

# “For Me It’s Just Living”

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Identity Construction in the Transnational Lives of  
First and Second Generation Somalis in The  
Netherlands

*by*

Maša Miglič



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## Identity Construction in the Transnational Lives of First and Second Generation Somalis in The Netherlands

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## Preface

Migrating from Slovenia to the Netherlands in pursuit of studying and discussing desired social phenomena – such as migration, globalisation and development – in a motivated and international university environment was without a doubt one of the best decisions I have made so far. I have learned immensely from the high quality of lectures at Radboud University Nijmegen, which have opened up new horizons for me and through professors' appreciation of every opinion, and friendly and reasonable approach, showed me how our possibilities and minds seem to be limitless, if only given the right incentives to stimulate them. I feel as I have received the right dose of stimulation, which I needed in order to be reminded again of how it feels like to truly enjoy studying and to devour the study literature. The latter also consisted of migration related topics, which enabled me to get a solid insight into the fields of study such as migration and multiculturalism, among others. Additionally, the lectures of dr. Lothar Smith, who has also been supervising my thesis work, have aroused in me a great desire to further explore the subject of transnationalism, which ultimately inspired me to think of a research topic combining this concept with another two that I am particularly interested in: refugees and identity.

Besides giving me the opportunity to follow various interesting courses and engage in invaluable conversations with the professors and my fellow human geography students, I was also able, as part of this Master programme, to do an internship and simultaneously conduct a field research responding to my research topic. This is how I spent three months in Amsterdam, working at the Platform Organisation of Somali Associations in the Netherlands (FSAN). The project manager of the Organisation, Zahra Naleie, has generously offered me to help with my research by finding the respondents for the interviews and hence, to establish first contacts with my interviewees. At this point, I would like to take the opportunity and express my gratitude particularly to Zahra and her deeply appreciated assistance, without which my field research would most probably suffer from too many obstacles. The hours in the office of FSAN were more pleasant because of Shukri (second generation Somali), whose stories and information about Somalia and Somalis helped me in better understanding the context and certain details from the interviews. I would like to thank her, as well as Hannah for her assistance in translating the name generators into Somali. Also, I would like to deeply thank to all the respondents without whom this thesis would not see the light. They were willing to take their valuable time and thought me about *life*; the hardest school there is. From them, I have learned the most valuable lessons thought from their life stories and consequently gained the necessary information, which enriched me and at the end helped me to contribute – through this thesis – to the academic discussion.

Last but not least, I would also like to express my deep gratitude to Lothar, my supervisor, who skilfully guided me through the whole process with incredibly valuable and constructive comments, much appreciated advices, and a lot of interesting food for thought. Before I started off with my field research, he helped me in chasing away the feelings of insecurity when saying that at the end, field research is definitely worth all the hard work and that all the efforts 'pay off' when looking at the thesis and all the valuable experiences, new acquaintances, and knowledge gained on the way. I thank him for that and hope that this piece of academic work lives up to his expectations.



*For my parents, whose unconditional love and support has always helped me in pursuing my dreams and ideas. I cannot thank you enough for everything that you have done for me.*

*For Juri, my shining light, who has never stopped believing in me and whose words of encouragement, love and moral support have given me impetus and desire to always do better.*



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## List of Acronyms

- AMISOM – African Union Mission in Somalia  
ARPCT – The Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counterterrorism  
ARS – Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia  
AU – African Union  
FGM – Female Genital Mutilation  
FSAN – Federatie van Somalische Associaties Nederland (*Platform Organisation of Somali Associations in the Netherlands*)  
HBO – Hoger beroepsonderwijs (*Higher Professional Education*)  
ICU – Islamic Courts Union  
IDP – Internally Displaced Person/People  
IGAD – Intergovernmental Authority on Development  
MBO – Middelbaar beroepsonderwijs (*Secondary Vocational Education*)  
NGO – Non-governmental Organisation  
SNG – Somali Next Generation  
SNM – The Somali National Movement  
TNG – The Transitional National Government  
TFG – The Transitional Federal Government  
UK – United Kingdom  
UN – United Nations  
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
US – United States  
WWII – World War II

## **1 Introduction**

The contemporary and unprecedented pace of the process of globalisation and developments in transport, communication and technology, have been notably challenging and altering social, cultural and other dynamics, and thus the traditional role of the nation-state and conceptualizations of processes such as migration (Escobar, 2001; Wahlbeck, 1998). Correspondingly, new concepts emerged to enable adequate descriptions of new social and ever more interconnected phenomena placed in new reality. Transnationalism is one of those concepts, since scholars unravelled the transnational nature of contemporary migration (Salih, 2002, p. 51), recognizing that many migrants and their descendents maintain contacts with their home country and co-nationals around the world, and thus span the borders of one nation-state (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). Hence, in order to understand modern-day migration, it is necessary to empirically research the significance of those ties, since they have wide range of impacts, especially on the “conflation of geographic space and social identity” (Routon, 2006, p. 483), for the nation-state concept, and more practically, for state’s immigration and integration policies and regulations. Transnational perspective on migration is thus a relatively new paradigm and (multidisciplinary) field of study – though transnationalism is not a new phenomenon – describing immigrants’ lives within transnational social fields, which traverse national borders and “respond to the constraints and demands of two or more states” (Basch *et al.*, 1995, p. 54). In this way, transnationalism greatly challenges the traditional perception of place and the role of the nation-state, with the latter not acknowledging simultaneous living “within and beyond the boundaries” (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1006), and persistently questioning loyalty of immigrants. This is the case especially after 11 September 2001, when nation-states increased their supervision and control over the immigrant population, with the assumption that transnational migrants remain loyal to their homelands (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). Namely, loyalty, affiliation and identity are according to Shain (2007) the “underlying foundation upon which the nation-system rests” (p. 33) and which are greatly challenged by transmigrants.

Members of a diaspora therefore transcend national boundaries, nationality and ethnicity, and in this context negotiate and transform their cultural identities, producing hybrid cultures and forming ‘third’ space. How migrants and refugees in particular reposition themselves in living transnational lives in the receiving society varies greatly between individuals, because numerous factors have influence on them. But since every nation-state creates its own national identity, it also plays a great role in identity formation of refugees and their children, given that the identity and questions related to home and belonging of an individual consists of his/hers self-perception, as well as the characteristics that others ascribe to them.

Unlike the majority of the preceding studies, which mainly focused on the immigrant communities and their acculturation, or rather assimilation (Itzigsohn *et al.*, 1999, p. 317), I focus on transnationalism “from below”; people’s initiatives to form and preserve transnational ties. In relation to this I undertake, in a more postmodern vocabulary, to research the complexity of the identities of first and second generation Somalis living in the Netherlands. Since many studies have overlooked the empirical exploration of migrants’

perceptions in constructing transnational identity, I evidently aim to avoid the same ‘mistake’. As indicated, I will conduct the empirical research on the case of Somalis – one of the most widely dispersed refugee population in the world (Koser & van Hear, 2003, p. 7) – who fled to the Netherlands due to the long standing violent conflicts in their home country. Therefore, this thesis draws on information collected during the qualitative study among Somali refugees and their offspring in the Netherlands, tackling identity formation – in Erikson’s (as cited in Wrong, 2000, p. 11) words always a subject of diffusion and confusion – and comparing the first and the second generation, as well as looking at the intra-generational variations. As mentioned, the research is primarily of qualitative nature, which enabled me – as in the case study of Viruell-Fuentes (2006) – not to overlook and instead point out the nuances within each generation.

Before proceeding to next chapters, I would like to elucidate possible vagueness regarding the particular terms and ‘labels’ that I have used throughout the thesis, and with adequate argumentation provide necessary clarification of my decisions. Firstly, the northern part of Somalia declared its independence in 1991 as Republic of Somaliland, but has not been internationally recognized as such (Koser & van Hear, 2003, p. 6). Stemming from this fact, I use the term Somalia to include territories that are officially recognized as constituting parts of what international community recognizes as Somalia, even though some participants in this study originate from the northern part. Secondly, I refer to first generation Somalis as refugees, even though a few of them came as part of the family reunification programme – those are plainly indicated in the text when presenting the participants in Chapter 5, section *Profile of the Respondents* – since the big majority of Somalis in the Netherlands is regarded as refugees after applying for asylum (Moret *et al.*, 2006). Hence, in order to simplify the use of numerous labels, I generally apply the notion of a ‘refugee’. Additionally, it is crucial to point out that the use of the term ‘migrant’ on the other hand would have different implications and correspondingly impacts on reasoning – stemming from different meanings of the two concepts – related to transnational practices and identities, as will be seen from the theoretical chapters.

In the above paragraphs I aspired to provide the reader with a glimpse of what is possible to expect from this research and indicated the main topics and the relations examined in this thesis. In the following sections of the *Introduction* chapter I explicitly introduce the main research question and sub-questions and thus explain the central objective and aim of my research. Thereafter, I also present the societal and scientific relevance, and the structure of the thesis, with which I conclude this chapter.

## **1.1 Aim of the Research**

The objective of this research is to contribute to and fill the void in the field of transnational studies regarding inter- and intra-generational differences/similarities in transnational practices and identities of first and second generation Somalis in the Netherlands, by providing analysis and insight based on the literature study and empirical research among the specific ethnic group. Therefore, my aim is to comprehensively carry out

research and explore the contemporary significance of transnational lives and give special focus to identities of first generation Somali refugees and their children. Beyond I present the main research question, which I will strive to answer throughout the thesis, and the sub-questions through which I will be able to fully answer to the main question. In order to achieve the selected research objective, which is the external aim of the study, my endeavour is to reach the internal aim of the research and answer the following research question:

*How do first generation Somali refugees in the Netherlands and their children (second generation) engage in transnational practices and negotiate and construct their identities within a transnational setting, and what are the implications for their everyday lives?*

On the basis of this central research question I study the attachments that Somalis have to Somalia and other Somalis spread around the world, how are those attachments related to the creation of their identities, and *vice versa*. Therefore, I focus on the relation between transnational practices and transnational identity, how the former are restored and preserved, and how the latter are negotiated and formed. It must be noted at this point that from the very start I presuppose something similar of what Ghosh and Wang (2003) suggest, namely, that acts create identities, identity influence acts, and both modify in the course of time. Ultimately, I am interested to know what are the consequences of their practices and identities – presumably set in the context of a Somali household on one side and Dutch society on the other – for their everyday lives.

The sub-questions I aspire to answer as a means of answering to the main research question and understanding the proper context are the following:

- In what kind of transnational practices are Somalis in the Netherlands engaged in and what is the intensity of their transnationalism?
- What are inter- and intra-generational differences regarding the possession of transnational consciousness and maintenance of transnational practices?
- With what do first and second generation Somalis identify with?
- What is the role of the nation-state in practicing transnationalism and constructing transnational identities?
- How do identity self-perceptions differ between the first and second generation, as well as within the first and within the second generation?
- How do the two generations (especially the second one) balance the practices related to the Somali culture and identity and those associated with the Netherlands?
- How are potential transnational practices and identities manifested in the everyday lives of the two generations?

Firstly, my aim is to establish the different transnational activities in which first and second generation Somalis in the Netherlands engage and which sustain their transnational social fields, as well as to establish the intensity of this engagement; major focus will be put on the inter-generational reproduction of such ties. I aspire to get a picture of who sustains links –

and who does not, or to a lesser extent – with people living in his/her (parents') homeland and other Somalis who also migrated, and thus who still maintains – and who does not, or to a lesser extent – a social network mainly consisted of Somali relatives or friends. I will compare the first and the second generation, as well as provide a comparison within the first and separately within the second generation. I will therefore fully explore the maintenance of transnational ties and their meaning for my respondents, as well as the role of the nation-state in this regard. Thereafter, as the third and fifth sub-question demand, I will analyse with what exactly do the two generations largely identify and in relation to this, how do they narrate their identities; who they are, where do they belong and where is their home. In connection to the previous, as well as the last question, I will try to answer to the question regarding the mixture of Somali and Dutch culture and how do they position themselves between the two. Finally, I will try to find out what do their everyday lives look like, with whom they associate with, where do they go in their free time, etc. While trying to answer to all of the above-mentioned questions, I will take into consideration the specific context in which the research has taken place. Therefore, even though (for instance) age and gender are not among the variables of this particular research, I consider them as possible reasons for potential differences between the respondents.

## **1. 2 Relevance of the Research**

### **1. 2. 1 Societal relevance**

Transnationalism of refugees and immigrants in general has great implications not only for immigrants themselves, but also for the nation-state to which they have fled or migrated. As Vertovec (2001b, p. 14) mentioned in one of his works on transnationalism, political authorities in nation-states are more and more concerned with transnational migrant communities because they assume that they remain loyal to their homelands and thus foster distance nationalism. Especially after 11 September 2001, nation-states, as well as the realm of social sciences, have been increasingly interested in activities and loyalty of their immigrants (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 309). Thus, in order to understand countries' policies and on what basis they came to exist in the first place, we have to dive to the source and examine migrants' transnational practices and identities, and the connection between the two. In relation to this, immigrants' transnational practices and construction of their identities is of great relevance for the behaviour of nation-states and consequently for people's every day lives, which are greatly affected by nation-state's policies and legal frameworks (Gray, 1996, p. 101). In general, I believe that it is of great importance to combine the debates about transnationalism, nation-state and identity because they are increasingly intertwined and can offer the explanation of other disputed concepts – such as integration – linked to the phenomena of transnationalism. Namely, Nagel and Staeheli (2008) for instance argue that to understand integration and migrant's sense of attachment, it does not suffice to only observe or go through the census data. Instead, studying migrant's identities, and thus their negotiation and thoughts regarding their own identifications and identities, is central to understanding other issues related to integration (Valentine *et al.*, 2009).

The case of Somali refugees is especially highly relevant because of the difference in religion between the majority of Dutch and the majority of Somalis. Levitt (2004; Levitt *et al.*, 2003) has for example pointed out how religion exercises significant influence over the ways in which migrants are incorporated into host societies and stay attached to their homelands. Therefore, selecting a state with a significant and different majority religion seems to be additional explanation for the relevance of the case study, since particularly the presence of Muslims in Europe “has generated a wave of hysteria among some pundits and their readers in Europe and America” (Esman, 2009, p. 105). According to the respondents I have interviewed for this research, 9/11 meant a milestone in their lives in the Netherlands, because state’s policies concerning immigrants became stricter and people on the streets more suspicious. Researching transnationalism of Muslim refugees is thus of particular relevance for the Netherlands and its society.

In comparison to their parents, the potential transnational engagement of the second generation is of even greater importance, since they are *the* future of the Dutch society and focusing research on them illustrates and predicts certain patterns. Not only that, investigation of their transnational engagements is also essential in understanding future trends “in the global movement of people, money, goods and ideas” (Lee, 2008, p. viii). Existing studies related to second generation transnationalism vary in their conclusions whether allegiances to their, or rather their parents’ home-country persist and what are the consequences of those potential allegiances for their adaptation in the host country. Answers to this question are clearly tightly related to the two issues mentioned in the previous paragraphs, and give additional insight and hence understanding of some of the crucial phenomena.

Most importantly, I believe that my research can be of interest also for the Somali community in the Netherlands in general, as well as for my respondents in particular. I ground this conviction on the basis of several feedbacks from Somali people during my fieldwork. One of them came from a member of SNG (Somali Next Generation) in our first correspondence through email: “I am glad you have chosen the Somali diaspora as the research population, as more research is needed in order to better understand the evolution of the Somali Diaspora communities in the world.” The majority of others came from the surprised second generation Somalis, who admitted that we have been discussing issues, which they have never thought of before. This additionally persuaded me in the relevance of my research.

### **1.2.2 Scientific relevance**

According to Levitt *et al.* (2003, p. 565), placing the meaning of transnational practices in the right perspective still requires more conceptual, methodological and empirical work. Thus, I would like to add certain insights to this field of study, which is relatively young, and try to fill some of the gaps that are still present. Namely, I plan to do that by bringing into the discussion refugees’ (trans)national identity, with the distinction being made between the first and the second generation, related to the type and intensity of transnational activities, and identity negotiation and formation of Somali refugees.

Clearly, there are several open questions and under-researched fields within the migration studies, which I plan to address in my research. As indicated, the debate on transnationalism has been largely ignored in the field of refugee studies. Conversely, within the growing literature on transnationalism, refugees and other exile groups remain relatively understudied, or studies mainly focus on their political activities (Al-Ali *et al.*, 2001). Furthermore, Vertovec (2001a) pointed out that “processes and patterns conditioning the intergenerational succession and reproduction of transnational ties remain largely under-researched and under-theorised” (p. 577; Armbruster, 2002, p. 19). Lee (2008) has edited a book exclusively on second generation and in the first chapter she also points out that the account of second generation transnationalism is ignored or not detailed enough in many ethnographic works on transnational migration. This consequently means that little is known about the transnational practices of the second generation and the self-perception of their own identities. On the basis of numerous authors and my own research of the literature, I realized that “generational research on transnationalism is still in its infancy”, as Somerville (2008, p. 24) has put it, and that the majority of the literature remains centred on migrants’ experiences with the host nations (Lee, 2008, p. 10).

All in all, since the understanding of respondents’ perspective and not generalization is the aim of this research, it has a potential to contribute to the related debates also present in other small-scale case studies. Narratives collected as part of this empirical research can challenge current perspectives on certain topics, which can have implications for successful and effective policy-making, as mentioned in the previous section. As Portes (1997b) similarly points out in his work, my study will not provide a theory but rather some new materials for its development and thus “the development of theoretical statements and, subsequently, the empirical ground and means to test them” (p. 807; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).

Although differentiating between generations in combination with migrant’s identity is according to Armbruster (2002) an “obfuscated field” (p. 19), I aspire to successfully tackle it and make some useful points. I believe that this particular research can highlight and at the same time contribute in filling the gaps in the migration field of research and has thus an important contributions to make in our understanding of refugee’s, especially second generation Somalis’ transnational engagements and their identity self-perception.

### **1.3 Structure of the Thesis**

In this section I briefly outline the structure of the following chapters in order to enable the reader to better understand the contents, as well as to easily follow the line of thought stretched throughout the thesis. What follows this outline is the theoretical chapter, self-explanatorily titled *Transnationalism Under Scrutiny*, in which I deeply engage in the concept of transnationalism, present its meaning and significance, and indicate its relations with the issues and notions, such as nation-state and identity formation, which are also relevant for this research. In addition, I discuss the concepts of transnational community, diaspora, place and space, until reaching the section about refugees, after which I open the debate on nation-state. Deriving from the ‘umbrella’ concept of transnationalism, I centre this debate on challenges

for nations-state's primacy in transnational debates and take a closer look at the implications of methodological nationalism. Thereafter, I engage in a discussion about identity, taking a closer look in different types of identities starting with national identity, followed by cultural, ethnic and social identities, and lastly transnational, hybrid identities. Before reaching the second chapter I also dedicate a section to the explanation of second generation migrants and their transnational ties, and to the burning polemic on assimilation *versus* transnationalism.

After that, I commence with the third, more practical chapter in which I create a profile of Somalia. This profile follows logical succession starting with historical overview of Somalia, the main characteristics of Somali society, ensued by immigration history of the Netherlands in general, and the flow of Somalis in particular. Methodology chapter is the next one that I undertake, presenting the research methodology; tools with which I was able to obtain all the needed information. I present each method and describe the process of carrying out particularly the empirical part of the research, which follows after. The latter is divided into several chapters. It starts with the presentation of the respondents, their trajectories for migration, and their first impressions after arriving to the Netherlands. This chapter is then followed by the one titled *Transnational Practices*, focusing on migrants' social networks, on remittances, and migrants' participation in (diaspora) organisations, including stories of first and second generation Somalis. In the next chapter I focus on the lives of the second generation, discussing religion and their social relations. I conclude the thesis with the chapter on transnational identities, comprising discussions about mixing Somali and Dutch cultural elements, the importance of language in identity formation, as well as identity related discussions on home and belonging. At the end of this structure outline of the thesis it is worth noticing that where deemed adequate or necessary, I have concluded segments of sections in the empirical chapters with parts titled *Findings*, and the core sections *Transnational Practices* and *Transnational Identity*, with a more extensive *Conclusion*.

## 2 Transnationalism Under Scrutiny

One of the essential characteristics of the globalized world is certainly human mobility on a large-scale (Tsakiri, 2005, p. 102). This phenomenon of migration is social, economic, political and transnational in its nature and thus apt to knit connections across international borders (Hyndman & Walton-Roberts, 2000, p. 247). With this process, borders and boundaries are transgressed and transnational communities formed, posing a great challenge to the nation-states' eager for their political communities to be homogeneous<sup>1</sup> and for the national identities to be undisputed and deeply rooted in their citizens.

However, these developments have also had a great impact and consequences on migration field of study, among others redirecting scholars' attention from state-centric orientation of migration discourse – binary assumption of 'place of origin' and 'place of destination' – to transnational networks and maintenance of "cross-border livelihoods" (Sørensen & Olwig, 2002, as cited in Levitt & Nyberg-Sørensen, 2004, p. 3). The phenomenon of transnational migration with immigrants' embeddedness in more than one society thus transforms the experiences and representations of time and space (Basch *et al.*, 1995) and with its political, economic, social and cultural implications challenges nation-state container model and leads to multiple networks (Withol de Wenden, 2009, p. 48). This in effect reveals – based on the experiences explored in numerous case studies – "multiple and messier relations of migrants to states" (Hyndman & Walton-Roberts, 2000, p. 245).

In the introduction of one of the *International Migration Reviews*, Levitt, De Wind and Vertovec (2003) discuss about the contentious significance of transnationalism – generally perceived as "broadly defined, interdisciplinary field of inquiry" (Crang *et al.*, 2003, p. 439) – and 'transmigrants' for the migration studies, since various authors have such a diverse view on the matter. They wrote:

Some critics doubt that transnational practices are widespread or very influential. Others contend that migrants' transnational practices are not new and that, as in the past, they will diminish over time among migrants and be of little significance for their children. Still others charge that the findings from the primarily case-study-based research on transnational migration are often exaggerated or skewed. Resolving these debates is made even more difficult because what is meant by 'transnationalism' and what should and should not be included under its rubric is not always clear (p. 565).

Stemming from this segment of the article and from what has been already said in the introduction and previous chapters, I will dedicate the theoretical part of this thesis to one of the key concepts in global theory of migration (Brettell, 2006) and a perspective on migration; the concept of transnationalism. My aim is also to analyse dealing issues of transnationalism, such as state-centrism, the role of place and space, and identity formation. Therefore, I will examine notions, such as nation-state, identity and diaspora, which are crucial for the complete understanding of the concept under question. Additionally, in order to answer the research questions and prepare the reader for the empirical part of the thesis, I also aspire to

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the role of the nation-state in transnational processes, please refer to section *Nation-state*.

integrate into this theoretical discussion a clear explanation of the term ‘refugee’, as well as introduce the ‘burning’ polemics on second generation transnationalism.

In the following sections under this chapter, I will further elaborate on what exactly I mean by several concepts and linkages mentioned above and through the process of combining and comparing them, indicate what I believe are the most adequate definitions, which I will follow throughout the thesis.

## **2.1 Transnational Perspective on Migration**

### **2.1.1 Introducing the concept**

After 1970s and 1980s, when the mainstream approach in migration studies was restricted to labour migrants and their “one or a few discrete moves” (Kraan, 2009, p. 169), the broader concept of *transnationalism* was introduced, which challenges the conventional discourse in migration studies. It represents phenomena, which ‘went global’ and became intense at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Smith & Guarnizo, 2006, p. 4). The idea of transnationalism emerged due to the recognition that migrants maintain ties to families, communities and traditions outside the boundaries of their countries of origin (Vertovec, 2001a, p. 574) – also by travelling back and forth between different places, cultures and social systems – and therefore make home and host country “a single arena for social action” (Dahinden, 2005, p. 192). Consequently those transnational connections have a great impact on migrants, as well as on those left in their home country with whom they keep in touch (Vertovec, 2001a, p. 575).

Numerous articles and books on transnationalism extensively cite anthropologists Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc (1994, 1995), making it impossible to dismiss their introduction of the notion of transnationalism to academic discourse of migration studies and thus their significant contribution to the field. *Comme il faut*, I also provide their definition of transnationalism, being “the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Basch *et al.*, 1994, p. 7).<sup>2</sup> By ‘transnational’ they signal the decreasing importance of national boundaries and the fluidity, or in other words, “... ideas, objects, capital, and people [who] move across borders and boundaries” (Basch *et al.*, 1994, p. 27). With the new concept an increasing number of immigrants have become better perceived as ‘transmigrants’; “immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state” (Basch *et al.*, 1995, p. 48). Or in words of Stephens (1998, p. 593), they become “social actors with allegiances, loyalties and networks that go beyond their citizenship in one nation-state” and who are thus simultaneously embedded in more than one context (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004).

After the concept of transnationalism had been presented to the academic world, it was not always clear what was its actual meaning, so several attempts were made by leading scholars

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<sup>2</sup> It should be stressed forthwith that the definition of transnationalism of Basch *et al.* is still caught in the dichotomies of the receiving and sending countries – traditional paradigm (Ruiz Baía, 1999, p. 93). However, the third dimension will be possible to gather from what still follows.

on the subject to perfect the definition (Hopkins, 2010). Therefore, in order not to base such an important or even crucial concept for this thesis on one line of thought coming from the three mentioned authors, it is relevant to incorporate works of other authors who contested or merely upgraded the definition. Glick Schiller and Fouron (2001) for instance advocate that transnationalism surmounts the premise of only keeping in touch with migrants' kin in the homeland, because keeping in touch or travelling between the two countries also has a great impact on every day lives of people involved in the networks of social ties. For Mazzucato *et al.* (2004), transnationalism is a “continuous flow of people, goods, money and ideas that transgress national boundaries and thereby connect different physical, social, economic and political spaces” (p. 131). From her definition it is evident that transnational approach has undertaken new ideas about space, since one of the consequences of transnationalism and transnational practices was also emergence of pluri-locally situated social spaces and change in peoples relation to space (Pries, 2001, 2007).

By now it must be clear that international migration is a process – multidimensional, as Faist (2000, p. 200) puts it – comprising numerous and various links between two or more places managed by migrants and usually those who have stayed behind or also migrated abroad. By that, previously mentioned transnational social space(s) emerge, named by others also as transnational social field(s) (Basch *et al.*, 1995), transnational village (Levitt, 2001, as cited in Vertovec, 2001a, p. 578) or translocality (Appadurai, 1995, as cited in Vertovec, 2001a, p. 578). Faist (2000) defines it as “sustained ties of persons, networks and organizations across the borders across multiple nation-states, ranging from little to highly institutionalized forms” (p. 189) and Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004, p. 1009) as a “set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed”. Transnational field is “multi-layered and multi-sited” (Levitt, 2009, p. 1227), since it does not include only the host and home country, but also other arenas anywhere around the world, that “connect migrants to their co-nationals and co-religionists” (*Ibid.*).<sup>3</sup> In addition, it is also important to derive from various definitions that transnational social spaces include mobile and immobile persons (Faist, 2000, p. 192), meaning that both, migrants and non-migrants are a part of transnational social spaces because of such an intensity of flows, which shape lives of both groups (Levitt, 2009, p. 1227).

Moreover, Vertovec (1999) shows that several – though interrelated – strands of studies related to transnationalism can be generally found in the transnationalism literature. He asserts that the meaning of transnationalism “has been arguably grounded upon distinct conceptual premises” (p. 448) and in his estimation there are six of them that deserve additional scrutiny. Namely, studies of transnationalism as social morphology (meaning “social formations spanning borders” (p. 449), or ethnic diasporas in other words, and networks), as a type of consciousness (dual or multiple identifications, or “decentred attachments” (p. 450) of migrants), as a mode of cultural reproduction (the production of ‘hybrid’ cultures), as an avenue for capital (trading between countries and the role of

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<sup>3</sup> On this basis and in relation to the previous footnote, Vertovec (1999) speaks about triadic geographies of belonging in the discussion of complexities of transnational relations to place. This point will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections of this chapter.

transnational corporations), as a site of political engagement (political activities undertaken transnationally) and as a (re)construction of ‘place’ or locality (change in people’s relation to space and difficulties in producing ‘locality’). Excepting ‘transnationalism as an avenue of capital’, other premises identified by Vertovec (1999) can be also find intertwined in this thesis.

Another relevant point for this research, which I will analyse in greater detail in section *On Transnational Community, Diaspora and Place*, but only to give a sense of what will follow, is one more apparent outcome of the process of transnationalism. Namely, besides institutions, transnational communities emerged – operating in two or more countries – created by migrants. This forces us out of the false assumption that sedentary lives are the natural state of society. The implication is that clear-cut dichotomies of ‘origin’ or ‘destination’ and categories such as ‘permanent’, ‘temporary’, and ‘return’ migration are increasingly difficult to sustain in a world in which the lives of migrants are increasingly characterised by circulation and simultaneous commitment to two or more societies (De Haas, 2005, p. 1273).

### **2.1.2 In search of a clear-cut definition**

There is also a downside to the concept of transnationalism that one has to take into consideration. According to Crang *et al.* (2003) there were several authors in the time of his writing who have claimed that transnationalism had not yet operated as a tightly defined analytical concept, and that transnationalism was more and more used as a catch-all term of reference. Al-Ali and Koser (2002, p. 2) agree, stating that there is a lack of consensus related to the concept of transnationalism, which resulted in different authors using different definitions and approaches in studying it. Since the time the concept was developed, studies on transnational practices increased, with several authors “contesting the concept, others delimiting, refining and re-formulating it” (Viruell-Fuentes, 2006, p. 335).

One would understandably ask, as Hyndman and Walton-Roberts (2000) did, whether transnationalism can explain the relationships, identities and experiences of immigrants better than existing immigration conventions? After all, the alleged novelty of the concept of transnationalism is strongly contested, as well as the role of the nation-state, as I will elaborate on below. However, after studying the literature and analysing the theoretical concept in question, I have decided to follow those authors who advocate and attach a great importance and relevance to the concept. Among others, Brettell (2006) believes that transnationalism “aptly suits the study of population movements in a world where improved modes of transportation as well as the images that are transmitted by means of modern telecommunications have shortened the social distance between sending and receiving countries.” In this context Mazzucato *et al.* (2004, p. 131) add that migrants are engaged in two different countries and that mobility and transfers of goods and ideas between two or more countries consequently rises. That is what a transnational perspective conveniently stresses, and is therefore also able to explain crucial distinct phenomena mentioned above.

Stemming from these allegedly cursory argumentations and abovementioned definitions, several authors conciliatorily explain that certain definitions and explanations need

refinement, or better, precision. Thus, Portes *et al.* (1999) proposed the delimitation of the concept of transnationalism to economic, political and sociocultural “occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders” (p. 219), with sociocultural being at the heart of this thesis. What is more, Portes (1997a) suggests that the ‘true transnationals’ are those who are “at least bi-lingual, move easily between different cultures, frequently maintain homes in two or more countries, and pursue economic, political, and cultural interests that require a simultaneous presence in both” (p. 16). Portes (1997a), who is clearly in favour of a very strict definition of ‘transnationality’ adds three ‘must-be’ characteristics to get a real ‘transnational’; near-instantaneous long distances communication across national borders, the involvement of substantial numbers of people in these activities and which tend to become normative once a critical mass is reached. It appears that the main stumbling block and at the same time realization in this discussion is the fact that not all migrants are transmigrants and not all practices are transnational, and further, as Glick Schiller and Fouron (2001) stated, “not all transnational processes establish transnational social fields” (p. 544).

Building on these strict views on transnationalism, it turns out that only a minority of migrants could actually be perceived as *transmigrants*. The significance of numerous interesting case studies (see Dahinden, 2005, for references) is therefore diminished. However, I believe that Itzigsohn *et al.*'s (1999) rather moderate explanation of how *transnational* transnational communities' engagements are, is more adequate. They advocate that some members are part of political links, others are engaged in economic activities, and again others only experience the transnational field “in a symbolic way, as part of their space of meaningful references” (p. 317). As will be shown in the empirical part of the thesis, there are “many ways of being transnational”, as Smith (2002, p. xii) puts it, since people can be involved in different social spaces, such as domestic or public space. These various spaces of political, economic and cultural engagements are “complex sites where transnational practices are negotiated, enacted and contested” (*Ibid.*) and which are imbued with power relations, producing social life (LeFebvre, 1996, as cited in Westwood & Phizacklea, 2000, p. 6). Additionally, it can be said that the levels of transmigrants' activities, as well as their frequency or intensity vary greatly (Levitt *et al.*, 2003, p. 570), because certain conditions have to be in favour of creation of transnationalism. They depend mainly on economic, political, legal and social factors in host and home countries. Clearly the context, holding limits and opportunities, has a great influence on transnational practices (Dahinden, 2005; Al-Ali & Koser 2002; Smith & Guarnizo, 2006).

Speaking of polemics surrounding the concept of transnationalism, it is necessary to dedicate a few words to the reproach from certain researchers on migration who claim that there is nothing new about transnationalism. Namely, migrants have been keeping contacts with people and institutions in their places of origin already in the nineteenth century (Vertovec, 2001a, p. 574). Portes *et al.* (1999) support this statement, noticing that despite the contemporary technologies of communication and transportation, which was lacking, “precursors of present immigrant transnationalism have existed for centuries”, including return migration, visits and regular contacts (p. 224). Adding, that contemporary

transnationalism “had plenty of precedents in early migration history” (p. 227). However, at the same time these authors are also aware of the fact that with the process of globalisation and advanced information technologies, the way this interaction takes place has changed over time; spontaneity was replaced by a more structured manner (Tsakiri, 2005, p. 102). Lives are also more and more affected by sustained connections between people and institutions in places of origin or elsewhere in diaspora. Thus, predominantly progress in communication and transportation technologies<sup>4</sup> contributed to “the increase in density, multiplicity, and importance of the transnational interconnections of immigrants” (Basch *et al.*, 1995, p. 52) and to the phenomenon’s “unique manifestation in modern times” (Viruell-Fuentes, 2006, p. 336). In other words, displacement of people is more rapid, communication across space is practically instantaneous and the number of ‘transnationals’ is immense (Portes, 1997b, p. 813). So, while transnational migration is not new and dates back into the nineteenth century, as found out, the transnational perspective on migration is new (Glick Schiller & Fouron, 2001, p. 544) and helps us in understanding social behaviour of migrants and their relation to place.

## **2. 2 On Transnational Community, Diaspora and Place**

As indicated in the previous section, the accelerated process of migration due to new and improved means of communication leads to an emergence of so-called ‘transnational communities’. Portes (1997b) defines them as “dense networks [or social fields as denoted by Hyndman & Walton-Roberts, 2000, and others] across political borders created by immigrants in their quest for economic advancement and social recognition” (p. 812). Through these networks, an increasing number of people maintain strong social – and actual – as well as symbolic ties and in this way lead dual, or rather ‘hybrid’ lives. But sometimes, transnational communities are also superficially labelled as diasporas, especially in non-academic – though also academic – discourse. The question thus appears how can we differentiate between transnational communities and diaspora?

While I have explained the concepts such as transnationalism and transmigrants, the next necessary step to be taken towards the formation of the proper theoretical background for further reading is to analyse the terms ‘transnational community’ and ‘diaspora’, compare and finally define them. This part is required in order to properly set the grounds on which the case study is built.

Both concepts under question are a subject of academic polemics, research and public debates. Only a glance through the literature covering the matter confirms the expected; “the uses of these terms often overlap and are sometimes even interchangeable” (Faist, 2010, p. 14). Thus, there is no clear separation and it seems, as the authors have not yet come to the agreement on separating the concepts in a significant way. The consequence is its overused

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<sup>4</sup> See Manuel Castells’s ‘The Rise of the Network Society’ for more on why new technologies are at the heart of today’s transnational networks, as Vertovec (1999, p. 449) aptly puts it.

and vague application. My attempt is to present the numerous acknowledged definitions, and gather the main differences and similarities.

### **2. 2. 1 Diaspora**

A very clear-cut definition, listing the main features of diaspora can be found in Clifford's (1994) work on the concept, which in his view comprises: "a history of dispersal, myths/memories of the homeland, alienation in the host country, desire for eventual return, ongoing support of the homeland, and a collective identity importantly defined by this relationship" (p. 305). He confirms that even though groups of people do not meet all the criteria, they are frequently called diaspora, but also admits that "no society can be expected to qualify on all counts, throughout its history" (*Ibid.*). This can be perhaps explained by the diaspora discourse being strongly influenced by the prototypic Jewish (also Greek and Armenian) diaspora, which in author's opinion "... can be taken as non-normative starting point for a discourse that is travelling or hybridizing in new global conditions" (p. 306).

Thus, considering changing nature of global setting through time, going beyond the strict and 'old-fashioned' definition<sup>5</sup> of the term diaspora seems to be enabled. Tölölyan (1991) for instance asserted that the term "now shares meaning with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community" (p. 4–5). Clearly, diaspora is now used in various new and interesting contexts (Cohen, 1996) and the criteria of what falls under the definition have changed and what is more important, it has widened (Brubaker, 2005; Kleist, 2008b). This process, however, was gradual and still lacks a proper consensus. Continuing with Cohen (1997, p. x), he distinguishes diasporas among each other on the basis of their formation due to persecution, labour migration, colonial settlement and trade. Although the term has been normally used as reflecting the element of forceful displacement (for example Ghorashi, 2004 uses it as such in her study on Iranians in the USA), Cohen believes that the term should transcend the victim tradition and agrees with Safran (1991) that it should be instead, as at least now already is, used in various other contexts. Namely, it should include "expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities *tour court*" (Safran, 1991, p. 83). Even in broader terms, Danforth (1995, as cited in Djurić, 2003) defines a diaspora simply as a social entity that "consists of people who left their homeland either voluntarily or by force, and who have an awareness of constituting a minority immigrant community in the host country in which they have settled" (p. 114).

Furthermore, from who qualifies as a member of diaspora, authors also name several different criteria on what are the necessary characteristics of diaspora as a whole. Most academics (e.g. van Hear, 1998) moderately refer to diaspora as a spatial dispersal of people who maintain a sense of collectivity over a long period of time. Sheffer (1993, as cited in Dorai, 2002, p. 88–89) asserts that they have three things in common: ethnic identity, internal organisation and significant level of contact with the homeland. Cohen (1997, p. ix) perceives

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<sup>5</sup> For more on analysis of the term in its classical meaning, see Clifford (1994), Cohen (1996), Brubaker (2005), Tölölyan (1991), Esman (2009), etc.

the concept of diaspora as a community, which has settled outside its home country but whose emotions and loyalties are still devoted to this country of origin and whose members share a sense of co-ethnicity. Diasporas manage to overcome the distance between their separated communities and to lead transnational lives, having, as Bruneau (2010, p. 47) puts it, “exceptional symbolic and ‘iconographic’ capital”. They share a history of dispersal and oppression, believe of common descent (Glick Schiller & Fouron, 2001, p. 23), and common cultural forms. Those are “deployed in transnational networks built from multiple attachments, and they encode practices of accommodation with, as well as resistance to, host countries and their norms. Diaspora involves dwelling, maintaining communities, having collective homes away from home” (Clifford, 1994, p. 308). In its contemporary form, as Esman (2009, p. 14) names it, diaspora is a migrant community “that maintains material or sentimental linkages with its home country, while adapting to the environments and institutions of its host country”. Brubaker (2005, p. 5) for instance lists three core elements that remain widely understood to be constitutive of diaspora. The first one is dispersion in space (to more than one land, stresses Cohen, 1996); the second, orientation to a ‘homeland’; and the third, boundary-maintenance – the preservation of a distinctive identity *vis-à-vis* a host society or societies.

Since people’s lives in diaspora are simultaneously intertwining two countries, they challenge the assumptions concerning identity and territory/place (Carter, 2005). The importance of place – homeland, more precisely – for the diasporic communities and their identity formation, should be stressed again. Namely, territoriality continues to play an important role, since all the social groups within diaspora are integrated in a territory in the form of a nation-state (Bruneau, 2010, p. 48). Even though members of diaspora have lost their physical contact – at least in the majority of cases – with the territory of origin, they still aspire to preserve the relationship through contacts, collective memory and strong cultural consciousness (Brettell, 2006). In other words, they are living in transnational networks in which homeland is not something that is “left behind”, but it presents a “place of attachment in a contrapuntal modernity” (Clifford, 1994, p. 311) and is thus kept alive by preserving physical or emotional transnational connections. Despite those, they are in a state of being entangled in living here, but desiring another place; the one that is commonly expressed in visions of “nature, divinity, mother earth, and the ancestors” (p. 309), a place of eventual return (Safran, 1991, p. 84).

Furthermore, diasporas are not bounded by a nation and are capable of shaping a new, “third space”<sup>6</sup> (Mitchell, 1997, p. 534) – a position beyond space and time. Carter (2005) is critical, asserting that within diaspora studies there are many “spatial metaphors” (p. 55), but the significance of geography is at the same time denied. This is done by accentuating dissolution of borders and overcoming of space and by discounting “the re-territorializing elements of diasporic practices” (*Ibid.*). On the other hand one can notice that Jackson *et al.*

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<sup>6</sup> In greater detail, Katharyne Mitchell explains that “third space” was termed by Bhabha, who defines hybridity as in-between space, “a space inherently critical of essentialism and conceptualizations of original or originary culture”. Bhabha (as cited in Mitchell, 1997) explains the relation of hybridity and ‘third space’: “For me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the ‘third space’ which enabled other positions to emerge” (p. 534).

(2004, p. 1–3) could not be a subject of Carter’s criticism, since they point out to the underestimated significance of space, which is in their opinion “constitutive of transnationality” and in which increasing number of people participate in. Transnational space thus includes “material, symbolic, and imaginary geographies” and encompasses people who are in any way engaged in transnational cultures. Namely, culture in its widest sense plays an essential role in every diaspora (Bruneau, 2010, p. 39). With the help of modern technology, which facilitates diaspora to maintain contacts and to recreate itself “through the mind, cultural artefacts and a shared imagination” (Cohen, 1996, p. 516), the significance of place, transnational space and culture, remain germane to the present discussion.

Before continuing with comparisons, I am concluding this section with Fortier’s (2000) three dualities that are typical for diaspora’s ‘inherent betweenness’; “here and there, homeland and hostland, indigenouness and dispersal” (p. 160). These come from the culture and ethnicity that are as a rule embedded in history, territory and language, but that are also able to cross the dualities, seen in a state of being ‘at home abroad’, or when the second generation no longer speaks the language of their ethnic group. As King and Christou (2010, p. 181) notice and which is crucial for this thesis, as I will be able to elaborate more in the empirical part, these binaries not only mix, but can also become very similar, all the way to the feeling of strangerhood when being here or there. Applied to my specific case, this happens when Somalis feel Dutch when in Somalia and *vice versa*.

### **2. 2. 2 Which one is it; transnational community or diaspora?**

The concepts of transnational community and diaspora strive to deal with time and space compression across the boundaries of nation-state. They are also crucial means to discuss terms of ‘community’, ‘social space’ and ‘boundaries’. Both ways of perception – lenses – partly distinguish from ‘methodological cosmopolitanism’<sup>7</sup> because they do not take the ‘global’ as a “horizon of perception, interpretation, analysis or moral evaluation” (Faist, 2010, p. 33) but they both deal in the direction of breaking binary frames of position (Brettell, 2006). However, let me firstly take a look, with the help of Faist (2010, p. 9), at the main and most obvious difference between terms of diaspora and transnationalism in general, since they are also used interchangeably sometimes. The difference lies in the fact that the first always means a community or group, while the second also embraces spaces, fields and formations, refers to processes transcending nation-states’ borders and is thus more abstract phenomenon – even though it can also be narrower, when referring to migrants’ enduring ties between countries. From this explanation it could be established that diaspora, as transnationally organised community, is a narrower term, but the same can be also said when comparing it to transnational community. Namely, transnational community also includes phenomena such as “cross-border village communities or borderland communities” (p. 21) and “transnationally active networks, groups and organizations” (p. 9). Stemming from this explanation, diasporas “tend to constitute a specific type of transnational community” (Faist, 2000, p. 197), or in

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<sup>7</sup> For more on ‘methodological cosmopolitanism’ please refer to the *Nation-State* section and make inquiries for further references.

other words, “transnational communities are building blocks of potential diasporas that may or may not take shape” (Levitt, 2001, p. 202). Therefore, diaspora is only one of the forms of transnational community, meaning that not every transnational community is diaspora. Or rephrased, diaspora is a transnational community only when its members develop significant social and symbolic ties also with the receiving country (Faist, 2000, p. 197).

Furthermore, Portes *et al.* (1999) draw the line between the concepts on the basis of the nature of their relationship with the homeland. In case of diaspora the emphasis is on symbolic ties, while in the case of transnational communities, on real connections. Van Hear (1998) for instance mentions that it is characteristic of transnational communities to emphasize dual allegiances between sending and host society, while diaspora “involves a wider spread of allegiances” (p. 249). Among other factors, there is supposedly also duration of migrant’s settlement that is important. Namely, King and Christou (2010, p. 171–172) suggest that diaspora stands out in comparison to international migration and transnational communities because of its historical continuity across at least two generations and the nature of being scattered and firm as regards the distribution of population within the diaspora. Cohen (1997, p. 24) believes that the strong emphasis on group identity and the reluctance to assimilation into the host society also distinguishes diaspora from other communities. Despite all the definitions and instructions of their application, I agree with Brettell (2006), that there is still a long road ahead before truly learning all the processes and imaginaries that the two concepts encompass.

From what will be able to see in the history of Somali immigration and from what was established in the cross-section of the concepts of transnational community and diaspora, it might come as no surprise that Somalis are more recently labelled as diaspora (Kleist, 2008a, 2008b; Al-Sharmani, 2006; Horst, 2004). They fulfil most of the criteria – at least the core ones, such as (forceful) dispersion across space, homeland orientation, engagement in construction and maintenance of collective Somali (ethnic) identity and regular and significant ties with kin members around the globe – presented in this chapter (see Al-Sharmani, 2010). However, Kleist (2008b) explains this by stressing that the diaspora category, as a moral community, is not “universal identity” for Somalis who live outside Somalia, but “a political framework” (p. 1139). Somali politicians lean on Somali diaspora and call on their mobilisation for the purpose of reconstruction and development goals. That is how diaspora becomes “a concept of a political identity nature that might at once be claimed by and attributed to different subjects of groups” (p. 1130). Irrespective of how the Somalis were characterized as diaspora – though still having in mind its political nature – it is my estimation that the group of Somalis in the Netherlands can be incontestably identified as diaspora, though I will refer to them also as a transnational community.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Although defined as unified community, it is crucial to have in mind the role of internal power dynamics and differences within the group that constitutes a diaspora – such as gender, social status, generation, etc. (Anthias, 1998 and Azel, 2004, as cited in Kleist, 2008a, p. 308).

### 2.3 Refugees

As outlined in the *Introduction* chapter, I chose to conduct research on the population that is having a status of a ‘refugee’, falling in the wider group of migrants. The latter can be divided by where they came from; from diaspora of hope, of despair and from diaspora of terror. Whereas economic migrants fall under the first and second classification, refugees come from the diaspora of terror and flee to safer sites (Appadurai, 1990, as cited in Ghosh & Wang, 2003, p. 279–280). However, refugees may also experience, or possess, multiple diaspora consciousnesses and thus emotions and motives, which prepares them to depart their home country (Ghosh & Wang, 2003, p. 280). In any case, it is reasonable to explain before continuing, who exactly is a refugee. Following the article 1A of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Additional Protocol, refugee is a person who:

... owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.<sup>9</sup>

Traditionally, a clear distinction between refugees and labour migrants has been followed in the study of international migration, with refugees representing a political, and labour migrants an economic outcome of global systems and interactions. Other distinction casts refugees as involuntary, and labour migrants as voluntary migrants (Al-Ali *et al.*, 2001; Povrzanović Frykman, 2002, p. 122). But more recently scholars (for example Koser & Van Hear, 2003) began to question this distinction and headed more towards its conceptual blurring in international migration studies, in order to include refugees in the focus of transnationalism (Al-Ali *et al.*, 2001, p. 616). Thus, they have been indicating that it may not be accurate to distinguish so straightforwardly between political and economic migrants because almost all migrants in reality move out of mixed motivations. As refugees may move out of specific, forced reasons, their options from the departure on are open to choice, and similarly, labour migrants may leave due to “corporate imposition” and not voluntarily (*Ibid.*, p. 616). As a result, the experiences of refugees are according to Richmond (1994, as cited in Wahlbeck, 1998, p. 1) rarely distinguished from the ones of other migrants.

Therefore, proceeding from recent perspectives in international migration studies, which suggest that there may be at best only a blurred conceptual distinction between refugees and other migrants, I think that in the discussion about identity (especially national), belonging, home and transnationalism, this question is crucial. The primary incentives to migrate, especially in the case of Somalia, stems directly from the political circumstances in their home country and the primary reasons for transnational activities greatly differ from the motives of economic immigrants. While migrants largely ‘decide’ to leave and to recreate their life in another place, “refugees are torn away from their homeland and still cling to it” (Steen, 1992 as cited in Wahlbeck, 1998, p. 4; Faist, 2000, p. 213), unable to separate the life in exile from

<sup>9</sup> For more on refugees from the legal point of view and European migration law I suggest reading Boeles *et al.* (2009).

the memory of the homeland.<sup>10</sup> As Steen (1992, as cited in Wahlbeck, 1998) argues in the case of refugees, “everything that should normally define them in a socio-cultural context is non-existent, or rather, still back home” (p. 4). Refugees clearly have a distinctive, ‘special’ relationship with the country they have been forced to flee from, as well as with the country where they have involuntarily settled (Wahlbeck, 1998, p. 9). Kunz (1973), author of one of the classical articles in refugee studies states: “it is the reluctance to uproot oneself, and the absence of positive original motivations to settle elsewhere, which characterises all refugee decisions and distinguishes the refugee from the voluntary migrants” (p. 130). Additionally, refugees differ from other migrants in their legal status and consequently social implications (Al-Ali *et al.*, 2001, p. 616) – in terms of their motivation for migration in the first place and integration trajectories once settled in the host country (Tubergen, 2010, p. 518) – and also in the capacity and desire nexus, usually facing greater obstacles than others (Koser & van Hear, 2003, p. 13). Namely, experiences of “loss, marginality, and exile ... are often reinforced by systematic exploitation and blocked advancement” (Clifford, 1994, p. 312).

Furthermore, refugees have been generally excluded from international migration studies out of three reasons, listed by Koser (2002, p. 138): they were foreseen to eventually return home, those who stayed were usually a subject of integration studies since they were not expected to maintain ties with their homelands, and due to their status and reason to migrate, they could be rejected by their home countries. They have also been ‘skipped’ by transnationalism, or studies have focused only on particular cases of their political activities (Al-Ali *et al.*, 2001, p. 615). But as I have been advocating all along, at least for the case of Somali refugees, and what one of my aims is to show in this thesis, is that this focus on only political transnational activities should be extended to incorporate also the involvement of refugees in economic, cultural and social transnational activities because they clearly can and are engaged in them. As Portes (1999) nicely puts it: “when migration is massive and motivated by political convulsions at home, it is likely that immigrants remain morally tied to kin and communities left behind and, hence, are more likely to engage in a variety of activities to bridge the gap and sustain a common bond” (p. 464). However, even though various activities of refugees just stated have narrowed the conceptual distinction between refugees’ and labour migrants’ transnationalism, we should be aware that refugees are usually still legally restricted by their status and distinctive in several other, abovementioned factors. Stemming from these discussions, when studying political refugees, it requires from us “a more sceptical conceptualization of transnationalism than that found in some of the overly celebratory narratives...” (Smith, 2002, p. xiii). In any case, according to Hyndman and Walton-Roberts (2000, p. 248) the term *transmigrant* is appropriate for immigrants as well as refugees, who maintain different ethnic, national, etc. identities. That is why I also employ the term, defined as it is under Chapter 2, section *Introducing the concept*, throughout this thesis.

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<sup>10</sup> They are also still politically and socially oriented towards their country of origin, and frequently conflicts there have an impact on their lives in country of settlement (Wahlbeck, 1998, p. 9). In the case of Somalis, clan disputes are in some cases still present and manifested among them, as will be explained in greater detail in the empirical sections.

Moreover, Wahlbeck (1998, p. 2) warns that there is a need for clearly defined concepts and complete theories that could illustrate and capture the specific experiences of refugees. Accordingly, concepts of transnationalism and deterritorialization are in his opinion not enough if one wants to capture the difference between a refugee's and a labour migrant's experience. As a new conceptual framework he suggests the concept of diaspora (*Ibid.*, p. 9), as adequate in describing geographical displacement and deterritorialization of identities and cultures (*Ibid.*, p. 10). Thus, refugee studies could benefit from the diaspora discourse, particularly now, when focus on transnational networks and communities has replaced former interest in immigration and assimilation (Lie, 1995).

## 2.4 Nation-State

In this section I will discuss the changing role of the nation-state in the 'age of transnationalism' in practice, as well as in the inquiry of the current migration research. My aim is to examine most frequent statements or rather generalities about the demise of the nation-state, and analyse the ways in which nation-state is being remodelled rather than demolished. In other words, the significance of the role of the nation-state and its functions will be at the heart of this section.

In order to understand transnational migration and the changing role of the nation-state as a consequence, it is necessary to discuss the concept of the nation-state as such, which has been socially and historically constructed (Basch *et al.*, 1995, p. 51). After the Second World War and before the current period of globalisation, people started to perceive territorially based nation-states as the natural – taken for granted – political and social entities (Glick Schiller & Fouron, 2001, p. 18). According to Basch *et al.* (1995, p. 51), nation-states were created and shaped by constructing and popularizing collective memories and by using this historical narrative “to authenticate and validate a commonality of purpose and national interests” (Anderson, 1991, as cited in *Ibid.*). In other words,

Key to nation-state building as a political process has been the construction of a myth that each nation-state contained within it a single people defined by their residence in a common territory, their undivided loyalty to a common government, and their shared cultural heritage. In the past immigrants were forced to abandon, forget, or deny their ties to home and in subsequent generations memories of transnational connections were erased (Basch *et al.*, 1995, p. 51).

Since 'nation' and 'state' are two separate objects of inquiry – illustrating the relationship between the cultural and the political (McCrone, 1998, p. 7) – let me first explain the meaning of a 'state' and afterwards the meaning of a 'nation'. Modern states as we know them today, are based on the agreed size of territory – surrounded and defined by borders – which is recognized by other member states of the international community (Faist, 2000, p. 201). States are also understood to be a sovereign system of government that can – among other authorisations – determine who and what can legally enter its territory and who or what cannot, and control legal membership (Esman, 2009, p. 140; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 301; Glick Schiller & Fouron, 2001, p. 18; Morris, 1997, p. 194). Additionally, Bauböck

(2003) defines states as “bounded political entities whose borders are crossed by flows of people, money or information and are spanned by social networks, organisations or fields” (p. 701).

In contrast, Anthony Smith (1998) defines nation as people, “possessing common and distinctive elements of culture, a unified economic system, citizenship rights for all members, a sentiment of solidarity arising out of common experiences, and occupying a common territory” (p. 188). Additionally, human beings who share “common origins and history as indicated by their culture, language, and identity” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 306) are perceived as being members of the same nation. Stemming from these definitions, it is evident that nation falls under a domain of identity and belonging. The origins of this ‘truth’ date back to the times when people were devotedly attached to local units from which nation-states were later developed. These attachments to units were perceived as ‘natural’ and the nation-states as “soulless and artificial” (Beck & Sznaider, 2006, p. 8). Due to national rituals and symbols this has changed completely; for instance nowadays, national identities are seen as natural, and European, global, or cosmopolitan identity, as artificial constructs (*Ibid.*).

Furthermore, if we put the concepts together, the omnipresent assumption in our society is that people, who are members of a particular nation, share an identity and as a nation contribute to the various activities and duties that form the state (Glick Schiller & Fouron, 2001, p. 18). Besides, arising from this understanding of a nation-state, the political commitment of individuals is understood to be “exclusive” – having a citizenship of only one nation-state (Esman, 2009, p. 161). This “container model of society”, as Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002, p. 308) nicely put it, and which developed in the social science after the Second World War, has been somewhat challenged with the processes of migration and globalisation. By crossing borders in order to work abroad or find a refuge, people are no longer disciplined and obedient citizens, having only one citizenship (Cohen, 1996). From the classical geopolitics’ point of view, the territorial order of the nation-state, “the conceptualization of the nation-state as a single, fixed, unified, entity” (Carter, 2005, p. 61), has been disrupted and the coherent ‘container’ of society challenged. On the other hand critical geopolitics deals with the meaning of conceptual borders (distinguishing nation-states between each other) and imaginative borders (separating what is foreign or domestic and what is inside and outside of the nation-state) (*Ibid.*), undertaking post-modernistic standpoint.

Therefore, from the perspective of classical geopolitics and nation-state builders, every move across national borders is “an exception to the rule of sedentariness [the principle grounded in the stateness, as well as nationness of modern nation-states (Joppke, 1998, p. 7)] within the boundaries of the nation-state” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 310). Large waves of cross-border labour migration and movements of asylum-seekers that expanded across the globe with almost no restrictions, presents an anomaly and exception to the rule of staying where you “belong..., to [your] nation-state” (p. 311) and thus confirms assertion that population movement beyond state boundaries is inherently a political matter (Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004, p. 1183). People in diaspora for instance, are thus allegedly disrupting “the hegemony and imagined homogeneity of the nation-state through their fluid and/or hybrid identities” (Mavroudi, 2007, p. 396) and dual loyalties, even though diasporas have in fact

predated the nation-state (Cohen, 1996).<sup>11</sup> According to Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) this indicates that migration studies have been promoting, or rather representing the ‘normal life’, as seen by nationalists.

The ‘transnational’ paradigm within migration studies analysed in the first part of this theoretical chapter obviously challenges the idea of the nation-state (Joppke, 1998). Namely, transnational phenomenon, seen as part of the broader globalisation processes, is perceived as a bearer of the demise of the nation-state (Basch *et al.*, 1995, p. 49). Lee (2004, p. 236) offers an example of Tongan migrants, who have wide networks of ties with those at home, as well as abroad, saying that the state remains “geographically bounded territory of Tonga”, whereas the nation includes all Tongan people, also those who live over-seas. This example signifies that the concept of society should be reformulated, so as to stress that it is no longer “automatically with or confined by the boundaries of a single nation-state” (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1004). Tsakiri agrees (2005, p. 102), adding that transnational communities are seen as leading to a “redefinition of the balance between community structures and the state”.

In sum, global flows, multiple identities, and cross-border networks represented by transnational migrant communities critically test prior assumptions that the nation-state functions as a kind of container of social, economic and political processes (Vertovec, 2001b). However, authors like Bauböck (2003) alleviate the assumptions by stressing that the scope of those theses is very likely to be exaggerated and consequently its significance misunderstood.

#### **2. 4. 1 Beyond methodological nationalism**

The section above aimed to present the roots of the nation-state building process – establishing a homogeneous nation in a territorially-bounded state – and how human mobility presents an anomaly to the nation-state’s society ‘container model’. Social sciences and migration studies more specifically, are “a child of [this] postwar era” when nation-state had a great power of managing migratory movements and influencing their research, which itself justified the nation-state (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 301). The latter was primary unit of observation in mainstream social sciences, influenced by methodological nationalism and with nation-state oriented outcomes of studies throughout the 1990s (p. 305). In other words, “the social sciences were captured by the apparent naturalness and givenness of a world divided into societies along the lines of nation-states” (Berlin, 1998, as cited in Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 304), thus taking national discourses, cultures, loyalties and histories for granted. People, who have not shared national culture and were culturally and racially different, were essentialized as ‘Others’ – threatening social solidarity<sup>12</sup> – and politicization of ethnicity, forming a crucial part of nation-state building, was not questioned (*Ibid.*).

Findings presented in the previous paragraph embody the concept of methodological nationalism, which means container oriented methodology where theoretical and empirical

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<sup>11</sup> For more on how diaspora is seen as standing against the very ‘being’ of the nation-state, see Clifford (1994), Carter (2005), Cohen (1996).

<sup>12</sup> In case of Muslims in Europe, Fekete (2004) uses the expression the “enemy within”.

analyses and perceived social reality are restricted solely to the borders of nation-states (Amelina, 2008, p. 11) and where “social scientists in doing research or theorizing take it for granted that society is equated with national society” (Beck & Sznaider, 2006, p. 2).<sup>13</sup> In addition, it sees states and their governments as primary focus of analysis in social science research, division and competition between states as fundamental category of political organisation, and it territorializes “social science imaginary” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 307). Thus, everything that crossed the borders of nation-state was nonexistent for analysis (Giddens, 1995, as cited in *Ibid.*). But with the transnational migration and other phenomena transnational in character, which nation-state conceptualizations are incapable of explaining, it seemed that a way out of the deadlock was necessary. Various authors (Robinson, 1998, among others) were calling for a break with this “nation-state framework of analysis” (p. 562). Thus, during the last decade, the blinders of methodological nationalism have been gradually removed, overcoming the dichotomy between state and nation and therefore considering the main critiques. Namely, that “national organization as a structuring principle of societal and political action can no longer serve as the orienting reference point for the social scientific observer” (Beck & Sznaider, 2006, p. 4). New theoretical framework – less state-oriented one – of transnational migration was thus necessary (Hyndman & Walton-Roberts, 2000), responding to the process of globalisation and the emergence of transnational paradigm.

Therefore, with the paradigm shift, analysis of the phenomenon of migration through different lenses was enabled (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). At this point I would like to briefly present two different perspectives, one proposed by Beck (2005) and the second one by Glick Schiller (2010), as alternatives to methodological nationalism. The latter came up with what she calls ‘global power perspective’ (p. 110). This is to shift our focus from the nation-state as the main unit of analysis to the global system as the proper unit (Robinson, 1998, p. 562). By this paradigm shift, she claims to “elucidate the mutual constitution of the local, national and global” (p. 110)<sup>14</sup> and among other things, to stress the continuing importance of nation-states and recognition, that nation-states are only one set of institutions of power that stretch transnationally. Moreover, Beck (2005) sets forward a global perspective and stresses the role of migrants as transnational, or rather, cosmopolitan actors, who act beyond the nationalist projects. He advocates denationalization of political science and introduction of “cosmopolitan outlook of transnational spaces, strategies of actions and institutions” (Beck & Sznaider, 2006, p. 15). By cosmopolitanization, with which he wants to overcome methodological nationalism, he means “internal globalization, globalization from within the national societies. This transforms everyday consciousness and identities significantly” (Beck, 2002, p. 17). However, as he also sees it, methodological cosmopolitanism does not mean the end of the nation but only its transformation (Beck & Sznaider, 2006). But contentious point for Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) is exactly cosmopolitanism as a post-national stage of identity in relation to the nation-state. Namely, in their opinion Beck does not acknowledge

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<sup>13</sup> Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002, p. 302) designate as methodological nationalism the assumption that “the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world”.

<sup>14</sup> For more see Faist (2010) and Glick Schiller (2010).

that “nationalism is a powerful signifier that continues to make sense for different actors with different purposes and political implications” (p. 326).

Although nations massively transgress states, territorially limited entities, they are still perceived as integrated whole, conceptualized as static and essential (*Ibid.*). This should be surmounted by researching (each) immigrant’s activities that stretch across borders of one country, and following Crang *et al.* (2003, p. 445), mind the remapping of space of cultural identity and ‘triadic’ geography of belonging; belonging not only in relation to national territories but to diaspora as well.

#### **2. 4. 2 Nation-state refuses to ‘go away’**

Despite Robinson’s and other authors’ persuasive attempt to exclude the nation-state as a unit of analysis as regards transnationalism, not everyone agrees. For example contributors to Al-Ali and Koser’s (2002) book *New Approaches to Migration? Transnational Communities and Transformation of Home* see the power of nation-states in shaping and delimiting transnational migration and “how receiving and sending states continue to impinge on the everyday activities even of transnational migrants” (p. 12). Thus, although it holds true that the nation-centred perspectives of both sending and receiving countries often either misinterpret or “plainly ignore” migrants’ transnational orientations (Bauböck, 1998, p. 26), that does not mean that the nation-states as such do not matter anymore. International migration transnationalizes both, sending and receiving societies, by extending relevant forms of membership beyond the boundaries of territories and citizenship. The dynamics of each case of transmigrants’ political involvement are affected by specific conditions in both sending and receiving contexts, including migrant status and dual nationality or citizenship, access to funds and resources, and the host country’s laws, policies and relations with the migrants’ homeland (Vertovec, 2001b) and transnational loyalties, which challenge the national polity. Thus, migrants’ transnational practices have direct implications for several areas of state interest, among others being national identity, which concern matters of membership, belonging, loyalty, and moral political values (Vertovec, 2003).

Stemming from the abovementioned findings, transnationalism does not mean the end of the nation-state, which clearly still has important implications in practice, as well as in influencing thinking in the social sciences (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 301). According to Al-Ali (2002, p. 100), nation-states shape transnational social space with its boundaries and provide ways of transnational activities. In words of Anderson (2001), “the movement between different dimensions of transnational social space that affects multiple transnational membership is not seamless then, and the state plays a crucial role in access to transnational social space and in the negotiations around multiple transnational membership” (p. 11). Clearly, the continuing role of nation-states in transnational migration is still present in the academic works of several authors, in contrast to earlier studies on transnationalism, which mainly neglected their impact (Kivisto & Faist, 2010, as cited in Faist, 2010, p. 22). But national communities are also not being gradually replaced by transnational ones, rather, they are “constructed on a transnational scale” (Danforth, 1995, as cited in Djurić, 2003, p. 114).

Apparently nations refuse to go away, as Anthias has stated (2001, p. 635). That is to say, one should be cautious not to downplay the role of a nation-state in the control of movements of people across borders (Al-Sharmani, 2007; Salih, 2001; Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004). Firstly, some authoritarian countries carefully manage borders when in need to control the exit of their citizens, again other immigration countries impose new difficulties for migrants with admission controls, and integration and refugee policies, hampering their settlement, family reunification, naturalization, etc. (Bauböck, 2003; Freeman, 1998). Nations-states are thus still very much present with their regulations, especially when it comes to various aspects of citizenship (Turner, 1990, as cited in Anthias, 2001, p. 635) and consequently to rights, entitlements, and legal status that basically “empowers people to pursue transnational lives” (Smith, 2002, p. xiv), including transnational practices such as sending remittances. Borders are still policed “against undesirable others, in formal and informal ways, through migration controls and racism” (Anthias, 2001, p. 635) and strong efforts in place to integrate, or rather assimilate migrants. However, on the other hand it cannot be overlooked that the process of creating and maintaining transnational lives is influenced by nation-states, through imposing political constraints and protecting and regulating national identity (Smith & Guarnizo, 2006; Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002).

While many still claim the decline of nation-state’s power, either from below (e.g. by separatism) or above (e.g. by transnational capital),<sup>15</sup> the nation state from “the side” (from the point of view of migrants/non-citizens) is according to Anderson (2001, p. 8), stronger than ever. With that she points not to territorial space, but entry to the national social space. Namely, states are posing more and more obligations to citizens with managing access to social space of citizenship and in return – if the citizenship is granted – aspiring to obtain from them affirmations of belonging and loyalty. The state thus sets in as protector of national identity and social cohesion and “one of the ways it seeks to achieve these objectives is through demonstrating its ability to control and manage migrations and diversity” (Kofman, 2005, p. 454–455).

I could perhaps best conclude this chapter by establishing that with the ‘break away’ with methodological nationalism and re-examination of the role of the nation-state in the discussion on migration and transnationalism, nation-states are still significant with all the regulations and policies, but social life and identity are not confined – though still strongly influenced – by the boundaries of the nation-states. Or in words of Hopkins (2009), “the global order is changing, and that there is in fact a dual process occurring, in which national borders are simultaneously tightening in some respects, and loosening or being erased in others” (p. 22). And as regards research, the role of the nation-state and our national identity also plays a part, because our perceptions are strongly influenced by our own location in the framework of nation-states – results of the identity politics – and “the constrains this places on our scientific perspectives” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 324). All in all, reconsideration about how we perceive nation-states is necessary, as well as awareness of the fact that our

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<sup>15</sup> I suggest reading Smith and Guarnizo (2006) for more on transnationalism “from above” and mostly on transnationalism “from below”.

theoretical language is influenced by the political and social forces around us (*Ibid.*; Carter, 2005).

## 2.5 Identity

With the process of globalisation, technological developments and increased mobility, “transnational circuits opened up”, which led to a degree of deterritorialization of not only nation-states but also migrants’ identities. In opinion of some authors (Glick Schiller *et al.*, 1999, as cited in Routon, 2006, p. 484), identities are no longer attached to specific territories, since they transcend local, regional and even national borders. The notion of identity is besides being one of the most delicate concepts in the social sciences (Vertovec, 2001a, p. 573), also an extremely important one, especially when researching those of transnational migrants, whose answers to the questions ‘Who am I?’ or ‘Who are we?’ (Mutanen, 2010, p. 33; Wrong, 2000, p. 12) undergo through stern tests and deep self-reflections. Thus, identity is far from being foreseen or easy to define because it is produced, “never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation” (Hall, 1990, p. 222). In Erikson’s and other social scientists’ opinion (1968, as cited in Wrong, 2000, p. 11), identity is always problematic and its “something that is not just given but that has to be sought, striven for ...”. Plus, the process of identity formation gets even more complicated with the dynamic and continuous maintenance of transnational ties (Ghosh & Wang, 2003, p. 269) of diaspora, which constructs identities in transnational ways (Stephens, 1998, p. 603). However, generally speaking, for the sake of introduction, identity is “any social category in which an individual is eligible to be a member” (Chandra, 2006, p. 401), and since the field of transnational identity is under-researched, various views are possible (Wangaruro, 2011, p. 11).

Several recent writers (e.g. Wrong, 2000; Sen, 2007) have suggested that individuals do not have singular identities, but a repertoire of different identities. Since I firmly agree with this line of thought, this notion of identity is used throughout the thesis. People will ‘draw on’ each of them – or a combination – depending on where they are, whom they are with, and the particular social setting they are in (Hall, 1992, 1996, 1997, as cited in Ross, 2007, p. 287). Stuart Hall thus advocates that identities are composed of several, sometimes contradictory, identities and disagrees that a person is “fully centred, unified ... endowed with capacities of reason, consciousness and action” (as cited in Ross, 2007, p. 287). Sen (2006) also renounces the existence of singular identity, and argues that “forcing people into boxes of singular identity [tries] ... to understand human beings not as persons with diverse identities but predominantly as members of one particular social group or community” (p. 176).

Before continuing with specific ‘types’ of identities, I wish to put some more emphasis on what has been indicated in the first paragraph. Namely, the postmodern and widespread idea – the influence of postmodernism has great implications for our understanding of identity – that identity is a social/human construction (Mutanen, 2010, p. 28). This is at the core of my thesis, since I am particularly interested in how first and second generation Somalis in the Netherlands construct and formulate their identities. Therefore, it is worth pointing out Dunn’s (2001) definition of identity, as being understood as “the product of multiple and

competing discourses, which construct unstable, multiple, fluctuating and fragmented senses of the self and other” (p. 56). I thus follow the idea that identity formation should be seen as a process not constrained by space or time, but as fluid and artificially constructed. Individual’s identities are reflected in the narratives; stories people tell about themselves and others about who they are (see Martin, 1995). Although identities are reproduced and transmitted from one generation to the next, this is always done in a selective way. According to Yuval-Davis (2006), “the identity narratives can shift and change, be contested and multiple. They can relate to the past, to a myth of origin; they can be aimed at explaining the present and ... function as a projection of a future trajectory” (p. 202). In the narratives of identity, a combined, dual process of being and becoming; belonging and longing to belong, is usually expressed (*Ibid.*). Furthermore, Brah *et al.*’s (1999, as cited in Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202) understanding of identity is very eloquent, stating that identities are “a set of narratives of self production that are dispersed through a multiplicity of power relations”. In any way, we articulate ourselves in a particular place and time, from a specific history and culture; therefore, as Hall says (1990, p. 222), what we say is always in a particular context, it is positioned.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, the fact that those identity narratives can be individual or collective – with the former usually stemming from the latter (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202) – and Smith’s thesis about ‘a need for community’ (explained in the footnote 16) bring me to the brief ‘collective *versus* individual identity’ discussion. Appandurai (1991, as cited in Basch *et al.*, 1995) has written that group identity needs reconceptualisation because the definition of groups has somehow changed. They are no longer territorialized and spatially bounded, not even culturally homogeneous. However, collective identity has long been an important defining criterion for groups, as distinguished from individual identity (Wrong, 2000, p. 13). They derive out of stories and discourses usually preserved through longer period of time, which eventually produces group categories and consequently criteria for belonging. In the case of immigration, host countries are usually the ones that assign (commonly from the perspective of their ‘race’) a particular, expected identity (frequently based on ‘class’ and ‘ethnicity’) to its immigrants, which is at the same time homogenised and “which may only remotely relate to their self-perceived pre-migration identities” (Ghosh & Wang, 2003, p. 280).

However, opponents of the ‘collective identity’ criticise “the essentialism of collective attributes and images” (Cerulo, 1997, p. 387). Social constructionists basically reject “any category that sets forward essential or core features as the unique property of a collective’s members” (*Ibid.*). They advocate social construction of identity, on which collective self is then build. That is to say, each individual’s social location is “constructed along multiple axes of difference, such as gender, class, race and ethnicity, stage in the life cycle, sexuality, ability and so on” (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 200). This means that each person has it’s own specific

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<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, there is Anthony Smith (1991, as cited in Cerulo, 1997, p. 390-391), who challenges social constructionist’s stand, by letting in more essentialist view of identity – national, in his case. He claims that identity is a product of ‘natural’ continuity, originating in pre-existing ethnic community and conscious manipulation, accomplished through ideology and symbolic representations. Additionally, he adds third dimension as integral to identity work, a social psychological one; a need for community. Thus, he stresses that a persons’ identity is not only subject of construction but that a part of it is already ‘naturally’ attributed and a tendency of every individual, to strive for community belonging and therefore identity sharing.

characteristics and preferences, determining and shaping his or her identity. Erikson (1968, as cited in Wrong, 2000) for instance equates identity and personal individuality, but reminds us that this consists of one person's objective qualities and his/her "subjective awareness of those qualities and the recognition of them by others" (p. 12). Because in order to fit in and be accepted by the host society, immigrants often internalise those assigned identities (Ghosh & Wang, 2003, p. 280). The identity is therefore reflection of individual's unique personality shaped through the process of interaction with others, plus, of other's perception of his/her personality (Wrong, 2000; Valentine *et al.*, 2009). Many theorists support this thesis (Vertovec, 2001a, p. 577, references Richard Jenkins, 1996, who draws upon big names in academic research, such as George Herbert Mead, Erving Goffman and Fredrik Barth), stressing that identities rest on internal and external dialectic, which is influenced by specific social worlds.

All in all, I believe that identities are primarily constructed, leaving no, or rather little room, for 'natural', pre-assigned identities. Even if they do, each individual negotiates its impact and shapes it according to his or her specificities. On the other hand, I reason that if these 'natural' identities are at the same time the ones that society assigns to a person, this might chase away the scepticism about the degree to which collective identity can be of significant value after all. Thus, I use concepts of individual as well as collective identity, since at least to a certain extent, the importance of the collective identity for people's behaviour patterns should not be overlooked – national or diaspora identities are great examples of that – especially if persistently ascribed by others.

### **2.5.1 *The role of 'place' in the identity discussion***

In the first part of this theoretical chapter, several words have already been dedicated to the debate on the significance of place and space in the transnational processes, since the latter is understood to reconstruct 'place' and 'locality' (Al-Ali & Koser, 2002, p. 4). While some authors (e.g. Castells, 2010, p. 412) advocate that the logic of places becomes absorbed in networks and that positions are defined by flows, I argue slightly differently. If we understand by place "the experience of a particular location with some measure of groundedness (however unstable), sense of boundaries (however permeable) and connection to everyday life, even if its identity is constructed, traversed by power and never fixed" (Escobar, 2001, p. 140), then places still have an important impact on identity construction and are important in people's lives. Friedman (1998, as cited in Armbruster, 2002, p. 32) for instance stresses the crucial impact of place; "where people come from and where they travel to are constitutive of identity". Furthermore, Escobar (2001, p. 140–141) points to the decline of the meaning of place in the age of globalisation and by warning that placelessness, though a feature of the modern condition, is in many cases traumatic experience – as in the case of refugees – he also implies a significant role of the place and its meaning for people. He further also questions the privilege of space over place in the analysis of various phenomena.

This place versus space tension has profound consequences on our understanding of culture, nation, and of course, identity. As Casey (1996, as cited in Escobar, 2001) puts it hardly disputable, "to live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the places one is

in...” (p. 143). Additionally, place also bounds personal cultural identity, according to Tilley (1994, as cited in *Ibid.*), who accurately continues; “geographical experience begins in places, reaches out to others through spaces, and creates landscapes or regions for human existence”. Therefore, geographically speaking, identities are very often allied to territory (Gilroy, 2000, as cited in Carter, 2005, p. 55) and with transnationalism, identities pass through multiple places, which leads to place-polygamy, in Beck’s (2002) words; meaning, that one belongs to many places “in different worlds and cultures” (p. 24). The consequences are that diasporic forms, which emerge, disrupt the balance of territory and identity, or better, the influence of the first on the latter, and thus brings confusion into the links between place, location and consciousness (*Ibid.*). However, place is still important in identity formations, when place is – in relation to identity – most frequently defined in terms of ‘residence’, ‘local area’ and ‘nationality’ (Wangaruro, 2011, p. 11).

A feeling of home and belonging, discussed in greater detail below, can thus also be – and usually is, as shown in the empirical part – geographically defined, and related, for example, to nation or local communities, expressed in people’s answers to the questions like ‘Where do I belong?’ or ‘Where do I feel at home?’ (Fangen, 2007, p. 401). Namely, feeling of home is directly related to the notions of identity and belonging (Armbruster, 2002, p. 18; Wangaruro, 2011, p. 45) and is of significant value especially for refugees. It means “a mystic place of desire ... and cannot be revisited, even if it is possible to return to the territory on which it is inscribed” (Brah, 1996, as cited in Hopkins, 2009, p. 30).<sup>17</sup>

With this section my aim was not to blindly argue in favour of ‘place’, as it was to point out that ‘place’ is still a considerable factor in identity formation and should not be dismissed in such discussions. However, I do believe that its role has been diminished, or rather changed because of the growing dimension of transnational social space in which immigrants are embedded. Due to transnational processes and transnational social spaces, in which this processes incur, dissociation and renewed association of culture and place takes place. Namely, cultural identities are no longer confined to a particular nation-state and places are perceived more as assemblage of connections within wider cultural circuits than as intrinsically bounded entities (Massey, 1992, as cited in Crang *et al.*, 2003). Also, as a consequence, a discussion about multi-local affiliations should replace bipolar/dual belongings and identities (Rouse, 1995, p. 355).

## **2.5.2 National identity**

It is not a coincidence that I have titled and dedicated this part of the thesis only to national identity. Namely, strong or even primary identities have often been associated with national identity and the awareness of the strength and the meaning of national identity is steadily arising. Of all the collective identities in which human beings share today, national identity is according to Smith (1991, p. 143) the most fundamental and inclusive. Other types of collective identities such as class, gender, race, or religion, may overlap or combine with national identity but they rarely succeed in undermining its hold, though they may influence

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<sup>17</sup> For more on the concept of ‘home’, please refer to Chapter 8, section *Home and Belonging*.

its direction. The persistent cling to the importance of national identity and also ethnic identity, explained in the consequent part of the thesis, will be perhaps clearer from the empirical analysis.

The question of what national identity means and what the concept holds is highly debatable and still without a proper consent. It is clearly one type of identity and like any identity it summarises something about who its bearer is – the member of a nation – and what each of them shares. Anthony Smith (2010) is one of many scholars who have tried to answer this question by defining a nation and has therefore helped to explain what members of a nation might share. I have already defined the concept of ‘nation’ in the *Nation-state* section, but for the purpose of this specific discussion on national identity and in order to answer the abovementioned question, I use the updated version of the definition. He describes a nation as “a named human community residing in a perceived homeland, and having common myths and a shared history, a distinct public culture, and common laws and customs for all members” (p. 13). Members of a nation can therefore share a homeland and a history, believe in similar myths, possess common rights and duties, adhere to the same public culture and so on. As members of a nation share such things, their national identity must summarise this fact. Moreover, several authors established that national identity reflects people’s sense of community, belonging, and attachment to one another and to their state, polity, or territory. Therefore, according to Korteweg (2008), national identity can also be a force containing the potential of both, social cohesion and social fracture, as it demarcates those who fall within and those who are excluded from ‘participation’ in the nation-state.

When settling in the host nation-state, immigrants commence with the active construction of their national identity (Mavroudi, 2007). This so-called ‘diasporic’ national identity is thus being actively constructed and ‘invented’. Politicians offer all this, besides officials and intellectuals who use the state’s legitimate powers of coercion and persistently construct nation’s ‘commonalities’. Politicians and officials basically use the state to imply what history, homeland, public culture, etc., members of the nation share. In doing so they are answering the question ‘Who are we?’ and shaping what a national identity offers (Uberoi, 2008, p. 408). Thus, in principle, the bottom line is that the state apparatus acts on behalf of a national ‘we’ (Lechner, 2007, p. 355), which means conscious manipulation with the phenomenon of national identity. This can be achieved through historically situated narratives of shared ethnicity and culture, or alternatively, through notions of shared citizenship practices and membership in a polity (Koopmans *et al.*, 2005, as cited in Banks, 2008, p. 129). Among other things already mentioned, it is also said to give us a sense of “‘place’, continuity, and connectedness by enabling us to situate ourselves within the narrative of the nation” (Gray, 1996, p. 95).<sup>18</sup> However, even though national identities are constructed, “the very fact that they have been used to define the situation of states makes it real in its consequences” (Lechner, 2007, p. 357). Therefore, it is important to recognize that national identities and

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<sup>18</sup> Officials construct national identity with managing national time; fixing national holidays and thus influencing people’s remembering. *Viz.*, it encourages them to feel a sense of belonging and think of home (Westwood & Phizacklea, 2000, p. 6). Additionally, in spirit of adjusting to transnationalism, states are also “re-essentializing their national identity and extending it to their nationals abroad as a way to maintain their loyalty and flow of resources ‘back home’” (Smith, 1999, as cited in *Ibid.*, p. 8).

ways in which they are constructed affect the policies and legal frameworks of nation-states and have consequently vast material implications for people's everyday lives (Gray, 1996, p. 101). So, despite the actual source of national identity, it still has to be framed in the present reality.

Furthermore, a formal statement of membership in a particular nation-state is citizenship and one of the pivotal dimensions of citizenship is identity; the matter of identity that comes with the sense of belonging to or being affiliated with a political community (Kivisto & Faist, 2007, p. 13). Since liberal theory of citizenship mainly stresses its role as a mutual relationship of rights and duties between the state and individuals, republican theory also expects from a citizen to express his/her loyalty to the political community, the nation, and to preserve and promote it (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 205). But citizenship, traditionally claiming priority over other identities, is in tension with the heterogeneity of social life and the multiple identities that arise therefrom. There is, thus, a distinct friction between citizenship and the identities that arise from other aspects of our lives. The issue is that too frequently nations have been conceived of as categories of like individuals – emphasis on sameness – rather than as webs of social relations, leading nationalism to be the enemy of diversity (Calhoun, 1993, p. 387). Actually, it was already back in the sixteenth century Europe, when state structures first cohered and nation-state was offered as an object of devotion, that they coped with ethnic diversity by demanding “exclusive citizenship, border control, linguistic conformity and political obedience” (Cohen, 1996, p. 517).

However, time has passed and the world has changed, as Cohen explains, and “the creation of new transnational linkages and social/cultural spaces has diminished the significance of borders, and altered the shape of those (national) identities that are contained within boundaries, along with the regulatory frameworks and narratives that underpin such constructions” (Spoonley *et al.*, 2003, p. 41). In the same process the space outside and beyond the nation-state opened up for multiple affiliations and associations, which has also allowed a diasporic allegiance to become more open and more accessible (*Ibid.*). Namely, transnational relationship, pervaded with bonds of language, culture, religion and a sense of common history, is “affective, intimate quality that formal citizenship or even long settlement frequently lacks” (*Ibid.*, p. 518), which is also a reason why diasporas usually use nation-states more instrumentally than with great affection. Numerous communities have been arising out of the system of multiple interactions transgressing nation-states' boundaries, which are based on interest – shared opinions, beliefs, tastes, ethnicities, religions, cuisines, etc. – rather than place. Multiple cultures are thus “being syncretised in a complex way” (Perlmutter, 1991, as cited in Cohen, 1996, p. 517), always mixing and matching differently in each setting. With this changes going on, identity reconstruction consequently ‘intimidates’ the nation-states’ assumptions about loyalty and traditional conception of citizenship<sup>19</sup> (Spoonley *et al.*, 2003, p. 41).

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<sup>19</sup> One of the outcomes of transnationalism is also dual national citizenship, which is an evident sign of overlapping membership in two political communities (Bauböck, 2002, as cited in Vertovec, 2001a, p. 575), thus expressing hybridity of belonging to more than one place (Hopkins, 2009, p. 22).

Even though it is largely perceived that migrants' transnational practices and affiliations present challenge to the nation-state – as explained in the previous section – and are “counter-narratives of the nation” (Bhabha, 1990, as cited in Smith & Guarnizo, 2006, p. 5), Smith and Guarnizo (2006, p. 23) have rightly warned against uncritical acceptance of this idea. They pointed out that migrants still very often seek ‘sanctuary’ in a strongly imagined national identity.

### *Belonging*

One of the most important aspects of nations and national identities is the sentiment of national affiliation, or in other words, a sense of belonging to the nation-state (Westwood & Phizacklea, 2000, p. 2). The ideological work of nation-building thus includes a lot of effort and emotional investment into the shaping of national identities and sense of belonging (*Ibid.*, p. 41). Since belonging plays an important part in the discussion about (national) identity and consequently considerable role in the empirical section, I will spend a few words on the concept of (politics of) belonging.

It is widely accepted nowadays, that contemporary migrants have dual citizenship, lead transnational lives and maintain homes in two countries, thus presumably having dual loyalties and feeling of belonging to their homeland (Portes, 1997b). On the other hand Salih (2002, p. 52) warns than transnational relations do not necessarily result in simultaneous belonging to two countries. Instead, she talks about paradox; due to transnational relations migrants can have “a feeling of living in more than one country, but belonging to ‘neither’ place”. This will be possible to better understand from what follows in the thesis, as well as why it is so important not to study belonging merely for academic purposes, but also for policy-makers (Wangaruro, 2011, p. 58).

Moreover, as stated above, the concept of citizenship is based on the feeling of belonging to a community and the desire to share aspirations and beliefs with other people (Lathion, 2008, p. 59). Yuval-Davis (2004, as cited in Nordberg, 2006, p. 525), referring to the communitarian understanding of citizenship as a way of belonging to a community, suggests that belonging is not just about membership, rights, and duties, and it cannot be reduced to identities and identifications, which are about individual and collective narratives of self and other. Instead, it is a deep emotional need of people; it is a sense of being ‘home’ and feeling ‘safe’ (also, Ignatieff, 2001, as cited in Valentine *et al.*, 2009, p. 244).

Furthermore, Yuval-Davis (2006) writes about belonging:

People can ‘belong’ in many different ways and to many different objects of attachments. These can vary from a particular person to the whole of humanity, in a concrete or abstract way; belonging can be an act of self-identification or identification by others, in a stable, contested or transient way. Even in its most stable ‘primordial’ forms, however, belonging is always a dynamic process, not a reified fixity, which is only a naturalized construction of a particular hegemonic form of power relations (p. 199).

He adds that when we talk about belonging, the importance of social and economic locations of each individual, in addition to power relations in society, is very important to consider (also, Hall, 1996, as cited in Armbruster, 2002, p. 19). Thus, positionalities are different, depending

– generally speaking – on historical contexts, and often “fluid and contested” (*Ibid.*). Skrbiš *et al.* (2007, as cited in Phoenix, 2011, p. 314) agree with the latter fact at least, stressing that it is generally agreed that ‘belonging’ is not a static phenomena. People act strategically and relationally in shaping their senses of belonging (Armbruster, 2002, p. 19). Additionally, it is also politically constructed, as other elements of nation-state already discussed above, artificially dividing people on those inside, and others outside, excluded from a specific community (Yuval-Davis, 2008, as cited in Phoenix, 2011, p. 314). This frequently used division on ‘us and them’ is “an integral part of the politics of belonging”, which takes care of this boundary maintenance (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 204) and production of common background, and serves as a source of belonging (Ghorashi, 2004, p. 330). A very important question is what should people feel and possess, or rather what is required from them, as Yuval-Davis (2006, p. 209) puts it, in order to ‘belong’. He also provides us with an interesting answer. In usual cases it is (a myth of) common descent, in some cases also a common culture, religion and/or language. In pluralistic societies, there are also loyalty, solidarity and common values, which are important. Clearly, the answer is manifold, indicating that different projects of politics of belonging expect different levels of belonging – he names social locations, identities and ethnical and political values.

In sum, the politics of belonging “inevitably asserts the intersection of self-identification with hegemonic regulations of identity, such as nation, race, gender, class and religion” (Armbruster, 2002, p. 20).

### **2.5.3 Cultural, ethnic and social identities**

As already established, national identity, though as important as it might be, is only one of the many identities migrants, or people in general, can have and share. Cultural, or ethnic and social identities are another overwhelming and complex concepts that I would like to present in this theoretical framework. In addition to national identity, with which they frequently overlap, they are crucial in understanding the whole identity aspect of transnational migrants. This will enable better understanding of the empirical part, where ‘types’ of identities are intertwined. However, I have to emphasize that this short analysis is not even remotely complete due to space limits on one hand and considerable intricacy of the subject on the other, but I believe that it will suffice for the purpose of this research.

The concept of cultural (and ethnic) identity is, like national identity, often very hard to define and its meaning is discussed by academics from various research fields either narrowly or broadly, but in any case, diversely. As Dahal (1996) puts it, to define an indigenous culture or a culture of a particular group, it is not such a difficult task, but it becomes much more complicated to define a national culture or cultural identity of a nation, especially if a nation is composed of diverse ethnic/clan groups with different language, religion and culture (*Ibid.*). However, the cultural identity of transnational migrants is mixed, rather than coinciding with a particular nation-state, as was already posited. With reference to this, Kofman (2005, p. 454) for instance writes about the right to one’s own culture. Even though admitting that identities remain “particularistic and locally defined and organised”, he implies, by citing Soysal (2000,

as cited in Kofman, 2005), that migrants' identities are based on personhood and less on membership of a national, bounded political community.

Furthermore, in this paragraph I analyse Hall's (1990) line of thought about cultural identity, stressing that there are at least two ways of perceiving 'cultural identity'. The first envisions cultural identity in terms of shared culture, based on common history and ancestry, providing 'us' as 'one people', with fixed frames of reference and meaning. On the other hand, even if it is difficult to see beyond these similarities, it is more realistic to also see the points of differences "which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather – since history has intervened – 'what we have become'" (p. 223). Thus, cultural identity is in this sense a matter of 'being', as well as 'belonging'.<sup>20</sup> It has its own history, but it is not stable; it is a subject of constant change and transformation, due to several processes such as power and influences from other cultures. Hall (1990, p. 225–226) mentions that identity always refers to the past, but we reconstruct the past once we 'recall' it from the present. In this way the past undergoes constant transformation. With this he implies that cultural identities are points of identification, a positioning, as he stresses, and therefore shows that meaning is never complete, it is never fixed.

Moreover, as nation-states build on 'common' national identity, which encompasses 'common' culture, ethnicity<sup>21</sup> as a concept usually also includes meanings such as "belonging, cultural practice, tradition, religion and identity" (Fangen, 2007, p. 401). In fact, according to Hall (1998, as cited in Stephens, 1998, p. 603), the meaning of ethnicity as a source of identity is rising in comparison to nationalism. Ethnicity, commonly understood to be a sense of group belonging grounded in the idea of common ancestry, history, and culture, is thus a strong element of identities, and along with race, gender, and class, matter in how individuals make sense of who they are (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998, as cited in Louie, 2006, p. 364). Or from another perspective, identity and culture are essential for the main projects of ethnicity; "the construction of boundaries and the production of meaning" (Nagel, 2005, p. 153).

Continuing with the definition study, authors like Horowitz (1985, as cited in Chandra, 2006) and many other followers assert that ethnicity is an umbrella concept that includes groups such as tribes, races, nationalities, castes, and thus groups differentiated by colour, religion, and language. Bhugra (2004, as cited in Wangaruro, 2011, p. 57) includes in the concept of ethnicity a common heritage in terms of history, language, but also food and dressing preferences. And when cultures mix, then ethnic identity may also change. Again others, like Chandra (2006), take bolder position, stating that definition should exclude common culture, history, territory or language, because those characteristics are not always associated with *ethnic* identities, and thus cannot be thought of as "defining characteristics". As a result, the author proposes a definition in which ethnic identities are "a subset of identity

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<sup>20</sup> For more on Hall's conceptualization of cultural identity as 'being' and 'belonging', please see section *Second Generation Migrants*.

<sup>21</sup> There are two schools of interpretation as regards the concept of ethnicity; "the primordial underlines the natural and unchangeable quality of ethnicity, whereas the circumstantial underlines the fluid, temporary character of ethnicity" (Fangen, 2007, p. 401). She proposes a theoretical analysis that encompasses cultural practice and geographical belonging, plus ethnic identity, considering fixed, as well as context-dependent quality in combination. For more on this, see the conclusion of the empirical section *Transnational Identity* and 61<sup>st</sup> footnote.

categories in which eligibility for membership is determined by descent-based attributes” (p. 4). Stemming from this, more narrow definition, ethnic identity is for instance being black, as well as being Somali.

Furthermore, what will be extremely useful when reading the empirical part is the explanation of identity narratives or expressions. While ‘I am a...’ implies an identity defined in terms of descent and which is ascribed by others, ‘I feel like an...’ means subjective ethnic definition, such as Somali, or Somali-Dutch (Eriksen, 2002, as cited in Fangen, 2007, p. 401). Thus, as authors on cultural identity also suggest, ethnic identity comprises external as well as internal opinions and processes; or in other words, “individual’s self-identification and outside’s ethnic designations” (Nagel, 1994, as cited in Ruiz Baía, 1999, p. 97; Giddens, 1991, as cited in Kaya, 2005, p. 429).

Last but not least, identity is nowadays more often than not referred to social identities; the ones acquired by membership in specific social categories or organized groups. Wrong (2000, p. 11) lists race, gender, or ethnicity as being the most common groups or categories, since they are normally ascribed at birth. Moreover, ethnicity, language, sexuality, interest and religion are all prominent indicators of social identity – inherent and ascribed, as Hopkins (2009, p. 24) stresses. Those social identities can be closely attached to place, be ‘in harmony’ with nation, conform to a diasporic ethnonationalism, be tied to a rejection of ascribed identity – example of Kurds rejecting Turkish national identity – or transcend nation-states, as religion does (*Ibid.*). However, when people are spanned between multi-local worlds and live transnationally, the conditions for construction and reproduction of social identities get even more complex (Vertovec, 2001a, p. 578). In addition, they are also strongly influenced by their pre-migration social identities – e.g. gender, or class – and “individual, familial and societal value systems and moralities” (Ghosh & Wang, 2003, p. 179).

#### **2. 5. 4 Transnational, hybrid identities**

One of the outcomes of the processes of migration and transnationalism is construction of new identities among migrants – or at least reformulation of old ones in transnational context. The processes challenge the assumption of ‘bounded’ identities, ascribed – or rather shaped and negotiated – within a nation or any other social group, and provide a person with new possibilities for “thinking of the self in relation to nation, place, and community” (Gray, 1996, p. 90). Namely, Gilroy (as cited in *Ibid.*, p. 96) explains that diaspora transcends national boundaries, as in his concept of black Atlantic culture, it transcends nationality and ethnicity and produces a concept of hybrid culture, “a counterculture of modernity”. Clearly, such practices and identities vary depending on individual, since various factors are having an influence on a person, from material, psychological and sociocultural ones.

Furthermore, Ghosh and Wang (2003, p. 278) believe that transnational consciousness is individualistic, dependent on one’s awareness of “self, diaspora and multiple belonging” and that in transnational consciousness an individual ponders his or her involvement in transnational activities. The engagement in the latter also depends on migrant’s pre-migration

identities, as mentioned in the previous section, and on the material circumstances of their family and friends back home (access to telephone, Internet, etc.).

Migrants themselves actually often say that they belong to a “community spanning borders and form organizations that express their identity as a transnational group” (Tsakiri, 2005, p. 102). They relate to the country of origin (because they bring with them their own identities, which were shaped and influenced by the culture, religion, ethnicity, system, etc. in the country in question) and the one of residence (where their identity is reshaped due to processes of adaptation, integration, etc. stimulated in part by the country’s policies), and participate in both spaces (*Ibid.*, p. 102). That is why collective identities of diasporas are so complex and dynamic because they have to adjust a lot, (re)produce themselves, they may also consciously share two ethnic identities, assuming, hybrid identities (Esman, 2009, p. 168; Gray, 1996, p. 90 cites Hall, Gilroy and Clifford). Even though some would expect that migrants cease to identify with their places of origin once they settle in their host country, and develop hybrid identities in order to more easily accommodate, Gray (1996, p. 90) advocates that this is not necessarily so. Hybrid identity, which is signified by transnational identity (Basch *et al.*, 1994), does not automatically imply substitution of national identity with diasporic one and is generally used for the purpose of “undoing binary oppositions”.

In conclusion, it is clear that modern states are being compelled to accept that their roles have changed, as well as the nature of their so-called ‘homogeneous’ societies and people’s identities. As I have tried to show, the process of transnationalism also modified the concept of identity, how it is shaped, constructed and imagined. Namely, within newly created transnational social spaces identities and cultures are being negotiated anew. Boyarins’ (1993, as cited in Clifford, 1994) passage aptly captures the essence of diasporic identities, stating: “Diasporic cultural identity teaches us the cultures are not preserved by being protected from “mixing” but probably can only continue to exist as a product of such mixing. Cultures, as well as identities, are constantly being remade...” (p. 323). As identities are changing, people also conceive of themselves differently through time.

## 2.6 Second Generation Migrants

The essence of transnationalism is, as I have explained, to perform and maintain transnational practices and (collective) identities of migrant populations. However, those practices and identities are having a great impact also on the lives of transmigrants’ offspring, the so-called second generation migrants (Vertovec, 2001b, p. 11). Thus, the study of second generation migrants – refugees in case in question – and how they experience transnational life and use this orientation to situate themselves, is of special interest of this thesis. In a way, it is also of a significant value, since systematic studies of second generation transnationalism are relatively recent<sup>22</sup> (Levitt & Waters, 2002, as cited in Lee, 2004, p. 248) and as Portes stated

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<sup>22</sup> Research on the second generation migrants has been firstly mainly focused on the United States (US-born children of Mexican and Asian immigrants) (Quirke *et al.*, 2009, p. 6) but more recently, there has also been a growing interest in European second generation (Quirke *et al.*, 2009, references Crul & Vermeulen, 2003; Thomson & Crul, 2007; Wessendorf, 2007), although largely approached from the framework of assimilation

(1997b, p. 814), an important “strategic research site”, interest of which is still growing. Namely, the host country is more dependent on the fate of the second than the first generation, since the former will basically turn the scales as regards linguistic shifts, enclaves, ethnic inter-marriages, etc. (*Ibid.*).

### **2. 6. 1 Strength of the second generation transnational ties**

The lives of second generation migrants are expected to be less directly tied to their (parents’) homeland, which raises questions about the transnational involvement of second generation youth (Somerville, 2008, p. 23) and points to another part of my research. Namely, while some admit that transnational activism may be important for the first generation, they predict that these ties are temporary and will disappear among transmigrants’ children. Thus, with the exception of those who maintain that transnationalism will carry on and continue for several generations (e.g. Basch *et al.*, 1994), the mainstream position goes that it is highly unlikely that the children of immigrants will be involved in their ancestral homes in the same ways and with the same intensity as their parents (Portes, 1997b, p. 814).

An important factor that should not be dismissed in this discussion is the fact that the majority of those children have been raised in households, greatly entangled in transnational practices and relations, imbued with transnational identity, or in other words, they were raised in a transnational social field. Thus, even those who express little interest in their roots have the knowledge and skills to activate these values and identities if and when they decide to do so (Kasinitz *et al.*, 2008, as cited in Levitt, 2009, p. 1225). It might be as Levitt (2004) argues, that at critical stages in their lives, these individuals may activate the potential contacts and identities available to them and become transnational activists. Although they might not be fluent in their parents’ language for instance, they are still directly or indirectly in touch with daily references to homeland ideology, identity, affection, etc. (Levitt, 2009, p. 1231). Therefore, we should not overlook the potential effects of being raised in a transnational social field (e.g. on socialisation and social networks) and in specific social contexts (e.g. family and ethnic enclaves) (*Ibid.*, p. 1226). The family context for instance influences the transnational practices and orientations of the second generation, since it is in this context that children get primarily socialized (Gecas, 2000).

Nonetheless, I believe that instead of discounting the role of the second generation, transnational studies need to take the potential role of this ‘pool of participants’ into account and study how second generation Somalis are experiencing this kind of transnational life of their parents and how it is reflected in their every day lives and identities. Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004, p. 1010) suggest that we can do this by differentiating between ‘ways of being’ and ‘ways of belonging’ in a transnational space. ‘Ways of being’ refer to the actual social relations and practices in which individuals engage, whereas ‘ways of belonging’ refer to an identity and a connection to a homeland through memory, nostalgia or imagination, but also in combination with concrete actions like dress or flag. Thus, “ways of belonging combine

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and integration. In comparison to the established US-based research, European one focused more on ‘national context’ (*Ibid.*, p. 7–8).

action and an awareness of the kind of identity that action signifies” (*Ibid.*). One might be engaged in transnational field of being but not belonging or vice versa. They may have a lot of contacts, eat Somali food, but do not feel any belonging to their homeland (*Ibid.*).

As I have explained, several authors have shown that second generation migrants can experience transnationalism through practice (Itzigsohn *et al.*, 1999; Portes *et al.*, 1999). Even if they are not engaged in actual practices, they still experience a symbolic meaning out of dual frame of reference. Viruell-Fuentes (2006) for instance argues that transnationalism provides first generation immigrants – in the case of Mexican women – with emotional support and sense of belonging; both being very important for them to integrate into the host society. Similarly, it also provides second generation Mexican Americans with the needed cultural resources for the construction of ethnic identity in the US,<sup>23</sup> which is in Louie’s (2006) opinion more relevant for the second generation experience. These points are crucial, since they indicate the influence of transnationalism on the identity formation of transmigrants, which in consequence enables them to have their ‘homes’ close to them and to feel a sense of pride when knowing their origin and their culture.

First generation immigrants are usually dependant on relationships with the people of the same background, often because of the language barrier. On the other hand, the second generation has fewer contacts with the same ethnic or linguistic background (Wimmer, 2004). In general, only a small number of the second generation retains strong ties to the homeland and as Lee (2004, p. 248) suggest, specifically when involved in nation-building process. In any case, the identities of the first, second and subsequent generations vary and produce their own “mixities” (Bruneau, 2010, p. 47) under the influence of numerous reference points, or better, identities, from various sides. Thus, they are creating ‘new ethnicities’ – being typical for transnational youth – because, as stated above, their primary socialization takes place within diverse cultural fields and they select and mix different parts of cultures and identities (Vertovec, 1999, p. 451).

## **2. 6. 2 Assimilation versus transnationalism**

As indicated above, European countries have been very much occupied with the questions related to the second generation and their assimilation/integration into the host society. Namely, “the crux of the process of socio-cultural assimilation comes not in the first, but in the second generation” (Portes, 1999, p. 470), since first generation migrants are more likely to keep their identities, language and cultural preferences. For their descendants this is not so straightforward and that makes Portes (*Ibid.*) stating that the real question is not whether second generation migrants will assimilate, but rather to what extent and to what sector of society they will. This line of thought is congruent with the assimilation debate whose proponents – of the classic approach – believe that transnational migration is “an ephemeral first generation phenomenon” (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1005). What is certain is that

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<sup>23</sup> In case of Muslim immigrants in Europe for example, Joppke (1998) notices that Islam is *the* identity to recourse to, especially in the case of “outcast second- or third-generation immigrants, who have no job, no education, no legitimate membership in the national community (p. 37).

the first generation, whose identity is imbued with “collective histories of nation and culture” (Hyndman & Walton-Roberts, 2000, p. 256), memories of forced displacement and violent loss, will not just simply forget their roots and past happenings once arriving in the host country. Their lives are spanned across borders and by acting transnationally in the household, their children will be under a strong influence to preserve at least a part of that transnational practices and identities.

Furthermore, transnationalism has evidently spurred much research on how we think of nation-states, borders, culture, global civil society, communities, identity and above all, assimilation/integration. It has provoked the debate opened in the previous paragraph; some authors assert that transnational ties stand in opposition to assimilation, which is also prediction of classical assimilation theories, and produce instead cultural hybrid identities (see, for example, Clifford, 1994). As for host countries, it is in the end depended on:

the extent and manner in which the many dimensions of the integration process are addressed including the societies’ acceptance of cultural diversity, the level of interaction between migrants and the local population, the extent and pace at which foreigners have to adapt to their new environment as well as the degree of adjustment required by the host communities. These elements affect and shape governments’ policies towards migrants’ incorporation into their societies (Tsakiri, 2005, p. 103).

However, other authors disagree by stating that assimilation/integration into a host society and transnational connections with family who usually share religious or ethnic identity “can occur at the same time and reinforce one another” (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004, p. 1003; Schans, 2009, p. 1167). Moreover, maintenance of collective identity of the second generation does not necessarily prevents the process of assimilation/integration and as Faist (2000, p. 212) argues, “unlike language, which changes in a linear fashion – the longer you stay, the better you tend to speak it – collective self-identities vary significantly over time”. When researching immigrants in the United States, Levitt and Waters (2002), and Portes (2003) found out that transnational practices actually supplement immigrant’s efforts to integrate, and thus deny mutual exclusiveness of this two phenomena. Portes (2003) also states that the second generation may benefit from their parent’s transnational activities and their own – even though likely limited – because transnationalism provides the resources for the “successful integration of second generation youths into the host society” (p. 889) and presents a counterweight of sometimes assertive assimilation processes.

I will conclude this section with examples of actual case studies on the relation of transnationalism with assimilation/integration process. Engbersen *et al.* (2003, as cited in Muller, 2008, p. 391) for instance researched immigrants’ integration into the Dutch society – though not explicitly of the second generation – finding that the effect of transnational ties maintained by immigrants has rather neutral effect on the host society. Additionally, judging on the basis of second generation youth in the US (volume edited by Levitt and Waters, 2002), assimilation tendencies can coexist with strong engagement in the transnational social field. These and many more findings of people maintaining ties to their homelands show simultaneous integration into the host societies.

### 3 Profile of Somalia and Migration to the Netherlands

With the following chapter my aim is to provide the information regarding the background and context of migration of Somalis to the Netherlands, which is in my believe necessary for further – and better – understanding, especially of the empirical chapter. Thus, I chose to include wide-ranging information, commencing with the historical overview of Somalia, scanning through the developments in the time frame between the beginning of colonisation and current situation in the country. With the presentation of the past and present situation in Somalia, my aim is to explain the considerable importance of the motives behind the massive out-migration of Somalis. I continue with brief exploration of the three main characteristics – based on my study and personal judgement – of Somali society, being religion, use of khat and the phenomena of clan structure. By that I aspire to additionally provide the necessary information in order to understand certain social relations among Somalis. After describing the context and circumstances from which the Somalis flee from, and some of the main features of the Somali society, I take a closer look at their migration patterns, in order to properly understand the many difficulties they had to overcome in search for a better life in another country. Hence, the chapter then turns its course to migration, focusing on Somali's long history of mobility. Before the last section when the position of Somali's in the Netherlands is analysed, I take a look at the Netherlands' history of receiving immigrants and the way of dealing with the situation through policies and laws. Last but not least, I finally focus on the Netherlands as the destination country of the Somalis, who are at the heart of my study. Namely, before undertaking the reading of the empirical chapter, I believe that one more context is essential to comprehend; how does the Netherlands regulate the fields of immigration and integration, and what are the consequent impacts for the Somalis in question. This is a crucial constituent element of the framework that I would like to present in this part of the thesis, with the purpose of setting the necessary ground and thus enabling better understanding of the following discussions, especially about Somalis' everyday practices and identities. As already mentioned, I have focused mainly on the details that are necessary for further understanding of the thesis and especially those, which came up in the interviews.

#### 3.1 Brief History of Somalia

The purpose of this particular section is to elucidate the conflicts-related circumstances in the country of Somalia and their consequences for the people living there. It is of crucial importance to highlight the fact that general instability in Somalia lies as the primary reason behind numerous Somali asylum seekers around the world, also those currently living in the Netherlands and on whom this research is based on. Joly (as cited in Koser, 2002) for instance also argues that social interaction of refugees and their way of group creation in the receiving society have to be analysed “in relation to their position within and *vis-à-vis* the structure of conflict in the society of origin” (p. 151). What is more, it is of crucial importance to examine “conditions of displacement from a country that represents ‘home’” (Hyndman & Walton-

Roberts, 2000, p. 248), since this enables us to understand migrants' experiences and generally their behaviour in the Dutch context.

### **3.1.1 Formation of present-day Somalia**

Contemporary Somalia was formed in July 1960, when former British protectorate (in the North) and the Italian colony (in the South) merged and formed Somali Republic (Van Heelsum & Hessels, 2005, p. 89) with Mogadishu as the capital and thus "southern-dominated" (Griffiths, 2003, p. 3). This union was perceived as a first step towards reunion of all five Somali territories as reflected in the five-pointed star on the Somali flag (Kleist, 2004, p. 4). This new republic formed a democratic parliament and government, the latter being established by the representatives of the two former colonies. *Alas*, the period of freedom and democratic order was short-lived, since the government was not able to sustain stability of institutions (Won Hong, 2009, p. 117).

In 1969, the time of notorious Chief Commander of the Army, Major General Mohamed Siad Barre came, after the first president was killed and he, with the help of his cohorts, prepared a *coup d'état* and established a military dictatorship (Won Hong, 2009, p. 117; Kleist, 2004, p. 4). During his rule he prohibited any reference to clans (Kleist, 2004, p. 5), even though he was at the same token the one manipulating with clan affiliations and working in advantage of his clan and its members (Lewis, 1994, as cited in Kleist, 2004, p. 5; Griffiths, 2003, p. 4). Due to his "authoritarian socialistic rule" (CIA, 2011) and oppression, numerous Somalis fled the country and sought asylum elsewhere. After the Northern Frontier District became a part of Kenya and inhabitants of French Somaliland decided for their own independent nation-state (Djibouti) (Kleist, 2004, p. 5), Barre engaged in a war against Ethiopian Ogaden in 1977, being partly motivated by the idea of Greater Somalia (Hesse, 2010a, p. 247). However, the Somali army had been defeated and what followed were years of corruption, repression and militarism (Wolf, 2011, p. 2). When two decades of this regime passed, Barre's rule broke down into the civil war with numerous clan militias fighting and trying to take control over Somalia (Won Hong, 2009, p. 117).



**Figure 1: Empirical partitions of Somalia (late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century).** Source: *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2011).

### 3.1.2 *After the Barre regime*

In 1991, after many bloody years, thousands of people dead and wounded, Barre had to flee the country due to population uprisings and a definitive fragmentation of Somalia began (Kleist, 2004, p. 7; Griffiths, 2003, p. 2). What is more, Somalia also lost its appeal in the sense of strategic value in the eyes of the US foreign policy and other Western countries after the cold war. They slowly ended their “economic support, credits and aid programmes” (Kleist, 2004, p. 7) and attention drifted away from Somalia (*Ibid.*). The United Nations (UN) intervention led by the US, called Restore Hope, was also a total failure in terms of long-term effects, since constant unrests continued to hinder economic and social development of the country and creation of effective central government (Van Heelsum & Hessels 2005, p. 2; Kleist, 2004, p. 8). Therefore, the year 1991 meant the start of anarchy – ‘failed state’ – and devastation. Despite several attempts to restore order and functioning of the state, all of them failed at the end (Møller, 2009, p. 1).

Since then, millions of Somalis had to find a refuge in other countries around the world and they were unable to reconstitute their identity and the institutions (Won Hong, 2009, p. 117). In addition, the Northern part – former British protectorate – or The Somali National Movement (SNM)<sup>24</sup> in particular, had unilaterally declared its independence, named itself Somaliland and introduced a parliamentary system (Kleist, 2004, p. 7). Soon after that, different legislatures, languages, administrations and regional disparities between the north and the south started to appear (Griffiths, 2003, p. 3). However, until now, not a single government has recognized Somaliland despite their efforts to establish “constitutional democracy, including holding municipal, parliamentary, and presidential elections” (CIA, 2011) and despite the fact that there has been relatively peaceful since 1997 (ACCORD, 2009, p. 5). At the very Horn of Somalia, there is also a semi-autonomous state of Puntland with self-governance since 1998 and no attempt of achieving independence, since it sees itself in the future as one of the Somali federal states (CIA, 2011).

### 3.1.3 *Involvement of Islamic groups and the current situation*

In 1995 UN troops withdrew from Somalia – primarily the South – after two years of humanitarian efforts and suffering of severe casualties. However, the disorder was still very much present. In 2000 the Transitional National Government (TNG) was formed but it failed to establish proper governing institutions and security. As a consequence, government of Kenya, under the auspice of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), led the peace process, resulting in the election of Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed as President of second interim government, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of the Somali Republic in 2004 (CIA, 2011). The main foes of the government were/are several diverse Islamist groups, but probably the most notorious and fearsome among them is *Al-Shabaab* (“The Youth”), which can be typified as brutal Islamist militias, struggling against Ethiopian imperialism and proclaiming *jihād* against the (Christian) invaders (Møller, 2009, p. 2). In 2006 conflicts

<sup>24</sup> SNM was founded in London in 1981 as a resistance movement based on Isaaq clan, which spoke and acted against the Barre regime (Lewis, 1994, as cited in Kleist, 2004, p. 7).

erupted between the militia loyal to the Sharia-based Islamic Courts Union (ICU) – now called Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) formed by those various Islamist groups – and The Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counterterrorism (ARPCT), consisting of secular warlords. The former were more successful, conquering areas in South and Central Somalia with the purpose of establishing Sharia-based courts and implementing Sharia. In the meantime, refugees around the world and UN acknowledged the Somali government in exile, which returned to Mogadishu in 2007 with the help of Ethiopian troops (Wolf, 2011, p. 2). There were additional turning points in the years of 2008 and 2009; the President of the TFG resigned, Ethiopian forces deployed in 2006 withdrew from the country (Møller, 2009, p. 1) after the creation of a TFG-ARS unity government in Djibouti (CIA, 2011), and the President permitted the implementation of Sharia (Wolf, 2011, p. 4).

Stemming from what has been said, it might come as no surprise that for the last four years Somalia has been positioned as the first on the Foreign Policy's Failed States Index (Dickinson, 2011). It thus seems as this is a never-ending condition of political and humanitarian disaster and that there are no effective solutions on the horizon, also due to the unwillingness of the international community to take necessary measures in order to improve the situation. Besides Islamist militant groups, who are mainly controlling the country, pirates are carefully guarding along the coast, trying to catch passing ships and extort huge amounts of money out of the crew (Dickinson, 2010). As a consequence of explained 'men-made' reasons, people are fleeing the country and dying also as a result of the drought and famine which struck Somalia once again in summer 2011. Thus, even though people, especially in Southern Somalia, were – and still are – in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, armed groups, such as radical Al-Shabaab, have restricted the access of such help (Refugees International, 2011). People are therefore struggling to flee their country and find safe haven somewhere else, first stop being Kenya, where on average thousand Somali refugees arrive in the Dadaab refugee camp every day (Maigua, 2011). Somalia thus remains a 'refugee-producing' nation (Hopkins, 2010).

However, in June 2011, there were some promising steps taken from the side of national troops and UN–African Union (AU) joint peacekeeping mission (AMISOM), since they managed to gain significant parts of territory in Mogadishu (UN Security Council, 2011a, p. 1). From August 2011 struggles were also made for adoption of transitional federal institutions (UN Security Council, 2011b, p. 1). As for (too) many years other countries were shutting their eyes to what has been happening in Somalia, because of the lack of political or economic interests on their sides, the latest relations in the international community might change that. Namely, *The Guardian* has reported in February that Great Britain offered their security and humanitarian assistance, and hence set a terrain for future business in the energy industry, since Somalia is the seventh largest oil rich nation (Townsend & Abdinasir, 2012). Still, this does not necessarily proclaim amelioration of circumstances in the country.

## 3. 2 Religion, Clans and Khat

### 3. 2. 1 Religion

In Somalia people are predominantly Muslims – a small community of Christians is present (Encyclopaedia of the Nations, 2011) – and alongside clanship, Islam is the basic element of their culture and national identity. It is also written in the Transnational Charter of the Transitional government, that Islam is the state religion, due to their history of being Muslims (Encyclopaedia of the Nations, 2011). According to Van Heelsum (2011b, p. 5), the first Muslim community developed already in the 7<sup>th</sup> century along the coast, as a result of their trade with the Middle East, and the minority among them was also involved in spreading the religious life within the Somali community (Lewis, 2002, as cited in Heelsum, 2011b, p. 5).

Traditionally Somalis follow the liberal version of Islam, called the Sunni Sha’afi School, and their ancestors were of the Qurayshitic lineage of the Prophet Muhammad (Encyclopedia of the Nations, 2011). The majority adheres to the Qadiriya-stream, which promotes a moderate Islam. But there is also more radical, minority stream, called Salihya-stream, having contacts with Wahabi teachers (Van Heelsum, 2011b, p. 5). However, Somalia is just another case where Islam has once again become politicized, where new Muslim schools developed and consequently new movements, such as Al-Shabaab were born. But these kinds of movements develop in distinct ways in Somalia, since membership of religious stream and clan membership interacts (*Ibid.*, p. 6).

In The Netherlands a great majority of Somalis – 95% households – perceive themselves as Muslims, and 69% of them pray five times per day (Dourleijn & Dagevos, 2011). While for older Somalis clan affiliation is more important, their children mainly identify with being Muslim, rather than with adherence to a particular clan (Moors *et al.*, as cited in Wolf, 2011, p. 9). These findings will also be interesting to compare to my empirical research and possibly draw some parallels.

### 3. 2. 2 Clans

Somalis like to stress that they stand out in Africa as being a unique example of ethnic homogeneity and having a common religion and language. However, thereby they underestimate the ethnic and linguistic diversity, as well as the role of clan networks (Griffiths, 2003, p. 3).<sup>25</sup> As Van Heelsum (2011b) notes, “social relations in Somalia are built around a heaped system of family- and (sub)clan relations” (p. 2), or following ACCORD (2009), “the Somali kinship structure is based on an agnatic lineage type, known as clan” (p. 7). These citations clearly explain the very essence of Somali society, people’s mutual relations and their political and social life. Persons thus belong to a particular clan, depending on the ancestor from whom he or she stems. The heritage of clans is extremely important in Somali community and it means that a person belongs to a “system of kinship relations” (Van Heelsum, 2011b, p. 2) within which he or she has certain rights and obligations.

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<sup>25</sup> Refer to Chapter 5, section *First impressions and thoughts*, where Fathia, one of the respondents, accordingly expresses her view.

The Somali population is divided into two genealogical groupings – inhabiting distinct geographical locations: the Saab (mostly crop farmers) and Samale (predominantly nomadic cattle breeders) (Van Heelsum, 2011b, p. 3). The first grouping consists of two clans, which amounts to around 20% of all ethnic Somalis, while Samale clans share cultural and linguistic ties and present around 75% of all ethnic Somalis, consisting of three to four [depends on who you ask (ACCORD, 2009)] main clan families. Clan divisions do not stop at sub-clans but go all the way down to the household level (Hesse, 2010a, p. 249). Since ‘outsiders’ usually see this system of clans as extremely complex, it offers a source of identification and support, which is crucial in insecure environments (Griffiths, 2003, p. 11), and it is very practical and clear when it comes to migration. However, it is also a source of distrust and potential danger from other clans (Kleist, 2008a, p. 313), as well as division in Somalia and in migration associations (*Ibid.*, p. 314).

Furthermore, it is relevant to mention that clan identity in case of Somalis basically corresponds to ethnic identity “in many instances of violence” as Platt (2009, p. 14) advocates, and explains that ethnicities or national identities are not ancient or absolute, but rather social constructions. Elites do the construction as they please in order to serve them for their political ends. This is the case especially after the colonial period when the clanship surfaced again as a “political organisation and identification” (Griffiths, 2003, p. 3), despite several attempt of its suppression. Clan divisions, which gained in significance in the early 1990s (Menkhaus, 2004, as cited in Platt, 2009), are thus constructed by social processes and liable to manipulation and changes, depend on agencies and social conditions at the time (Griffiths, 2003).

### **3. 2. 3 Khat**

Khat is a drug in the shape of a leaf of a bush, grown in specific parts of Somalia, Kenya and Yemen, and is widely used among Somali working men. Most commonly it is used in Somalia, Djibouti, Somaliland, Kenya and Ethiopia (Green, 1999, p. 35). Its effects are similar to those of amphetamines (Wolf, 2011, p. 13; Patel *et al.*, 2005, p. 1) or alcohol and coca leaves, since consumers feel cheerful and alert at the beginning, without any tension or pain. Later effects include sleeplessness, depression, confused day and night rhythm, and as Green (1999) puts it, “disassociation from the pain of reality” (p. 34). There is a thin and unclear line between occasional usage and addiction.

Since khat is mind-alerting drug, The Messenger in The Holy Quran condemns it, which makes its use in Islamic Somali societies unusual. Notwithstanding, it is deeply rooted in Somali culture and thus one of the things central to one’s – predominantly male – social self-definition. Unfortunately it is at the same time also perceived to be the main cause of abandonment and abuse, resulting in frequent divorces among Somalis – albeit no statistics exist to support this (Green, 1999).

Somalia’s traumatic history of war has left scars on many individuals, which is also reflected in their use of khat. Since Somali women everywhere are reported to passionately oppose the use of khat (Green, 1999, p. 42), it is according to one of my interviewees more and more common among Somali women in diaspora as well – in this case in the

Netherlands. Wolf (2011) also confirms my information by stating that in the Netherlands, khat is ever more commonly used among unemployed men, women and young people. For Somali users of khat it is quite convenient living in the Netherlands, since “the possession, trade and production of the khat plant are legal in the Netherlands and come under Commodities Act” (*Ibid.*, p. 13), being the second only country besides the UK where import of khat is legal. However, through various ways the Netherlands is also striving to reduce the number of khat addicts.

### 3.3 History of Migration: Somalis on the Move

People originating from Somalia are among the most scattered people in the world (Van Heelsum, 2011b). According to Gundel (2002), migration is typical for Somali nomadic culture, which is depicted by a “subsistence economy, trade to procure necessities not domestically produced, and transhumance to adapt to cycles of climate in search of ‘green pastures’” (p. 262). Besides migration within the country or intercontinental migration, Somalis largely migrated to Arab countries and colonial states for various purposes, including trade, family movements, pastoralism and education (Goldsmith, 1997; Greenfield, 1987, as cited in Kleist, 2004, p. 4). Until the 1960s it was mainly men who migrated overseas, while women were moving between neighbouring countries dealing with trade, nomadic pastoralism or family-related matters (*Ibid.*).

The roots of contemporary forced migration in and from Somalia lie in “former colonial divisions, clan conflict and fierce competition over the economic and political resources of the post-colonial state” (Griffiths, 2003, p. 2), and in drought and flooding, adding to great famine and displacement of the population (*Ibid.*). Since the 1960s Somalia was struggling with the weak economy and political institutions, extreme militarisation and among other things, with the dictatorship of Siad Barre. During his leadership plenty of unpopular and destructive moves were taken – such as economic nationalisation and the military defeat in the Ogaden war – that, alongside disastrous drought in 1974, threatened the country (*Ibid.*). Consequently, a lot of<sup>26</sup> Somali workers – usually well-educated ones, looking for better employment – went to Arabic, oil producing countries (Gundel, 2002, p. 263).

Furthermore, from being a refugee-receiving country in the 1970s,<sup>27</sup> situation soon took its turn in 1988 and escalated through the 1990s into the new millennium. Namely, a large exodus of around 600,000 Somalis fled the North-western part of the country to Ethiopia (Gundel, 2002; Al-Sharmani, 2007) and Djibouti when the civil war started in 1988 in Northern Somalia (Somaliland). Out migration continued massively – 1 million according to estimations (Gundel, 2002, p. 264) – in 1991 when Barre regime collapsed and civil war spread to the whole country (Moret *et al.*, 2006). This time the situation was reversed; Somalis started

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<sup>26</sup> The numbers were estimated to be between 150,000 and 200,000 at the beginning of the 1970s, almost doubling in a few years time (Gundel, 2002, p. 263-264).

<sup>27</sup> Due to Ogaden war in 1977 and humanitarian crisis, numerous ethnic Somalis from Ethiopian Ogaden region tried to find refuge in Somalia (Waldron & Hasci, 1995, as cited in Gundel, 2002, p. 264). Ironically, before the civil war, Somalia hosted one of the biggest refugee populations in Africa (*Ibid.*).

to flee to Ethiopian Ogaden region. Poorer ones went mainly to Kenya, Djibouti, Egypt, South Africa, whilst the better-off usually went further to Western countries (Al-Sharmani, 2007; Gundel, 2002). Finally, around 2 million remained in Somalia as internally displaced (IDPs) (Griffiths, 2003, p. 17). Those initially migrated due to fightings and drought between 1991 and 1993, but later on they were forced to move mainly out of food scarcity and insecurity reasons, and due to widespread flooding between 1997 and 1998. Because of the conflicts in Southern Somalia in 1998, 25,000 people fled; around 10,000 went to Yemen by boat but for hundreds of them the journey ended before reaching the coast. In 1999 conflicts continued and another 50,000 fled to Kenya, Ethiopia, or to the capital of Mogadishu (Griffiths, 2003, p. 19).

The situation has not improved until the year of 2009, – except for the regions of Somaliland and Puntland, where the situation remained stable – in fact, the state of affairs kept deteriorating without any foreseeable solution. By the end of 2009, there were around 1.5 million people displaced and some 678,000 asylum-seekers. In addition, medical or any other assistance was not possible due to insecure circumstances, violence targeted also towards humanitarian workers and conscious refusal of any relief assistance by armed groups (UNHCR, 2010).

As of January 2011, the number of registered refugees from Somalia was 770,154, besides 22,839 asylum-seekers (UNHCR, 2011), presenting the third largest refugee group in the world, or rather, under UNHCR (United Nations High Commissionaire for Refugees) responsibility. It might be important also to bear in mind that undocumented migrants are (usually) not listed in the statistics, meaning even greater number of Somalis living outside Somalia. In any case, they are amongst the largest refugee population in the world, constituting dispersed but big and important diaspora around the globe. Besides mainly settling in neighbouring countries, they also migrated to the UK – currently hosting the largest number of Somalis in the West (Al-Sharmani, 2007, p. 2) – and Italy with which they used to have colonial ties, to countries where they had employment opportunities (the Gulf States) and countries considered as ‘lands of milk and honey’; the Netherlands, Scandinavian countries and Canada (Moret *et al.*, 2006). Somalis are therefore scattered from Africa and Middle East, to Australia, Europe and North America.

It is relevant to stress the important role of those first migrants who went to UK, Italy and other Western countries, because they enabled the creation of networks that more or less determined the later movements of large number of refugees (Gundel, 2002, p. 266). Subsequently, asylum-seekers fled to those countries where Somali communities were already established. This rich history of migration, albeit primarily due to forced exodus, sketched an interesting settlement pattern of Somalis. Many of them also do not settle in the first country of arrival, but they migrate further to another country. Perfect example of this is high rate of migration of Somalis from the Netherlands to the UK, which Van Heelsum (2011b) labelled as “extreme migratory behaviour”<sup>28</sup> (p. 2).

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<sup>28</sup> More on the large waves of Somalis migrating from the Netherlands to the UK, see section *Somalis in the Netherlands*.

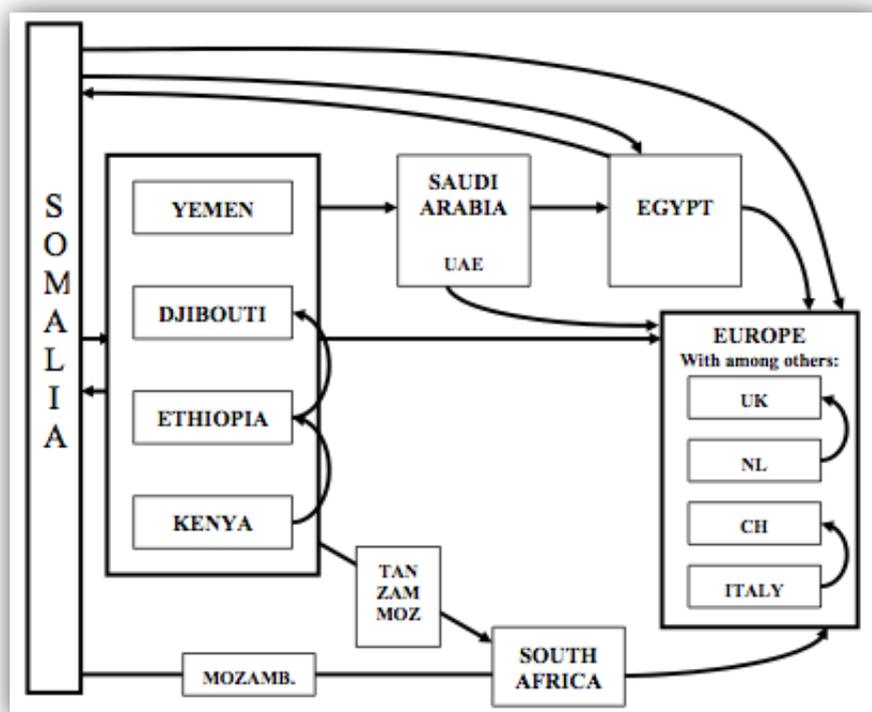


Figure 2: Frequent patterns of movements of Somali refugees. Source: Moret *et al.* (2006, p. 89).

In their study, Moret *et al.* (2006) indicate migration as a process of moving by delineating frequent patterns of movement and main trajectories of Somali refugees on the basis of interviews with Somalis in eight countries. As is possible to discern from the study, Somalis usually decide to migrate from Somalia to neighbouring countries, such as Kenya, Yemen, Djibouti and Ethiopia. Thus confirming that South-South migration is the dominant form of migration in Africa (Schapendonk, 2011). However, a few of those better educated and wealthier usually continue their journey further on to Europe, North America or other Western countries and reach – some of them – the ending stage of migration. Those ‘routes’ on the upper picture do not do justice to all the Somalis who undertook the journeys since it is immensely important to point out that trajectory threshold is difficult to overcome or have influence on it and that trajectories are changing depending on circumstances (*Ibid.*). Namely, the place of destination is mostly unclear and insecure, since most refugees are not well informed about the country they are headed to (Van Heelsum, 2011b). Therefore, “trajectories as spatial routes connecting places of origin and places of desired destination constrain or facilitate the movement of the potential immigrant” (Van der Velde & Van Naerssen, 2011, p. 6).

Since Somalis have been fleeing the country for over two decades now, host countries are fatigued of their applications and governments perceive them as being economically motivated rather than in dire need of protection, which leads to inadequate assistance and acts of harassment and hostility towards them. Those are just a few reasons why more recently some decide to take another step in reaching one of the most common destinations among Western countries mentioned above. In 2009 a Working Group was established within UNHCR (2010) to identify the drivers of such journeys in order to mitigate risky and

preventable onward movements. They found out that the routes taken by many Somalis are tough, hazardous and many times deadly, frequently with the ‘assistance’ of smugglers. However, once they manage to reach their destination they offer the support to their family members in Somalia or other neighbouring countries through remittances. Different means of communication, such as Internet and telecommunications enable them to maintain the relations with their relatives in Somalia or around the world (Griffiths, 2003, p. 23), as will be possible to clearly see from the cases of my respondents in the empirical parts of the thesis.

### 3.4 Migration to the Netherlands

Besides understanding the circumstances from where the Somalis escaped from, it is also important to be familiar with the context they fled to. The Netherlands has a long tradition of immigration, history of cultural diversity and religious beliefs. Besides this, wealth, relative freedom and political and economic factors attracted numerous immigrants to the Netherlands (Hoogveld, 2000). Last year, around 20% of the total Dutch population were immigrants or had at least one parent who was born abroad. The four prior years show a similar, but rising pattern. As can be seen from Table 1, approximately half of those have non-western background and the number of both groups is slowly increasing. This can be explained by a combination of immigration and relatively high birth rate.

**Table 1: Number of immigrants in the Netherlands based on their background. Source: CBS (2011).**

	2007	2009	2011
Total population	16 357 992	16 485 787	16 655 799
Dutch background	13 187 586	13 198 081	13 228 780
Foreign background <sup>29</sup>	3 170 406	3 287 706	3 427 019
Non-western background	1 738 452	1 809 310	1 899 245
Western background (excluding Dutch)	1 431 954	1 478 396	1 527 774
Total Africa	521 672	543 649	577 242
Total America	580 877	598 936	621 336
Total Asia	708 935	726 646	747 034
Total Europe (excluding Dutch)	1 339 242	1 398 450	1 460 931
Total Oceania	19 680	20 025	20 476

After the Second World War immigrants can be, according to Zorlu and Hartog (2001, p. 2), roughly distinguished into three groups: immigrants from former Dutch colonies (e.g. Indonesia and Surinam), guest worker recruitment countries (e.g. Morocco and Turkey) and in recent times also refugees (e.g. from Somalia). Since The Netherlands has been able to maintain high standard of living throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the prosperity

<sup>29</sup> A person of whom at least one parent was born abroad (CBS, 2011).

in the 1960s turned the Netherlands into an immigration surplus country and thus a magnet for immigrants<sup>30</sup> (Dieleman, 1993, as cited in Hoogveld, 2000, p. 105; Zorlu & Hartog, 2001, p. 2). However, such a globalised world of free mobility of labour was apparently ‘threatening’ the welfare of the Netherlands, so the government decided to respond with banning labour migration in 1973 and tightening its immigration policy, focusing on family reunion and formation (Zorlu & Hartog, 2001). Many labour migrants therefore tried/try by applying for a refugee status, which is also one of the reasons why the number of applications increased (Houtzager & Rodrigues, 2002). In the 1990s the number of Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese immigrants decreased due to a restrictive immigration policy but the overall number of immigrants did not decrease (*Ibid.*). At the time economic migrants largely prevailed, but more recently – applications started to pile up after the mid-1980s – the number of refugees is fairly high as well and is still increasing, also because of the reason captured in the saying ‘a good name is better than riches’ (Hoogveld, 2000, p. 106).

**Table 2: Number of immigrants in the Netherlands per country of origin: detailed. Source: CBS (2011).**

	2005	2007	2009	2011
Cape Verde	19 966	20 181	20 669	21 218
Indonesia	396 080	389 940	384 497	380 047
Suriname	329 430	333 504	338 678	344 734
(former) Net. Antilles & Aruba	130 538	129 965	134 774	141 345
Morocco	315 821	329 493	341 528	355 883
Turkey	358 846	368 600	378 330	388 967
Vietnam	18 019	18 441	18 913	19 510
Afghanistan	37 021	37 230	37 709	40 064
Bosnia and Herzegovina	672	680	699	723
Iraq	43 708	43 891	49 202	52 858
Iran	28 691	28 969	30 613	32 777
Somalia	21 733	18 918	21 798	31 237

### 3.4.1 Immigration Policies and Integration

After the period of working years, guest workers were expected to leave the Netherlands, which explains why integration was not on the priority list of the Dutch government and why there were no integration policies in place until 1970 (Ersanilli, 2007, p. 5). According to the Dutch multicultural policies, they were supporting cultural maintenance of immigrants in line with the Dutch principle of “sovereignty in one’s own circle” and consistent with the

<sup>30</sup> Dutch industries, such as textiles, shipbuilding or mining, needed unskilled workers, so they invited guest workers – as temporary residents – since the economy was accelerating swiftly. Initially workers from Spain and Italy came, then from Yugoslavia, Portugal, Greece and Tunisia. When the government signed new bilateral agreements for labour recruitment, Turks and Moroccans joined in large numbers (Dieleman, 1993, as cited in Hoogveld, 2000; Zorlu & Hartog, 2001). After the recruitment of Turks and Moroccans – when the first oil crisis began – they decided to stay in the country and bring their families to the Netherlands, making family reunion “the main source of settlement migration to the Netherlands” (Ersanilli, 2007, p. 2).

“pillarisation system”<sup>31</sup> (*Ibid.*). The first integration policies were introduced in 1970 when the government realized that immigrants have no plans of returning to their home countries. In the 1980s the policy of ethnic minorities was introduced, again following the principles of “integration while preserving migrants’ own identities” (Ersanilli, 2007, p. 5). A few years later, in the 1990s, cultural preservation was no longer at the core of integration policies, being replaced by “labour market integration and equal opportunities” (*Ibid.*), since socio-economic situation of immigrants – Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans – was disadvantaged. Namely, economic restructuring and skill upgrading of the Dutch economy resulted in increased unemployment among immigrants, benefit programmes, or early retirement (Zorlu & Hartog, 2001, p. 12–13).

The number of economic immigrants and refugees has been slowly increasing, and pride of being tolerant, positive public debates, and understanding among the Dutch, were replaced by more formal and cool feelings, guided primarily by right wing rhetoric (Ersanilli, 2007, p. 7). The change in integration policy reflected the discourse of state policy; whereas early integration policies emphasized maintaining of cultural diversity, later ones saw diversity as something that obstructs integration into the Dutch society. The focus thus shifted from the rights of citizens to their duties. They were blamed as being self-responsible for their disadvantaged status since they were claimed passive and not trying hard enough (*Ibid.*). Therefore, in 1998 the law on the civic integration of newcomers came into effect, demanding – except from students and temporary workers – 600 hours of language and societal orientation classes, demonstration of loyalty and acceptance of a common political culture, knowledge of Dutch norms and values, and certain level of language skills before even migrating (Kofman, 2005, p. 455).<sup>32</sup> Though some other countries followed, it was the first country with such a binding programme (Ersanilli, 2007, p. 6).

Focus is (still) especially on Muslims, who are believed to mostly and generally deviate from Dutch values and norms; hence, civic integration courses were directed at assimilating them into Dutch culture, diminish diversity and consequently avoid problems (Kofman, 2005, p. 462–463). Clearly, there is a tendency to differentiate among immigrants, preferring ones to the others. Unfortunately many Muslims feel completely European but due to the society in which they live, they need to constantly search for equilibrium “in terms of country of origin/country of residence; mother tongue/European language; culture of origin/culture living in; religion; otherness; insecurity; rootlessness; emancipation; and so on” (Lathion, 2008, p. 55).

Speaking of Muslims, after the occurrences on 11 September 2001, political climate has changed substantially. Besides several xenophobic incidents reported against Muslims in the Netherlands – be it on the streets or at a workplace – new anti-immigration political parties

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<sup>31</sup> Pillarisation has been a part of the Dutch political system from the first half of the twentieth century and on the basis of this system each religious faith, secular socialist, and liberal groups gained their own ‘pillar’ (Ersanilli, 2007, p. 5).

<sup>32</sup> In addition, the introduction of the naturalisation test that came along with the more restrictive attitude towards citizenship policy, has led to a sharp decrease in the number of naturalisations and to the exclusion of certain categories of immigrants, namely the less educated and less well-off groups. According to van Oers *et al.* (2010), the replacement of the naturalisation test by the integration exam does not appear to have changed this situation.

and leaders emerged. Pim Fortuyn, who was assassinated in 2002, advocated closing borders for immigrants and asylum seekers, accusing them for everything wrong going on in the country, even though he was apparently – according to some – speaking out what everyone was thinking all along. In 2004, filmmaker Theo van Gogh was murdered by a young Muslim extremist, in the eyes of some confirming their already ingrained anti-Muslim conviction. The most current and controversial figure in Dutch politics is Geert Wilders, expressing extreme anti-Muslim ideas, such as Quran being a “fascist book” (Ersanilli, 2007, p. 6), or announcing a “tsunami of islamization” (*Ibid.*). Yet his ideas represent the views of a substantial part of the Dutch society, as his PVV (Freedom party) gained 24 seats out of a total of 150 seats in the parliament elections of 2010.

Since 2006 the role of integration courses became more important, which meant that migrants who wanted to join their spouses in the Netherlands had to pass a civic integration test – on language and Dutch customs – abroad. However, since 2007 immigrants are no longer obliged to visit civic integration courses, but they have to pass a civic integration exam in order to obtain a permanent residence permit (Ersanilli, 2007, p. 9). Restrictive immigration policies are quite discriminatory, aiming primarily at those seen as a burden to the Dutch welfare system, making a distinction between low and high-skilled immigrants, and between the ones coming from developed *versus* developing countries. Due to the process of aging and views on the sustenance of a strong economy that preserves a certain standard of welfare, these debates are more and more present in the new discussions about the need for immigrants (*Ibid.*; Zorlu & Hartog, 2001).

All these tendencies described in the preceding paragraphs are indicating that we have been witnessing what Vasta (2007, p. 735) described as a move away from civic identity towards nationalism, or even a certain sense of patriotism – i.e. allegiance to the nation-state. Dutch language skills are also more about cultural assimilation than civic participation (Korteweg, 2008, p. 9).<sup>33</sup> Correspondingly, ‘Dutchness’ is no longer an association for tolerance and diversity. Instead, “the rhetoric of ‘migrant responsibility’ has become a convenient cloak for structural barriers and assimilationist identities rooted in Dutch history and culture” (Vasta, 2007, p. 735). Also, as migrants are more and more visible in their claims for equality, this has additionally tensed the relationship with the *autochtonous* Dutch who react with assimilationism. Thus, migrants are perceived as ‘others’, not belonging to their imagined national community. This is how it becomes according to Vasta (2007, p. 736) – at least for the time of her writing – nearly impossible for ethnic minorities to integrate into the Dutch society and become part of the Dutch national identity.

### **3. 4. 2 Refugees**

Promptly after the WWII the Netherlands was receiving asylum seekers from Eastern Europe and later also from other countries. In the second half of the 1980s the number of

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<sup>33</sup> What is more, citizenship in integration discourse of the Dutch authorities is on the one hand a culture-centred, and on the other hand a loyalty-centred way of thinking. Therefore, “citizenship becomes a matter of inclusion in a ‘society’ and it becomes a thoroughly cultural matter” (Schinkel, 2008, p. 19).

refugees increased substantially, coming mainly as political refugees and asylum seekers from countries such as Turkey, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Somalia among others (Zorlu & Hartog, 2001, p. 8–9). Nowadays, the biggest refugee communities are from Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Iran and Bosnia, as seen from the Table 2. Clearly, the number of applications for a refugee status is not the same as the actual number of refugees, and rejection of a person’s application does not mean that he or she leaves the Netherlands.<sup>34</sup> It might be also interesting to mention that “refugees are higher educated, have more human capital and ... better social and economic prospects than guest workers” (*Ibid.*, p. 22). However, little is known about their economic integration.

In 2001 changes of immigration policies were introduced with the Aliens Act of 2000, which provides legal basis for asylum and immigration. In accordance with this law, in order for asylum seeker to receive a refugee status, he or she has to meet “the criteria of Geneva Convention, on humanitarian grounds or if they are the dependent partner or minor child who fled together with or within three months of a principal applicant” (Ersanilli, 2007, p. 7). One of the measures contained in the Aliens Act of 2000 is to assess application 48 hours from when the application was delivered and make decision if a person could be considered as a refugee or not. Even though the number of asylum requests dropped substantially from the year of 2000 when there were 43,560 applications, to 9,780 applications in 2004, there is no evidence that this is due to the policy, since the numbers increased again in 2006 to 14,465 (Ersanilli, 2007, p. 8) – the numbers of asylum requests in the following years are provided in Table 3. Since 1997 the Dutch state accepts certain number of refugees “submitted by the UNHCR for resettlement to the Netherlands. For the period of 2008–2011 the Netherlands have committed themselves to accept 2.000 refugees (500 per year)” (IOM, 2011).

**Table 3: Number of asylum requests in selected years – by Somalis and in total. Source: CBS (2011)**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Somalia	2 005	3 960	6 025	3 670	1 985
Total citizenships	9 730	15 275	16 160	15 155	14 630

Furthermore, as of 1987, asylum seekers are upon arrival taken care of in the asylum centres where they are provided with bed, toilets and showers, and small weekly pocket money, since they are not allowed to work for more than 12 weeks a year until they are in “a legal procedure of application for a refugee visa” (Zorlu & Hartog, 2001, p. 10). In case the status is granted, the state takes care for their housing, provided all over the Netherlands. Approximately two thirds of the refugees are housed outside the large urban areas, even though most of them move to the city sooner or later (Van Heelsum, 2011b; Zorlu & Hartog, 2001). Those asylum-seekers who are granted asylum acquire a renewable temporary residence permit for one year, and after the period of three years they can apply for a

<sup>34</sup> Many of them settle as undocumented migrants; between 112,000 and 163,000 people are estimated to live in the Netherlands without authorization. This numbers consist of people who did not leave the country after the refusal of their application for asylum, and others who have entered the Netherlands “through illegal channels or overstayed their tourist or worker’s visas” (Ersanilli, 2007, p. 7).

permanent residence permit.

Just recently the proposals for “tightening up asylum and migration policy” by the Minister for Immigration and Asylum Policy, Gerd Leers, have been approved by the cabinet and will be passed on to the Council of State for its advisory opinion (Government of the Netherlands, 2011). More selective approach to migration is intended, plus harmonisation and simplification of the grounds for asylum and fight against illegal residence; the latter will be perceived as (minor) criminal offence. The government wants to guarantee proper integration and participation in the Dutch society and bring Dutch asylum policies in line with European asylum legislation (*Ibid.*).

### **3.4.3 Somalis in the Netherlands**

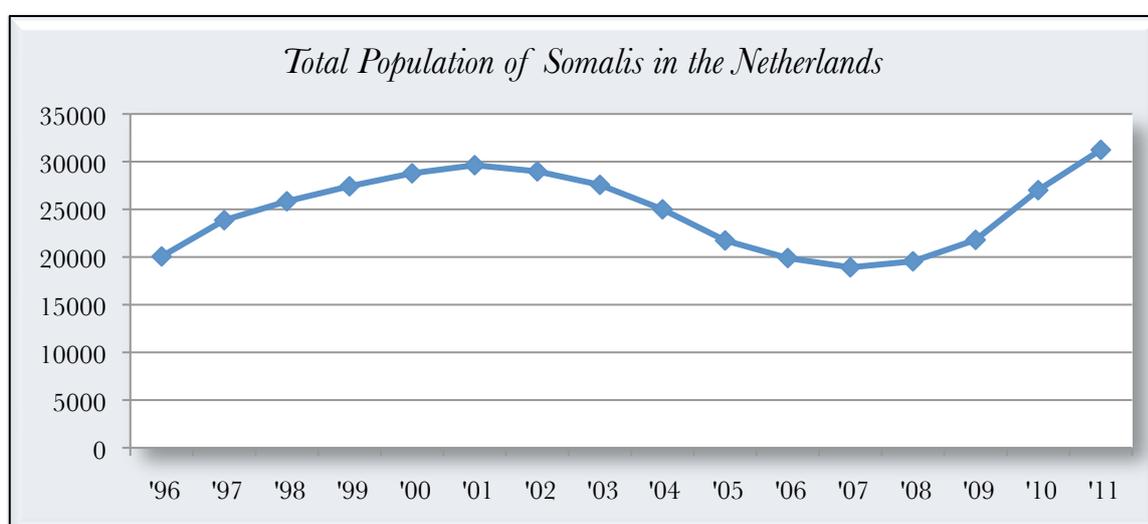
Somali community in the Netherlands is the second largest in Europe, after the one in the UK. According to the research of Moret *et al.* (2006) among Somalis in eight case studies, the majority of asylum-seekers had a long and exhausting journeys behind them before arriving to the Netherlands. As I showed in the previous sections and as will be confirmed also by my respondents, they frequently fled Somalia for one of the neighbouring countries and from there flew to Europe, usually stopping in one of the transit countries in the Middle East. They found out that many Somalis who ended up in the Netherlands organized their travels through personal networks of people already settled in the Netherlands, instead of fully resorting to intermediaries. Few of them had also stayed in other European countries before moving on to the Netherlands. While some of the asylum seekers consciously decide for the Netherlands as their host country due to the reasons such as family reunification or high standards of living, others simply follow the decisions of agents or they are caught during the illegal crossing (for instance) to the UK.

The exact number is hard to establish, since large waves of Somalis with Dutch citizenship migrated onwards to the UK – substantially between the years of 1998 and 2005 (Dourleijn & Dagevos, 2011, p. 12) – and most probably not all of them informed the municipality about their move, and also, many Somalis did not leave the country after their application for asylum has been turned down (Moret *et al.*, 2006). However, from the following graph we can get a picture of the development of the Somali population – refugees plus other Somalis with different permits, such as family members who arrived under the family reunification programme – living in the Netherlands: from 1996 there was an increase for more than 10.000 Somalis residing in the country in question, with peaks in 2001 and more recently in 2011 when the number was the highest till now – 31,237 (as of October 2011).

Some respondents in my interviews frequently mentioned that a lot of Somalis moved from the Netherlands to the UK. I was therefore interested to know what were/are the reasons behind such decisions. Somalis move to the UK out of several reasons – my interviewees’ answers reflect the findings of other authors; high unemployment in the Netherlands, rise of anti-Islamic feelings, state’s selection of housing, complicated procedures for establishing private enterprises and recognition of their education (Moret *et al.*, 2006; Van Heelsum, 2011b), etc. Dating back to colonial ties, large Somali community has been established in the

UK, which appeals Somalis already living in one of the other European countries. According to Van Heelsum (2011b), they “feel more at home among each other where the life is regulated by family and clan ties than in the strange world of the modern welfare states, where life is regulated by laws and bureaucratic rules” (p. 19). In particular highly qualified Somalis often consider their stay in the Netherlands as temporary in the sense of being only a stopover (Wolf, 2011). Due to several restrictions and policies, it is merely impossible to establish a strong Somali community in the Netherlands and exactly this is one of the most important motivations for their decision to further migrate in more “culturally diverse society”. The latter meaning a life according to their own rules and customs (Moret *et al.*, 2006; Van Heelsum, 2011b); wish to live in a more closed community, near to family and clan members.

**Graph 1: Total population of Somalis in the Netherlands. Source: CBS (2011).**

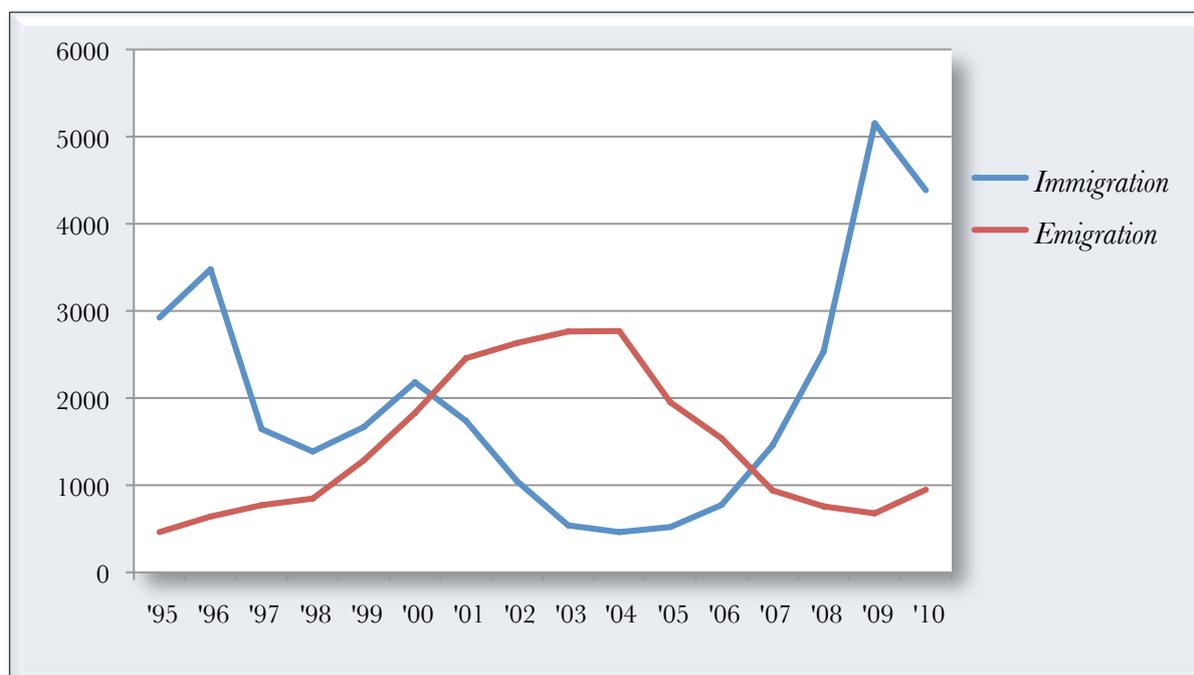


Immigration of Somali asylum seekers have been steadily taking place since the 1980s but reached two peaks up until now; between 1992 and 1997, and in the period between 2008 and 2010. The first period of larger influx of asylum seekers reflects the start of civil war in Somalia, after the collapse of Siad Barre’s regime. Clearly, there is a delay between the start of migration and the peak of arrivals to the Netherlands, which is related to the time Somalis needed for the journey – as discussed in the previous chapters, it contained few steps and several trajectories to overcome – and family reunifications after the settlement of refugees. The second peak is related to the disruptive political situation in the South in 2007. However, in 2010 the asylum laws became stricter and refugee status harder to get, which slightly lowered immigration flows of Somalis (Van Heelsum, 2011a, Van Heelsum 2011b).

A detailed fluctuation of the number of Somalis arriving in and leaving the Netherlands is presented in the next graph, which explains what is behind the fluctuations of Somali population seen in the previous graph. Between 2002 and 2007 when there was the lowest number of Somalis, we can see that the immigration is low and emigration high. After 2006/2007 when immigration and emigration are more or less equal, the number of immigrants rocketed substantially due to high immigration and decision of the majority of

Somalis to stay in the Netherlands.

**Graph 2: Immigration and emigration of Somalis in and from the Netherlands. Source: CBS (2011).**



As mentioned, Somalis began to migrate to the Netherlands at the end of the 1980s – mainly from Somaliland – and are together with those who arrived at the beginning of the 1990s highly qualified and had usually already been living abroad for a period. Most of them were businessmen, diplomats, or had similar occupation. The second group, if we divide them roughly into two, are those who fled the country later, around the year of 2006 and wished to escape the situation of poverty and violence in the country, not able to receive proper education (Wolf, 2011; Dourleijn & Dagevos, 2011); a significant proportion of them came as single minors.

Until 1994, all asylum seekers were granted a ‘tolerated status’, which was formalized in a resident permit on humanitarian grounds. However, this policy was changed in 1996 because of the improvement of conditions in northern Somalia, which opened possibility of return to that area, depending on the clan and sub-clan affiliations. Due to this changes and generally blur circumstances in Somalia, the procedure became even more complex. Several restrictions were added to the asylum policy since then, intended particularly for the Somalis, “which amount to a complex scheme of persons entitled to an asylum policy” (Moret *et al.*, 2006, p. 41). It is worth stressing that the Netherlands is quite strict when it comes to those individuals whose application has been rejected. Namely, the state sends them back to the northern areas of Somalia (*Ibid.*).

Between 2006 and 2009 a “category-based protection policy” (Wolf, 2011, p. 6) was in place. Asylum-seekers were thus eligible for a residence permit because the Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimated the situation in Somalia as too dangerous and the safety situation in this particular time span has been deteriorating. As a consequence the number of asylum

applicants increased from 800 in 2006, to 6025 in 2009 (CBS, 2011). The category-based protection was abolished in the mid of 2009 – though granting of asylum is still possible on the individual grounds – resulting in 3670 asylum requests from Somalis in 2010 (*Ibid.*). Besides those applying for the asylum, high numbers of Somalis also came through family reunification under less stricter conditions contained in the asylum policy. According to Wolf (2011, p. 7), more than 50% of female and more than 33% of male immigrants came to the Netherlands choosing this path.

Moreover, after the procedure is over and who used to be an asylum-seeker is now a refugee or has any other permit, enjoys rights and benefits of other Dutch nationals. Whereas a few of them are satisfied with the conditions they live in, many others are not. The majority feel that their situation as immigrants and mostly as Muslims deteriorated in recent years, namely, that anti-immigration political discourse prevailed and the atmosphere in the society consequently changed. Many complain about the restricted employment opportunities, nonrecognition of their educational qualifications obtained in Somalia (Moret *et al.*, 2006), difficulties in adjusting to Dutch norms and values (Won Hong, 2009, p. 122), etc. Unemployment rate of Somali's is around 33% while for Dutch it is 4% (Van Heelsum, 2011b, p. 15). There are also language problems that many Somalis mention as being very difficult; but evidently, younger and more educated you are, easier it is to master the language (Dourleijn & Dagevos, 2011). Somalis are in the worst socioeconomic position in comparison to the three other refugee groups – from Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran – and the four traditional migrant groups – Turks, Morrocans, Surinamese, Antillean/Aruban. Youngsters are facing several difficulties in education and on the labour market, and in general they are also coping with the worst housing situation of all refugee groups mentioned here, more often living in ethnically concentrated areas (Dourleijn & Dagevos, 2011).

Like other refugees, Somalis are deliberately spread around the Netherlands as a part of government dispersion policy for the refugees (Klaver & van der Welle, 2009; Dourleijn & Dagevos, 2011). However, after a few years several of them – around 2% on average – decide to move mainly from the north to the west and from a villages to bigger cities, due to better educational and employment opportunities (Klaver & van der Welle, 2009) and probably because of the concentration of other Somalis already living there. Cities with the densest concentration of Somalis are Rotterdam, Den Haag, Amsterdam and Tilburg, following that order (Van Heelsum, 2011a, Van Heelsum, 2011b). According to the study of Parmentier and Wittenbrood (2011), three other refugee groups tend to live in more “white” neighbourhoods after around 10 years of living in the Netherlands, but that is not the case with Somalis, since those who live longer in the Netherlands more often also live in predominantly immigrant neighbourhoods.

## 4 Methodology

On the basis of the research questions set in Chapter 1, section *Aim of the Research*, this chapter outlines the methodological tools that I have used in order to obtain proper answers. Namely, the conceptual framing of the research questions reflects in the empirical approach and consequently in the methodology a researcher decides to employ. Stemming from the nature of the research questions, my thesis is predominantly a qualitative research, aiming to understand “complex psychosocial issues” (Marshall, 1996, p. 522). Clearly, I believe that overarching approach of a qualitative study can provide the answers on humanistic questions ‘why’ and ‘how’ and enable a researcher to study a phenomenon in natural settings, with real people. It also goes beyond positivistic findings of a quantitative study and helps a researcher to study phenomena more deeply, and to widen holistic and “contextually informed” understanding of how and why things happen as they do (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Shank, 2002, as cited in Parker, 2004). In the following sections under this chapter, I further elaborate on the chosen methods and explain in greater detail why I consider them as the optimal choice for this particular research.

### 4.1 Qualitative Research

As Parker (2004) notes, qualitative research is becoming a more and more important method in research and it contributes considerably to the published research literature. It is “attractive, relevant and potentially powerful research genre for project design, implementation and resulting thesis production” (Parker, 2004, p.159). Among other things, the main characteristic of qualitative research is interpretive approach to the world, a general critique on postpositivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) and as Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) state, a general endeavour towards “discovery, exploration, theory/hypothesis generation, the researcher as the primary ‘instrument’ of data collection, and qualitative analysis” (p. 18). Time or context free generalizations are according to these authors not only impossible, but also undesirable (*Ibid.*, 14). Namely, the researcher – ‘the subjective knower’ – is the only source of information and ‘reality’ cannot be value-free since human beings are subdued to subjectivity and can never be resistant to values and judgments. Furthermore, the interviews – the principal qualitative method, explained in section *Interview Techniques* – basically consist of discourses, so the language is an asset through which people produce their reality (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000, as cited in Nordberg, 2006). As Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002, p. 325) note, it would then be “naive to think that we will ever develop a theoretical language not profoundly influenced by the social and political forces around us”. Therefore, as Silverman (2006) explains, the purpose of qualitative research is “to understand the participants’ categories” (p. 20) and see their usage in actual activities.

Moreover, ‘followers’ of qualitative studies reject the philosophy of positivism and among others mainly advocate theories of knowledge, such as constructivism and views of humanism. As already mentioned, but worth stressing again, they also assert that research is necessarily

value-bound, that “explanations are generated inductively from the data” and that “knower and known cannot be separated because the subjective knower is the only source of reality” (Guba, 1990, as cited in Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 14). Therefore, when interpreting and trying to understand certain phenomena, we have to bear in mind social, political, economic, institutional, organizational, and technological contexts, (Shank, 2002, as cited in Parker, 2004) and the way language, concepts, and arguments are used (Parker, 2004).<sup>35</sup>

In order to successfully carry out qualitative research and to better interpret and understand phenomena under study, researchers employ various methods. For the purpose of this particular study I have decided to conduct interviews – semi-structured in particular – and include participant observation and informal conversations as a way of collecting data, since “multiple methods ... tease out the complexity, depth and richness of the natural settings being studied” (Parker, 2004, p. 160). The mentioned qualitative methods are explained in greater detail in the following sections.

Given that my thesis is generally speaking a research about transnationalism and social networks that traverse spaces beyond the borders of one nation-state, I decided to add a specific method of data collection; namely, name generator. Hence, I supplemented qualitative research methods with what might appear as a more quantitative one; that is to say, I handed out name generators to each person that I interviewed. But since I have used it as a tool that searches for networks and explores them essentially in qualitative sense through other methodological tools, I prefer considering name generator as falling inside the range of qualitative methods. Since the meaning and purpose of this specific method is examined below, this paragraph only highlights and clarifies its position in this research, in order to avoid possible misconceptions.

While I employed several research methods, this will also serve as ‘triangulation’ of data, which is defined as “largely a vehicle for cross validation when two or more distinct methods are found to be congruent and yield comparable data” (Moebius, 2002, as cited in Moon & Moon, 2004, p. 7). This represents and enables detailed and comprehensive research results from different points of view. The main purpose of triangulation is to add up to the credibility of data collected and consequently the resulting findings and conclusions made by a researcher. To do this it was necessary to collect information – standpoints – on the same issue from different sources and various individuals (Parker, 2004). When this various sources gave a clear picture of particular processes and concepts, I anticipated for the credibility and justification of my analysis to be strengthened.

I believe that all of the research methods and strategies, which are elaborated below, were of great significance for obtaining sufficient knowledge about the unit of analysis (first and second generation Somalis in the Netherlands) – through a set of observation units (transnational practices, (trans)national identity) – and correspondingly assisted me in answering my research question.

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<sup>35</sup> See section *Content Analysis* for more on interpretation and research context.

## 4.2 Case Study Research Strategy

In my research I employed a single case study approach as a research strategy; i.e. this is highly “detailed examination of a single example” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 220) and according to Yin (1994) suitable for studying complex social phenomena. Case study therefore focuses on specificity and complexity of a single case under unique circumstances (Stake, 1995) and enables to gain rich understanding about the people – the unit of analysis (Zucker, 2009). In addition, if more qualitative, in-depth approach is needed, as in the case of this particular research, than the case study approach is appropriate (Smith, 2007). Robson (1993, as cited in Wisker, 2008, p. 216) further elaborates on the meaning of this research strategy: “case study is a strategy for doing a research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon in its real life context using multiple sources of evidence”. Besides, it helps us to examine ‘how’ questions, which means obtaining insight in the relation between transnational activities of first and second generation Somalis and their (trans)national identity.

The main characteristics of this research strategy are: small number of research units, intensive data generation, in-depth study of a subject as a whole, and use of a strategic sample (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010). A case study strategy generally employs a multiple set of methods (Parker, 2004) – qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of these methods (Yin, 1994). But it usually boils down to interviewing, observing, and document analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In my research, however, I tried to achieve more open and informal nature of the methods used, since thereby I hoped to establish more trust from the respondents in the research (Smith, 2007). This was of particular relevance for this research because the nature of the information that I was interested in, are generally perceived as sensitive and personal, and thus such that one easily feels reluctant to talk about.

There are disadvantages and advantages of doing a case study research. One of the good sides is that an in-depth situation can be examined entirely. Due to its in-depth approach, case study is appropriate for identifying certain issues, which might not be seen, or considered relevant at first glance (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Personally, I am very much in favour of the fact that case study can be used as an innovative alternative to traditional approaches, since it gives emphasis to the participant’s perspective in the process (Zucker, 2009). Namely, case study is less *a priori* fixed in its approach than other research strategies and allows more freedom for a researcher in his/hers subjective judgments (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 234). Besides, with a case study one can get an insight into real-life situations and to “test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice” (*Ibid.*, p. 235). But the downsides, on the other hand, include factors such as time-consuming fieldwork, lengthy interviews and complicated transition from transcriptions to a coherent and holistic analysis (Zucker, 2009). Furthermore, it is common in the methodology literature to come across several authors (i.e. Wisker, 2008) who stress the impossibility to avoid subjectivity of a researcher – already examined in the prior section – and the impossibility to generalize from only one case.

The latter observation mentioned in the precedent paragraph might be accurate until one finds out that this is not necessarily a sign of the method’s weakness. To be exact, employing a

case study enabled me to generalize to theoretical propositions and not to population, which in other words means that mode of generalization is theory-related analytic generalisation, not statistical (Yin, 1994). The latter is, as already mentioned, undesirable; thus my aim was to look at the perspectives, generate thematic analysis and develop “contextualized theories” (Parker, 2004, p. 169), rather than trying to generalize. Flyvbjerg (2006, p. 228) for example worked on challenging several misunderstandings about a case study strategy, this being one of them. He stated: “one can often generalize on the basis of a single case, and the case study may be central to scientific development via generalization as supplement or alternative to other methods.” He backs the arguments with Beveridge’s (1951, as cited in Flyvbjerg, 2006) thoughts, advocating that there are more findings originating from intense observations made possible by a case study, than from statistics that can be perhaps applied to larger groups.

Moreover, it might be relevant to stress again that a case study produces a type of context-dependent knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Any case study is conducted within a specific context, – in an exclusive place, time framework, with specific individuals or groups, and events going on at the time – with a particular researcher’s state of mind. “Case studies can be more descriptive, and can follow the discourse and development of those observed or interviewed” (Wisker, 2008, p. 220). At the end of the research process, case story is an end in itself, since the narrative is actually one of the most elementary forms of presenting the experience. “Narrative inquiries ... develop descriptions and interpretations of the phenomenon from the perspective of participants, researchers, and others” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 240). Thus, case studies should be perceived as narratives and thought of as presenting different things to different people (*Ibid.*, p. 238).

### **4.3 Sampling**

Collecting data on transnational activities and identities of Somalis can be done best by employing purposeful sampling – the most common sampling technique (Marshall, 1996) – that “seeks to maximise the depth and richness of the data to address the research question” (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The decision was made due to the specific framework of variables developed during the preparation for the fieldwork, when the decisions were actually based on the available literature and to a limited degree also on my practical knowledge of the research area (Marshall, 1996). The framework encompasses several characteristics of respondents – more in depth explained below – that were expected to have an impact on their answers and contribution. Selection procedure of respondents was thus not carried out through random sampling, which is used rarely in qualitative research anyway, but was carried out through purposeful sampling. The latter stresses “the search for ‘information-rich cases’” (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). Chosen participants are in this way source of rich data and usually a lot of useful information can be gained from them, since they are consciously selected in order to provide the most constructive/‘fruitful’ sample to answer the research question (Marshall, 1996). It is also of great importance to know that obtaining such a ‘pure’ sample, where researcher deliberately seeks out persons to be invited to participate, is consistent with the principle of science (Morse & Richards, 2002).

Furthermore, there is no formula or rules for determining sample size in qualitative inquiry (Patton, 1999) and what constitutes a large enough sample is determined by the situation studied, the quality of data and time limitation. However, an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that adequately answers a research question. Usually it becomes obvious as the study progresses, as new categories, themes or explanations stop emerging from the data ('data saturation') (Marshall, 1996) and according to Baxter and Eyles (1997), when credibility of the research is not threatened by low sample sizes. However, the same authors also point out that irrespective of sample size, the researcher should present a rationale in order to justify his or her decision.

Into the research I included representatives of first generation Somali refugees who are for the purpose of this research defined as those who were born and grew up in Somalia and migrated to the Netherlands as adults. They have been forcefully displaced from their homelands, or they came in the Netherlands through family reunification. Additional requirements included; she/he had to be engaged in the transnational field and her/his child – usually one of the many – had to be born in the Netherlands and was at the time of the interview at least 18 years old, or was not more than four years old – pre-schooled – when fleeing to the Netherlands.<sup>36</sup> This is also my classification for what I call 'second generation' Somalis. To be able to properly compare first and second generation of Somalis in the Netherlands and obtain relevant data to answer my research question(s), I included in the sample the same number of the first generation respondents and the second generation respondents. Out of specific and yet obvious reasons, the first and the second generation representatives had to be in blood relations; father – son/daughter or mother – son/daughter. In the discussion of sample characteristics I have to stress another peculiarity that had to be taken into the consideration; namely, if children in the sample are 18 years old or more, this points to the fact that their parents fled the country in the early 1990s. As was explained in section titled *Somalis in the Netherlands* in Chapter 3, they are mainly highly qualified and differ from those who migrated later on.

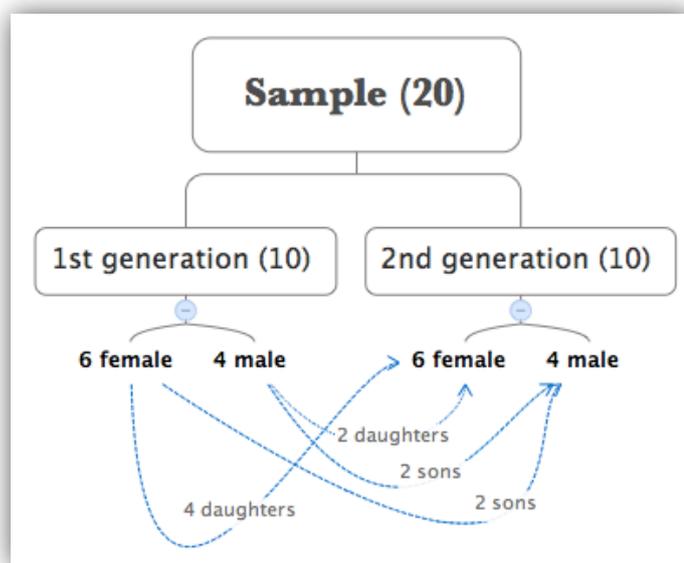
Participants were also divided on the basis of gender, even though one of the aims of my research was not to distinguish and compare transnational activities and identities on this basis. Namely, I have decided not to additionally narrow the sample, since other variables such as education should then be considered as well, and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to take into account all the differences among the Somali population in the Netherlands. However, when analysing the results I try to take into consideration both mentioned variables and also indirectly indicate when a specific variable might have played a significant role. All in

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<sup>36</sup> King & Christou (2010) already established that the term 'second generation' is "a hostage to fortune" (p. 168). Meaning, that it seems clear on the first sight, but up-close, it is full of complications. I have also struggled a lot with who should fall within the concept. The same authors provide us with examples of various studies in which second generation children were perceived as the ones born in a home country and brought to a host country at an early age, usually from four and all the way to twelve, as in case of Rumbaut and Portes (2001), who even include those whose one of the parents is native-born. For again different classification see Lee (2008). However, for my particular study I have made the following decision. In the Netherlands children start with school when they are four years old. I presuppose that the integration into the Dutch school environment is easier when starting at the same age as other Dutch students. In addition, if they arrive before reaching four years, they most probably do not remember their lives in Somalia.

all, I believe that more or less similar number of men and women can contribute to the validity of results and towards achieving the research objective. Moreover, an interesting detail concerning the sample comes from the observation of Levitt (2003; 2004, as cited in Somerville, 2008) who states that religion has a great impact on migrants' incorporation into the receiving society, as well as their attachment to their homeland. Since my respondents all declared Islam as their religion, this simplifies the sample.

As seen in Figure 3 on the right, the sample consists of twenty Somalis in total; ten are from the first generation and another ten from the second. Within the first generation I conducted interviews with six women and four men, and within the second generation I talked to six girls and four boys. As already stated, the role of the gender is not relevant for my research but it is important for the reader to know the exact context of this particular study, since it might be useful and stimulating for other researchers from this field of study. Therefore, the figure



**Figure 3: Core sample of research project divided in two generations and with indication of relationships by gender.**

also indicates the relationships between the first and the second generation based on gender; out of six female respondents from the first generation I interviewed four daughters and two sons, etc.

Moreover, I have chosen eligible participants through gatekeeper(s)<sup>37</sup> who facilitated introductions with the great majority of my respondents and was thus my path towards them. With her effort and immense assistance I got my first contacts with first generation Somalis. Later on I called them as well and set a date and place of the meeting, ensuring that their daughter and son will also participate. In other cases, I firstly came in the contact with second generation Somalis and with their help arranged an interview with their mother or father. The gatekeeper followed my instructions in the process of collecting the respondents and

<sup>37</sup> Researchers are not always able to directly approach potential participants in their research, which leads them to gatekeepers, who assist them in gaining access. Hence, gatekeepers – in the context of research process – are intermediaries – be it individuals, groups, or organizations – between researcher and participant (De Laine, 2000, as cited in Clark, 2010, p. 486). According to Clark (2010), they “support the research process by providing an efficient and expedient conduit for access between researchers and participants” (p. 486). In my case I have obtained access to the majority of the respondents through an individual gatekeeper, working as a project manager at FSAN (Platform Organisation of Somali Associations in the Netherlands) situated in Amsterdam. Since I was working at the organisation as an intern, I was able to meet other employees and volunteers at the organisation, who have also assisted me in gaining access to some of the respondents. However, I got into contact with the great majority of the respondents through her, our collaboration was more structured, and she was well informed about my research. On the basis of these reasons I have decided to explicitly refer only to her in the text.

introduced me and my work when she first called them. Due to time restraints I had no other choice but to rely on her incredibly wide social network. At this point it is also relevant to stress that the criteria that I have set for this research, which are quite narrow and very specific, were causing problems also for the gatekeeper who was at some points facing difficulties in finding suitable – especially male – respondents for the study. This is also the reason why the number of female first generation respondents is higher in comparison to men, and why we had to settle for a ratio of 6 to 4. Since the majority of the first generation respondents knew her, I indirectly gained some trust – at least to some degree. However, I am aware that when establishing contacts with the respondents through the gatekeepers, greater chances of selection biases exist and consequently a sort of answers obtained. This might have influenced the results of my research.<sup>38</sup>

At this point I also have to state that besides a few informal interviews with Somalis whom I had the opportunity to meet during the fieldwork, and which I included in the research, I also conducted an additional formal interview with a member of the organisation called Somali Next Generation (SNG). He gave me an insight into some of the activities of Somali youngsters and his view on the second generation transnational activities and identity.

## 4. 4 Research Methods

### 4. 4. 1 Literature review

I believe that in the specific case of my research, an initial understanding of the theory of studied phenomena was necessary before any field contact, which is also consistent with the case study strategy that I elaborated before, under section *Case Study*. Thus, to have enough knowledge before engaging in empirical research, I firstly searched for academic literature – monographs, collections of scientific papers and articles – in order to provide a more in-depth understanding of some of the debates concerning the concepts of transnationalism, identity, nation-state, etc. and to get familiar with the conceptual considerations related to definition of categories such as ‘refugee’ or ‘national identity’. Furthermore, I analysed numerous documents, working papers and reports, as well as websites rich with statistics.

The majority of the relevant literature I obtained in the libraries of the Radboud University Nijmegen, the University of Amsterdam, VU University Amsterdam, plus, in the libraries of the University of Ljubljana and University of Maribor.<sup>39</sup> All the literature used for the research and obtained at the locations just mentioned was complemented by the sources found on the Internet. The amount of collected electronic literature exceeds the literature found in the libraries, and has thus become the main source of information and primary manner of searching the literature. Electronic databases enable much more complex searching and often provide access to full-text publications. Additionally, and very importantly, electronic searching is substantially less time-consuming and more systematic

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<sup>38</sup> For more on biases in my research project, please see section *Credibility and Biases*.

<sup>39</sup> Since I have spent a period of time during the thesis writing in Slovenia, my home country, I was also able to search and use the literature in the two mentioned universities.

than the search of printed bibliographies. I had the access to databases of resources or projects, such as Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR), EBSCO Online database, Picarta, JSTORE, Proquest, etc.

After searching and finally obtaining all the necessary literature, I critically reviewed it in relation to the theories and approaches employed. It was of great help to review the literature before field engagement, since it facilitated – among other things – the creation of name generator and basic questions for the interviews.<sup>40</sup> Theory derived from the literature review and presented under the theoretical chapter, thus serves as a ‘model’ with which I compared the elements and empirical findings from the case under study (Yin, 1994).

#### **4.4.2 Interview techniques**

Semi-structured interviews, one of the main and most commonly used interview format of qualitative research method (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006), were employed as a basis of my research in order to gain first hand, in-depth insight into the dynamics of transnational processes and refugees’ identity. By conducting interviews it was possible for me to meet with the subjects of my research and gain detailed information that I was seeking for (Wisker, 2008). Semi-structured interviews consist of a few main questions prepared in advance and complemented with more free flowing ones, which allows certain degree of dynamism, spontaneity and thus a possibility for the interviewee to raise new topics or issues themselves. This way of asking questions enabled me to obtain more open-ended and broader answers that were perhaps related to other questions posed before or later on in the conversation, but it provided me with a clearer picture of related issues (Burnett, 2009). Therefore, semi-structured, open-ended interview offers a set of questions and still some space manoeuvre for additional questions (Wisker, 2008) that usually make discussion more lively and relaxed. The interviews were generally planned in advance; setting date, time, and place of the meeting. According to Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), the interviews can be organized for an individual or for a group and can vary widely in terms of duration from half an hour to several hours. In my case, the interviews were set up with individuals, lasting from approximately half an hour, to an hour and a half.

The general strategy for the interviews was to start off with my introduction, ‘rules’,<sup>41</sup> explanation of my research goals and objectives, followed by broader and more general, basic questions, which served as ice-breakers and a path to get to know my respondents better. Semi-structured interviews consisted of questions about topics prepared in advance; open ended questions, arranged in a reasonably logical order, supplementing the main questions with either planned or unplanned sub-questions. The interviews were recorded and transcribed in preparation for analysis (Morse & Richards, 2002), which I will explain in greater detail in the *Content Analysis* section. Next to posing direct questions, I have tried to actively participate with comments and claims, in order to promote a more in-depth

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<sup>40</sup> The methods mentioned will both be explained in sections *Interview Techniques* and *Name Generator*.

<sup>41</sup> I informed each participant that “the research findings will not harm them either physically or psychologically, and that [the] research design respect the integrity of the participants with confidentiality and anonymity ...” (Steane, 2004, p. 63).

discussion. Namely, “an active interview can be regarded as a form of collaboration towards producing a narrative, whereby the interviewer helps the interviewee to use all her interpretive resources and experiences to deliver nuanced and complex answers” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997, as cited in Nordberg, 2006, p. 572).

As already indicated, I conducted semi-structured open-ended face-to-face interviews with Somali refugees and their children in the Netherlands,<sup>42</sup> and thus collected individual in-depth interview data from my respondents over a three month period (May – July 2011). These methods enabled me to gain detailed narratives about them and their transnational activities and identities. The interviews lasted between half an hour – mainly with male respondents of the second generation who were more reserved, shy, or did not have clear thoughts on the topic, as will be seen from some answers presented in the empirical chapter – and an hour and a half. The latter was rare, since after an hour I spotted a drop of concentration on the side of respondents and in case I insisted on still posing further questions, they provided me with short answers, which at the end left me with no choice but to finish with the conversation. Interviews were mainly conducted in English, since people with whom I have talked to were fairly educated and had enough knowledge about the language that more or less smooth communication was possible. In case of two respondents their younger relatives helped with translation from Somali to English, and in case of another two respondents the conversation was in Italian,<sup>43</sup> thus the assistance of translator was necessary. Clearly, that meant that there were fewer opportunities for spontaneous sub-questions and respondents had difficulties with expressing themselves freely. But despite this difficulties and more limited amount of data gathered, they still provided me with interesting and useful information.

All the interviews except of three – probably due to insecurity and a lack of trust – were recorded and pseudonyms have been used to provide anonymity and privacy. This and the structure and nature of the interviews enabled the interviewees to stay more or less relaxed, and it also prevented any unease related to more formal and structured interviews. I could not say to what degree they were comfortable with speaking to me, but I believe that this helped them to overcome their hesitation of speaking without significant restraints. In addition, they were always able to set the location where they felt the most comfortable and content – usually in the setting of their own house. In addition, I planned to speak to every person individually, without the presence of his or her relatives, friends, etc., because I was afraid that they would not be honest about certain, sensitive topics, especially those concerning their children. However, it turned out that not in every case the ideal environment for doing a research interview was possible. But even though I am aware that it is nearly impossible to know precisely how honest they actually were with me, I have sensed in some cases that they felt even more comfortable if, for instance, their daughter or son was sitting there as well and listen.

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<sup>42</sup> See the next chapter for detailed profile and number of the respondents.

<sup>43</sup> The two respondents have spent a few years living in Italy before moving to the Netherlands, since Italy has – as indicated in section *Formation of the present-day Somalia* – colonized a great part of Somalia in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This is the reason why they preferred to talk in Italian and not in English.

Furthermore, interviews enabled me to gather multilayered data by getting the insight into people's biographies and experiences, thoughts and feelings. My suppositions were therefore tested from the first hand, namely, from the viewpoints of my research subjects (Zimmermann, 2009). Thus, I believe that applied fieldwork in the form of qualitative research – face-to-face interviews mainly with refugees – was an invaluable source of information for this study. While interviews provided me with broad, in-depth understanding of the respondents' transnational activities and identity, as seen from their own point of view, participant observation – though limited, as explained in the next section – also added to the quality of the process of field research.

#### **4.4.3 Participant observation**

Another qualitative research method that I have used in this study is participant observation, which “can be used to help answer descriptive research questions, to build theory, or to generate or test hypotheses” (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002, as cited in Kawulich, 2005). I will only briefly discuss the method since it was also of limited value for my research, though in my view still important enough to point it out. It is desired to use more than one interpretative method – like case study, interview and observation – because each method enables us to see and perceive social phenomena in a different way (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Methods of observation can be useful out of various reasons. Among others, they enable the researcher to use and include in the findings – with significant value – non-verbal communication, feelings, expressions, that only he or she was able to see in a specific moment in time. Different interactions, ways of communication and work, everything is important in order to get a picture of the situation, relations, etc. in minute detail. Thus, there were opportunities during my field research when participant observation enabled me to test the information from the interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, as cited in Kawulich, 2005). I was observing events that my respondents mentioned in the interviews or got new acquaintances with other family members and observed relations between first generation Somalis and their daughters and sons.

Participant observation, as a “tool for collecting data about people, processes, and culture in qualitative research” (Kawulich, 2005, p. 1) definitely adds a new aspect to the research. I was able to meet with Somalis numerous times, almost every day during nearly three months internship at FSAN. This facilitated socializing with Somalis other than those with whom I have conducted interviews. I was able to get familiar with the Somali community in the Netherlands and engage in several informal discussions with Somalis during my fieldwork – mainly in the FSAN office, but also in more informal settings and occasions. Thus, although my primary way of data collection was through interviews, I also made use of participant observation to obtain additional information and was therefore able to better understand the whole context in which I was doing research.

#### 4.4.4 Name generator

Additional research method that I have used is so called ‘name generator’, which complemented the information from both qualitative methods discussed above. In the study of personal networks and transnational studies as well, name generator became crucial method to “enumerate networks and delineate network characteristics and structure” (Marin & Hampton, 2007, p. 164). Roughly, network studies differentiate between “personal or egocentric networks and the complete or total networks of a whole group of society” (Dahinden, 2005, p. 3). In my particular case I selected crucial persons out of the whole network and aimed at discovering the social networks of these particular individuals; this is called personal or egocentric network. According to the same author, “the network of an actor consists of all persons with whom he or she has a direct relations” (p. 4), which are mutually recognized.

The name generator was firstly introduced in 1960s and consists of several questions that ask for a list of network alters, such as those with whom they talk once per week or those whose advice they need when having problems. After a list of names has been provided by the respondents, they are furthermore asked to answer additional questions, depending on the research question of the researcher<sup>44</sup>, all of them usually targeted on the relationship between alter and ego or alters themselves (Marin & Hampton, 2007). Hence, in case of the name generator all respondents are asked to report certain contacts from their social network. Name generator – the name, their contact details and a brief summary of the migrant’s relationship with the prospective respondent – produces a list of names of alters with whom a respondent (ego) maintains a relationship. The sum of these names produces an overview of the social network of the respondents (Smith, 2007).

There are different types of name generators; it depends whether the studied networks are closed – for instance within one specific firm – that is ‘finite’, or rather whether this network is open as in my research, “whether historic or current relations are the focus of the research; whether a finite or an exhaustive list of alters is required; and whether mention may only be made of alters who are bound by some social, physical or other entity.” (Smith, 2007, p. 51). My name generator is adopted from the *Ghana TransNet* website (2011)<sup>45</sup> and it consists of several questions about the respondent’s social network and relations with their family and friends, requiring finite list of ten alters.<sup>46</sup>

I gave my respondents the name questionnaire after each interview in order to gain even more information and confirm those that were already mentioned in the interview. On the basis of some of their remarks I got a feeling that a few of them were not completely comfortable with filling it in, perceiving it as an annoying addition after already talking to me for a while and as something that invades their privacy. Unfortunately, that is why a few of them did not fully complete the form or did it as in a terrible hurry. After explaining them

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<sup>44</sup> Namely, according to Alexander (2009, p. 5), “questions can be adapted to tease out various ways people may connect with one another”.

<sup>45</sup> A website of a research programme that also used name generator to explore how transnational networks affect local economies in Ghana and in the Netherlands.

<sup>46</sup> Name questionnaire is also attached in the appendix of this thesis.

even more thoroughly what the questionnaire is about, then their reluctance slowly faded away, also thanks to their son or daughter who encouraged him or her to fill it out properly and take it seriously. However, another half – more or less – of the respondents took their time from the first moment on and were unsparing in their efforts to assist.

#### **4.4.5 Content analysis**

The last step before completing research is data analysis and interpretation (Stake, 1995) of collected and transcribed data. In this final step I used content analysis method to “identify important themes or categories within a body of content, and to provide a rich description of the social reality created by those themes/categories as they are lived out in a particular setting” (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, p. 11). To carry out the analysis, I did not use any computer-based programs for qualitative data analysis, but I used another ‘technique’ instead. When analyzing data from the in-depth interviews I followed the advice of several authors. Namely, I engaged in the process of analysing qualitative data with firstly coding, which signify “achieving categorisation and interpretation” (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 141), or in other words, I searched for common patterns and themes that appeared in all of the interviews and consequently identified categories and subcategories. Thus, I systematically reviewed the transcripts of the interviews and organized them in categories – which were able to embrace and explain key processes and respondent’s feelings and thoughts – by grouping the same themes arising from the data. Thereafter, I compared categories to identify patterns and possible connectedness between them. With the words of Morse and Richards (2002), I “identified the linkages connecting the various categories by comparing and contrasting the conditions and consequences of the relationships among categories” (p. 159). Simultaneously with coding of the interviews, I have compared all the data gathered with different methods and subjected them to analysis as well. It might be relevant to mention that all the units of coding were mainly words or sentences, representing certain ideas. I also went through the analysis a few times to ensure the comprehensiveness of all the categories, concepts, explanations and interpretations. Through this and in general the whole process described, themes and categories emerged from the data, which indicates the inductive reasoning used in the process (Patton, 1999). Additionally, I have also generated concepts or variables from the theories of previous studies, especially in the very start of data analysis (Berg, 2001, as cited in Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).

Since it is typical for qualitative analysis to describe the context, include complexity and rich description among other things (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Parker, 2004), I presented the findings in the form of narratives, through discourse and literary forms. Miles and Huberman (1994) also explain that human activity is like text; a compilation of symbols, which contain layers of meaning, revealed by interpretation. Hence, my experiences are clearly evident from the data – the narratives – presented, and they reflect the paradigm that guided me, or in other words, “basic set of beliefs that guides action” (Guba, 1999, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 91). All in all, I tried to build as much as possible a holistic picture of context, processes, influences and outcomes (Parker, 2004). To achieve that, I have also used

verbatim statements from the interviews, as I believe this is the way to properly present findings. There are certain ideas expressed that I have chosen as relevant enough to include them entirely, since it is crucial for the reader to self-interpret their meanings. Or as Somers (1994) states, “it is through narrativity that we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identities” (p. 606). Therefore, especially in a research about identities and second generation Somalis, it is of great importance to understand how they produce their own “narratives of the self, and the particular interpretative repertoires that they draw on within this process” (Valentine *et al.*, 2009, p. 236).

#### 4.5 Reflection: Credibility and Biases

Who ‘she’ is as well as who ‘we’ are depends upon our co-performance and relations of identity, difference, and power. In discursive terms, we as researchers are part of the field and must strive to be accountable for our participation in the making of stories and meanings.  
(Langellier, 2010: 89–90).

One of the most important, or according to Baxter and Eyles (1997) even the most important principle of qualitative studies, is credibility. The notion of credibility refers to the level of description of human experience; namely, those who were actually having the experience have to recognize it instantly and those outside the experience have to be able to understand it (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Baxter & Eyles, 1997; Guba & Lincoln, as cited in Cutcliffe & McKenna, 1999). Thus,

credibility refers to the connection between the experiences of groups and the concepts which the social scientist uses to recreate and simplify them through interpretation. Credibility is based on the assumption that there is no single reality but rather multiple realities, mentally constructed by ourselves” (Baxter & Eyles, 1997, p. 512).

Clearly the conventional positivist research paradigm and its criteria of validity, objectivity and reliability for evaluating the quality of research are not suitable for judging the research results of this largely qualitative study (Bradley, 1993, as cited in Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).

There are numerous ways how to improve credibility of scientific work; Mays and Pope (2000) and Patton (1999) for instance state that there are no definite solutions or easy formulas to limit the probability of errors in qualitative research. However, taking into account the circumstances, especially time limitations of my fieldwork and perhaps the sensitive/personal nature of the research topic, I aspired to enhance the quality and credibility, or ‘authenticity’ (Silverman, 2006), by doing the following. I tried to rigorously and transparently present the design of the research project, methods used (data collection), context (including several challenges, limitations and biases), coding procedure and findings/analysis of the research project. In addition, I used triangulation as a way of “ensuring comprehensiveness and encouraging a more reflexive analysis of the data ...” (Mays & Pope, 2000, p. 51), because

with each method different sides of empirical ‘reality’ can be discovered (Patton, 1999), and with that I wished to increase the credibility of the research.

Furthermore, I would like to dedicate a few words to the issue of biases that emerge while doing research, which was also one of the challenges that I was faced with during the fieldwork. By doing that – providing a description of possible biases in my research – I would like to prevent the reader to misinterpret the data and at the same time increase the credibility and reliability of the findings. Firstly, since I come from Slovenia and I was doing a research about Somalis in the Netherlands, they may have thought of me as a fellow immigrant or even an ‘outsider’ within the Dutch society. Correspondingly, without any reason to be partial, which might have made them feel more comfortable to speak to me honestly, with less reluctance and confusion. Indeed, I believe that this mere fact of being a migrant myself has helped me to be more impartial than I could have been if I was Dutch. But on the other hand, they knew my gatekeeper and could have somehow perceived me as being under her/organisation’s influence, even though I have tried to be seen as an independent researcher during the whole process of conducting interviews – by introducing myself, explaining the context of my research and in case they asked, also my role at the organisation. However, as FSAN did not try to influence on my research process or my findings in any possible way, this has helped strengthening the principle of impartiality and lowered the risk of getting biased results. Thus, I also believe – clearly subjectively – that the internship at the organisation did not influence me personally, in a sense of being more biased because of it.

Furthermore, the notion of trust is closely related to the notion of bias. Namely, if respondents trust the researcher, then they are more likely to answer the questions and speak without inhibition. In my case, I have already gained some trust by contacting them through the gatekeeper – a respected person in the Somali community – but a lot more could have been done in order for them to trust me completely, such as multiple visits of the respondents. However, several limitations prevented me from performing an ideal plan.

Last but not least, personal characteristics such as age, social class, sex, religion and skin colour should also be taken into consideration when discussing biases (Mays & Pope, 2000), since abovementioned ‘categories’ can have an immense influence on behaviour of certain people and create distance – or even reconciliation among them. The fact that everyone has an influence on the unique outcomes of a certain situation, with his or hers specific characteristics, should be kept in mind. But in practice, during my contacts with the respondents or Somali colleagues, I did not encounter any problematic situations that would make conversations uncomfortable because of our potential differences, let alone force me to re-form my research.

## 5 From Trajectories for Migration to Living in the Netherlands

After laying the necessary theoretical foundation in the previous chapter, it is now possible to embark on a more empirical section of the thesis. This consists of several chapters containing findings from the empirical research and in which I have also integrated the discussion and main conclusions, since I believe that this will make reading more comprehensive, clearer and thus also more pleasant. Before fully engaging in the analysis of gathered research material, the subsequent and first section – based on the information gained through name generators – serves to highlight the basic information about the respondents on which all the following chapters rest, in order to provide necessary characteristics of the sample, and hence enable better understanding of the analysis and conclusions. Then I follow the respondents' stories from the very beginning by presenting their trajectories for migration, as well as their first impressions and thoughts when arriving in their host country: the Netherlands. As already stated in section *Brief History of Somalia* in Chapter 3, it is relevant to analyse circumstances of displacement from their homeland, since this helps us in understanding their experiences and consequently their 'adaptation' to the Netherlands. From obvious reasons, I will be interested in the exclusive stories of the first generation respondents.

### 5.1 Profile of the Respondents

As comprehensively presented in the methodology chapter, the core of the empirical research consists of twenty name generators and interviews conducted with Somali refugees and their offspring in the Netherlands. In order to ensure the anonymity of the respondents concerning the information gained, I changed their names. Even though I have not used any information in the analysis that could endanger their position in the community or unnecessarily expose them, I have promised to each of them to preserve and maintain the privacy of our conversations.

The persons interviewed distinguish among each other in terms of gender, time of arrival, age, type of residence permit, working situation, and in terms of different social, educational backgrounds and family situation. Through name generators I have managed to collect some demographic data from my respondents, which I present in greater detail in Table 4 below. I divided them on the basis of generation, with a double line in the table indicating a separation between the two groups; the first generation respondents are stated in the first ten (blue) table cells, while the second generation respondents are filling the next ten (red) cells. All of them declared as Muslim, even though a degree of their religious affiliation – in the sense of practicing religion – varies from one respondent to another. The first generation respondents whom I interviewed have on average five to six (5,6) children. The age of the first generation interviewees varies between 46 and 67, which gives 55,3 years in average. The second generation respondents are between 18 and 23 years old, with a median age of 21,2. Two first generation Somalis came to the Netherlands in the late 80s and the rest came in the early 90s. Except for two, all of the second generation participants came before reaching the age of four – pre-school aged – or they were born in The Netherlands as in the case of four interviewees.

**Table 4: Profile of respondents participating in this research, including information on gender, age, year of arrival, marital status, education/profession, number of children and dates of interviews.**

<b>Pseudo-nym</b>	<b>Gen-der</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Year of arrival</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Education*/ Profession in the NL</b>	<b>No. of children</b>	<b>Inter-view date**</b>
<b>Amina</b>	F	51	1992	Separated	MBO/Parent consultant at the NGO	4 + 4 foster	08 July
<b>Nadifa</b>	F	47	1989	Married	High School/Unemployed	5	01 July
<b>Naja</b>	F	55	1993	Married	High School/Unemployed	6	13 July
<b>Fathia</b>	F	52	1993	Separated	MA/Project Leader at Diaspora Organisation	4	19 May
<b>Faadumo</b>	F	46	1994	Separated	HBO/NGO	3	26 May
<b>Sofia</b>	F	53	1996	Separated	BA/Volunteer	6	30 May
<b>Hassan</b>	M	67	1993	Married	PhD/Retired	8	17 July
<b>Abdikarim</b>	M	62	1999	Married	BA/Unemployed	7	03 July
<b>Abukar</b>	M	55	1987	Married	HBO/Medical Analyst	5	27 June
<b>Mohamed</b>	M	65	1994	Married	MA/Retired	8	30 June
<b>Siad</b>	M	23	20	Single	Student of Harbour Logistics (MBO)	0	08 July
<b>Ali</b>	M	20	Born in the NL	Single	Student of Management (HBO)	0	01 July
<b>Leyla</b>	F	21	Born in the NL	Single	Law student (BA)	0	13 July
<b>Rihana</b>	F	23	20	Single	Law student (HBO)	0	01 June
<b>Haweeyo</b>	F	21	17	Single	Law student (HBO)	0	30 June
<b>Basra</b>	F	21	15	Single	Student of Communication Studies (BA)	0	22 June
<b>Magol</b>	F	21	19	Single	Student of International Business and Management (HBO)	0	17 July
<b>Khalid</b>	M	22	17	Single	Student of Management (HBO)	0	03 July
<b>Maka</b>	F	22	Born in the NL	Single	Student of Social Work (MBO)	0	27 June
<b>Omar</b>	M	18	Born in the NL	Single	Studying for becoming a pilot (HBO)	0	30 June

\* In contrast to their children, who are currently enrolled in different study programmes, the first generation respondents generally did not finish their studies in the Netherlands. Thus, the completed levels of education stated above are ‘translated’ into the levels of education possible to obtain within the specific Dutch education system. Taken from the website of the Government of the Netherlands – Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (2012), here are short explanations of the above-mentioned acronyms:

- MBO: Secondary vocational education, which takes up to four years. After completing the training, it is possible to start working or continue with another form of education.
- HBO: Higher professional education offered at the universities of applied sciences, which provide “theoretical and practical training for occupations for which a higher vocational qualification is either required or useful”.
- BA, MA and PhD: University, research-oriented education, offered at the research universities. Degrees possible to obtain include bachelor’s, master’s, and PhD, the highest academic degree.

\*\* All the interviews were conducted in 2011, between May and July.

Due to some misunderstandings between the gatekeeper, parents and myself, when checking for suitable second generation participants, there are two exceptions that do not fit perfectly into the criteria set beforehand. Namely, one was five and the other six years old when they arrived in the Netherlands. Despite this fact I have decided to conduct the interviews anyway, and take the final decision later on whether to include them in the analysis or not. However, judging on their stories and other criteria, I have decided to include their answers, but to point out, when necessary, their slight age deviation when making conclusions.

The lowest level of education is high school (two respondents) and the highest is PhD (one respondent). It is also important to stress that their socio-economic position in Somalia was fairly higher than it is in the country of refuge. The majority of professional statuses and working positions that the respondents have occupied in Somalia were respected and well paid – due to several reasons stated, many of them have explicitly requested not to mention the details in the thesis. As I have explained in Chapter *Methodology*, the refugees who fall under my research group distinguish from those who are currently coming to the Netherlands. I leave the explanation to Hassan, one of my interviewee, who describes the difference as he sees it:

All these people that you see here, are those who came when I came. Are the elite people, the urban people...the people who studied, the people who had means to flee. Now they are coming those ... from the civil war. Probably most of them are the people who came in the cities at that time...mostly analphabetic people.

**Figure 4: Map of The Netherlands with labelled locations of respondent's homes and (in majority of cases) the interviews.**



As gender is not one of the variables in the research, so is not the location of respondents' homes. Evidently, the geographical area of research did not cross The Netherlands' borders, but within the country the location was not of vital importance. My only goal was to ensure the diversity of participants' locations. Namely, by choosing diverse locations I wanted to avoid getting the information that would mirror certain circumstances and social dynamics specific for one location.

## **5.2 Respondents' Trajectories for Migration**

Before engaging fully in the analysis of the transnational activities and later on transnational identity as being the focus of this thesis, I would like to briefly present, on the basis of the information shared, some of the refugees' trajectories before reaching The Netherlands. In other words, in Chapter 3, section *History of Migration: Somalis on the Move*, I tried to explain diverse settlement patterns of Somalis in general, but I believe that it is also interesting and helpful for the reader to better understand the specific migration patterns of my respondents.

Starting with Amina; she left Somalia and fled firstly to Ethiopia, and from there went to Eastern Europe before reaching The Netherlands, a destination she did not choose by herself. Naja for example came directly from Somalia but has changed her residence inside The Netherlands several times. She has also explained me how hard it was/is for Somalis to flee:

... because they don't know where to go. They want to move from Somalia, somewhere safe, but they don't know where is safe... [there are] also some smugglers, they say to Somali girls, we send you in England and Italia and they bring them in Iraq, they are there and have difficult life. And they are in prostitution. ... if you hear the news from Somali women, it is heartbroken also, because we have no government, we don't have nothing and people do what they want.

Fathia came to The Netherlands in order to study and with plans on going back after finishing her studies. But in the meantime the war started and she could not return. Faadumo firstly fled to Italy due to "political problems" related to her working position in Somalia, and then further to The Netherlands. Sofia fled Somalia with her children,

... even though we didn't want to. But because of the war ... militias were killing people and stealing and they came also to my house. For this reason we escaped to Nairobi. We stayed there for six years, but this country did not have a future for us and we decided to come to Europe in order to live in peace.

Hassan went to The Netherlands to join his wife and six children. He was firstly settled in the refugee camp in Kenya and there he was "invited by the UNHCR" as part of the resettlement program. He interestingly describes a situation that numerous refugees very often go through:

My children were from less than one year, to six years old. They were the most vulnerable people, so we had to bring them to safety fast. And I was left behind. And there was a possibility ... we had no choice where they could go. There was a flight to Amsterdam, to a city called Amsterdam, and we embarked them. [My wife] was alone with six children and pregnant and with hundred dollars in her pocket. She has been through a lot.

Abdikarim only went to The Netherlands in 1999 out of the same reason; to join his family – three out of four men interviewed went to The Netherlands to reunite with their families – that fled already in 1994. Due to the nature of his job they lost each other in the midst of the war. Besides vulnerability in general that Hassan mentioned as the reason for her wife and children to flee first, other authors stated more specific reasons of their Somali respondents. Those span from the fear of being a subject of violence and sexual abuse (Hopkins, 2010, p. 523), to allegedly a greater possibility for a wife and children to be granted asylum in host country, according to Al-Sharmani (2010, p. 505). However, in recent years, family reunification in the Netherlands has been aggravated (Schans, 2009, p. 1177).

In sum, the respondents went through a lot in search for a safe haven and this is the context that one should have in mind when either researching, or merely reading the results of this type of research. Respondents' perceptions, feelings, as well as civic participation in the host society are doubtlessly influenced by their background stories – filled with important details of what they have seen and experience – as well as their relationship with the country they fled from.

### 5.3 First Impressions and Thoughts

After the arrival, first generation Somalis were generally faced with numerous obstacles and cultural shock in the society in which they have found themselves. But the first impressions vary from one to another, as well as their way of coping with the new environment. For non of them (except maybe for those who lived in Italy or any other European country before) it was easy to adapt to the new environment, since they had to learn a new language – mentioned by everyone as being very difficult – and get used to a new culture, regulations and level of bureaucracy, climate and religion. I provide short but no less interesting excerpts from the conversations, referring to respondents' observations regarding the new country they fled to, and its society.

Dutchmen spend much more time inside their houses and they are much more introverted and 'cold'. ~ Faadumo

I was very much familiar with Europe. The only thing new to me was this status of a refugee. From somewhere to nowhere. ~ Mohamed

It was very difficult for me as a career woman from Somalia coming here and being a housewife. But I was also very busy with the children, making sure that they go to school and getting a start up with the new life and as soon as everyone got older I decided for myself that I needed to go to work, so I also work now for a few years. ~ Amina

...that people lived together and had children before they got married. ~ Abukar

The first statement points to different temperaments of Dutch people in comparison to Somalis, which also explains why Naja for instance stated that she felt better among Italians where she lived for a few years before moving to the Netherlands, because they are more like Somalis; "more warm ... and they live outside". The Mohamed's statement refers to difficulty

of accepting the change, or rather lowering of status and consequently life style, as Amina implies. However, Abukar's thoughts are clearly stemming from strict religious principles.

The respondents have also different views on the Somali community in The Netherlands. Amina says that they are more connected than before, but there are differences between those who came at the time when she arrived and the newcomers – those who have been arriving only for the past few years:

You see that the ones who came here [years ago] are more connected because they are well-established in the Netherlands, they had their own challenges that they overcame mostly, so they are searching for their own people now. ... the newcomers, they are more left out of the Somali community because they are busy with learning the language, going to school, ... personal issues that they are dealing right now. ... Newcomers eventually also look for each other.

With this statement she implies the tendency of Somalis to eventually find their co-nationals with whom they share ethnic background, and form a community based on ethnic or national identity. I elaborate on this later on, when I focus especially on the second generation. Furthermore, Fathia explains that Somalis form quite a close community, being more connected to their homeland than other Africans. She suggests that this is the case because of the commonality that binds them together; instability in their home country. Faadumo interestingly compares the Somali community in the Netherlands with the one in the UK, noticing that the one in the Netherlands is much more open. Namely, in the UK, they live in closed communities, or rather neighbourhoods, while in The Netherlands they are spread around the country and consequently more open towards other people and immigrants. Hassan and Abdikarim like to meet fellow Somalis from the same town for a tea and talk (though, Hassan added that only to a certain extent because he dislikes talking about war and clans the whole day). Besides sharing thoughts and tea together, they also organize events, etc., since according to Abdikarim's wife, present during the interview, their community "has money", so their activities are structured and ideas possible to implement.

In Chapter 3, section *Clans*, I have already pointed out that Somalis like to emphasize and express pride and 'specialness' due to the homogeneity of Somalia, which is based on common ethnicity, language and religion (Langellier, 2010, p. 73). This most likely stems from Somalis in Somalia who believe that their identity is "natural, unconstructed category that is lodged in the belief that they are descended from a single ancestor" (Kusow, 1998, as cited in Fangen, 2007, p. 403). I was also able to sense this pride of homogeneity in the interview with Fathia, stating:

...we are the only African country who have one language like Dutch. We have different pronunciation from the North and from the South, but we have one language in Somalia. That's also the advantage. We have the same culture, we have mostly Muslims, about, almost 100% Suniti Muslims....

However, staying realistic, she reminds us in the same breath: "... but problem we have is about the clan. We are different clans ...". This indirectly indicates that social structure of a refugee community is to a certain degree "a continuation of patterns in the country of origin" (Wahlbeck, 1998, p. 9) and that the 'diasporic community' has a drop of internal division. The answers of other respondents vary greatly among each other, some of them feeling the

tensions and the importance of clans also in diaspora, while others do not. Their children, however, are generally disinterested in their clan background.

## 6 Transnational Practices

“Central feature of Somali contemporary migration is a transnational way of life, which an increasing number of diasporic Somalis and their families are leading” (Al-Sharmani, 2007, p. 1). With this opening citation I undertake this part of the thesis in which I will analyse respondent’s transnational practices, giving the greatest emphasis on their transnational contacts with Somalis still living in Somalia, or others spread around the world, and on remittances sending. Thus, after learning about the participants in this study and their ‘first steps’ in the Netherlands, transnational practices will be studied next, focusing mainly on the already mentioned contacts and remittances, as well as their participation in (diaspora) organisations. With this chapter I also integrate the second generation into the discussion, therefore, youngsters, who were still one to four years old when they entered The Netherlands with their parents, or they were not yet even born.

After arriving to the Netherlands due to forced migration out of Somalia, some asylum-seekers and refugees are keen to maintain links with their country of origin and go as far as getting involved in development projects in their home country. Therefore, they live transnational lives through family relation networks that span borders of numerous nation-states (Al-Sharmani, 2007, p. 2). This way of living provides Somalis with possibilities to seek “security, protection, opportunities for a better life, and different forms of capital for themselves and their relatives in the homeland and elsewhere” (*Ibid.*, p. 1). Additionally, after the arrival they can also face difficulties accepting the new context in which they have found themselves. In this case, expansion of their social networks to incorporate new, local actors also seems to play, according to scholars, an important role in shaping transnational activities (Ghosh & Wang, 2003, p. 280).

In what follows, I will analyse and compare actual transnational activities of first and second generation Somalis, but first, it has to be clear what exactly falls under the concept of transnational practices/activities and how can they be identified and measured. In other words, what type of practices and activities could be considered transnational. Despite numerous attempts there is no uniform typology that would explain what constitutes a transnational activity and what does not, also because dividing line between types of activities and different levels – individual, family and community level – is usually blurred (Al-Ali *et al.*, 2001, p. 618–619). Itzigsohn *et al.* (1999; similar categorization provided also by Portes *et al.*, 1999, p. 231), who divide transnational practices on economic, political, civil-societal and cultural, also suggest differentiation between ‘narrow’ and ‘broad’ ones. They define them depending on the “degree of institutionalization, degree of movement within the transnational field, or the degree of involvement in transnational activities” (p. 323). Thus, transnationality in ‘narrow’ sense includes above-mentioned four types of practices, involving “a regular movement within the geographic transnational field, a high level of institutionalization, or constant personal involvement” (*Ibid.*). Transnational practices in a broader sense refer to the material and symbolic practices that involve “only sporadic physical movement between the two countries, a low level of institutionalization, or just occasional personal involvement, but

nevertheless includes both countries as reference points” (*Ibid.*).<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, Al-Ali *et al.* (2001), or Portes *et al.* (1999) have been advocating quite strict criteria for who is transnational and who is not, as it was indicated in the theoretical chapter. Portes *et al.* point out that contacts should be maintained through prolonged period of time, refusing “selective transnational practices”, as Levitt *et al.* (2003, p. 570) put it in their article, disagreeing with Portes *et al.* Albeit rigorous criteria of transnational community put forward by the authors just mentioned, Hopkins (2010) warns that “defining transnational by levels of involvement and numbers seems arbitrary” (p. 527). I similarly argue that refugees, such as Somalis, should not *a priori* fall outside this framework of criteria set by scholars cited above and speak in favour of those who assert that the criteria in question should not condition transnationality. Namely, refugees and their children are usually restricted in the frequency of transnational activities due to financial constraints – phone calls, remittances – which makes their contacts with home infrequent. Additionally, their statuses are insecure and resources limited – for those in the host countries, as well for other Somalis, who stayed at home or fled – once again confirming the different nature of transnationalism defined by Portes *et al.* (1999) for instance – traditionally relating to labour migrants (Al-Ali, 2002, p. 100) – and refugee transnationalism, as Sherrell and Hyndman (2006) work on. Thus, let me once again point out that less strict approach to transnationalism – especially of refugees – is necessary and valuable because the gap between the desire to participate and the abilities/capacities to do so should be taken into consideration, as well as the fact that some groups are more transnational than others (Foner, 1997, p. 23). While it is understandable to foresee that refugees’ transnationalism will be restricted to a few domains of transnational activities, Portes (1999, as cited in Wangaruro, 2011, p. 36) on the other hand rightly suggests that due to migration context of refugees, they are even more likely to remain morally tied to kin and their communities left behind, and thus more likely to be transnationally active (*Ibid.*). On the basis of this discussion I suppose that transnational activities of refugees may be limited to a few practices, but those are likely to be deeper, more sensitive, and generally more intense.

Several predictions in introductory discussion have been put forward, hence, setting the stage for the continuation of my case study. I will examine the engagement in transnational practices – family or household, as well as more institutionalized ones – of Somali first and second generation migrants. I base my research on qualitative indicators, which means that I

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<sup>47</sup> The authors also provide us with a few examples (I apply them on the case of Somalis in the Netherland):

- ‘Broad’ economic transnational practices: remittances (also symbolic meanings).
- ‘Narrow’ economic transnationality: transnational business (firms or informal transnational trade).
- ‘Broad’ political transnationality: the interest of transmigrants in electoral politics (supporters or opponents of particular candidate, parties).
- ‘Narrow’ political transnational practices: membership and activism in (potential) Somali parties in the Netherlands.
- ‘Broad’ civil-societal transnationality: community initiatives in diverse areas.
- ‘Narrow’ civil-societal transnationality: grass roots or institutional initiatives.
- ‘Broad’ cultural transnationality: cultural practices that refer to the definition and boundaries of ‘being Somali’ (music, food, etc.).
- ‘Narrow’ cultural transnationality: practices and institutions that take part in the formation of meanings, identities and values. It influences the discourses about being Somali in the Netherlands and abroad (Itzigsohn *et al.*, 1999, p. 325-335).

do not ‘measure’ the connections and ties maintained by the selected research group, but I am instead more concerned with the nature of practices and how are they related to the identity formation. Thus, this particular section will not result in the development of a new typology of transnationality, but as also Al-Ali *et al.* (2001) explained in their work, I will draw on empirical evidence in order to comprehend from them what appears to be transnational features. This will assist me in understanding the construction of identities, especially of the second generation Somalis. Namely, as Glick Schiller and Fouron (2001) stated, adequate analysis of identities of the second generation must take into consideration the significance of their “transnational ties and experiences” (p. 163).

## **6.1 Being ‘In Touch’ and ‘Updated’**

All first generation Somalis with whom I had the privilege to talk to have their relatives scattered all over the world; from Kenya, Australia, Canada and UK, to India, Iraq and China. Name generator and interviews also revealed that all of them, except for one (Faadumo), have relatives still living in Somalia, from brothers and sisters, to cousins, aunts and uncles. Fathia and Hassan also have their mothers in Somalia, and Sofia her husband (though they are separated). They all keep in touch regularly with their family members even though they generally communicate more frequently with those that live in Europe, especially with those staying in the Netherlands (as in few cases), like themselves. Roughly speaking, they talk to their relatives in Somalia from one to two times per month, while they are in touch with other relatives, living mainly around Europe or North America, on a daily, or at least weekly basis. In case of Fathia (first generation), they talk to each other once a week and they are very close as a family, especially due to the difficult situation in Somalia; “Somalia is a very dangerous place and then I have to look at least if my mother or the family they are safe, you know...there is war, there is always a war”. This indicates that the commonality of having family in Somalia whose lives are insecure, is also one of the reasons why they communicate between each other so often. Additionally, a few of them explicitly mentioned that nowadays, with all the means of communication, it is much easier to maintain contacts and reach people almost wherever they are, plus, in Hassan’s (first generation) words, “communication is very, very cheap there ...”. Although contacts are maintained via Internet and phone, they are in touch primarily through phone calls, since “we are oral society and we discuss all issues, how is the family and things like that ...”, stated Fathia of the first generation. Other reasons include: “the only way to contact those in Somalia is via phone”, as in the case of Mohamed’s (first generation) relatives. However, even this is not always the case. Namely, Sofia (first generation) mainly communicates with relatives living in Somalia or Nairobi by sending them letters through the Red Cross. According to her, the life in the city where they used to live is without electricity, with people having nothing to eat and drink.

As regards the respondents’ social lives in the Netherlands, it could be noticed from the interviews, and especially from name generators, that the majority has closer ties with other Somalis living in the Netherlands, or other immigrants; such as those from Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Morocco, Turkey, Bosnia, etc. They mainly move within the Somali circle of friends

and colleagues. However, all of them get along well with the ‘native’ Dutch population and do not encounter any difficulties whatsoever. More on their relation with the Dutch society will also be discussed in the following sections.

Furthermore, all respondents are up-to-date with the current happenings in Somalia, longing for daily news from their homeland. Thus, besides talking to the relatives and receiving first hand news, they also watch news on the television and check the Internet regularly. Naja (first generation) for instance listens to the news every morning when she wakes up, including Dutch news, in order to see what is happening in The Netherlands and around the world. But in the evening she wants to watch only Somalian TV and check Somali news on the Internet. She nicely describes the feelings of the majority: “that is my life...all the time. I want to know what’s happening in my country ...”. Mohamed (first generation) thinks similarly and explains: “I follow the news because it concerns me a lot. It’s my roots. I have to follow what’s going on there”. Faadumo (first generation) on the other hand does not have anyone with whom she would wish to maintain ties, and consequently no desire to follow Somali politics anymore or regularly watch or listen to the news. To infer from this specific case, it could be said that her social network reflects in the change of her relationship with Somalia.

The above cited Naja’s (first generation) statement continued as follows: “... But my children don’t know. They like to say come here and listen what they say, but they don’t understand. They don’t feel it”. With this I turn the focus to second generation Somalis – in comparison to the first one – and to the analysis of their transnational practices. In contrast to the more or less uniform statements of first generation Somalis, the variations within the second generation are greater. Concerning the contacts those youngsters interviewed maintain with their relatives in Somalia, the majority does not speak to them often, only if their parents pass them the phone while on the line and ask them to greet their aunt, or uncle – as is usually the case. The conversation then stays mostly on ‘how are you?’ level, as Leyla explains;

... my dad would talk to her and sometimes would say, say ‘hi’ to your aunt and that’s it. And that’s the whole extent of our relationship. ... I don’t really know much about her life there and I don’t think she knows much about me.

The reason that she – or Ali and Maka, both second generation – does not have anything in common with them comes at the forefront. As a consequence she prefers talking to her aunt from London or Kenya and uncles living in Canada, because she has visited them before and knows their children. Thus, while the majority mainly passes greetings when their parents remind them to do so, or do not speak to the relatives in Somalia at all, there are also three exceptions among my interviewees who have a slightly different view on the relationships, which they try to keep ‘alive’. Rihana for instance deeply cherishes the family ties she maintains and the perspective she shared with me quite substantially deviates from the ones heard from other youngsters: “Because I think it means for us more than to the generation before us because we grew up in not your own country, so it is of more value to us”. With this words she implies that Somalia is her country, as will be examined further in the following chapter on *Transnational Identity*. Khalid is also more enthusiastic about talking to his family, explaining: “Yeah, relatives call me, like aunts, families...we talk together by phone, we stay

connected. With those in Somalia as well”. He stresses that he likes to hear them, wishing to make the message clear by telling me that his parents are not forcing him to stay in contact. Instead, it was his choice to stay connected with the relatives, because he does not have the opportunity to see them. Unlike the majority of respondents, Khalid clearly reacts differently on the fact that he cannot see his relatives living in Somalia. For Omar it is similar; when asked what motivates him to maintain the contacts, he answers: “It’s my family, I think it’s Somali thing, keep family close”.

Another factor, which impedes four interviewed youngsters from maintaining regular contacts with their – mainly older, as will be explained later on – relatives, is the insufficient knowledge of Somali language. This is not the case with everyone of them, but the majority is faced with this obstacle. Haweeyo explains it in the following words: “Yeah, she always says, call your grandmother, call your cousins...but I don’t...because my Somali is not so good so it’s always a bit awkward for me and I think that’s one of the reasons why I don’t talk to them”. Magol also mentions her inability to speak perfect Somali as being the problem in communicating with her relatives. “Most of the contacts goes through my parents and most Somali people that I speak to actually live here and I speak to them in Dutch”. I will also discuss the meaning of language in relation to identity in section *Language*, in Chapter 8.

Furthermore, like their parents, they also hear more often – in cases when they do – from those relatives that live outside Somalia, especially in Europe. Most often they are in touch with their younger cousins, who are usually around the same age as them. However, the way of communication between them varies greatly from the one of their parents, which implies different ‘communication behaviour’. While first generation Somalis state phone as the primary means of communication with those living in Somalia, as well as others beyond its borders, their sons and daughters prefer Internet and numerous social networks available to them. Rihana explicitly acknowledged; “I’m not a calling person. I can’t hang up the phone after one hour, as my mom does and the older generation. They are like...[sigh], they talk a lot on the phone. We’re faster in other things”. With ‘other things’ she – and other respondents – has been pointing to facebook and blackberry messenger, to only name the two that were mentioned most frequently during the interviews.

How durable are those ties that the second generation still maintains is another question all together. Most of them have stressed that they could not foresee what the future will bring and how they will feel about it later on, but Basra and Khalid for instance have an opposing predictions of what will happen to their ties once their parents will not be around anymore. Basra admits that if her mother was not around, they would probably not maintain ties with their family: “I think we would call if there’s problem or some kind of family crisis, but I don’t think we would just call to say ‘hey’, because I don’t think my mother even calls to say ‘hi’”. With this she indicates that even her mother usually calls or receives calls out of particular reasons, one of them being remittances, examined in the next section. Khalid is on the other hand convinced that he will continue with maintaining contacts in the future, if he for instance moves away from his parents: “because it’s a part of your blood, it’s your relative ...”. These two cases also illustrate how differently attitude towards their ethnic identities and their parents’ behaviour concerns them. Thus, besides being difficult to find the reasons behind

various transnational practices in the form of contacts of second generation Somalis in the first place, it is consequently also too ambiguous to predict if these ties will continue in the case of the second generation.

To generalize, almost none of them actively searches for the news from Somalia or follows them, unless their parents draw their attention with something they believe their children should know about. Siad for instance checks the news on Dutch television but according to him, the news are mostly about “pirates and terrorists” and if he wants to see “good news”, then he has to watch them with his mother. In Maka’s household, the Somali TV is on “24 hours a day”, which means that she is constantly surrounded by the news from Somalia. Omar and Khalid, who are among those few who like to maintain phone contacts with their relatives living in Somalia, also do not follow the news. The last relevant information is that all of the second generation respondents have a very multicultural circle of friends in the Netherlands – as also name generator showed – with whom they mainly share their free time.

### **6.1.1 Findings**

All the respondents in my study maintain certain degree of ties with Somalia or Somali diaspora, situated in almost every corner of the world, and mainly engage in family, or household networks. Those ties are maintained across transnational space mostly via phone and Internet<sup>48</sup>, the latter mentioned as an important facilitator of ‘keeping in touch’. However, phone calls are definitely primary means of contact between first generation Somalis. Hesse’s (2010b) article *Where Somalia Works* perhaps offers one explanation of why this is the case. Namely, with Somali mobile phone companies having a very creative business models and attracting 6,1% of Somalis who have phone subscriptions, the country is outpacing neighbouring countries as regards penetration rates. In contrast, long distance communication among young Somalis is mainly through numerous social networking services and other social media, hence, differing from ‘standard’ phone calls used by their parents. All in all, it could be said that the transnational lives of the interviewees do not end with diaspora and homeland connection but they go further, embracing “highly dispersed but well-connected circuits of relatives” (Al-Sharmani, 2007, p. 14) and as will be seen in the next section, also “resources and family relations and obligations” (*Ibid.*).

Furthermore, the first generation generally keeps contacts with Somali relatives and friends on a regular basis and more zealously than not, since all of them, except for one, still have their family members living in Somalia, making them worry on a daily basis. They also lead their lives in light of up-to-date news from Somalia. Their children’s transnational behaviour, however, evidently differ to a great extent. In general they do not feel comfortable talking to their – mainly older – relatives living in Somalia and the reasons lie in the insufficient knowledge of Somali language and not knowing and having little in common with the people they were supposed to maintain ties with – even though they are a part of the family. Though,

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<sup>48</sup> Internet does not only serve as means of direct communication, but also as a source of discussion forums, information and consequently influence. The most frequent themes deal with Islam, upbringing of children and youth, political news in Somalia, as well as with countries where Somali diaspora lives (Kleist, 2008b, p. 1132).

the majority maintains ties with their relatives who are the same age as them, using different means of communication as their parents. A few others who give greater meaning to these contacts should also be pointed out, however, the same as other second generation Somalis mentioned above, they are generally not in touch with the occurrences in Somalia.

Seemingly, their transnational behaviour, as regards keeping contacts and having an interest in information related to Somalia, does not only differ if compared to the first generation, but the respondents of the second generation also distinguish among each other, as will be also possible to gather from the subsequent chapters. More themes related to the transnational activities in form of maintaining connections across transnational space follow next.

## **6.2 Remittances**

Firstly, I should briefly define what the expression ‘remittances’ means. It stands for money that migrants working abroad send to their home countries – usually to their relatives (Wangaruro, 2011, p. 56). With remittances migrants considerably shape living conditions of those who stayed at home, which also make remittances “a concrete, material manifestation of ‘transnationalism’” (Van Hear, 2002, p. 221). With sending remittances, it is “one of the most important ways transmigrants continue to play a role in the nation building process of their homelands” (Lee, 2004, p. 239) and through which Somalis usually share their “economic resources and burdens” (Al-Sharmani, 2007, p. 3), as will be explained by the respondents. Although studies on remittances show that most of the remittances are sent by economic migrants (Koser & van Hear, 2003, p. 4), that does not mean that this concrete transnational practice is not one of the most important in case of refugees as well, regardless of the amount of money sent; namely, the latter is also not relevant for this specific research. The process of sending and receiving remittances takes place in a complex transnational network of people, located in multiple countries (Al-Sharmani, 2010). Many members of Somali diaspora in various countries support their families in Somalia or in neighbouring countries, helping their households with necessary contributions (Gundel, 2002) and thereby play a crucial part in the Somali economy (Horst, 2004, p. 5).

Besides Lee (2004) establishing that contacts with family members and sending remittances are the most widespread transnational practices, my analysis results based on Somali refugees and their offspring in The Netherlands confirmed the predicted. Hence, in this short section I will examine remittances sending of the first and the second generation, following the already established pattern of presenting the results with few direct quotations.

Approximately half of the first generation respondents send money regularly, which is usually once a month. Besides standard remittances, Amina (first generation) for instance also receives calls from distant relatives when they are experiencing problems and are in need of financial assistance. In such exceptional cases she sends some more money, as the majority of the respondents. Fathia (first generation) sends around hundred dollars to her mother and sister in Somalia every month. She shares the ‘burden’ with her sisters and brothers in

Canada. If they are in greater need, if her sister or mother is ill for example, she sends some more money. But it also depends on the financial position of her brother, sister and herself. She says that she does it with pleasure because she is aware of the desperate situation in Somalia and that without functional central government offering help, they need to help instead by sending remittances. Others also send remittances, if not regularly, at least when people call in need of help, which is in fact not a rare case: “calls are many, you cannot answer to all the calls. But what you can, you send”, said Mohamed (first generation). However, in words of Abdikarim (first generation), people left behind are not aware that they also have to pay the bills, since he is not working anywhere and the social care is not enough. Similar is in Hassan’s (first generation) case, but thanks to his family members around the world he does not have to send remittances every month. Before passing over to the second generation, additional information seems relevant. Namely, all the respondents give donation to the charities; a few of them give money orders monthly to organisations such as Amnesty International or charities fighting against cancer, but the majority grant request of those who knock on their door and ask for the financial help. Two among the respondents also donate to Somali diaspora organisations working in the Netherlands.

As regards remittances, the situation is different with the second generation. Generally they do not send them, but if they do, then the reason behind it are usually their parents, who ask for help, or they send it on special occasions, such as ending of Ramadan as in case of Rihana. Siad’s and Leyla’s answers were similar; they for example give the money to their mothers, who further decide whom to send it. Leyla explains the details: “there is like a list of people that this family sends money to, so we all give money to my mother and she divides it under the people on the list. And that’s every month. But I don’t know who gets what”. Furthermore, Basra told me that her family sends money together, each of them – her mother, sister and brother – gives around 50 euro and they send it to the relatives every month or once in two months. If “it’s something big”, then their brothers from the UK and Sweden send it as well;

Usually is because someone needs something or if, for example, we have family who has farm and something goes wrong with the food and they don’t have food for the entire season, then we send money so that they can buy food, or if someone dies or there is a funeral or someone is sick then we send money as a family.

On the question if she feels obliged to send money, she meaningfully answered:

Of course we want to help but I just realized that the people there...if they really need help then I’m happy to send it. Usually you know that the people there aren’t happy with the amount of money you send because they think you are some kind of millionaire here, you know like 400 dollars? But it’s a big amount for someone who’s a student, so...yeah, it is a lot but at the same time...we realized that maybe they will call you to thank you but they’ll not be, you know; ‘wooo, thank you!’ We have to realize that the money they share it with eight or nine other people...

Moreover, while Khalid and Maka send it self-initially, Omar, as the youngest child, “... got off [laughing]. But when I get older and have a good job, of course I’ll send money if my family needs it...wherever they need it”. The complete opposite to other respondents,

especially in comparison to Omar's statement, is Magol's point of view. Though she gives some money to her father in order for him to send it to her grandmother, her view on the matter – broadly discussed in the findings – is quite unconventional:

I don't believe in remittances... If you give too much money to the people, they become dependent on your money. I always tell my dad, like, in twenty years when you're not able to give money anymore, don't expect me to give my money. They can work over there [referring to the Northern part], it's not like...I don't...some people actually need it and they give their money.... In ten years when they're not gonna ask my mom or my dad, they're gonna ask me probably...and if I'm working really hard for my money, you become cheaper I think [laughing], or don't want to give it away that easily. But it's different generation as well, because the people, they actually know them, I don't know them...they're like my family, but they are far. ...

### **6. 2. 1 Findings**

A few interesting findings could be gathered from this short section on remittances, since according to Rumbaut (2002), its frequency is closely related to “subjective attachment, and commitment, to the country of origin”<sup>49</sup> (p. 89). The meaning of sending money to the relatives left behind in Somalia is thus very meaningful and justifiably deserves analysis. To start at the end, Magol's statement struck me. Not because of the nature of the statement as such, but from whom it came from and because in my mind, it involves a sense of thoughtless, ignorant rebellion, but also intelligence, or rather, maturity at the same time. Clearly, remittances can have positive, as well as negative effects on places and people (Vertovec, 2001a, p. 575). On one hand, they can reach vast sums of money and thus support families, education, and other infrastructure that developing countries cannot provide themselves, as well as positively influence on social relations in a society (Glick Schiller, 2010, p. 128). On the other hand, remittances can create “new status hierarchies and generate patterns of economic dependence” (Vertovec, 2001a, as cited in Glick Schiller, 2010, p. 128), hence, even bigger disparities within the national and international society. However, on the case of a refugee camp Dadaab in Kenya, Horst (2004, p. 8) for instance showed that the ‘dependency syndrome’ is inexistent.<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, as also Ghosh and Wang (2003) rightly observed, transnational acts are frequently a reflection of the expectations of their friends and family in the homelands. Since the society ‘back home’ often perceives immigrants as rich and limitless, they expect from them things that those immigrants cannot always provide. Therefore, because of their relatives in Somalia expecting certain transnational acts, refugees engage in cross-border

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<sup>49</sup> Even though I would rather argue that attachment to country of origin is indirectly also connected to people staying there. Namely, from the case of Faadumo it could be learned that since she does not have almost anyone left in Somalia, she does not remit anymore and she has also lost her interest in what is happening in Somalia. Thus, the importance of people – in relation to place – should not be overlooked. However, when asked if she would return to Somalia if it was safe, she replied with no hesitation that she would be the first to do so, which indicates the importance of place.

<sup>50</sup> Please note that author's findings that I have used relate solely on the rhetoric that those receiving remittances become idle and stop working. On the whole, the discussion is much more complex, depending on how the mentioned syndrome is defined.

economic activities, even though not always without problems and with the burden to their own livelihoods (Horst, 2004, p. 15; Muller, 2008, p. 401), as Hassan (first generation) mentioned. In order to ease this burden of securing livelihoods, which is also a great responsibility, relatives share it among each other. From the conversations, especially with Fathia (first generation) and Basra (second generation), it was evident that sending remittances sometimes presents a whole project of collecting money from a transnational network of relatives – usually done by women – who also immigrated to safer places. My findings somehow overlap with Al-Sharmani's (2007) work on Somali diaspora. He writes:

The process of remitting is complex. Within a family, there are usually several remitters. The task of remitting to multiple family members is divided among several relatives; some remitters undertake the obligation of sending monthly remittance while others remit vulnerable family members on special occasions such as religious events or in emergency situations (p. 3–4).

As the importance of economic remittances analysed in this part should not be dismissed, the value of what Levitt calls 'social remittances' (1998, as cited in Ruiz Baía, 1999, p. 96) that also travel through regular contacts with the relatives, should be equally acknowledged. They include ideas, beliefs and values. Thus, not only transfer of money is the result of transnational activities, but also nonmaterial things that have sometimes even greater impact on the people and countries they live in.

Furthermore, there is a considerable gap between remittances of first and second generation Somalis in the Netherlands. One of the reasons is a lack of motivation for the Somali youngsters, who are also students and undertake student jobs, as being the secondary reason why they are mainly not expected to participate in sending. While some send it without being asked (three of them), others are explicitly asked to contribute a share to the total amount of remittances. Again others do not remit out of different reasons, among them, the fact that they do not know people to whom money goes, because they become dependent on their financial assistance, because they do not have anyone left in Somalia, or because they do not plan to do it before earning their own money. Only to mention one observation while comparing the answers related to the contacts and remittances, it is interesting to see specific patterns. Maka for instance does not speak to her family friends or relatives in Somalia, but she sends them money – in detail, to the neighbours of her mother, with whom she grew up together – showing a great sense of solidarity.

### **6.3 Participation in (Diaspora) Organizations**

In this brief section I will present my findings regarding the participation of the respondents in the Somali diaspora organisations in the Netherlands, which is also one of the transnational activities in which members of diaspora are possibly engaged in. Almost all first generation refugees whom I interviewed participate, in one way or another, in a non-governmental organisation, which is related to their homeland. Especially women are much more active and involved in various organisations, whereas as employees or volunteers. A few of them also have their own organisation. Amina (first generation) is one of them; her diaspora

organisation deals with ‘newcomers’ – Somali refugees who just arrived and need guidance and a set of advices on how proceed in a new society – differences in cultures, integration, spreading the information about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), educating children and mothers on how to raise children in the new society, etc. While the situation is similar with other women, men are less active when it comes to diaspora organisations and participation in the Somali community. Mohamed (first generation) and Abdikarim (first generation) are not members of any organisation whatsoever, but Hassan (first generation) and Abukar (first generation) are, the latter holding a high position in one diaspora organisation and being very active in the local area. In contrast, their participation in the Dutch society through organisations, thus through institutional channels, is somehow limited. While all of them regularly vote, only two are active in a political sphere; one is seriously involved, while another used to be a member.

That political transnationalism is “almost exclusively first generation concern” (Bauböck, 2003, p. 701) could also be derived from my research sample. Namely, second generation is generally not engaged in activities related to Somalia. But of course, there are exceptions. Three girls – Rihana, Haweeyo and Basra – work for a Somali diaspora organisation as volunteers, with Rihana and Basra being more involved than Haweeyo. Their motives for participation vary, but I believe that the collective and primary reason is personal attachment of their parents to the organisation and consequently their incentives, plus, a great opportunity for work, – in a sense of gaining working experiences – contribution to the community and the possibility to stay in touch with people of the same ethnic background. As their involvement in the Dutch organisations is concerned, it is practically close to ‘zero’. Beside Magol, though an inactive member of a political party, none of them participates, but all of them regularly vote, also due to their parents’ stimulation.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

In Chapter *Transnational Practices* I examined the main set of transnational activities in which the interviewed first and second generation Somalis in the Netherlands engage in. Those include keeping contacts with their relatives in Somalia and around the world, following news from Somalia, participating in diaspora organisations, and sending remittances to their family and friends left in the country that themselves have managed to flee from. Those transnational practices that Somalis mainly maintain are from ‘below’, and are the result of grass-roots initiatives of immigrants and their counterparts in Somalia or in other countries to where they have migrated. Therefore, they are together engaged in a dynamic process of transnational activities (Al-Ali *et al.*, 2001), and by maintaining, in case in question, mainly social and economic ties, they constitute a transnational social field. In words of other scholars, they sustain “multistranded social relations” (Basch *et al.*, 1994), or “cross-border connections” (Vertovec, 2001a). By doing that, they do what has been explained in the theoretical chapter; cross national borders, sustain connections and networks, and hence provide for circulation of ideas, values, symbols, etc. (Lucas & Purkayastha, 2007, p. 244).

Furthermore, I believe that participants in this research are transnational – especially the first generation; they lead transnational lives with being regularly engaged in several transnational activities. However, some are more transnational than others, whose ties are more loose and irregular, and their interest in Somalia not so passionate. In any case, they are all at least indirectly involved in the multiple forms of links that exist, as Lee puts it (2004, p. 236) in case of overseas Tongans, by keeping themselves informed and through imaginings and remembering (Mahler, 2001, p. 600), as will be seen from next chapters. Their memories and continuing connections with Somalia are thus both part of their consciousness (Gray, 1996, p. 64) and both also stem from this consciousness (Vertovec, 1999, p. 450; Ghosh & Wang, 2003, p. 278–279). Therefore, after the arrival in the Netherlands, which I have presented before this particular chapter, Somalis turned transnational with “remittances, regular contacts ... the exchange of ideas and knowledge and the involvement in community associations promoting and upholding social ties and cultural practices”, as in the case of Bosnians researched by Al-Ali (2002, p. 114). Similarly to the cases of other studies on transnational practices, I have also noticed a variation in depth, frequency and range of transnational ties (Vertovec, 1999, p. 456). While some engage regularly, others might only occasionally (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1005) and indirectly engage in transnational practices that are mainly broad, but also narrow in scope. All in all, it might be interesting to mention that in comparison to other refugee groups in the Netherlands, Somalis maintain the fewest transnational contacts with their homelands but at the same time most often – 27% of them in 2008 – send money and other goods to the country of origin (Dourleijn & Dagevos, 2011, p. 22).

In specific case of Somali refugees, there is also a frequent conflict between a desire to perform transnational acts and realities captured in a particular context. With this I have in mind types of communication that refugees have available to them, since there are parts of Somalia where access to communication technology might not be possible. Thus, material and also sociocultural circumstances in both countries are important factors, which influence types and frequency of transnational practices. But in any case, over time, “actions change and ramify and create fluid and situational transnational identities” (Ghosh & Wang, 2003, p. 278).

Comparing first and second generation Somalis and the extent of their transnational practices, it could be concluded that they, as expected, differ greatly, as well as youngsters among themselves. Their behaviour is determined by numerous factors; what kind of stimulation they get from their families, parental links to the ancestral homeland, how their social lives in the Netherlands are established,<sup>51</sup> on gender, race, character, education, “the feeling of belonging” (Tsakiri, 2005, p. 104), etc. (Lee, 2008). It could be said that degree of transnational engagement is much lower that in the case of their parents, as well as consciousness about it, and that it stays mainly on a symbolic<sup>52</sup> level. This indicates that

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<sup>51</sup> On the example of first generation Mexican women in the US, Viruelle-Fuentes (2006) for instance established that the context of “limited local social embeddedness” (p. 342-343) stimulates immigrants to maintain strong (emotional) connections with their siblings in Mexico.

<sup>52</sup> Espiritu and Tran (2002, p. 369, as cited in Viruelle-Fuentes, 2006, p. 337) define symbolic transnationalism as “imagined returns to the homeland (through selective memory, cultural rediscovery, and sentimental longings)”,  
(... continues on the next page ...)

growing up in the ethnic enclave (Vickerman, 2002, as cited in Louie, 2006, p. 388) does not necessarily mean that the second generation will have transnational attachments. Their way of thinking is highly influenced by other than Somali culture. Even if they are consistent with one type of transnational activity, such as keeping in touch with the relatives in Somalia – though to a lesser extent than their parents – they do not remit, or *vice versa*. This case is not isolated; Rumbaut (2002, p. 91) for instance studied around 2,500 members of second generation migrants in the US from various countries, and found that just 2.4% of them had “high level” transnational attachments. However, it is important to stress at the end what Jones-Correra (2002, as cited in Lee, 2008, p. 14) observed; people’s feelings and stance towards transnational practices change over the life cycle and consequently their transnational involvement. Therefore, as also the respondents stressed during the interviews, it is difficult to predict the future and thus durability of those ties, since various power relations can influence the transnational engagement.

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or in Faist’s (2000) words, it refers to “collective identity without necessarily being part of a rather coherent system of practices and meanings of a ‘whole way of life’” (p. 213). For more on symbolic level of transnationalism refer to the following sections.

## 7 Living The Netherlands: Lives of Second Generation Somalis

One of the main determinants of second generation transnational attachments is their ‘relationship’ with the country of residence. Meaning, that transnational practices could be a reaction to negative experiences of acceptance in the Netherlands, or in other words, as a result of their dissatisfaction with their lives in the host country. This was the case with Moroccans and Turks in the Netherlands, as Schans (2009, p. 1178–1179) found out, especially regarding their religion and culture. Due to such unpleasant circumstances, their transnational attachments may become deeper and more important. On the other hand, however, the opposite can be gathered from Snel *et al.* (2006), who established that for immigrants in the Netherlands, sending remittances and having regular contacts with family members in the country of origin were not influenced by the effects of integration. Findings thus differ among various case studies. Although the relationship between these two phenomena is not at the core of this thesis, it is still crucial to explore. Namely, it will help me in better understanding the relationship between transnational activities, lives in the Netherlands, and identity formation of my respondents – maintenance of social relations with other Somalis can for instance reaffirm their ethnic identity.

Before reaching the part on transnational identities, I will examine the lives of second generation Somalis, with the purpose of understanding the environment in which they grew up and setting the proper ground for the already mentioned *Transnational Identities* chapter. Thereby, this chapter is dedicated to the lives of youngsters, in order to get an insight into their social lives in the Netherlands, their thoughts, emotions, and indirectly their identities. The lives of first generation Somalis have already been explained to a certain degree and will be in greater detail, but at this point it is of great importance to understand perhaps more complex, unpredicted and still labile livings of their children. I chose two interesting topics, which I believe are essential in understanding how they negotiate influences of different cultures and consequently construct their identities; Islamic religion in the Dutch context and social relations of the Somali youth.

### 7.1 Religion

While all the women from the first generation were very devout Muslims, covered, not necessarily wearing a hijab, but at least having a scarf loosely covering their hair, only three out of six girls interviewed wore hijab. Rihana is one of them, but her decision about wearing it came not long ago. Even though she grew up with this religion she was never forced into anything – as in the case of the other two. When in her college years a Dutch girl converted to Islam, it made her think: “I was born with that religion, from my house, my parents...but I don’t know a lot about Islam, so I bought a lot of books and did a lot of reading...and then I started to pray”. She continues with telling her mother about wearing a headscarf.

My mom told me, okay, you'll get my blessing but she said, I don't want you to wear it one day and then the other day off, you have to know why you are wearing [it].... So it took me six months to really wear a scarf.

Basra wears it but not yet correctly and does not do everything that the right Muslim is suppose to do – e.g. praying. I talked with her more generally about Somali people and religion, their culture and consequently the effects on integration. In her opinion Somalis are very tolerant towards people of other beliefs, which I also had the impression when talking to first generation Somalis, who are generally more religious than their children. She explained to me the difference in the role of the culture and religion in Somali lives.

I think with Somalis is more the culture that maybe creates some problems with integration, I think it's more the culture than religion ... I think it's more the culture and values that don't necessarily mix, you know the values here in Holland and the values that we have. Because if you look at the reports of integration problems of Somali it has to do with khat, you know, the drugs, so that's not a part of religion, so most of those things have to do with things that are a part of culture and not religion. ... A lot of grown ups don't have jobs, I don't think that has something to do with religion, it has to do with culture. Especially women who don't have jobs and sit at home. ... Because they come here and it's a different culture, it's like a cultural shock.... I don't think religion plays a big...it does play a part in integration problems, but I think culture is more a factor.

Basra is separating the culture and religion, and thus perhaps disidentifies with 'cultural Muslim', as the respondent in Langellier's (2010, p. 82) research puts it.

Furthermore, religion is "pretty important" for Leyla and Magol, the latter saying that for her, being Muslim is above all. "Above being Somali", which implies her strong consciousness of identity through religion.<sup>53</sup> She does not practice it as she should, but "in the future, Insha'Allah". Her primary category of identification is clearly religion and not culture or ethnicity. Haweeyo does not wear hijab, because "right now I don't think I would feel comfortable because ... I wouldn't know why I would do it. ... My mom always says to me, it's your choice, if you want it you can do it, but it's up to you".

The boys are generally also religious, which laic can most visibly tell from their abstention from alcohol and – though not regular – praying. However, even though there were only four boys in the sample, deviation among them is quite big. Since Omar and Khalid seems to be more disciplined, Ali and Siad do not take it so seriously. Siad's example is especially interesting and stands out the most. Namely, he does not do much about the religion and for the first time in front of his mother confesses that he has not been a good Muslim: "I don't drink, I have done it sometimes, I must say ... that's the first time she hears it [looking and pointing at his mother]". But he compares drinking to using khat and involves his mother into the conversation: "But my other brothers they do khat...leaves they chew and sometimes they do that. But I don't do that...I prefer sometimes other things, so." When I asked if chewing khat is tolerated in Islam, he replied: "No, it's haraam also". Amina adds: "It's a part of our culture, but to drink bear...", and her son grabs the opportunity: "it's hypocrite to say, you

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<sup>53</sup> Possible reasons behind this identification are explained in next chapters.

cannot drink but you can chew khat...because khat chewing causes much more damage than anything else, so...”.

I had the impression that the majority of parents are having an “individualistic style of parenting” (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001, as cited in Valentine *et al.*, 2009, p. 240), which means that they generally allow their children to decide for themselves the aspects of religion, and to define, more or less, their own identities. The environment and society with which they are surrounded are also important factors. Valentine *et al.* (2009, p. 241) for instance find on the basis of their case study that Dutch and Scandinavian Somalis are understood to be less religious and in general more ‘European’ than those that live in Britain, implying that local space is important in creation of certain identities. Hence, they are more likely to construct new, more casual Muslim identities (Phoenix, 2011, p. 321). At the same time, however, religious tradition is in case of the first generation most firmly safeguarded, which is also one of the reasons why they are, according to Esman (2009, p. 109), even more likely to adapt hybrid identities. Furthermore, a lot of the respondents, mainly the first generation, mentioned drastic change of attitude of Dutch people towards Muslims living in the Netherlands after 9/11, personally experiencing racist and Islamophobic prejudices.

## 7.2 Social Relations of the Somali Youth

In this part I discuss social lives of second generation Somalis, or in greater detail, how much are they close to the Somali community in the Netherlands and what kind of social relations they maintain. This will assist me in additionally highlighting the identity-construction and identity-preservation sites of second generation Somali youngsters. Siad and Ali are again similar in this regard. They do not attend Somali meetings or events, because they have their own friends – who are mainly from other immigrant groups living in the Netherlands. Siad explains: “... one time I went and I didn’t like it. It’s not my thing really. I don’t feel comfortable... I didn’t enjoy with the people there, the dances and everything”. When I asked him about Somali girls, he replied: “No, for me it’s not so. Somali girls want to contact me, they want to talk to me on facebook, but I don’t have interest in. It’s not for me. We don’t understand each other”. Stemming from this, I wish to present an interesting hypothesis, which I have developed through numerous conversations with the youngsters and SNG representative. Namely, I have observed that Somali youngsters eventually ‘find each other’ and as they grow older, they also become more engaged in Somali activities. A reason behind it is frequently the wish to find a future husband or wife. With this hypothesis in mind, I have approached this particular chapter.

The following example is very meaningful and representative, since I had the impression that more of them share similar feelings, but did not know how to express them so eloquently, or something was holding them back to do so. Leyla on the other hand expressed herself comprehensively and flavoured it with an anecdote. Her friends come from several different backgrounds, thereby having more non-Dutch friends than Dutch – as in all second generation cases. She explains that she went to a “very Dutch high school”, like Magol and Maka, and besides two others, she was the only black girl in the class.

But there were other black girls at other classes and I used to hang out with them..., we sort of found each other. Because if you are surrounded by all this white...yeah, because you stand out. And sometimes, because it's so..., like....white, they are sometimes very inconsiderate. One time, it was in the class, I think it was geography class, and he asked the question, like, why is it that in Africa everything is so poor, you know, and that's mostly because of the colonies, right..., and then this girl was like: 'because they are black'. And I got really upset and I started yelling...yeah, exactly, they don't realize what they are saying and they're not like...it's not like they are trying to be racist, but they are like, subconsciously, I don't know.

Leyla described an unpleasant incident, related to racialization of her skin colour opposed to “hegemonic whiteness” (Langellier, 2010, p. 69). She explained that she mostly associated with other black girls in her school because she “stood out” and was also disappointed how some of her white classmates thought about certain things. Although she does not generalize to all white people and *a priori* refuses to associate with them – as will be seen later on – this is an example of how rejection – for instance a continuing identification with ancestral homeland, or even recourse to criminal behaviour – can be a response to rejection – experience of racialization (Esman, 2009, p. 6; Glick Schiller & Fouron, 2001, p. 163). What is more, even though others do not explicitly show her their racist tendencies, she assumes that those are subconscious. She said that she will never forget that day, and from that time she has tended to “gravitate towards non Dutch people”. However, that was not the only reason; lack of sympathy and understanding as regards religion, is another one.

Also, it's easier. I have my Dutch friend, she's from my university, she's really nice, I like her a lot, but it's like, sometimes she would ask me like, oh, let's go to the casino. You know, I'm Muslim, I don't gamble [laughing]...and I had to explain that to her and..., there's a lot you have to explain to Dutch people. Things that you don't have to explain to your other friends. So maybe that's also one of the reasons ... If someone is really nice of course, I would still be friends with them..., it doesn't matter to me, it's just more work.

Magol also explicitly told me that she has mainly Muslim friends with whom she can “talk about that stuff as well” – *that* meaning issues related to religion. Clearly, it is easier to get along with fellow Muslims than with Dutch people, for instance. It is tiresome to constantly explain to a person that she has her own principles and that she wants to follow them – based on her experiences people like to push and hustle her into certain things, and they do not ‘understand’. At the University things are better, she says. On the other hand she does not “actively search out for Somali people” and go to Somali events, even though her parents would like her to have more Somali friends and learn Somali better. Although he advocates that it does not matter with whom you associate, Khalid on the other hand describes his experiences: “when we see each other we already understand each other”. Basra also usually approaches students who are “the same ethnicity” as her, believing that they might get along better, which she admits has proven to be misleading a lot of times. Namely, as Rihana stresses, – many others would agree – selecting friends on the basis of ‘Somaliness’ is like “putting people in boxes”. Siad for instance told me that some Somali people do not want to associate with “white people”. After I apparently expressed surprise, he explained: “Not every time of course, but some people are closed and they hang around only between themselves.

They want to keep their culture alive and they have too much pride, they stick together, they don't go out with other people." He concludes that this is "not normal", with his mother agreeing with the statement.

It depends on many factors why Somali youngsters eventually seek out to meet fellow Somalis, but religion is clearly one of them, as seen above: "I think it's religion. Because with them you can talk about every part of your life and with others, they are Christians for example and they don't understand things, so it's...that's probably the main difference...", explained Magol. Furthermore, since I was interested in the phenomena of 'finding each other', she helped me a lot in understanding it because she has also attended the events of SNG, which I was referring to in the question (I was able to observe from a distance one of their gatherings). Her thoughts were very useful since she is just in the process of finding more Somali friends. In her case, it is as follows:

...when I was younger I used to just hang out with my sisters and my friends, so it was the whole different group. But they were mostly Dutch or Moroccan or Irani...and now, actually, since this year, I have a lot of Somali friends, I don't know how did it happen, but I went to a couple of Somali things, so I know a lot of Somali people now. And it started like saying 'Hi' all the time and then you have a conversation and then keeping in touch.

She further explains the process of social networking that she was 'sucked in' and since one thing lead to another, her network of Somali friends in The Netherlands is gradually expanding. Also because of several Somali events, which she attended in a short period of time, she has met a lot of Somali people from her school with whom she had never talked before. Clearly, it is in the initiative of some active young Somalis to connect co-ethnic youngsters living in the Netherlands.<sup>54</sup> However, in contrast to her and the observations stated in footnote, Leyla currently personifies the opposite. Her position is nicely expressed in the following statement on Somali community of youngsters and indirectly on how this community works through her eyes. As observed at social and cultural events, she explains the dynamics within the Somali youth groups:

I do not attend. I don't find it interesting; it's not my scene. You know, the kind of people that go there are ... Somali girls who only have other Somali girls for their girlfriends and they are like a little group and it's very hard to get in that group...because I don't know them, they know who my sisters are so they know who I am, but I don't know them personally and I've never felt the need to get to know them, so it's very hard if you go there, then everyone is like, oh, Leyla, Leyla, but I ... find it very difficult to be super pleasant, enthusiastic about people I don't know. And then I have to

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<sup>54</sup> Ibrahim (the name has been changed for the sake of anonymity), one of the co-founders of the organisation Somali Next Generation, is definitely one of them. He told me in the interview (5 July, 2011) that before 2008 there was no independent organisation that would deal exclusively with young Somali people, which brought frustration among some of them, since they have big ideals to do something for Somalia and they were disappointed with other organisations. Thus, in 2009, they founded this organisation, which is the only organisation that deals with youngsters and in the role of mediators, helps them to integrate into the Dutch society (among other things). In his words, this is a youth-led organisation that strives to connect and motivate Somali youth. According to Ibrahim, Somali youngster do not know what the war really is about and they are not familiar with the Somali history. Additionally, Somalis living in the Netherlands do not know each other because they grow up with non-Somali friends, but later on they wish to meet other offspring of first generation refugees as well. From how he sees it, youngsters approaching 20 years of age start to interact with other Somalis and unconsciously enter the period of finding a partner, plus, express the desire to assist the country of Somalia.

hang out with them and they are like a group and they have their inside stuff...<sup>55</sup> and it's very difficult to feel a part of that and I don't feel comfortable.... So I tend to avoid those kinds of situations.

The cases of Leyla and Magol are two interesting examples of how differently Somali youngsters think regarding the matter in question and adequately show the complete picture of what can be gathered from all the respondents. Namely, no precise conclusions could be drawn from the analysis, perhaps presenting an exception that proves the rule. A few more years have to pass – most probably until the time for marriage and child rearing comes – and the same questions should be put forward to the same respondents in order to notice changes through their life-courses. However, on the basis of what Ibrahim – refer to the 54<sup>th</sup> footnote – has told me, and the fact that almost all the older brothers and sisters of my respondents are integrated in Somali circles, one is expected to make certain predictions.

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<sup>55</sup> Siad has also mentioned that he does not “understand their jokes”, indicating that the whole mindset is different.

## 8 Transnational Identity

The way I dress, the way I work, etc. I don't have an identity anymore I am just myself, but I am not hiding my identity. It is not important for me to be seen as Somali, but it is important that people see me as a person.... I am first Dutch and after Somali. I have a Dutch passport and I don't have Somali citizenship. Sometimes I feel I am without a country. It depends, sometimes I am Somali-Dutch and sometimes I am Dutch-Somali. If I go to the UK and I meet some Somali I say I am Dutch. ~ Faadumo, first generation

In this thesis I have presented various examples of transnational practices that diverse Somalis in the Netherlands engage in, and I have also indicated some issues confronting them while living transnational lives, especially in the case of the second generation. The findings from the previous chapter in a way already set the ground for this one. Namely, under this chapter I will examine the issue of identities – as complex as it may be, judging on the above citation – of first and particularly second generation Somalis, and see from numerous perspectives how diasporic lives among them are being constructed, negotiated and maintained. I will firstly analyze how parents encourage their children to maintain transnational lives and preserve Somali culture, and then dedicate considerable amount of space to how parents and also their descendants mix Somali and Dutch cultures in their everyday lives, to the meaning of language, and lastly, to the respondent's feelings of belonging and their sense of 'home'.

Even though transnational practices of second generation Somalis are quite substantially limited in comparison to those of their parents, and their transnationalism is mostly symbolic, those practices and a mere fact of growing up and living in a Somali household, present an important resource for the construction of their identities. The question of how various identities are being constructed, reformed, and values changed, as well as geographical and ethnic belongings in the context of the host country and transnationalism, will be at the core of this particular chapter.

I have learned about the respondents' thoughts through the narrative identity (Somers, 1994, p. 605). Narrative(s) are concepts of social epistemology and social ontology, meaning that it is through narrativity that we get familiar with and make sense of the social world, and it is through narrativity that we constitute our identities (*Ibid.*, p. 606). Identities are thus stories that we tell to ourselves and to others about 'who we are' (Langellier, 2010, p. 68) and with them, we construct past in the present. However, as explained in the methodology chapter, the narratives of refugees are "fraught with political potential and peril" (*Ibid.*, p. 70), which is hard to escape in the narrative analysis. A proof of the fact that identity is something that we "do and re-do" (*Ibid.*, p. 71) also through storytelling, is a statement of Haweeyo. After the interview, she told me: "I say now that I'm a Somali but I start asking myself what do I do for my people? I don't really do anything. It is positive to start thinking about those things ...I never thought of some things that you asked me now".

As already indicated above and as Fangen (2007) describes in her research on young Somalis in Norway, I will similarly choose excerpts of the most characteristic and also extraordinary answers on ethnic and geographical belonging, on their sense of 'Somaliness',

or ‘Dutchness’, or in general, following one of the many definitions of identity, on their self-perception and perception of them by others. I make the conclusions on the basis of how parents encourage their children to maintain and preserve the ‘Somaliness’ in them, on the basis of symbols that mark their identities, such as clothes, food, or language, and to what extent they mix them in everyday lives, and lastly, on their thoughts about home and belonging. Therefore, in what follows, I will question ‘natural’ identities and undertake the issue of identity formation by analyzing the answers – containing informal categorization practices (Fangen, 2007) – of first and second generation Somalis in the Netherlands.

## **8.1 Encouragement of the Second Generation**

On the basis of different examples and from different perspectives I was interested in finding out how the first generation influences the second to maintain transnational way of living, especially as regards preserving their part of identities related to Somalia and their ‘roots’, as they put it. Additionally, my aim was to establish how they encourage them to do so. Amina for instance explains the influence of the first generation on how the second generation thinks:

If you grow up in the household where they constantly talk about the clans, about their own clan..., if you grow up in that kind of environment then you will have the same mentality or mindset as your parents. You also see it with the weddings, ... they want their daughter or son to marry someone from the same clan. And usually it still happens. Still now.

And how does she encourage her children to maintain their ‘Somaliness’?

... to keep their culture and language and everything, I encourage them to go to places where Somali have events or conferences, celebrations (as independence day) and have more Somali friends than other.

Through actual realization of their parents’ ‘wishes’, these kinds of encouragements have a great potential to indirectly influence ethnic identity formation of second generation youth, and to re-affirm a transnational Somali ethnic identity (Quirke *et al.*, 2009, p. 26). It is interesting to see how her son Siad accepts and perceives this encouragement. He said that generally she encouraged him to do better, to do different hobbies and interact with different people, even though “they were not my choice”. When he was young, his mother told him a lot of stories about the life in Somalia, showing pictures and videos. But when the question is put differently, he tells me that even though he has no interest in socializing with Somalis and go to their events, she likes to “put [him] there...she tried but I have other interests”.

Naja (first generation) is also determined: “...but I like them to know the roots and their culture. They have to know because they are not really Dutch, they are Somali”. She then tells a story about when she was visiting the Indian consulate a few weeks before our interview, and described how disappointed she was by the way she was ‘treated’. Due to the fact that she is originally Somali, she had to pay more for the visa than Dutch people, even though she showed them her Dutch passport. On this basis, she concludes: “so only because of

the paper<sup>56</sup> I know I'm Dutch, but originally I'm a Somali". Dutch passport is therefore the only thing that gives evidence of her relation with the Netherlands, since her appearance clearly shows her Somali origin and Muslim belief, with the latter two appearing to be of a greater importance in specific circumstances. For this reason, she does not want her children to deceive themselves and instead accept the reality, even though she realizes it is hard:

...but I'm a Somali, I have to accept that, but my children didn't accept that, because they are growing up here and they think they are Dutch, but they are not and they have to know where they come from and they have to accept it where they are. Our children have identity crisis because they come from Somalia and then they came here. She came when she was three [looking at Leyla who was listening the conversation], she doesn't know what is Somalia. And she has a Dutch passport. When she goes now to another country, she is Somali and she doesn't know what is Somalia, what is her clan, .... She doesn't know. It is very difficult.

It seems on the one hand that she tries to facilitate her daughter's life with trying to make her understand that even though she is officially Dutch, she will never be 100% Dutch, since her looks tells otherwise. Similarly Abukar (first generation) points out the role of skin colour, saying that you cannot change it. In Valentine *et al.* (2009, p. 237) this phenomenon is explained on the case of Somalis living in Britain. They stress that identifying with the British is of little value for Somalis if the British community does not accept them as such and labels them as 'outsiders' instead. Additionally, in this research Naja (first generation) is concerned with what Esman (2009, p. 138) found out in his research; locally born descendants of first generation immigrants usually expect to be respected and treated like ethnic natives. When these expectations are not met, they may well vent their frustration by resorting to violence. However, on the other hand, Naja is also frustrated with her daughter Leyla's insufficient knowledge about almost everything related to Somalia, indirectly indicating that Leyla is quite 'Dutch', as the following chapters will clarify.

Naja said that her children do not have many Somali friends but she encourages them to marry Somali man/woman, which explains to a certain degree the polemics in the previous section:

I say, when you want to get married, it is good the same culture, because if you are married it is not easy, we say ... you pick up something and you don't know what you pick up. Because when you get to know the man, he was growing in one culture and you were growing in another culture, maybe it's clash. It's better when you are the same culture.

Furthermore, even though Fathia (first generation) says that her children are Somalis, her position is more moderate in the sense that she has accepted that they will not be like her: "they grew up here, they speak fluent Dutch, the way they think is different from me". Although she would like for her children to preserve the culture, language and religion, she does not force them into anything. She seems to combine liberal views, repeated several times and expressed in: "[my children] can do whatever they want", but still consistent with the religious beliefs and within the framework of Somali culture. She is also aware that she has to

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<sup>56</sup> This paper, however, does not mean only citizenship as such, but also security and "the emotions that such membership evokes" (Yuval-Davis *et al.*, 2005, p. 526, as cited in Valentine *et al.*, 2009, p. 246).

abide to Dutch laws, but at the same time she does not want to miss her culture and the way she lives her life.

Generally, all the parents tell their children about Somali history, culture and other details that appear in everyday lives in their household. They are all determined that their children should know their roots, where they come from and what does it mean to be Somali. A few of them express more flexible strand, such as Hassan (first generation). When implying that his children are growing up in Dutch environment and that they will probably be ‘more Dutch than Somali’, Hassan immediately reacts, saying among other things that he does not have problems with that, and that he should not force his children to be anything. Her daughter Magol also says her parents do not encourage her – with a difference to many other parents interviewed – to associate with Somalis. In Mohamed’s (first generation) opinion, there is a good side and a bad side of every society “and if they take the good end of what the Dutch people are doing, it is okay with me. Yeah. Because they are Dutch [laughing]”.

Besides intentional encouragements of their parents, second generation Somalis also grew up in the presence of what Hirsch (1999, as cited in Pratt, 2003, p. 45) calls ‘postmemories’. These are experiences, stories and images – mainly photographs – with which they grew up in a Somali household and which have an extremely powerful and influential impact. Postmemories are “mediated through an imaginative investment and creation” (Hirsch, 1997, as cited in Valentine *et al.*, 2009, p. 237) and usually result in children’s identification with Somalia as their homeland (Pratt, 2003, p. 45). But their identities and ethnicity are not ascribed to them only by their parents, but also by the wider society in which they grew up and where stigmas related to their religion or skin colour “sets limits for their self-ascription” (Fangen, 2007, p. 403).

## **8. 2 Mixing the Elements of Somali and Dutch Cultures**

In this part I focus on everyday practices that Somali migrants reposition in the country of their current residence. In other words, I will be interested to what extent Somali cultural elements are mixed with the Dutch ones. The main question is thus, how everyday practices of Somali refugees have changed since their lives were ‘moved’ to the Netherlands and indirectly what does that mean for their identities. I will move away from their political and economic activities analysed in the *Transnational Practices* chapter and focus on cultural and ethnonational characteristics, as Hopkins (2010, p. 527) puts it. I was also trying to avoid essentializing the Somali and Dutch cultures and present it as fixed poles (Fangen, 2007), and let instead the respondents themselves conceptualize it through their narratives. Most of the statements, however, were in the spirit of Fathia (first generation)’s thinking: “We live in two cultures – Dutch culture and Somali culture – but I think it depends on you”.

Starting with food, a subject of every conversation, it is clear that all of them mix Somali and Dutch cuisines, which reflects their plural identities (Salih, 2002, p. 57). Siad for instance

describes how they eat ‘stampot’<sup>57</sup> with banana: “the only fruit they<sup>58</sup> always eat, every day”. Almost all of them also mentioned how it was difficult to get used to the Dutch style of eating only one hot meal a day, in the evening. In Somalia they would eat two to three hot meals in a day, says Amina (first generation). But at a workplace, they seem to have no other choice but to eat ‘Dutch style’, even though they prepare hot meals whenever they have the opportunity. Some of first generation interviewees complained that their children prefer fast food, or Dutch food – “bread with cheese” as Abdikarim (first generation) notices – over Somali food, which is the reason why they often go and eat outside, as Ali for instance does. He is not the only one, but Magol on the other side, in whose taste the Somali food is the best, is also not an isolated example.

Another interesting expression of identity is dress, which I discussed mainly with women and which can be a subject of vivid debates between a mother and a daughter, as I shall present in this paragraph. All women were wearing African-like clothes, which Amina (first generation) commented as follows: “I want to keep it that way. It is one of the things that still makes me feel being a Somali, it still makes me feel connected to Somalia ...” and since this is accepted in the Netherlands, she continues to dress however she wants to. Fathia (first generation) sees herself as Somali, African woman and her dress mirrors that: “It is something that comes from my heart” she explains, “something that is part of my culture”, so she would have felt that a part of her is missing if she had not been allowed to dress according to her wishes. Somali women’s clothing, which expresses respect for Islamic dress codes, as well as Somali traditional dress (Hopkins, 2010, p. 532), can be viewed as “an act or gesture through which Somali women may constitute a new or continued identity performed to themselves and others to create or maintain links to Somalia and the local Somali community” (*Ibid.*). This is apparently a way of keeping closer their homeland and culture, of intentionally expressing their ‘Somaliness’, and of expressing the adherence to Islam, among other things. On the other hand, however, Nadifa (first generation) does not wear Somali clothes on the street. She interestingly explains: “[more time] that you spend here, that is how you dress. If you live here longer, you start to dress as Dutch for example”. Her experiences and feelings somehow stand out, since other women differ in this regard.

After food and dress, other statements about the Dutch and Somali cultural elements will follow, which did not overlapped so explicitly as the topics already mentioned, or they do not have such a straightforward impact on their identities. A few of the respondents pointed out the strict respect for time that Dutch people have, and which they are, or rather were, not used to. For Fathia (first generation) it is nearly impossible to function in the Netherlands without an agenda and punctuality. Hassan (first generation) also mentions it in his interesting statement:

I think we didn’t change much...one thing is maybe respect for time. In Italy and Somalia things go slowly, but here everything is on time. Administration and bureaucracy are very complicated. I come from the country where bureaucracy is too loose, corrupt; here is the other side of the coin. And I like that. Better this than that. If you do wrong, you pay it.

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<sup>57</sup> Typical, traditional Dutch dish.

<sup>58</sup> With the emphasis on *they*, I would like to point out Siad’s distancing from the Somali culture.

Furthermore, other interesting ‘Dutch’ cultural elements that some of them have adapted to a certain degree are how to be tolerant (Amina, first generation), and more straightforward (Fathia, first generation).

The difference between the first and the second generation, concerning how they experience the Dutch culture and society, is considerably different. Amina’s son Siad perceives growing up in Somali household and being surrounded by the Dutch society as something “normal”, as in the case of Omar, who very meaningfully stated: “... I don’t see a difference. For me is normal...I don’t see if it’s Somali or if it’s Dutch. For me it’s just living”. I realized later on how my questions must have seemed odd to some of them, especially to the boys. Siad further explains:

I never thought about it really. It’s normal for me. There is no difference because I grew up in Holland and my culture also automatically became...not really Dutch, but multicultural. I adopted a little bit from Surinam boys, from Moroccan boys, Turkish boys...everybody. We collected our own culture. It’s not really Dutch, you know. But everything.

The lives between two cultures, as Fathia (first generation) puts it, are not without regular misunderstandings and challenges, at least when in Somali household. Namely, here are two examples of how clashes of the two cultures most visibly appear within the households between parents and their children. Siad tells me a short story containing the ‘clash’, which seemed as not being so simple to surmount it after all: “...mostly my mother says in the weekend bring me to some place by car and I have other appointments ... And I say to my mother next time and she says, that’s real Dutch, making appointments, but...”, his mother interrupts him, insisting: “but I say not for me, I’m your mother ..., that’s Somali culture, if mother says he should do it, but he’s not...he says you’re my mother but...” Siad jumps in, arguing, “I’ll bring you but say to me two days earlier...when I put on my jacket she says, are we going there and there [laughing], or when I make an appointment...my mother says, come, we’re going somewhere else”. The second includes Fathia and her children, who ‘teach’ her that particular behaviour is not very welcome, or even ‘normal’ for the Dutch society. She stresses that she has to know the elements of Dutch culture but some things are “not normal” for her, like the ‘salary talk’. She finds it strange that Dutch people do not talk about their salaries openly and see it as a taboo, while in Somalia this was not the case: “You know, my children say no, you cannot ask that, that is more private thing, you know, things like that...which is normal for me because they are grown up here. It is so completely different”.

While the first generation talk about the Dutch culture as something ‘strange’ and ‘new’, I got the impression that the second generation talk about the Somali culture – not religion – in a similar manner. Therefore, we can witness a different positioning, especially within the second generation, in terms of ethnicity and culture (Fangen, 2007, p. 409). Leyla is for instance more reserved, and although she looks “very Somali”, she also does not “dress or act” this way. It was interesting to hear her view on Somali weddings, which was convincingly defending the statement that she thinks more like Dutch, as she puts it:

I don’t go...like my mother, she goes to a lot of weddings because people would call her, like, oh, come to the wedding of my daughter and stuff. But I don’t go to anyone’s wedding unless I know the person getting married and they’re related to us, then I will go. But I won’t go to some

neighbour's daughter's wedding. I don't know you, so I don't go. Weddings, I like them... They are the only real Somali cultural stuff that I do ....

In her next statement she explains how her relatives perceive her behaviour and appearance, and how she feels she cannot meet their expectations and also does not plan to.

For me it is just the way it is, but also I think..., like my mom and her friends say, oh yeah, she's very Dutch, she's the Dutch one, she acts like a Dutch .... And for them it's not something that is bad, but you don't act properly Somali. But I don't think I know how to act like a Somali. I don't know.... I can act like my mother but that would be fake because that's not... I did not grow up in Somalia..., I don't know how a real Somali person would act. I don't know how I would be if I grew up in Somalia. Like, how am I suppose to act then..., for me it's not a crisis. It's just the way it is and it's not that I can change it, so I don't see myself changing in the near future.

Furthermore, after Haweeyo explained me how she has adopted some elements of Somali culture, such as profound respect for elders, our conversation led to the issue of homosexuality, when she expressed her understanding of Somali culture, or rather Islam's stand on the matter. However, at the same time she proved her openness, possibly as a result of – among other factors, such as her mother's influence – living in the Dutch society:

I understand why Somali and other Islamic people wouldn't accept it. They would accept you if you are homosexual, but they wouldn't accept if his or her son or daughter was homosexual.... I don't have anything against it. God knows what you are feeling and if you have good heart and at the end of the day that's the most important.

Khalid also observes that Dutch families are more open, while Somali culture is more traditional, “and we don't like weird<sup>59</sup> stuff, just regular Somali culture. I'm also very proud of my culture, so I can relate to my culture. It's not any difference for me. I was raised in both cultures, so I picked everything good from both”. He also indicates that it is natural for him to be raised in a mixed cultural environment, but in comparison to Siad – who thinks that Somali culture is too chaotic – or Ali for instance, he is much more aware of the ‘Somali part’ of him, with Somali culture playing greater role in his life. Furthermore, Magol compares elements of both cultures and also stresses that she combines them and takes from each what suits her most, making her “live in the middle”.

However, while it seems easy especially for Siad or Omar, Leyla put a lot of thought into the state of being integrated into more cultural worlds at the same time, and consequently also into the existential questions such as ‘who am I?’ After listening her for a while and after receiving answers already cited above, I found the question – “On one hand you say that it's your culture [Somali], but is it really?” – to be appropriate for the moment.

Yeah, I know what you mean. See...hmm...yes and no...see, I grew up here for my whole life, but it's because your family is Somali, the people that you associate with, like, everything is Somali, you know, like, the way your mom speaks, and also what your mother teaches you in comparison to...why can't I wear shorts, you know. Like all the Dutch girls they're wearing shorts...No, you're Muslim, you're Somali. I've always been very different from the Dutch girls or other cultures ... I

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<sup>59</sup> I was not able to gather what he meant by *weird*, but from the context I assume that he was pointing to the more liberal principles of the Dutch society.

always knew that I'm not like them. So that's how I see it, it's my culture because you have restrictions, so it's not like if I was a completely Dutch then I would do whatever all the Dutch people do, but because I'm Somali and because of the way I was raised, I have these restrictions that I can't do this stuff, and that's what has always separated me from the other kids and that's how I always identified it to myself...I'm Somali; therefore I can't. Not in the bad way..., but yeah, I have different rules that you do and sometimes it is difficult to explain that to my friends...why can't you do that, why can't you stay at my house...and then no, we don't do that, it's not my culture.

From what she has said, it is possible to establish that she realizes that as a Somali living in The Netherlands, she has particular restrictions, which has always been drawing a line between the Dutch people and herself. This is one of the reasons why she could never really feel Dutch, even though her overall behaviour is highly similar to that of her Dutch peers.

Moreover, Magol interestingly explains how she cannot fit perfectly in either of the two cultures. She basically summarizes and captures in a very comprehensive way, the feelings of how a lot of second generation Somalis mainly feel:

Because I don't speak Somali as good as my mom, so that's like the gap between Somali culture [and herself]...but in Dutch culture you don't really have that. But you know you're different because we have different religion, we have different language, we look different, so there is a gap between both actually. There is a gap between me and the Somali culture, and me and the Dutch culture. Although I know both of them, I don't know...it's a bit strange, but it's a...like, you have things that you can improve in both cultures, that's it.

Magol's statement clearly shows how youngsters who were/are born in Somali households situated in another country, such as the Netherlands, orient themselves somewhere 'in between'; not 'fitting' perfectly in either of the two communities and feeling – in some aspects – disconnected from both. Due to the reason she stated, the most optimal reaction is to gather the elements from both cultures with which they can best relate to, and form their own, mixed (or hybrid), distinctive cultures.

### **8. 2. 1 Findings**

While some of the second generation youngsters stress that they do not know any other way of living their lives than the one in which they have grown up – in predominantly Somali household surrounded by the Dutch society (the distinction between girls and boys is quite obvious since the majority of the latter seems to take it more loosely, not thinking about it that much) – others gave me the impression that they are constantly negotiating their positioning in the mixed society. Even though their parents generally seem to understand and try to be realistic, they all expect from their children to act in the framework of Somali culture and Islamic beliefs. Stemming from this, second generation Somalis face several restrictions in comparison to their Dutch friends, which not only makes them sometimes 'incompatible' to associate with, but it also creates a gap between them and the Dutch culture – besides the gap they already feel with the Somali culture.

That migrants' in general and refugees' cultures in particular cannot stay enacted and without at least some modification, is already evident from first generation Somalis – proving

the fluidity and spatiality of the term – left alone the fairly substantial fusions happening in case of the second generation. They transform and reconstruct Somaliness and hence produce “nuanced characteristics amongst Somalis” (Hopkins, 2010, p. 525). Although the evidence from other researches also shows that cultural practices and meanings do not disappear so quickly, the refugee culture cannot be identical to the culture of the country of origin (Faist, 2000, p. 213). What is more, old patterns are usually subjects to synthesis with the new ones (*Ibid.*), thus forming mixed cultures to a different extent. Whereas first generation Somalis are learning how to be Somali in the Netherlands – and combining home and host country values – the case is similar, or even more challenging for the second generation, who largely adopted more of a Dutch mentality. A lot depends on the character of each and every individual, and how he or she perceives dynamics around himself/herself, with numerous other factors having an influence on it.

### 8.3 Language

Language is a tool for communication, which connects people and enables them to understand each other, or in words of Mutanen (2010, p. 32), to “stand between differences”. But the fascination of language is much more than that. It is “part and parcel of the identity of an individual and of a nation” (*Ibid.*, p. 31) and thereby plays a central role in identity formation of an individual. Furthermore, it is frequently “language, more than land and history, that provides the essential form of belonging” (Ignatieff, 1993, as cited in Rumbaut, 2002, p. 43). This great significance of language is explicitly expressed through the respondents’ narratives. Besides discussing it in depth when the questions regarding the language were put forward, the issue of language was also repeatedly mentioned in other discussions, which additionally indicates its importance. While the respondents of the first generation were stressing how important it is to know the Somali language and in that way have the ability to talk to their Somali relatives, as well as preserve the attachment and belonging to Somalia and conscious of being Somali, the majority of the second generation was also aware of its crucial role. However, they were at the same time emphasizing their lack of competence in the Somali language. I was interested in what is happening with the language in the Somali community – in particular, in households of my respondents – and the relation of each individual towards the Somali language. Through the understanding of Somali and Dutch language fluency and individual’s view on it, one can also better understand transnational behaviour among second generation youth, because fluency in Somali is not so self-evident as it is in case of their parents (Louie, 2006, p. 366).

In the majority of households parents insist on speaking Somali with their children – even though, in Mohamed’s words, they “pick up very little [laughing]” – but they usually respond in Dutch, because it is easier for them since the knowledge of Dutch is fluent and their Somali is usually “not that good”, or “not perfect”, as they mainly estimated. The language of communication between brothers and sisters is mainly Dutch as well. From what she has observed from her children, Naja (first generation) explained to me an interesting dynamic of Somali language in their household: “They all know, but they are better each from the other.

The older is the best and then it goes down like that, with the age”. She assumes that is because they were too young when they came to The Netherlands, depending on the person as well; some pick up the language easily, while others have more difficulties in general. One of her daughters for instance came to the Netherlands when she was six and speaks fluent Somali, but she was also very interested to learn. Furthermore, second generation respondents estimated their knowledge of Somali and their satisfaction with a certain level that they have reached, with some of the following excerpts. For Ali the Somali is “not really” important and even though the level that he speaks is not so high, he believes that “it’s enough”:

The last time I talked to my uncle that lives in Somalia and I say to him, how do you do, and then I say in Somali, ‘I will catch my mom’, and I wanted to say that I’ll give the phone to my mom and my mother is laughing. But they understand what I mean.

Leyla’s Somali is “not that good”, which is the reason why she avoids speaking to Somali visits at their house. Correspondingly, everyone thinks she is very shy, but the answer lies in her embarrassment of not speaking perfect Somali. This is one of the reasons why Omar speaks “fairly good” Somali and tries to do better: “...eventually it’s the country that you came from, so... If I want to talk to my relatives, I cannot talk in Dutch to them”. Rihana says that they generally speak Somali in their house, but a lot of words they mix with Dutch, forming sentences consisting of half Somali and half Dutch words. She says she was lucky to be able to learn it from her mother:

... thirteen years ago she gave every Sunday Somali class for me and Somali kids, the neighbours, and my cousins who were living in our town. ... it was for one year, me and my sister took the classes from our mom.... I was really glad because she thought us Somali grammar and how to read, how to write.... I thank my mom for that because a lot of Somali children didn’t have the opportunity to learn Somali in another country.

A few parents stressed that they do not push their children to learn Somali perfectly, since they were born in the Dutch society. One parent also described the communication gap that they experience at home, since his children do not speak perfect Somali, and he does not speak perfect Dutch, making some words and meanings difficult to explain. The majority of children also expressed their desire to learn better Somali and be able to easily communicate – for practical, as well as more personal, identity related reasons:

... even though we live here, maybe I’ll never go back to Somalia, maybe I will have babies here, but still it’s a part of your culture and yourself and your identity. You should be able to speak Somali as well. If I can’t speak Somali and if I’ll have children, my children won’t be able to speak.  
~ Basra

...cause Dutch can speak their language very nice, they feel like Dutch people. But I really don’t feel like a Dutch human being...I feel mostly like Somali you know, and language is problem. For me, to do is, to learn the language.... If I want to make a future in Somalia...so, I would like to learn and have lessons...to really know the grammar and spelling, to talk to them back fluently.  
~ Khalid

Maka agrees that you have to speak the language in order to “feel Somali” and since she is the only one fluent in Somali among the respondents, she points out how proud she is to be able

to speak it that well. However, besides similar reasons behind the encouragements from the parents and quite similar answers of their children – with no substantial deviations – Faadumo (first generation) is one exception. When she arrived in the Netherlands she decided to speak Dutch with her children in order for them to speak good Dutch and therefore have the opportunity to go to good schools. This, however, would in her opinion not be possible if she spoke to them Somali. Faadumo's daughter Haweeyo on the other hand does not speak Somali well, but she is aware of its significance and no less determined to learn it:

...it means a lot because it actually defines who you are, to me. Because if you're Dutch then you obviously speak Dutch language. And if you're Somali, you should speak Somali language. ... It's who I am, it's my culture and I should speak Somali.

As regards the future of Somali language among next Somali generations, Magol might be right in saying that "...so if I teach my children I'll teach them as good as I can speak Somali but I think it always goes down a level". Even though her prediction is most likely to realize, there are also exceptions. Rihana for example told me that her younger sister and her friends encourage each other to speak Somali in order to maintain and preserve the language.

... That's new. They encourage each other to talk Somali. Even if they were born here. Maybe also because now there's a Somali TV and in my youth we didn't have it. Mom was getting the news from the internet and now every night we watch Somali TV at eight o'clock so you see the culture and learn the language.

### **8.3.1 Findings**

Language is clearly an important marker of culture and identity (Al-Ali *et al.*, 2001; Valentine *et al.*, 2009), and it is crucial to acquire at least some level of competence in a particular language in order to build a sense of identity and belonging (Lee, 2004, p. 248). Otherwise, "the authenticity of their identification as Somali is often challenged" (Morton, 1998, as cited in Lee, 2004, p. 246). Besides one or two exceptions, every respondent seem to confirm this observation. Clearly, sufficient knowledge of language is one of the (pre)requisites of belonging for second generation youngsters, which shapes how they talk about their lives (Valentine *et al.*, 2009, p. 242). Jones-Correra (2002, as cited in Louie, 2006, p. 366) also argues that in order to identify closely with their country of origin and let open the possibility of ever going to Somalia, second generation individuals need, and as shown, generally also wish to acquire a certain level of fluency in the ethnic language. Practically all of the parents would like to see their children speak Somali, some more than others, but at the same time, they are also understanding and tolerant, and in some cases even resigned to the fate that their children have been growing up in a non-Somali environment.<sup>60</sup> From what I have managed

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<sup>60</sup> They might reconcile themselves with this fact, but at the same time they express concern with the decline of knowledge of Somali language of younger Somalis. The following case is perhaps rare, but indicates a trend. Namely, Haweeyo stated: "With my family around the world, sometimes when we come together, mostly with younger people, we would speak English instead of Somali and that's really bad actually because you're suppose to [speak Somali]." Comforting is at least the fact that the majority of second generation is convinced that they should do something about it in order to improve their language skills.

to gather, the first generation is not so much concerned with their children's ability to talk to their relatives, than with the fact that their children might lose the Somali culture if not able to communicate in the language of that culture. As already indicated, speaking Somali does not only mean linguistic possibility on its own, but it also indicates being a part of cultural-symbolic order, which Breton (1992, as cited in Hopkins, 2010, 530) calls group identity. They perceive it as their children are cut from the tenet of belonging to Somali community, and do not have what it takes, or rather, what constitutes being a Somali (*Ibid.*).

#### **8.4 Home and Belonging**

In this section I analyse answers to the questions concerning the narrowly related, geographically defined concepts of home and belonging. What is more important, they are closely attached to the concept of identity. Since I have discussed the notion of belonging in the theoretical chapter, I will dedicate a couple of introductory paragraphs to the concept of 'home'. One of the preliminary definitions imply that home refers to space, which includes place and where one lives and feels sheltered (Joisten, 2003, as cited in Kinzel, 2010, p. 115) – allowing the possibility of 'feeling at home' (also, the feeling of belonging). It indicates something familiar, or something that can be longed for (*Ibid.*). Home means a lot of things, as Mallett (2004) has shown in her work: "the term home functions as a repository for complex, inter-related and at times contradictory socio-cultural ideas about people's relationship with one another, especially family, and with places, spaces, and things" (p. 84). It is a very flexible term, carrying numerous meanings, among others, the meaning of "the home nation" (Armbruster, 2002, p. 18), as will be evident from the respondents' answers. However, going beyond boundaries and actual physical places, home is also a place in a symbolic meaning (Mallett, 2004, p. 79) of the word. As Al-Ali & Koser (2002, p. 7) explain, there is a tension in the existing literature between the definitions of home, which refer to physical space (that one inhabits), and the ones referring to symbolic space (where one belongs) (Salih, 2002). At this point I would like to stress that I did not have an influence on the respondents on what 'home' is supposed to represent. The questions, such as: 'where is your home?', 'where do you feel at home?', 'what does home mean to you?' let the respondents the possibility of answering anything they perceive as 'home'. As other scholars already established in their works and I would like to point out once again, home is generally related to the feelings of safety, familiarity and belonging, and to the processes of identity formation (Lucas & Purkayastha, 2007, p. 244), as well as to the expressions of one's identity and "sense of self" (Mallett, 2004, p. 84).

Furthermore, the processes of globalisation and transnationalism have affected the meaning of home for migrants, and in general our understanding of home (Lucas & Purkayastha, 2007, p. 243). Home is certainly not a bounded, protective space anymore (Pratt, 2003, p. 44) – even though for many it still is, stemming from the answers of the Somali refugees. There are a lot of similarities in their answers, but concepts of home still vary greatly within a specific group of respondents. Additionally, conceptions are dynamic processes, "involving the acts of imagining, creating, unmaking, changing, losing and moving 'homes'"

(Al-Ali & Koser, 2002, p. 6). In this chapter I will thus explain Somalis feelings of belonging, connection to Somalia and the Netherlands, and their sense of home.

As regards the first generation, their answers were without a serious surprise factor – judging on the basis of every individual and his/hers previous answers. Instead, only the strength and depth of the feelings within the group of first generation respondents varied to a certain extent. Amina (first generation), “a Somali woman”, was for instance upon arrival very happy to realize that other Somalis have also been living in the country. This gave her “a little bit of Somalia in the Netherlands”, and since they have “the same culture, language, [it] makes it easier to connect with”. About Somalia, she passionately and very convincingly explains:

Somalia is my life. My home is Somalia. Second home is The Netherlands.... I have a whole history in Somalia and therefore Somalia will be my number one home and this will never change.... Somalia are my people. Somali people are my people. Somalia is my land.

Other first generation respondents feel similarly, with Fathia cheering, “sweet home, Somalia”. Despite her cry, she wants to stay realistic and admits that she sees herself as Somali-Dutch – i. e. a pan-ethnic representation (Louie, 2006) – and thinks of the Netherlands as her first home now. And as Abdikarim (first generation) also stated, they miss their homes in the Netherlands when travelling abroad. He and his wife, who joins the conversation, form this interesting answer:

Wife: Nederland is our land now...we don't have another land.

Both: We are Nederlanders. We love Nederlands. How can we forget? No, we can't forget.

Abdikarim: It is our second country.

Wife: ...at the moment this is first. Because we don't have other home...now we stay here.

They are all aware of the fact that the near return to Somalia is highly unlikely and that they have created a family here, with children establishing and integrating their whole lives into the Netherlands. Albeit this reality, they are still imagining how it would be to return, they are still nostalgic about Somalia and the majority still fantasize to return someday (Appadurai, 1996, as cited in Ghosh & Wang, 2003). The conversation between Naja and her daughter Leyla is very expressive and informative in this regard. The conversation stems from the one mentioned in section *Mixing the elements of Somali and Dutch cultures*, thus I only state the last part, or rather, an addition after the conversation was over. Leyla moved closer to me when her mother left the room and quietly added:

You know, I don't believe what my mother says about Somalia. She imagines it as a perfect place on earth, but it is just her nostalgia talking. I cannot believe it was like that, look at all the fightings and war. It is not so perfect.

In the similar context Haweeyo says something that the majority of first generation Somalis who would return to Somalia immediately if it was safe, should perhaps consider:

I understand it and I know that my mom wants to go back but I think it's different because I think she will be sad because when she was in Somalia it was good and beautiful and I think if she wants to go back now, she'll be too shocked and disappointed and I think in her head it was something else. I think it is better for her to keep her memory and stay here. It's safer.

In these particular examples, home is “recognized in an abstract ideal, a longing for a nostalgic past or a utopian future” (Al-Ali & Koser, 2002, p. 7). This is nostalgia for a past as a time of righteousness, safety, justice, and friendly relations (see also Glick Schiller & Fouron, 2001, p. 265), and when we lay claim to the past from the present, then past “undergoes constant transformation” (Ghorashi, 2004, p. 330).

Moreover, it gets even more interesting when talking to second generation interviewees. The Siad’s answer was the most straightforward and clear, leaving no space for doubting his feelings. Since he does not have any memories of Somalia, the Netherlands is the only place he feels belonging to and a sense of home: “everything for me is here...”. Leyla also puts emphasis on memories and does not have any reference points: “...they tell me about it, but I can’t imagine anything. ...I know where I’m from and it’s my culture and stuff like that, but it’s very hard for me to visualize it. So I don’t feel as connected as [her brothers and sisters] do”. Everything the majority – those who have not visited yet – of second generation respondents know about Somalia is second-hand, coming from different sources. Her home is her town, and she gives an interesting explanation, not being the only one who told me the similar:

When people ask me where I’m from I say Somalia.... Because I know that’s what they expect. If I say I’m Dutch then they say, no, where are you originally from. Sometimes I say I’m from Schiedam...and they say, no, no, I mean where are your parents from.... And I know what they mean so I just automatically say Somalia. If I went to the UK and they would ask me that there, I would say from the Netherlands because I came from the Netherlands.

On the other hand, she does not feel belonging to the Netherlands, or better, to the Dutch society. After a few sub-question she explained her thoughts:

I feel belonging to my family but not...I’ve never really felt like Dutch, because there has always been a difference...you know, Dutch people and me. There is a very big difference between the way we live our lives so I never really felt, I feel a little Dutch because I’ve lived here and grew up here and I also feel a little Somali. ... I feel a little Dutch but I don’t feel 100% Dutch.

Her answer is similar to Magol’s in the previous section, when she talked about the Somali and Dutch cultures. She clearly does not ‘fit’ into either of the two poles, and cannot position herself perfectly in any of them. It is also interesting how Leyla for instance stresses that she does *not* belong completely – whether to Somali or Dutch culture or society. Rihana firstly views it from another perspective, telling me that she feels Somali, since she was “raised as a Somali” and also Dutch, having friends, school and social life in the Netherlands. Hence, she positions herself being somewhere in the middle. But then, she also describes the feeling of not really belonging anywhere. Ali’s well-described and concise feelings state the same:

Look, in the Netherlands I’m Somalier and in Somalia I’m Dutch. When you go to Somalia they say you are Dutch and when you are here they say you are Somalier. So you don’t really know what you are and what you are not. That’s the biggest problem.

Continuing with Rihana, she quite seriously – based on my impressions – envisions her life in Somalia, saying, that she would rather live in Somalia, if the country was safe, than in the Netherlands. Despite her quite idealistic plans sounding as ‘building castles in the sky’, since

she aspires to restart the business of her family, which was, in her words, “a family with a big name...[with] a lot of status and respect”, she still seems to be aware of the plausible downsides of her wish: “maybe they’ll see it as negative, like, you have been in Europe all the time, what do you know about your country, what are you doing here? They might think that I would feel superior, even though I wouldn’t”. She probably derives these predictions from her experiences from several years ago, when she was nine and visited Somalia (similar as Ali). She recalls playing outside and being dressed like other Somali children, when one lady approached: “you are not from here, you are from Europe or something because I can see how you act, how you talk and how you walk. You are different than other Somali kids who live here...so. They already see...”. Plus, they were struggling with the language. Valentine *et al.* (2009) studied Somali refugees in the UK and Denmark, and their respondents noticed the same; local people made them feel dislocated, ‘out of place’, due to the “slippages in their Somali identities” (p. 238), mentioned by Rihana, and thus gave them a feeling of not belonging.

It is evident that in her heart, Somalia is her home, which is the reason why she would like to live there someday, and why she believes: “I was always like, I’ll come back and I’ll build up everything for you again”. She stresses that if being realistic, then the Netherland is her home and a place where she currently belongs. But Somalia is *the* place in her mind, where she would like to feel at home and feel that she fully belongs: “The Netherlands, I grew up here, and I feel so safe, so free... in my heart I hope to go once again [to Somalia] and feel really that Somalia is my country”. Thus, in comparison to others, she strives to experience that real and deep belonging, that she can only get with being physically present in a place called Somalia. The situation is similar with Khalid, who says “my country” – as well as Maka – when referring to Somalia, and also likes the idea of opening a business there one time in the future. But currently, “Holland is my...I have learned everything here. ... Holland is my first home. I know everybody here, I know the streets...it feels home. But maybe in the future I can really make Somalia my home”. However, as few other respondents, he does not feel that he belongs to The Netherlands, and does not really ‘feel Dutch’.

Yeah, I don’t feel like a Dutch person...you know Dutch have their history, culture, they really see themselves as a Dutch person. I come from a Somali background, so I am Nederlander, I can speak with the people, but you don’t feel like a Dutch person. You’ll always feel like where you came from...your mother language, you know. That’s with me.

Even though a place seems familiar and feels like ‘home’ – because you are used to it – that does not necessarily mean that you also feel you belong there, pointing out the culture and language. Referring to the statements in this paragraph, I borrow from Yuval-Davis’s (2006, p. 202, Phoenix, 2011) an interesting observation, that efforts for recognition necessarily include elements of construction (of belonging), which reflects an “emotional investment and desire for attachments” (p. 315).

As in the case of Leyla and Rihana, Haweeyo gets comments from other, older Somalis as being “really Dutch”, and having “a bit of Dutch mentality”. She perceives Somalia as her “motherland, as where are my roots”. But unlike anyone else, she feels African first and then Somali. “I’m really proud African...”. Why? “I feel more connected to African [culture] in

general than Somalian because I don't speak Somali that well...". This again indicates a great importance of language in identity reformation. When asked where does she come from she says Somalia, with immediate 'but'. Eventually she comes to the conclusion that "somehow I'm divided between two places". But the most revealing is the answer on the question 'What defines you as Somalian?', answering "that my parents are from there, that when I look myself in the mirror I see a Somali girl, not a Dutch girl. That's the main thing". It appears that she cannot really identify with Somalia as she would like to and could, because of the language barrier. Hence, she feels more African in general, since she also cannot identify with the Dutch society because of her skin colour. Stating skin colour as a reason indicates that being Somali is something pre-given and thus, as Fangen (2007) puts it, "modified form of essentialism" (p. 409). Correspondingly, a sense of ethnic identity is undisputed. Maka, whose home is "here but there" and who lives here but feels that she belongs there, similarly explains: "You were born to be Dutch, but you are not the same colour, you know. You are different". According to my respondents and the research made by Fangen (2007) among the Somali refugees in Norway, this is a common experience among young Somalis. Thus, even though they speak fluent Dutch for instance, skin colour is also one of the things standing on the way of feeling 100% Dutch and which implants them a sense of foreignness.

Basra, who was six when she fled Somalia with her family, likes living in the Netherlands, it feels like home to her and she feels she belongs there as well. "Well, you have different communities as well, University community, old high school community, different environments...so, I do feel that I belong but maybe different in every community". Similar to Ali and Rihana, she explained that even though she is Somali, she probably would not feel as such when in Somalia, the same as she cannot feel really Dutch in the Netherlands. The answers of some respondents overlap. Namely, Magol's answers are similar to other girls' already mentioned, also realizing that "I'm in between, really". When asked about the 'identity crisis', she – as Leyla does – without any hesitation and very decisively replied:

I don't have an identity crisis. I'm Magol [laughing]! Like, if you ask me where I'm from, first thing I'd say is Somalia, but...yeah, I was born there, I sort of speak the language and I know the culture. But it's the same here, I speak the language and I know the culture. It's not that I have an identity crisis. I know where I'm from, I know where I live, but it's...I don't have an identity crisis. It's just me...and the rest is extra.

At first sight it might appear as she was convincing herself in the opposite, desperately trying to negate the option of having an identity crisis. But as she told me, she created her own identity: "I mix everything I have, all the influences I get, I mix them, make them my own. You keep the things you like, the others can just go". She resists being put in a box, and defined in the framework of national cultures and identities. Furthermore, her home is her house: "We could have lived in another country and there would be my home, so it's...the home is with my family", which goes beyond nation-state or any culture.

The youngest among the respondents is Omar, who admits at the end of the interview that this kind of questions had never crossed his mind before, gave me an answer, which sounded like a stuttered quotation from a book: "I'm a Somali person who lives in Holland and was born in Holland. I'm a Somali and I'm Dutch. I'm both...". He seemed to be surprised why

would someone ask him those kinds of questions, which indirectly confirmed my impression of him as someone who enjoys life of a successful athlete, surrounded by many friends and whose identity is rarely, or never truly challenged.

Boccagni (2010, p. 189) believes that positions of ‘home’ in immigrants’ mindsets can also be comprehended from their future projects. Thus, before concluding this chapter let me briefly take a look at my respondents’ answers regarding their future plans. As already stated, Rihana dreams about opening a business in Somalia, Basra and her friends talk about helping to rebuild Somalia one day, even though she would probably not live there. Non of them chose their studies with a future goal of working in Somalia, and all of them prefer living in the Netherlands, some of them fearing the cultural difference they might encounter, with one explicitly mentioning poorer life standards that she would struggle to get used to. Haweeyo’s case is interesting; when she decided to study law, her mother thought it was great, but her relatives (aunts and grandmother) were “more negative about it, because the first thing that they said was that I cannot do anything in Somalia with that”. She understands their perspective but believes that her home is the Netherlands where she also wants to stay in the future. However, all of them will try to carry over their knowledge of Somali language. Thus, while the possibility of return is present in vivid “geographical imaginations” (Valentine *et al.*, 2009, p. 245) of first generation respondents, their children generally exclude this option. But it really depends on the respondent to what extent she/he will transmit the elements of Somali culture on their descendants.

#### **8. 4. 1 Findings**

In this chapter my aim was to analyse how transnational lives manifest themselves in people’s conceptualizations of home, belonging and indirectly also identities. Through dense transnational networks and intense memories, the first generation perceives homeland not as something left behind, but as a place of attachment, “which defines their strategies of identification” (Povrzanović Frykman, 2002, p. 122) and thus belonging, since “belonging is a matter less of identity than of identification...” (Grossberg, 2000, as cited in Pratt, 2003, p. 54). When the first generation talks about home and belonging, their narratives are filled with nostalgia, idealized memories of the homeland (Dorai, 2002), awakening collective memory and myth. I could not describe it better as in Adamson’s (2002) words, that the relations of first generation members of transnational community towards their home country are “as likely to be defined by a desire for transformation, contestation and political change as it is by nostalgia, continuity and tradition” (p. 155).

The meaning of home was understood here as the physical space one occupies, and the “symbolic conceptualization of where one belongs” (Salih, 2001, p. 666). One of the findings that stand out the most concerns this particular understanding of the concept. Namely, the majority of respondents answered differently to the questions of home and to the questions of belonging, – most explicitly the second generation – stating different places. Furthermore, since home is a place where family lives, and where you feel safe and satisfied, constructing the country as a home of the nation means that they imagine the nation as a family (Holy,

1998, as cited in Povrzanović Frykman, 2002, p. 133). In contrast, a few respondents also defined home more narrowly, in a sense of town, or even their house. In this sense, house was for instance associated with feelings of love and where one's family lives (Lucas & Purkayastha, 2007, p. 248). According to Al-Ali and Koser (2002, p. 8), it is characteristic of transnational migrants that they have multiple allegiances to places, but in the case of the second generation, their feeling of belonging nowhere, or somewhere in-between, is more common. This also indicates two things; that they are not 100% assimilated and generally position themselves as being ethnically distinctive, and that they are not segregated or isolated from the Dutch society in which they live. The meaning of home is complex and multidimensional (*Ibid.*), with several interpretations by respondents themselves, noticing 'generation' as an important variable in understandings of 'home' (as Al-Ali & Koser, 2002, for instance do, besides 'gender'). Interesting was also to notice how those who visited Somalia while living in the Netherlands described their feelings of their visit. They generally liked it a lot and felt welcomed, but on the other hand also displaced – the feeling that is sometimes present also in the Netherlands. Stemming from this, many of them are determined to learn the language better, to 'feel' their parental countries as 'their own', and eventually return to Somalia and recover their homes, "in order to achieve a sense of belonging" (Pratt, 2003, p. 43).

## **8.5 Conclusion**

Migration, transnational lives, and consequently contacts of different cultures call the identity into question and often result in negotiating and repositioning 'Somaliness'. Constant re-production of identity is the outcome of numerous factors, such as race, gender, class, and location (Langellier, 2010, p. 89). They have to adjust social, religious and cultural practices within the transnational space, connecting Somalia, the Netherlands and local Somali community, and thus move the "bounds of being Somali" (Hopkins, 2010, p. 534) due to "ethnonational and sociocultural locators" (*Ibid.*, p. 519). According to Bailey *et al.* (2002, as cited in Hopkins, 2010, p. 526), ethnonational and ethnocultural norms limit the ability and desirability to reposition identity. However, it is obvious from the answers of my respondents that lifestyles of first generation interviewees have gradually changed upon the arrival in the Netherlands, and that they have adopted more traditional 'Somaliness' to the "temporal, relational and contextual moment" (Hopkins, 2010, p. 519–520). On the basis of their everyday practices and how they differ among each other, it is possible to ascertain that generally speaking, their identities were/are repositioned, although almost negligibly if compared to their children. But since some of them also explicitly identified as Somali-Dutch, this proves their transnational identities. Despite adjusting their everyday lives to a certain degree and perhaps modifying some elements of their culture, their ethnic identities stayed almost enacted, as well as their desire to return to a place where they belong, geographically

speaking.<sup>61</sup> Additionally, as they have been living in the Netherlands for several years now, I believe that the feelings of many, that in a way the Netherlands is their home now, come from a certain realization. Namely, even though they mainly do not feel that they belong to the Dutch society, their children grew up in the Netherlands and have established their whole lives there.

Furthermore, the second generation's narratives of location – how you place yourself “in terms of social categories, such as those of gender, ethnicity and class at a specific point in time and space” (Anthias, 2002, p. 498) – contrast to those of their parents. Even though surrounded by postmemories – created by their parents' stories – while growing up, they cannot remember the place where they – at least the majority – were born. Therefore, they perceive Somalia more in a sense of ethnic community, which originally lives there, and less as a specific place.<sup>62</sup> Especially concerning their everyday practices – body language, clothing, etc. – and aspects of culture, which are creolized.<sup>63</sup> The majority positioned themselves somewhere ‘in between’ and created their own cultural mixture and consequently a set of practices of their own (Levitt, 2009, p. 1239), blurring the binary opposition between the two cultures. While a few of them admitted that it is sometimes hard to negotiate between the two cultures since they grew up in Somali household situated within the Dutch society, – where they have numerous identity-construction spaces (Kaya, 2005, p. 429) that influence them – the majority expressed no such difficulties because they do not need to negotiate between the two cultures, since they have been living like this as long as they can remember. At this point I will use one of Fangen's (2007) conclusions in her research, which is also to a great extent consistent with my findings. She asserts that “young Somalis actively use and neglect different elements of their ‘Somaliness’. They redefine and reconstruct according to views and values that they themselves regard as important” (p. 403–404). Thus, while some resist encouragements of their parents – not so much to appeals, such as ‘you have to know where are your roots’, or ‘what is your background’ and thus preserve your sense of belonging, but more to their desires to ‘push’ them towards the Somali community, coordinating their private lives, and reminding them about the cultural, or rather Islamic norms – or feel a little bit restricted by it, others positively perceive their ethnic heritage.

However, their ethnic identities and belonging are more or less stable, identifying primarily with being Somali. This is most probably because their parents come from there and identify as such, but I ascribe this also to another reason. Namely, they are what Esman (2009) calls visible diaspora, distinguishing racially and religiously from the majority population. Because of that, they agree that they will never be ‘100%’ Dutch. Though they mostly enact as such,

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<sup>61</sup> In this analysis I decided to follow – to a certain degree – Fangen (2007), who advocates that specific aspects of ethnicity should be identified in the research. These are: “naturalized and situational ethnic identifications, geographical belonging and everyday practice” (p. 412).

<sup>62</sup> Interestingly, this might not be only the case with the second generation. I had an opportunity to see on the example of Faadumo, that ‘Somalia’ is very much the people who live there. Namely, the decline of interest in Somalia and deviations in answers related to identification – in comparison to other respondents – perhaps show that it is primarily the people – ethnically ‘the same’ – and especially relatives, who make Somalia a place of identification and belonging.

<sup>63</sup> However, religion is for instance the most visible way in which youngsters follow Somali everyday practice (see also Fangen, 2007).

they do not feel the belonging because they are black and Muslim. Their race and faith identities thus intersect, differentiating them with the majority population (Valentine *et al.*, 2009, p. 244). Riccio (2002, p. 77) also stresses that perception of the majority population towards them is also important in defining the meaning of home and identity. Nonetheless, all of the respondents state the Netherlands as their home, where they feel satisfied and where their family and friends are. Speaking of friends, the second generation mixes with other ethnicities to a greater extent than their parents. But according to what I have been able to gather, youngsters are somehow expected to fall into the Somali ethnic circle eventually, which would be very interesting to explore in a few years time frame.

## 9 Conclusion

Throughout the thesis my goal was to undertake themes and deepen the debates, which would ultimately lead and enable me to provide the answers to the research questions set forward in the introductory section of the thesis. Thus, in this last part, I discuss the concluding remarks and the main observations from the research, as well as offer a few recommendations for further studies related to this topic.

As the first and the most obvious realization I can establish that a transnational perspective on migration can greatly help us in understanding migrants' – in particular refugees' and their children's – social behaviour, their identities and everyday life practices, which confirms examining the lives of first and second generation Somalis through the prism of transnationalism as adequate. When researching transnationalism from below and people's transnational features, and after ascertaining their transnational consciousness, it was necessary to establish their engagement in transnational practices; its type and intensity. There are many ways of being transnational and being involved in transnational social space, clearly depending on several factors. The main transnational activities in which my first generation respondents are engaged in are: regular maintenance of contacts with their Somali friends and relatives living in Somalia or around the world; constant search for news from Somalia, which they mainly receive via the Internet, TV, or first-hand from their Somali co-nationals; remittances; and active participation in diaspora organisations. The nature of these practices is generally broad, rather than narrow. Additionally, it should not be overlooked that they also express their transnationality through customs such as dress (most visibly women) or food (prevalence of Somali cuisine in their households), and that symbolic and emotional ties to their homeland also signify transnationalism. Frequency and intensity of engagement in practices of first generation Somalis vary greatly – though not that much as within second generation respondents – also because relatives of some of them are more restricted by the means of communication than others. This and several other barriers influence types, frequency, and level of their engagements. On the other hand, symbolic and emotional transnationalism is even stronger, as well as their feeling of moral duty of staying in touch and helping those who were left behind. Clearly, the first generation intentionally preserves – to a great extent – 'Somaliness' because it constitutes a major part of them, and because their transnational lives make that possible.

In contrast, their children are generally less interested in keeping contacts with their – older – relatives in Somalia; mainly because they feel uncomfortable speaking Somali – described as poor – and because they do not know the people they are supposed to communicate with. However, some of them do keep in touch with their younger siblings through modern social media. A few exceptions exist, who self-initially maintain contacts and choose to do so because a person is supposed to keep his/her family close. It is difficult to establish commonalities between those who keep regular attachments, and even harder to predict the durability of those ties. However, a few of them already said that if it was not for their parents, they would probably not keep transnational contacts with their relatives in Somalia, and practically none of them follows – out of self-interest – the news coming from their parents' homeland. They

send remittances indirectly through their parents, with a few exceptions, even though the majority is reluctant to send due to: a lack of motivation and money, because they do not know to whom the money goes, or because they distrust the system of remitting. For other types of transnational practices I assume that they will change over time and keep varying between different respondents. All in all, a drop in the level and intensity of second generation transnationalism in comparison to the first is obvious, and quite significant differences within the second generation are also possible to observe. As mentioned and what is important to stress again is that people's feelings and stance towards transnational practices change over time, and consequently their transnational involvement. Therefore, as also the respondents stressed during the interviews, it is difficult to predict the future and thus durability of those ties, since various power relations through the life cycle can influence the transnational engagement – possible factors include: stimulation from their family, parental links to the ancestral homeland, social lives in the Netherlands, stimulus from the Dutch society, gender, race, character, education, feeling of belonging, etc.

From what I was able to establish, they are generally aware of their roots and ethnic background, but more than half of them do not feel the need to perform transnational practices, in terms of crossing borders other than emotionally and symbolically. However, in terms of their practice, yet prevailing, it can be concluded that the second generation is less transnational in terms of the intensity of exchanges and takes on more indirect, symbolic level, influenced by their parents' emotions, encouragements, postmemories, and transnational household in which they grew up. Thus, it is more about ways of belonging than being. Even though many scholars doubt the significance of second generation transnationalism, which might have also appeared at first glance from this research, I would be more careful in drawing such a conclusion. Namely, the main question of what will happen with their attitude towards transnational practices and their identities – their varying engagements in transnational activities through time are linked to the changes of their identities – in a few years time is still open, and judging on some of the predictions and plans of the respondents and diaspora organisation representative, this is likely to change when they grow older.

The processes of migration and transnationalism, and thus contacts with other cultures modify the concept of identity, how it is shaped, constructed and imagined, and as being a part of diaspora, refugees construct these identities in transnational ways, resulting in plural identities of first generation Somalis. Since refugees have a special relationship with the country that they were torn away from, I would not say that their identities were completely deterritorialized. The first generation is still very much connected to their homelands, with nostalgia, memories and dreams penetrating their minds. Their answers regarding home and belonging were not surprising, mainly stating Somalia as being both, although the majority is aware of the reality they are in, resigning to its fate. On the other hand some cultural elements do become disassociated with place (Somalia) and more easily mixed with the Dutch culture, as regards food, timing, etc. Thus, it could be established that while they are still very much attached to their homeland, their ethnic identities are on the other hand practically intact. Compared to the first generation, youngsters' identities possess a greater degree of 'mixture' under the influence of various people and other factors from the multicultural circles they

function in. Therefore, they produce hybrid cultures, ethnicities and thus identities, forming a third space, which emerges out of living transnationally. Furthermore, even though the place called the Netherlands seems familiar to them and it feels like 'home', they do not necessarily belong there. As a matter of fact, they do not feel they belong anywhere, or somewhere in-between perhaps, confirming the gap they feel *vis-à-vis* both cultures. But if they had to decide, then it would be Somalia. I ascribe this to the fact that their roots and thus origins are there and because they are the so-called visible diaspora. Obviously, in contrast to the first generation, their children's ethnic identities are stronger than their geographical belonging, indicating a decreasing relevance of place 'of origin' in their lives. In addition, it could also be said that a meaning of place in the case of the second generation is replaced with (social) networks, because these networks in combination with their memories and living in transnational household present their primary attachment to Somalia.

Furthermore, one of the primary determinants of second generation transnationalism is their relationship with the country of residence and its society – thus, local space – which is sometimes manifested in disappointing realization that they are not 'one of them'. However, I would not conclude that resentment from the Dutch society is a reason why people engage in transnationalism. I found religion to be of more relevant factor in this regard. Namely, a lot of them identify with being Muslim and express their difference with the Dutch people, who do not share their interests and consequently do not understand them, which makes it easier for them to associate with other Muslims, who are often also descendants of migrants. Skin colour is another visible characteristics that distinguish them from the wider society. Due to these two – the most commonly expressed – differences, they sometimes feel disconnected with the Dutch society. However, interestingly, there is also a gap which they feel between them and the Somali community, and which stems from their inability of speaking perfect Somali – though the majority would like to speak it better – because they do not know exactly how to act like them, and because their mentality and the way of thinking is more similar to Dutch. From this I derive that they are not fully assimilated, and at the same time the nature of their transnationalism is not very intense and deep. They would definitely disappoint those who advocate that the two concepts are positioned on the opposite sides of the single continuum and impossible to be combined. Thus, while their parents were and still are facing some difficulties with the Dutch culture and customs, their children are used to combining the two worlds. However, while they perceive growing up in a Somali household and being surrounded by the Dutch community as something normal, they too face several obstacles that demand lots of thinking, negotiations, and sometimes also deep self-reflections. Since younger Somalis initially move within multicultural circles, they eventually start associating with mostly Somali friends and form a community in which they all share similar experiences, feelings, and preferences related to their cultures. It depends on many factors why Somali youngsters eventually seek out to meet fellow Somalis, but here are most plausible reasons: religion; initiatives of several diaspora organisations; ethnic identity, enforced by the 'differences' with the native Dutch population on one hand, and subtle pressures coming from their co-ethnic peers on the other.

Although people in diaspora display their attachments to people and places outside the limits of one nation-state, the role of the latter should not be dismissed in the discussions on transnationalism, as indicated above, since they set the terms – with the regulations and policies – under which transnational connections take place and significantly influence the construction of transnational identities; not only through official policies, but also indirectly through its artificial divisions on ‘us’ and ‘them’ and regulations of national-identity. Possible results include Islamophobic acts and changes in migrants’ identities, which comprises how you position yourself, but also how others define you. However, transmigrants also have an impact on nation-states, more specifically on matters of belonging, loyalty, membership, etc.

Internal differentiation and heterogeneity within these particular respondents of the Somali diaspora and the complexities related to the examined subjects result in making any concrete generalization unsuited. Larger sample would perhaps contribute to a better understanding of numerous differences within the community based on gender, age, class, occupation, etc., and various factors, which have a great impact on a person, should be taken into consideration, from material and psychological, to sociocultural ones.

Although my aim was to provide a study as unambiguous, relevant and well argued as possible, I am fully aware of its limitations and imperfections, and take this last paragraph to point this out again. Thus, in this last paragraph I would like to put forward some recommendations for further research within this field of study, which have a potential of adding value to the forthcoming case studies. I have learned that various other variables should be taken seriously into consideration when researching transnational practices and identities with inter- and intra-generational differences, such as class and gender, which can considerably clarify certain degrees of transnationalism. This might explain why some second generation individuals are more transnationally oriented and why they value their ethnic identity more than others. I came across the ideas for another two recommendation in the literature and I believe they are also appropriate for improvement of similar case studies as mine. Firstly, it is advisable to observe the dynamics within a certain transnational community when changes in the home country take place, and secondly, to undertake a methodological approach in which individuals on both sides of the transnational network are simultaneously researched and incorporated into the study. Furthermore, the impact of citizenship on individual’s identities should also be examined in greater detail, which would assist policy-makers in better understanding of its significance. Last but not least, and most importantly, I would like to point out that this particular research – and many others for that matter – are based on a one-time snapshot, which misses certain patterns of migrants’ behaviour – due to appearance of time and again new factors – throughout their life course, since their attitudes towards transnational practices and their self-perception of their identities shift over time. Therefore, especially the changing transnational features of second generation migrants in the course of time and over space would definitely be an invaluable contribution.

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## Summary

Processes of globalisation and transnationalism greatly transformed the way we study migration and migrants' – or refugees' – attachments to their homelands, as well as to the receiving country they have migrated, or fled to. Transmigrants thus have significant implications for migration studies and more concretely, for the role of the nation-state – challenging state-centrism and other conventional discourses. Under the process of transnationalism refugees' relation to the nation-states changes, as well as their everyday lives and identities. Transnationalism is relatively young and currently one of the key concepts and perspectives in this field of study; however, the phenomenon itself is not new. It helps us in understanding the social behaviour of migrants, their relation to place, as well as their construction of identities.

Viewed through the lenses of transnationalism, this research focuses on first generation Somali refugees and their offspring (second generation) living in the Netherlands and asks how do they engage in transnational practices and negotiate and construct their identities within a transnational setting, and through examining the mentioned phenomena, tries to comprehend what are the overall implications for their everyday lives and what are the inter- and intra-generational similarities and differences. This is of great relevance especially when discussing the second generation, since they are more likely than their parents to maintain only symbolic and emotional ties. In order to answer to these questions, discussions on nation-state, home, and belonging are also integrated into the study. Focus is put on the narratives of the respondents and their self-perception regarding their transnational practices, and most importantly, their identities. With tackling the issues mentioned, this study is of great societal, as well as scientific relevance for the migration field of study, which indicates its potential contribution to the existing literature related to the themes researched in this thesis.

International migration is not only a process of moving from place A to place B, but it also consists of numerous links and networks between migrants situated in several places around the world. With regular connections and flows of ideas and objects crossing borders of nation-states, and thus living transnational lives, they establish transnational social field, reconstruct the concepts of place, nation-states, identity, etc. Migrants can practice transnationalism in various ways, with different intensity and through diverse types of activities, crossing the dualities traditionally prevailing in migration and diaspora discussions, and thus recognizing migrants' numerous allegiances to places and societies. However, when analysing the intensity and types of transnational practices, one should bear in mind that first generation Somalis are refugees and that their motives for migration differ from those of labour migrants, as well as the nature of their transnational activities, which clearly reflects the circumstances of the country from which they have fled and their distinctive attitude towards, in this case, Somalia. This is the first among the many indicators of how any omission of the discussion about nation-state would point to a study's deficiency. While the role of the nation-state is actually being reformulated, – since transnationalism has great implications for its national identity, related to belonging, loyalty, etc. – it still holds a tight rein on several complex matters referring to regulations of transnational practices and identities. The latter is at the core of this research, especially when in a discussion with the second generation, whose identities are still easier to influence on and therefore change, since they were raised in transnational households while being simultaneously surrounded by the Dutch society, for all their lives.

This small-scale case study is predominantly a qualitative research, which is considered as the best type of research for answering the questions related to the complex social phenomena captured in the research questions. The very core method of this study is the interview – which reveals their histories of mobility, feelings of attachment and self-perception of their identities – besides literature review, participant observation and the use of the name-generators for studying the social networks of participants. The interviews were semi-structured and thus in-depth, in order to get an insight into the dynamics of refugees' transnationalism. The study employs purposeful sampling in order to obtain rich data and as much useful information as possible. The sample consists of twenty Somalis in total; ten representatives of the first generation, 6 women and 4 men, who fled the country of Somalia at the beginning of the 1990s, and the same number and gender ratio of their children – second generation representatives – who are between 18 and 24 years of age. After the field research, obtained data was transcribed and analysed, and results presented in the empirical chapters.

As already explained, the research is about first and second generation Somalis living in the Netherlands. The parents fled from Somalia due to unbearable circumstances and from what appears to be a never-ending conflict – although current developments might be more promising – or they went to the Netherlands through the family reunification programme. Somalis are predominantly Muslims and social relations among them are characterized by the system of clan relations. Due to the humanitarian crisis and the length of the conflict-related circumstances, they are one of the most dispersed people in the world, presenting the third largest refugee group, comprising 770,154 people (as of January 2011). On the other hand the Netherlands, which accepts Somalis as part of the resettlement programme, has been changing integration policies and adjusting them to the public atmosphere in the country, and vice versa; the public opinion reflects the governments' policies. In any case, even though the participants in this research felt a substantial change in how they are perceived by the Dutch after 9/11 2001, they are generally very satisfied with living in the Netherlands and its society.

The respondents generally possess transnational consciousness but are practicing transnationalism to a very different extent – in terms of the level, frequency, and intensity; variations are possible to observe intra-generationally (second generation), and especially inter-generationally. In general, practices are of broader nature, involving material as well as symbolic ones, and in the case of youngsters, they are experiencing transnational lives primarily through the ways of belonging, rather than being. One of the reasons for this type of practices stems from their refugee status and the circumstances in Somalia, which prevent some of them from getting more deeply involved (capacity and desire nexus). Their status has also a great impact on their positioning in the host society, their attitude towards their homeland and the formation of their identities, indicating the relevance of place in the formation of identities. Moreover, the second generation seems to more or less successfully combine transnational orientation – though limited – and their integration into the Dutch society. This results in the hybrid identities they construct and in the mixed cultural practices, even though everyday lives of the majority are still captured in the framework of the Somali culture and Islamic religious belief. Due to the self-perception and perception of them by others, they feel a gap between them and the Somali culture, as well them and the Dutch culture, values, etc., and consequently feel estranged from both societies. Negotiating 'Somaliness' and 'Dutchness' thus varies between the generations, as well as within the two. This has a great and consequently diverse impact on their lives.

## Appendix: Name Generator

Contact:

### Name generator questionnaire

Your name and surname (Voornaam en achternaam):

Age (Leeftijd):

Gender (Geslacht):

Citizenship and Nationality (Nationaliteit):

Status - type of permit (Type verlijfsvergunning):

Marital status (Burgerlijke stand):

Number of children (Aantal kinderen):

Religion (Geloof):

Place of residence in The Netherlands – (Woonplaats):

Educational level (Opleiding):

Work situation/profession (Beroep):

Duration of living in The Netherlands (Aantal jaren woonachtig in Nederland):

List people (maximum 10) with whom you communicate weekly and fill out other categories (Lijst of van mensen met wie u per week contacten hebt):

<b>Name</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Frequency of contact</b>
1.)				
2.)				
3.)				
4.)				
5.)				
6.)				

7.)				
8.)				
9.)				
10.)				

Please answer the following questions (Beantwoord de volgende vragen):

- Do you have family in Somalia? Who (no names necessary)?
- Heeft u familie leden in Somalia? Zo ja, wie (namen zijn niet noodzakelijk)?
  
- Do you have family in the Netherlands? Who (no names necessary)?
- Heeft u familie leden in Nederland? Zo ja, wie (namen zijn niet noodzakelijk)?
  
- Do you have family outside The Netherlands and Somalia with whom you communicate?
- Heeft u familie buiten Somalia en Nederland met wie u Communicatiemiddel
  
- From whom do you receive calls from abroad? (Names are not necessary, only the relationship with that person and the country from where he/she calls)
- Met wie heeft u telefonisch contact uit het buitenland? (namen zijn niet noodzakelijk, alleen de soort relatie beschrijven)
  
- With whom do you most likely spend your free time?
- Met wie brengt u het meeste tijd door?
  
- Whom do you ask for an advice?
- Naar wie gaat u voor advies?
  
- Is there anyone who is important to you in any way and you have not mentioned him/her before?
- Is er iemand anders voor u die belangrijk is maar die u nog niet heeft opgenoemd?