

The integration strategies and social networks of Somali women in Cape Town

Parveen Brown

BRWPAROO1

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Social Science in Sociology

**Faculty of Humanities
University of Cape Town**

2014

Declaration of Plagiarism

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature : _____

Date : _____

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To the individuals who participated in this study, thank you for opening up part of your lives and for sharing your experiences and stories with me.

My gratitude and respect to my supervisor Amrita Pande, your guidance, insight and patience have been a source of light throughout this entire process.

Thank you, Professor Melissa Steyn, for believing in me and for your important contribution to my development as a scholar.

Thank you to all my friends for your reassuring words and for keeping my spirits up. Kershan Pancham and Riaan Laan warrant special recognition for their encouragement and extraordinary friendship. Thank you Kershan for all the conversations about theories and for helping me work through all my conceptual challenges. Riaan, thank you for reading and commenting on various chapters in this thesis and for sharing your academic insights.

I would like to express my profound gratitude to my family in George, my parents Amina and Bashier Brown as well as my brothers Ziyaad and Wazeer. I am also deeply grateful to my incredible family in Cape Town, my parents Hameeda and Mustaq Brey as well as my siblings Shenaaz, Omer, Khalid and Yaseen and my delightful nephews Shaahid and Mohammed Salman. Thank you for all the warm meals which filled me with love and for all the support you provided.

To Zubeida Brey, a special thank you for proofreading the final draft of my thesis. Zubeida, I respect you for your strength and courage, you are truly an inspiration to me.

Finally, to my beloved Asief, thank you for understanding the importance of this research and for supporting me so tirelessly. Your tolerance, patience and unconditional love made the completion of this thesis possible. I am deeply grateful that you share your life with me.

ABSTRACT

Somali migrants began arriving in the country in the early 1990's, following the collapse of the state in Somalia and the promise of increased opportunities in South Africa. This study is based on the experiences of Somali women in Bellville, which is situated in Cape Town; it is home to one of the largest Somali community's in the country. Migration to South Africa has brought Somali women into a new gendered context which has provided the opportunity to renegotiate gendered roles and practices. I focus on gendered processes of integration and adaptation to South Africa. The study also investigates how different forms of social networks influence integration and the kinds of value systems and identities that are reproduced through these networks. People experience migration and resettlement in gendered ways. Postcolonial feminist theory and the gendered geographies of power framework are used as tools to analyse how gender operates in the new migratory context. Social network theory is used to gain insight into the functions and features of networks among migrant women. The study takes an inductive approach and employs a qualitative research strategy. In-depth individual interviews and group discussions were conducted with 13 women migrants and 4 individuals from organisations working closely with the Somali community of Cape Town. Women's experiences reveal varying degrees, to which they accept, resist or negotiate different gendered norms. The ability of Somali women to insert their own gendered norms into existing societal patterns disrupts dominant discourses. The integration strategies migrants adopt are influenced by the kinds of social networks which are dominant in their lives. As expected this study finds that migrants draw on kin based networks where they choose to remain strongly connected to the Somali community. These networks can be restrictive in that they pressure migrants to conform to group expectations and norms; but they are also important as a source of social and economic support. Some migrants operate within a broader social network, linked not only to the Somali community but also to the broader South African society. These migrants have a stronger socio-economic position compared to the others which enables them to move beyond kin based networks more easily as they are not as dependent on these networks to integrate.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	I
ABSTRACT	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	III
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION.....	1
1.2 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND	2
1.3 HISTORY OF SOMALI WOMEN.....	4
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
2.1 INTRODUCTION	7
2.2 MIGRATION AND GENDER WORLDWIDE	7
2.3 GENDERED MIGRATION TO SOUTH AFRICA.....	7
2.4 SOMALI WOMEN MIGRANTS.....	9
2.5 POSTCOLONIAL FEMINISM	10
2.6 “GENDERED GEOGRAPHIES OF POWER”	13
2.7 REFUGEE OR ECONOMIC MIGRANT: MOVING BETWEEN MIGRANT CATEGORIES.....	15
2.8 THE SOMALI MIGRANT COMMUNITY IN THE DIASPORA AND SOUTH AFRICA	16
2.9 SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION.....	18
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	22
3.1 INTRODUCTION	22
3.2 SAMPLE.....	22
3.2.1. <i>Secondary Sample</i>	23
3.3 DATA COLLECTION	24
3.4 DATA ANALYSIS	26
3.5 ETHICS APPRAISAL.....	27
3.5.1 <i>Self - reflexivity</i>	28
3.6 RESEARCH CONSTRAINTS	29
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	31
4.1 INTEGRATION STRATEGIES.....	31
4.2 BARRIERS TO INTEGRATION AND STRATEGIES OF SURVIVAL.....	31
4.2.1 <i>Xenophobia and Crime</i>	31
4.2.2 <i>Appropriating Language</i>	34

4.3 GENDER AND ISLAM	36
4.3.1 <i>Being a Somali Muslim in Cape Town</i>	36
4.3.2 <i>“Some of us are trying to change our kind of dressing not by choice”</i>	38
4.3.3 <i>Work and Changing Gender Roles</i>	43
4.3.4 <i>“It’s a secret thing”: New Forms of Dating</i>	47
4.3.5 <i>“You marry because you are hungry, it’s not even love”</i>	50
4.4 SOCIAL NETWORKS.....	53
4.4.1 <i>The Uses of Social Networks</i>	54
4.4.2 <i>Accessing Economic Opportunities through Social Networks</i>	58
4.4.3 <i>Gendered Networks</i>	60
4.4.4 <i>Social Networks and Integration</i>	62
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION	66
REFERENCES.....	70
APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT PROFILES	80
PROFILES FOR THE SOMALI WOMEN MIGRANTS.....	80
PROFILES FOR THE NGO WORKERS INVOLVED WITH THE SOMALI COMMUNITY.....	83
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM	84
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE- SOMALI WOMEN MIGRANTS	85

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Question

South Africa has undergone remarkable changes over recent decades, which has opened the country to migrants from across the African continent. Somalis are an established migrant group in South Africa and are significant as a migrant community for many different social, economic, political and historical reasons (Crush & McDonald, 2002). This study is based on the Somali community of Bellville in Cape Town and explores how Somali women use social networks to facilitate integration and develop a sense of belonging in a new migratory context. The research focuses on the changing sense of identity among this migrant group, particularly along the axes of gender, religion, nationality and culture. Integration strategies employed for survival and adaptation are also examined.

In the diaspora Somali women encounter a social environment that may differ greatly from the one they left. They enter South Africa with a template of how to operate within society, their understanding of sociocultural constructs from home countries are transferred into their new communities. And it is here, where “the reproduction of cultural and social norms, provide a space for the renegotiation of roles, rights and practices”, which this study attempts to explore (Jinnah, 2012: 1; Crosby, 2006). The research proposes to look at the extent to which women migrants in Cape Town adapt to their new environment and the impact that their social networks have on their degree of integration. The study also aims to determine how migrants interact with South African society and culture by focusing on processes of identity.

The key research questions are:

- i. What types of social networks do women migrants have, how are these formed and what purpose do they serve?
- ii. Are social networks characterised by relationships with diverse groups?
- iii. Are sociocultural norms easily reproduced in South Africa?
 - a. In terms of sociocultural norms, what is lost, what is gained and what adapts?
- iv. Do perceptions of gender roles change in the new migratory context?

The primary research material is based on qualitative data gathered through in-depth interviews and discussion groups with Somali women and individuals from organisations working closely with the Somali community of Cape Town. Postcolonial feminist theory, the Gendered Geographies of Power lens and the concept of social networks are employed as theoretic tools in data analysis (Nayar, 2010; Mahler & Pessar, 2001). The "gendered geographies of power" framework, created by Sarah Mahler and Patricia Pessar (2001) examines gender and transnationalism, agency within structures of power and intersectionality. The framework is comprised of different but interrelated parts, each offering an alternate perspective which enables a comprehensive view of gender in transnational contexts.

Postcolonial feminist theory facilitates a critique of colonialism and the position of women in the postcolonial nation- state. It's a complex theory which offers various positions and analytical lenses to a scholar; key concepts and ideas relevant to the study have been selected. Postcolonial theory and the "gendered geographies of power" framework share a political element in that they engage and contest hegemonic ideologies while simultaneously creating a space for marginalized voices to be heard and theorized accordingly. Social network theory is drawn on in analysis of the forms and functions of networks among migrant women in Bellville. There is a focus on how different types of social networks influence integration into South Africa and also the kinds of value systems and identities that are (re)produced through these networks. Additionally, I engage with other concepts that relate to more current issues affecting Somali migrants. The narratives of the individuals in this study contribute to the emerging scholarship that focuses on the role of gender in migration integration in South Africa.

1.2 Contextual background

Somalis began arriving in South Africa in the early 1990's, following the collapse of the state in Somalia and the promise of increased opportunities in South Africa. Steadily, over the next two decades, Somalis migrated to cities and townships in most of the major and secondary cities in the country (Jinnah, 2010). . Somalis have deemed South Africa a preferred destination on the continent since refugee status in that country allows for

mobility and the autonomy to create trade opportunities or seek employment and independent housing. This stands in stark contrast to the circumstances in Kenya as an example, through which a number of Somalis transit before migrating to South Africa. There, refugees are required to remain in overcrowded, underfunded camps (Sadouni, 2009). Unlike other welfare states such as Canada or Australia who offer forced migrants support upon arrival, migrants to South Africa receive limited assistance from the state and must largely rely on their social networks and own resourcefulness to adapt and integrate into the country (Crush & McDonald, 2002).

In South Africa Somalis are an ethnic minority and believe that their status as foreigners, refugees, entrepreneurs and Muslims separates them from mainstream society and compels them to interact with and rely on their own community for subsistence and security. They are often viewed as distant and 'keeping to themselves', and as making no effort to acculturate into South African society. Limited integration and self-isolation are barriers to opportunities and security within the country; however they remain within the confines of their community by choice as well as necessity. Broader social and economic contexts within the country enable discriminatory practices against Somalis; this is compounded by their lack of citizenship which distinguishes them as foreigners. Structural forces act as constraints which inform the active decision to retain a strong membership to the group (Landau, 2008; Sadouni, 2009).

Bellville, in the Northern suburbs of Cape Town is home to a large Somali community. It has been described to me by a Somali as the 'headquarters of Somalia in Cape Town'¹. The area is also known as Little Mogadishu or Somali Town. The Bellville central business district could be described as an 'ethnic enclave'². There are many Somali owned stores, food outlets, mosques, madrasah's and lodges which offer accommodation. Somali's also reside in this area. At Star Junction, Somali pop songs surge from a speaker the size of a

¹ Informal conversation with a Somali man from Bellville, 8 April 2013.

² 'Ethnic' enclaves are 'characterised by the spatial concentration of the immigrant group and by considerable within-group stratification that give rise to clustered networks of business owned by group members' (Heisler, 2008; 88; Losifides, 2011).

refrigerator, filling the market space with energy. All kinds of goods spill out onto the pavement from the Somali stores; household items, food products, clothes, toys, accessories, and replica branded sportswear. Some stores close for a short time when the call to prayer echoes through Durban Road and shopkeepers make their way to the Masjid or pray in their stores. Warm currents of cardamom and pepper drift from the food outlets, with some food items brought especially from home. Many Somalis are found chewing a leaf called *khat*, which has the effect of a mild stimulant and which Somalis say elevates their mood.

The shopping mall Oriental Plaza which is completely occupied by Somali tenants represents an ethnic commercial niche that can protect Somali traders from theft, police harassment, and xenophobic and racist public sentiments. Women particularly are vulnerable to discrimination and fear assault, sexual harassment and robbery if they venture too far from the safety of their male kin. Their anxieties and the reality of crime limit their ability to integrate into larger society, and undermine access to economic opportunities. The anti-immigrant impulse of South Africa has affected Somalis severely, as the targets of violent assault and murder since before the xenophobic attacks of 2008, at present there are still cases of Somali killings reported in the media. In Bellville, community solidarity provides Somalis with a sense of protection.

1.3 History of Somali Women

This section offers an account of significant events and changes relating to Somali women, particularly in the late 20th century. A brief history of the political unrest in Somalia is also discussed.

In 1991 over a decade of growing conflicts in Somalia erupted into a full-scale civil war, causing the absolute collapse of the state. The ousting of Siyad Barre, after 22 years of dictatorship, left Somalia with a governmental void which exists to this day, despite attempts at establishing a central government. A fundamental aspect of the Somali conflict is the role of the clan system. In the political realm, clan identity was manipulated by Siyad Barre's regime, to divide and rule the Somali people. A series of ineffective governments,

unsuccessful peace efforts and cycles of war and famine have characterised Somalia for the last 20 years (Buyer, 2008: 228).

The repercussions of the civil war were felt acutely among women, homes were pillaged and girls and young women were subjected to serious sexual abuse. Many women witnessed acts of violence and were victimised themselves as they tried to escape (Hopkins, 2010). Although searching for basic security needs such as water, food and medicine were familiar tasks to Somali women, they became practically unattainable without societal order (Crosby, 2006: 69). As a consequence many became refugees in neighbouring African countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia; while others fled to different continents contributing to a Somali diaspora which spans the globe. It must be noted that Somali women also played active roles in the civil war; they participated in various ways such as being care-givers, combatants involved in armed conflict, members of militias, peace-makers and politicians. While some were physically involved in the war, others participated through artistic expressions of poems and war songs (Gardner & El Bushra, 2004). Studies on internally displaced women in Somalia have focused on their livelihood strategies, experiences in refugee camps and women's calls for increased political participation (Abdi, 2006; Gardner & Warsame, 2004; Horst, 2002). In Somalia literacy and school participation rates are among the world's lowest for women and girls. Historically, sociocultural influences meant that few girls attended school. Access to education in Somalia was limited for everyone once the war started, but it was especially so for women³ (UNICEF, 2002).

Throughout Somali history, it was uncommon for women to assume positions of power, such as those in the household or government. Siyad Barre's regime administered radical, societal and legislative changes, which influenced the roles of women in public and private life. These changes however were not initiated to further the liberties and equality of women but rather to legitimize the regime's socialist philosophy (Kusow, 2007; Hopkins, 2010). The Family law of 1975⁴ as an example, avowed women equal rights in property,

³ This reflects among Somali women who have migrated to South Africa, they are disadvantaged by this lower literacy in many ways.

⁴ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Human Rights Brief: Women in Somalia, 1 April 1994, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a83b8.html> [accessed 11 February 2014]

inheritance and divorce, and restricted the practice of polygamy (Ahmed, 2004). The government also established the Somali Women's Democratic Organisation (SWDO) in 1977 as the only official women's group in Somalia. This organisation was involved in various education and human rights campaigns, including a programme to eliminate and educate people about female genital mutilation (Gardner & Warsame, 2004). The SWDO dissolved with the fall of Barre's administration. In the 1970s and 1980s, Somali women also had greater access to education, although the wide gender gap in education remained (Akou, 2011). The laws, organisations and movements of the time, which related to women, did not always translate into a real change in their socio-economic positions. Still, Somali women's rights progressed more during Barre's rule than any time throughout the colonial and post-independence period (Gardner & El Bushra, 2004; Crosby, 2006: 74). Thus, the regime prior to the civil war and the war itself, "have proved instrumental in bringing Somali women to political life and prominent positions" (Hopkins, 2010: 524). The conflict also influenced the formation of female-headed households in Somalia. In the diaspora female-headed households became increasingly prevalent due to the absence of kin but also since migrant women put their rights into effect, especially as they relate to marriage, maintenance, access to welfare from the state, divorce and economic participation (Hopkins, 2010).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a literature review of key areas relating to this dissertation. I begin by tracing established trends and new patterns in the migration of women globally, and then focus on gendered movements to South Africa. This is followed by a discussion on Somali women migrants. The sections on postcolonial feminism and the “gendered geographies of power” framework form part of the theoretical basis for this study. I highlight how this approach relates to the main research questions as well as its value as an analytical lens. Lastly I discuss the Somali diaspora and detail relevant concepts within Social Network theory that speak to migration.

2.2 Migration and Gender Worldwide

A key distinguishing feature of current trends in global migration is the feminization of migratory populations around the world. Increasingly, women are migrating not as dependants of male kin but autonomously. The international migration of women now involves extremely complex power hierarchies and structures of inequality, not only between the global North and South, but also within the South itself. The gendered aspect of international migration received limited focused scholarly attention before the 1980s. Research generally reflected the long-held belief that migration is a male phenomenon. A few scholars began studying the rural-urban migration of women, which then steadily grew to include international female migration (Oishi, 2005: 2-7). The increased focus on the gendered nature of migration has resulted in a rich literature which illustrates how gender is a key factor in our understanding of the causes and consequences of international migrations (Piper, 2008). As this dissertation is concerned with migratory flows within Africa’s borders, the next section will focus on migration to South Africa from regions across the continent.

2.3 Gendered Migration to South Africa

Gender intersects with other social identities such as nationality, religion, class, migration status, ethnicity and/or race, which taken together, form a complex web of stratification

with its own dynamics of inclusion/ exclusion and power relations. These dynamics are active in both origin and destination countries, which mean migrants, *leave and enter* gendered and stratified societies. There is a need for a gendered analysis of contemporary cross-border migration and a deeper understanding of migrant women's agency in present day South Africa (Lefko-Everett, 2007; Piper, 2008: 1).

Migration by women is increasingly being undertaken as a livelihood strategy and as a response to the shifting social and material conditions in countries of origin. Women⁵ are moving independently, for extended periods or temporarily, for a wide range of social, economic, environmental and political reasons. Contemporary male and female migration to South Africa is gender-specific, indicating diverse motivations and patterns (Crush & McDonald, 2002; Kiwanuka, 2010). Migration is an important economic strategy for women who have become the main source of income in their households due to the absence of male partners and decreased support from the extended community. There are a number of gendered barriers to migration which are more of an obstacle to women than men; women have added household and family responsibilities, are more vulnerable to discrimination, harassment and safety risks and have limited access to resources and opportunities (Lefko-Everett, 2007: 68).

Female migrants tend to gravitate toward urban areas where employment opportunities exist and can be created; here they are primarily engaged in low skill and informal work (Dodson, 2008). Research findings report conflicting outcomes related to the benefits and trials of migration. Studies by Lefko-Everett (2007), Moorhouse and Cunningham (2012) and Gouws (2010) maintain that, among some women, such movements have afforded positive returns such as economic independence and stability and the sending of remittances⁶ and

⁵ I do problematize the understanding of the term gender as a synonym for 'women', I do use the term in reference to women at times but I also contest the male/female binary which does not account for all the variations of gender and sex.

⁶ The sending and receiving of remittances are essential to creating ties of obligation and reciprocity, which are maintained among members of the family network. Remitters strongly influence decisions regarding the transnational family and enable fellow kin to migrate, find a livelihood and sustain their stay in host societies. Remittances also have symbolic value, they communicate important matters of prestige and power which shapes relations (Al-Sharmani, 2010; Mahler & Pessar, 2001: 450).

other forms of support to families in serious need. While studies by Raj and Silverman (2002) and Trimikliniotis, Gordon and Zondo (2008), conversely, call attention to the impact of discriminatory immigration legislation, social barriers such as racism and xenophobia, combined with gender inequality which perpetually places migrant women in even more vulnerable positions.

Most Somali women in this study highlight the structural barriers to finding employment in Cape Town, but a few do raise cultural differences and beliefs about gender roles as significant. They felt that in South Africa there was less discrimination based on gender and more emphasis placed on qualifications. Kenya was cited as an example where Somali women don't work because gendered traditions are more entrenched. Respondents believed that in South Africa women had more opportunities and freedom of choice.

Expectations about the destination country strongly affect migrant decision-making. Women migrants from African countries believe South Africa can offer them a range of economic opportunities with an abundance of employment prospects, access to basic security such as housing and healthcare, as well as social assistance and the ability to obtain certain commodities. Positive expectations and imagery are strong pull factors for many. This is however tied to fears about the country as violent and crime ridden, although push factors in home countries are often strong enough to encourage women to migrate, despite the potential dangers (Gouws, 2010; Lefko-Everett, 2007).

2.4 Somali Women Migrants

Up until 2000, Somali migration to South Africa largely consisted of men. In 2000, the movement of Somali's to South Africa intensified, with an increase in women and youth, changing the predominantly male character of the Somali community. From the 2000's onward, social rules within Somalia began shifting due to the ongoing war and conflict. The breakdown of kinship structures and livelihoods through migration and economic constraints saw a rise in Somali women migrating independently with their children. This autonomy points to an increased agency in migration decision making among Somali women (Shaffer, 2012; Langellier, 2010; Jinnah, 2012: 2).

For Somali women, gender and related sociocultural dynamics play a key role in the decision for or against migration. Many Somali women have been subject to, or have lived in fear of, violence and serious sexual abuse prior to and during their migration journey, and many families sent female members out of the region because of this (Hopkins, 2010: 523). All the respondents in this study spoke about the difficulty of migrating as a woman and the high risks involved, the danger of rape was mentioned several times.

Research on Somali women in the diaspora looks at the functions of social networks, the exercise of sexual and reproductive health rights, dress, remittances, changing gender relations and shifting cultural identities (Schaffer, 2012; Akou, 2011; McMichael & Manderson, 2004). In Somalia, family roles are determined by gender and mediated by kinship which sets norms for appropriate behaviour; this presents challenges even in the home country and is compounded by new migratory contexts where hierarchical status and power relations are disrupted. In the diaspora Somali women often act on their rights related to marriage, domestic violence and divorce and may have more freedom to make decisions concerning themselves, their bodies and their families. However they may also feel more vulnerable, physically and economically without the support and protection of kin (Ibrahim, 2004; Hopkins, 2010; Jinnah, 2010).

Political and economic instability in Somalia has been both enabling and constraining for men and women who have had to negotiate changes in roles and responsibilities in the receiving society. Migration has presented Somali women in Bellville, with challenges and opportunities to redefine and reinterpret what it means to be a Somali woman (Boyd, 1999; Hyndman & de Alwis, 2003; Hopkins, 2010).

2.5 Postcolonial Feminism

The field of postcolonial theory has been developed by authors such as Edward Said (1978), Gayatri Spivak (1988), Franz Fanon (1967), Chandra Mohanty (1984), and Homi K. Bhabha (1994). By foregrounding the political, a postcolonial critique unsettles the ideological discourses that naturalise Western hegemonic representations. It brings to light the variance of postcolonial subjects' experiences and also examines the material conditions under which they live. The way in which diversity and difference, whether along the axes of

culture, gender, race or sexuality, has been represented historically, ongoing to contemporary times, attests to the circulatory power of the Western, modernist worldview (Ozkazanc-Pan, 2012; Nayar, 2010).

The Somali narrative is situated within a history of colonialism (Langellier, 2010). Legally, colonialism has been dismantled in Africa, although the effects remain in policies, attitudes and practices. With South Africa's history of institutionalized discrimination, strong patriarchal culture, continuing inequality and xenophobic sentiments, it can be a hostile place to find oneself as a racialised and gendered migrant. A postcolonial perspective is useful to the study as it "provides crucial insights concerning the maintenance and reproduction of current relations and structures, and through this critique, can help generate possibilities for transforming social and political conditions" (Abrahamsen, 2003: 210).

In postcolonialism women are seen as being doubly colonised, by colonialism and by patriarchy. The research is informed by postcolonial feminist theory, a thread of postcolonialism. This approach deepens the analysis of gender in postcolonial contexts. It can provide a critical understanding of the social construction of women's subordination globally. It contests 'Third World Women' as a homogenized, coherent and undifferentiated category. Postcolonial feminism is impelled by a commitment to decolonize representation, to address the power of a Western worldview, challenging the idea of the liberation of women from their own culture⁷ and creating the space for representing differences among women. Ong (1994: 377) notes how within dominant discourses the 'non-Western woman' is constructed as either non-modern or modern, "she is seldom perceived as living in a situation where there is deeply felt tension between tradition and modernity". The theory problematizes mainstream White feminism's assumption that women move along a linear progression, from being ignorant, passive, tradition bound and victimised, to being an educated and empowered Western woman (Sandoval, 1991). Postcolonial feminism is engaged in the real lived experiences and conditions of 'Third World' women's lives as

⁷ In this study, culture is conceptualized as fluid, constantly changing and in flux; it is characterised by improvisation and heterogeneity (Hall, 1994; Rosaldo, 1989).

situated within particular contexts and politics. The theory informs debates on various issues such as women's labour, education, appropriate dress codes, the right to divorce and the right to property. It is also concerned with the ongoing patriarchal control over women as well as interpretations of religious doctrine that serve the interests of men (Ansari, 2008; Nayar, 2010; Steyn, 2010).

In migrant discourse, women come to symbolize "home culture", and the protection of women is understood as the protection of a country's heritage, while the 'immorality' and 'transgresses' of women are indicative of the dissolution of culture. The home, community and tradition become sites of identity, with women being the key figures in this (Hedge, 1998; Nayar, 2010: 102). Tradition is seen as embodied in women, resulting in greater policing of women's bodies. The autonomy of women is a question of agency. Agency is understood as the thoughts and actions of individuals which express their power in social contexts. It can be based on the collective or the individual. Agency is contingent on social conditions in which choices can be made and acted upon. The idea of only understanding agency in terms of resistance to hegemonic forces is limiting, the concept of embedded agency however, includes practices that do not have this explicit intent yet demonstrate active engagement in directing one's life (Korteweg, 2008). Within a postcolonial framework, an individual's agency must be located within multiple hierarchies of power. For that reason, "when examining the lives of marginalized women, it is essential to view agency within the structures of gendered asymmetry in order to understand the victimization and resistance of women" (Hedge, 1998: 288).

The concept of intersectionality enriches the use of postcolonial feminist theory. The term intersectionality was first introduced by Kimberle' Crenshaw in the 1980's and articulates the need to think through the ways in which race, gender and class simultaneously co-construct one another (Lerner, 1997; Kitch, 2009). Race, class and gender, including other categories of difference, cannot be separated or understood without each other. This applies to both individuals and groups in various social locales. Race is constructed by class and gender; class is constructed by gender and race; and gender is constructed by race and class (Lerner, 1997: 197). These differences are interlocking and interdependent (Lerner, 1997). In migration processes, intersectionality can be useful as a tool for understanding the

interconnected and constitutive nature of multiple forms of oppression and privilege (Bürkner, 2012; Yuval-Davis, 2006). It enables an analysis that extends beyond gender to include an understanding of how gender is also constituted by race, class, ethnicity and normative ideas of sexuality (Bürkner, 2012). Considering that migrants cross multiple boundaries which are gendered, raced and classed, the concept of intersectionality is valuable as an approach to comprehend the experiences of migrant women (Nash, 2008).

Postcolonial feminist theory is dynamic and allows for the use of multiple approaches toward the research. People experience migration and settlement in gendered ways, the theory considers variations between women and men, and also includes analyses of power hierarchies such as race, sexuality, class and nationality. The theory is used to examine changing sociocultural arrangements and gender relations, and offers deep insights into the forces at work in the Somali community of Cape Town.

2.6 “Gendered Geographies of Power”

Sarah J. Mahler and Patricia R. Pessar (2001) have developed a conceptual framework, entitled "gendered geographies of power," for studying gender in transnational contexts. To best delineate this model, each of the constituent parts will be discussed in turn. Firstly, they propose that gender functions simultaneously across “geographic scales” which refers to multiple spatial and social scales such as the body, the family and the state. These spaces and scales interact in complex ways; “It is both within the context of particular scales as well as between and among them that gender ideologies and relations are reaffirmed, reconfigured, or both” (Mahler & Pessar, 2001: 445). A fundamental concern of the model is whether transnational spaces provide opportunities to question hegemonic gender ideals, and consider opposing understandings of gendered lives, or, conversely whether there is a greater probability that prevailing gender ideologies will be reinforced. In essence, does “international migration and other cross border activities that bring people into new gendered contexts change gender relations, and, if so, in what direction(s)?”(Mahler & Pessar, 2006: 42).

The second component of the model analyses individuals’ positions within power hierarchies, shaped by economic, geographic, historical, political and other structuring forces. This is referred to as “social location”. People are situated within power hierarchies

of race, class, gender, nationality and sexuality, which function at many levels to influence their social location. The model's third component is agency, which looks at the different kinds of social agency actors' exercise, considering their social locations. Agency refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices regarding their life course. The concept of agency is heavily contested and often critiqued in the literature, in social theory much of the debate centers on the relationship between the individual and the system, also seen as the dilemma between structure and action in Sociology. Here, social actors are represented as being in relation to something external to themselves known as structure or society; they are either determined by the system (structural-model) or they act upon it (action-model) (Bilge, 2010:12). The action-model centres on agency and is linked to a liberal humanist concept of agency which emphasises individual autonomy, willful action and rationality. One of the most radical critiques of humanist agency emanates from poststructuralism which urges a consideration of how agency is not about acting in a manner that is unconstrained by power, but instead involves working within power, which is seen as both enabling and constraining (Bilge, 2010; Butler, 1993).

An analysis of "power geometries" places an emphasis on agency and its manifestations, to provide an understanding of how people's social locations influence their access to resources, to exert control over their circumstances. People are seen as initiators, refiners and transformers of their circumstances. Their access to resources also enables decisions about exercising personal agency or choosing not to, and through these processes gain access to power (Abrahamsen, 2003; Shaffer, 2012; Mahler & Pessar, 2001). This conceptual framework was created to contribute to theory-building in transnational migration research and "to conceptualize and study gendered identities and relations when conducted and negotiated across international borders, as they relate to multiple axes of difference, and as they operate along and across many sociospatial scales – from the body to the globe" (Mahler & Pessar 2006: 42).

The "gendered geographies of power," framework is useful to the present study as it facilitates an analysis of the way gender, in all its complexity, operates in the Somali community of Cape Town. It can contribute to our understanding of the interplay between

South African society and Somali sociocultural constructs. The process of migration alters gender relations, and interpreting the social location of individuals adds insight into the dynamics of changing relationships in Cape Town. Looking at local level, micro struggles are important to understanding how Somalis imagine and realize alternative ways of organizing life. The exercise of agency occurs in a continuum, it ranges from active and overt to more subtle and creative forms of 'resistance'. The component of agency in the framework delves into these alternative spaces for human flourishing. Through the framework, the production and reproduction of gender can be examined, within a particular context and in a particular location (Ansari, 2008; Shaffer, 2012).

2.7 Refugee or Economic Migrant: Moving between migrant categories

The movement of people, whether through purposeful migration or by forced displacement has occurred as a consequence of interconnected political, social, ethnic, religious and demographic processes which occur simultaneously at local, national and international levels. Migration is multifaceted; refugees and political migrants move for fear of persecution or due to violence; poverty and economic factors are also influential, thus the same or comparable contexts can create both refugees and economic migrants (Ogata, 1995). The term economic refugee came to describe those who were not escaping political persecution but rather adverse economic conditions (Ong, 2003). Somalis in South Africa are a combination of refugees and economic migrants, most though have been persecuted in some way and are 'true' refugees.

Coutin (1998) writes on Salvadoran immigrants in the United States, who continually negotiate their legal status within the country so that they are able to access rights and services. The Salvadoran community at times found it both empowering and politically necessary to define themselves as refugees. At one point the United States government contends that the human rights situation in El Salvador is improving and that Salvadoran immigrants need to be categorised as economic migrants, not refugees deserving of political asylum. This points to the important issue of the manner in which migrants are socially constructed; as legitimate refugees or as unauthorized foreigners, with political refugees receiving preferential assistance. The Somali community of Bellville represents themselves as asylum seekers and refugees.

Ong's (2003) study on Cambodian refugees in the United States also shows how the meaning of the term refugee is contested and contextually based. While waiting to emigrate to the United States, Cambodians spent time in refugee camps, some were in Thailand. At a point during the political unrest in Cambodia, an interim government was installed; from the Thai government's perspective, Cambodians in Thailand were now not legitimate refugees and could return home. On the Cambodian side of the border they were 'displaced persons' while on the Thai side they were 'illegal immigrants' (Ong, 2003: 50). Refugees are widely seen as a threat to the nation-state and policies often attempt to restrict entry, permanence of residency and movement of migrants. An ideological opposition exists between an imagined nationhood and refugees, who come to represent disorder and immorality for the nation-state (Ong, 2003: 78). Kenya, which is home to a very large Somali refugee population, is working to repatriate Somalis back to Somalia, noting that they are a security risk and citing the fact that there are regions in the southern part of Somalia that are 'safe'. Here Somalis are no longer seen as legitimate refugees.

2.8 The Somali Migrant Community in the Diaspora and South Africa

The civil wars and conflicts in Somalia have led to a humanitarian crisis that has forced its people to different parts of the world (Langellier, 2010: 68; Sadouni, 2009). Somalia is the second largest refugee-producing nation in the world after Afghanistan; with the largest Somali refugee groups found in Kenya and then Ethiopia⁸. There are over one million Somalis living in the diaspora. Dispersed across continents and among several nations, with refugee communities in North and sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand as well as numerous countries in Western Europe, Scandinavia and even countries in Asia (Shaffer, 2012: 27).

Somalis are regarded as refugees who have witnessed the greatest horrors and grieved countless losses; whose families have met daunting challenges in fulfilling their needs for employment, transportation, housing, healthcare and education for their children; and who,

⁸ Refugees in the Horn of Africa: Somali Displacement Crisis, retrieved from <http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/regional.php> on 18/02/14.

in spite of their relatively small numbers, have attracted attention to themselves almost everywhere they have settled (Kapteijns & Arman, 2008; Langellier, 2010: 69). Somalis in South Africa are a combination of primary and secondary migrants, having first lived in other African countries as well as in different provinces within South Africa. Migrants began arriving in the country in the early 1990's, following the collapse of the state in Somalia and the promise of increased opportunities in South Africa. From the mid 1990's to 2000, social networks played a key role in out-migration as Somalis in the home country came to know of the prospects for trade, entrepreneurship and self-settlement in South Africa. The country's infrastructure was also regarded as well-developed which attracted migrants (Jinnah, 2012: 2).

Following the Ethiopian incursion into Somalia in 2000, the movement to South Africa intensified and gradually increased throughout the 2000's; the drought and famine in Somalia toward the end of 2010 to 2012 again saw a drastic increase in movement of people to the country. From this continuous and systematic movement of Somalis to South Africa, urban areas with high concentrations of Somalis gradually appeared, such as parts of Bellville in Cape Town and Mayfair in Johannesburg. In areas such as these where a form of Somali presence is entrenched, the community is, to an extent, protected from violence and xenophobic sentiments (Jinnah, 2012).

The custom of informal trade which is central to migrant economies, and the economic traditions transferred from Somalia influenced the manner in which Somalis sought inclusion into South Africa. The experiences Somalis gained in transitory countries such as Kenya, Zambia and Tanzania, developed into resources they could draw on to facilitate their social and economic integration. This was evident among the Somali community of Bellville, especially regarding trade⁹ and business networks where respondents used established transnational links to further their economic activities in Cape Town. Somalis, who are able

⁹ There was evidence of transnational networks among respondents, such as in the United States, other African countries, the United Arab Emirates and then also locally across South Africa, in towns outside of Cape Town and in Johannesburg. These were mostly kin-based networks, some of which were used for trade.

to depend on their social networks, trust between kin and who have access to credit systems are indeed able to advance their settlement in South Africa (Peberby & Rogerson, 2000; Sadouni, 2009).

2.9 Social Networks in the Context of Migration

Social network theory is closely tied to the concept of social capital. Pierre Bourdieu defines social capital as 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (1986: 249). Social capital can be described as a resource inherent in a social network; it ties people together and facilitates interaction between them. For Bourdieu social capital is a collective phenomenon even though it is seen from the perspective of the individual (Bourdieu, 1986; Siisiainin, 2000). Mohan and Stokke (2000: 255) define social capital as 'features of social organisation, such as networks, norms and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit'. For this study a working definition of social capital informed by Bourdieu as well as Mohan and Stokke's work will be used. Although social capital is beneficial, it does have serious negative aspects which can be detrimental to an individual or group. It can affect individuals in counterintuitive ways and place restrictions on individual freedom. Social capital can also exclude outsiders and create very strong groups which are difficult to infiltrate. This could negatively influence the integration of communities. The literature on social capital includes very little discussion on issues related to power, ethnicity, gender, race and class which result in the segregation of social networks (Mohan & Stokke, 2000).

The social networks of migrants are influential in the migratory process; they play a key role in determining migration routes and in surmounting the difficulties that migrants confront on their journey. Networks also inform decisions and facilitate access to various important resources (Boyd 1989; Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino & Taylor, 1993). Networks can be based on various ascribed criteria such as kinship, religion, ethnicity, class, gender or nationality. Affiliations based on these and other criteria serve as social capital in a network. In the literature theoretical arguments center on the types of impacts different social networks may have, on different sets of migrants. Contrasting views exist on the types

of relationships that need to be studied to get an accurate depiction of a migrant's social networks (Schmitter-Heisler 2000; Wellman, 1983).

Danis (2007), citing Granovetter (1973), introduces new analytical elements that occur within networks, by distinguishing between strong and weak ties. A tight-knit cluster of relations often based on kinship, is believed to facilitate access to security such as housing and employment. Here it is essential for a researcher to look at the density of people closely linked to the migrant rather than the breadth of their social network. In this type of analysis, the social network is often imagined and conceived as being a group of people with common socio-cultural features, who operate in the same kind of environment in the host society (Jean, 2008). Strong ties, as described above, tend to be exclusive and can limit contact with different individuals and communities. In this regard, weak ties, as illustrated by Granovetter, are believed to be more influential than strong ties in linking diverse groups and drawing resource flows toward the migrant. Weak ties represent the links that a migrant has with individuals who are outside their dense social network. These types of relationships connect migrants to a new group of individuals who operate in a different kind of environment (for example members of the host society), providing new opportunities, information and assistance in attaining various objectives such as employment or education (Granovetter, 1973; Jean, 2008; Danis, 2007). The concept of strong and weak ties in social networks is drawn on in analysis of the forms and functions of networks among migrant women in Bellville. I question whether migrants have social networks characterised by weak or strong ties, and what this means for their integration into South Africa and the kinds of value systems and identities that are (re)produced.

Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) discuss various types of trust that arise among group members of a social network. Trust between members is an important measure of the strength and success of social networks. In contexts where a common threat is recognized, as a result of shared identity, history or circumstance, cultural symbols which reinforce the group's commonality are invoked. This serves to sustain network ties of obligation. Members have the ability to enforce individual compliance to group norms through ostracism or coercion. This however depends on the resources available within the community relative to the resources outside it as well as the group's ability to monitor

individual behaviour, which is made possible through dense networks stemming from social and physical proximity (Curran & Saguy, 2001; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993). This also extends to policing gender roles in the Somali community of Bellville on which this study is based, as this community is largely concentrated in one area of Cape Town where residential and commercial space are adjacent to one another.

Social networks transmit essential information as well as values and cultural perceptions. Beliefs become and remain meaningful if an individual is integrated into a network of people who share the same beliefs. If there is no participation in such networks an individual's beliefs are not affirmed or reinforced by others, increasing the likelihood of their erosion. Exposure to and involvement in new networks with contrasting beliefs will serve to challenge an existing world view and present alternative value systems, identities and desires (Curran & Saguy, 2001; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Massey *et al.*, 1993).

A study by Portes and Zhou (1992) shows how Cuban emigrants to the United States create niches and sheltered spheres of activity and experience, which is both practical and symbolic. This enabled the Cuban community to exist in partial isolation from the host community. When confronted with a hostile reception in Miami, Florida, the Cuban community found refuge in the familiar by consuming products synonymous with home and associating and working with fellow Cubans. This developed into ethnic enclaves, as community businesses flourish and ethnic identities are formed (McMichael & Manderson, 2004). In South Africa, pervasive social and institutional barriers restrict the movement of Somali migrants and create a sense of insecurity. These barriers are important to understanding community dynamics in Bellville, as unstable incomes and limited protection from harm compel Somalis to rely on each other for physical safety and social and economic assistance.

In a study by Danis (2007) on Iraqi Christian women migrants in Istanbul found employment in Christian households through their religious networks. The Church played a key role and the employment process involved religious leaders, Christian employers and other Christian Iraqi women migrants. Religious social networks assisted the Iraqi migrants to find domestic work easily, although it involved longer working hours and less vacation time. The migrants

in this study are predominantly Muslim; research on this migrant group in South Africa has shown that religious networks with Muslim South Africans have been instrumental in providing various forms of support (Jinnah, 2010). Numerous studies have also found that Somalis draw on religious affiliation to settle and immerse in host communities (McMichael & Manderson, 2004; Sadouni, 2009; Hopkins, 2010). In the Somali community of Bellville, religious networks were used to access various opportunities and resources such as employment, scholarships and housing. However, Muslim social networks in Bellville can also be restrictive.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology employed for this dissertation, highlighting the appropriateness of chosen strategies. I chose a qualitative research approach because of the depth of understanding it permits. Qualitative researchers emphasise and place value “on the human, interpretive aspects of knowing about the social world and the significance of the investigator’s own interpretations and understanding of the phenomenon being studied” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003: 7). Qualitative research methods, from a feminist perspective, is situated in standpoint research, which underlines the need to concentrate on women’s experiences in everyday life as it is familiar to them, recognizing that those experiences are continually created and recreated (Madriz, 2000).

3.2 Sample

The primary sample consisted of 13 Somali women; two are shopkeepers in Bellville, three attend a University in the Northern region of Cape Town, one works at a restaurant in Bellville, one is a community leader, refugee rights activist and interpreter and six were involved in informal street trade in Bellville.

I used non-probability, purposive sampling to recruit participants, which were chosen based on the aims of the research. Participants had to be Somali and female, aged¹⁰ between 19 – 45 years. I aimed for a balance between younger and more mature women. Participants had to be engaged in some type of trade or paid employment, whether formal or informal, temporary or long-term, or they had to be studying in South Africa. Individuals who were not working at all were not selected as economic participation (no matter how informal) was important to understanding links between livelihood strategies and social networks as well as how new-found economic roles impact on gender relations. I aimed for a range in terms of the different occupations of participants. Participants also had to be living in Cape

¹⁰ Respondents believed the average age of Somali women who migrate is 30 years of age and that you find young women from 17 years of age onwards in South Africa.

Town currently; the sample needed to represent differences in length of duration of stay in South Africa, with the minimum length of stay being three years. Class variations arose from the respondents themselves; class criteria was not purposefully applied in my sampling but was used in data analysis.

Informal links with members of the Somali community were established and participants recruited through these channels. I also employed the use of snowball sampling¹¹ combined with convenience sampling; this entailed recruiting existing research participants to suggest individuals to include in the study based on their understanding of the selection criteria. Either the research participants or I then contacted the potential participants to explain the study and extend an invitation to join (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Although I came across many Somali men who spoke English, finding women who had a sufficient grasp of the language was challenging. Without an interpreter, I limited my sample to women who had an understanding of English. All the participants were first generation Somali's; none were born in South Africa. Somali migrants interviewed for the research emanate from Somalia, Kenya and Zambia.

3.2.1. Secondary Sample

A secondary sample consisting of people, who were part of Non-governmental organisations which engaged with Somalis and were in touch with the kinds of issues Somalis face at a very fundamental level, was selected. The secondary sample was recruited through purposive sampling, the criterion being that participants should have extensive experience in working with the Somali community of Cape Town.

Participants included two Somali males who worked at the Somali Association of South Africa¹² (SASA) which is based in Bellville, one female who works as a trainer at Sonke

¹¹ Snowball sampling is considered a serious source of bias in research; this was considered while recruiting participants (Ritchie, Lewis, 2003).

¹² The Somali Association of South Africa (SASA) is an NGO with branches all over the country, across the nine provinces. When it was founded in 1995 there was no Somali Embassy, so business people came together to organise themselves. The Bellville office is situated in the Oriental Plaza in Blackenberg Street. SASA provides services such as legal advice, English language classes and welfare distribution. Dacar tells me SASA has a women's wing but no respondents were aware of its existence.

Gender Justice, an organisation based in the Cape Town CBD which focuses on gender issues and one male who works at The Agency for Refugee Education, Skills Training & Advocacy (ARESTA), an organisation based in Athlone.

3.3 Data Collection

The primary material for the study is in the form of semi-structured, one-on-one, in-depth interviews and semi-structured group discussions, the responses provide the key data for my analysis. I chose to combine in-depth interviews and discussion groups; mixing these qualitative approaches is seen as very useful. The group discussion context provides the opportunity to discuss shared experiences, ideas and concerns. There is also more scope for spontaneous emergence of issues, encouraged by the array of different people's contributions (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Discussion groups were initially used to begin to explore relevant issues which were then further pursued in the in-depth interviews. An interview schedule, containing mainly open-ended questions, was used as a tool to elicit responses based on the aims of the research. As the data collection proceeded the effectiveness of the interview schedule was evaluated and then revised as needed.

Data was collected through two semi-structured group discussions with seven Somali women, six of whom were involved in informal street trade in Bellville with one working at a restaurant. The first group had three participants while the second group had four participants. Interview themes focused on the migration journey; households, livelihood strategies, experiences as Muslim women in a new context, adaptation to South Africa and social networks. Group discussions were most appropriate in this case as participants felt comfortable with one another and assisted each other with language and expressing themselves in English. I was concerned that in the presence of fellow women, Somali participants would feel restricted by cultural norms¹³, influencing what they were willing to share. This was not the case. Madriz (2000: 836) argues that group discussions "can be an important element in the advancement of social justice for women, because they can serve to expose and validate women's everyday experiences of subjugation and their individual

¹³ It is common practice, in Cape Town for researchers to have to ask the permission of Somali women's husbands before they are able to speak to them, especially when visiting them at their home. I wasn't required to do this as I met respondents in their places of work, study and at the mosque.

and collective survival and resistance strategies". From a feminist perspective, in the group situation the balance of power is also tilted toward the group members, with less influence from the facilitator, thus giving more weight to participants' opinions. This differs from individual interviews which are seen to have the potential to "reproduce power relationships between the researcher and the participants" (Madriz, 2000: 838). A disadvantage of using the group discussion method is that it offers less opportunity for the detailed generation of individual accounts; to gain this depth I also conducted individual interviews (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

The interview themes for the semi-structured, In-depth interviews were similar to those used in the group discussions. The interview with the trainer was conducted to gain an expert 'outsiders' perspective, and focused on interventions implemented in the Somali community which were related to women's sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention. Questions were also asked about gender relations, intergroup conflict, access to healthcare and xenophobia. The interviews with the male employees from SASA were conducted to learn about the history of Somalis in Bellville, migration patterns, the demographic makeup of the community, educational and employment opportunities, as well as social and institutional barriers to living in Cape Town. These interviews provided information only, questions of opinion or personal experience were not asked. In total ten individual interviews were conducted.

In-depth interviews were used for the richness of data that emerges from this form of interview. The semi-structured interview approach ensured a balance between allowing my participants to discuss their own perceptions and keeping the interview focused on the aims of the research questions. The methodology mainly consisted of open-ended questions which allowed participants to express themselves more freely than closed questions which are common to survey questionnaires (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Participants were not first language English speakers so in depth interviews gave me a chance to clarify anything I was uncertain of. It also provided the space to observe more subtle behavioural and emotional nuances which could be important in the stage of analysis (Foflonker, 2008). Throughout my data collection I considered that respondents are reading me as the interviewer and talking

back to dominant discourses while simultaneously questioning my own involvement in dominant structures (Langellier, 2010).

Informal interviewing was useful in the case of one participant, a male who works At ARESTA, an organization based in Athlone, which focuses on educating and providing skills to refugees and asylum seekers. Many Somalis frequently approach this organization for assistance¹⁴. Finally, I kept a notebook throughout data collection and data analysis which is discussed in the next section. Here I would write detailed field notes at the end of each day I conducted interviews. This included notes about my observations, interactions, ideas and explanations about events. I paid attention to physical and emotional expressions of respondents, significant moments or statements made in the interview and reflective notes on myself as the researcher. Belton (2009) highlights the usefulness of field notes, maintaining that they are much more than simple fact gathering. Field notes are important to the record keeping systems of a researcher; they assist one's memory and enable the transmission of knowledge over time. Furthermore, field notes are also evidence of one's thought processes and are valuable for the 'raw' knowledge and data it provides (Belton, 2009: 2-3).

3.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis was employed by using a thematic analysis approach (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The interview transcripts were the main focus of the analysis. The process of analysis began with the transcription of digitally recorded Interviews which were read. After rereading the transcripts thoroughly, line by line, major themes were identified. Themes arose both from within the data (inductively) as well as from my own prior theoretical understanding of the area my research is based on (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Discovering themes is known as open coding in Grounded Theory (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). I created codes and code definitions; "coding involves assigning unique labels to text passages that contain references to particular categories of information" (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 56). Themes emerging from the data were labeled and coded. This means that bounded segments of the text (transcript) were labelled by using codes and put into

¹⁴ The times I visited ARESTA, I was struck by the number of Somalis lining the corridor, waiting to be assisted.

the different themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I then cut out important quotes (but retained the context) and sorted these into themes and refined subthemes (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). During this process I made notes about themes and linked it to theory. After the initial themes emerged, I started engaging in a deeper level of analysis. I sought to draw out unusual findings from the data, looking for clashes between respondents' various identities, their different forms of resistance and the way agency was exercised. I paid attention to the frequency of a phenomena or theme and identified contradictions. The themes often overlapped each other; I compared relationships within and between themes and also across the interviews so that a broader understanding could be achieved. I ensured the quotes and data I selected was representative of all the participants. Further in the analysis process I paid attention to missing data which involved alerting myself to topics respondents did not mention (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Finally, I was able to produce summaries of my findings.

3.5 Ethics Appraisal

On receiving an ethics clearance for the study, from the department of Sociology at the University of Cape Town, fieldwork commenced. Ethical considerations focused on confidentiality, anonymity and harm to participants. The objectives of the study were explained and I ensured participants understood these before the interview. It was also clarified that participation in the study was completely voluntary and that access to the final research report would be granted upon request. I pointed out that there was no "correct" or "incorrect" answer to the questions asked. All participants were required to sign an interview consent form¹⁵ before the interview commenced. The consent form, which was verbally explained¹⁶, made clear that participation was voluntary and that participants could withdraw from the study at any time. It explained that personal information will be treated with confidentiality and that participants remain anonymous as pseudonyms¹⁷ would be used in the final research report. By signing the consent form, participants also gave permission for the interview to be recorded and used for research purposes only. On

¹⁵ The interview consent form can be found as an appendix in this dissertation.

¹⁶ This was done to account for the low level of English literacy among Somali women in South Africa.

¹⁷ All names in this dissertation are pseudonyms to protect participant's identities.

concluding the interview participants were asked if they had any further questions or issues they wanted to discuss. The interview process and information contained in the research report will not put participants at risk or harm them in any way (Haverkamp, 2005; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005).

3.5.1 Self - reflexivity

The importance of reflexivity to research is to make an honest assessment of yourself and your position in relation to the research. Self-reflexivity involves critiquing traditional modes of knowledge production, such as formal research, which has developed in settings structured to exclude other forms of knowing (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The process involves actively working to develop a critical reflexive awareness of oneself as a producer of knowledge and of research as productive of identity (Langellier, 2010). It was important to consider the power relations between myself and the participants. This meant taking into account the impact of my age, gender, “race(s)”¹⁸, nationality, education level, language, class and political orientations, on the individuals I researched. I also reflected on how these axes of power and difference influenced the research process and writing of the dissertation. It was important that this research be a truthful representation of participant’s narratives. I’ve been especially careful of imposing my own subjective¹⁹ meanings and analysis to their words.

Being a Muslim woman was advantageous in some ways. I was able to understand respondents when they referred to religious prescriptions and teachings and when they drew on Islamic terminology in their explanations. I did not reveal my religious identity unless asked, for concern of the influence it may have over the data, I was however asked frequently. On discovering my religious identity, respondents were pleasantly surprised and curious. The immediate response was ma’shallah²⁰. I always dressed modestly during fieldwork, wearing a long sleeved tunic that went over my knees and long pants, with a

¹⁸ Participants placed me as a Coloured woman.

¹⁹ This also meant acknowledging that I have cultural as well as ideological and theoretical blind spots and ways of thinking, of which I may not be aware.

²⁰ Ma’shallah , is an Arabic term which means ‘as Allah wills’ and is used as an expression of joy, thanksgiving and praise for an occurrence or person.

shawl over my shoulders. I did not feel that it was necessary to cover my head while interviewing respondents, seeing that they were women, had I been interviewing Somali men, I certainly would have worn a head scarf. My gender was an advantage, in accessing and building relationships with participants, I also felt more comfortable approaching women to extend an invitation to take part in the research. It can also be argued that female interviewers are perceived as less threatening than their male counterparts.

One respondent was hesitant to introduce me to other Somali women; for fear that the news of someone going around doing interviews would create an expectation in the community, that people might mistake me for a United Nations representative, especially since I was asking people about their experiences in South Africa. At all times I was clear and honest about the objectives of my research. Some respondents did ask me for advice on how they could change their situations and if I could assist with gaining permanent residency in South Africa, which I could not. Lastly, the field notes I had accumulated were valuable as a lens for reflexivity; they were “evidence of an identity and a narrative of the self” (Belton, 2009: 4). They were also important to my conscience as a researcher.

3.6 Research Constraints

In the early stages of the research, many people cautioned me that Somali women were difficult to access. Not knowing a single Somali woman and only having a few uncertain contacts was daunting, but I was able to access informants through two²¹ researchers who were part of the African Diaspora project based at the University of Cape Town. These researchers were also involved in studies on the Somali community in South Africa. The language barrier was the main obstacle I encountered. Although it was anticipated, once in the field I realized how strongly this impeded my access to participants as I had to limit my sample to those who spoke English which were few. The Bellville CBD is perceived as an unsafe area, although there was always a police presence whenever I went there and I had my informant at SASA whom I could contact, I still did not feel safe walking around as a woman alone. Age may have been a constraint especially in interviews with participants

²¹ One of the researchers was based at the University of the Witwatersrand and the other was based at the University of the Western Cape.

who were many years my senior, regarding subjects they deemed appropriate to discuss with me and those I felt comfortable to address without offending them. However In the case of participants who were closer to me in age, the minimal age gap is likely to have been an advantage seeing that young adults are more likely to relate to one another. My identity as a South African and a member of the 'host' community may have influenced responses about topics regarding South Africans, particularly Coloureds which is how participants raced me.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Integration Strategies

This section presents data and findings related to processes of integration and adaptation among Somali migrant women. Resettlement in South Africa has disrupted sociocultural arrangements and established gender roles. I explore the resultant changes and contestations in various aspects of migrant identity. Broader structural constraints are discussed as well as local level struggles, which are important to understanding how women in Bellville exercise their agency and realise alternative ways of organising life. I highlight the forms of resistance expressed against institutional and social barriers Somalis face every day; particularly those that impede access to resources, rights and freedoms as well as those which inhibit integration into South African society. Strategies of survival used to this end are also discussed.

4.2 Barriers to Integration and Strategies of Survival

4.2.1 Xenophobia and Crime

“The power is not for us, it is for the lady born in South Africa, but for us nothing.” - Jawahir

Xenophobia and the crime that often accompanies it, is a serious impediment to integration. The xenophobic attacks of 2008 were imprinted on the memories of all Somalis I spoke to. Most respondents agreed that they live in a constant state of fear which restricts their movement and affects their access to economic opportunities. Xenophobia manifested as harassment²², theft, assault, gender based violence and murder. Women were verbally abused, which scared them; people would shout “you are dirty, you are stupid, you are *makwerekwere*²³.” Robbery ranged from overcharging in the taxi, to snatching of cell phones and purses, home burglaries and the taking of merchandise respondents were trying

²² Some women reported being questioned at the hospital about their reasons for having several children and being told that the country can't afford them.

²³ “*Makwerekwere*” is a derogatory term used for foreigners, particularly Black African migrants from other African countries.

to sell. Theft of their belongings left women despondent, they would work so hard and struggle to acquire the items, just for these to be stolen:

When I work, South Africans take my things, they run, escape (frustrated expression). I say why you take my stuff? She pulls out a knife (talking loudly), a South African, she say I kill you! Even my sisters torn, she was stabbed, I can't do anything. When she takes my stuff I can't say nothing! I can't get back my stuff. - Ebyan

Even though they are able to point out perpetrators, little is done, Jawahir recounts:

My son was stabbed with a mes (knife) for his own shoes, I go police station, he can do nothing, three months I pay for that shoes, R250, R300, R220 whatever I can pay. The police do nothing, just open case, still man is outside, three week I am waiting, they did nothing, my son was in the hospital. For us, we not have power here.

Amran has been discriminated against and attacked so many times, she can't even recall:

I have a shop, in xenophobia they take it, and they was burning my leg with hot water, they want to kill me (says with urgency), they tried to kill me! I was run away, one of my friend they kill it, in front of me I see (emotional in her voice and expression) there was shoot, he was die. From 2008 I don't have that lease, the shop was in Khayelitsha.

The police were present during the incident, they did not want to help her and just told her to cover herself and run, even though she was struggling with her injured leg. Amran²⁴ tells me she was recently beaten by a South African man while walking home, the person then ran away.

As a Somali woman is was extremely difficult to find employment, barriers included a lack of a driver's licence, issues around dress, language, skills, education and cultural factors. Amran cites the fact that they are foreigners who are not fluent in English as one reason, she goes on to say that even when employment is available it will not be given to a Somali woman and that she has been called *makwerekwere* and other indignities by those she was

²⁴ Amran recalls how she has often been robbed of her merchandise while hawking, in two instances she was assaulted when the robbery took place.

seeking employment from. Other respondents cited the fact that they don't possess a South African ID book as a major impediment, with Jawahir lamenting "this paper is fucking rubbish" when referring to her asylum seekers permit. Others spoke about their inability to read or write and that they don't have a CV to give to prospective employers.

Safiya claims Black officials at Home Affairs "treat Somali people like trash" and subject individuals to shoving and verbal harassment. Race²⁵ is still the defining social identity in South Africa and some Somalis find the use of the construct quite perplexing. They strongly identify as Somali and disassociate themselves from Black South Africans. Most respondents felt that the degree of discrimination they experienced was based on race. Black²⁶ South Africans were seen as the most discriminating, followed by Coloureds (who were Christian); Whites were seen as the least discriminating group. If Somalis were in a situation where they needed the assistance of the police, they would hope for a White police officer.

Asiya, a refugee rights activist, encouraged her fellow Somalis to become aware of their rights, stating that the knowledge would facilitate communication; she alludes to the power of language in asserting one's rights...

Education helps a lot, there are so many things I would not have known if I didn't do the refugee rights course. In 2005, Somali men were particularly attacked, over 30 men died in one month so the UCT law clinic contacted one of the men I knew in Mitchell's plain and they wanted a meeting with the women that were affected by that, so I was with the women and no woman could speak English then that's how I was chosen and how I became involved. I became a spokesperson for the group and

²⁵ In South Africa, Somalis are confronted with the practice of racial classification. They may not be familiar with inequitable practices stemming from this; in Somalia and the other African countries respondents originated from, there has never been any structured racial legislation as was the case during apartheid. It is noteworthy that respondents use the construct of race in their meaning making with regards to experienced discrimination, and do not choose to draw on class based or ethnic categories. This reasoning may fall into the general discourses on xenophobia where African migrants feel subjugated by the Black lower class population of South Africa. The fear of violence, crime and xenophobic attitudes in which Black South African men are placed as perpetrators leads Somali women to distance themselves from this group. Somali women might also be socio-spatially furthest removed from White men as they 'compete' in the same spaces with Black men, especially along class lines.

²⁶ Race is understood as a social construct in this dissertation.

the women came together and formed one of the first Somali women's groups that were existing in Cape Town, the group's name was *Filanwa*, it means unexpected.

Asiya refers to one of several xenophobic attacks in recent times, aimed at Somalis. She strategically uses her English language skills to represent the interests and enable the survival of the group at forums intended to understand the concerns of Somalis. The following section further explores how Somali's use language as a strategy of survival.

4.2.2 Appropriating Language

Most women in Bellville speak only Somali or Arabic, negotiating language barriers is a complex issue. Respondents²⁷ who were hawkers²⁸ and shopkeepers spoke English to their customers. And those who felt comfortable enough spoke English to other migrants and South Africans. What struck me about Jawahir was her frequent use of 'colloquial' Afrikaans dialect, fellow Somalis were amused at her cussing, and while speaking to me she used English and Afrikaans interchangeably. She had picked up the language in her Coloured²⁹, Afrikaans neighbourhood, where she's been living for thirteen years. Acquiring these languages was important to her safety, selling her goods, and was also used to assist fellow kinswomen in situations³⁰ where an informal interpreter was needed. This demonstrates a strategic use of local language tools as a strategy of survival. This chosen strategy is powerful as these linguistic skills are used to strengthen her own socio-economic position as well as that of fellow kin.

There were also instances of harassment, where respondents were coerced through language by South Africans who deliberately spoke Afrikaans or Xhosa. Here there was no opportunity for dialogue or for the women to respond. Respondents did however express a

²⁷ The term *respondents*, as it is used in this chapter, only refers to Somali women.

²⁸ Renting a *stalletjie* to trade from is too expensive, costing around R300 per month; this forces many respondents to walk the streets selling their goods.

²⁹ Race is understood as a social construct in this dissertation.

³⁰ Respondents avoided conversations when going about doing errands like shopping. In instances when they needed to speak to South Africans, they would have to find someone to act as a translator.

desire to learn local languages, particularly English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Zulu or Tswana as Beyruud emphatically described

It's important to speak South African languages. If someone says take your clothes off or I am going to kill you, you won't know what that person is saying!

Becoming fluent in local languages, with an intention to use these against discriminative practices, would enable respondents to literally and symbolically 'talk back' to oppression. The desire to learn³¹ a South African language also points to a willingness to integrate and acquire a skill that would assist a long term stay in the country. For many Somali women, the inability to speak any of the languages commonly spoken impedes their expression and mobility, their access to information and employment opportunities. Speaking any language of the host country is essential to navigating your way around, engaging with the locals and accessing key resources like healthcare. Community members are pleased about Safiya's job at a pharmacy in Bellville as she speaks Somali:

...previously they (Somalis) had language barriers, they go there they can't understand the pharmacists the pharmacists assistant can't understand them so they normally just give them antibiotics and painkillers but now at least they have someone who can talk to them, understand their problem and interpret it to the other pharmacists who can then give them the right medication.

Safiya's ability to speak Somali puts her in a position where she is able to assist fellow kin in a context where South African languages are hegemonic and where Somalis often struggle to access appropriate medical treatments, knowledge and medical care. As seen, language is a tool used by those in power to oppress and other, but it is also strategically used by those same "others" to access resources, ensure safety and advance livelihoods.

³¹ The Somali Association of South Africa (SASA), based in the Bellville CBD has partnered with Scalibrini, an NGO, to offer English language classes to Somali's, these are held at the SASA offices. This shows that Somalis are becoming more organised, especially with facilitating their integration into the country.

4.3 Gender and Islam

4.3.1 Being a Somali Muslim in Cape Town

“According to Islam a woman is not allowed to be more powerful than her husband.” - Hodan

Islam is the overarching framework guiding the lives of Somalis in Bellville. Every respondent was passionate and energised when speaking to me about their identity as a Muslim, emphasising that they had their religion wherever they were in the world. Their Islamic hood also seemed to transcend clan divisions, unifying them. This is known as the *Ummah*, which refers to an Islamic identity linked to transnational identifications and a belonging to a global community of Muslims. The concept of *Ummah* exemplifies the “universalism of Islam and provides a framework for religious unity”, which transcends different bases of community among Muslims. Research on Muslim diasporas across the world shows this sense of Islamic togetherness (Sadouni, 2009: 241; Hassan, 2006: 311).

Garbin’s (2013) study on the Congolese Kimbanguist Church in London and Atlanta demonstrates the complexity and multi-layered expression of diasporic religion and the religious networks that inform it. The study shows how, in current post-colonial contexts, migrants are shaping distinct spaces of otherness through their religious practices and strategies, and that this frequently occurs on the margins of urban life. Somalis experience similar processes; even though their situation is precarious they carve out identities and lives in Cape Town. They are strongly connected to various centres of the Somali diaspora, which provides the narrative of a cultural heritage and also the idea of a stable community and strengthened religious networks.

Somalis are confronted with considerable losses and numerous changes in the diaspora; “Islam provides the single most stable source of strength and public communal identity” (Langellier, 2010: 79). Shifts in religious identity since migration have been more prevalent among the younger respondents who were students, particularly related to dress, employment, marriage and the role of women in the family. Although opportunities for schooling were limited in Somalia, many respondents were proficient in Islamic studies, reciting passages of the Quran by heart and possessing detailed knowledge of teachings. For

many respondents religion is synonymous with culture, “Somali cultural authenticity is perceived to be largely coterminous with Islam” (Langellier, 2010: 79). Their deep religious beliefs influenced many important decisions in South Africa.

Cape Town, which is situated in the Western Cape, has one of the largest Muslim populations in the country. Safiya was an exception to other respondents in that she didn't feel discriminated against as a Muslim in Cape Town, commenting that there were many Muslims around. She does not often visit Bellville and spends her free time in cosmopolitan, middle class spaces. Her economic mobility shields her from spaces such as the townships where prejudice against foreigners and Islamophobic sentiments are much more likely to be acted out. Working class and poor respondents felt this kind of discrimination more acutely.

A few respondents felt that compared to Somalia, Islam was practiced differently in South Africa; “you would find a Muslim lady that is not covered, it's not easy for us to do that”, Baxsan stated. She is referring to the flexibility she believes South African Muslim women have, in their practice of Islam. There was also a belief that South African women who did not cover their heads and bodies were not ‘proper’ Muslims. When I was asked about my religious beliefs while having lunch with Hodan and Baxsan one afternoon, I revealed that I was Muslim. Both were intrigued to know why I did not cover my head and if I knew that as a Muslim I was required to do so. I was reluctant to share my opinion even though we were not in a research context. Not wanting to enter into a complicated discussion about my understanding of hijab as a choice, the different interpretations of religion and that I did in fact wear hijab when I deemed it necessary, I answered that it was because of my socialisation and that my mother did not wear one, Baxsan then responded “it's fine, one day you will cover yourself”.

Being a Muslim Somali mother in a new migratory context came with its own anxieties and challenges. Some respondents did not send their children to school at all for fear of harassment and xenophobia their children may experience at government schools. Parents, who could afford to, preferred to send their children to private Islamic colleges which offered both religious lessons and a ‘secular’ education. A study in Maine, United States, found that Somali parents’ fears are centred on the loss of culture and religion, although

this differs by gender. Fears for son's concern drugs, gangs and alcohol use, while for daughter's fears centre on sexuality (Langellier, 2010).

In addition to discrimination, respondents were also concerned about how their children would integrate with fellow learners and non-Somali teachers. They worried whether their children's identities as Muslim would be a concern. Asiya, conscious about South Africans' reluctance towards foreigners decided to be proactive. She fetched her children early, so she would have time to engage with teachers and build a relationship with them, learning about their interests and their beliefs about others. She actively worked to develop a hybrid identity within her children:

...then the thing of your child, changing your children because **I don't teach my children to be only Somali** now every time I teach my child some word in Somali I must teach him in English, when I teach him how to greet my people I must again teach him how to greet the neighbours, the way he talks, the kind of dressing he dresses I must not only focus on Somali child I must also dress him like other fellow children that he goes to school with so the child even, it's a bit unusual challenge that the children themselves goes through. - Asiya

By consciously teaching her children Somali cultural and Islamic values as well as Somali language and dress, she seeks to maintain their Somali identity but simultaneously develops a South African identity. Two concerns, the maintenance of the home culture and the degree to which people seek involvement with the host culture, are important to understanding the construction of immigrant identities. Where these issues intersect, an acculturation space is created, Asiya adopts integration as a strategy of adaptation for her children, where they maintain their own culture but adopt aspects of the dominant culture (Berry, 1997; Vandeyar, 2012).

4.3.2 "Some of us are trying to change our kind of dressing not by choice"

All respondents interpreted *hijab* as covering the entire body except the face, hands and feet. For all the respondents, wearing their *hijab* was an integral aspect of their identity; it was naturalised to them, and significant to their practice of Islam. Amran tells me that no matter where you are in the world a Muslim lady must wear her *hijab*. She cites in Arabic Surat an-Noor, ayah 31 from the Quran, which reads:

And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their private parts and not show of their adornment except only that which is apparent, and draw their veils over their (necks and) bosoms and not reveal their adornment.

All respondents but one conformed to the ideology that the wearing of *hijab* was a religious prescription. When I asked Asiya what covering her head and body meant to her, she responded; “It’s me, 100% me, if I leave them behind it’s like I lose my identity”. In South Africa, local Muslim women usually wear a headscarf, long pants and a lengthy shirt. Most respondents wore long burqas that reach above the knee with matching floor length cloaks. On the day I meet Asiya, she wears a short burqa and a fashionable sleeveless ankle length dress with a long sleeved polo neck jersey underneath. She was the only respondent who framed *hijab* as an active choice and not a religious mandate. She felt that it was not something one had to do, yet she never went without it. In a context where the othering of Somali women based on their dress, often manifests as harassment, verbal abuse and exclusion from employment opportunities, she demonstrates her agency by wearing Islamic dress. Among other respondents it was evident that the wearing of Islamic dress in spite of oppositional discourses provided a strong sense of empowerment. As an aspect of identity, dress can be seen as an act “through which Somali women may constitute a new or continued identity, performed to themselves and others, to create or maintain links to Somalia and the local Somali community” (Hopkins, 2010: 532). Through dress women are able to demonstrate their sustained ties to ‘home’ and also show their adherence to religious codes. Somali women do this for themselves as well as for fellow Somalis. Dress enables women to represent themselves as they wish (Hopkins, 2010).

Childhood socialisation plays a strong part in dress, Asiya’s mother used to wear the full *hijab* and her four year old daughter always cries for a *burqa* like hers, despite her attempts to send the child to crèche without one so that she would not look different. She did not want her child to be marked by dress among her fellow classmates but she was however actively working to foster a hybrid identity within the child, where in certain contexts she dressed her daughter in cultural or religious dress and in others she dressed her in western

styles. As a teenager in Somalia, Asiya often went without her *hijab* which was exciting, her mother would too and it would not be problematic.

Weddings were opportunities for respondents to socialise and have fun with dress. All the women would come together and look and comment on each other's outfits, the women would "all undress and wear something very light", Asiya tells me, and everyone would see this display. This kind of frivolity occurs at the women's party for the bride, in this space where they are segregated from men, they can defy cultural and religious prescriptions regarding dress.

Deqa³² attended an Islamic high school in Cape Town where everyone was covered. Dress wasn't such a contentious issue until she reached university, but she willingly answers her peer's questions about her hijab, explaining that she wore the long burqa for religious purposes not because she was a married woman. The gradations of Islamic dress worn by Somali women do vary with age, marital status and life-stage. While Deqa dressed more like the older respondents, Safiya emulated and borrowed from Middle Eastern and Western fashions and resisted against more conservative³³ versions of Islamic dress. I met Safiya in her University cafeteria, she wore a long blue denim skirt, long sleeved shirt and a colourful scarf wrapped in the trendy Arabian style, with a bun creating height underneath the scarf. When young women do adopt Western fashions, they select modest versions of trends, in Safiya's case a denim skirt instead of jeans. Dress can also be used as a signifier of education and class. External forces like the media and local culture can strongly draw people to alter their styles of dress, while pressures from within the Somali community also persuade them to resist changing (Akou, 2011). Wearing *hijab* had different meanings for Safiya, predominantly she wore it for religious reasons but she also wanted to protect herself from the male gaze and male lust and *fitnah*³⁴ going around.

³² Deqa's studies occupy most of her time, which limits her socializing with female friends and men. She has limited interaction with the Somali community and only sees them when she is working as an interpreter, she does not often see her relatives who live in Cape Town.

³³ Safiya inquired whether I understood the difference between dress in Islam and the Somali culture, commenting that Somali's misinterpret Islam and take covering their body to the extreme level.

³⁴ In this context, the term *fitnah* refers to sin, temptation and misguidance.

Safiya, who works part time at a pharmacy in Bellville tells of instances where customers would not want to be assisted by her as she was Somali, commenting that she doesn't know anything and that they wanted a Coloured or a White lady to help them. At times people can't tell that she's Somali; it depends on what she wears and how covered she is. Dressing in a more 'traditional Somali' manner marked her as different. She has discovered that customer's perceptions can be manipulated through dress and what she wears when at work.

Most respondents were subjected to harassment, robbery or assault because of their dress. Harassment particularly, was frequent, in public spaces such as the market, taxi or street. The reactions of respondents ranged from calm explanations and disregard to loud verbal confrontations and silent contempt. The following excerpts indicate the range of responses:

I was walking in the road, a Somali woman alone, and a man came and pulled on my burqa saying "why are you wearing this, throw it away!" It happens often, everywhere. - Beyruud

Yes, they feel like we are different, some of them start asking you questions like why are you wearing this, it's summer time, some when you pass them, they start laughing at you... I just reason out with them I explain I have to wear this because I am Muslim, I don't feel that offended because I know they are not used to it. - Baxsan

This is Cape Town; you must take, why you wearing this one, **they shout, but me I don't care, whatever they say, they talk about what they believe, this one I'm going to die (fervently gestures to her burqa)**. Sometimes they speak in Afrikaans, sometimes they speak in Xhosa, sometimes they say whatever they want to, sometimes when I'm taxi rank, they pull it, sometimes when I want to go down they take my hijab you see (emphasis, expression and gesturing), how many people asking me, can I see you? Me I say, no you can't see me, they say why? What is the difference? Why? You and this lady, you are same, why are you hiding, why are you burning for yourself? Me I say that's not your business, **they shout me, then I leave it, because what must I do, this is not my country.** – Amran

These people are not good, you are foreign, you are wearing these clothes, the people shouting, but I don't worry, I am a Muslim you see. Sometimes, some people are rude, some people say this is not Somalia, this is South Africa. I can't live without this, my scarf, it is Muslim culture. - Ebyan

Somali's dress differently to other refugee women and South Africans, making them hyper visible. I had not met any Somali women or teenage girl wearing pants although Asiya told me that people were starting to mimic local South African Muslim women. Dress was being altered for various reasons, Asiya explains:

Some of us are trying to change our kind of dressing **not by choice** but just expecting that people will look at them different, gain more respect. People are wearing scarfs only and not the big hijab. That's one of the first things that makes it so easy for people to attack us because if you're a Zimbabwean you dress normally, you wear jeans and t-shirts and no one will get so busy with you... but if you're Somali, you're always the main target, always.

Somali women are aware that their dress marks them as different, importantly changes in dress are not necessarily done out of choice but is rather a practical strategy of survival, a response to physical and verbal assault, crime and xenophobia. These shifts toward a lighter hijab are in an attempt to adapt to the new migratory context, in the short term the strategy eases movement in public spaces and may challenge religious and cultural prescriptions on dress, but as a long term strategy it reifies structural forms of discrimination which remain intact.

There was also a fear of the consequences of not wearing hijab, as expressed by Marwo:

I've been wearing these clothes from Somalia, **I can't go uncovered, I'm too scared**, I must cover myself. People will kill me if I go out uncovered (she gestures by taking her burqa off and demonstrating) **It's too much to go out uncovered, you are Christian already**, you aren't allowed to go like this (gestures to uncovered head) you must close it. You can't go without it, Somali people killing each other. **If you have a man, your man will beat you, if you don't have a man, your brother will beat you or your father will beat you!** - Marwo

The Somali community would perceive it as a denunciation of Islam if a woman went without her *hijab*. Fear of the severe punishment for not dressing appropriately leads to self-curtailment and conformity. Going out in public wearing Western clothes, or without *hijab* brings a woman's respectability into disrepute. When women depend on their kin and

social networks, they are not in a position to jeopardize those important relationships. They need to practice caution in how they oppose norms. For women to alter their dress publicly, threatens their standing in their social networks and communities (Allen, 2009; Shaffer, 2012). The power of traditional Islam and patriarchy in culture was evident even in minor gestures; during my interview with Johorad³⁵, in the store where she worked, a group of three Somali men walked in, one of them an elder. She immediately lowered her *niqaab* (veil) over her face and pulled her *garbasaar* (shoulder cloth) over her chest.

Dress has been seen to increase in importance in the diaspora. Clothing and religious activity are consciously used at particular times and in certain spaces to position and reaffirm Somaliness. Ultimately dress represents the women's efforts to negotiate very complicated social circumstances in the new migratory context (Hopkins, 2010; Akou, 2011).

4.3.3 Work and Changing Gender Roles

Keyse, who worked at the SASA³⁶ office, believed that Islam directed what women and men should do, and that women who were wives needed to stay at home and care for the children and the house while men were the breadwinners. This is still the prevailing view in the Bellville community and the norm in many households. Men are acutely aware that they are expected to provide for their families, by religion, culture and the community. Women are responsible for all the caring duties which, for some, means that only a few hours per day are available for paid work. Economic circumstances and the reality of life in South Africa has destabilised gender relations, but how respondents understand and dispute these processes is variable (Shaffer, 2012).

Asiya believed that in South Africa, Somali men preferred women to work, "even though they won't admit it in an open discussion". She says the perception has changed because of the economic situation. Here the economics of migration and a new way of life is in conflict with the need to preserve culture and tradition. For many Somali women, employment and

³⁵ This is a pseudonym used to protect the identity of the individual referred to.

³⁶ The Somali Association of South Africa (SASA)

economic activities just added to their homemaking and child-caring responsibilities and overall workload³⁷ Respondents who owned shops worked long hours, seven days a week, from 8am to 8pm and never took time off work unless they were seriously ill. The economic participation of migrant women often indicates a family's economic insecurity and does not always advance their status in the household or community (Fernández-Kelly & García, 1990).

Half of the respondents felt that their husbands were not providing sufficiently for their families, which compelled them to engage in economic activities which they were not always happy to do. Ayan comments:

My husband also works, we work together. In Somalia, it was nice before, you can sit home and be a lady at home; your husband can support you and your children. I run and walk together with my husband, early in the morning. In South African there is no one who can support, all people to run, no one to support me³⁸.

None of the respondents had really worked in Somalia for economic gain before migrating to South Africa as Jawahir describes: "We never worked in Somali, women cooked, looked after children, went to *madressah*, going to school, here we can't get the life we had there". Hodan³⁹ spoke about the big house her husband built for her in Somalia; there he had stable employment so she could be at home. Many participants aspired to be homemakers. Feminist scholarship on women's empowerment tends to homogenize agency in terms of women's participation in the labour force and presumes that all women are *empowered* by engaging in economic activities outside the home. Islam specifically, is often constructed as a religion which binds women to home life, restricting their access to the public sphere (Mahmood, 2005). The findings in this study complicate this discourse as many women feel

³⁸ Throughout the writing of the findings and analysis chapter I have tried to remain true to the words of respondents, describing phenomena and events using their terminology and phrasing. I have not corrected any grammatical or syntax errors in language. I also wanted their voices to be prominent.

³⁹ Hodan is very unhappy at work and would prefer to stay home because she's tired and has been working for many years. She tells me she's suffering and life is very difficult but she has to work, she has nine children to care for and rent is high.

that they are compelled to work outside their homes. By choosing to disengage from the public, economic sphere Somali women would be able to shield themselves from exploitative and unfavourable labour conditions, harassment, gender based violence and crime experienced in South Africa. Their underprivileged class position however, forces them to engage with a hostile public space. Thus, retaining their traditional gendered roles would be advantageous to the women in some ways.

While there was a sense of nostalgia toward a previous way of life in Somalia, many other respondents believed that there were more opportunities for education, employment and a higher standard of living in South Africa. For many, working and pursuing a career was integral to how they envisioned their future. It would be difficult to do this had they been in Somalia. In the context of South Africa, some respondents feel their lack of education and skills, precarious citizenship status and the risks associated with the broader Cape Town area, lead them to prefer staying close to home when possible, yet they aspire to do other things if conditions were favourable. Johorad and Amran felt that acquiring the skills and education⁴⁰ that would enable them to build a new career was not realistic at this stage, although both wished for their own shops with better working conditions.

Although there have been shifts in gender roles, particularly relating to women's increased economic participation, some respondents believe power within the household still resides with men. In contrast to this view, other respondents observed that wives who work have more power to make decisions in the household, that their voices were more recognised compared to those who did not. These women felt that when they gave their husbands good advice or thought of ideas that would benefit the family, they would not be heard, as men feared the humiliation of having a wife who earned money and made important household decisions. George's (2000) study on an immigrant church community in the U.S.A who had origins in Kerala, India, shows how couples adapt to new gender roles, often brought on by women gaining the status of breadwinner through their work as nurses. The

⁴⁰ Most respondents valued education and the acquisition of skills, and would attend educational initiatives given the opportunity, especially those which would empower them economically.

gendered division of labour within household changed; men were forced to share decision-making and do chores, while women worked outside the home. Kerala Christian men who experience a loss of social and economic status attempt to compensate by taking on more active roles in their church. Men assume power and privileges in the church (a public space) that they have lost in their families and their jobs. Women then, compensate for their financial autonomy and increased authority in the home by upholding gender norms in the church community. Women curtailed their speech and behaviour so as not to appear too independent.

Upholding gendered norms in the home and public spaces was seen as problematic by respondents like Safiya, here she comments that migrating to a new context has not increased women's status:

Men have more power definitely because most of them are still stereotyped; the men still believe that women have a lower place than the man, they still have that primitive thinking. Not so many women have gotten that whole, to them men are still always above, always above, I don't know if that's ever going to change but for now that's how it is.

Safiya claims that women still believe men have legitimate power. She contests traditional gender roles and interpretations of religion and Somali culture that serve the interests of men. This is enacted in various ways; she limits her interaction with the community and avoids spending time in Bellville, she was dating a young Somali man in the United States (she believed Somalis in that country were more progressive), her friendship group was purposefully diverse and 'educated' and she pursued her studies even though she received criticism from the community for wasting her time.

Baxsan⁴¹, whose husband, infant and toddler lived in Kenya, tells how she often had to justify her decision to study and work in Cape Town:

Some agree with women working, they say it's good that you are working, but some they question you, in my community, why are you working? Why are you away from your husband and your kids?

⁴¹ This is a pseudonym used to protect the identity of the individual referred to.

You're a Muslim lady, they believe if you're married you have to stay with your husband, it is, that is how things are, but me and husband we agreed on this, but most of them question you.

When asked how she responded to the questions asked by family and community members, she remarked:

Sometimes I question myself, am I doing the right thing but **since I became strong I just say as long as my husband is happy with me.**

The decision to remain in South Africa was taken *with* her husband and she draws on his authority to express her rights within the context of her marriage. The power structures of traditional Islam, patriarchy in marriage and expected gender roles within Somali culture are all operating on her simultaneously. She subverts these power structures by successfully negotiating permission from her husband to pursue her academic career and employment and live away from her family. Mahmood (2005) provides an insightful analysis of how women's agency need not always be tied to the goals of progressive politics and need not always signify resistance. Mahmood (2005: 2) problematizes the "assumption that there is something intrinsic to women that *should* predispose them to oppose" norms, values and practices which are embodied in traditional Islam. The practice of interpreting agency mainly in terms of resistance to norms is contested; an alternative position is offered where instead we consider the different ways people inhabit norms (Mahmood, 2005). Baxsan negotiates traditional gender roles in a way that retains her husband's powerful position; Mahmood's analysis is important here as it shows that gendered norms can be inhabited in ways that do not necessarily resist traditional Islamic values, yet dominant practices are disrupted.

4.3.4 "It's a secret thing": New Forms of Dating

Amongst Somalis dating refers to courtship including kissing and physical intimacy, but excludes sex which is forbidden before marriage. In Somalia the male suitor would visit the lady at her home and they would talk with her family members present, the purpose would always be to get married. Respondents spoke about the average dating period being very short, it was not permissible to date for more than 5, at most 6 months. Dating, in the

Western sense is not permissible within Islam, although it does happen; a couple can only be alone together once married. Dating people that are not Somali does occur, mostly among men.

A form of dating called *shukaansi* is becoming increasingly prevalent among women in Bellville and respondents claim it is “the in thing” to do. The practise has become popular in South Africa and is seen as uncommon in East Africa. It differs from the customary route to marriage in several ways. Firstly, the process of *shukaansi* is for a short time period, it could be over within a few weeks. Secondly, the couple would only have a *nikkah* and not the whole marriage ceremony, there’s no paying of *varad* (bride price)⁴² which is a tradition in Somali weddings and there’s much less involvement from the extended family. Thirdly, technology plays a strong role, the Internet and cell phones particularly have made it easier for young Somalis to connect privately. Lastly this practice is most common among women, young adults and men who are in polygamous marriages.

The process of *shukaansi* does not involve continuous one on one dating where a couple goes out alone together. There’s little physical contact between the prospective couple, mostly they communicate by talking and sending messages via cell phone. A suitor sends air time to the lady he is interested in, so that she may contact him. It is implicitly understood that the interaction is to measure suitability as partners in marriage. If there is agreement and understanding between the prospective partners, it would lead to a few dates together and then marriage.

Safiya⁴³ is of the opinion that women don’t marry for love and that they don’t know what love is. In the *shukaansi* process, very, very few women marry for love, it is purely based on

⁴² The male suitor is not required to pay a complete *varad*, in Somalia people would usually pay with livestock, in South Africa, people pay with cash. The woman determines the amount; it could be five or ten thousand rand for example. In East Africa, people ask for much more, but not in South Africa because the man most likely has a small store and not much money, Safiya tells me.

⁴³ Although Safiya fiercely challenges many Somali practices, she will not transgress cultural norms and date or marry outside of the Somali community, it would generate too much negative criticism from her family. She also wanted a partner who would understand her culture; indeed she was dating a young Somali man in the United States and had future plans of moving to America and marrying him.

need, she tells me. Most of the Somali women she's met find a partner and marry through *shukaansi*. The process is described in further detail:

...a guy sees a girl and says ok I'm interested in this girl, sometimes it's not about love it's mostly about looks, it has nothing to do with character, they like ok I like this girl, let's start talking and getting each other's numbers, talk for a bit of time, hey send me airtime...it's not like normal dating where you take a girl to diner, *shukaansi* is that type where you sit in the car, have a chit chat, go out once or twice, after three weeks have a *nikkah* and that's the end of it, there's no putting a ring you know that whole romantic process. It's the most common thing in South Africa. - Safiya

People don't have a marriage ceremony, they only do a *nikkah*, where a sheik will oversee the vows and the necessary documents will be signed by all parties involved. The whole process takes about thirty minutes. After the *nikkah* the couple is legally married within the Shariah Islamic law, and are allowed to have sexual relations and live together. A large proportion of *shukaansi nikkah's* are done in secret as many of the men are already married and have wives in other countries. The performance of *shukaansi*⁴⁴ is acknowledged in the Bellville community even though it's not supported by tradition and religious practices; people do it because it's inexpensive and very fast. This practice speaks to a similar concept discovered earlier where practical and economic strategies to survive new migratory contexts become powerful challenges to "traditions", even though these may not be celebrated or recognised as challenges by Somali's themselves.

Many women in Bellville don't have economic stability and with the absence of parents, siblings and an extended support system they struggle to get by. They are aware of the difficulties related to securing employment in Cape Town and if they had a choice would prefer not to work. Many marry for the sake of survival and become a homemaker caring for several children. Marriage is seen as an opportunity to escape hardship and they have high expectations that the husband will offer support. As seen in the dating practice, women are using traditional norms of marriage to their advantage by choosing to do *shukaansi*. In the short term it is a survival strategy that would ensure basic security needs and protection for

⁴⁴ Older respondents gave me shy smiles and had amused looks on their faces when I asked about *shukaansi*, while respondents who were younger were quite guarded about sharing the details of their love lives and kept their boyfriends hidden, especially from family and in some cases from Somali friends too.

themselves and for their children from previous marriages, if they had any. As a long term strategy it is not empowering, it creates over-dependence on the husband in a situation where men have more access to economic power.

4.3.5 “You marry because you are hungry, it’s not even love”

Somalia is better for the marriage. - Jawahir

The Humanitarian crisis in Somalia and the desperation and frustration linked to a lack of basic needs and services exacerbate forced and early marriage (UNICEF, 2002). Some respondents were as young as 16 when they first married. Many respondents most notably those who were part of the working poor, were in unhappy marriages. They remained in the marriage simply for survival and access to basic security needs like food and shelter.

Partners were often selected from family based networks. Marwo is the Sheiks first cousin, and is married to the Sheiks brother; it was an arranged marriage as she explains:

I don't have a love marriage, I married for my life, how was I going to support my life. I didn't get someone to love and grow with, no. when I came here I had no one to support me, I found my baby's father, he said he would look after me and I took him to marry.

Her sentiments were echoed by Jawahir: “you marry because you are hungry, it’s not even love, you *sukkel* (struggle) in your life, you don’t have food...I did not marry for love, I was too much hungry then I marry man, I take it”.

Filad’s marriage was also an arranged one; she felt her mother was fortunate to have found that man for her. After migrating to South Africa together, her husband passed on from a heart attack. She then remarried, thinking that her new husband would help her, he gave her two more children and left. Filad doesn’t know if he is alive or dead. The second husband has been gone for over a year; her kinswomen suspect that he has another wife. With eight children to support, life is challenging for her.

Dacar estimated that in terms of the Somali population in Cape Town, 70% were male and 30% were female. There are no official statistics to corroborate this estimate but many agreed that males are in the majority⁴⁵. There are instances of Somali men dating and marrying Coloureds or Xhosa's but it's uncommon. In known cases men would have two or three wives from South Africa as well as a Somali wife. Although the occurrence of a man marrying someone from outside the community or religion is transgressive and would cause gossip, it still happens but the woman would have to convert to Islam. A Somali woman marrying outside the faith or community would suffer more serious consequences. Asiya observed that Somali men were constantly looking at Somali women to the point where women were terrorised wherever they went making it impossible to marry outside the community. Safiya, as mentioned earlier, is in a relationship with someone from the United States as she believes Somalis in South Africa are 'regressive', she is however an exception. Jawahir asserts that South African men are undesirable; she tells me that women would *never* have a South African husband:

We don't want South African men, sometimes they are not clean the South African men, it's the religion, and they have dirty *piel* (penis), they are different, they are too much sick, we are scared, it's not safe, they drink, we don't drink.

Jawahir sees the vast cultural and religious differences as a barrier to marriage with South Africans. She reflects an anxiety around contracting sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. There may also be concerns about South African men not being circumcised as is required in Islam; she describes their penises as being dirty and also mentions their participation in practices that Muslims do not do.

Somalis deny that HIV/AIDS is prevalent within their community. Men especially have multiple partners due to polygamous marriages. A programme on HIV/AIDS and contraception was implemented in the Bellville community by a local NGO, Sonke Gender

⁴⁵ This gender imbalance amongst this group of migrants reflects gender attitudes in Somalia as well as general migration patterns in which men are more likely to travel further distances as refugees and asylum seekers, with women and children remaining behind. Additionally, the migrant's destination is often gendered, where men are perceived as being able to easily gain paid employment and then send remittances to families elsewhere.

Justice. Facilitators of the programme were met with contempt and outrage and were told they were not welcome. Santhiana, a refugee health and rights trainer, had to use tact in the way she introduced contraception and distributed condoms amongst the Somali community in Bellville. Although there was interest in the use of condoms, she could not distribute it publicly and community members did not want to be seen accepting them. She was told to put the condoms in the bathrooms and that it would be collected there.

Divorce⁴⁶ or *talak* is becoming more prevalent in the Bellville community. Within Islam, only men possess the right to divorce, but women are however able to initiate a divorce. All respondents agreed that divorce rates have increased among the Somali community in South Africa. Various reasons were cited for this such as husbands who do not allow their wives to work, even though the family lives in poverty, shifting gender structures where women are gaining more power and polygamy. There was also the issue of men who are not able to provide for their wives and the household, which places strain on marital relations and puts women under duress, causing both women and men to opt for divorce.

After struggling for some time in South Africa, Ebyan decided to marry in 2005, she stayed with her husband for a while but says that he treated her badly and they divorced. With a baby and no one to support her she remarried in 2007, she is still with her husband. Safiya attributes the higher divorce rates to the fact that marriages are not based on love and that women don't really know who they are marrying, only to discover later that the person is not what they hoped for. Practices such as *shukaansi*, which was discussed in a previous section, offer a fast route to marriage when women find themselves in challenging socioeconomic positions. After a serious fight a woman could be sent away by her husband which is perceived as divorce because the wife is forgotten about completely; it's a common practice respondents tell me. The wife may receive remittances from time to time but mostly the husband simply moves on.

⁴⁶ Women go to the sheik of the community if they need help with some matter but they would only consult with the imam if they wanted a *talak*. When there is conflict within a marriage, some women consult with elders in the community, while others go to the police.

A few respondents noted that once women were in South Africa, their behaviour and perceptions changed in the sense that they were more aware and assertive about their rights as women:

Somali men expect a woman to be under them like worship them and serve them all the time but women are trying to go ahead of them, doing what they want, that's what they call change, a woman trying to take her place, they don't like that, they want her to be submissive. **Woman are changing because they get exposed to different environments, they become more outspoken.** - Safiya

When Somali women migrate to South Africa, they are exposed to a discourse of gender equality in the media, the local culture and through educational programmes in Bellville which are coordinated by NGO's. This leads to new ways of performing their gendered identity. They come to know about women's organisations and how to apply for assistance from the state. They would have their husbands arrested if they were mistreated, and would demand that men pay maintenance for their children. Shaffer's (2012) study on Somali migrants in Johannesburg, found that women who have lived in South Africa since the 1990s understood their rights as women and were more likely to call the police when violent conflict occurred in spousal relationships. This indicates that woman who have been in the country longer are emboldened to rebel against Somali customs, as they possess stronger or more established networks and do not maintain the ideologies of newer migrants.

4.4 Social Networks

Different recollections of Somalia centred on geography, livelihood, education and experience, as well as strands of diversity such as gender, class and clan create different ideas about what it means to be Somali, even as people maintain that there is "one language, one religion, and one culture". The community is not homogenous; there are a myriad of intergroup and intragroup differences. It can't be assumed that social networks will organically arise simply because of a shared ethnic identity or interaction; rather it is determined by the resources that are available to the individual within the group and is reinforced by physical and social positioning (Mahler, 1995). Yet, there is a sense of togetherness among the Somali community which facilitates cooperation and reciprocity.

This section presents findings on the functions and features of social networks in the migrants' lives. Social networks are a significant source of support for this group of migrants. It is essential to their livelihood strategies and influences their integration into South African society. Gender is highlighted as an important element of distinction in social networks. The formation of social groups and organisations, which are enabled through social networks based on a Somali ethnic identity, is also discussed.

4.4.1 The Uses of Social Networks

Social networks were formed mainly through family and extended family ties, than through friends and acquaintances and to a lesser extent through clan. Bellville is affectionately described as little Mogadishu and I am told Somali's always go and stay in one place which is how it was formed. All the respondents had family or friends in Cape Town who played a key role in their decision to migrate to South Africa. They were able to tap into established networks and learn from the experience of others. Research on the Somali diaspora shows that they make a concerted effort to live together in the same towns, neighbourhoods, and buildings. Social networks can be used as a means to preserve and express national identity, which is evident as one of the many functions of networks⁴⁷ in the Bellville community (Langellier, 2010).

Al-Sharmani's (2010) study on transnational family networks among Somalis in Egypt, highlights the gendered nature of kin-based networks, and demonstrates that family and kin networks are the most important support system used by migrants. This was also found in Bellville, where kinship networks facilitated the migration journey by funding travel costs and offering various forms of support⁴⁸. On arriving in South Africa migrants would first search for their tribe members and kin and live with them for some months or longer until they settled in. Kinship networks provided information about how to obtain permits and

⁴⁷ There have been attempts to form a women's organisation; in late 2012 a newly formed group named the Somali Women's Network was established, the chairperson was a prominent business woman. SASA offered the group their offices as a space to meet and organise themselves. Unfortunately the group is now inactive due to limited participation by members (who I'm told had to prioritise their child caring and homemaking responsibilities), a lack of finances and the founder of the group migrating to the United States.

⁴⁸ The woman migrants in this study most often had female kin in South Africa who were instrumental in their decision to migrate and who assisted in their migration journey.

documents; one would also learn about employment opportunities and be introduced to other Somalis who could help in this regard.

It was on a visit to her sister in Cape Town, that Hodan decided to move her family to South Africa. Hodan's sister also has a shop in Bellville. Hodan and her family lived in Athlone before moving to Welgemoed, a suburb near Bellville. She would much prefer to live in Bellville and be close to her business but finding suitable accommodation is challenging. She has few Somali neighbours, much to her dismay:

We are alone, if you don't have tea leaves you can't beg people, our tradition even when you don't have something you can ask a neighbour, you say hi can I have something but now you can't, the White people, Indian people, China, Pakistan, you can't talk with them, different country.

An ethic of neighbourliness and reciprocity which was enabled by Somalis living in close proximity to one another has disappeared for Hodan. In the absence of Somali kin networks, the next important 'community' was of 'co-religion', which created some sense of belonging. Asiya appreciated the presence of South African Muslims in Bellville, particularly because of issues related to dress:

Most of coloureds are Muslim and they wear similar to us. I've been staying there for 11 years. I can't stay in Gugulethu like this or Khayelitsha, I can't stay in Mowbray like this, at least somewhere that those Muslims they're familiar with the scarf and long shirt or long t-shirt.

Numerous studies have found that Somalis draw on religious affiliation to settle and immerse in host communities (McMichael & Manderson, 2004; Sadouni, 2009; Hopkins, 2010). The Sheik⁴⁹ of the mosque helped Ebyan find a place to rent; some respondents went to him if they were really desperate for food or money for electricity.

For Amran, even though she does recognise the existence of a community of co-nationals, to her disappointment, they are not as collegial and compassionate as one would expect as a migrant. Amran strongly feels that the broader Somali community in Bellville is unsympathetic:

Somali community I don't see, they don't care about you, they don't even ask you whatever you done or something, they don't care, you know Somalia they don't care each other... but friends, maybe you

⁴⁹ The Sheik is a spokesperson for the community, very few women stated that they would go to the Sheik for counsel about conflict in their marriages.

need some money, you can borrow, they can help you but Somali community they never ask me “what are you doing”? They never ask me “what did you eat”? Or “what did you have”? Or “are you suffer”? “are you hungry”? They don’t worry about that things, Somalian community (says impassionedly).

Like Amran, other respondents were also angered and saddened that the norms of reciprocity and sharing of their homeland had been eroded by resettlement. Her description questions the assumed cohesion among migrant communities (McMichael & Manderson, 2004). Her experience also highlights how different standpoints within the community can be a source of tension. Amran has hardly any tribe members in Bellville on whom she can rely on for support. She does however have a strong social network which consists mainly of Somali women and a few men who are friends. If she sought advice or needed to borrow money, she would ask someone in this network. A friend informed her about her right to be exempt from paying school fees for her children, seeing that she cannot afford it. The friend encouraged Amran to speak to the school about the matter; representatives from the school came to see her home and living conditions and subsequently accepted her request. Social networks allow migrant women to share information which enables them in different ways, here Amran has secured the education of her children through her kin networks. Many other respondents also mentioned that they would turn to their friends and family for advice or assistance.

Government and humanitarian aid are not readily available, causing Somalis to call on their cultural and religious communities for assistance in times of financial need. They rely on their kinship and social networks to provide material support such as housing and food when they are few alternatives short of being homeless. This collective support is vital for both married and single women in different circumstances.

Through her kinship network, Baxsan has been able to access various important opportunities. She is employed, part time, at the Somali Association of South Africa, the chairperson is an acquaintance and he contacted her about the position. She works occasionally as a translator at the UNHCR, her cousin who does the same work told her about the vacancy. And through Baxsan’s network at the UNHCR, she was able to secure a scholarship to attend university. Fellow Somali women students informed her of a weekend internship at an established pharmacy, this opportunity was crucial to the completion of the

practical component of her studies. Three university students participated in this study, Baxsan being one of them. Two of these three students were working part time at the same pharmacy, all three worked part time at the UNHCR, all belonged to the Somali Students of the Western Cape, two, who were also maternal cousins had received scholarships from the UN. Belonging to the same social network enabled access to, and information about, the same opportunities which is both enabling and constraining. Among some respondents, the strong bonds and social ties they have with fellow Somali's can be a barrier to new opportunities and integration into a broader community. As an example, Somali's who rely heavily on kin networks to access employment opportunities may lack different sources of information about employment. Ties to the broader economy may be lacking, which hinders the mobility of work seekers.

A group of Somali students formed a new organisation, the Somali Students of the Western Cape (SSWC); Deqa is an active member and their treasurer. The purpose of the organisation, whose members are comprised of Somali students from several universities, is to assist the Somali community and students through various initiatives. They have been raising funds and paid the registration fees of fifteen Somali students in 2013 and intend to prevent Somali students from dropping out due to unpaid tuition fees. They are currently working on a project to assist Somalis seeking medical care, where individuals volunteer to act as interpreters at hospitals⁵⁰. This organisation is an outcome of Somali based networks and is funded generously by Somali business persons. Here community based networks facilitate integration into new migratory contexts through education.

Safiya and Baxsan were both recruited by SSWC; Baxsan has the role of secretary while Safiya has only attended one meeting and says she's not an active member. Safiya chooses to be part of this network, but does not make a great effort to be involved. If she needs to draw on them for assistance she can, however she interacts with the community on her own terms and is able to operate within broader networks.

⁵⁰ In the future the organisation would like to implement English language classes in the community.

4.4.2 Accessing Economic Opportunities through Social Networks

Pervasive social and institutional barriers restrict the movement of Somali women and create a sense of insecurity. These barriers are important to understanding community dynamics in Bellville, as unstable incomes and limited protection from harm compel Somalis to rely on each other for physical safety and social and economic assistance. Gender based violence takes many forms in the context of South Africa, and for Somali women it limits their participation in the market place, to feel safe enough to work as informal traders, or to venture out of Bellville to seek employment elsewhere. The threat of robbery, rape and even murder limited women to economic activities within the local area. Although respondents felt safer in South Africa, it was only within the confines of Bellville:

When I'm stay in Bellville I'm safe, but when I go to location I'm not safe, in the location they will rob you, kill you but here in Bellville there's nobody. - Amran

Amran lamented that there was no money to be found in Bellville. Their economic choices reflect their anxiety about interacting outside of the Somali community. The central business district of Bellville is overtraded in the sense that there are an abundance of the kinds of shops Somalis have. Women are unable to realise a similar level of economic success as men, due to the gendered limitations to women's opportunities.

Social networks are vital to success in economic activities. They are used to employ a fellow Somali and introduce migrants to important contacts for business or work. Social networks also create employment by providing start-up capital to open a business. With limited skills or work experience, often their only option is to open a small shop.

Amran pooled her resources together with her network of Somali women whom she refers to as her *sister friends*. A Somali male acquaintance who is also a hawker, lent Amran a small amount of money which she, along with the contributions of several other *sister friends* used to put up a shop. This opened up an opportunity for the women to become economic actors:

You know the first time, we start, you know there's little bit of money, you going to start, maybe R200 or something like that, you start to buy *sockies*, caps, something like that, after that, we a group, then we open the shop and we put little bit stuff, just the business it start like that.

They lost this shop during the xenophobic attacks of 2008. For some women, there's a strong sense of relying on female friends rather than the broader Somali community in times of need. Group membership is selective in this type of social network; members are only Somali women. An unspoken rule of reciprocity exists within these networks; women help each other knowing that in the future assistance will be available to them. This illustrates a way in which Somali women rely on kin networks to provide material support, financial resources and stability.

Currently Amran is a hawker⁵¹, she obtains the items⁵² she sells from her Somali trade networks. She wants to set up an informal shop in the Bellville CBD, but fears the municipality will take her goods because she has not registered for a space⁵³. Without a space to trade from, which would be near other Somali traders who could offer her some security, she is left to hawk by herself. As hawkers, women determine their own working hours and the number of days they work; this is however influenced by their homemaking and child-caring responsibilities. Often they do not have social networks in place on which they can rely to care for her children⁵⁴.

Beyruud and Marwo share a house in an informal settlement in Bellville, they are sisters-in-law. Beyruud tells me she has to rent a place with family because she has no other place to go. Marwo is a hawker, while Beyruud works every day at a restaurant in Bellville. When asked about her work, Beyruud laments that she is extremely unhappy:

My face change, my body change, working over a fire, twenty four hour. I work twenty four hours, just for food for me and my baby.

⁵¹ Respondents who were hawkers spoke about how difficult it was to find alternative employment.

⁵² As hawkers they sold items such as caps, socks, superglue and face cloths.

⁵³ She has tried but is always told that none are available.

I notice large, dark marks on her face, she gestures to me that she was burnt at work. She's been looking for alternative employment but it's been difficult. With no employment contract, long working hours and hazardous working conditions, she is vulnerable to exploitation and health risks. Hondagneu-Sotelo's (1994) study on Mexican women domestic workers in California, found social networks to be both enabling and constraining. Networks governed entry into the occupation as a domestic worker and also influenced internal occupational mobility. Success in the occupation was based on the women's ability to use the network resources and at times to employ more vulnerable domestic workers for little or no pay which shows that networks can also be exploitative. Similar processes are occurring in Somali networks. Some migrant women in this study who were employed by fellow Somalis⁵⁵, worked long hours and often received no time off unless gravely ill. Ethnic economies often depend on the availability of female immigrant labour; it is also more likely that women earn less and are in unfavourable jobs with minimal benefits (Hillmann, 1999).

4.4.3 Gendered Networks

The gendered aspect of migration received limited focused scholarly attention before the 1980s. Gender as a variable in network theory was also largely overlooked. Studies generally reflected the belief that migration was a-gender (Oishi, 2005; Boyd & Grieco, 2003). Along with culture, class, ethnicity and religion, gender is an important element of distinction in social networks. Internal differentiation within the community influences individual action and participation in social networks (Menjivar, 2000).

It would be difficult for a Somali woman to enter certain networks without a man. A woman interacting with men outside of her kin networks is a contentious issue. Within Islam and Somali culture, there are principles that govern interactions between men and women. Practices such as these, together with other factors like language, class and education make it difficult for women to establish heterogeneous and informal social networks. Networks of respondents were mostly closed and selective.

⁵⁵ Employers were not necessarily only male, one respondent was employed by her sister.

Safiya, a pharmacy student believes that for Somali women, education is not a priority. She strongly disapproves of Somali men who don't believe women should be in school and says even educated men still believe a woman's place is in the home, cooking and caring for several children and her husband. At times, when people came to know she was studying, they would comment; "what is she doing, she's wasting her time", she was not given much support from the community. Safiya discovered, on arriving in South Africa that her perception of Somalis who live in that country was misinformed:

When I left Kenya to come to South Africa I thought South Africa was a developed place, that the Somali's here are very educated like those in America but they're all straight from Somalia so their level of thinking is very primitive, they believe a woman has to wear the whole attire, it's mixed up I don't know how they think but I don't like their thinking.

She consciously disassociates herself from the Somali community of Bellville and the worldview she believes they hold. Safiya had a stronger class position in relation to other respondents, and was not as dependant on male kin or a social network for survival and assistance with integrating. There's a certain abandoning and critique of Somali culture, where 'home' is constructed as 'regressive'. She distances herself from certain community practices and representations, to move toward a middle class culture which values cosmopolitanism. In terms of sociocultural adaptation she does place value on the maintenance of her cultural integrity but simultaneously seeks to participate in a broader social network. Her relative economic freedom gives her more choice and mobility (Berry, 1997; Nayar, 2010).

Safiya lives with her maternal aunt in Bellville, who owns several shops in the area. Her aunt encouraged her to migrate, advising her that there were more educational opportunities in Cape Town. She avoids visiting her aunt at her shop in the Bellville CBD because she feels that she is constantly under the gaze of community members where she is harassed and bombarded with questions such as; "are you married"? "why are you studying"? "can I have your number"?. Even in the pharmacy in Bellville where she works, there is no escaping the advances of Somali men and she is terrified of the power of community gossip and its implications on her:

I don't like men, when they annoy you, they judge you so easily then they start talking about you, if my **aunt hears anything negative about me, she's paying for my fees, I'm scared she's going to deport me and send me back to Kenya** so I don't want to cross her path in any way and if there's any information about me in Bellville, any wrong thing like I'm talking to men or anything, she's going to hear about it and if she hears about it she's going to start having doubts in me and I don't want that.

She is dependent on her aunt who funds her tuition and provides her with security, and dreads being sent back to Kenya if she steps out of line. Her aunt acts as a guardian over her chastity and is careful to maintain her status in the community and the reputation of her niece. Here, social networks act as a disciplining, restricting force, by policing the boundaries of gender, culture and religion, particularly what appropriate behaviour is for a young woman.

4.4.4 Social Networks and Integration

Somali women who form part of diasporic communities are often constrained by the sociocultural norms which they transfer to their host societies, which may impact on their integration. A study on the social networks of Somali women in Australia showed that few migrants consider themselves members of a broader Australian community; the culture of Anglo Australians was seen as less communal and religious differences were a point of contention. Somali cultural norms served to polarize Somali and Anglo-Australian identities; as an example Australian women were construed as having depraved sexual morals (McMichael & Manderson, 2004).

The only opportunities respondents had to socialise with fellow kin were at weddings, funerals and events at the Masjid. Typically Somali's don't have friends outside the community; most have come to South Africa directly from Somalia with only a few having grown up in other countries. First time migrants are overwhelmed by the new environment, "the different language, the different roads, the shopping malls, they trying to get used to a lot, they're trying to catch up". Asiya tells me that to make friends with non-Somalis would add more challenges to the adaptation process:

...now to have someone to be a friend, someone non-Somali will always become a challenge, if it's not the language, it's going to be a challenge in a cultural way, they're not comfortable, they try to be nice, to entertain you but not by heart because they don't know how to be friends with someone

other than Somali. You talk about things that you are a bit sensitive to speak about with someone else that's not a Somali. If they're thirty years old, they've never seen someone who's not a Somali in their life, now to be friends with them; it's a bit unusual, maybe after they stay here for a while.

McMichael and Manderson (2004: 90) argue that "social networks are not just about contemporary structures and activities, but are given meaning through comparison with remembered social worlds in Somalia". In the new migratory context, attempts are made to remain integrated into a network of people who share the same history, beliefs, culture or religion (Curran & Saguy, 2001; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Massey *et al.*, 1993).

Marrying people that are not Somali does happen; men are far more likely to have a South African partner than women. Women's social networks are not expanded through marriage as they often have to choose a partner within their clan; it was indeed uncommon for a woman to marry someone that was not Somali.

There was also resistance to developing relationships with South African nationals, to whom negative attributes were ascribed:

I need for Somali people and Muslim people I like but I don't need these South Africans. – Ebyan

The Social networks of many respondents were extremely limited by only knowing Somali kin in Bellville and being obligated to remain there for lack of contacts elsewhere. A lack of resources to take a risk and leave was also a contributing factor. The inability to speak English or other South African languages, compounded by low literacy levels also affect the types of social networks Somali women are able to enter and participate in.

Most respondents only had Somali friends and even these friends they did not socialise with often because everyone was busy at work and with their responsibilities in the home. I observed that women would gather in groups outside their shops in Bellville, sitting on plastic stools they would talk and share food while they kept an eye out for customers entering their shops, after assisting the customer they would return to the group. This shows that opportunities are created in economic spaces for the women to socialise with one another. Research has shown that networking opportunities among migrants can be spatially based (Yeoh & Huang, 1998). A study on migrant female domestic workers in

Singapore examined the way in which public spaces such as parks and shopping malls are negotiated through strategies that contest spatial expressions of patriarchy, race, class, nationality and other forms of segregation (Yeoh & Huang, 1998: 583). Even though there are many public spaces where Somali women feel apprehensive and where they are actively subordinated by members of the host society, they find ways to “reject dominant exclusionary definitions of themselves”, an example being the appropriation of the market space in Bellville (Yeoh & Huang, 1998: 584).

Baxsan is training as a pharmacist at a well-known retail store; she works well with her South African colleagues but feels the customers are not used to someone as different as her. They comment on her big burqa and ask her questions about what she’s doing there and where she is from. Language makes it difficult to have a good flow when serving Afrikaans and Xhosa customers but she’s happy at work. Negotiating a relationship with a homosexual colleague has been bemusing for her:

I work with a gay person, he’s South African, coloured, he’s good, he works 4 cm from me, I see them around I feel weird talking to a gay person I feel like I’m not used to it, I feel like this man, this women, he’s so good, good at pharmacy, he’s a locum, there is no gay people in Somalia, if there is they will kill him or her, but if he happens to ask me anything I will say no it’s fine. If I tell him they kill gays in Somalia he will feel bad. – Baxsan

For her, the concept of diverse sexual orientation and homosexuality is foreign and unsettling. At the pharmacy she has opportunities to engage with diverse social networks and individuals who are different to herself such as her South African colleague. Exposure to and involvement in new networks with contrasting values may serve to challenge existing world views and present alternative belief systems, identities and desires which prove challenging. Unsurprisingly, the social networks of most respondents are characterised by strong ties within kin based networks which makes Baxsan’s exposure to networks outside the Somali community an exception (Curran & Saguy, 2001; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Massey et al., 1993).

Dacar, a male community activist feels very strongly about integration into society, he tells people to view themselves as South African Somalis. Adaptation and integration also depends on the willingness of the local culture to facilitate entry. He proposes more

integration processes and awareness-raising by government. Asiya encourages her fellow women to firstly become familiar with their surrounding community, and to acculturate into South African society, she even advocates for assimilation:

Always I tell my fellow refugees, I always tell the women, when I meet them at weddings or celebration occasions, when they complain about South Africa, I say no it will be better you should try to know your rights, you should try to demand your rights, the moment you demand what you have rights for, things will change, things are going to start changing, you are not going to be the victim always...**I tell the women do not depend on your man, this is not Somalia, this is South Africa, try to know how you can do things on your own, go in there and find out details of the country**, we know South Africa doesn't like foreigners, the whole world knows that, but you are you, everybody is unique, the community you live with is unique, the hospital nearby you is unique, try to communicate with people that you living with because if you change to **become just almost like them, to talk like them, to do, even though you are on your own and you got your culture and everything but put yourself in their shoes just for a moment**, greet your neighbour early in the morning, if he says he's sick say sorry, if you find out someone died from your neighbourhood go at least and offer your help, some of the things if you do, you will learn a lot from the community. - Asiya

Asiya urges women to not depend so heavily on their kin networks; she encourages them to actively create ties with members of the broader South African society, such as people in their neighbourhood. She supports the development of a hybrid identity where she recognises the cultural integrity of individuals but simultaneously encourages them to adopt new identities and values. The concept of weak ties within social networks, is related to links which connect migrants to new and diverse groups of individuals who operate in a different kind of environment, providing new opportunities, information and access to resource flows (Granovetter, 1973; Jean, 2008; Danis, 2007). Weak ties are uncommon within the social networks of Somali migrant women, which impede relationships with members of the host community and other migrant groups.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This dissertation was an exploratory study on the integration strategies and social networks of Somali women migrants in Cape Town. It has sought to contribute to the understanding of how Somali women use social networks to facilitate integration and develop a sense of belonging in a new migratory context. The various strategies migrants employ for survival and integration have allowed them to navigate the changes in sociocultural arrangements and established gender roles, and work through institutional and social barriers.

A new geographic location does not spontaneously bring about changes in migrant identity; rather, these come about through events, experiences and interactions with the various components in that location, with these interactions and components being in a constant state of flux (Hopkins, 2010: 534; Conway, 2008). Migrants in Bellville cannot be understood through essentialised notions of Somali culture; the broader identity of Somalis as a migrant group shifts as changes seep in from outside and within. The ways Somali women choose to enact their Somali identity may vary according to the impression they wish to create at different times and in different spaces and in response to family and community expectations (Hopkins, 2010).

Sociocultural norms among Somalis are easily reproduced in South Africa, but this does not mean that norms go unchallenged or unaltered. In this study every migrant strongly identified as a Somali woman and as belonging to a Somali cultural group, yet they acknowledge changes within themselves and the community. There was however, no sense of being a 'South African Somali'. This term, as described by Dacar, refers to the integration of Somalis into South African society.

The integration strategies migrants adopt are influenced by the kinds of social networks which are dominant in their lives. Social networks may be characterised by strong or weak ties (Danis, 2007; Granovetter, 1973). Dense social networks with strong ties are comprised of family, friends and other members of the community of origin (Jean, 2008). Strong ties tend to be exclusive and can limit contact with different individuals and communities. In this

regard, weak ties are more influential than strong ties in linking diverse groups and drawing resource flows toward the migrant (Granovetter, 1973).

Findings suggest that most migrants in this study exist within dense social networks based on strong ties. Dense social networks are used as an integration strategy, where respondents choose to remain strongly connected to the Somali community, and keep to a Somali sociocultural identity. Although networks of this kind can pressurize migrants to conform to group expectations, it also facilitates integration as the migrant receives social and economic⁵⁶ support from their family, friends⁵⁷ and members of the Somali community. There are a limited few who operate within a broader social network, linked not only to the Somali community but also to the broader South African society, they are however the exceptions. In some cases economic mobility and higher education gives these migrants more choice; they move beyond kin-based networks more easily as they are not as dependent on these networks to integrate. They choose to participate in a broader social network as an integration strategy, and through these networks, access new information and opportunities. In terms of their sociocultural adaptation to South Africa, their involvement with new and diverse networks expose them to alternative value systems and identities (Curran & Saguy, 2001; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Massey *et al.*, 1993).

There are cultural and religious principles which govern interactions between Somali women and others. Additionally, factors like language, class and education make it difficult for women to establish heterogeneous social networks. There is also some resistance to developing relationships with South Africans and other migrant groups. Kin-based networks serve to transmit certain values and sociocultural perceptions. Practices are affirmed and reinforced when an individual is integrated into a network of people who share the same beliefs (Curran & Saguy, 2001; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Massey *et al.*, 1993). Adopting South African values and ideologies are seen by some members of the Somali

⁵⁶ Kin based networks enable access to, and information about, the same opportunities, which is both enabling and constraining. Somali networks are vital to success in economic activities but may only offer access to typical forms of migrant employment as informal traders, shopkeepers or language interpreters.

⁵⁷ Social networks comprised solely of Somali women, referred to as *sister friends* by a respondent, play an important role in the livelihood strategies migrants adopt.

community and at times by respondents themselves as being deviant. Although women have access to more rights and liberties in South Africa, there are consequences for contesting Somali norms. As Somalis adapt to a new context and negotiate new gendered norms, they are simultaneously negotiating family and community expectations and relationships. Social networks in Bellville are strong enough to police the boundaries of religious and cultural ideals, especially as they relate to gender and what appropriate behaviour is for women. Although gendered roles and expectations certainly are changing in South Africa. The ability of Somali women to insert their own gendered norms into existing societal patterns disrupts dominant discourses.

At times migrants participate in economic activities⁵⁸ not by choice, but out of necessity. Their disadvantaged class position forces them to engage with a hostile public space. Broader social⁵⁹ and institutional barriers deter Somali women from pursuing employment outside of Bellville. And even though women are enterprising, they are often dependent on other Somalis for social and economic resources which compel them to adhere to community based norms and expectations, to ensure access. Social networks may offer assistance but this is subject to women meeting social standards of conduct. Structural forces act as constraints which inform the active decision to retain a strong membership to the group (Landau, 2008; Sadouni, 2009; Shaffer, 2012). The current socio-economic position of Somali women in Bellville may be too precarious to trust and build social networks with diverse groups. Asiya suggests that in time women will integrate into Cape Town's social fabric.

Migration to South Africa has brought Somali women into a new gendered context which has provided the opportunity to consider opposing understandings of gender. Migration (re)shapes gender identity, relations, ideologies and their meanings across multiple scales and spaces (Sondhi, 2013: 238). Shifting gendered identities among Somali women reflect

⁵⁸ Although there were more profitable business opportunities in the townships, women felt anxious about leaving Bellville. Legally, Somalis are protected in South African society but the reality is very different for those who venture out of Bellville unaccompanied.

⁵⁹ A number of Somalis have been killed in South Africa in recent years, due to xenophobia and violent crime, which as a result, has strengthened a network of solidarity among Somalis (Sadouni, 2009; 243).

the constant negotiation of power relations in spaces such as the home, workplaces, streets and community setting, which results in shifting power-geometries. Women's experiences reveal varying degrees, to which they accept, resist or negotiate different gendered norms in and across the scales and spaces they encounter (Sondhi, 2013: 244). The socio-economic context of Somali women in Cape Town situates them in positions where they confront strong power structures at a macro and micro level. Physical and economic insecurity diminishes their power. Confirming the findings of the literature on gender, feminism and migration, the cases in this study illustrate that women migrants negotiate their identities and social locations within power hierarchies, using their agency. Survival strategies are often able to subvert some forms of power, but ultimately because of their intersectional identity, they inadvertently succumb to another power structure. Power negotiations are seen to be a contradictory, uneven and multi-layered process. Interactions with South African society act as sites in which Somali women's identity is destabilized, resulting in increasingly complex self-definitions. Confronted with exclusion, economic insecurity and social and institutional barriers, for most Somali women the prospect of integration into South Africa is minimal (Lefko-Everett, 2007; Jinnah, 2012). Despite this many have experienced positive individual and economic changes.

REFERENCES

- Abdi, A.M. 2006. Refugees, gender-based violence and resistance: a case study of Somali refugee women in Kenya. In *Women, migration and citizenship: Making local, national and transnational connections*. E. Tastsoglou & A. Dobrowolsky, Eds. Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Abrahamsen, R. 2003. African studies and the postcolonial challenge. *African Affairs*. (102):189-210.
- Ahmed, S.M. 2004. Traditions of marriage and the Household. In *Somalia, the untold story: The war through the eyes of Somali women*. J. Gardner & J. El Bushra, Eds. London: Pluto Press. 24–41.
- Akou, H.M. 2011. *The Politics of Dress in Somali Culture*. Indiana, United States: Indiana University Press.
- Alhourani, A. 2014. Aesthetic and Performance of Unity and Diversity of Muslims in Cape Town: Somali Performances of Muslim-ness in Bellville, Cape Town. University of the Western Cape. (Unpublished).
- Al-Sharmani, M. 2010. Transnational family networks in the Somali diaspora in Egypt: Women's roles and differentiated experiences. *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*. 17(4):499-518.
- Allen, R. 2009. Benefit or burden? Social capital, gender and the economic adaptation of refugees. *International Migration Review*. 43(2):332-365.
- Ansari, U. 2008. Should I go and pull her burqa off? Feminist compulsions, insider consent and a return to Kandahar. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*. 25(1):48-67.

- Belton, T. 2009. The dawn of the "chaotic account": Horatio Hale's Australia notebook and the development of Anthropologists' field notes. *Libraries and the Cultural Record*. 44(1):138-152.
- Berry, J.W. 1997. Immigration, acculturation and adaptation. *International Journal of Applied Psychology*. 46:5–34.
- Bhabha, H.K. 1994. *Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse in the location of culture*. London: Routledge
- Bilge, S. 2010. Beyond subordination vs. resistance: An intersectional approach to the agency of veiled Muslim women. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*. 31:(1):9-28.
- Bourdieu, P. 1986. The forms of capital. In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. J. Richardson, Ed. New York: Greenwood. 241-258.
- Boyd, M. 1989. Family and personal networks in international migration: Recent developments and new agendas. *International Migration Review*. 23(3):638-670.
- Boyd, M. 1999. Gender, refugee status and permanent resettlement. *Gender Issues*. 17(1):5–25.
- Boyd, M. & Grieco, E. 2003. Women and migration: Incorporating gender into international migration theory. *Migration policy institute: Migration information source*. Washington, D.C. Web address: www.migrationinformation.org.
- Brettell, C.B. 2000. Theorizing migration in Anthropology. In *Migration theory: Talking across disciplines*. C.B. Brettell & J.F. Hollifield, Eds. New York: Routledge. 97-135.
- Brinkmann, S. & Kvale, S. 2005. Confronting the ethics of qualitative research. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*. 18: 157-181.
- Bürkner, H. J. 2012. Intersectionality: How gender studies might inspire the analysis of social inequality among migrants. *Population, Space and Place*. 18: 181-195.
- Butler, J. 1993. *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of sex*. New York: Routledge.

- Buyer, M. 2008. Negotiating identity and displacement among the Somali refugees of Cape Town. *South African Historical Journal*. 60(2).
- Coleman, J.S. 1990. *Foundations of Social Theory*. Massachusetts, United States: The Belknap Press.
- Conway, J. 2008. Geographies of transnational feminisms: The politics of place and scale in the world march of women. *Social Politics*. 15(2):207–31.
- Coutin, S. B. 1998. From refugees to immigrants: The legalization strategies of Salvadoran immigrants and activists. *International Migration Review*. 901-925.
- Crosby, D.B. 2006. Resettled Somali women in Georgia and changing gender roles. *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies*. 6(9).
- Crush, J. S. & McDonald, D.A. 2002. *Transnationalism and new African immigration to South Africa*. Kingston, Ontario: Southern African Migration Project and Canadian Association of African Studies.
- Curran, S.R. & Saguy, A.C. 2001. Migration and cultural change: A role for gender and social networks. *Proceedings of the Culture and Inequality Workshop*. Princeton University.
- Danis, D. 2007. A faith that binds: Iraqi Christian women on the domestic service ladder of Istanbul. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 33:601-15.
- Dodson, B. 2008. Gender, migration and livelihoods: Migrant women in Southern Africa. In *New perspectives on gender and migration: Livelihood, rights and entitlements*. N. Piper, Ed.
- Fanon, F. 1967. *Black skin, white masks*. New York: Grove Press.
- Farah, N. 2000. *Yesterday, tomorrow: Voices from the Somali diaspora*. London: Cassell.
- Fernández-Kelly, M.P. & García, A.M. 1990. Power surrendered, power restored: The politics of work and family among Hispanic garment workers in California and Florida. In

Women, Politics, and Change. L.A. Tilly & P. Gurin, Eds. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. 130-149.

Foflonker, K. 2008. The integration of adolescents of immigrant origin into the German education system. Masters Thesis. University of Cape Town.

Gardner, J. & J. El Bushra, Eds. 2004. *Somalia, the untold story: The war through the eyes of Somali women*. London: Pluto Press.

Gardner, J. & Warsame, A.M. 2004. Women, clan identity and peace-building. In *Somalia, the untold story: The war through the eyes of Somali women*. J. Gardner & J. El Bushra, Eds. London: Pluto Press. 153-165.

George, S. 2000. Dirty nurses and men who play: Gender and class in transnational migration. In *Global ethnography: Forces, connections, and imaginations in a postmodern world*. M. Burawoy, J. A. Blum, S. George, Z. Gille & M. Thayer, Eds. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gouws, A. 2010. The feminisation of migration. *Africa Insight*. 40(1).

Granovetter, M. 1973. The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*. 78(6):1360-1380.

Hall, S. 1994. Cultural identity and diaspora. In *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory: A reader*. P. Williams & L. Chrisman, Eds. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf. 392-403.

Hassan, R. 2006. Globalisation's challenge to the Islamic Ummah. *Asian Journal of Social Science*. 34(2):311-323.

Haverkamp, B.E. 2005. Ethical perspectives on qualitative research in applied psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 52(2): 146-155.

- Hedge, R.S. 1998. A view from elsewhere: Locating difference and the politics of representation from a transnational feminist perspective. *Communication Theory*. 8(3):271-297.
- Heisler, B.S. 2008. The Sociology of immigration, from assimilation to segmented assimilation, from the American experience to the global arena. In *Migration theory: Talking across disciplines*. C.B. Brettell & J.B. Hollifield, Eds. New York: Routledge. 83 – 111.
- Hillmann, F. 1999. A look at the 'hidden side': Turkish women in Berlin's ethnic labour Market. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. 1994. Regulating the unregulated?: Domestic workers' social networks. *Social Problems* [Special issue: Immigration, Race and Ethnicity in America]. 41:50-64.
- Hopkins, G. 2010. A changing sense of somaliness, Somali women in London and Toronto. *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*. 17(4):519-538.
- Horst, C. 2002. Xawilaad: The importance of overseas connections in the livelihoods of Somali refugees in the Dadaab refugee camps of Kenya. Working Paper. Oxford: Transnational Communities Program. WPTC-02-14.
- Hyndman, J. & de Alwis, M. 2003. Beyond gender: Toward a feminist analysis of conflict in Sri Lanka. *Women's Studies Quarterly*. 31(3):212–26.
- Ibrahim, R.M. 2004. Women's role in the pastoral economy. In *Somalia, the untold story: The war through the eyes of Somali women*. J. Gardner & J. El Bushra, Eds. London: Pluto Press. 24-41.
- Immigration and refugee board of Canada, human rights brief: Women in Somalia*. 1994. Available: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a83b8.html> [2014, February 11]
- Jean, P.D. 2008. The social networks of migrants and their negotiation of the city of Johannesburg. Masters Thesis. University of the Witwatersrand.

- Jinnah, Z. 2010. Making home in a hostile land: Understanding Somali identity, integration, livelihood and risks in Johannesburg. *J Sociology Soc Anth.* 1(1):91-99.
- Jinnah, Z. 2012. Trading places, shaping spaces: Examining Somali refugee women's lives and livelihoods in Johannesburg. (Unpublished).
- Kapteijns, L. & Arman, A. 2008. Educating immigrant youth in the United States: An exploration of the Somali case. *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies.* 4:18-43.
- Kitch, S. L. 2009. *The specter of sex: Gender foundations of racial formation in the United States.* New York: SUNY Press.
- Kiwanuka, M. 2010. For love or survival: Migrant women's narratives of survival and intimate partner violence in Johannesburg. In *Gender and migration: Feminist interventions.* I. Palmary, E. Burman, K. Chantler & P. Kiguwa, Eds. London: Zed Books. 163-179.
- Korteweg, A. C. 2008. The Sharia debate in Ontario: Gender, Islam and representations of Muslim women's agency. *Gender and Society.* 22(4): 434-454.
- Kusow, A.M. 2007. From Mogadishu to Dixon: Conceptualising the Somali diaspora. In *Somalia: Diaspora and state reconstitution In the horn of Africa.* A.O. Farah, M. Muchie & J. Gundel, Eds. London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers. 34-42.
- Landau, L.B. 2008. Decentralisation, migration and development in South Africa's primary cities. In *Migration in post-apartheid South Africa: Challenges and questions to policy-makers.* A. Wa Kabwe-Segatti & L. Landau, Eds. Paris: Agence Française de Développement. 163-211.
- Langellier, K.M. 2010. Performing Somali identity in the diaspora. *Cultural Studies.* 24(1):66-94.
- Lefko-Everett, K. 2007. *Voices from the margins: Migrant women's experiences in Southern Africa.* Institute for Democracy in South Africa.

- Lerner, G. 1997. *Why history matters: Life and thought*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Losifides, T. 2011. *Qualitative Methods in Migration Studies*. Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing.
- Madriz, E. 2000. Focus groups in feminist research. In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln, Eds. SAGE Publications. 835-850.
- Mahler, S. 1995. *American dreaming: Immigrant life on the margins*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Mahler, S.J. & Pessar, P.R. 2001. Gendered geographies of power: Analyzing gender across transnational spaces. *Identities*. 7(4):441-459.
- Mahler, S.J. & Pessar, P.R. 2006. Gender matters: Ethnographers bring gender from the periphery toward the core of migration studies. *International Migration Review*. 40(1):27-63.
- Mahmood, S. 2005. *Politics of piety: The Islamic revival and the feminist subject*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Massey, D. S., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A. & Taylor, J. E. 1993). Theories of international migration: A review and appraisal. *Population and Development Review*. 3:34-62.
- McMichael, C. & Manderson, L. 2004. Somali women and well-being: Social networks and social capital among immigrant women in Australia. *Human Organization*. 63(1).
- Menjívar, C. 2000. *Fragmented ties: Salvadoran immigrant networks in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Miles, M.B. & Huberman, M. 1994. *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. California: Sage Publications.

- Mohan, G. & Stokke, K. 2000. Participatory development and empowerment: The dangers of localism. *Third World Quarterly*. 21(2):247-268.
- Mohanty, C.T. 1984. Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. *Boundary 2*. 12(3)-13(1):333-358.
- Mohanty, C.T. 2003. *Feminism without borders: Decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity*. Duke University Press Books.
- Moorhouse, L. & Cunningham, P. 2012. We are purified by fire: The complexification of motherhood in the context of migration. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*. 33(5):493-508.
- Nash, J. 2008. Re-thinking intersectionality. *Feminist Review*. 89: 1-15.
- Nayar, P. K. 2010. *Postcolonialism: A guide for the perplexed*. New York, Continuum.
- Ogata, S. 1995. Mixed migration: A strategy for refugees and economic migrants. *Harvard International Review*. 17(2):30-33.
- Oishi, N. 2005. *Women in motion: Globalization, state policies and labor migration in Asia*. Stanford University Press.
- Ong, A. 1994. Colonialism and modernity: Feminist representations of women in non-western societies. *Inscriptions*. 3(4).
- Ozkazanc-Pan, B. 2012. Postcolonial feminist research: Challenges and complexities. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*. 31(5):573-591.
- Piper, N. 2008. International migration and gendered axes of stratification. In *New perspectives on gender and migration: Livelihood, rights and entitlements*. N. Piper, Ed. New York: United Nations.
- Portes, A. & Zhou, M. 1992. Gaining the upper hand: Economic mobility among immigrant and domestic minorities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 15:491-522.

- Portes, A. & Sensenbrenner, J. 1993. Embeddedness and immigration: Notes on the social determinants of economic action. *American Journal of Sociology*. 98(6):1320-1350.
- Putnam, R. 1995. Bowling alone, America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*. 6(1):65-78.
- Putnam, R. 2000. *Bowling alone, the collapse and revival of American community*. Simon and Schuster.
- Raj, A. & Silverman, A. 2002. Violence against immigrant women, the roles of culture, context, and legal immigrant status on intimate partner violence. *Violence Against Women*. 8(3):367-398.
- Ritchie, J. & Lewis, J. 2003. *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. London: Sage Publications.
- Rosaldo, R. 1989. *Border crossings, in culture and truth: The remaking of social analysis*. Boston: Beacon Press. 196-217.
- Ryan, G. & Bernard, R. 2003. Techniques to Identify themes. *Field Methods*. 15(85):85-109.
- Sadouni, S. 2009. God is not unemployed: Journeys of Somali refugees in Johannesburg. *African Studies*. 68(2).
- Said, E. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.
- Sandoval, C. 1991. US Third World Feminism: The theory and method of oppositional consciousness in the postmodern world. *Genders*. 10:1-24.
- Schmitter-Heisler, B. 2000. The sociology of immigration. In *Migration theory: Talking across disciplines*. C.B. Brettell & J.F. Hollifield, Eds. London: Routledge. 77-96.
- Shaffer, M. F. 2012. This is South Africa, Not Somalia: Negotiating gender relations in Johannesburg's 'little Mogadishu'. Ph.D. Thesis. Ohio State University.

- Siisiäinen, M. 2000. Two concepts of social capital, Bourdieu vs. Putnam. *ISTR Fourth International Conference*. Dublin, Ireland: Trinity College.
- Sondhi, G. 2013. Gendering International Student Mobility: An Indian case study. Ph.D. Thesis. University of Sussex.
- Spivak, G. 1988. Can the subaltern speak? In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. C. Nelson & E. Grossberg, Eds. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 271-313.
- Steyn, M.E. 2010. Postcolonialism and Peace. In *Oxford University Press Encyclopedia of Peace*. N. Young, Ed.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. 2008. *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Rev. 3rd ed. California: Sage Publications.
- Thompson, R. A. 1973. A theory of instrumental social networks. 29(4):244-265.
- Trimikliniotis, N., Gordon, S. & Zondo, B. 2008. Globalisation and migrant labour In a 'rainbow nation': A fortress South Africa. *Third World Quarterly*. 29(7):1323–1339.
- United Nations Children's Fund .2002. *Women's rights in Islam and Somali culture*. Hargeysa, Somaliland: The Academy for Peace and Development.
- Vandeyar, S. 2012. Immigrant students' shifting identifications in South African schools. *International Journal of Educational Development*. 32: 232–240.
- Wellman, B. 1983. Network analysis, some basic principles. *Sociological Theory*. 1:155-200.
- Yeoh, B. S. A. & Huang, S. 1998. Negotiating public space: Strategies and styles of migrant female domestic workers in Singapore. *Urban Studies*. 35(3):583-602.
- Yuval-Davis, N. 2006. Intersectionality and feminist politics. *European Journal of Women's Studies*. 13(3):193-209.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT PROFILES

Profiles for the Somali women migrants

- ❖ **Asiya**⁶⁰ is a 27 year old Muslim female of Somali origin. She migrated from Kenya to South Africa at the age of 16 and has been living in the country for 11 years. She has a section 24 permit⁶¹. She attended school in Kenya but this was disrupted by migration. She is married to a Somali man and has four children aged 4, 3, 2 and 1. After the 2008 xenophobic attacks, she was recruited as the spokesperson for the Somali women's group *Filanwa*⁶² because of her English language skills. She was invited by the UCT law clinic to complete a course on refugee rights in 2007 and has been working at ARESTA for 6 years, on the refugee rights awareness campaign. She is also an interpreter at the UNHCR and an activist advocating for the rights of the Somali community.

- ❖ **Amran** is a 35 year old Muslim female of Somali origin. She migrated to South Africa in 1997, at the age of 19, with a group of Somalis who assisted her financially; she also married in that year. She's been living in Cape Town for 16 years and has six children, aged 13, 11, 9, 7, 5 and 3. She had not worked in Somalia as she was young but now trades as a hawker in Bellville⁶³. She is part of a strong social network comprised of Somali women. She has not had any schooling and has learnt English in the market place. She has a section 24 permit. She dreams of having economic stability in the future and peace in Somalia, she also wants her children to attend madrasah, complete their reading of the Quran and visit Makkah.

- ❖ **Beyruud** is a 28 year old Muslim female of Somali origin. She is married with a baby and has been living in South Africa for 3 years. She has not had any schooling. She had not worked in Somalia, but currently works full time at a restaurant in Bellville. She has a section 24 permit.

⁶⁰ All participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

⁶¹ A section 24 permit grants the bearer refugee status which enables work and study in South Africa whilst the permit is valid. It is renewable upon expiration of its validity.

⁶² The term *filanwa* means unexpected.

⁶³ Amran held SASA in low regard, telling me they were unhelpful and their services were not free; their membership fee of R150 was deemed expensive.

- ❖ **Filad** is a 33 year old Muslim female of Somali origin. Her first husband from whom she has six children, passed on from a heart attack after migrating to South Africa. She also has two children from her second husband who has been missing for over a year. The younger of these two children lives in Somalia with her family⁶⁴. The ages of her children are 17, 14, 12, 10, 9, 8, 3 and 1. She has been living in Cape Town for 13 years and has a section 24 permit. She has not had any schooling. She had not worked in Somalia, but currently trades part time as a hawker.

- ❖ **Marwo** is a 31 year old Muslim female of Somali origin. She is married with a baby and has been living in Cape Town for 6 years. She has not had any schooling. She had not worked in Somalia, but currently works part time as a hawker in Bellville. She has a section 24 permit.

- ❖ **Jawahir** is a 38 year old Muslim female of Somali origin. She has been living in Cape Town for 15 years and works as a hawker in Bellville. She has five children, the eldest is 18 and the youngest is 5 years of age. She was the only one who worked in her household; her husband was unable to find employment and took care of the children. This did not however influence her power within the household. She has not had any schooling and had not worked in Somalia. She has a section 24 permit.

- ❖ **Safiya** is a 21 year old Somali Muslim female of Kenyan origin. She has been living in Cape Town for 3 years and studies pharmacy full time at a university in the Northern region of Cape Town. In Kenya she worked in a theatre. She works part time at a pharmacy in Bellville and is registered with the South African pharmacy council. She has a section 24 permit. She is unmarried and has no children but is dating a male who lives in the United States of America. She consciously disassociates herself with the Somali community of Bellville, she is aware that she is different in terms of education and class. She has integrated well at her university and has many different friends. She has a driver's license and spends her free time at malls and beaches around Cape Town, socializing with her girlfriends, not guys, she assures me.

- ❖ **Hodan** is a 43 year old Muslim female of Somali origin. She completed her secondary schooling in Somalia and then married. She has nine children aged 24, 21, 19, 17, 15, 13, 11, 8 and 4. After the civil war started she left for Ethiopia with her family where she stayed for four years, they then migrated to Zambia where they stayed for ten years before migrating to South Africa. She has been living and working in Cape Town for nine years. She works with her husband at their shop in Bellville. She was a business lady when she stayed in Zambia, selling clothing and other items. She

⁶⁴ Young children are often sent to live with the grandparents of the mother, Filad's youngest child was staying with her mother in Somalia and when her mother passed on, her sister cared for the child.

previously went to Dubai to purchase stock but now gets clothing from Johannesburg. She has a section 24 permit.

- ❖ **Ebyan** is a 28 year old Muslim female of Somali origin. She has not had any schooling and had not worked in Somalia. She has a section 24 permit. She is divorced from her first husband whom she married in 2005, she then remarried in 2007. She has one child from her first marriage and one from her second. At times she had to take her baby with her to work, she is a hawker and walks around selling goods on the street, her baby often got sick in the harsh cold of winter.

- ❖ **Deqa** is a 24 year old Muslim female of Somali origin. She has been living in Cape Town for nine years and studies pharmacy full time at a university in the Northern region of Cape Town. She has a section 24 permit and is registered with the South African pharmacy council. She is unmarried and has no children. She works part time at the UNHCR as an interpreter and also at a pharmacy in Bellville. She is the treasurer for an organization she helped form, the Somali Students of Western Cape. She says her life has changed for the better since moving to South Africa, she has an opportunity to study in a field she feels strongly about, and her education will help her in the future. She welcomed the diversity of people she was exposed to at university.

- ❖ **Baxsan** is a 26 year old Somali Muslim female of Kenyan origin. She is married with two children⁶⁵, her husband lives in Kenya. She completed her secondary schooling in Kenya and has been living in Cape Town⁶⁶ for 4 years. She studies pharmacy full time at a university in the Northern region of Cape Town. She has a section 24 permit. She works part time at the Somali Association of South Africa⁶⁷ and weekends at a pharmacy in a retail store, she also works at the UNHCR when they need interpreters. Although she hopes to acquire a permanent residency in South Africa, her plan is to return to Kenya and find employment there once she graduates. This points to a willingness to maintain mobility and keep the option of returning to South Africa.

⁶⁵ Baxsan's baby and her toddler are in Kenya with her mother, which enables her to work and attend university.

⁶⁶ She had a long and arduous migration, she wasn't married at the time but was dating her now husband who helped her with some money, her mother contributed as well and she made her journey from Kenya to Tanzania to Zambia to Zimbabwe and then South Africa.

⁶⁷ Baxsan was the only respondent who stated that she would approach SASA if she needed assistance with anything; she worked there and would likely have easier access to resources.

- ❖ **Johorad** is a 40 year old Muslim female of Somali origin. She has been living in Cape Town for 17 years and has a non-citizen South African identity document. She is not married but has a child aged 22. She works full time in her sister's shop in Bellville. She has not had any schooling and had not worked in Somalia. In the future she wanted to be her own business woman, marry and have a family.
- ❖ **Faadumo** is a 52 year old Muslim female of Somali origin. She is married with 5 children, aged 24, 23, 21, 19 and 16. She has been living in Cape Town for 5 years and has a section 24 permit. She has not had any schooling and had not worked in Somalia. She works as a hawker, but has been trying to find alternative employment⁶⁸ as a cleaner for 3 years with no success.

Profiles for the NGO workers involved with the Somali community

- ❖ **Dacar** is a 28 year old Muslim male of Somali origin. He is director of the Cape Town office of the Somali Association of South Africa and a community activist. He has been living in South Africa for 8 years and has a section 24 permit. He worked in a tuck shop when he first came to Cape Town and is now enrolled in an undergraduate degree in Social Development through correspondence learning.
- ❖ **Keyse** is a 25 year old Muslim male of Somali origin. He is an administrative assistant at the Cape Town office of the Somali Association of South Africa and a community activist. He has a section 24 permit.
- ❖ **Santhiana** is a female of Burundi origin and a trainer on the refugee health and rights project at Sonke Gender Justice, an NGO based in Cape Town. She has been involved in the implementation of various interventions including; HIV/AIDS, masculinity and gender based violence, human rights, sexual and reproductive health and gender equality, in the Somali community of Cape Town. She is familiar with existing tensions and dynamics within the Somali community and has experience with working around community resistance to the interventions.
- ❖ **Remy** is the Refugee Policy & Advocacy Programme Manager at ARESTA, an NGO who provides education and skills to refugees and asylum seekers in Cape Town. He works with Somalis on a daily basis and provided insight into the social networks, gender relations and livelihood strategies of the Somali community.

⁶⁸ There's a great sense of urgency for her to find employment as she has a 16 year old daughter who is very ill, she believes the illness started once they got to South Africa. I spoke to her daughter, who upon the surrounding women's insistence showed me her swollen legs covered in long, blood red cracks. She's been unable to leave her house because of the illness.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM



University of Cape Town Sociology Department

My name is Parveen and I am a student at the University of Cape Town. For my degree, I have to complete a research project. My research project looks at the integration strategies and social networks of Somali women. Please would you help me learn more about the experiences of Somali women in Cape Town?

Please note:

- Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time.
- You will not be identified by name in any research using information from this interview, and your confidentiality as a participant will remain secure.
- This study has been approved by the Ethics Committee in the Sociology department at the University of Cape Town.
- This interview will be recorded for research purposes only.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE- SOMALI WOMEN MIGRANTS

Date:

Interview number:

Participants name:

Place of interview:

Start time:

End time:

Introduce myself and the study. State that the information they give me as well as their identity will be kept in strict confidentiality. Request permission to conduct the interview and state that they do not have to answer questions they do not feel comfortable with and that they may stop the interview at any time. Participants sign the interview consent form.

1. Biographical Information

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

Please tell me about your education?

How best do you describe your Marital/relationship status?

When did you get married?

Do you have children? How many? What are their ages?

Please tell me about your immigration status?

For how many years have you been living in Cape Town?

2. The Migration Journey

How did you come to live in Cape Town?

What made you leave your home country and come to South Africa?

3. Household in South Africa

Where in Cape Town do you stay?

Who helped you find this place to live in?

Why did you choose to stay there?

Who do you stay with?

Are you happy living there?

Do you have many Somali neighbors in the area?

Tell me about your household in Somalia?

How different is the household you have in South Africa compared to Somalia?

4. Employment/Livelihood Strategies

What kind of work are you doing at the moment?

Do you do the same work each day or are you involved in different types of work?

How did you come to do this work?

How many hours or days a week do you work?

Do you work with other Somalis, other migrants or South Africans?

Are you happy with the kind of work you do?

Do you experience any problems at work?

Did you work in Somalia? What type of work did you do there?

As a woman, is it difficult to find work in Cape Town?

Does your spouse work?

Are you the main source of income in your household?

How do members of the Somali community feel about the work you do?

Can you tell me about a time or situation when other Somalis were not supportive of the work you do?

Do you ever receive money from family or friends outside of Cape Town or South Africa?

Do you help anyone here in Cape Town?

Do you send money home or elsewhere?

What does it mean to you to earn money?

5. Gender in the New Migratory Context

Is it easy for a woman to migrate?

How has your life as a woman changed since you moved to South Africa?

Tell me about marriage:

Do people marry for love or opportunities?

Are there arranged marriages in Bellville?

Are people dating? Is this acceptable?

How do you feel about dating or marrying someone that is not Somali?

Are there more divorces in South Africa?

What happens when there is conflict within a marriage?

Now that some women are working, how has that influenced relations in the home?

6. Experiences as a Muslim Woman in South Africa

Have there been any changes in the way Islam is practiced in South Africa, compared to Somalia?

What role does the Mosque play in women's lives?

Tell me about the religious leaders, do women go to them if they need help with something?

How do you feel about dress codes in Islam?

What does it mean to you to wear hijab or Islamic forms of dress? Tell me about an experience where wearing your hijab or Islamic form of dress was important to you?

Do you often interact with Muslims that are not Somali?

Have you ever felt any kind of discrimination based on your religion here in Cape Town?

Could you depend on other Muslims through the process of migrating?

7. Life in South Africa

How would you describe the Somali community in Cape Town?

What do you like about living in South Africa?

What are the most challenging aspects of everyday life in Cape Town?

Have you had any negative experiences with other migrants, South Africans or the police?

Tell me about your family and community responsibilities in Cape Town?

How are these different from your responsibilities in Somalia?

How have women responsibilities changed in Cape Town?

Do women have more power in South Africa?

Do you see yourself going back to Somalia?

Do you have children in school?

What are your experiences of raising your children in South Africa, compared to Somalia?

8. Social Networks

When you were thinking about migrating, did you already have relatives or friends living in Cape Town?

Did they encourage or help you to come to South Africa?

Do you have friends that you meet here in Cape Town? Where are they from?

Where do you go meet and spend time with people?

How do you feel about interacting with people who are different to you?

What language do you use when speaking with South Africans and other migrants?

Is it important to speak and understand South African languages?

Is the clan identity important in South Africa?

Do you belong to any social groups or organisations?

Have you ever gone to any organisation or person for help, to find work or to borrow money, or for other things like information?

Please tell me about your future plans and aspirations

Is there anything else you would like to share with me?