'It's easy for us to move': The imaginaries behind Somalis' transnational journeys

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Master thesis

‘It’s easy for us to move’: The imaginaries behind Somalis’ transnational journeys

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Abstract

Somalis have been engaging in national and transnational migration for centuries. In the past, their relocation has often been fuelled by pastoralism and trade and later, more forcefully, by civil war. In more recent times, imaginaries about destination countries seem to be shaping the mobilities of Somalis in the diaspora. In the context of the massive onward migration of Somalis from the Netherlands to England around the year 2000, this thesis attempted to gain insight into Somalis' imaginaries about future destinations through semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Special attention was paid to content and sources of imaginaries, and to differences along the lines of gender and generations. The data was analysed through coding and through an anthropological and psychological lens. Results indicate that imaginaries mostly revolve around England and Somalia, although actual plans for migration only exist towards Somalia. While in the past imaginaries were mostly formed based on oral information, today social media and personal country visits are creating more nuanced imaginaries. Furthermore, compared to the first generation, younger Somalis are more cautious in forming positive imaginaries about destination countries. Future research should include educational background and observe how transnational migration trends among the Somali community in the Netherlands take shape across generations and in the future.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Now more than ever, people are mobile and pursue migration. Most of the time, people migrate in search for better physical or mental wellbeing. Some search for better education, some for better working conditions, and yet others search for a life free of war torments. In the early 90s, a few thousand Somalis arrived in the Netherlands for the latter reason, fleeing the political unrest in their home country (van Liempt, 2011). In the Netherlands, one would imagine that a safe environment awaited them, free of civil or political unrest. Still, ten years after their arrival, several thousand 'Dutch' Somalis migrated further to England. In general, the Somali diaspora shows high levels of mobility, with Somalis around the world frequently engaging in transnational movements. From the outside, this is surprising: why would refugees that have fled a warzone in their home country not stay settled in a 'safe' country such as the Netherlands? Why would they migrate even further?

Scholars like Salazar have tried to explain such onward migration through positive or even idealistic imaginaries that people have about other destination countries (Salazar, 2018). The question remains: What drives the high transnational mobility of the Somali diaspora? If imaginaries are indeed a driving factor behind Somalis' departure towards the UK, then what do these imaginaries look like and what is their role in Somalis' onward migration? This thesis attempted to find an answer to this question by taking an ethnographic approach supplemented by psychological theories.

This topic was chosen inspired by the stories about transnational movements that I have encountered in my personal life. My Pakistani grandfather migrated from Pakistan to Lebanon, Turkey, Greece and ultimately Germany through onward migration, driven by imaginaries about a better life in his next destination country. These positive imaginaries have often fascinated me because not only did they impact my grandfather's life, but also the life of my parents, siblings and me. Likewise, I am fascinated by imaginaries and their potential impact in other migrants' lives. As I have heard in many migrant stories, migrant trajectories are often much more complex than one might expect and fuelled by all sorts of factors. Viewing refugees as active agents of their own migrant trajectories instead of helpless subjects of civil war can help readjust our perception of such groups. Additionally, as a daughter of migrants I have experienced the challenges of migrant lives first-hand. Sadly, Somalis in the Netherlands are subjected to numerous negative assumptions in the public discourse. For this reason, this thesis attempts to give a voice and platform to Somali voices and stories as told by themselves. It would be my personal pleasure to help reduce unjust negative assumptions about Somalis through this research, and to contribute to a more holistic view of factors that can shape transnational movement.

Research questions

When looking at imaginaries and migration, it becomes clear that these concepts are often closely connected. As Salazar argues, imaginaries have been identified as one of the driving forces for mobility and migration (Salazar, 2018). For example, a common imaginary is to view Europe as an integrated space where free movement and work across EU countries is possible (Dimitriadis, 2020, p. 102). Furthermore, imaginaries have been used by immigration scholars to explain how migrants choose their next destination country, namely by imagining a certain hierarchy between countries (Pajo, 2008, p. 10). Among the most common imaginaries about destination countries are ideas about less discrimination, stable working contracts and connection to a larger group of one's own ethnicity (Wajsberg, 2020).

Despite this apparent connection between imaginaries and migration, with the exception of Della Puppa and King (2019) little research has been done on the role of imaginaries in onward migration. Onward migration refers to the relocation of immigrants to a country other than their initial host country (Dimitriadis 2020, pp. 135-6).

Based on these considerations, I have come to the following research question:

What imaginaries about the Netherlands and destination countries shape Somalis' onward migration?

This question was unpacked through the following sub-questions:
(1) What are Somalis' dominant imaginaries about the Netherlands and destination countries?
(2) What are the sources of Somalis' imaginaries?
(3) How do imaginaries differ along the lines of gender and generations?

The first sub-question draws on the assumption that Somalis pursue onward migration away from the Netherlands based on certain negative imaginaries about the Netherlands and/or positive imaginaries about other destination countries. The second sub-question adds on to this, tapping into the sources of Somalis' imaginaries. Here, it was expected that social media, Somalis' experiences in a country, and conversations they have with fellow Somalis about elsewhere inform their imaginaries. The third sub-question is based on literature that suggests different motivations for onward migration exist depending on gender and between first- and second-generation migrants (Moret, 2018, pp. 55; 68; 75). As part of these questions, the concepts 'onward migration', 'imaginaries', as well as 'sense of belonging' and 'narratives about nomadism' were explored, as will be further explained on page 28(?) under 'Operationalization'.

This thesis is structured in the following way. I will firstly dive into the context of Somalis in the Netherlands, ranging from Somalia's colonial history to Somali communities in the Netherlands. Continuing, the methodology used in this thesis is presented, followed by positionality and ethical

considerations. Subsequently, the theoretical framework is discussed, going from relevant academic debates to literature specific to my research concepts. The three data analysis chapters that follow relate to the research questions in the following way: Chapter 4 relates to the first research question, while Chapter 5 relates to the third research question. Chapter 7 presents data that was found through an inductive approach, and mainly relates to the first research question. Lastly, data relating to the second research question can be found in Chapter 6 under 'Generational differences', and throughout Chapter 5. In 'Chapter 8: Conclusions', an answer to the main research question and all three sub-questions is presented, as well as suggestions for future research.

Context of this thesis

Situation in Somalia prior to the 90's

To understand the potential factors shaping Somalis' mobility, it is important to gain an overview of Somalia's history. Laying at the tip of the horn of Africa by the Indian Ocean, Somalia has gone through many changes with regards to its borders and its residents. Before being colonized by Italy, France and England, Somalia had not yet seen many alterations to its borders. 'Greater Somalia', as the original area is called today, encompassed Somalia, South Djibouti, and a large part of East Ethiopia and East Kenya (Moret, 2018). Upon leaving, the European colonial powers created new borders that have resulted in the Somalia that we know today (Enough Project, 2012). Identity-wise, this has created an interesting dynamic among the Somali diaspora where many people from South Djibouti and other former 'Somali' areas still consider themselves ethnically Somali, while others might challenge this idea (Moret, 2018, p. 26). Moreover, many Somalis fantasize about the Pan-Somali dream in which all former parts of Somalia will be reunited, as my interviewees told me. For this reason, the term 'Somali' can both refer to the national citizens of the Federal Republic of Somalia, and to the ethnicity of all those people who believe that they share a common Somali ancestry (Moret, 2018, p. 26). Among my own sample, one man was born in Djibouti, and two women's parents originated from today's Ethiopia, yet all of them considered themselves Somali.

Traditionally, Somalia has been a clan-based society. The major clan families include Darod, Dir, Issaq, Hawiye and Rahanweyn as well as other minority clans (UNICEF, 2013). While clan-based affiliations are still present in the diaspora, they play a lesser role for the Somali community in the Netherlands. Furthermore, different languages have been present in different parts of Somalia. While the north-western region of former British Somaliland was introduced to British English, Italian was introduced in the south-eastern region of former Italian Somaliland. Through the spread of Islam in the country, Arabic became another language that was spoken by many Somalis. According to my interviewees, the prevalence of these languages resulted in different preferences of destination countries among Somali refugees. Somalis originating from north-western Somalia often targeted England as a destination, while Somalis from the southeast often fled to Italy after the civil war. However, due to the poor reception and lack of benefits for Somali refugees in Italy, many Somalis left

and migrated further to the Netherlands, Sweden or England.

As has been noted, migration is not new to Somalia (Moret, 2018). Historically, nomadic movements in the context of pastoralism have long been a strategy for people to navigate resources and certain environmental conditions in Somalia (Majok & Schwabe, 1996, pp. 35-37). Mobile pastoralism refers to seasonal movements based on climate conditions and resource availability (Bille, 1997). In 2013, UNICEF reported that the majority of Somalis living in Somalia led a life of mobile pastoralism (UNICEF, 2013). It should be noted, however, that this life predominantly exists in the north of Somalia, while there is agriculture in the south (Rousseau, Said, Gagne, & Bibeau, 1998).

On the other hand, Somalia had also long been a center for trade and commerce. Dating back to at least the 7th century, Somalia's advantageous position by the ocean made it a key stop on the Silk Road trade route and made it an important hub for traders from countries like India or China (Forum of Federations, 2022). Somalia's profitable involvement in global trade lasted up until the mid-20th century when tensions arose in the context of the country's newly gained independence. Up until that time, it was not uncommon for Somali men to migrate to other countries for trade. Combined with the high mobility of mobile pastoralists, the idea of moving to a different place was not novel to Somalis in general, even before fleeing the country in the context of civil war. These two forms of mobility, mobile pastoralism and trade, remain important lifestyles in Somalia even today and play an important part in many Somalis' idea of 'Somaliness' (Horst, 2006; Moret, 2018, p. 28). Interestingly, most Somalis that fled the country at the onset of civil war in the early 90s led an urban and rather sedentary lifestyle. Nevertheless, many continue to refer to nomadism as an important part of their own identity (Moret, 2018, p. 29; Engebrigtsen, 2011). According to Moret (2018), it is often a romanticized, idealized version of nomadism that Somali refugees refer to when explaining their mobilities in the diaspora (Moret, 2018, p. 29).

Linked to the concept of imaginaries, Somalia has been known for its long oral tradition in the form of poetry, stories and more. According to Jama (1994), this tradition is century-old and practiced by both men and women. Even today, the tradition of orally passing on poems, proverbs and riddles to younger generations allover the world continues to remain strong. This oral form of information transmission is used both as a form of communication as well as an educational tool (Jama, 1994). Rather than being mere forms of entertainment, Somali poems and proverbs have become even more important in times of conflict as they were used to spread information and empower people.

Civil war as an initiator of new mobilities

In 1960, Somalia gained independence and reunited former British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland under the banner of the United Republic of Somalia (Moret, 2018, p. 27). The disorganized state of the government led to a bloodless coup by General Mohammed Siyad Barre in 1969 who vowed to leave clan-based affiliations behind and dreamed of reuniting all former Somali regions. However, Barre's loyalty to his own clan and his invasion into Ogaden, a Somali-speaking region in East-Ethiopia,

resulted in a bloody war and ultimately in Barre's fall in early 1991 (Moret, 2018, p. 27). This event initiated the emigration of around one million Somalis, 20,000 of which arrived in the Netherlands (van Liempt, 2011). In the 20 years following Barre's fall, Somaliland in the Northwest proclaimed its independence and has become a relatively stable political region. Puntland announced a regional autonomous state in 1998 and is more frequently disturbed by terrorist activities (Meyer, 2010).

It is difficult to estimate how many Somalis fled the country since the beginning of the civil war and what their destination countries have been. According to van Hear (2005), by the end of the 90s there were asylum applications in more than 60 countries that had been filed by Somalis. It is estimated that around one million Somalis live outside of Somalia, and that another million live internally displaced (Sheikh & Healy, 2009). While most Somalis have relocated to neighboring countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia or Djibouti, a second group has settled in the Gulf states, and a third group in Western countries like England, Sweden or the Netherlands (Hammond et al., 2011). However, considering Somalis' strong tendencies to relocate, destination countries continue to change. What becomes clear from these findings is that mobility has not been new to Somali lifestyles even before the civil war but has considerately increased since the early 90s.

Situation of Somalis in the Netherlands

The first Somali refugees arrived in the Netherlands in the early 1990s after fleeing the fall of Siad Barre and following civil war in their home country. In the Netherlands, a safe environment awaited them, although it presented new challenges to the newly arriving Somalis. More recently, around 2010, another, smaller wave of Somali refugees has entered the Netherlands due to rising tensions in Somalia (SCP, 2017, p. 145). Among both of these groups of refugees, a considerable amount of onward migration towards the UK has been observed (SCP, 2017, pp. 146-6). The Somali diaspora in the Netherlands can thus be divided into two waves, an earlier generation of migrants most of whom now have children, and a younger generation consisting of mostly males in their twenties or thirties (SCP, 2017).

Socio-economic and educational status

Generally speaking, Somali refugees that arrived in the Netherlands more recently seem to do worse than older refugees. Due to the continuous unrest and instability in Somalia, refugees arriving in more recent years tend to show a much lower educational background than other refugees (SCP, 2017, p. 147). Moreover, among the more recent refugees group a stronger self-identification towards Somalia has been observed. However, also Somalis who have arrived in the Netherlands earlier as well as persons born to Somali parents in the Netherlands show lower levels of socio-economic status and integration than other non-Western groups. Somalis in fact show the highest unemployment rate among all migrant and refugee groups in the Netherlands. (Andriessen, Gijsberts, Huijink, & Nicolaas, 2017).

Furthermore, according to CBS [Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek], compared to other youth groups, criminality rates in the Netherlands are one of the highest among Somali youngsters (CBS Jaarrapport Integratie 2018, 2018). Education-wise, we can see a similarly negative performance. Statistics from CBS show that among all non-Western migrant groups, Somali youth is the least likely to pursue a secondary education (CBS Jaarrapport Integratie 2018, 2018).

A dispersed community

An important characteristic of the Somali community in the Netherlands is that many families have one parent or sibling(s) living in a different country than the rest of the family. On the one hand, this is because of the way in which many Somalis had to leave Somalia in the wake of 1991's civil war. This forced migration was in most cases abrupt, and confronted by many challenges including the inability to travel with one's entire family. Moreover, Somalis' migration to Europa has hardly been a straightforward journey. Quite the opposite, some refugees' trajectories led them to Kenya while others fled to Ethiopia, both being Somalia's neighbours. For some family members, these places ultimately became their places of settlement, while other members continued the journey to Europe (Gundel, 2003). In Europe, the massive onward migration of Somalis from the Netherlands to England around the year 2000 led to additional dispersal within families that had lived together in the Netherlands up until then. As we will see in Chapters 4 to 7, already in my relatively small sample of 24 interviewees this dispersal within families can be noticed.

Around 2017, the number of Somalis living in the Netherlands had grown to around 40,000. When Somalis newly arrived in the Netherlands, they were subjected to a dispersal policy which places refugees in different areas of the Netherlands, dispersing them throughout the country (Darling, 2014). Officially, the idea behind this is to 'share the burden' of welcoming refugees into one's municipality, such as spreading the financial costs of housing. In addition, it is a way to avoid politicization of refugee presence in one particular area (Darling, 2014). In practice, this means that refugees are often placed into smaller towns which typically offer a more difficult environment for migrants to get used to. Although much problematized, the Dutch dispersal policy has not undergone any big changes since it was first introduced (van Liempt & Miellet, 2020).

Its criticisms include that refugees' preferences for housing and social environment are often neglected. As Witteborn (2011) notes, being resettled into small towns especially proves to be a struggle for refugees who feel distanced from other migrant communities with whom they want to connect to (Witteborn, 2011). Considering that most Somalis describe themselves as group-oriented, many Somalis pursue intra-national migration to be closer to fellow Somalis (van Heelsum, 2011). Generally, a large part of the Somali community resides in the West of the Netherlands, especially in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Around 40% of Somalis in the Netherlands have a recognized refugee status (van Heelsum, 2011).

Integration issues

Although most Somalis have lived here for several decades, statistics show that Somali migrants are among the least integrated ones in the Netherlands. Researchers have identified Somalis' generally low educational background as a reason for this (SCP, 2017). Only around 8% have attended higher education, and more than half went no further than primary school. The exception to this low educational attainment are Somalis born in the Netherlands or who arrived at an early age. Another challenge to Somalis' integration is stereotypical assumptions in Dutch society about Somalis such as being criminals or freeloaders. Furthermore, the increasingly negative picture about Islam among Dutch people presents another challenge for the predominantly Muslim Somalis (Open Society Foundations, 2014).

A possible reason behind Somalis' struggles might be the lack of an organised, nation-wide educational system in Somalia at the moment when most Somalis fled to the Netherlands. Furthermore, Somalia has long focused on its oral tradition instead of written language (Afrax, 2022). In contrast, the Netherlands has had a strong emphasis on written script and on the mastering of the Dutch language. 1983 saw the introduction of the *Ethnic Minorities Policy* applied to migrants and refugees with a non-Western background which encouraged people to integrate into Dutch society through training courses and more but also did not hinder their personal cultural expressions (Vasta, 2007). After the intended integration goals were not met, a new Integration Policy was introduced in 1994 which set up much more strict rules in the process of 'becoming Dutch'. Over time, more and more policies like obligatory Dutch language courses and social orientation courses were implemented, parallel to rising anti-immigration sentiments around the country (Siedenberg, 2004).

Since the mid- '90s, the Netherlands has moved away from multiculturalism, which emphasizes immigrants' ability to participate in society and their right to express their cultural identity (Vasta, 2007, p. 734), and towards assimilationism. As Vasta describes, in the case of the Netherlands this has resulted in a system that obligates immigrants to adopt Dutch culture and sanctions deviations from it (Vasta, 2007, p.734). As one of my interviewees has pointed out, this can result in feeling less able to express one's religious identity and can even fuel thoughts of emigration.

Orientation towards Somalia and Islam

According to a report by SCP, over time Somalis' hardships have resulted in a stronger identification towards Somalia among Somalis in the Netherlands. In 2017, around 84% of Somalis strongly identified with their home country, an increase of 16% compared to six years earlier (SCP, 2017, p. 149). Moreover, although the majority of Somalis reports that they are satisfied with life in the Netherlands, there has been a strong decrease in their reported sense of belonging in the country. Additionally, Somalis are feeling increasingly distanced from native Dutch persons. This is interesting because in other migrant groups, the perceived distance has been getting less (SCP, 2017, p. 150).

Moreover, for Somalis the extent of perceived discrimination has been increasing as well. These numbers suggest a general worsening of Somalis' financial, social and integration position in Dutch society. This has been attributed to the more recent influx of younger Somalis, which has changed the profile of the Somali community in the Netherlands. It is suggested that because illiteracy and thereby unemployment rates are higher in this group compared to 'older' Somali migrants, the general numbers of the Somali group have worsened.

Another aspect that has to be considered is the relatively more vulnerable position Somalis in the Netherlands are in compared to other Muslim communities. Unlike most other Muslim migrants in the Netherlands, Somalis generally do not have religious organisation in the form of Somali mosques or well-known religious leaders (van Heelsum, 2011, p. 15). This prevents the interconnectedness of Somalis among each other through their religion. Additionally, specific traditions practiced in Somalia seem to be isolating them from other Muslim migrants, namely the practice of female genital mutilation which is unfortunately still practiced across Somalia (van Heelsum, 2011). This practice is not only forbidden by Dutch and human rights law but is also not accepted by other Muslim communities and is rather seen as pagan (van Heelsum, 2011, p. 15). For these reasons, Somalis in the Netherlands seem to not only have a hard time connecting to native Dutch persons, but also to other Muslim migrants.

In this context, it is important to mention the concept of intersectionality. Intersectionality refers to the intersections of various aspects of our identities such as gender, race, class and religion (Center for Intersectional Justice, 2022). Somalis in the Netherlands often belong to both the Black community and the Muslim community, both of which are frequently subjected to discrimination. In addition, Somali women face additional discrimination on the basis of gender. In the last decade, increasingly more attention has been paid to the intersection of race and Islam (Garner & Selod, 2015; Husain, 2017; Selod & Embrick, 2013). In their research about the racialization of Muslim college women in the U.S., Karaman and Christian found that all Muslim women of their sample population were subjected to acts of discrimination (2020). This was especially the case for Muslim women that wore a *Hijab*, as their intersectional identity was more visible than of those without a Hijab (Karaman & Christian, 2020, p. 518).

This finding confirms the idea that Somali women, being a population that commonly wears the Hijab, are more likely to be confronted with discriminatory acts than non-*Hijabi* Muslimas. Furthermore, Karaman and Christian write that the particular intersection of female gender, dark skin color and Islam should receive more attention by scholars due to the hardships it often places its recipients in (Karaman & Christian, 2020, p. 522; p. 530). This particular combination of race, religion and, for women, gender hinders Somalis' integration even more.

Somali organisations

As a way of connecting with and helping each other, many Somali organisations have been established across the country, with most of them being in the West of the Netherlands. These organisations are

led by the *Federatie van Somalische Associaties Nederland* (FSAN), an umbrella organisation that currently counts in around 50 Somali organisations in the Netherlands. Many of these organisations try to offer a piece of home to their members. During meetings with two separate organisations, the *Stichting Somaliers Haarlem en Omgeving* (SSHO) based in Haarlem and *Stichting Sador* in Hoofddorp, I could observe that Somali is the preferred language among members. Also, many organisations state that they aim to bring Somali culture closer to the first generation of Somalis born in the Netherlands. This is often done through lessons about Somali words and customs, and Arabic and Quran courses.

Furthermore, almost all organisations share the goal of supporting Somalis' integration process into Dutch society. This is often done by organising seminars on topics like democracy, the Dutch healthcare system, how to do certain paperwork, and more. Also, many organisations offer Dutch language courses or help members to find a language course elsewhere. My conversations with Somali organisations have made it clear that Somalis have clear imaginaries about life in other countries, mostly about England. Most people that were approached through such organisations were eager to share their imaginaries with me.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Approach

This thesis took an ethnographic approach using semi-structured, open interviews and participant observation as its key research methods. These methods were chosen based on their suitability to observe and understand meaning-making from the participants' perspective (Bryman, 2012, p. 399). Furthermore, as imaginaries are a psychological concept, this research took an interdisciplinary approach, integrating psychoanalytical insights into my interviews and psychological theories into my data analysis. By taking an interdisciplinary approach, I have attempted to expand on the current academic literature by working on the boundary between the anthropological understanding of onward migration, and the psychological understanding of internal imagination processes. As we will see in my data analysis, insights from anthropology and psychology are often amenable, especially so in the case of this research topic. This interdisciplinary approach also allowed me to make use of my background in psychology.

Interviews

A qualitative and interpretive stance was taken for the methodology of this master's thesis. Interviews can have a dialogical nature and are therefore a meaning-making experience for both the interviewer and the interviewee. Scholars have encouraged researchers to establish a relationship of trust and respect with their interviewee which can enable them to relate to the interviewee to the extent of recognizing nonverbal cues and giving more appropriate follow-up questions (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). Having such a dialogue and establishment of a relationship is made possible by conducting interviews. Considering that topics like future migration plans or sense of belonging might be sensitive, it is crucial to establish a trust relationship to be able to peek behind the 'front stage' (Bryman, 2012, p. 218; Goffman, 1959). Furthermore, scholars argue that interviews can give a voice to marginalized people who have not often been asked about topics that the research is dealing with. In such cases, the interview can have cathartic and empowering characteristics for the interviewee which in turn might make them more eager to share their experience and thoughts (Hiller & Diluzio, 2004, p. 5). As Somalis in the Netherlands are among the least integrated migrants, it was deemed important to give a voice to their stories.

In the context of this research, 24 semi-structured interviews were conducted. These interviews had the goal of tapping into the concepts relevant to this research, while at the same time giving space to the interviewee to freely take the lead on their narrative. In this way, it was attempted to create a space that would allow for 'free association'. Free association refers to the psychological technique that encourages the person to freely express any thoughts that come into their mind (Rabeyron & Massicotte, 2020). Through this technique, formerly unconscious thoughts and conflicts might come to the surface. Initially, it was intended to conduct structured interviews and life history interviews.

However, during my interviews it soon turned out that people, especially first-generation Somalis, were more comfortable to talk in a shorter and less structured manner. Therefore, a freer, semi-structured interview approach was adopted which allowed my interlocutors greater freedom to take the interview into directions that they deemed important. A similar approach was employed by Lindner who conducted qualitative interviews with Somalis in Somalia in the late 90ies (Lindner, 2000, p. 5).

In the context of free association, a new research concept emerged: the concept of nomadism. Especially during my conversations with second-generation interviewees, the interviews were taken into such new and unexpected directions and interviewees seemed to be engaging in free association. Besides nomadism, second-generation interviewees mentioned their split sense of belonging between the Netherlands and Somalia, and struggles in expressing their Muslim identity. Several interviewees mentioned their own surprise of bringing such topics into the conversation. Linked to this, it has been argued that through retelling one's personal story, the interviewee can become aware of formerly unconscious aspects of their lives (Maynes et al. 2008). This aspect is also beneficial to study imaginaries, part of which are often unconscious as well.

Respecting the interviewee's free-flowing narrative, no considerable interruptions were made to their story, even if less relevant details were shared. This open-ended approach was taken to ensure the interviewee's comfort and respect. As Maynes and colleagues point out, narrators of less structured conversations may find themselves in a vulnerable position, often sharing intimate details about their personal life with the interviewer (Maynes et al., 2008). This makes it important for the researcher to limit the structuring of the interview with too many questions or interruptions. Still, the aimed focus of interviews was relevant imaginaries around onward migration. The risk of re-opening traumatic memories had to be considered as well (ibid, p. 40). To mitigate this risk, attention was paid to remarks that might have been triggering for respondents. Most Somalis have fled their country due to civil war and might have had traumatic memories of violence or personal losses. Because of this potential sensitivity it was crucial to quickly identify hesitations or discomfort in the interviewee, and to formulate an action plan for such situations. In such cases, the conversation was either steered into a different direction, or the interviewee was asked if they felt comfortable enough to continue or not.

Participant observation

Through participant observation, anthropologists hope to immerse themselves in their participants' everyday life through observing and participating in it, in order to interpret the social world through the participants' perspective and thereby obtain material for 'thick descriptions' (Bryman, 2012, p. 399). Since I as researcher was not familiar with Somali life in the Netherlands, it seemed only appropriate to attempt a sense of understanding through participant observation. More specifically, I joined a ten-women group in Haarlem in five of their weekly breakfast meetings on a political debate, a community dinner organised by different migrant and elderly communities in Haarlem, and an event

in the context of Women's Day on 8 March. All these events took place in the *Schalkwijk* neighbourhood in Haarlem, in the context of my interactions with the organisation SSHO. As I researched concepts that might have been personal and sensitive for some participants such as 'sense of belonging' and future migration plans, it was crucial to establish rapport and trust. By joining in seemingly mundane activities and casual conversation, I was able to establish such a relationship with many of my interlocutors.

Over the course of my fieldwork, the Somali organisation SSHO, based in the *Schalkwijk* neighbourhood in Haarlem, became my most stable pool of interviewees and information. I first met with two staff members of SSHO two months before my fieldwork started and explained my research to them. As SSHO aims to connect the Somali community in Haarlem to non-Somalis, they were happy to help me in finding interviewees and inviting me to relevant events. The weekly breakfast events were organised by Amal who is the wife of one of SSHO's staff members. The breakfast group included around ten to 15 Somali women and one Sudanese woman who all lived in or close to *Schalkwijk*. Every Thursday, Amal organised the food and we would convene in SSHO's main conference room. I was able to attend five breakfast meetings.

Besides this, I was invited to a debate that took place in the context of Haarlem's municipal elections. On 16 February, eleven representatives of different Dutch political parties were invited to the *Schalkwijk* community centre, located next to SSHO's building. The event was attended by many Somalis and SSHO staff members, members of the Turkish and Syrian migrant community, the elderly community, and more. During this event, I was able to overhear which topics the Somali community deems relevant or irrelevant. In addition, I was invited to an event for the International Women's Day on 8 March. In this event, many Somali women and women of other non-Western and Dutch backgrounds came together in the Schalkwijk community centre for coffee and cake. Lastly, on 13 March, I attended a '*Ruiken en Proeven'* event (English: smelling and tasting) organised by the Somali, Turkish and Syrian communities in *Schalkwijk* which intended to invite outsiders to 'taste' their culture. These last two events allowed me to overhear topics that are seen as important to Somalis and their group dynamics when together with fellow Somalis and non-Somalis.

Unlike in surveys or interviews, I as researcher could limit my degree of interference over my interlocutors' flow of conversation and thoughts more during participant observation. In other words, I could observe how and when the topic of 'onward migration' came up among Somalis, and if and in which way it was connected to 'sense of belonging' or 'nomadism'. In some cases, short follow-up questions were asked during conversations. Participant observation also held the advantage of observing group dynamics. For example, during my breakfast meetings with the Haarlem women's group I was able to observe what topics are important for Somali mothers. In addition, following the words of Fassin, there is a lot of valuable information to find in the 'mundane' if one is patient enough to observe it (Fassin, 2013, p. 628).

During my meetings with the women's group in Haarlem, I was sometimes faced with the

challenge of language barriers. Especially among the first-generation Somali migrants in the Netherlands, it is relatively common to ask children who are fluent in Dutch to help out with paperwork or phone calls in Dutch (Johnsdotter, 2015). This indicates a preference to converse in Somali among the first generation, making it harder for someone like me to understand and interact. Indeed, during many breakfast meetings the Somali women spoke in Somali to each other, leaving me unable to follow their conversation. However, at the end of each topic the main organizer of the breakfast translated and explained to me what they had spoken about. In this way I was able to roughly follow their conversations, however many details probably got lost in translation. During the other events I attended, I could observe that although many first-generation Somalis have a preference to speak Somali, they were also very open to conversations in Dutch with non-Somalis.

Ethical considerations

According to the American Anthropological Association (AAA, 2012), the following seven aspects have to be considered for anthropological research of any kind: 'Do no harm', be it to humans or non-human primates and animals, refers to avoiding any kind of physical harm, distress, loss of self-esteem or dignity, especially if the research surrounds a vulnerable population (AAA, 2012, p. 2). In contrast, anthropologists should strive for the "promotion of well-being, social critique or advocacy" for participants through their research (AAA, 2012, p. 2). 'Be open and honest about your work' demands transparency regarding research purpose, methods, results and sponsors. Linked to this, the principle 'Obtain informed consent and necessary permissions' asks for the voluntary and informed consent of participants (AAA, 2012, p. 4). 'Weigh competing ethical obligations due collaborators and affected parties' refers to the tensions between what is best for participants versus for their research or university; this includes informing participants of any change in research purpose, methods, or other. In any case, the obligations towards participants will remain superior. 'Make your results accessible' refers to the obligation of the same name. Lastly, 'Protect and preserve your records' and 'Maintain respectful and ethical professional relationships' both refer to the obligation of protection of and respect for participants beyond one's research. For this research, all the aforementioned ethical obligations were reflected on and followed before, during and after the research.

In particular, a universalist ethical stance was adopted, with the intention of never breaking any ethical precept (Bryman, 2012, p. 130). According to this stance, ethics must remain a superior concern at all times and can never be broken, no matter the circumstance. Considering that this research takes place in the context of a Dutch university, also the ethical guidelines of the Dutch Association for Anthropology (Abv, 2018) were considered; these overlap with the AAA. Lastly, considering the COVID-19 pandemic, additional guidelines were implemented, such as staying home when having a fever or symptoms of a cold and wearing a face mask (Universiteit Leiden, 2021).

For this research in specific, several ethical challenges can be identified. My position as a researcher from a university automatically put me into a position of perceived authority and higher

hierarchy. This might have resulted in participants feeling indirectly forced to agree to participation or might have led to the misunderstanding that by participating in the research, they might receive material, financial or social rewards from me. In this case, consent becomes not entirely voluntary, but motivated by other agendas or feelings. It was even more crucial then to correctly present the purposes of this research to all participants.

In order to minimize the aforementioned challenges around consent, the following steps were taken. Informed consent was asked during initial contact with the participant, right before the actual interview, and was checked again after the interview. At the end of an interview, it was asked if the participant is comfortable with their narrative being published, or if they wished for certain parts to be omitted. Data of all participants was stored in a safe place that only I could access.

For this research specifically, the issue of anonymity and consent is more important than usually. As mentioned earlier my findings are being published both in the form of my Master Thesis as well as in a personal blog. This two-fold output had to be sufficiently explained to participants. To do so, four participants who were found to be open and talkative were asked if they would like to be featured on a blog as well. After asking informed consent at the beginning of an interview, I presented the idea of my blog to these four participants, and that I plan to create two forms of output from my research. It was made clear to participants that the primary purpose of the interview is to serve my thesis, but that participants were welcome to be published on my blog as well if they were comfortable with this. For the latter form of output, it was more fitting to publish the narratives of persons who are willing to give up their anonymity.

Lastly, as mentioned before, with Somalia being in conflict and war-ridden, Somali interlocutors might have had traumatic experiences. An appropriate action plan to identify and mitigate triggering situations was formulated and included in my ethical review form.

Positionality

Another aspect to consider is the impact that my personal position has had on this research. I experienced both advantages and disadvantages from my position as a daughter of Pakistani parents who migrated to Germany. On the one hand, this position put me in a somewhat similar position as my Somali interlocutors. Both my interlocutors and me are living in a country that does not fully match with our cultural background, and like them I also am a Muslim. During my conversations with my interviewees and other interlocutors, people therefore frequently commented on the collective struggles that Muslim migrants and refugees of colour often face in European countries. In these comments, I was included into the struggles that Somalis face outside of Somalia. My position as a migrant of colour was especially advantageous because the Somali community is relatively closed off to outsiders, partly due to language barriers and partly due to suspicion. Based on their negative experiences in transit countries, asylum centres and other challenging steps towards resettlement, refugees often become suspicious to outsiders. I experienced both the language barrier and suspicion but was able to overcome

them by appealing to my interlocutors as a fellow migrant who wants to reduce the negative image about Somalis in the Netherlands through her research.

Furthermore, my position as a woman greatly helped me to approach Somali women. Seven out of 13 female interviewees told me that me being a woman made it easier for them to open up to me during our conversations. Lastly, my position as a second-generation migrant in a Western country helped me to bond with my second-generation interviewees. I was able to empathize with comments on how second-generation migrants have to help the first generation in paperwork and more, and how this can often result in the second generation having to grow up faster. Also, I have experienced the expectations that many migrant parents put on their children first-hand. In this way, my own background facilitated much of my conversations with female and with second-generation respondents.

On the other hand, one could argue that my positionality limited me in some ways. For example, as I have never experienced a situation of war, it was more difficult for me to estimate which topics exactly could be triggering and should be avoided, and in which ones to dig deeper. Also, the fact that I can personally relate to many of the struggles that were mentioned by my research population potentially created a biased vision in me. Furthermore, as a woman I have experienced less openness from several male interviewees who might not be used to being questioned by a female. Lastly, the fact that interlocutors might relate to me based on my migrant background also proved challenging in a few instances. As is common in members of struggling communities, struggling migrants often ask each other for help in paperwork or translating things, among others. During a few of my interviews, I was asked for such help by my interviewees. For example, one of my female interviewees asked me to help her daughter with applying for study grants. In situations like this, I had to clarify the extent to which I am able and willing to help, without it being detrimental to the professional relationship between me and my interlocutors.

This research sample

During the course of this fieldwork, 24 qualitative, semi-structured interviews were conducted. All interviewees were currently living in the Netherlands and identified themselves as Somali. Interviewees' age ranged from 18 to 58, with the mean age being 35 years. Three people, one man and two women, originated from Djibouti and Ethiopia respectively but considered themselves to be ethnically Somali. Among my interviewees, eleven were males and 13 females. 13 people considered themselves as first-generation Somalis and eleven as second-generation Somalis. Regarding anonymity, eight out of 24 interviewees wished to remain anonymous. Initially, it was planned to include the variable 'level of education' into this research. However, as only limited data could be collected on this variable, level of education was not analysed.

In the following chapters, I will mainly refer to my participants as 'interviewees' and as 'interlocutors'. The term 'interviewees' is used in situations where I refer to a comment or observation that was taken from an interview with the participant in question. The term 'interlocutor' is used when

a comment or observation was taken from any other moment, for example during events that I observed or in conversations besides the formal interview setting.

Following is a table depicting the most important sample information. For a more detailed table, refer to Table 2 in the Appendix.

Table 1: Interviewees' demographics (brief)

Participant number	Gender	Age	Generation
1	Male	58	First
2	Female	In 50's	First
3	Male	48	First
4	Male	37	First
5	Male	In 30's	First
6	Male	37	First
7	Male	57	First
8	Female	In 40's	First
9	Female	18	Second
10	Male	52	First
11	Male	32	First
12	Male	45	First
13	Female	25	Second
14	Female	35	First
15	Female	23	Second
16	Female	19	Second
17	Female	52	First
18	Female	20	Second
19	Female	25	Second
20	Female	26	Second
21	Female	In 20's	Second
22	Male	30	Second
23	Female	24	Second
24	Male	30	Second

Sampling

The main sampling method employed in this fieldwork was convenience sampling. Initially, it was intended to make use of snowball sampling, however this method proved to be difficult as most interlocutors did not want to act as gatekeepers for further interviewees. Therefore, from early on rapport was established with staff members of the Somali organisation SSHO, which made me appear more trustworthy to other Somalis within the organisation. During several meetings and events with SSHO, people who appeared to be open to talk were approached for an interview. Besides this, most second-generation interviewees were approached through LinkedIn searches. All six people who agreed to be interviewed in this online search were ultimately interviewed. Towards the end of data

collection, a purposive sampling approach was employed to obtain a balance regarding gender and generation of the research sample.

Research units

Considering my research questions, the two criterions of gender and generation were applied. This resulted in the following four research units. Firstly, I have distinguished between male and female Somalis. Secondly, participants were, if possible, selected according to the generation they considered themselves part of. While some participants were born in Somalia, they still considered themselves second-generation because of their young age at the time of arrival in the Netherlands.

Chapter 3: Theoretical background

Academic debates

Intra-EU movement

In the past, a common conception about transnational migration has been that it follows a linear trajectory: the migrant travels from country of origin to a new country in which they settle (de Hoon, Vink, & Schmeets, 2019). More recently, this perspective has come under scrutiny by scholars who have asked for a mobility perspective instead (Schapendonk et al., 2018). This perspective accounts for the possibility that migrants engage in stepwise migration to their preferred end destination, that they return to their country of origin after some time (Paul, 2011) and more. Another migration pattern is presented in the term 'onward migration'. Here, migrants and refugees like Somalis have lived in the current host country for some time but decide to travel further to another country. De Hoon and colleagues (2019) identify two most common reasons for onward migration. Firstly, that immigration authorities have assigned the migrant into a country they did not intend to stay in from the beginning. Or secondly, that migrants become dissatisfied with their current host country over time and react to this by migrating onwards (de Hoon et al., 2019). Such dissatisfaction can have several different reasons, including feelings of discrimination, unstable working conditions, or low wages (Wajsberg, 2020, p. 102). In either case, recent research into more complex migratory patterns have demonstrated migrants' often non-linear and multiple-step trajectory.

Another academic debate can be identified around the meaning of obtaining formal citizenship in one's host country or in other words, becoming a naturalized citizen. Research into refugee integration in EU countries commonly assumes that refugees will stay in the host country after obtaining formal citizenship (Valenta & Bunar, 2010). This is especially assumed since refugees have often fled an insecure and unsafe environment in their country of origin, and EU naturalization offers them security and social rights (Nunn et al., 2016). However, increasingly more scholars have pointed out that refugees may relocate to other EU countries over time (van Liempt, 2009; Ahrens, Kelly, & van Liempt, 2016; Mas Giralt, 2016). In this context, citizenship has been identified as a potential source for intra-EU mobility, allowing the newly naturalized citizen to move freely (Ahrens, Kelly, & van Liempt, 2016). This growing body of literature stands in stark contrast to the assumption that naturalization leads to the settlement of migrants or refugees. Interestingly, it has been noted that the EU actively encourages the mobility of EU-citizens, while discouraging the movement towards or within the EU by non-EU citizens; even stronger, movements by non-EU citizens are often termed 'migration' instead of 'mobility' (Bauböck, 2012).

Transnationalism and nomadic roots

In the context of the Somali diaspora, theories on transnationalism become relevant as well. With the turn of migration studies during the 1900s from assimilationist theories to a transnational perspective, scholars incorporated the idea that some migrants maintain active ties to their country of origin instead of completely assimilating to their host country (Moret, 2018, pp. 6-7). In fact, the Somali diaspora, including newer generations that have been in Europe, has evidently maintained strong ties with Somalia. This is especially visible in the roughly $1.3 billion in remittances that Somalia receives per year and that makes up around 25-45% of the country's GDP (Oxfam Policy & Practice, 2015), with around 40% of households in Somalia relying on these remittances for food and housing (Rift Valley Institute, 2022). The strong connection to Somalia is visible in the second generation of Somalis as well. There is a significant number of returnees to Somalia, including persons not born in the country themselves (Moret, 2018, p.30).

Linked to the strong connection that diasporic Somalis show to Somalia, some scholars and many Somalis themselves think of Somalia's history of nomadism as a reason behind their high mobility. In a more general sense, nomadism is often defined as a mobile lifestyle without a fixed residence. Chapter 1 describes in more detail how nomadic lifestyles take shape in the case of Somalia's pastoralism (see p. 9) In his book on Somalis' post-migration mobilities, Moret (2018) notes that many of his interviewees frame their mobilities in light of Somalis' nomadic roots (p. 29). According to him, this is an idealised and sometimes romanticised version of nomadism that might be employed by Somalis to put a more positive light on their forced departure from Somalia. Instead of being seen as mere displaced, helpless refugees, the self-identification as a 'nomad' might appear more comforting and empowering to the Somali refugee (Moret, 2018, p. 29). However, Moret remains cautious and does not view Somalis' mobility as being related to Somalia's nomadic history. Similarly, van Heelsum attempts to explain Somalis' high levels of migration through their 'nomadic past' but concludes that there is no clear evidence that nomadism might be in fact linked to Somalis' post-migration movements (van Heelsum, 2011, pp. 19-20). Still, Somalia's nomadic history appears to remain important to Somalis in the diaspora and to how they make sense of their own mobilities. More specifically, instead of the nomadic roots themselves, it might rather be the *narratives* about nomadism that are shaping the Somali diaspora's mobility. This thought is further elaborated on page 27.

This research

Turning to the topic of this research, Somalis in the Netherlands have been found to commonly migrate onwards to the UK. It is estimated that since 2000, around 20,000 Somalis have migrated from the Netherlands to the UK (van Liempt, 2009). Feelings of discrimination and racism in the Netherlands have been identified as the main factors for this movement (Ahrens, Kelly, & van Liempt, 2019). Earlier research has furthermore shown that most Somalis migrate from the Netherlands to the UK after having obtained Dutch citizenship (van den Reek & Hussein, 2003). The academic debate around using one's

naturalisation to move onwards thus becomes important here. Moreover, most Somalis living in the Netherlands have experienced stepwise migration before arriving. Most of them have migrated first from Somalia to a neighbouring country, then to transit stops in the Middle East to the Netherlands. Many have had to experience even more complex migrant journeys involving more transit stops (SFM, 2006). For the case of Dutch Somalis, it therefore becomes interesting to investigate both imaginaries of future destinations, as well as imaginaries they had in the past.

What makes the case of onward migrating Somalis especially interesting is the fact that the number of onward migrants in this specific group seems to be much higher than in most other migrant or refugee group living in the Netherlands (van Heelsum, 2011).

Relevant concepts

Imaginaries

In order to understand the concept of imaginaries, it is important to first distinguish it from the related concept of imagination. 'Imagination' is the capacity to creatively imagine people, places, future mobilities and more (Cangiá & Zittoun, 2020). It is usually an individual activity, taking place in one's mind and is shared with others. Although imagination is often not consistent with reality, people's imaginations are usually closely related to reality nonetheless (Lennon, 2015). Furthermore, imagination is a key resource for planning one's future mobility (D'Onofrio & Sjöberg, 2020). Continuing this thought, Salazar argues that we construct our environment with the help of imagination (Salazar, 2020, p. 770). Shaping our behaviour, imagination is therefore both a mental process as well as a producer of our reality.

Building on this, 'imaginaries' can be seen as the result of our imagination. Salazar defines imaginaries as "culturally shared and socially transmitted representational assemblages that interact with the personal imaginations" (Salazar, 2011, p. 576). In other words, imaginaries are subjective social representations, or images, that are shared across a group of people or societies. These interact with one's individual images and consequently shape our behaviour and view of the world. Imaginaries therefore refer to a shared mental life, shared between individuals and the group or society they live in. Because of this culturally shared characteristic, imaginaries are rather fixed and hard to change (Salazar & Graburn, 2014).

To make the difference between imagination and imaginaries clearer, an example will follow. Somali refugees might have the imagination that the Netherlands will offer stable working conditions to them if they move there. Meanwhile, their imaginary about the Netherlands will contain this individual image and will also be informed by collective images of Somalis about the Netherlands. Such collective images can for example be found in stories Somalis tell each other or in social media that depict life in the Netherlands. These collective images taken together with Somalis' individual images, form their imaginary.

Such imaginaries seem to be one of the drivers behind migration (Salazar, 2010, p. 6).

Papastergiadis argues that movement is about moving but also about our "ability to imagine an alternative" (Papastergiadis, 2000, p. 11). In other words, without our imagination and imaginaries, migration would likely not even be possible. These mental processes form the basis on which the possibility of migration stands. In practice, imaginaries about potential future destinations include thoughts about better and more stable work opportunities, a safe environment to raise one's children and less discrimination in daily life. Conversely, negative imaginaries about a place can work as deterrents and make people stay in their current place. Positive imaginaries about European countries abundantly exist in the minds of refugees who, driven by their imaginaries of a better life abroad, make the journey to the continent (Della Puppa, Montagna, & Kofman, 2021). Apart from imaginaries about destination countries, imaginaries about one's own group or society can shape one's openness to future movements as well.

In the case of Somalis in the Netherlands, it is interesting to explore imaginaries behind Somalis' onward migration, despite the Netherlands providing a safe living environment at first glance. So far, racism and discrimination have been identified as two factors supporting this desire to move again. This research attempted to identify additional factors shaping Somalis' onward migration.

Onward migration

This brings us to the next pillar of this research. 'Onward migration' refers to the migration pattern of relocating to a new destination country, while already being in a host country (Dimitriadis, 2020, p. 135). In other words, migrants currently living in a host country, and deciding to migrate again to a second, third or even additional destination can be seen as onward migrants. In general, such migration can be initiated by one of two reasons. On the one hand because the migrant had a predefined plan to migrate to a country other than the host country but landed in the unpreferred host country through, for example, immigration authorities or lack of resources (van Liempt, 2009). In this case, onward migration away from the unpreferred host country was intended from the start. On the other hand, onward migration may also be triggered through dissatisfaction that is developed in the host country over time, often due to feelings of discrimination, low wages and more (Ahrens, Kelly, & van Liempt, 2016). In this case, onward migration is often not pre-planned, but becomes desirable over time. As this specific research focuses on Somalis in the Netherlands, onward migration in this case will focus on movements within the EU. This migratory pattern within the EU is especially interesting because the relatively free movement of people across EU countries' borders can make onward migration easier (de Hoon, Vink, & Schmeets, 2019). Within the EU, onward migration commonly takes place from South to North Europe and from East to West Europe (Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs, 2019).

Sense of belonging

Sense of belonging refers to a person's attachment to a social and spatial setting. It acts as a motivation to stay or leave a setting, making it interesting to study in relation to Somali migrants. According to Antonsich (2010), belonging is expressed in relation to diverse social and spatial terms. Moreover, Yuval-Davis argues that 'belonging' can be understood firstly as the individual attachment to a place but is also found in discourses and acts of inclusion and exclusion, also called "politics of belonging" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 204). Sense of belonging is commonly seen as key for a "meaningful life" (Cross, 2015, p. 649), the lack of it as cause for loneliness and isolation (Cross, 2015).

In the case of Somalis, past research has shown that Somalis in the Netherlands often complain about the dispersed diaspora and discrimination, both of which result in decreased sense of belonging to the Netherlands (De Correspondent, 2015). Meanwhile, imaginaries about England often include the assumption of a bigger Somali community that will lead to increased sense of belonging (van Liempt, 2009). A low sense of belonging in the Netherlands can become a push factor, while an imagined large Somali community elsewhere can become a pull factor towards that destination country. Since one of the biggest pull factors for Somalis in the Netherlands to go towards the UK seems to be its bigger Somali diaspora, sense of belonging appears to be crucial for this group.

Narratives about nomadism

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Somalis have long been engaging in the oral tradition of transmitting information to each other, for example in the form of poems or narratives (Jama, 1994). This has resulted in a strong intergenerational cultural transmission among different generations of Somalis, including Somalis living in the diaspora (Jama, 1994; Abdullahi & Wei, 2021). The 'nomadic figure' that Moret (2018) refers to in his book, is likely to have been passed on through such narratives. Such narratives around mobile lifestyles seem to be an important factor shaping Somalis' mobilities. Linking this back to imaginaries, as our imaginaries are most often a result of what we hear from others about a certain subject, imaginaries and narratives are inherently linked (Salazar, 2014; Riquet & Kollman, 2018). In the case of Somalis' perceived connection to nomadism, the narratives about nomadism can therefore be seen as an imaginary.

Based on past authors that have included nomadism into their research (Moret, 2018; van Heelsum, 2011) and based on the data gathered during my fieldwork, narratives about nomadism will be considered as a potential imaginary shaping Somalis' onward migration. However, unlike imaginaries about the Netherlands or destination countries, imaginaries linked to nomadism seem to shape Somalis' openness to migrate, rather than their perception of a certain place. For this reason, narratives about nomadism are discussed in a chapter separate from imaginaries about destination countries, namely in Chapter 7.

Academic relevance

This research aims to provide further insights into the mobility of migrants who are already present in the EU, in particular the reasons behind their subsequent movements. This might provide further insights against the common conception that once naturalised, migrants will stay in their host country (de Hoon et al., 2019). Furthermore, research into onward migration can further question the simplistic, linear understanding of migrant trajectories that supposedly only move from A to B (Ahrens, Kelly, & van Liempt, 2016, p. 85). By understanding the reasons behind other migrant trajectories such as onward migration, we can move towards a better understanding of the mobility perspective, which also incorporates non-linear migrant trajectories. In this way, new meanings of naturalizations can become apparent, apart from the understanding that it might lead to settlement of migrants (de Hoon et al., 2019). Related to this, most research on intra-EU movement so far has been done on native-born EU citizens, neglecting the movement of naturalized EU-citizens such as Somalis in the Netherlands (Ahrens, Kelly, & van Liempt, 2016).

Moreover, by understanding imaginaries of Somalis who plan to migrate onwards, the push and pull factors relevant for this migrant group can be better understood. Such insights can for example provide a better understanding of Somalis' dissatisfaction in the Netherlands. Previous research on migrants' dissatisfaction in the Netherlands has been helpful in finding better integration techniques (Open Society Foundations, 2014). Also, it is crucial to be aware of the possibility that imaginaries could merely be a coping mechanism in some cases. Such an understanding can offer a new perspective to those researchers who focus on migrants' hopes and aspirations for the future, namely that imaginaries may not be actual migration efforts but rather mere daydreaming or a way to cope with currently difficult situations (Carling & Schewel, 2017).

Finally, this research aims to contribute to a better understanding of Somali migrants, their migratory patterns and their imaginaries, providing a qualitative perspective on these issues. As mentioned earlier, Somalis in the Netherlands are not only particularly vulnerable to discrimination and have one of the lowest integration levels of migrants in the Netherlands but are also not fully understood by academics. By using a qualitative perspective, it is hoped to present the internal heterogeneity of Somalis' experiences and narratives. Furthermore, by using emic terms of my interviewees whenever possible, it is attempted to present Somali stories in Somalis' own words so that their own perception of nomadism and destination countries can be better understood.

Operationalisation

Imaginaries

The concept 'imaginaries' was operationalized through the following two indicators. 'Past imaginaries' explored imaginaries that were collectively shared by Somalis in the past. This includes imaginaries persons have had in the past about the Netherlands and other countries they have passed through before

arriving in the Netherlands. For example, imaginaries of better working conditions or a safer living environment.

'Present imaginaries' looked at imaginaries Somalis presently held about a present or future destination country. These could be imaginaries about the Netherlands or about a different destination country for the future and were also searched for in newspaper articles and on social media platforms.

Exploring imaginaries on the temporal axis is important for the following reason. By distinguishing between past and present imaginaries, the change that imaginaries go through over time can be explored. Imaginaries about a person's current country can be compared with ones of the past or about future destinations.

Onward migration

For the concept 'onward migration', the following aspects were of particular interest: previous movement to a new country, stay in a country and attitudes about onward migration. The aspect 'previous movement to a new country' was approached through an indicator which inquired whether participants had migrated to a different destination in the past, if yes how often and from where to where. The indicator 'stay in a country' explored Somalis' length of stay in host countries in the past. The indicator 'attitude towards onwards migration' shed light on Somalis' general attitudes and on their openness towards onwards migration in the future. This was seen as interesting information in combination with Somalis' actual steps towards onward migration. In this way, it was hoped to explore to what extent an open attitude towards onward migration actually translates into steps taken towards the movement.

Linked to the concept of 'onward migration' and migration in general, the term 'diaspora' was frequently used in this thesis. For the purpose of this thesis, diaspora will be defined as a population from a common geographical area that is now living someplace else (Cohen, 2008). In addition, while Somalis can be categorized as 'refugees' from the civil war in Somalia, I have also made use of the term 'Somali migrants'. This is because in the context of onward migration, Somalis' journeys away from the Netherlands can be classified as 'migration' and not as 'refuge seeking'.

Sense of belonging

Continuing, the third concept 'sense of belonging' was operationalized based on the work by Antonsich (2010) who compiled several factors as a means to study emotional attachment to a spatial setting. While Antonsich defines sense of belonging through five factors, namely autobiographical, relational, cultural, economic and legal, only the first three of these factors were used in this thesis. Economic factors about interviewees' jobs and legal factors about their citizenship proved to be sensitive topics for most interviewees and were therefore not included.

First, *autobiographical factors* will zoom in on Somalis' past experiences and memories. Depending on how past experiences are valued compared to present ones, a stronger or weaker sense

of belonging is expected. For example, having only few experiences with fellow Somalis in the Netherlands might be linked with a low sense of belonging here.

Second, *relational factors* refer to the social ties that make a person's stay in the place valuable, such as ties to family, friends or romantic partners (Antonsich, 2010, p. 8). In addition, they refer to a person's position in the family or community which might impact their sense of belonging. For Somalis, a strong social network in the Netherlands might increase sense of belonging here. Conversely, a position in the family with less responsibilities might allow for more movement aspirations, lessening sense of belonging.

Third, *cultural factors* like adherence to religious practices, food preparation and language use that are particular to one's current or past place can impact sense of belonging as well. Here, public discourses in Dutch media about Islam and difficulty with the Dutch language and system might be of importance.

Taken together, these factors can reflect a person's sense of 'home' (Njwambe, Cocks, & Vetter 2019, p. 417). These factors were be measured by asking Somalis open-ended questions related to these factors. An example question would be: 'What is necessary for you to feel at home in a country?', and 'To what extent do you feel at home in the Netherlands?'. For a full list of draft interview questions, see the Appendix[1].

Narratives about nomadism

Lastly, the concept *narratives about nomadism* was formulated in the course of my fieldwork using an inductive approach. This concept was brought forth by my interviewees themselves during fieldwork; many interviewees explained Somalis' high mobility through their 'nomadic' tendencies originating from their forefathers' lifestyle of mobile pastoralism or transnational trade in Somalia. For this reason, narratives about nomadism are linked to my first two research questions, namely they are linked to both sources of imaginaries and content of imaginaries. While narratives allude to the oral manner of information transmission, the idea that one's nomadic origins would relate to one's high mobility also presents an imaginary in itself.

In specific, this concept was approached through the following indicators. 'Knowledge of narratives' refers to the interviewee having heard that nomadism narratives are linked to Somalis' mobility or not. If the interviewee had heard about nomadism narratives being used to explain Somalis' mobilities, then this was followed up by the following two indicators. 'Participation in narratives' refers to the interviewees' own belief or disbelief that such a link between nomadism and Somalis' mobility exists, and their own (non-)participation in passing on this belief through narratives. Lastly, 'Type of narrative' refers to one of the two forms of nomadism in Somalia's history, namely pastoralist lifestyles or transnational trade.

[1] The Appendix includes two versions of interview questions sheets, one for the first generation and the other for second-generation interviewees.

Chapter 4: 'In England it's just easier'

"I think around 75% of [Dutch Somalis in England] they make it. In the end they have their own business, their own things."

- *Ridwan, 37-year-old Somali*

This first chapter of my data analysis presents the content of my interviewees' imaginaries about potential destination countries. First, I will present imaginaries about England, secondly imaginaries about Somalia. Thirdly, I briefly mention third countries that came up during my conversations. This chapter will not cover all relevant imaginaries; imaginaries that can be divided along gender and generational divisions will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Imaginaries about England

During my interviews and participant observation, my interlocutors' imaginaries mostly involved England and Somalia, ultimately putting these two countries at the centre of my data analysis. All 24 interviewees reported that they personally know Somalis who are currently living in England, most of them being close friends.

Business prospects in England

The main perception about life in England is that it is "easier" there. This refers to an ease to open businesses, an ease to connect to the Somali diaspora, and an ease to be financially stable. One of my interviewees was journalist Mohamed Abdi who had a personal interest in why so many Somalis had and still are planning to move to England and had personally interviewed Somalis about this in the past. According to him, the system in England was more "flexible" and "open" than the system in the Netherlands. Ahmed, a male first-generation Somali in his mid-30's, further elaborated on the easier "system" in England:

> "They (the first generation) didn't know the [Dutch] system so well. […] In the Netherlands it was maybe too much paper for our parents who didn't know the system."

Here, Ahmed is describing that especially for the first generation, the switch from the Somali system, apparently much less bureaucratic than in the Netherlands, was quite difficult. England was perceived

to demand less paperwork and was therefore deemed more attractive and less "difficult". On this topic, Hussein explained to me how different the Dutch system was from what Somalis were used from back home[2] where you only needed some money, not even a plan, to start something of your own. He did acknowledge that by now, the Dutch system had become easier as well. Still, according to most interviewees, easier conditions made England much more desirable than the Netherlands. Moreover, 12 interviewees, all of them male, believed that the Dutch system did not fit well with how "Somalis work". According to Ridwan, a male first-generation Somali in his mid-30's:

> "[Somalis] are not used to rules and laws. […]. For example in the Dutch law, '[…] request permit', then they find that all too much. […] [In] England […] you just have a place, start something and the case is done."

At the same time, Ridwan calls Somalis "doers", in other words people who want to work. As there are many rules in the Dutch system, he perceives the system as an obstacle to Somalis' nature of working. Just like Ahmed and Ridwan, they stated these perceptions as if they were facts and were commonly known among the Somali community. Especially Somalis who had visited England in the past, which was the case for 14 out of 24 of interviewees, spoke this confidently about England. According to Ridwan, Somalis are also particularly successful in England:

> "I think around 75% of [Dutch Somalis in England] […] they make it. In the end they have their own business, their own things. And the other 25% mostly go and work for a boss, just having a stable life and this sort of stuff."

Ridwan's perception of Somalis' success in England is in line with Hussein's remarks, who told me: "You have Somalis that have their own TV program, TV stations. And those people really came from the Netherlands. The Dutch Somalis were the most successful [Somalis] out of all Europe that went to England".

The fact that Ridwan could give direct examples and even percentual numbers for Somalis' success in England probably made the positive imaginaries about England much more tangible to fellow Somalis than if it were only vague stories.

Entrepreneurial desires

[2] Today, Hussein is running a small Somali food store in Haarlem together with a Somali friend.

The wish to start your own business seems to be common among the Dutch Somali community. According to journalist Mohamed Abdi, engaging in entrepreneurship is a typical desire among Somalis. Many Somalis trace their apparent entrepreneurial desire back to Somalia's history as a centre for trade and commerce. Shafie for example, a 30-year-old Somali man, directly made this connection by telling me about Somalia's history as a trading country, his family's history as traders and how this history continues to shape many Somalis' desires today[3].

In addition, Mohamed Abdi explained to me that it was crucial for Somali people to earn enough, given their responsibilities not only towards their family here, but also their family back in Somalia. As England[4] was often perceived as being a place where Somalis could obtain a job faster and more easily, the country presented an attractive solution to the sometimes big financial responsibilities of diasporic Somali families. Mohamed Abdi claimed that Somali families were almost always expected to send remittances to Somalia and that this burden could be so big that it made some Somali fathers migrate onwards to England in search for better paying jobs. The practice of Somalis sending money back to Somalia has been widely reported by scholars (Oxfam Policy & Practice, 2015; Moret, 2018, p. 37). In the diaspora, it is often seen as dishonourable to not be able to provide for your family in Somalia while living in the West (Kroll & Yusuf, 2013). This was another reason, he explained, that the "easier" system in England attracted many Somalis from the Netherlands.

In line with Mohamed Abdi, the general sentiment among my interviewees was that England allowed for more financial stability. Considering these findings, it seems that many Somalis who decided to move to England were not entirely satisfied with their financial situation and perceived restrictions in the Netherlands. Recent research into job employment in the Netherlands has highlighted the fact that in regions with higher concentrations of ethnic minorities, especially of a non-Western background, applicants with a migrant background are more strongly discriminated against (Thijssen, 2021). This might lead to lower chances of employment of job searchers with a migrant background, and thus a stronger desire to move to a different place. However, in contrast to Somalis' imaginaries about working opportunities in England, literature suggests that similar obstacles exist there. A study by the Centre for Social Investigation at Oxford University has found that levels of labour market discrimination against Black and South Asian people have remained almost unchanged since the 1960s (CSI, 2019). More specifically, it was found that such applicants have to send out around 90% more applications for a positive response than white persons. This finding stands in stark contrast to the perception of living ease in England that many Somalis appear to have.

Although most interviewees, such as Ridwan and Hussein, emphasized self-employment when talking about working in England, it is quite telling that such a strong labour market discrimination exists in England. This is especially interesting because none of my 24 interviewees mentioned such

[3] Shafie's remarks about Somalia's history as a trading country will be analyzed in more detail in Chapter 7.
[4] Most, if not all my respondents described imaginaries about "England" instead of "the UK". This is in contrast to the literature I found prior to my fieldwork; many scholars have written about Somali onward migration to the UK.

discrimination, not even when explaining why many Somalis returned back from England to the Netherlands. This makes Somalis' imaginaries about working in England appear idealised rather than realistic. Having such an idealised perception about a destination country like England is in line with research on other diaspora group's imaginaries. For example, Dimitriadis describes the positive stories Polish people living in Greece describe about life in Italy (Dimitriadis, 2020, p. 137). Similarly, Bangladeshis in Italy perceive London as promising due to its larger Bangladeshi diasporic group and due to racism and discrimination in their workplaces in Italy (Della Puppa & King, 2019). This brings me to the other major positive imaginary Somalis hold about England: the larger Somali community there.

Somali community in England

Besides the perceived job opportunities, many interviewees mentioned the larger Somali community in England as a positive aspect about living there. For many, this community represents a support system, a way to belong and a way to connect to one's Somali roots and religious beliefs. In most cases, interviewees believed that Somalis could rely on this community right away after arriving in England, considering that everyone has either family or close friends living in England. 14 out of 24 interviewees told me that they had visited England while staying at such a family's or friend's place. However, problems might arise for those who cannot or cannot any longer fall back onto such a support system in terms of housing. A survey conducted by the Guardian revealed that those looking to rent a place in England with a minority background are more strongly discriminated against in the housing market, especially those with a Muslim name (The Guardian, 2018). Surprisingly, this circumstance was not at all discussed by my interviewees. In contrast, the following quote by 19-year-old Aysha[5] is representative of what most respondents thought about the housing situation in England:

> "I first want to live in Birmingham with my friend, I already asked my aunt […] if I can stay with her. […] That is much cheaper. And after that we will live in a room ourselves."

Aysha was in general very optimistic about a future in England while at the same time being vague in the steps needed to fulfil her plans. For example, while she was planning to move to England in a year from now, and to open her own mental health institution focused on Muslim clients, she had not arranged any concrete steps or other contacts in England yet to pursue this.

Ahmed, a 37-year-old second-generation Somali man, described the Somali community in England as a "support system" that "finds each other". The fact that like other refugees, Somalis have been subjected to a dispersal policy in the Netherlands, makes the creation of a Somali support system more difficult in the Netherlands. Ahmed also clearly distinguished between first- and second-

[5] Aysha is currently finishing her studies in the Netherlands and is actively planning to permanently move to England next year for work.

generation Somalis and their needs, claiming that the support system in England was especially needed by the first-generation in job and housing searches. Thus, besides the mere presence of a larger Somali group as a support system, also their potential help to start up one's business in England is part of the imaginary.

Negative imaginaries about England and the Netherlands

Apart from positive aspects about England, interviewees also shared negative imaginaries with me. Among these, the most commonly shared ones revolved around a bad environment for one's children, and other undesirable living conditions. Since imaginaries of an unfriendly environment for children almost solely stem from female interviewees, these will be discussed more elaborately in Chapter 5 on gender differences. To briefly mention them, 14 out of 24 interviewees described the risk for children to join gangs in England and thus get involved in criminal activities. Apart from this, several interviewees have a negative perception of the social welfare system in England, calling the Netherlands "much more organized" (Hussein) and caring. Additionally, several interviewees view England's housing options as being in decline. Ahmed described his perception of British houses in the following way:

> "It's chaotic, [in] some neighbourhoods you just see rotting houses. In the end the Netherlands are good, nothing to complain about."

More recently, Brexit has become a new source of negative imaginaries about England. Hussein told me that Brexit was the major reason to not move to England anymore. Brexit was given as an obstacle by five other interviewees but none of them went into detail on why this has become a problem. Such negative imaginaries seem to hold people back from moving to England themselves. This in in line with research by Salazar (2014) that suggests that negative imaginaries could provide a useful tool to explain people's decision to stay in a certain place.

Apart from this, several remarks were made about stories about fellow Somalis 'not making it' in England. Sahra, a Somali woman in her mid-50's, knew a woman who first lived in the Netherlands, moved to England and later returned back to the Netherlands. When I asked Sahra what her friend had expected from England, she told me that her friend tried to open a store but had failed. Sahra was hereby referring to the common imaginary that finding a job or opening a business would be easy in England. However, what we hear is that the opposite can be true as well, prompting people to move back yet again. Similar accounts were shared by ten other interviewees, with Sahra being one of the most detailed in her description of what went 'wrong' in England.

Most interviewees did not give much detail on what did not work out for those Somalis. This is especially interesting if we consider that oral tradition and being connected to the British Somali diaspora had been strong enough to provide my interviewees with vivid positive imaginaries about

England. As my interviewees were mostly re-telling the information that they had received from Somalis in England, this might also say something about those Somali acquaintances and what they were maybe not sharing. I noticed that in several of my conversations, interviewees' tone of voice and body language slightly changed when talking about negative aspects about England. It seemed as if there was a discomfort when talking about this topic in too much detail. This might mean that my interviewees either did not want to present their acquaintances' decisions as 'bad', or that their acquaintances had not shared negative information about England with them.

The latter could be explained through the importance of '*ceeb'* that is prevalent in Somali communities. '*Ceeb'* refers to a shame culture in which the Somali community, especially Somali mothers, monitor each other's children and lifestyles and point out 'shameful' aspects publicly (The Conscious Nomad, 2022). *Ceeb* in Somali communities seems to be linked to the concept of 'loss of face', a concept that has been observed and studied in other migrant communities as well (Rasmussen, 2015). However, in itself *ceeb* has not received academic attention as of yet. I have mainly been able to find information about the *ceeb* shame culture in online podcasts (Participatory Action Research, 2021; Halow Podcast, 2022) and in online forums like Reddit and Blogposts (The Conscious Nomad, 2022). From what I could gather and find online, *ceeb* is seeing major resistance from second-generation Somalis living in the West due to its negative impacts on personal freedom. In a group discussion between Nima, Asha and Hamdi in an online podcast, they discuss how seemingly normal things such as leaving your parents' house for studies or having a side job can be seen as a potential threat to Somali children's religiosity (Participatory Action Research, 2021). Similarly, my first-generation interviewees have disapprovingly described Somali parents in England as inattentive towards their children, resulting in Somali children's involvement in gang violence. These remarks suggest that other aspects about life in England run the risk of being condemned as well, which might be a reason for Somalis living in England to not share difficult aspects about their lives. In other words, the prevalence of *ceeb* in Somali communities seems high enough for Somalis to only share positive aspects about their lives, which might in turn spread positive imaginaries and minimize negative imaginaries about destination countries in the minds of other Somalis.

While in this case the fear of being shamed and humiliated by fellow Somalis might result in the spreading of more positive imaginaries, the same fear of humiliation might also lead to onward migration. According to Fangen (2006), the challenges Somalis encounter in Western countries can often lead to feelings of humiliation. Fangen bases such humiliating situations especially in the cultural differences and misunderstandings between Somalis and natives of the host country and claims that in some cases, such feelings of humiliation can become so strong that onward migration is pursued (Fangen, 2006, p. 78). Among my interviewees, there were several examples of Somalis who felt humiliated by how others perceived them. One such example is 18-year-old Hawa, who described her mother's struggles with the Dutch language. While her mother wants to practice her Dutch more by speaking it, she is afraid and uncomfortable to receive negative looks by other people. This story also

suggests that Somalis like Hawa's mother are self-conscious of what others think of them which in turn increases the chance of feeling humiliated.

Another example of humilation was given to me by several male interviewees who told me that Somalis, including themselves, generally do not enjoy being on the receiving end of financial benefits. Instead, there is a strong emphasis on opening businesses, in other words, to be actively working. During a debate prior to the *Gemeenteraadsverkiezingen* (English: municipal elections) in Haarlem which I was invited to (see Chapter 2), Somali father Assad touched upon the fact that Somalis had the lowest socioeconomic status of all non-Western groups in the neighbourhood. He passionately implored the municipal representatives to help improve this situation because "no Somali father likes to sit at home and do nothing and just receive money". It was clear that this was a difficult topic for Assad and for the other Somali men to talk about, judging from the abrupt change in their demeanour.

While similar problems of discrimination against Somalis and a negative reputation in the media exist in England, other issues such as the inability to work or speak the language are less prominent there. For Somalis who struggle with humiliating feelings in the Netherlands, onward migration to England might mitigate their struggle to some extent.

Imaginaries about Somalia

Re-connecting with family and one's roots

All 13 first-generation and five out of 11 second-generation interviewees discussed their desire to 'return' to Somalia at some point in their lives. For first-generation Somalis, this was planned after retirement. Mohamed[6], who is in his late 50's, told me:

> "If it would be good in Somalia, I would choose for Somalia. If the government was good. But the way it is now, I choose the Netherlands."

Almost all of the above-mentioned interviewees shared Mohamed's sentiment, namely that they would go to Somalia if the situation there was better. In a way, it seemed as if waiting for their retirement was at the same time a wait for things to become better in Somalia. Furthermore, all first-generation interviewees planned to return to Somalia once their children were grown up and had a job to support themselves. For second-generation interviewees, plans of when they would move to Somalia were less clear. Almost half of my second-generation interviewees expressed the desire to move or go to Somalia at some point. For most of them there is a desire to build a closer connection to the place they feel they 'really come from', where their 'roots' lay. Their remarks are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Interestingly, all interviewees who would like to move to Somalia share the desire to re-connect to family there and to their 'roots'. However, in the case that their families in the Netherlands do not

[6] Mohamed has two children, both grown up and standing on their own feet. His wife is living in England with her family since at least ten years now.

want to join them in their migration to Somalia, this would evidently lead to a condition of splitting up their family between the Netherlands and Somalia. While this could seem like an obstacle for a group like first-generation Somali refugees who probably already had to leave much of their family behind in Somalia, my interviewees hardly saw this as an obstacle. In general, I noticed that notions of family are often more fluid in Somali communities and can refer to nuclear, extended or sometimes even clan contexts. For this reason, ties that are often described as 'weak' within other communities have become rather 'strong' in Somali communities. While strong ties traditionally refer to family and friends, and weak ties to acquaintances or business partners (Granovetter, 1973), Somalis in the Netherlands seem to have strong ties beyond nuclear contexts and often even beyond national borders. As Fahama, a 26-year-old second-generation woman told me:

> "My father has returned back to Somalia, and my mother also wants to go back for a longer time to Somalia in May, so now that we are getting older, they (the first-generation) are thinking a lot about moving to Somalia. And settle there."

The way in which Fahama told me about the geographically split state of her nuclear family, in this quote and in the remainder of our conversation, sounded as if this was a fairly common situation for Somali families in the Netherlands with adult children. In a similarly normalizing manner, many interviewees had also described the split families that were created in the wake of Somalis' massive onward migration to England. Van Heelsum (2011) even goes as far as describing Somalis as "perhaps the most dispersed people in the world", a state which she argues has been in place for several decades now (van Heelsum, 2011, p. 2), which might be why the prospect of one's family splitting up through onward migration does not come as a surprise or threat to fellow Somalis.

For some interviewees, it was also still a question if they wanted to go back permanently or only for a few months per year. For example, for Hussein:

> "When I have retirement, then I will have to look and think 'okay, what do I want?' […] Then you think about your last few years, where do I actually wanna live? So I still have to think about that, it could work that I live partly here, partly here. And that my kids are here then."

Hussein's state of undecidedness could potentially be explained by research conducted by Bolognani (2016), among others. In her research on British Pakistani migrants, Bolognani addresses the fantasy of returning home that is common among many different migrant groups. Bolognani acknowledges the fact that for many migrants, the idea to return to one's home country remains merely that, an idea that is never actually fulfilled. However, she argues that rather than merely being an empty desire to return, the fantasy of returning can instead offer a coping mechanism to the migrant (Bolognani, 2016, p.195).

She refers to the concept of 'transitional space', introduced by Winnicott (1971), which describes a virtual space that supports the idea of continuity when out of one's comfort zone.

In this space, which for example gives room to the fantasy of return, the individual can 'play' and feel comfortable again. According to her, having such a space with such comforting fantasies inside can be part of migrants' identity-building and support their well-being. Similarly, Wang (2012) argues that such fantasies can help the person overcome everyday hurdles or even traumas, such as violent and abrupt separation or a conflicted sense of belonging (Wang, 2012, p. 145). In the case of this research, having the fantasy of returning to Somalia one day might soften everyday struggles. In line with this theory, all interviewees that mentioned Somalia spoke positively and fondly of it while also acknowledging the war and its after-effects. In terms of Antonsich's factors of sense of belonging, this observation touches upon my first-generation interviewees' autobiographical sense of belonging (Antonsich, 2010) as they seem to base their return plans on their memory of the 'good old days' in Somalia.

Re-building Somalia

Another prominent reason to go back to Somalia was to help re-build the country. "I would love to go to Somalia", 25-year-old Fatima, who studies medicine, told me.

> "I have never been there. […] But […] because it is unsafe you almost can't go. So that is frustrating, but I would love to go there and start something."

Interestingly, most interviewees with the desire to re-build Somalia had never been to Somalia before or not in a long time. Still, the second-hand information they could obtain about Somalia has resulted in a certain imaginary about Somalia. All five second-generation interviewees interested in migration to Somalia told me imaginaries similar to Fatima, labelling Somalia "unpredictable" or "unsafe". At the same time, there was the imaginary that the country was slowly doing better and needed help to be re-built by people like second-generation Somalis from Europe.

The phenomenon of second-generation members wanting to return to their parents' birth country, to which they feel a close connection as well, is called 'roots migration' (Wessendorf, 2007). Also in other countries with Somali communities, roots migration or the desire to do so has been observed (Handulle, 2022).

Imaginaries about other destinations

Besides England and Somalia, a few other places were named as potential destination countries for respondents' future. There were almost no specific imaginaries about life in these places besides superficial aspects such as having "many Somalis there" or "being an Islamic country". Four respondents, all female, one of them first-generation and three second-generation, mentioned Dubai,

the Emirates or other Islamic countries as a place they could imagine moving to at some point. Two of them had been there in the past, the other two not.

In three of these cases, the reason for planning to move there was the Islamic or multicultural environment in the destination country. Rukio for example, a 35-year-old first-generation woman, told me that she liked the multicultural lifestyle of Dubai. According to her:

> "[People in Dubai] don't put such an emphasis on 'you have to know the Arabic culture […]'. And I think in the Netherlands [Dutch culture] is emphasized a lot, especially in recent years."

Rukio criticized the focus on assimilation she was seeing in the Netherlands. Here, she felt restricted in the expression of her Somali and her Muslim identity. Mainly for this reason, she was actively looking for ways to either return to Somalia or to a different Islamic country in the future. As mentioned before, the Netherlands has moved away from multiculturalism since the mid-90's and has moved towards assimilationism. As Rukio has pointed out, this can result in feeling less able to express one's religious identity and can even fuel thoughts of emigration.

Chapter 5: 'Women always know what's going on'

"What I find very funny, [is that] even if they (Somali mothers) live in Australia, they know what's going on and all want to go to the same place."

- *Nawal, 20-year-old Somali daughter*

Several differences in imaginaries' content and sources can be noted with regards to interviewees' gender and generation. This chapter will present data relating to my third research question, 'How do imaginaries differ along the lines of gender and generations?'.

Gender differences

Somali society has been described as patriarchal, patrilineal and clan-based society where "each individual has an exact place in society" (Lewis, 1994, p. 19; Bangura, 2021). Furthermore, men are often assumed to have "a social status superior to women" (Gardner & Bushra, 2004, p. 11). In line with this, men are traditionally perceived as the breadwinners of the family, while women take care of the household. At the same time, women often have an important role in decision-making regarding their household (Warsame, 2002). Somali gender norms have gone through many changes through the introduction of Islam, colonisation and civil war as well the differences between pastoral communities and urban populations. Still, the dominant norms are of strong and dominant men and docile women (Kleist, 2010, pp. 6-7; Næss, 2019).

Men and the Somali community

Among the imaginaries that were shared with me, certain imaginaries were more commonly shared by women, others more commonly by men. Among male interviewees, the most dominant imaginary about England was the better job and business opportunities there. All eleven men mentioned less paperwork in England and better financial conditions. Linked to this, male interviewees collectively appreciated the large Somali community in England which they saw as a means to easily acquire jobs and housing when newly moving there. Mohamed Abdi, the earlier mentioned journalist, told me that the large Somali community in England could often help newcomers in finding a job or setting up business. As mentioned in Chapter 4, entrepreneurial desires of Somalis were frequently brought up to me by my male interviewees. With the exception of one woman in her 50ies, this imaginary was only important to Somali men. As Warsame (2002) describes, Somali men have traditionally been the ones to earn an income in Somali families, hence this gendered observation.

Linked to this, interviewees told me that when migrating onward, it is often first the father who migrates. Once he has found a somewhat stable job and housing, the rest of the family will follow. This

was shared with me by ten out of 24 interviewees and sounded like a very common strategy in the Somali community in the Netherlands and in other countries like Sweden. Fahama for example told me:

> "First of course the father, look around a bit, search for an apartment already, and then the family comes in most cases. It's not like they all go at once. First the father […] to settle there, otherwise you don't have a house."

This quote underlines the observation that Somali men are driven to destinations like England by imaginaries of better work, and that they are perceived as the ones in the family who will carry out this work. However, the plan to "look around a bit" and find a job in England does not always work out. As a result of this onward migration strategy, many Somali families now live divided between England and other 'transit' countries such as the Netherlands. This is because many Somali fathers who migrated to England but are still unable to secure stable job and housing, seem to continue their attempt in England instead of returning back to the Netherlands. Thus, due to the high mobility in the Somali community, family structures keep changing (Osman, Klingberg-Allvin, Flacking, & Schön, 2016).

Another explanation for the apparent low number of returns of unsuccessful Somali men from England might be found in psychological theories around loss of face and humiliation. As mentioned in Chapter 4, *ceeb* and humiliation might be a factor preventing Somali men to share negative stories about their situation abroad. Similarly, Somali fathers who migrated onwards to England but were unsuccessful there, might fear humiliation and therefore do not come back to the Netherlands. Furthermore, being unable to provide for one's family often results in the loss of face among Somali men (Kroll & Yusuf, 2013). 'Loss of face' refers to the sense of "damage to your identity and sense of self" (Klein, 1991, p. 97). In Somali and in other communities, loss of face can for example occur when women have sex before marriage or when men cannot provide for their families (Rasmussen, 2015).

The findings by Kroll and Yusuf are furthermore in line with the above-mentioned Somali gender ideals of strong men who earn the income of the household (Kleist, 2010, p. 6).

Women and the Somali community

While my female interviewees also very much appreciated the larger Somali community in England, they valued it for different reasons. In line with the above-mentioned research by Warsame (2002), seven interviewees told me that Somali women rather stay at home, focusing on their children and household. Ahmed for example, a 37-year-old man, told me that Somali women are often housewives. For them, an important source of social contact can be found in the Somali community around them. During house errands or children's school activities, they are likely to meet each other. During my visits to the women's breakfast in Haarlem, I was able to observe a female community that had been created in this way. Perhaps for this reason, my female interviewees almost always mentioned

community in the context of feeling connected to other Somalis. For Mohamed Ali's wife, the longing for such a connection had been so strong that she had moved to England for it. He told me:

> "For my family and wife, [there is] a lot in England. [Therefore] my wife moved there. But if she wouldn't have had family there, she would have stayed here (the Netherlands). The woman always wants to be with family. [To] talk together. But [for the] man it's no problem (laughs)."

Here, Mohamed Ali is talking about his wife's desire to be with her family in England. It sounded as if Mohamed Ali was content with her movement, as if he could understand why someone would move away from their husband to be with family. In fact, his wife had taken two of their children with them; their eldest son had stayed in the Netherlands with the father. Mohamed Ali's wife is an example that stands in stark contrast to Somali men's view on the Somali community in England. In contrast to my male interviewees, his wife has migrated to England to be close to family and to other Somalis. Many Somali men on the other hand seek out the Somali community for practical help.

A possible explanation for the relatively stronger need that Somali women have for community was offered by Hawa, an 18-year-old woman herself:

> "The men are more connected with the community [in the Netherlands]. For example, where I live […] the men also go to Jummah[7] together, they have a place where they all come together. But I think that women […] don't really go outside to make contacts."

Hawa is pointing out the difference in community-feeling that exists for Somali men versus for Somali women in the Netherlands. As she has observed, certain gathering moments exist for Somali men such as the weekly prayer on Fridays at the local mosque. Men usually form the majority of visitors at mosques in Western countries and gatherings at mosques and in Muslim communities are usually divided by gender (Nyhagen, 2019).

In other words, for Somali women who are longing for contact with a larger female Somali community, there seem to be very few options in the Netherlands. On the one hand this has to do with the relatively small number of Somalis in the Netherlands, and on the other hand with the Dutch dispersal policy which has led to only few Somali 'hubs' in the country (Darling, 2014).

Family life

Besides a focus on the larger Somali community, Somali women seem very involved in their personal family and children life, and how it differs to England. During my five visits to the Somali women's

[7] *Jummah* refers to the Islamic prayer on Fridays. It is typically performed at the mosque with fellow Muslims.

breakfast in Haarlem, the topic of family life in England was often discussed. One of the women, approximately in her mid-forties, told me:

> "Many people go to England because a bigger community [is] there, who can help you with your children. But it's not so good to move when you have younger children, not so good for the children",

While on the one hand she is appreciative of the bigger Somali community and its potential help in raising Somali children, she was also wary of the negative effects that onward migration could have on young children. This was a concern that was mentioned by almost all women of this ten-women group, but by only two of my male interviewees.

Linked to this, another negative imaginary about England had made its round among Somali women. When asked about Somalis returning from England to the Netherlands, all 13 female interviewees explained this through the risk of gang violence in England. They explained to me that because there was less safety in England and because parents were often too busy with work to steer their children on the 'right' path, many Somali teens ended up in gangs. 25-year-old Nima for example told me that for certain groups, it was dangerous to enter certain neighbourhoods. Rukio, a 35-year-old woman, connected the increased risk of gang membership in England to the instability that comes with onward migration. According to her, because Somali parents got caught up in settling in their new life in England, they had less time and attention for raising their children. In her own words:

> "You can't give a kid in their teens […] suddenly a completely new life in a new country. Because that causes a big gap and turbulence in kids. Through which [they] are more likely to go on street and […] get in contact with false friends."

The fear of gang membership and violence was shared by all Somali mothers, as well as the explanation that this was probably due to parents' lack of attention. Besides this concern, another woman explained how the UK school system had changed for worse:

> "They teach bad things at school now. […] Now they teach from class 1 about having a girlfriend or boyfriend, so that is why some parents move to other countries."

This was echoed by Rukio who works at a large Somali organisation and is in close contact with many Somali women:

> "Children receive certain lessons at school about gender equality, homosexuality, and then they (Somali mothers) are scared of '[…] I don't know what my child is getting whispered.'"

Rukio herself was not opposed to these school practices, however they were perceived as anti-Islamic and were highly condemned by the Haarlem women's group, who all took a lot of interest in their children's school lives. According to the women in Haarlem, it was a fairly recent practice to teach young children about romantic relationships. As a matter of fact, since 2020 it is a legal requirement to teach so-called 'relationships education' in primary schools and sex education in secondary schools (House of Commons Library, 2021) and explains the observation made by the Somali women's group. And while parents may withdraw their child from sex education, this does not seem to be an option for relationships education. Relationships education in England involves educating children on what a relationship is and how to maintain personal boundaries (Department of Education, 2021). While the primary purpose of this education is to enable young children to recognize and report abuse, the Somali women in Haarlem all perceived this education as a bad influence and as being against Islamic values.

Besides their keen interest in their children's lives, in some cases it even seemed as if it was women who were deciding future migration trajectories for their families. Nawal, whose mother was part of the Haarlem women's group that I visited, told me that it was often mothers who initiated the move to England. This was echoed by Fatima, another second-generation woman:

> "We also almost moved there, really almost, because my mother already really had a house there, and then we all got together and thought 'should we go now or not?', and in the end we stayed here because of school, because of work, so we didn't move."

For both Nawal and Fahama, their mothers had taken up a central role in the decision-making of their families to move or to stay put. It also sounds as if Fatima's mother was the one who had contacts in England that had helped her find a house which would again reflect Somali women's focus on and connections in the Somali community. Moreover, according to Nawal, Somali mothers always knew how to obtain information about potential destination places, no matter the distance:

> "That is also something I find very funny, among mothers, even if they live in Australia, they know what's going on and they all want to go to the same place."

In Nawal's experience, women were always in close contact and sharing information with each other across countries. Thereby they stay up to date on the newest "trend", as Nawal called it. She explained that there is always a "trend", a certain place the global Somali community aspires to go to, which at some point had been England. In Nawal's experience, information about these 'trending' places was

mostly obtained and shared by Somali mothers.

The observation that Somali mothers may take up such a central and active role in their families' movement plans is an important one. Such an insight could help contest the common conception of the submissive and suppressed Muslim *Hijabi*[8] woman that has been prominent in anti-Islamic discourses (NieuwWij, 2015). In fact, during my conversations with Somali women I rarely had the impression of them being submissive; in contrast, all my female interlocutors appeared as strongly willed and independent women who seemed to be equal heads of their families. In the context of imaginaries, it then becomes interesting to view Somali women as major sources of imaginaries, as well as the ones deciding to follow their imaginaries or not.

Women and Islam

Lastly, especially female interviewees shared comments on the role that Islam played in their lives. All 24 interviewees claimed that their religion played an important role in their daily lives. However, with the exception of one Somali man only my female interviewees mentioned their struggles to express their Muslim identity in the Netherlands. This was an issue that was brought forth by eight out of 13 female interviewees, and was well summarized by 18-year-old Hawa:

> "It's just, you see that I am Muslim, and everything is a bit against me. It's not the norm of the Netherlands, not what they want to see."

When I asked her what she meant by "not what they want to see", she elaborated:

> "It's always 'wear what you want' until you wear a headscarf. […] It's always against our religion. You also have an entire [political] party that is against us. […] I'm also Dutch, but I'm still not being accepted."

In these quotes, Hawa is especially referring to the visibility of her Muslim identity. Like most Somali women in the Netherlands, Hawa wears a *Hijab* along with modest clothing. According to Akou, the *Hijab* is the clothing style of choice for Somali women, no matter the country they live in (Akou, 2011, p. 107). In fact, 12 out of 13 female interviewees and all ten women of the Haarlem women's group wear a *Hijab*. This makes Somali women like Hawa more visible and more vulnerable to anti-Islamic rhetoric. Like Hawa, all 13 female interviewees described their struggles as a Muslima in the Netherlands.

For some of these women, these struggles were big enough to be a reason to think about new destination countries for the future. Such plans of onward migration were especially thought of in the

[8] *Hijab* refers to the Islamic headscarf worn by women. A *Hijabi* is a woman wearing the *Hijab*.

context of raising one's future family and children. Hawa, unmarried at the time of our conversation, for example was thinking of maybe moving to an Islamic country with her husband later.

From our conversation I could tell that Hawa was struggling against experiences of racism *and* Islamophobia in her life. This particular intersectionality will be highlighted in more detail in the next section of this Chapter as struggles in religious identity were mostly expressed by second-generation women.

Generational differences

Socio-economic and academic differences

When looking at generational differences that might impact Somalis' imaginaries, several observations can be made. Two of my interviewees observed that second-generation Dutch Somalis are generally doing better than the first generation in terms of academic and economic success. Despite this small number of observations, I think it is important to discuss this topic, and its substantiality, here. Shafie, a 30-year-old Somali man who works in close contact with migrant-background youth in his work, passionately told me:

> "I notice that it's going really well with the second generation. [...] The girls, I don't know what they all do at home but I think they are all studying. They are doing very well, I don't know anyone who is below HBO."

Shafie had a relatively good overview of the second generation of Somalis in the area of and around Arnhem. He and Idris, who I also interviewed, had started their NGO '*Kansenmakers'* (English: opportunity-creators) in 2020, with the focus on connecting youth with a migrant background to a professional network to ease them into the job market. First and foremost, Shafie's observation has to do with a smoother learning process of the Dutch language and system for the second generation who in seven cases were born here, and in four cases came to the Netherlands at the age of three or younger. This meant that all second-generation interviewees were able to follow Dutch education from early on. In contrast, their parents' generation not only came to the Netherlands under tense, abrupt and sometimes traumatic circumstances but was also confronted with a system and language that was entirely new to them. While Somalia had been colonized in the past and thereby exposed to European languages such as British English and Italian, Dutch was not among them. Furthermore, academic degrees obtained in Somalia or other developing countries were and still are generally not accepted by the Dutch education system (Lancee & Bol, 2017). Because of this, many newly arriving Somalis could not follow their careers anymore and often had to switch to lower-paid jobs or became unemployed (Andriessen, Gijsberts, Huijink, & Nicolaas, 2017).

Mohamed Abdi had experienced this first-hand:

> "As long as you are not learned here, you are considered differently. No matter what diploma you have. As long as they don't see their diploma's, they see different."

Compared to this, second-generation Somalis are doing relatively better in school and on the job market. However, generally speaking it is not true that second-generation Somalis are doing better than other non-Western groups. As discussed earlier, criminality rates are particularly high among Somali youngsters and educational performance is particularly low (CBS Jaarrapport Integratie 2018, 2018). The picture that students of Somali descent are underachievers is also reflected in other western countries (Open Society Foundations [OSF], 2015). In his research on second-generation Somalis in Finland, Ismail (2019) traces this underperformance back to discrimination students may face in daily life, and the lack of support their parents can offer. According to him, Somali parents are hindered by not understanding the Dutch school system, cultural differences that can result in confusion, and by language barriers (Ismail, 2019, p. 718).

From a developmental psychology perspective, these negative numbers might also be based in the vulnerable position that Somali children are in. Research suggests that children of refugees are at a greater risk for adverse developmental and mental health problems due to their parents' instable or even traumatic past, even if the child itself was not exposed to war-situations (Flanagan et al., 2020). Indirect effects through parental factors, also called intergenerational transmission of trauma, might impact the child's development. Furthermore, refugee parents have been found to more likely have harsh parenting styles, which can be detrimental to children's wellbeing (Bryant et al., 2018). These findings are in line with remarks by my respondents. Although this was not the focus of this research, 50% of my second-generation interviewees briefly mentioned their parents' authoritarian and demanding demeanour towards them.

In addition, Ayaan and Loubna, two second-generation women, told me that as a child of refugees, they have had to grow up much faster. They described that besides doing homework, they frequently had to help their parents with paperwork through translation and filling out papers. Similarly, a staff member of SSHO in Haarlem told me about their walk-in hours that were frequently used by Somalis who needed help with paperwork. Also here, teenage or adolescent children of staff members would occasionally help out in other Somalis' paperwork. Such parenting and attachment styles and the responsibilities put on second-generation Somalis might partly explain the alarming statistics around Somali youngsters.

Shafie's comment stands in contrast to these statistics and research. However, it is not in the scope of this thesis to make further inferences about Somalis' level of education, because only very few comments on this topic could be gathered and because my sample of second-generation respondents was mostly taken from LinkedIn, a platform that is generally used by academics (Mazurek, Gorska, Korzynski, & Silva, 2022).

Language barriers

As mentioned above, Somali children's underperformance in school might be linked to their lack of parental support (Ismail, 2019). This lack of parental support is at least partly created by the language barrier many first-generation Somalis face in the Netherlands. As discussed in my previous chapter, my interviewees frequently mentioned the English language in England as an attractive trait about living in England. Such comments were given by nine out of 13 first-generation interviewees, and by six out of eleven second-generation interviewees. However, these remarks differ across generations in the following way: first-generation interviewees mentioned language barriers as a difficult aspect about life in the Netherlands for other Somalis and also for themselves, while second-generation interviewees also explained that language barriers have been a problem for their parent's generation, not for themselves. Ahmed, who had seen his parents struggle when during their first years in the Netherlands, told me:

> "They (the first-generation Somalis) learned Dutch but it was difficult in the beginning. I think especially our parents needed more time than we do. In the end our parents learn [Dutch] from us."

This struggle can explain why all of the nine first-generation interviewees mentioned above described the English language as one of the most important aspects of their and others' positive imaginaries of England. However, this seemed to be such a self-evident fact for them that no interviewees dwelled on this. The fact that Somalis were and still are quite familiar with English likely has its roots in Somalia's colonization history (see Chapter 1).

Apart from Somalis' own struggles with Dutch, several interviewees also pointed out that the Dutch system puts a strong emphasis on migrants learning the language. During my conversation with second-generation Idris, he told me:

> "If you speak the language here (in the Netherlands) well, then you really have much more advantages. You live a different life. And anyways, Somalis speak English much better and faster."

Rukio furthermore explained that having such a strong emphasis on language can be dangerous for newcomers from conflict zones who are already struggling with mental health problems. According to her, language should be learned slowly over time and other languages should be encouraged as well.

These remarks illustrate that for first-generation Somalis, Dutch was not only harder to learn than for example English, but also the strong emphasis put on speaking the Dutch language sufficiently

increased obstacles for newcomers. Since this issue mostly plays for first-generation Somalis, it makes sense that positive imaginaries about and onward migration to England are especially common among this group.

Destination countries

While second-generation Somalis show less movements than the first generation, they are nevertheless still highly mobile. However, it is interesting to see that there are different destination countries that the two generations aspire to respectively. All 13 first-generation interviewees had positive imaginaries about England and Somalia, yet in terms of actual movement, only desired to move to Somalia. All second-generation interviewees' imaginaries about England were positive as well, albeit much less detailed and also with almost no one intending to move there. Imaginaries about Somalia were more nuanced, with only five interviewees imagining their own migration to Somalia.

All five second-generation Somalis that wanted to move to Somalia were planning to actively contribute to the country's healthcare system or economy. For example, Fatima wants to use her knowledge from her Dutch medicine studies in Somalia. She was not alone in this pursuit:

> "We have a group of Somali doctors. […] [We are] general practitioners, children's doctors, surgeons, but also medicine students. Preferably we would go with that group back to Somalia and share our base knowledge regarding healthcare there."

As Fatima elaborated, she and her sister had noticed a tendency to pursue health-related studies among Somali university students, including themselves. They then decided to set up a group of young Somali professionals who all had the wish to share and apply their knowledge in Somalia. Established at the start of the pandemic in 2020, their group now counts around 30 people. Among all my interviewees, this was the only group I encountered that was actively planning their collective migration to Somalia. In all other cases, people were imagining their journey to Somalia solo or had simply not planned it out in that much detail yet.

Apart from Somalia, half of my second-generation interviewees brought up countries like Dubai, The Emirates, America or Canada as potential destination countries. This suggests that compared to the first generation, the second generation shares perhaps more diverse imaginaries and an openness for new, yet undiscovered destination countries.

Sources of imaginaries

Another topic that highlighted generational differences among my interviewees was people's sources of imaginaries. This paragraph will not present much new quotes, but rather bring together several observations and small comments by interviewees that I could gather on sources of imaginaries. As

mentioned in Chapter 4, many imaginaries about England seem to be formed based on fellow Somalis' verbal accounts. This type of oral transmission of information was especially often used by my first-generation interviewees who all personally knew Somalis who had migrated to or visited England. As discussed earlier, orally transmitted information about destination countries seemed to be mostly positive, while negative aspects about life abroad seem to be known in much less detail. As a consequence, my first-generation interviewees held rather positive imaginaries about England and Somalia and only brought up negative imaginaries in the course of the conversation and only if explicitly asked.

The second generation on the other hand seems to have a much more diverse set of imaginaries about destination countries. In contrast to their parents' generation, they appear to be much less dependent on the stories of Somali acquaintances and much less active in seeking out information about destination countries themselves. 20-year-old Nawal for example told me that she had visited Saudi Arabia herself to figure out if she would like to move there for studies. It turned out that that had been a smart decision:

> "On social media I saw a lot of positive things (about Saudi Arabia). Then I went there and I thought 'no'."

The desire to visit a country personally before moving there was shared by six more second-generation and only one first-generation interviewees. In addition, young Somalis frequently make use of social media to find information about other countries. After we had finished our interview, Fahama told me about several Instagram and TikTok accounts[9] that she follows online to watch other young Somalis' experiences in England and in Somalia. Similarly, 25-year-old Fatima, who was planning to move to Somalia to share her medical knowledge, has been closely following and watching other young Somali doctors' stories about moving to Somalia. As Fatima and also 19-year-old Aisha explained to me, many second-generation's imaginaries about Somalia partly come from interesting new conversations the second generation is currently having with the first generation of Somalis in the Netherlands. This results in a mix between positive imaginaries from parents and acquaintances, and mixed imaginaries from social media about England Somalia.

As a result of seeking out such diverse sources about destination countries, second-generation Somalis' seem to be more wary and cautious when forming their imaginaries about destination countries. In contrast to my first-generation interviewees, the second generation shared positive imaginaries about England as well as comments that one should be cautious to believe other people's stories. They also much more willingly referred to the fact that many Somalis had returned from England because their imaginaries had not been fulfilled. Similarly, second-generation interviewees

[9] On request of Fahama, the names of these social media accounts will not be shared.

seemed to be more cautious about the dangers that still exist in Somalia. Meanwhile, my first-generation interviewees put much more emphasis on their enthusiasm to go back to Somalia and about the potential that lies in the country.

Religious identity

As mentioned in the 'Gender' section of this chapter, difficulties in expressing religious identity were almost exclusively mentioned by second-generation Somali women. After having looked at this from a gender perspective, we will now turn to the more pronounced generational difference in Somalis' religious identity. From my own sample, the following numbers arise: among all female interviewees, one first-generation woman and five second-generation women talked about their struggles as a Muslim woman in the Netherlands. Although these numbers are very limited, they do represent a larger trend that especially young and female Muslims with an immigrant background develop a devotion to Islam (Rozario, 2011, p. 286). For the Somali diaspora in specific, expressing their religious identity is seen as a uniting factor, especially among young people (Omar, 2012) and is used to maintain their ethnic identity (Tiilikainen, 2007). This is in line with what I could observe among my interviewees. All nine second-generation women had either Somali or Moroccan women as their best friends. When asked what made them feel connected to them, the most recurring answer was that they were Muslim as well. In Fahama's words:

> "I only have Somali friends. […] Because they also all wear headscarves and are Muslim, and also the culture is the same."

The desire to share one's religion and culture with friends was common among all second-generation women. In the case that an interviewee did not have Somali but Moroccan friends, they explained that this was because not many Somalis lived in their environment. Fahama's quote is in line with the observation that religious identity is treated as a common, uniting factor among young Somalis (Omar, 2012).

On the other hand, being so vocal and expressive of their Muslim identity appears to subject young Somali women to the particularly vulnerable intersectionality of gender, race and religion. Hawa explained to me why she thought that Somali women were especially vulnerable to such challenges:

> "I am a woman, so that is already kind of unsafe. And I am also black, and then you have another thing, I am Muslim. It's on three levels. As if everything is directed against me."

In this quote, we hear Hawa making a sharp observation. What she is referring to here is the intersectionality of gender, race and religion. As I have elaborated on in Chapter 1 of this thesis, intersectionality refers to the intersections of various aspects of our identities such as gender, race, class

and religion (Center for Intersectional Justice, 2022). As Somali women belong to the female, the Black and the Muslim community, they are often subjected to discrimination on all these three levels at once. Such discrimination seems to be especially high against *young* Somali women as they seem to be more expressive about their Muslim identity than older, first-generation Somali women. Coming back to the concept of imaginaries, it becomes understandable why young Somali women would maintain positive imaginaries about Islamic countries where discrimination on the religious level would presumably fall away.

To be more specific on the difference between first- and second-generation Somalis, research suggests a stark difference in religious identity of first- and second-generation Muslim diaspora in Europe. According to, among others, Knott and Khokhler (1993), second-generation Muslims are turning away from the Islam they were taught and that is practiced by their parents' generation. According to many young Somalis and other young diasporic Muslims, their parents' version of Islam is infused with cultural practices like arranged marriages and is therefore not a 'pure' form of Islam (Knott & Khokhler, 1993, p. 596). These second-generation Muslims argue that cultural practices such as female genital mutilation or marriage within one's culture are often given an Islamic stamp while actually not originating from Islam. This perception is confirmed by Schmidt (2004) who found that second-generation Muslims in Sweden are making a conscious choice to be Muslim, more particularly to follow a version of Islam that crosses boundaries of ethnicity and social class and de-emphasizes cultural practices. Their parent's generation on the other hand is perceived as following a version of Islam that is filled by cultural misconceptions (Schmidt, 2004, p. 37).

In line with these findings, I found first-generation Somalis to focus on practices of Islam such as the importance of wearing the *Hijab* or of praying. Among the second-generation on the other hand, the focus was laid on the content of Islamic principles. Hawa, for example, shared her wish to find a husband who would follow the habits of the prophet Mohamed (*pbuh*), habits such as being honest and kind. Aisha, who was friends with Hawa, told me how she and her Somali best friend constantly try to educate each other about teachings of the Islam. These observations suggest that the focus within faith differs for first- versus second-generation Somalis in the Netherlands.

Linking the intersectionality of young Somali women and their devotion to Islam to imaginaries, it becomes understandable why especially second-generation Somalis hold positive imaginaries about Islamic destination countries where they can follow Islamic principles and conversations without major challenges.

Chapter 6: Why wouldn't it work for me, too?

"This is maybe very old-fashioned, and I don't know if this is based on academic research, but what I strongly believe is that the Somali community has been a nomadic community originally. So then you always have that urge. If you are a nomad then you always go where your camels can find the best grass, where the water is. So maybe that mentality has stuck around. That you don't think you really have one place where you live. So you just go where it's the best."

- Aisha, 27-year-old Somali woman

The term 'nomad' often has a certain connotation in our minds. Perhaps we think of camel caravans in the desert, or of the recent emergence of digital nomads. When my Somali interviewees, like 26-year-old Aisha above, talked about their 'nomadic' origins, they told me about camels and arid climates as well. But much more did they tell me about a nomadic perspective to life and a fluid sense of home. In the following chapter, marking the final data analysis chapter of this thesis, I will unpack these remarks and link them to both my first research question on the content of imaginaries, and my second research question on the sources of imaginaries.

The concept of narratives about nomadism was initially not part of this master's thesis. During my conversations with my interviewees, the topic of nomadism and its narratives naturally appeared. Once I realized that a substantial number of interviewees was discussing this topic, the decision was made to include this research concept into this thesis. This decision was furthermore backed by numerous studies that have been done on the topic of nomadic ideas in connection with Somalis' high mobility.

The chapter is divided into three parts. Firstly, I will discuss nomadism in Somalia's history. Next, I will analyse how this nomadic past remains relevant to the Somali diaspora today and lastly, specifically to the transnational movements of second-generation Somalis in the Netherlands.

Nomadism in Somalia

Somalia has traditionally been a nation of mobile pastoral communities. Pastoralism refers to a lifestyle of cattle herding which for Somali pastoralists typically includes sheep, goats, and camels (Wood, Anderson, & Broch Due, 2000). Oftentimes, pastoralists lead a nomadic lifestyle, meaning that they seasonally move from place to place depending on the condition of the environment and their own needs (Bille, 1997). This is the case for nomadic pastoralists in Somalia.

In 2013, UNICEF reported that the majority of Somalis living in Somalia led a life of mobile pastoralism (UNICEF, 2013). It should be noted, however, that this life predominantly exists in the

north of Somalia, while there is agriculture in the south (Rousseau, Said, Gagne, & Bibeau, 1998). The more widely used term in mainstream media and, as we will see, among my interviewees, for this type of mobile lifestyle is simply 'nomads'. I believe that it will be easier to follow the chapter's train of thought if I use the emic terms of my interlocutors, which is why the term 'nomad' rather than 'pastoralist' will be used here. Using my interlocutors' own terminology will also help understand how they themselves make meaning of Somalis' nomadic past.

Among my interviewees, the nomadic traditions in Somalia were commonly known. 13 out of eleven interviewees mentioned these nomadic traditions to me, some of them describing in detail the movements that take place in Somalia. Fahama, a 26-year-old second-generation woman, told me:

> "We are really nomads. […] So we move to every place. […] Back when there were no big cities yet, there were only villages. And we lived in huts. And everyone just had camels which moved to many places. And [we were] goatherders, that's really one of the characteristics of the Somali community. […] Because [we] went from place to place, there was never a home base. It was always like, where your animals go, you go. […] It was really mobile."

This lengthy quote by Fahama illustrates that even young Somalis born in the Netherlands have detailed accounts of past nomadic movements. Here, Fahama is describing the reason for Somalis' movements and their highly mobile housing style. Interestingly, she uses the word "we" to describe nomadic movements that she and her family in the Netherlands have never experienced or at least not since her parents live in the Netherlands. Still, from our conversation it seemed that Fahama feels connected to these nomadic movements and perceives this as part of her own background. In fact, she uses past tense to describe nomadic lifestyles in Somalia but uses present tense when saying that Somalis "*are* nomads" and "*move* to every place". I will come back to this observation in the second section of this chapter.

What is also interesting is Fahama's observation that "there was never a home base". When I asked her to explain what she meant by this, she told me that by having such mobile huts, many Somalis did not have a feeling of 'home' like we know it. Instead, 'home' was a vast area, which in turn made it easier for pastoralists to keep moving to the next place. This observation is confirmed by Broch Due (2000) who describes East African pastoralists' 'homes' as more closely linked to their clans, rather than to places.

However, this was not the only type of nomadic movement that my respondents told me about. Shafie, a young second-generation man, told me about Somalia's history as a trading country, and the movements that resulted from such trades:

> "Somalis have been nomads anyways. […] I think it's still in your genes. […] My grandfather for example, he lived in Yemen. And my other grandfather went back and

> forth to the Emirates. […] So I think that it's in them to make journeys for the sake of entrepreneurship. Ones that others might not make."

Shafie is using the same word as Fahama here, 'nomad'. He is however describing a very different type of movement, one that is driven by different reasons and one that is undertaken for different lengths of time than the mobile pastoralism Fahama is talking about. Shafie is rather describing Somalia's past as a trading country which was established especially due to Somalia's advantageous position on the Horn of Africa by the Indian Ocean and in close proximity to other trading countries like the Emirates (Forum of Federations, 2022). As he further elaborated, there was a history of traders in Shafie's family who took it upon themselves to move to the Middle East and stay there for prolonged periods of time. For this reason, as Shafie argued, it was not strange to him or to fellow Somalis to witness the massive onward migration from the Netherlands to England. In his view, such movements for the sake of business were very common among Somalis and had been for a long time.

This shows us several things. Firstly, Shafie is emphasizing the fact that Somalis' past as traders made it "easier" for them to move away from home for the sake of business. Secondly, we hear him distinguish such trading movements from nomadic movements. In my conversation with him after this quote, Shafie elaborated on nomadic movements, largely repeating what we have heard from Fahama above. It is interesting that Shafie is distinguishing between movements due to trade and movements due to nomadic lifestyles because in his previous quote he starts with the sentence "Somalis have been nomads anyways" and proceeds with describing Somalia's trade history. This suggests that although Shafie is aware that movements due to trade are different than movements due to nomadic lifestyles, he still categorizes both these movements as something similar, maybe as the general tendency of Somalis to move. The basis of my interpretation comes from the remarks of numerous other interviewees, who almost all commented on the inherent ease or desire of Somalis to move. So also 25-year-old Aisha:

> "The mobility indeed, is a completely different way of thinking. They don't think in borders. They really think in opportunities."

This remark was complemented by 20-year-old Nawal, who made the following interesting statement:

> "We don't have that 'why' that pushes us, to go someplace different."

These quotes, both shared with me after Aisha and Nawal described nomadic movements in Somalia to me, are very telling. They not only show that Aisha and Nawal have apparently already spent time privately on analysing the high mobility of the Somali diaspora, but it also suggests that Somalis'

nomadic origins, or at least the narratives around their origins, have resulted in a different perspective for them. According to Aisha, this is a perspective not bound by national borders, but rather shaped by opportunities. Moreover, Nawal claims that there is often no clear reason behind Somali movements, in other words there are no clear push- or pull-factors. Based on my interviewees' positive imaginaries about England and the negative experiences in the Netherlands, I do believe that there are certain push- and pull-factors among Somalis. Nevertheless, it seems that these factors work differently on the Somali community than on other groups that engage in onward migration, given the unusually high number of onward migrants among Somalis (van Heelsum, 2011).

Past research

The idea that Somalis' nomadic origins might be linked to their relatively stronger tendency to move to other places has been taken up, among others, by van Heelsum (2011). In her report, van Heelsum systematically reviews the different reasons behind Somalis' onward migration from the Netherlands to the UK and to what extent this onward migration can be explained by nomadic lifestyles in Somalia (van Heelsum, 2011). Similar to the comments of my interviewees, she also identifies business opportunities in the UK, the larger Somali community there and dissatisfaction with the Netherlands as the main reasons for Somalis' onward migration (van Heelsum, 2011, pp. 15, 16). However, she also notices that these reasons alone hold true for other migrant groups in the Netherlands as well, and therefore cannot be the only reasons behind the significantly higher number of Somali onward migrants. For this reason, she inspects the claim that Somalis themselves often bring forward: that their mobility is based on nomadism (van Heelsum, 2011, p. 19).

While van Heelsum's focus on statistics and lack of interviews does not allow her to draw definite conclusions about nomadism's role in this context, she does maintain the standpoint that there is a correlation between nomadic origins and Somalis' mobility. In either case, 13 out of 24 of my interviewees brought up nomadic origins as a factor influencing their mobility. This strongly suggests at least a psychological impact of narratives around nomadism on Somalis' onward migrations and on their strong willingness to follow positive imaginaries. In fact, all of the above-mentioned 13 interviewees explained the global dispersal of Somalis and the onward migration to England through nomadic origins. To discuss these remarks, we will now turn to narratives around nomadism applied to the Somali diaspora.

Nomadism applied to the Somali diaspora through narratives

Besides conversations about Somalis' nomadic movements, my interviewees also directly applied this concept to today's Somali diaspora. Many interviewees directly explained the onward migration of Somalis to new countries through nomadism. So for example Ridwan:

> "It's really easy [for Somalis], like you live here, you don't like it, you go. They are not so difficult. And I think that's one of the reasons they go to other countries. To do something for themselves."

For Ridwan, Somalis in the diaspora were still carrying out nomadic movements, despite not living in pastoral communities anymore. He believes that there is a certain ease to movement among the Somali community which makes it easier for people to follow ideas of a better life elsewhere. Ridwan also explained that because it is easier for Somalis to move, a common strategy to manage challenging environments is to move to another place. This coping mechanism seems to be especially interesting for Somalis who want "to do something for themselves" in a country such as England. In fact, Rukio even went as far as to say that Somalis too quickly leave a challenging environment instead of trying to make it work there. In her own words:

> "[They move] Instead of really trying to settle and working on problems or societal questions they struggle with. I do miss that in the Somali community. It's always like 'Oh, we'll go to a different place'. That's just too bad".

Rukio, who is a 37-year-old woman, works for a Somali organization in the Netherlands and therefore has a relatively good overview of the Somali community. She had been disappointed to see so many Somalis leave the Netherlands. For her, this seemed like an unwillingness to deal with unpleasant situations, like an easy way out. From a psychological perspective, Ridwan's and Rukio's observations to migrate away from challenging environments could be categorized as a coping mechanism that Somalis employ in difficult situations.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define coping as "the constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person." (p. 141). In other words, coping mechanisms are mechanisms that people use to deal with difficult conditions in their environment. In the last decade, increasingly more attention has been paid to how migrants cope with life in a new country (Kuo, 2014).

In psychological terms, migrants' process of adapting to their new environment is often referred to as 'acculturation' (Kuo, 2014). One of the key stances in acculturation theory is that the interaction between person and environment inherently leads to stress and positive or negative coping (Ward, 2001). Because migration usually leads to a major change in environment, migrants will likely experience stress and develop coping mechanisms during or after their migration process (Kuo, 2014, p. 18). Moving away from a situation of challenge, as Rukio claims Somalis do, would at first glance be categorized as avoidance coping. In avoidance coping, a negative coping mechanism, the person tries to avoid confrontation.

This stands in contrast to 'approach coping' in which problem solving and confrontation are central, and which has been found to have positive effects like decreased stress (Folkman, 1997). Judging from Rukio's statement, she wishes that more Somalis would actively work on their struggles in the Netherlands instead of moving to other countries. However, in the case of onward migrating Somalis, one cannot assume the usual case of avoidance coping. Typically, avoidance coping refers to passive coping strategies such as inactivity or substance use (Ben-Zur, 2009). In the current case however, Somalis are far from being inactive but rather actively move to a different place. Such active behaviour stands in contrast to avoidance coping, despite Somalis essentially avoiding challenges in their current host country through their movement.

25-year-old Nima gave me another example of the many movements Somali families in the diaspora may go through in their lives:

> "[Some people] moved three times. From the Netherlands to England. And then back to the Netherlands again. And because they don't cancel their house here, they think 'maybe I'll come back […]. Maybe I don't like it there. […] Maybe let someone look after it, and then I'll come back!".

On the one hand, Nima is illustrating just how often Somalis might pursue movements in their life. Moreover, Nima explains how Somalis keep options open for potential returns. According to her, oftentimes houses are not given up so that the option exists to come back in the case of an unsuccessful endeavour in the new destination country. In other words, there seems to be an awareness that things could go wrong in the destination country, yet this awareness is not necessarily enough reason to stop Somalis from moving there. Instead, this risk is dealt with differently, namely by keeping ties open to one's current country. This particular way of dealing with the uncertainty of risks in destination countries suggests an inherent desire to move, a desire that is stronger than fears of failed migration attempts. With regard to imaginaries this means that negative imaginaries seem to be considered, given the fact that arrangements are made for potential returns in the future. However, positive imaginaries are a decisive factor in the mobility of Somalis, whereas negative imaginaries are not or less.

A global Somali network

Several interviewees connected the ease of diasporic movement to the fact that Somalis can seemingly be found in every corner of the world. Nawal for example told me:

> "In every corner of the world you can find a Somali person, […] you have Somali communities. […] You have family everywhere. [...] So I don't think Somalis need a reason to go somewhere. I think we would really go anywhere."

Here we hear Nawal describing the presence of Somalis across the globe. According to her, the fact that she for example has family in England, Sweden, Belgium, and even in China is proof as well as a motivator for Somalis to migrate anywhere. Nawal perceives the fact that Somali communities have formed in many countries around the world as an encouragement to plan movements to diverse countries. The link between the global Somali community and movements was explained even more clearly by Rukio:

> "Somalis have that [nomadism[10]] in them but there is also a large safety net. […] Because there is always a family member, or acquaintance, or someone from your own clan who can pick you up and can coach you, offer help if needed. […] So it's easier to go from country to country".

Here, Rukio is clearly describing how the global Somali community plays a role in facilitating movements of fellow Somalis. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Somalis in the Netherlands seem to be very aware of the Somali support system that can be used in times of need, no matter how realistic or unrealistic this idea might be. Interestingly, Rukio referred to both the Somali community in the Netherlands as well as the Somali diaspora across the globe simply as the "Somali community". This suggests even more that there is less of a perceived distance between members of the Somali diaspora despite being separated by large geographical distances. 30-year-old Idris shared a similar observation with me:

> "Somalis are dispersed across the whole world. So they are in contact with each other. […] So often […] Somalis in other countries tell you 'Hey, I have these advantages in this country'. And because they are entrepreneurs and can move fairly easily, they are moving in massive numbers".

Through this quote, Idris eloquently brings together the different factors that he believes to facilitate Somalis' movements. In line with Rukio, he mentions that the global Somali diaspora often attracts fellow Somalis to move towards them. Idris specifically notes how Somalis will often describe their

[10] For clarification purposes, Rukio's "that" is being filled in as 'nomadism' because she elaborated on Somalis' "nomadic tendencies" right before this quote.

'better' living conditions to others, in other words create positive imaginaries in the minds of fellow Somalis. Because the Somali diaspora are "in contact with each other", these positive imaginaries seem to easily make rounds. Idris illustrated such imaginaries by telling me: "Like 'the grass is always greener on the other side'". While in Western contexts this saying might be used for the longing for something we do not have, in Somali contexts this saying is taken quite literal and can even be translated into transnational movements. Moreover, Idris mentions Somalis' entrepreneurial personality as a facilitator of movement. Here, he is referring to Somalia's history as a trading country and the desire of many Somali men, including in the diaspora, to open up their own business. The observation that Somalis are connected to a strong transnational network that can facilitate migration has been observed by other scholars as well. Massey and colleagues (1998) write that migrant networks can be helpful in providing information about destination countries or the job market.

More specifically on Somali networks, van Liempt and Nijenhuis (2020) write that Somalis show a strong orientation and use of their transnational ties to move. Scholars often distinguish between strong and weak ties in such networks, strong ties being with family and friends, and weak ties being with acquaintances or business partners (Granovetter, 1973). In the case of Somalis, it is interesting that ties that would typically be defined as 'weak' seem to be rather strong. As Rukio describes for example, even knowing someone unrelated but who is from your clan can be helpful in getting settled in a different country. Based on these comments, it is not clear how exactly this social unit that may offer help is defined. It rather seems like Somalis estimate to find readily available help in fellow Somalis, disregarding their own relation to them. This emphasizes the observation that the global Somali community is connected to one another in strong ties that go beyond family and friends and that can successfully facilitate transnational movements.

Judging from these quotes, ideas about nomadism are often applied to the global movements of the Somali diaspora. These movements seem to be further encouraged by the large global "safety net" (Rukio) that is in place for Somalis who plan to move.

Resilience and adaptability among young Somalis

Interestingly, most interviewees sharing remarks on nomadism were second-generation Somalis. In fact, out of all interviewees mentioning Somalis' nomadic origins, four were first-generation and nine were second-generation Somalis. All nine second-generation interviewees told me that in their view, the nomadic origins of their families in the past had had an impact on their own lives today. They all had learned about nomadic movements of Somalis from their parents. More specifically, most interviewees' parents had taught them that 'just like their forefathers', Somalis everywhere were free and sometimes even encouraged to go on transnational journeys themselves. Shafie for example told me that no one would find it strange if second-generation Somalis in the Netherlands would like to move abroad themselves.

> "I don't think they would encourage it (moving), but I also don't think they would find it strange. Because my father for example was also always between Yemen and [the Netherlands]."

In line with the observation that Somali parents would not discourage transnational movements, Nawal, who has been actively travelling in the past, told me:

> "I have more freedom in travelling than my [non-Somali] friends for example. Because with us that's just normal."

As she elaborated, Nawal had visited Saudi Arabia because she was interested in studying there and wanted to see the country for herself. According to her, she has much more freedom in such travels than her friends because nomadic movements have been inherent to Somalia's culture. For her female friends however, many of which are of Moroccan background, mothers are often stricter and usually do not allow their daughters to travel abroad by themselves.

The fact that almost all of my second-generation interviewees, nine out of eleven, mentioned Somalis' nomadic origins and its impact on their own lives suggests that there has been a strong cross-generational conversation around and passing on of stories and values around nomadism. The act of passing on cultural ideas from one generation to the next is also called intergenerational cultural transmission and can be observed in many diasporic communities (Tam, 2015).

For Somalis in the diaspora, a generally strong connection to Somali cultural ideas has been reported (Langellier, 2010). Over the course of my 24 interviews, I gained a similar impression about Somalis in the Netherlands. All first- and second-generation interviewees shared a strong connection to Somali cultural ideas which they all reported they had been taught by their parents. Listening to the remarks of my second-generation interviewees, it sounds like many Somali parents have framed their own and others' past and current movements as having been facilitated by their nomadic origins. In fact, several second-generation interviewees illustrated how they themselves are applying 'their' nomadic past into their own lives and planned futures. 20-year-old Aysha, who is planning to move to England for work next year, told me:

> "The fact that my parents managed to go from 0 to 100 and go from Somalia to the Netherlands. I think that makes it easier for me to move to England, because [they went] from Africa to Europe. That was really hard, but they still did it. And that motivates me. […] Why wouldn't it work for me, too?"

Instead of estimating her chances of success in England based on others who currently plan to move to England, Aysha bases it on the success rate of other past 'movers' like her parents. In fact, she did not even account Brexit into her moving plans but put a lot of faith into her own resilience and ability to take the leap. Also, Aysha told me that she had never been to Somalia in her life, yet she perceives her family's nomadic origins as shaping her personal life in the Netherlands. A similarly passionate comment was shared with me by 26-year-old Ayaan:

> "I think like 'You don't have to be scared to move, because your great-great-grandfather moved almost every week. So why would you not make it?'. […] I am already programmed. In my head is already 'you can adapt, you can go wherever you want.' So that nomadic perspective, I already have that in my head".

Several things stand out from this quote by Ayaan. Like Aysha, she is drawing a direct link between her family's ability and success in moving to different places, and her chances of successfully doing so. Moreover, Ayaan seems to have consciously thought about how her family's nomadic origins give her an advantage over other people who are planning to move. According to her, things that other people would perceive as obstacles when moving, such as having no friends, are not an obstacle for Ayaan because she is already "programmed" to move, to "adapt". Interestingly, Ayaan had also not been in Somalia often but regarded 'her' nomadic origins highly. These quotes illustrate that although second-generation Somalis might have spent their lives almost exclusively in the Netherlands, narratives around nomadism continue to shape their perceived resilience, adaptability to new environments, and future aspirations.

The adaptability to challenging environments was mentioned by other interviewees as well. 20-year-old Nawal further shared with me:

> "We are doing this (moving) for years already, since Somalia exists, and therefore we can adapt really well to our environment. I also notice on me, I'm only in the Netherlands since nine years but I have adapted so well."

Nawal and several other interviewees mentioned that Somalis had a high adaptability to their environment. From a European point of view however, a high adaptability of migrants would be achieved if the migrant group is able to integrate well into the host country's society. However, Somalis are one of the least integrated migrant groups in the Netherlands (SCP, 2017), in England (Adfam, 2009), and in other countries (Fangen, 2016). If under these circumstances Somalis still view their community as highly adaptive, then the term 'adaptability' probably has a different meaning for them.

In fact, remarks on Somalis' adaptability were almost always made in connection with Somalis' ease of movement, like in Nawal's quote above where she states, "We are doing this for years already, […] therefore we can adapt really well to our environment". These quotes suggest that Somalis referring to a high adaptability might really be talking about an openness to go to new places.

In a way, such open-mindedness would make Somalis highly adaptive to at least the process of changing place of residence. Also mobile pastoralists in Somalia are characterized by high levels of flexibility in their place of residence and high adaptability to challenging conditions, in their case surrounding climate and resources (Moret, 2018). Applied to Somalis in the Netherlands, it seems that their high adaptability is focused on the relatively short-term change of residence and not on the long-term overcoming of integrational obstacles in host countries. This would explain why Dutch Somalis on the one hand perceive themselves as highly adaptive when it comes to transnational movements, but on the other hand show low levels of integration in the Netherlands.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

"That's also something that we hear often. 'It's as if Somalis can't sit still!'."

- *Nima, second-generation Somali woman*

This thesis and its accompanying fieldwork aimed to give an answer to the question: What imaginaries about the Netherlands and destination countries shape Somalis' onward migration? This research question was further subdivided into content of imaginaries, sources of imaginaries, and differences in imaginaries among gender and generations. In this last chapter, answers to these sub-questions and finally to the main research question are given based on my data analysis.

Content of imaginaries

Imaginaries about England

As I have elaborated on in Chapter 5, my interviewees have mainly shared imaginaries about England, Somalia and, indirectly, about the Netherlands with me. To reiterate, imaginaries are subjective social representations of people or places that are shared across a group of people or societies (Salazar, 2011). Based on my interviews, I can confirm that the imaginaries I gathered were indeed shared by most people in the Somali community. On England, the main imaginaries are that it is generally easier to open businesses there and get a job. Another imaginary seems to be that the larger Somali community in England offers a Somali support system that one can rely on in case of problems. Both these imaginaries originate from stories told by fellow Somalis who are either living in England or have heard stories themselves. However, from my conversations it becomes clear that such positive imaginaries are not necessarily grounded in reality. Many interviewees mentioned Somalis who went to England but returned to the Netherlands later due to unfulfilled expectations. Most of these unsuccessful ventures to England were linked to imaginaries based on oral information.

Negative imaginaries about England were often described in less detail and less often, with the most common negative imaginary being that England is a child-unfriendly environment that facilitates gang activity and criminality. Still, my interviewees have mentioned that negative England imaginaries have increased over time. This seems to be linked to the sources of imaginaries about England: on the one hand, the mouth-to-mouth advertisement is taken more cautiously now that many Somalis have returned from England after negative experiences there. On the other hand, other sources like social media or visiting personally to form imaginaries about England are on the rise. These developments have resulted in more negative England imaginaries over time. In addition, Brexit has made England

appear more complicated and less desirable for Somalis in the Netherlands to migrate to, although some Somalis are still planning the move.

Despite almost none of my interviewees planning to migrate to England, the massive onward migration around 2000 was well known to everyone. According to some interviewees, this migration represented a larger problem, namely that many Somalis tend to escape challenging situations through migration. In Chapter 4, I have analysed this as a potential coping mechanism that might be used in times of difficulties. However, unlike Rukio and Ridwan I propose to categorize Somalis' onward migration as an active approach coping mechanism oriented towards problem solving, rather than avoidant coping. While avoidance coping typically involved inactivity, relocation to a new country is a very active step to change one's challenging environment.

Yet others see the onward migration to England as just one of many 'trends' among the global Somali community and are just waiting for the next big 'trend' to appear. This idea is closely linked to the mouth-to-mouth propaganda about good lives in other countries and how Somalis, especially Somali women, seem to encourage each other to move to certain places.

Imaginaries about Somalia

On Somalia, the main positive imaginary entails that moving to Somalia will help to re-connect with one's family and one's Somali roots. In general, Somalia is viewed as a beautiful country that was struck by a tragic situation, and most interviewees feel a strong connection to it. Many interviewees talk about the potential that lies in Somalia and relish in their loving memory of or stories about the country. This image about Somalia stands in contrast to the image that media often presents about Somalia, an image that was even directly refuted by Fatima and several others. Not surprisingly, a large part of my interviewees, mostly first-generation, is planning to move to Somalia at some point. Nevertheless, upon inquiry almost all interviewees admitted that Somalia remains dangerous in certain places and that more time is required to get to an even better and safer situation.

Both in Somalis' positive imaginaries about England and about Somalia I could hear the indirect negative imaginaries about the Netherlands. These include the obstacles many Somalis face in the job market, especially when trying to start a business themselves, and the lack of a Somali community here. Especially the latter aspect seemed to bother my interviewees and can be linked to a lack of sense of belonging that many Somalis experience in the Netherlands. In line with the indicators discussed in Chapter 3, my interviewees' longing for a larger Somali community touched upon their autobiographical, relational and cultural factors of sense of belonging.

Imaginaries and nomadic ideas

In addition, Chapter 6 has shed light on the attitude that many Somalis in the diaspora have towards onward migration in general. According to 13 of my interviewees, Somalia's history of nomadism is perceived to have had some kind of impact on their own and other Somalis' willingness to migrate

onwards. Based on their descriptions, I can conclude that most interviewees hold a certain romanticized version of the 'nomad' in their minds and feel connected to this imaginary. This is especially interesting because none of my interviewees themselves have engaged in nomadism in the way it is practiced in Somalia, for example pastoralism or transnational trade. Instead, my interviewees described the 'nomad' as a mixture of both these nomadic practices, namely a person that travels from place to place with their camels and goods and is presumably fuelled by entrepreneurial desires.

It seems that stories about their family's nomadic past have been passed on to younger Somali generations, to the extent that these narratives are now encouraging the migration plans of young Somalis. As my interviewees have formed their idea of nomadic practices based on their parents' narratives, I have consciously decided to focus on narratives about nomadism as a facilitator of onward migration, rather than nomadism itself. It seems that it is mostly their imaginary about nomadism that has an impact on their migratory desires and plans. In other words, it seems that the imaginary of what it means to be 'nomadic' is shaping the mobilities of many Somalis in the Netherlands. However, this seems to be the case only for those Somalis who have been hearing and believing such narratives about nomadism, and who already have plans of migrating elsewhere in the future, even if only vaguely

There might be several reasons that narratives about nomadism seem to be powerful enough to shape migration of Somalis living in the Netherlands. On the one hand, by calling themselves 'nomads' and linking their own and others' mobility to Somalia's nomadic history, Somalis might be trying to frame themselves in a more positive, active light. Instead of being mere helpless, displaced refugees who had no say or choice in their departure from Somalia, the Somali person becomes an active agent in their post-refuge movements who can take their future into their own hands. In other words, applying ideas about nomadism to themselves might help Somalis in the Netherlands to navigate their transnational, refugee identities. By holding on to narratives about nomadism and making them their own, they might be able to tie their 'Somaliness' into their lives in a positive way and imagine their futures elsewhere. Furthermore, applying a romanticized version of a resilient, adaptive 'nomad' to themselves seems to inspire and empower Somalis to feel and behave in a corresponding way, like planning transnational migration themselves.

More specifically, it seems to be the mutual combination of nomadic perspectives, a strong global network of Somali communities and entrepreneurial tendencies that could explain Somalis' higher levels of onward migration compared to other migrant groups in Europe. If we follow the comments of interviewees like Rukio, Nawal and Ayaan, it looks like a Somali wanting to migrate to a certain place can almost certainly rely on a global Somali support system and is at the same time equipped with the resilience and adaptability of a nomad. If this is combined with a desire to live somewhere else and positive imaginaries about this place, then it seems plausible that the Somali in question would pursue their migration plans. Concludingly, it seems that nomadic perspectives that are facilitated by a global network of Somali communities and positive imaginaries could be the deciding

factor that makes onward migration more likely to be realized among Somalis compared to other refugee groups.

Sources of imaginaries

Moving on to my second research question, most imaginaries that my interviewees described to me were taken from oral information that they had received from other Somalis. These informants had either been to the particular destination country themselves or had also heard the information from someone else. Nevertheless, oral transmission of information appears to be the source of most imaginaries within the Somali community in the Netherlands. This seems to have led to an interesting situation in which most information that Somalis receive about destination countries are positive, making most of their imaginaries positive as well. As mentioned in Chapter 4, this might be linked to the *ceeb* shame culture prevalent in many Somali communities, a set of practices that I could mostly observe and hear among the first generation. In the context of shame culture, it is plausible that negative experiences about destination countries are not willingly shared, perpetuating positive and even idealized imaginaries, especially among first-generation Somalis in the Netherlands. As a matter of fact, from comments by several interviewees I gained the impression that Somalis who had returned from England back to the Netherlands had pursued their migration to England based on idealized imaginaries.

In recent years, two other forms of sources have increasingly been used as well. On the one hand, especially younger Somalis often make use of social media to obtain information about other countries. Among my interviewees, these media took the form of Instagram and TikTok accounts, Facebook and LinkedIn groups, and online podcasts and blogposts. In addition, some Somalis have started to take matters into their own hands by visiting potential destination countries themselves. This had been done by three of my interviewees but was discussed as a future plan by more people.

In general, these two newer sources have resulted in a more diverse set of imaginaries. Social media sources are often run by young Somalis who, unlike much of their parents' generation, do not follow the *ceeb* shame culture as much. Therefore, the information given by social media accounts does not shy away from being negative and cautionary, offering a basis for more nuanced, possibly more realistic imaginaries about destination countries. In conclusion, social media and personal visits have made Somalis more cautious and more nuanced in their imaginaries about destination countries. It is not surprising then, that the massive onward migration of Somalis from the Netherlands to England took place at a time when social media was not as popular as today and most imaginaries were formed through positive oral information by others. Hence, going forward one could expect that Somalis' imaginaries about destination countries will continue to become more nuanced, making a massive collective onward migration like the one around 2000 less likely. Coming back to my second research question, Somalis' imaginaries about destination countries primarily come from verbal accounts and more recently from social media and personal country visits.

Gender and generations

Last but not least, I was able to gather plenty of information on how Somalis' imaginaries differ along the lines of gender and generations. In general, it appears that gender differences in imaginaries are more prominent among the first generation, while second-generation male and female Somalis often have similar imaginaries and plans for the future. Therefore, the following section on gender differences will mostly discuss first-generation Somalis.

Gender

Regarding gender, it seems that there is a stark difference in what imaginaries first-generation men versus women deem important about destination countries. For men, the most dominant imaginaries about England include job opportunities and less paperwork. For women on the other hand, closeness to a larger Somali community and their children's future take centre stage. In general, these imaginaries largely align with Somali gender ideals revolving around the working man and the housewife. In line with the fact that such gender ideals are not as important to the second generation, most gender differences in imaginaries could be observed among first-generation interviewees. It is interesting to see that for both male and female Somali parents, imaginaries about destination countries mostly revolve around family roles. For men this role is to provide an income for their family, for women it is to ensure an education that is in line with Somali and Islamic values. Potential destination countries are judged based on their performance in these categories. For example, the Haarlem women's group has deemed England a harmful environment for children to grow up. This is because, according to them, Somali mothers often take up a job alongside the father, and thus are not able to give their children their full attention. In other cases, single mothers take their children to England and become the sole breadwinner of the household. This might result in Somali parents not being able to give attention to their children, who might in turn end up in disadvantageous and dangerous situations like gang violence.

Interestingly, first-generation women take a more active role when it comes to the formation of imaginaries within the Somali community. It seems that a large part of orally transmitted information about destination countries is being shared from one Somali woman to another. Furthermore, it also seems that within Somali families contemplating about onward migration, Somali mothers often take an active decision-making role and may have the last word. This observation refutes common stereotypical views on Somali women of being submissive, passive members of their community.

Apart from imaginaries about future destination countries, my male and female interviewees also differed in their negative imaginaries about the Netherlands. While men mostly highlighted the amount of paperwork and job obstacles in the Netherlands, women rather mentioned their difficulty in expressing their religious identity in the Netherlands. This can be linked to the assimilationist stance of the Netherlands and by the intersectional discrimination that Somali women in specific are subjected

to, among others. Linking this back to my third research question, it seems that Somali men and women in the Netherlands differ in their imaginaries depending on where their priorities lie. For Somali men this seems to be the ease of finding a job and working, if possible, in one's own business, for women the priorities lie in the social and religious support of a large Somali community.

Generations

Along the lines of generations, my first- and second-generation interviewees showed a difference in how nuanced their imaginaries about destination countries were. Among the first generation, I mostly heard positive imaginaries such as the ease of opening a business in England or the relative safety of Somalia at the moment. The only negative imaginaries among the first generation seem to come from Somali mothers who told me about gang violence and sex education in England. The second generation on the other hand appears to be more cautious and nuanced in their imaginaries both about England and Somalia. As mentioned above, this observation is likely linked to the sources of imaginaries the two generations make use of.

Related to this, I observed that second-generation Somalis often have a larger set of destination countries in mind when thinking about their potential migration in the future. While England and Somalia are the dominant destination countries in my first-generation interviewees' imaginaries, the second generation also described their imaginaries about Saudi Arabia, the US and Canada. This suggests that not only are second-generation Somalis more active and independent in seeking out information about destination countries, but they are also more creative and open-minded in imagining their own futures elsewhere.

Also related to this, there seems to be a difference in how first- versus second-generation Somalis make use of nomadic ideas to frame Somalis' transnational mobilities. For the first generation, it seems as if nomadism is mostly used as a saying, a simple explanation on why so many Somalis pursue transnational movements. For the second generation on the other hand, ideas around nomadism appear to be actively used as a fuel or inspiration for their own plans of future migration. This observation might be linked to them trying to navigate their transnational identities by actively adopting 'Somali' ideas around nomadism.

Main research question

Ultimately, my main research question can be answered as follows. 'Dutch' Somalis' onward migration is mainly shaped by imaginaries of England and Somalia, although most only seriously consider Somalia as a destination country. Somalis' openness to follow these imaginaries is facilitated by imaginaries about nomadism, the perception of a global Somali support system and entrepreneurial desires. Most imaginaries have been formed based on oral information in the past and are now increasingly formed through social media and personal country visits. Lastly, especially among the first generation, gender differences in imaginaries play a role.

Limitations and future research

While my interviews and observations have largely answered my research questions, other questions yet remain. As the Somali community in the Netherlands is rather young, with the oldest Somalis just now reaching retirement, the transnational journeys of this community are still unclear. It will be interesting to see if first-generation Somalis will indeed pursue return migration to Somalia in the near future, or if this idea has rather been a coping mechanism. Furthermore, as Nawal and a few others have suggested, there might be yet another destination country in the future that will trigger a massive onward migration like the one to England around 2000. It remains to be seen if enough positive imaginaries can be formed within the Somali community to make space for such a massive group migration, or if the newer sources of imaginaries will keep imaginaries nuanced enough to prevent this from happening.

Linked to this, it will be interesting to see how future generations of Somalis in the Netherlands grow apart from or rather grow closer to practices and ideas of their parents' generation. While younger Somalis resist Islamic ideas from their parents, other ideas like nomadism are adopted by many. As we have seen, the adoption of or distance from such ideas can shape young Somalis' imaginaries and the destination countries they consider. It would have been interesting for this research to interview different generations within the same Somali family to gain more insight into this subject. Future research on imaginaries should therefore pay particular attention to differences between generations, if possible within families.

Furthermore, this fieldwork was limited in its approach to interviews. Initially, it was planned to conduct life history interviews to gain insight into the development of imaginaries over time and to better understand fine differences among gender and generations. Future research should include life history interviews as a means to better understand the dynamic Somali community over the course of years.

Lastly, future research should study the relationship between level of education and imaginaries. As the Somali population is highly heterogenous when it comes to their educational background, with some Somalis having gone to university before the civil war and others only having gone to primary school, it is plausible that different future aspirations and thus imaginaries exist within the Somali community. Due to the limited scope of this thesis and limited data on this variable, level of education could not be included into this thesis.

In summary, since imaginative and actual transnational movements can take place over the course of a person's entire life, future research should take a longitudinal approach following Somalis' imaginaries and migration patterns over a longer period of time and across generations and include level of education.

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8: Appendix

Table 2: Interviewees' demographics (detailed)

Participant number	Gender	Age	Anonymous	Birth location	Generation	Interview location
1	Male	58	No	Somalia[11]	First	In person
2	Female	In 50's	No	Somalia	First	In person
3	Male	48	No	Somalia	First	In person
4	Male	37	No	Somalia	First	In person
5	Male	In 30's	Yes	Somalia	First	In person
6	Male	37	No	Somalia	First	In person
7	Male	57	No	Somalia	First	In person
8	Female	In 40's	Yes	Somalia	First	In person
9	Female	18	Yes	NL	Second	In person
10	Male	52	No	Somalia	First	Online
11	Male	32	Yes	Somalia	First	Online
12	Male	45	No	Somalia	First	In person
13	Female	25	No	NL	Second	In person
14	Female	35	No	Somalia	First	Online
15	Female	23	No	NL	Second	Online
16	Female	19	No	NL	Second	In person
17	Female	52	No	Somalia	First	In person
18	Female	20	No	Somalia	Second	Online
19	Female	25	Yes	NL	Second	Online
20	Female	26	Yes	Somalia	Second	Online
21	Female	In 20's	No	Somalia	Second	Online
22	Male	30	No	Somalia	Second	Online
23	Female	24	Yes	Somalia	Second	Online
24	Male	30	No	NL	Second	Online

[11] Although some respondents were born in Somalia, they identified themselves as 'second-generation' because of growing up in the Netherlands and having almost no memory of Somalia

Master Project Saira Wahid

Interview vragenlijst eerste generatie

Naam: Participant number:

Datum en tijdstip: Locatie:

Leeftijd:

Familie status:

Huidige woonplaats:

Geboorteplaats:

A / B / C (omcircelen)

Verzoek om anoniem te blijven: ja/nee

Waar bent u geboren?

Wanneer bent u naar Nederland verhuisd?*

Waarom koos u voor Nederland?

Heeft u voor Nederland al in andere landen gewoond?*

Hoe lang woont u nu al in Nederland?

Hoe bevalt u het leven in Nederland?

Waarom is dit zo?

Wat voor een beeld/verwachtingen had u over Nederland voordat u hier kwam?*

/ Is Nederland zoals u het had verwacht?

In hoeverre heeft Nederland aan dit beeld voldaan?

Waarom wel/Waarom niet

Waarover was u het meest verbaasd toen u voor het eerst hier kwam?*

Waar heeft u in Nederland het meeste moeite mee?

Wat vindt u het leukst over het leven in Nederland?

Voelt u zich thuis in Nederland?

Waarom wel/Waarom niet?

Voelt u zich thuis als u aan Somalië denkt?

Waarom wel/Waarom niet?

Wat betekent ‘thuis’ voor u?

Ziet u uzelf als Nederlands? Ziet u uzelf als Somaliër?

Waarom is dit zo?

Hoe zou u het leven in Somalie omschrijven?*

Wat vondt u prettig / minder prettig aan het leven in Somalië?*

Wat mist u het meest aan uw leven in Somalië?*

Heeft u ooit erover nagedacht naar een ander land dan Nederland te verhuizen?

Waarom wel/Waarom niet?

Indien ja: Waarom zou u Nederland willen verlaten?

Naar welk land zou u dan willen gaan?

Waarom precies dat land?

Bent u in het verleden ooit daar geweest?

Heeft u plannen om in de nabije toekomst daar naartoe te verhuizen?

Heeft u stappen ondernomen om daar in de toekomst naartoe te kunnen verhuizen?

Welke stappen zijn dat?

Zou u alleen willen gaan of samen met familie/vrienden?

Wat denken zij over het idee om te migreren, vinden ze het een goed idee daar naartoe te gaan?

Welke voorbereidingen zou u moeten doen om daar naartoe te gaan?

Wat denkt u dat anders zou zijn in dat land?

Waarom denkt u dat dit [herhaal antwoord] daar anders zou zijn?

Hoe weet u dat? Van wie heeft u dit gehoord?

Hoe stelt u zich het dagelijks leven daar voor?

Wat zou u doen zodra u daar aankomt?

Hoe stelt u zich de reis naar dat land voor?

Wat denkt u dat er voor risico's zijn tijdens de reis?

Hoe zou u met deze risico's omgaan? (talk about each risk separately)

Wat weet u van anderen die naar dat land zijn gegaan?

Indien nee: Kent u andere mensen die naar een ander land willen verhuizen?

Weet u waarom zij dat willen doen?

Met wie heeft u in de afgelopen week het meest contact gehad?

Met wie gaat u het meeste om?

Waarom deze mensen?

Wat maakt dat u zich verbonden voelt met deze mensen?Hoe kent u

deze mensen?

Wat ziet u als 'Nederlandse' cultuur?

Voelt u zichzelf ‘close’ met de Nederlandse cultuur?

Voelt u zich ‘close’ met Nederlanders?

Zou u willen dat uw kinderen meer Nederlands worden of meer Somalisch? Of iets anders?

Bent u religieus? Indien ja, waar gelooft u in?

Heeft uw religie een belangrijke/grote positie in uw leven?*Is

er een moskee waar u naartoe gaat?*

Is er een moskee waar andere Somaliers die u kent naartoe gaan?

Voelt u zich verbonden met andere moslims in Nederland?

Hoe voelt het voor u om als moslim in een niet-moslim land te leven?*

Bent u blij/tevreden over hoe uw leven is verlopen/nu loopt? Hoe

had u het leven voorgesteld toen u net uit Somalië vertrok?Wat zijn

uw doelen voor het volgende jaar?

Wat zijn uw doelen voor de komende vijf jaar?

Denkt u dat u uw wensen en doelen kan behalen in de toekomst?Wat

houdt een ‘goed leven’ in voor jou?

Ziet u uw toekomst in Nederland? In Europa?

Waarom wel/Waarom niet?

* = indien van toepassing, afhankelijk van eerdere antwoorden

Master Project Saira Wahid

Interview vragenlijst twede generatie

Naam: Participant number:

Datum en tijdstip: Locatie:

Leeftijd:

Familie status:

Huidige woonplaats:

Geboorteplaats:

A / B / C (omcircelen)

Verzoek om anoniem te blijven: ja/nee

Kun je eerst in het heel kort iets over jezelf vertellen?

Dus je bent zelf in Nederland geboren?

Wat denk je wat voor een effect de migratie van je ouders naar Nederland op jouw leven heeft gehad?

Wordt er bij jullie in de familie vaak over de migratie gesproken, bijvoorbeeld over de reis of zo?

Hoe was de reis van je ouders, weet je dat?

Hadden ze al een beeld over NL voordat ze hier kwamen?

Was het een toeval dat ze naar NL zijn gekomen, of hadden ze daar bewust voor gekozen?

Hoe bevalt je het leven in Nederland?

Zijn er dingen waarmee je moeite heeft?

En wat vindt je leuk/goed aan je leven hier?

Voel je je thuis in Nederland? (Waarom wel/niet?)

Voel je je thuis als je aan Somalie denkt? (Waarom wel/niet?)

Wat betekent thuis uberhaupt voor jou?

Zie je jezelf meer als Nederlander of als Somalier?

Heb je een idee hoe het leven in Somalie is?

Indien ja: Waar heb je die informatie van?

Wat vindt je leuk of moeilijk aan het leven in Somalie? (het dagelijks leven)

Ben je ooit in een ander land dan Nederland geweest?

En heb je ooit erover nagedacht naar een ander land dan NL te verhuizen?

Indien ja: Waarom zou u Nederland willen verlaten?

Naar welk land zou je dan willen gaan?

Waarom precies dat land?

Ben je in het verleden ooit daar geweest?

Heb je plannen om in de nabije toekomst daar naartoe te verhuizen?

Heb je stappen ondernomen om daar in de toekomst naartoe te kunnen verhuizen?

Welke stappen zijn dat?

Zou je alleen willen gaan of samen met familie/vrienden?

Wat denken zij over het idee om te migreren, vinden ze het een goed idee daar naartoe te gaan?

Welke voorbereidingen zou je moeten doen om daar naartoe te gaan?

Wat denk je dat anders zou zijn in dat land?

Waarom denk je dat dit [herhaal antwoord] daar anders zou zijn?

Hoe weet je dat? Van wie heb je dit gehoord?

Hoe stel je zich het dagelijks leven daar voor?

Wat zou je doen zodra je daar aankomt?

Hoe stel je zich de reis naar dat land voor?

Wat denk je dat er voor risico's zijn tijdens de reis?

Hoe zou je met deze risico's omgaan? (talk about each risk separately)

Wat weet je van anderen die naar dat land zijn gegaan?

Met wie ga je het meeste om?

Waarom deze mensen?

Wat maakt dat je je verbonden voelt met deze mensen?

Hoe kent je deze mensen?

Wat zie je als 'Nederlandse' cultuur?

Voel je zichzelf 'close' met de Nederlandse cultuur?

Voel je zich 'close' met Nederlanders?

Zou je willen dat je kinderen meer Nederlands worden of meer Somalisch? Of iets anders?

Ben je religieus? Indien ja, waar geloof je in?

Heeft je religie een belangrijke/grote positie in je leven?*

Is er een moskee waar je naartoe gaat?*

Is er een moskee waar andere Somaliers die je kent naartoe gaan?

Voel je zich verbonden met andere moslims in Nederland?

Hoe voelt het voor jo om als moslim in een niet-moslim land te leven?*

Ben je blij/tevreden over hoe je leven is verlopen/nu loopt?

Wat zijn je doelen voor het volgende jaar?

Wat zijn je doelen voor de komende vijf jaar?

Denk je dat je je wensen en doelen kan behalen in de toekomst?

Wat houdt een ‘goed leven’ in voor jou?

Ziet je je toekomst in Nederland? In Europa?

Waarom wel/Waarom niet?

General Information Letter

		Datum	1 januari 2022
		Doorkiesnummer	0615420884
Onderwerp	Introductie brief	*Contactpersoon*	Dr. Tessa Minter

Geachte heer, mevrouw,

We zijn u erg dankbaar dat u bereid bent om deel te nemen aan het kleinschalig onderzoek van onze studente Saira Wahid over ervaringen en verwachtingen van de Somali gemeenschap, welke zij dient uit te voeren als onderdeel van haar Master-opleiding in Culturele Antropologie aan de Universiteit van Leiden.

Het is mogelijk dat zij u vraagt verschillende keren terug te mogen komen, om haar opdrachten uit te voeren, waarbij zij gebruik zal maken van diverse onderzoeks-methoden zoals: (participerende)observatie, interview, en fotografie.

We hopen dat u afspraken met haar kan maken over wanneer het u uitkomt dat zij bij u langskomt.

We willen benadrukken dat de resulterende uitkomsten alleen openbaar worden in de beperkte omgeving van de universiteit, tenzij u samen anders besluit.

Nogmaals hartelijk dank voor uw bereidheid om deel te nemen aan het onderzoeksproject van onze studente en we hopen dat het een prettige en interessante ervaring zal blijken te zijn.

Hoogachtend,

Dr. Tessa Minter
Assistant professor Leiden Universiteit

Email: mintert@fsw.leidenuniv.nl

Saira Wahid email/mobile phone : swahid235@gmail.com / 0629183899

Informed Consent Letter

Geïnterviewd door: Saira Wahid mobiel nummer: 0629183899

Email: swahid235@gmail.com

Scriptiebegeleider: Dr. Tessa Minter email: mintert@fsw.leidenuniv.nl

Geachte mevrouw/meneer,

Bedankt voor uw interesse in mijn Master onderzoek! Ik doe dit onderzoek in het kader van mijn Master Culturele en Ontwikkelings Anthropologie aan de Universiteit Leiden.

Het onderzoek gaat met name over zowel afgeronde als toekomstige migratietrajecten van Somaliërs in Nederland. Ik zal hiervoor meerdere gesprekken met Somaliërs in Nederland uitvoeren. In dit interview worden u enkele vragen over dit onderwerp gesteld. Deelname aan dit interview is volledig vrijwillig en mag op elk moment worden onderbroken. Als u een vraag niet wilt beantwoorden, mag u dat aangeven. Het is mijn bedoeling dat u zich tijdens het interview volledig op uw gemak voelt.

Uw antwoorden zullen altijd geheim worden gehouden voor anderen. Na het interview zal ik uw antwoorden op een veilige plek bewaren. Deze gegevens zullen alleen ik en, als u hiervoor de toestemming geeft, mijn scriptiebegeleider kunnen inzien.

Dit voorjaar jaar zal ik deze gesprekken dan in twee verschillende vormen verwerken: in de vorm van mijn Master scriptie en in de vorm van een persoonlijke blog. Uw antwoorden zullen voornamelijk worden verwerkt voor de Master scriptie. Daarnaast zal ik een beperkt aantal interviews in een persoonlijke blog publiceren. Deelname aan het blog is volledig vrijwillig en kan nog eens later worden besproken als daar behoefte aan is.

Een deel van uw antwoorden zullen in mijn Master scriptie kunnen worden gebruikt in de vorm van een citaat. Indien u wilt, is het mogelijk dit anoniem te doen, zonder het aangeven van uw naam.

De planning van dit Master project is als volgt. Tot en met Maart 2022 zal ik interviews houden. Daarna ga ik op basis van de interviews mijn scriptie schrijvenIndien u wenst, kunt u in deze periode de antwoorden zoals in de scriptie opgeschreven nog eens nakijken en zo

nodig aanpassen. U mag ook op ieder moment besluiten dat ik uw antwoorden toch niet gebruik.

Als u nog verdere vragen heeft, hoor ik het graag. Mijn contact informatie vindt u bovenaan de eerste pagina.

Bedankt voor het deelnemen!

Saira Wahid

Bij deze geef ik toestemming aan de deelname aan dit interview:

Ik geef toestemming dat mijn verhaal op het blog mag worden gepubliceerd:

(www.parindah.com)

Universiteit Leiden

Ethics Review Form for MSc CADS

An important part of your study is to do research that involves people. This Ethics Review will help you and your supervisor to ensure that you do your study according to the ethical standards in our field. The interests of the research participants must be upheld and protected and your research must not harm or exploit those being studied. This Review helps to identify potential ethical issues that might require rethinking parts of your research project. Before completing the Review, consult the 'EASA's Statement on Data Governance in Ethnographic Projects'.[12]

If you have specific concerns or questions regarding ethical issues of your study, please discuss your concerns or questions with your supervisor.

Please address the following sets of questions. In doing so, be as clear and specific as possible. After completing the Ethics Review, submit it to your supervisor, who will decide if your research meets ethical requirements and if you can start fieldwork. You need to submit a signed and scanned copy to c.schotte@fsw.leidenuniv.nl (fieldwork/Internship in The Netherlands) or upload it in The Study Abroad Application System (fieldwork/Internship outside The Netherlands)

Deadline: 20 December 2021

1. **Personal Details**

   A) Your name: Saira Wahid

   B) Student number: 2889560

   C) Working title of research project: **Imaginaries in Somalis' onward migration**

   D) Brief summary of research project:

In the early 90s, a few thousand Somalis arrived in the Netherlands, fleeing the political unrest in their home country. In the Netherlands, a safe environment awaited them, free of civil or political unrest. Still, ten years after their arrival, a few thousand 'Dutch' Somalis migrated further to the United Kingdom. Scholars like Salazar have tried to explain such onward migration through imaginaries people have about other destination countries. If imaginaries are indeed a driving factor behind Somalis' departure towards the UK, then this raises questions

12 https://easaonline.org/downloads/support/EASA%20statement%20on%20data%20governance.pdf

like: What do these imaginaries look like? Where do they come from? And what is their role in Somalis' onward migration?

E) Research period: 3 January 2022 – 31 March 2022

2. People

Social science research frequently involves working with informants, participants or interviewees – and their rights are to be respected.

A) Does your research involve people who are in a particularly vulnerable situation? Think for example of children, people who are institutionalised, or are subject to other vulnerabilities. Also point out how you think you can best deal with these vulnerabilities ethically.

Yes, my research might potentially involve persons who are in a vulnerable position. As one of my sampling criterions is 'level of education', I am looking for both Somalis with a high and a low level of education. Especially among Somalis who have arrived in the Netherlands in recent years, a significant amount of people has only been to primary school or might be illiterate.

This circumstance might put interlocutors in a vulnerable position. They might not be able to well enough understand the implications of their participation in my research, or they might become suspicious of me upon seeing formal papers like the information letter or letter of informed consent. It is therefore even more important to explain, if needed several times, the nature, topic and implications of my research and participation in it to interlocutors. If there is an indication that interlocutors are intimidated, confused or suspicious, then I will attempt to refrain from academic language but only paraphrase in more common terms.

Furthermore, as Somali refugees might have had traumatic experiences in their past, there is the risk of triggering the memory of such traumas during conversations about the past. In such a case, the participant will be in an extremely vulnerable position, likely not in control of their emotions, distressed and in a state of intense discomfort. In addition, this would put me as researcher in a very difficult situation as I am not trained to appropriately react to and support traumatic re-experiences. Such situations should therefore be avoided at all costs, which is why I will work with unspecific questions to introduce potentially triggering topics. This approach is further elaborated on under point 3A).

Lastly, Somalis who are living in the Netherlands illegally are in a particularly vulnerable situation. By participating in research whose results are to be published, they run the risk of exposing their illegal status to authorities and being sent out of

the country. It is therefore my ethical obligation to make very clear that I am only ever going to publish results on Somalis' legal status in the Netherlands in an entirely anonymous manner. Also, I will have to explain why this question is of interest to my research and that their data will be handled with extreme caution, with a code system (explained under point 4D)) and will be destroyed six months after my thesis submission.

B) How will you let people know about who you are and what you do, and how are you going to find out if they consent with your study?

Before meeting with interlocutors for an interview, I will offer to email them a general information letter about my research which has been signed by my thesis supervisor. At the meeting itself, I will hand this information letter to the interviewee to keep. After that, I will go over a more detailed paper, namely the informed consent. This two-page paper entails information about my research topic, the voluntary nature of taking part in the interview, the right to anonymity, and how confidential data is going to be stored. Additionally, the general timeline of the research process will be described. Interviewees will be welcomed to ask questions or review their data at any time during this process. At the end of the paper, interviewees will find my contact details and will be encouraged to contact me for any questions or comments.

3. Topics

It is important to consider that some research topics and questions are sensitive, and this requires additional ethical considerations. Think for example about studying political and religious convictions, but also questions pertaining privacy and political, social or economic vulnerability.

A) Which research topics, questions or social situations are sensitive or private and how will you deal with this during your fieldwork?

Most Somali migrants who have come to the Netherlands have fled a situation of war and conflict in Somalia. Naturally, this might have resulted in traumatic experiences for migrants. Some of the interview questions I have planned might trigger such a traumatic experience. I am referring especially to questions about interviewee's past life in Somalia, their thoughts and wishes for the future when they were still living there, and the people who they feel close to.

In order to identify a triggering interview situation in time, each of these potentially triggering questions will be initially asked in a unspecific manner. For example, questions about interviewees' life in Somalia could be initially asked like 'How do you feel

when you think back of life in Somalia?', instead of a question like 'Could you describe your childhood/adolescence in Somalia to me?'. In this way, it will be easier to estimate if this topic will be difficult for the interviewee or not.

4. Information

During your research you will collect information. This needs to be done in a secure way that guarantees privacy and complies with legal requirements regarding privacy and data management.

A) What kind of information will you gather? (e.g. will you write down people's names; addresses; information about religion or beliefs; race; political preferences; health; sexual orientation; membership to a union; criminal past?)

I will ask the following information from my interviewees: Name, age, family status (single/in a relationship/married/children/other), religion, legal status in the Netherlands, current place of residence, place of birth, request to remain anonymous (yes/no).

B) Where will you store this information and for how long?

This information will be stored digitally on my laptop for the duration of six months after my Master thesis is handed in. The laptop and any back-ups of my data on this laptop will be password protected.

C) Who has access to this information? Will it only be you or also your supervisor and people in your research team?

Only I will have access to this information. During the interviews and participant observation, interlocutors will be asked if they consent to my thesis supervisor looking at their data as well. It will be made clear that still, I will be the only one holding copies of the actual data. Besides this, no one will have access to this information.

D) Will the stored information (or part thereof) be anonymised or not? If so, explain how you will anonymise this information.

If interlocutors wish for this, their names will be anonymized when mentioning them in my Master Thesis. Apart from this, each interlocutor will be given a participant number. On a confidentially stored document on my laptop, which only I will be able to access, each participant number will be matched to a (real) name of interlocutors.

For certain questions, interviewees' answers will be noted down with an extra layer of protection. This applies to the question of interviewees' legal status in the Netherlands, as an

illegal status automatically puts interviewees at risk of being evicted from the country should this come out. Therefore, the answers as well as the question itself will be disguised under some code only I will understand on the interview sheet and will also be noted down and stored through this code system.

E) When writing or disseminating information in other ways (blogs, social media, film, etc.), what kind of potential harm to the people you studied need to be considered? Please identify potential risks and describe the ways in which you try to mitigate these potential risks.

I am indeed planning to publish around six interviews on a personal blog. The idea is that both before interviews, I will ask each interviewee if they would like to remain anonymous. Those that answer 'no', I will present the idea of my personal blog to. It will be made clear that the primary focus of the interview is to be used for my thesis, but that interviewees' story along with a picture of themselves are welcome to be featured on my personal blog as well.

Potential risks of publishing stories on a personal blog are that interviewees are not aware how far reaching and public such a blog might be. This risk will be attempted to mitigate by clearly introducing them to the idea of the blog, showing the blog to them and asking for their consent to the blog at a separate time than consent for general participation in the research. Also, such interviewees will be intimately involved in the creation of the blogpost and will be sent a final draft of the blogpost before publishing it. At that time, interviewees will be asked if they would like to modify anything about the post.

5. **Assessment**

The supervisor hereby states that this project meets the ethics requirement and that the ethical issues connected to the research have been sufficiently addressed. If, during the research the project design changes in a way that raises ethical issues, you are required to discuss this with your supervisor.

Name of supervisor: Tessa Minter

Date: 20-12-21

Signature: