

“DON’T GO THERE”

*- A Feminist, narrative research on Somali-born women’s lived experiences and gender(ed)
identities in Kampala, Uganda*

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ABSTRACT

Through an intersectional and feminist narrative approach, the narratives from seven Somali-born women, aged 32-42, who have migrated from Somalia and are now living in Kampala are analysed as to discuss gender(ed) identities, femininities, and subjectivity at late modernity. This is done through postcolonial and intersectional feminist perspectives on gender, identity, femininity, and patriarchy. As such, their stories are taken as personal and political. Thus, the Somali women's narratives are analysed in relation to the socio-cultural and socio-political contexts of the nation(s) and the localities in order to deepen the understanding of their accounts around self-perception(s) and lived experiences and the meanings that they harbour. It henceforth offers an exploration of current debates around normative gender(ed) identities, femininity, and subjectivities, and the possible connections between their local and global constructions through the case of migrant, Somali women in Kampala by arguing that there is a huge danger and risk in simplistic denotations of patriarchy, gender, and oppression. These Somali women's herstories are constructed against various lived experiences and other factors with a significant emphasis on how women's sexualisation, symbolic representation, discrimination, and vulnerability limit and hinder their mobility and available options. Just as much, their previous traumas and interactive constructions of culture and religion shape their notions of self with particular emphasis on motherhood and community membership. In addition, this study warranted discussing the production of knowledge in a dialogical relationship between differently situated and positioned researchers and research subjects, particularly considering the violence inflicted upon study subjects, by foremost Western scholars, due to lingering colonial sentiments and the epistemic violence that is rooted in this as well as other systems of domination. In this epistemological and methodological discussion, I argue that it was paramount to aim for a position of situated knowledge and imagination in order to make accountable knowledge claims. Notwithstanding, I claim that you always run the risk of losing such a position unless you are continuously and deliberately questioning your own interpretations and imaginations.

Keywords: *Somali-born women, migrant women, Kampala Uganda, Global South, gender(ed) identity, self-perception, femininity, lived experiences, feminist narrative*

CAVEATS

Herstory instead of history, I have deliberately chosen to replace the word history with herstory and herstories as I wish to emphasise the hegemonic rule that certain subjects, heterosexual White men, have had and partially continues to hold over our past and present.

Postcolonial, can be seen as an extension of the previous point as it refers to both the scrutiny of the past and the present to dismantle metanarratives and hegemonic ‘truths’ that have hinged upon colonial projects of White superiority, just as it has premised on a gendered male bias. Thus, in this study it encompasses both a backward and forward look on different phenomena as to challenge such racial and gendered hierarchies.

Gender and sex, are commonly claimed to be distinct concepts of sociology/culture versus biology. However, I claim that such separations are not doable and therefore the premise of this study is that gender cannot be separated from sex and vice versa as they are symbiotically creating and constructing one another (Butler, 1999, p. 10; Oyewumi, 1997, pp. 8-9). As such, you might see me using these terms, as well as woman and female, interchangeably.

Global North and Global South as well as West/Western versus Non-Western, these terms denote the distinction “between affluent, privileged nations and communities and economically and politically marginalized nations and communities” or in other words to distinguish between “haves” and “have-nots” (Mohanty, 2003, p. 505).

Migrant and refugee, are two concepts that I also use interchangeably while I do know that these are interpreted differently against legal frameworks and thus endowed with different rights and entitlements. However, as my research is not focusing on legality or policy, I have not opted for one or the other. Nonetheless, I have mostly used migrant as it is a more inclusive and encompassing term, while I do recognise that all of the women in this study did see themselves as refugees and I am not disowning their self-identification as such.

Clan, while clan-based affiliations are social categories of importance to Somali identity I have not paid close attention to this in the study as it was not widely mentioned by the study participants.

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1. INTRODUCTION

“You have to be a little bit careful because you are a woman; and you have to be careful because you are a foreigner. You understand?”

– Fowsio Kampala, 22nd of March 2019

This quote by a Somali-born woman living in Kampala speaks to the double marginalisation that these Somali-born women face due to their gender and foreignness. Many of them also hold grave prior experiences of diversified gender(ed) violence, which become intertwined with gender(ed) xenophobia and Islamophobia as they form part of a complex and precarious urban mosaic with high-levels of unemployment and gender inequality. In order to understand such lived realities in the configuration of gender(ed) identities, subjectivity, and femininity, this feminist narrative study analyses the narrativizations of lived realities in Somalia and Uganda as well as self-perceptions, opinions, and dreams from seven Somali-born women living in Kampala. These are analysed across a broad intersectional spectrum and vis-à-vis global discourses on gender and femininity to elicit new knowledge on how gender discourses and identities are translated in a local context, for a specific group of women with their lived realities. Yet, such analysis warranted deep self-reflexivity and a deliberate methodological and epistemological discussion of knowledge production within a dialogical relationship between differently positioned researchers and research subjects.

Stemming from their oppression, women as a group, just as other marginalised groups, are argued by feminists to hold a double consciousness; that is, a deepened knowledge of both their own reality and that of the dominant group, commonly men (Brooks, 2007, pp. 63-68). However, feminism has, and continues to grapple with the issues of translation of traveling theories around women’s oppression and to understand difference within and among groups of women. Intersectionality thus pointed out that while women as a group face gender discrimination, there is no monolithic experience of oppression shared by all women. The interaction of systems of oppression, such as patriarchy, capitalism, heterosexism, and racism, results in women (and men) facing different realities of marginalisation (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; hooks, 2000, p. 19). As such, the approach of intersectionality teases out the differences that makes a difference and the ways in which there is and/or is no

difference in regards to sex and gender, but also class, religion, and race which might be just as, or even more, imperative in some women's lived realities and identity processes (Davis, 2008, pp. 68-70). Thus, while intersectionality warrants us from seeing migrant women's experiences and identities as homogenous, as female migrants, Somali women in Kampala are commonly facing multifarious discrimination due to their gender and 'foreignness', which may or may not coincide with that of native women and male migrants. A central argument is thus that migrant, Somali women living in exile are not only experiencing a reality of marginalisation upon their position as 'women', but also in their position as the migrant 'outsider' and possibly due to other factors such as class and religion. Similarly, they are faced with different discourses around gender and normative femininity. Moreover, as subjects living at the margins of society, Somali-born, migrant women, together with other women and post-colonial groups, (Mohanty, 2003, 2006; Pucherova, 2013; Young, 2012) have had their stories and voices neglected or even silenced and removed by hegemonic and self-proclaimed 'universal' knowledge regimes (Fraser & Macdougall, 2017, p. 243; Pessar & Mahler, 2003, p. 814; Stoetzler & Yuval-Davis, 2002, p. 327). To break such historical silencing, both post-colonial and feminist thinkers have critically examined the realities of these subjects (Mohanty, 2003, 2006; Pucherova, 2013; Young, 2012). The feminist narrative approach used in this study is seen as particularly adept to such inquiries as it has the power to unveil exiled stories and voices, which in turn offer information on how to counter intersecting systems of oppression (Fraser & Macdougall, 2017).

Still, the migrant, Somali women's narratives around their own lives and their self-perception(s) are just as much a projection of the social, cultural, and political as it is a personal story. To echo the now old feminist catchphrase, the personal is political. Their stories and narratives are therefore mediums of study as they connect the individual with the collective, the private with the public. Thus, they are interesting primarily on the basis that they represent a mediated, instead of direct, image of past and/or current events and perceptions, which are told to us in a format that through analysis reveals the norms and structures that guards it as well as the meaning that is interwoven with it (Riessman, 1993; 2005, p. 6). Thus, in this research on Somali-born women's narratives I move from the premise that any personal narrative is an individual's construction of past events and actions with the aim to claim and shape their identities and lives (Riessman, 1993, p. 2).

1.1 PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

With an intersectional and feminist narrative approach, I analyse the narratives from seven Somali-born women who have migrated from Somalia and are now living in Kampala as to discuss gender(ed) identities, femininities, and subjectivity at late modernity. By deliberately putting the Somali-born women's stories and active voices at the heart of my study, I aim to impede the continuation of silencing and devaluing of marginalised subjects' voices and experiences. This is done through postcolonial and intersectional feminist perspectives on gender, identity, femininity, and patriarchy. As such, their stories are taken as personal and political. Thus, I analyse their narratives against the socio-cultural and socio-political context of the nation(s) and the localities in order to deepen the understanding of the accounts and the meanings that they harbour in relation to intersected gender(ed) identities, self-perception(s), and lived experiences. It henceforth offers an exploration of current debates around normative gender(ed) identities and femininity and the possible connections between their local and global constructions through the case of migrant, Somali women in Kampala by discussing the following:

1. *How can the narratives of Somali-born women living in Kampala be understood against global discourses on gender, identity, and femininity?*
 - a. *How do Somali-born women living in Kampala narrate their lived experiences in Uganda and Somalia?*
 - b. *How do Somali-born women living in Kampala narrate their notion(s) of self?*

However, this postulates that 'we' as privileged researchers and scholars from the West are able to hear presumably suppressed and marginalised voices and experiences; that 'we' can still understand their accounts across our multifarious differences. Considering the violence

inflicted upon study subjects, by foremost Western scholars, due to lingering colonial sentiments and the epistemic violence that is rooted in this as well as other systems of domination (Mohanty, 2003; Oyewumi, 1997, pp. 122-127), it is less self-evident that ‘we’ can obtain this position of cross-cultural understanding which would enable us to hear their voices or to give voice to their lives. Consequently, I had to acknowledge that to aptly explore aforementioned research questions and aim I first had to engage with these epistemological, methodological, and theoretical concerns. Thus, applying standpoint epistemology, specifically using Donna Haraway’s (1988) framework on “Situated Knowledges”, I begin by discussing the following:

2. *What can migrant, Somali-born women’s narratives, considering their problematic position as research subjects to Western scholars, tell us about knowledge production?*

1.2 RELEVANCE

I locate this research as yet another aim to answer the feminist call for lifting the voices and the realities of the women that have routinely been suppressed, reduced, and ignored (Brooks, 2007, pp. 54-55). As explicated above, Somali-born women residing in Kampala arguably hold silenced and neglected subject positions on at least two grounds, as women and as migrants. However, this is not assumed to be a fixed position nor is it the only factor assumed to affect their lived realities, positions, and identities. Fundamentally, this study will contribute to knowledge on how Somali-born women residing in Kampala, Uganda experience themselves and how they locate and give meaning to these experiences. This is meaningful as it not only illuminates this specific case, but it similarly adds insight into broader debates on intersectionality and multiple oppression through the analysis of how lived experiences are infused by gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, but also shaped against a socio-cultural and socio-political context imbued by time and space.

There is still a lingering gap in contemporary scholarly investigations of women’s experiences and identities in general, which is even more palpable in the case of Somali-born, migrant women. Most studies are either located in, and/or conducted by scholars

from, the ‘West’ and/or the ‘Global North’. This is not only problematic due to the historical contingency of epistemic privilege of the ‘West’, and the epistemic subordination of the ‘rest’, but also due to the claim Mohanty (2003) makes of how the most adverse effects on women’s lives constituted by neoliberal global capitalism are felt by those residing in the ‘Global South’ (p. 514). To add to a countermovement of such silencing, this feminist narrative study explores herstories of seven Somali-born women living in Kampala, Uganda, which are presented under a pseudonym name without any correlation to their actual names. This inarguably shifts our attention to their lived realities and identities to more fully comprehend and acknowledge the complexity of gender and oppression as well as femininity, identity, migration, and belonging in the so-called late modernity of women’s empowerment and successful femininity (*see* Budgeon, 2014; McRobbie, 2007). Migrant, Somali women in Kampala is a particularly interesting group to study in relation to these global discourses of femininity and gender on at least three grounds. Firstly, as migrant women with translocal lives they are likely exposed to different gender norms and discourses. Secondly, they are part of the understudied category of migrant women in the Global south. Thirdly, they are women with a Muslim background and thereby they are arguably exposed to what Chakraborti and Zempi (2012) describe as an increased vilification of Islam as terrorism and as a vile vector for women’s subordination; a discourse which is intimately intertwined with those on gender and femininity, however less explored and researched outside the Western hemisphere. It has furthermore been argued that the nexus of gender and religion, in the case of Islam signified in the discourse around the veil, has not received sufficient scrutiny and analysis. Neither has this discourse accounted for the multifarious connections between Islam and gender, women and the veil (Chakraborti & Zempi, 2012, p. 274). As Somali-born women are largely invented discursively as veiled subjects, who have routinely been depreciated and misread, this study tackles the farfetched assumptions around veiled subjects and the interaction of religion and gender in the processes of identity and belonging for this group of migrant women; something which has not received due attention in intersectional studies.

While it is acknowledged in earlier research that migrant, Somali women lead translocal lives and are therefore arguably exposed to global discourses around gender and femininity there has not been enough exploration on this in relation to their lived experiences, gender(ed) identities, and self-perceptions as is done in this study. Previous studies on migrant

Somali women are moreover majorly qualitative, usually using semi-structured interviews, and they seem to be attuned to understanding the fixation or changeability of cultural norms, including gender roles, female genital cuttings and health (*see for example* Abdi, 2014; al-Huraibi, 2017; Connor et al., 2016; Jinnah & Lowe, 2015; Johnsdotter, 2003). In addition to, but not limited to this, my study, as a feminist narrative practice, places a greater importance on subjectivity and co-construction in the narratives by elucidating the lived realities, self-perceptions, and the gender(ed) identity processes of Somali-born women in Kampala. It furthermore lends insight into if, and how, this group of women hold different experiences and whether these can be located within the difference between Somali and Ugandan socio-political and cultural contexts, global constructions, and/or other factors such as personal agency, class, cultural capital, social status, and so forth. This is particularly interesting as, mentioned previously, most of the studies on gender, migration, and belonging, as well as gender identity and femininity, are drawn from places in the Global North, whereas the Global South more often figure as cases in global development agendas and reports. Hence, while this study is primarily providing first hand data to further theorisation around multi-layered understandings of normative femininity and gender, it also adds to the body of knowledge in the areas of migration, identity, and belonging, as the main focus lies on exploring narratives from Somali-born women in Kampala. Thus, by focusing on Somali-born women residing in Kampala this study challenges another silencing; that of the voices, life stories, and identity processes of women in the Global South. This is particularly imperative as it has been argued by Mohanty that “the material complexity, reality, and agency of Third World women’s bodies and lives” was long forgotten in feminist theorising (Mohanty, 2003, p. 510).

Hence, the study contributes to post-colonial and feminist scholarly debates on gender and femininity in a globalised era where there is a normative femininity of liberation, success, and emancipated womanhood (*see* Budgeon, 2014; McRobbie, 2007; Mohanty, 2003, 2006). It comes at a time when feminism and western universalism is called into question as central and universal models; when the ‘Other’ subjects of modernity speak back to expose such false representations (Mercer, 1994, p. 271). This speaks to how this study is similarly relevant on methodological and epistemological grounds as it challenges and questions the premises of feminism and Western Universalism by not choosing between specific and

universal, but using both as shifting and connecting points of analysis. By further disrupting the dichotomy between identity and lived experience, particularly since identity, subjectivity, and femininity has foremost been understood against a Western standard whereas ‘other’ women have largely figured as masses albeit with a singular voice, it furthermore calls into question lingering tendencies of feminist research biases (Mohanty, 2003, 2006). Through the feminist narrative approach and the deliberate investigation into the ability of Western scholars to channel silenced voices of marginalised subjects, this research disrupts the traditional relationship between research subjects and researcher. This entails methodological contributions by exploring the co-construction and chorus of voices; mine, societies, cultures, family, and so forth, that are present in one Somali woman’s account. These explorations extend further to a scrutiny of the regulations and terms under which voice is uttered and heard, without assuming that the narratives and their meanings are revealed at face value, but after vigorous processes of analysis and self-reflexivity.

1.3 A BRIEF SOMALI HERSTORY

Somalia is believed to be among the most dangerous countries for women according to the Thomson Reuters Foundation’s (2018) Global Poll. Ranked as number four, Somali women were argued to be particularly at risk due to limited access to healthcare, economic resources, and by being subjected to harmful cultural and traditional practices as well as non-sexual and sexual violence (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2018). These dangers faced by Somali women are partially due to prolonged civil upheaval in Somalia since the late 1980s and onwards (Kleist, 2008a, pp. 1130-1131). In the waters of civil conflicts and state instability, violence against women has become widespread and Somalia is believed to have the highest incidence of sexual violence against women and girls in Africa. Yet, they stand without a relevant framework to address the vice. The civil upheaveal has also bred a culture of impunity in relation to such crimes as there is a limited reach and implementation of law and justice. In addition, Somali women’s bodies and sexuality are constructed in a patriarchal honour-shame paradigm built on cultural and Islamic religious beliefs. The shame-honour paradigm prescribes a chaste and submissive female sexuality, which comes with blame and shame if broken. Thus, many Somali women are subjected to rape and torture and subsequently

shamed, blamed, and silenced about it. Due to the view that women's place is in the home, many Somali women are furthermore restricted from moving freely and from assuming decision-making and senior positions. This is exacerbated by women's low educational levels as well as concomitant difficulties in accessing land and resources. Somalia is also a country where being pregnant is a fatal risk due to poor maternal health care and where female circumcision is widely practiced, which puts the lives of girls at risk of infections and other health issues (SIHA, 2018, pp. 4-10). However, whether and how such externally measured and described realities and norms figure in Somali-born women's narratives will be discussed in chapter five.

In contextualisation, Somalia has a modern day herstory contoured by humanitarian crisis, poverty, famine, violent civil conflicts, and state collapse since the late 1980s (Garibo-Peyró, 2012, p. 114; Kleist, 2008a, p. 1131). In 1960, Somalia was proclaimed independent by the UN from the former colonising parties of the Somali land, namely, France, Great Britain, Ethiopia, and Italy who had carried out markedly different colonial projects (Garibo-Peyró, 2012, pp. 120-125). The newfound Somalia was, as other African nations, an artificial construction notwithstanding the apparent similarities among the Somali people constituting one ethnicity with shared Islamic religion as well as one Somali language and oral tradition. Thus, a North-South divide, a relic from colonialism, in tandem with the clan-based patrilineage system has figured at the centre of the civil unrest and violence (Garibo-Peyró, 2012, pp. 116-117, 127-128). In daily encounters during the civil conflict, civilians' lineage is often determining whether armed militias would either protect you or kill, rob, torture, and/or rape you. However, lineage is also argued to be both a site of solidarity and division for both Somalis within and outside its territory (Kleist, 2008b, pp. 313-314).

1.4 MIGRATING FROM SOMALIA TO KAMPALA, UGANDA

Unsurprisingly, the largest migration movements from Somalia are dated from the mid-1990s and forward when Somalis started fleeing the civil war (Kleist, 2008a, pp. 1130-1131). The migrated Somali community, estimated at over a million people, constitutes at least 14 percent of the total population (UNDP, 2012, p. 25). Whereas a large portion of Somalis migrated to the West, nearby countries have also been common destinations. In the case of nearby

migration, Somalis tended to opt for Kenya. Uganda however became a more popular destination from 2006 and onwards due to resurgence in the Somali civil war, heightened restriction on immigration and immigrants' movements in Kenya, and the installation of Uganda's Refugee Act 2006 (Monteith & Lwasa, 2017, p. 390). As a considerable composite of the urban refugees in Uganda's capital city Kampala, the Somali community has been found to experience xenophobic sentiments majorly in connection to their Islamic faith and practices (Stark, Decormier Plosky, Horn, & Canavera, 2015, pp. 176-177). This has elevated after twin bomb attacks, 2008 and 2010, in Kampala by alleged sympathisers to the Islamist militant group al-Shabaab (Monteith & Lwasa, 2017, p. 398). By these tokens, Uganda is arguably entangled in the discourse of the 'bogus refugee' coming to terrorise the nation. This discourse is intimately linked to the so called 'War on Terror' where specifically the Muslim subject, arguably most often portrayed as a man but more easily detected by the veiled woman, is singled out as a dangerous subject that has to be kept at bay to protect the national peace and security (Borg & Diez, 2016; De Genova, 2016). Such discourses are felt by Somalis in Kampala who report experiences of being called "al-Shabaabs" and dirty, denied to conduct prayer, forced to remove the veil in schools as well as receiving death threats, and being subjected to physical abuse (Monteith & Lwasa, 2017, p. 398; Stark et al., 2015, pp. 176-179). Somali-directed xenophobia is invariably intimately entwined with Islamophobia, but also gendered. In correlation with xenophobia, female Somali refugees in Kampala face gender-specific discrimination and harassment which generally originate from their veiling and include being forced to remove their veil, being attacked in the streets, and verbal harassment connected to their Muslim and Somali identity commonly by reference to FGM (female genital mutilation) and al-Shabaab (Stark et al., 2015, pp. 176-179). With reportedly high levels of experiences of physical and sexual violence, majorly before flight but also within Uganda, female Somali refugees, both in camps and urban areas, are unsurprisingly found to suffer from stark levels of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Morof et al., 2014, pp. 139-140; Onyut et al., 2009).

Somali-born women is but one of the refugee groups in Uganda, who hosts one of the worlds largest refugee populations of around 1,2 million (UNHCR, 2019). Uganda is known for being welcoming to refugees, 'immigrant-friendly', and generous by distributing land to refugees (Bernstein & Okello, 2007). Those who have countered the glossy image of

Uganda as the refugee paradise have pointed to the fact that this imagery is particularly useful to pursue by Western countries as it serves their interests to externalise their asylum and migration politics further (Schiltz & Titeca, 2017). Further pointing to the fact that Uganda is a country with great challenges for general population welfare, challenges which have been argued to fuel tensions and policy issues for refugee management and national development alike (Kreibaum, 2016). These tensions play out between locals and refugees as the assistance that refugee populations receive is not extended to locals, even as they are also largely not having their basic needs satisfactory met (Kreibaum, 2016, p. 275; Schiltz & Titeca, 2017). It is moreover argued that the 'refugee paradise' image serves the interests of the Ugandan government, by deflecting attention from questionable governance, just as it serves both local and international NGOs in their financial survival (Schiltz & Titeca, 2017).

Notwithstanding, with the 2006 Refugee Act, that gives refugees right to live, work, and own land in urban areas, Uganda went from being heralded as a key-player and role-model for refugee management through its (rural) settlement approach to also being renowned as an exemplary model for urban refugee management. In reality, however, implicit and explicit refugee management approaches are said to perpetuate the longstanding settlement and camp system, which constrains refugees to remain in designated rural areas in order to receive support (Bernstein, 2005, p. 42; Monteith & Lwasa, 2017, p. 384). However, these camps are often in-secure and under-resourced (Stark et al., 2015, p. 173). In a study with Uganda's four largest refugee settlements it was for example found that there is a general situation of poverty and physical insecurity in settlements in addition to high levels of sexual violence; a situation which leads refugees to sometimes embrace coping strategies such as girl-child marriages and marrying of raped girls and women to the culprits (Gottschalk, 2007, pp. 17-22, 52-54). Thus, refugees settle and re-settle in urban areas in search for, among other, work, education, social amenities, and telecommunications as well as staying with family and other people of importance in their social relationships (Dryden-Peterson, 2006, p. 384; Stark et al., 2015, p. 173). Most opt for Kampala, Uganda's bustling and crammed capital city, which harbours an ethnically diverse population of approximately 1,6 million (UBOS, 2019) out of which fifty-five thousand are refugees (UNHCR, 2019). This figure is however believed to be far higher considering the lack of legal recognition of refugees and migrants (Monteith & Lwasa, 2017). The conditions in Kampala are however also harsh with high

levels of unemployment, poor housing and sanitation, congestion, and poverty; conditions which are felt by refugees and nationals alike. However, refugees also grapple with language barriers, lack of legal status, as well as discrimination and xenophobia (Bernstein, 2005, pp. 42-43; Dryden-Peterson, 2006, pp. 384-385; Monteith & Lwasa, 2017, p. 400; Stark et al., 2015, pp. 174-176). Thus, making the general situation of urban poverty and marginalisation exacerbated for urban refugees who are largely absorbed in Kampala's large informal economy (Bernstein, 2005, pp. 42-43; Monteith & Lwasa, 2017, p. 385).

In addition to and in intersection with refugees, women is another group that face considerable discrimination and oppression as gender equality and women's rights are controversial and contentious issues in Uganda (Tamale, 2011, pp. 116, 166). Prominent Ugandan Law and Gender scholar Sylvia Tamale (2011, 2014) describes Uganda as a patriarchal nation state that is heavily influenced by its colonial past from where it inherited laws inscribing decency and morality around sexuality, particularly in relation to women. Uganda is furthermore said to cling to a religiously inscribed, Christian, heteronormative discourse around sexuality with acceptance for only heterosexual, marital relationships (Bompani & Terreni Brown, 2014). These discourses around sexuality are closely related to the Ugandan notions of femininity and domesticity which are founded on patriarchal institutions encoded with decency and morality prescribing women to be chaste, modest, sexually submissive, and monogamous. Men should on the other hand prove their masculinity by sexual virility (Tamale, 2011, pp. 157-158), however in a heterosexual matrix. These normative sexual scripts and notions of femininity and masculinity have been traced in various empirical and desktop studies (Bell & Aggleton, 2013, 2014; Birungi, Nabembezi, Kiwanuka, Ybarra, & Bull, 2011; Bompani & Terreni Brown, 2014; Iyer & Aggleton, 2014; Kemigisha et al., 2018; Muhanguzi & Ninsiima, 2011; Okello & Hovil, 2007; Porter, 2015; Rijdsdijk, Lie, Bos, Leerlooijer, & Kok, 2013; Rudrum, Oliffe, & Benoit, 2017; Schulz, 2018; Tushabomwe & Nashon, 2016). These contextual strands and norms are explored further in relation to the Somali women's narratives in chapter five.

2. STATE OF THE ART

Migration is a process that has been widely proven to affect gender identity, roles, and norms (Anthias, 2008, p. 5; 2012, pp. 107-108; Hunnicutt, 2009; Pessar & Mahler, 2003). The experiences of migration, exile, and displacement both geographically, socially, and culturally have thus been argued to have significant bearing on the lived experiences and the self-perceptions for migrant women and men alike (Pessar & Mahler, 2003). To locate such processes within the group of migrant, Somali women the subsequent sub-chapters explore previous studies in relation to these women's gender negotiations and gender(ed) identities.

2.1 MIGRATION AND SOMALI WOMEN'S RE-NEGOTIATION OF GENDER

It has been widely reported that previously held notions and traditional Somali practices, such as female circumcision, become open for negotiation and scrutiny at the face of forced migration and relocation, oftentimes with reference to Islamic texts and with aims of integrating into the host society (Abdi, 2014; Byrskog, Olsson, Essén, & Allvin, 2014; Jinnah & Lowe, 2015; Johnsdotter, 2003). Yet, some maintain the perception of female genital cutting as a positive practice that prevents women from becoming hypersexual and/or committing adultery (Johnsdotter, 2003, p. 364), premarital sex or sex work (Jinnah & Lowe, 2015, pp. 378-379). In a similar vein, while views on female circumcision were found to be renegotiated among a majority of Somali-Kenyans, Somali-South Africans, and Somali-Swedes, there was a reminiscent continuation of a norm of female virginity and marriageability (Byrskog et al., 2014; Jinnah & Lowe, 2015; Johnsdotter, 2003). In turn, this resulted in complete social exclusion and ostracization from the Somali community and the family if an unmarried woman becomes pregnant (Jinnah & Lowe, 2015, pp. 378-379; Johnsdotter, 2003, p. 367). Research with Somali-Americans and Somali-British mirror this in how they, mostly located in an Islamic discourse, distance themselves from female circumcision, support gender equal treatment, promote girls' and women's education and public work (Abdi, 2014, pp. 473, 478; al-Huraibi, 2017, p. 84; Langellier, 2010, p. 82). However, Somali women continued to be strongly condemned and stigmatised if they derailed from other 'old' cultural, gender norms; norms of, for example, keeping silent about domestic

abuse, staying married, and avoiding single motherhood (Abdi, 2014, pp. 473, 478). Whereas the European and American context brought out the issue of embodying normative femininity of a married, faithful, and modest Muslim woman as a strong contributing factor to getting and remaining married, a South African study found Somali women's economic vulnerability to be the main driver to marry (Waiganjo, 2018, p. 663). Moreover, stigmatization around Somali women's sexuality was seen by Somali-swedes as the workings of patriarchal norms, which hinders Somali women from disclosing rape, especially in the case of virgins as it goes against the norm of 'chaste femininity' (Byrskog et al., 2014, pp. 6-8). Another research analysing the views, knowledge, and opinions of young, Somali women living in Somaliland regarding rape and community values and responses elucidate similar issues of stigmatisation and importance of upholding women's dignity, thus leading to blame and silencing of rape survivors (Byrskog, Hussein, Yusuf, Egal, & Erlandsson, 2018, pp. 40-41). In this study by Byrskog et al. (2018), respondents reported on a double/triple punishment for most survivors in that they were to begin with subjected to a rape, secondly experiencing self- and community blame, and lastly robbed of justice due to impunity (p. 43). Common facets are found in the limited options that are seen as available for a Somali woman who has survived sexual violence. The available options that were given included: accepting the abuse and keeping silent, abide to the family decisions (including silence and/or marrying the perpetrator), suicide, and/or flight/migration (Byrskog et al., 2018, p. 41; Byrskog et al., 2014, p. 8). It was reported that gossip was negatively affecting sexual violence survivors as they would be at risk of losing their reputation and dignity. This was understood as a by-product of the prominent oral tradition in the Somali community (Byrskog et al., 2018, pp. 40-41). Considering that Somali women have been found to experience extremely high levels of physical and sexual violence (Byrskog et al., 2018; Byrskog et al., 2014; Morof et al., 2014; Onyut et al., 2009; Waiganjo, 2018), it is arguably a large portion of them that are experiencing this triple burden.

However, Abdi (2014) contests the binary journey from disempowerment to empowerment for Somali women that migrate from Somalia to the 'West' in her exploration of Somali-American men and women's perceptions around divorce, gender conflict, and violence against women (pp. 459-460). The configurations are not that univocal as is reflected in the findings of how a low socioeconomic position in the Western context was widely

reported by Somalis as a concern of gender conflict as Somali men felt increasingly disempowered. Somali men expressed feeling displaced from masculinity in the US as the migrant status, in combination with welfare and labour market systems, had diminished their authority and their gender norm of breadwinner and family head (Abdi, 2014, pp. 467-470; al-Huraibi, 2017). The dual socio-economic setup in America has also been found to alter gender roles, particularly seen in how men increasingly participate in the household chores which was never part of their gender role in Somalia (al-Huraibi, 2017, p. 75). While older women and men see this as problematic, most young women describe conditions after migration as majorly increasing their negotiating space and power in relationships with men and they openly discussed Somali cultural norms and practices that were harmful to women (Abdi, 2014, pp. 467-470; al-Huraibi, 2017, p. 76; Connor et al., 2016, p. 14). However, cautionary tales flourished within the Somali diaspora; tales which not only aimed to re-inscribe previously held subordination of women, but also extended to aim at curtailing freedoms women had prior to migration (Abdi, 2014, pp. 479-480). In a discussion of female Somalis views on shifting gender norms, roles, and beliefs due to immigration to the US, the most frequently cited challenge was the divergence between Somali and American sexual norms as well as aforementioned difficulty to be identified as a Muslim woman, the 'other', in a context of widespread Islamophobia (Connor et al., 2016, pp. 2, 6, 17). Hence, the migration from Somalia to the West is not a clear route towards empowerment as racial discrimination and Islamophobia as well as Western sexism present new challenges. In Waiganjo (2018) investigation of Somali women's experiences in a South African context plagued by Xenophobia and Afrophobia – Xenophobia towards 'foreign' black people detected similar issues of racial and Islamophobic discrimination. In this research it was concluded that Somali women's "experiences of the Somali civil war, gender-based violence, high crime levels and Xenophobia-Afrophobia realities are the main sources of trauma and stress" (p. 655). Somali women living in South Africa moreover dreamt of educational opportunities and more reliable sources of income, dreams that were attached to USA and Europe where this was believed to be existing (Waiganjo, 2018, pp. 659-662).

2.2 SOMALI WOMANHOOD AND IDENTITY

All of above mentioned studies highlight some of the tensions in gender re-negotiations and configurations when Somali women are caught between different cultural norms and discourses around gender and femininity. They furthermore recognise that Somali women's consciousness of their situation was raised, or rather shifted, with migration. This was invariably due to their newfound conditions and lived realities, which sometimes were said to make women question a subordinated gender position. It is furthermore important to take note that multiple studies with Somali diaspora localise Islam and a reinvention of Islamic faith as a decisive factor in their identity work as they are faced with translocal lives. Studies with migrant, Somali women have furthermore found that their identities are intimately linked to motherhood, childbearing, marriage, and family (al-Huraibi, 2017, p. 64; Byrskog et al., 2014, p. 5; Jinnah & Lowe, 2015, pp. 373-375). The importance of being a strong woman that endures and moves on despite a continuum of violence and hardships, to stay strong and resilient, was also mentioned as an integral part of Somali womanhood in research with Somali women in Sweden and South Africa (Byrskog et al., 2014, pp. 6-8; Waiganjo, 2018, pp. 658-659). It has also been argued that African, Muslim women with experiences of multiple oppression have rid themselves of such subordination by constructing themselves as autonomous and rational subjects (Pucherova, 2013, p. 4). Phoenix's (2011) study on young, Somali women in London are indicative of the same; study participants largely constructed themselves as 'modern' Muslims different from the stereotypical image of a veiled woman as uneducated and unemployed. This was linked to their efforts to move upwards in the national hierarchy of belonging amidst aforementioned rising Islamophobia, anti-immigrant, and racist discourses (pp. 315-321). This relates to what was found in the analysis of a young, Somali woman's narrative of her experiences living in Lewiston, Maine, namely that as "other immigrants and refugees, she has quickly learned the racial hierarchy whose public gaze always already reads her body as black mapped against hegemonic whiteness" (Langellier, 2010, p. 74). This woman similarly disputed the notion of a passive Muslim female subjectivity by contesting this Western notion through saying that people do not consider that she actually might have thought about her veiled head and chosen it herself. Yet, this is complicated with how she later aims to conform to the normative western, and feminist,

discourse by emphatically rejecting the harmful cultural gender norms that Somalis might execute, specifically female genital cuttings (Langellier, 2010, pp. 67, 76-77). Hence, these accounts highlight the conflicts inherent in gender(ed) identity formation and subjectivity which I similarly seek to analyse and discuss in this study on Somali-born women's narratives around their lived experiences in Somalia and Kampala, Uganda. It is additionally somewhat related to a critique of the simplified individualistic western female subject; a female subject that is not only irreconcilable with the communal and interdependent nature of motherhood and family life, irrespective of it occurring within a Somali community or not, but also with a feminist understanding of women's identity and identification as it hinges upon interdependence and coexistence (Pucherova, 2013, p. 10). In this regard, in a study on Somali-born women living in Toronto and London, Hopkins (2010) argued that "that indicators of belonging, such as dress, religion and language, come to hold new and increased value within the new context, and familiar facets of national, cultural and religious identity shift in significance in response to competing influences and are used as intentional signifiers of identity" (p. 519). The Somali women residing in Britain and Canada furthermore professed the translocal process of Somaliness as there is an active interplay between, but not limited to, the 'home' in Somalia, Somali diaspora, and the host society. The most common features to declare Somaliness were through language as well as adhering to an Islamic and Somali dress code. It was furthermore manifested that places with higher levels of co-habitancy and cohesiveness heightened the perceived enforcement of adherence to Somali norms of behaviour and dress (Hopkins, 2010, pp. 531-534).

3. THEORETICAL & ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTERSECTIONALITY – Understanding feminism and patriarchy

Aforementioned studies arguably complicate a simple demotion of migrant, Somali women's gender(ed) identities, which are rather shaped through multiple, intersecting processes signified in different social categorises ranging between female, African, refugee, Muslim, Somali, black, immigrant, to mention the most commonly given. This resonates with the findings in this study, where it was palpable that the Somali women's lived realities in the new host-society were impacting their identities and social positions. Hence, it speaks to how patriarchy, as "social arrangements that privilege males, where men as a group dominate women as a group, both structurally and ideologically" (Hunnicut, 2009, p. 558), has been severely contested as a universally applicable model. Critique comes particularly within a mounting feminist questioning of the viability of patriarchal and gender analysis without situated and localised knowledge and groundings (Brooks, 2007; Butler, 1999; Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Davis, 2008; Mohanty, 2003; Oyewumi, 1997; Spivak, 1988). Therefore, patriarchy has come to signify an analysis where gender hierarchy is the key, but not sole, structuring factor within the patriarchal system, which is built on both ideology (attitudes and norms) and structure (laws and policies) that might be, but is not always, co-existing/co-constructing (Hunnicut, 2009, pp. 554-556, 561-563). This understanding of patriarchy and gender oppression, as the outcome of multiple structuring factors and intersecting power dynamics, is renowned as intersectionality – a feminist theory, or rather analytical sensibility, which aided the understanding of women's disparate lived experiences of oppression and varied, intersected gender(ed) identities (Davis, 2008, pp. 70-79).

Intersectionality evolved from black and Latina feminist activism and scholarship in the 1980's USA as a commitment to address the, especially racial, blindness in feminism; where gender was narrowly and singularly defined and therefore did not understand or take black or Latina women's lived experiences into account, thus, perpetuating a sort of 'patriarchal nationalism' (Collins, 2015, p. 7). Lawyer and critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989, 1991) instrumental work within intersectionality exposed this by showing that theorising racism and sexism as isolated issues, single-axis analysis, only capture the experiences of relatively privileged within subordinated groups, either white

women (sexism) or black men (racism). In a similar vein, prominent African-American, feminist scholar bell hooks (2000) argues that due to the hegemonic rule that middle- and upper-class women had over the direction of feminism, feminism became defined as women gaining social equality with men. Hence, there was as much of a class as a racial blindness which excluded the realities of lower-class women, largely overlapping with non-white women, who would receive little to no emancipation from being ‘lifted’ to the position of their underclass male counterparts (p. 25). Notwithstanding its birthlands, intersectionality, as an analytical sensibility that focuses on the dynamic and relational processes of intersecting power systems, e.g. racism, sexism, ableism, classism, and heterosexism (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013, p. 795; Collins, 2015, p. 14), remains valuable to my analysis since it probes feminist researchers to examine the varying effects formed by such intersections for women’s experiences and identities as well as which social and material realities (Davis, 2008, pp. 70-71). Intersectionality is thus key in my analysis of the Somali-born women’s narratives as to not perpetuate single storying and distorted retellings by commanding a “reflexive, critical, and accountable feminist inquiry” (Davis, 2008, pp. 78-79). Still, being ignited in the US, played a major part in intersectionality focusing foremost on the intersections of racism and sexism. My case, however, necessitates a closer examination of other configurations, such as religion and class. This relates to Mernissi’s (2001) argument of how patriarchal domination and gender hierarchies are built differently in Muslim and Western societies with the former predominantly relying upon a control and division of space, whereas the latter dominates through beauty standards and vision (pp. 192, 213-214).

3.2 PATRIARCHY, MALE DOMINANCE, SEXUAL VIOLENCE

With the intersectional turn within feminism, gender is in this study seen as a non-binary, dynamic concept and there is consequently a plethora of femininities and masculinities existing in any given time and society (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013, p. 795). However, while there is commonly a dominant masculinity in the top, within both masculinities and femininities there are hierarchical orders and these two systems moreover inform one another as they are relational (Budgeon, 2014; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Further, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that the hegemonic masculinity on top of the gender hierarchy

perpetuates women's subordination by maintaining patriarchal power (pp. 832, 846). Moreover, patriarchy and male dominance is at the core of understanding sexual violence which Baaz Eriksson and Stern (2018) term a war against women and so-called 'weaker' and less dominant men. This ruptures the idea of sexual violence as something exceptional, which happens in certain times and spheres (pp. 305-310). However, as Ryan (2011) argues, more often sexual violence becomes blurred by rape myths that support the dominant male view of acceptable sex. Entangled with such constructions is the symbolism that women's bodies and sexuality come to hold as bearers of national identity and honour, which can be particularly heightened in multi-cultural contexts (Lewis, 2011, p. 212; Towns et al., 2014, p. 243; Yuval-Davis, 2004, p. 26). These specific areas within feminist, intersectional theory became key to explore as the Somali women's narratives touched on rape, masculinity, and sexual violence; as will be explored thoroughly in the subsequent analysis chapters.

3.3 INVENTING AND UNCOVERING WOMEN AND VOICE?

While it has been simply put that gender is the socially and culturally constructed notion of being a woman or a man, whereas sex is biologically given (Oyewumi, 1997, pp. 8-9); it is evident that sex and gender are not that easily distinguished in feminist discourses as seen in how gender oppression and sexism stand side by side. The sex/gender bifurcation becomes interesting when one considers the predisposition of gender binary concurrently constructed and enforced by the "mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it" (Butler, 1999, p. 10). It is thus seen that "the social and the biological feed on each other [...] and that even sex has elements of construction" (Oyewumi, 1997, p. 9). In line with this, Butler's (1999) theorisation has eloquently explicated that one cannot evade the categorising of man or woman, but only decide to intelligibly adopt or resist the assumed coherence between sex, gender, and sexuality/desire in a woman or a man. It is precisely through the coherence or incoherence to this that an identity is acquired or called into question. Thus, sex and gender are not separate units, but exist in co-construction and regulation which deems certain identities correct by performing and adopting the sex/gender/sexuality unity; those that diverge are however often as intimately measured and linked to this unity (Butler, 1999, pp. 10-11, 23-24). Simply put, a person with a vagina would

still be socially and culturally categorised as a woman who is either performing in accordance to the univocity of sex/gender/sexuality or signifying through opposition. Oyewumi (1997) consequently claims that the pertinent question is not the socio-cultural construction of gender, “but the extent to which biology itself is socially constructed and therefore inseparable from the social” (p. 9); thus, reiterating Butler’s theorisation of inseparability between the biological and the social constructs. Centrally, Butler (1999) explains identity through gender performativity, namely, gender, but also sex, sexuality, and the body, as always in the making, of doing, and therefore constantly creating the identity it is professed to already be; a gender performativity which is often allured to a binary pair of being by not being the opposite; being a woman by not being a man (pp. 29-33). Hence, such performative acts were exposed and expounded on in the speech of my informants as they related to the gender binary and the univocity of sex/gender/sexuality.

Butler (1999) asks: “Is the failure to acknowledge the specific cultural operations of gender oppression itself a kind of epistemological imperialism?” (p. 18). However, maybe there ought to be one more question; is gender oppression as analytical basis in cross-cultural contexts in itself a form of epistemic violence? At the forefront of these issues are the traveling (Western) notions of feminism, patriarchy, and gender (Oyewumi, 1997, pp. 9-16) and the global discourses on women and gender; global discourses that, I would argue, are heavily reliant upon an assumed Western centrality and universality rooted in a neo-colonial, racist, heterosexual, capitalist, and sexist worldview. Worldview is an interesting word-choice. In Oyewumi’s (1997) analysis of gendered colonialism and the invention of women, the relationship between worldview, the Western privilege of view/sight in gaining knowledge, is found central to the hierarchal opposition between the viewer, the rational subject (read the white man), to the object/body, which is studied as the opposite, different ‘other’ (p. 30). This additionally relates to the dichotomy between mind (masculine) and body (feminine/other) which has functioned to legitimise differences between men and women as well as Master and Slave in the colonial project (Butler, 1999, p. 17; Oyewumi, 1997, pp. 3-6). These are oppositional relationships which I claim could easily be transposed to this research project based on a Western researcher and research subjects from the global south. Hence, warranting the importance to also reflect on the epistemological premises and the knowledge produced within this research.

Oyewumi (1997) argues further that 'woman' as a social identity was part and parcel of the colonial project and consequently gender cannot be ignored as an important part of contemporary studies on identity and society in post-colonial settings, however, it cannot be easily traced through universal models (pp. 13-16). Presumably, gender was created in an intermingle between colonial and local culture and systems. However, generally there was a twofold colonialism of racial inferiority and gender subordination which positioned the African woman as the 'Other' (Oyewumi, 1997, pp. 122-127). As such, African women inherited the position formerly held by European women who were now longer the 'Other' (woman) in relation to racially inferior natives (Oyewumi, 1997, p. 153). To better understand this in my study and as a contemporary legacy, I turn to Mohanty's (2003) example of how Third World Women, on the one hand, are reduced to a stereotyped image of an oppressed and uneducated woman standing in for a totality, which conceals the complexity within and among them, while Western women, on the other hand, are represented in their diversity and as subjects within their everyday lives. The unwarranted effect is a reproduction of emancipated feminist West versus the oppressed and illiterate 'rest'. A monolithic image of the Third World woman next to the complex, ever-changing subject of the Western woman is at the core of global discourses that are persuasively reinforcing epistemic superiority (p. 519). While the images can be said to have shifted a bit from a hegemonic picture of a totally uneducated, dependent, and tradition-bound Third World woman (Mohanty, 2006, pp. 259-263), the tendency to homogenise are persistent. Not to forget, is the aforementioned discourse around the oppressed and submissive veiled woman (Chakraborti & Zempi, 2012).

My project to explore Somali-born women's self-perceptions, gender(ed) identities, and experiences becomes yet more intricate and fraught with doubt when I consider Spivak's (1988) discussion on subjectivity, Western imperialism, and the role of the intelligent in her work *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak (1988) debunks the possibility of the intellectuals to merely report on the formerly non-represented, oppressed subject, the subaltern, particularly the subaltern woman. Since, by assumption of merely representing the subaltern, it is probable that the academic partakes in the perpetuation of the 'Other' as the shadow of 'Self' (p. 74-75). Spivak (1988) rather claims that, irrespective of the irreversible heterogeneity of the colonised subaltern subject, the subaltern woman, the sexed subaltern subject, has no space to speak and neither can she be heard or read. The role of the intelligent

thus becomes confronting representation at the deepest level by shifting from merely presenting the subaltern voice-consciousness to analysing and representing ourselves (pp. 79-84, 103-104). Consequently, it becomes germane to “question the implicit demand, made by intellectuals who choose a ‘naturally articulate’ subject of oppression, that such a subject come through history as a foreshortened mode-of-production narrative” (Spivak, 1988, p. 84). Anew, this impels me to self-reflexively discuss the knowledge produced within this feminist narrative study, which you will find in chapter 5.1.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 AN INTERSECTIONAL, FEMINIST STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY

Aforementioned issue of representation relates to the feminist understanding and analysis of the interrelatedness of the epistemological triad: the knower, the known, and the process of knowing (Sprague, 2005, p. 31). Following this, both the feminist narrative approach and the feminist standpoint theory/epistemology view each narrative as a co-constructed product, a conversation, by the researched and the researcher (Fraser & Macdougall, 2017, p. 244; Hesse-Biber, 2007, pp. 113-114; Sprague, 2005, p. 131). Knowledge is furthermore seen as “constructed in a specific matrix of physical location, history, culture and interests, these matrices change in configuration from one location to another: are context specific” (Sprague, 2005, p. 41). Knowledge is local and historically specific, thus partial, but not relative or reliant upon assumptions that anything goes and is equally valid and valued (Haraway, 1988, p. 584). As a critical theory it explores the “creative tension between abstract explanation and grounded description” (Davies, 2012, p. 229). Further, researchers, as any social actor, are located in specific positions within social relations, which are organised by inequalities of e.g. race and gender (Sprague, 2005, p. 51). Working from these assumptions and a feminist epistemic I put privilege on gender as a standpoint. However, I do so from a position of intersectionality in the feminist analysis of the Somali-born women’s narratives as to not obfuscate the variations in their lived experiences, identity constructions, and self-perceptions that arise as multiple systems of power and oppression intersect. I explore the linkages between the experiences as told by the women and the processes and aspects of the social context that are systemically reproducing difference (Brooks, 2007, p. 78). Hence, I use a standpoint theory premised on dialogical epistemology, which “leaves the conceptual tension between ‘group’ and ‘individual’ unresolved” (Stoetzler & Yuval-Davis, 2002, p. 318).

I start from Somali-born women’s lives as they experience them in my knowledge production around gender(ed) identities and self-perceptions. This is as much a writing women, and marginalised subjects such as Somali-born, migrant women in the Global South, into herstory (Brooks, 2007, p. 56), as it is an attempt to acknowledge their agency in the process (Haraway, 1988, p. 592). As explicated by Haraway (1988), feminist standpoint

epistemology and theory involve a process of situated knowledge, of locality, partiality, and specificity which thereof derives a claim on knowledge by not making statements of total transcendence or insisting on separating the object from the subject, nature from humans (pp. 581-583). By rather making localised and situated knowledge claims, and high levels of reflexivity, feminist objectivity and validity is constructed (Haraway, 1988). Hence, as stated by Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis (2002), standpoint theory views the process of approximating the truth as part of a dialogical relationship among subjects who are differentially situated (p. 315). Hence, another critical component in feminist standpoint theory and epistemology is what Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis (2002) has termed “situated imagination”, despite its contradictory nature as it is on the one hand limiting while on the other hand stretching and transcending knowledge situated imagination enables us to dialogue and connect with social agents that are situated dissimilar to ourselves. This is doubtlessly crucial in my study as the Somali women and I are truly in a dialogical relationship countered by multifarious differences. This similarly entails my agreement with the feminist disavowal of the previous assumption that research is done through reason and detachment, as it validated the image of the rational white man, whereas emotions and engagement inhibited it, as it was the property of women and subordinate groups. This went further to discredit emotions as knowledge and those who were seen as emotional subjects as non-credible bearers of knowledge (Jaggar, 1989, pp. 151, 163-165). A further engagement with these concerns is to be found in section 5.1 of the analysis chapter.

4.2 A FEMINIST NARRATIVE APPROACH

As an extension of my intersectional, feminist standpoint epistemology I use a feminist narrative approach for my qualitative in-depth interviews as the method of inquiry. These approaches are closely related as they seek to generate knowledge about how gender and sexuality shape social phenomena and influence the lived experiences and realities of social beings (Fraser & Macdougall, 2017, p. 246; Hesse-Biber, 2007, pp. 117-118), in this case Somali-born women living in Kampala. Feminist narratives and in-depth interviews are additionally known for generating rich data (Fraser & Macdougall, 2017, pp. 244-245; Hesse-Biber, 2007, pp. 122-123), which is invaluable to the exploration of lived realities and self-perceptions of the migrant, Somali women in this study. Similarly, both reject hegemonic

and dualistic notions by situating knowledge and insisting that previously ignored, marginalised, and even silenced subjects are viewed as active agents with valuable and valid knowledge that offers insight into social processes (Brooks, 2007, pp. 54-58; Fraser & Macdougall, 2017, p. 243). Narration is moreover a powerful medium through which “subjects position themselves within the context of being discursively positioned” (van Stapele, 2014, p. 15). Hence, it is a medium through which self-perception and identification can be analysed in relation to discourses. My intersectional feminist epistemology, combined with a feminist narrative approach, offers the guidance in establishing the link between the Somali-born women’s personal herstories and the political landscape, thus grounding their personal experiences within the societal system (Riessman, 1993, p. 61). As a feminist researcher I pay attention not only to the stories told by the Somali-born women, but also the emotions attached to them, the language used, the untold stories, reluctance or difficulty to speak, and silence (Fraser & Macdougall, 2017, pp. 244-245).

In the unstructured, informal, and in-depth narrative interviews, I loosely used an interview guide with a few open-ended questions (*see ANNEX A*). This was done in line with Riessman’s (1993) recommendation of using an interview guide with five to seven broad, open-ended questions (p. 55). Yet, as I was more concerned about exploring the full narratives as well as the various stories that the women told, I paid more attention to listen to their storytelling and to pose follow-up and clarification questions as well as using neutral probes to encourage participants to deepen and enrich their accounts, all of which is recommended by narrative researchers (Riessman, 1993, p. 56). Probing is a technique that the researcher uses to support the participant’s storytelling without exerting control. It can be silent, echoing, encouraging – ‘aha/uhu’, and leading (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 126). In my case I used mostly the first three types of probes as I wished to exert as little power over the course of the interviews as possible. By aiming at something close to neutrality in relation to the interviewees, my follow-up questions were often “can you tell me more about X” or “can you tell me what happened” as well as “what do you mean by X?”; as it makes it easier for respondents to construct their own accounts (Riessman, 1993, p. 54). This entailed encouraging the interviewees to be active agents and ensuring them that they have the power to also direct the course of the interviews. In the follow-up interviews I therefore primarily built on the previous disclosure and information from each woman in addition to a few

cross-cutting questions (*see* ANNEX A). These follow-up interviews were particularly insightful as I was able to get a better understanding and to go deeper into aspects that they had touched on or remained silent on during the first interview. Apart from asking questions and encouraging the women to expound on the stories or opinions they aired, I also gave them the opportunity to ask me questions and I offered personal information to allow them to see me and my position a bit clearer. I sought to demonstrate my empathy and understanding where it was possible. Another important aspect was the active listening which would allow me to pick up on markers and by-passing phrases that would lead me to making follow-up questions which could offer more insight into the women's experiences and emotions (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 137).

4.3 ANALYSING NARRATIVES

Narratives are not valuable data because they are an unmediated image of the past, rather they become interesting mediums to study as they display connections between the political and the personal. They similarly convey meanings, strategic interests, and self-identifications which can be unearthed through an analysis process (Riessman, 2005, p. 6). A personal account is thus constructed by an active agent and as much as it is a highly personal story is it a story intermeshed with discourses and bigger stories about communities and human life (Riessman, 1993, pp. 2, 70). Narrativization is a process of inclusion and exclusion complicit with personal interests as well as shaped by power relations and with bodily, structural, and discursive limits (Riessman, 1993, p. 65). Hence, the Somali women's stories in this research serve as mediums through which material, psychological, and social realities of privilege and oppression are revealed (Fraser & Macdougall, 2017, p. 249), but they also mirror larger discourses, social processes, and communities; they are a convergence of the particular and the structural. Considering the research aim to understand subjectivity and gender(ed) identity processes, grounded in feminist perspective, I am confident that narrative analysis is suitable as it forefronts human agency, interpretation, and co-constructed meaning-making processes and ability to explore how storytelling is a process of claiming and shaping desired identities (Riessman, 1993, pp. 5, 19).

To analyse and interpret the meaning of the narratives without simplifying or reducing them to single-axis experiences, I undertook a circular process of analysing the interview excerpts. Firstly, the interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, also indicating pauses, sounds, and interruptions (Fraser & Macdougall, 2017, pp. 244-245). This first full transcription was done paying attention to striking features (hesitation, long pauses, laughter, tears, anger, etc.) (Riessman, 1993, p. 56), and from the knowledge that narrators use “elongated vowels, emphasis, pitch, repetition, and other devices to indicate what is important” (Riessman, 1993, p. 20). Retelling of significant experiences and opinions are generally lengthy and replete with comments, flashbacks, flashforwards, asides, hesitation, silences, and other similar indicators (Davies, 2012, p. 114; Riessman, 1993, p. 43), hence these were particular important pointers in some of my selections of extracts for further analysis. The selected sections were also partially identified through entrance and exit talk (for example, “first of all”, “so that is why”) as this often indicate a narrative for the teller (Riessman, 1993, p. 58). The selections were done with these pointers in form of inductive analysis, as has been recommended since pre-empted results are otherwise easily produced (Riessman, 1993, p. 57). Inductive analysis meant that I did not read the data to fit pre-existing categories, but I let the data be the source of analytical and thematic concepts (Davies, 2012, pp. 196-197). I furthermore validated my selection process through a concentrated effort to reassess each selection against their conformity and validation of my own assumptions and interests as a feminist researcher.

Based on the view that language has to be unpacked, the re-transcribing of sections was sometimes done in order to generate text that would be suitable for a more detailed exploration (Riessman, 1993, pp. 32, 56). Narratives inevitably loses some of their meaning when they are fractured (Riessman, 1993, pp. 5, 19). Notwithstanding, to ensure readability I sometimes fractioned narratives and I corrected grammatical mistakes as well as removed filler words when these impeded the flow of the narrative. My fractions are marked by “[...]”, whereas “[]” signifies text that has been added by me to improve readability. Still, as much as possible I maintained the full narratives and my questions in relation to these when I perceived that this was of importance (Davies, 2012, p. 116).

While a narrative analysis of personal experiences can be approached by thematic, structural, interactional, and performative properties of analysis, it is often valuable

to combine elements of more than one (Riessman, 2005). Hence, in my narrative analysis I sought to not only pay attention to thematic categories or interaction aspects between me and my interviewees, but to also interpret the performance that was played out between us as the Somali-born women narrated their different experiences and views. Thus, seeing the narratives as intertextual products with a chorus of voices, the women's, mine, communities, and discourses (Davies, 2012, p. 221). The method of narrative analysis is also particularly useful in this study as it does not limit the analysis to only the stories that were told, but it also explores how they were told and the language that was used (Riessman, 1993, p. 2). Hence, my narrative analysis is primarily occupied with the spoken word, but also with what people do not speak about (van Stapele, 2014, p. 19). These practices arguably reveal as much as the words themselves, particularly as it has been claimed that language commonly reflect a male bias and is thus ill-equipped to describe women's lived realities (Davies, 2012, p. 113). Notwithstanding, in the end I made certain interpretations and choices, which are inevitable in any study that seeks to move beyond a mere display of words. These decisions and interpretations were however part of an active engagement with language and narratives as laden with meaning that has to be unpacked and deconstructed (Riessman, 1993, p. 32). As mentioned beforehand this process is explored further in analysis chapter 5.1. However, the next two sections build-up for these discussions as I expose my personal interests, methodological choices, and ethical concerns.

4.4 THE METHODOLOGICAL JOURNEY

Before taking up my studies, I was working in Sweden as a youth counsellor for unaccompanied refugee minors, boys and girls from Somalia, Iran, Afghanistan, and Eritrea. The work was challenging and rewarding in every possible way. With time, a mutual trust was built and our relationships evolved. I became entrusted with some of their stories, feelings, fears, and hopes for the future. It was in these valuable moments of storytelling that especially one Somali girl opened up my eyes to the richness that lies in stories, both for me as a listener and for her as a teller. I witnessed how telling her story became a way for her to navigate different norms and to build her identity, self-perception, belonging, and meaning in her new life in Sweden without her family. Storytelling similarly helped her to make sense of

her up-bringing in Somalia. This Somali girl of then 16 years had been in Sweden for about three years and she expressed that it had taken her this much time to reach a place from where she was able to look back at, and reflect on her 'old' life in Somalia and her 'new' one in Sweden. She highlighted the tensions between different expectations, societal norms, and roles that were related to her gender, but also her ethnicity and religion. As much as this sounds as an anecdotal note with little relevance for the research, this Somali girl was the one who ignited the spark in me and led me to make many of the choices for this research project and she deserves to be mentioned. In a way, she has been with me before I even knew that this research was born and she is still with me on this journey.

As a narrative feminist research with the purpose to generate and explore in-depth notions of intersected and situated gender(ed) identities from the accounts of Somali-born women, and not to produce quantifiable or generalisable results, it was of less concern to establish a saturated and representative sample (Fraser & Macdougall, 2017, p. 249; Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 119). Hence, with the aim to extract rich stories the sample size was not predetermined; however, it was geared towards a smaller size. I furthermore adopted a purposive sampling technique by getting access to Somali-born women through different personal and professional networks (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 119). To begin with, I established contact with a 32-year-old Somali-born woman living in Kampala. In this study I have given her the pseudonym Fowsio. Fowsio had previously lived in a Ugandan refugee settlement and was known for helping the Somali community as an informal interpreter. After having a rich narrative interview with her, she helped me to gain access to four other Somali-born women in Kampala between 22 and 30 years-old. In those interviews Fowsio acted as the interpreter for me and I quickly realised that it was substantially more difficult to establish narrative interviews in this set-up, with an interpreter in-between me and the storyteller. While some answers would take a narrative form, the tendency was that of rather short and summative answers. In relation to those interviews, my first informant and thereafter interpreter commented on the young age of some of these women as a factor that made them give little information and/or feeling insecure about how and what to answer. This made me reflect on my interest to primarily interview 'young' (age 18-35 y/o) Somali-born women who had grown up in Somalia and spent at least two or three years in Uganda. I started to reconsider that demarcation as it might not generate the same reflective and storied answers. There was

furthermore a mounting doubt of how to undertake this narrative inquiry with the presence of an interpreter as it seemed to hamper the possibilities for narratives to flow freely.

Upon return to Kampala I met with a male Somali interpreter working for Refugee Law Project, an NGO that does humanitarian work and research with refugees and internally displaced persons within Uganda. With the assistance of this male Somali interpreter I was introduced to eight more Somali-born women willing to be interviewed. While he had communicated my target age it turned out that the eight women ranged between 21 and 52 years. I decided to go ahead with the interviews anyway; to respect their willingness to participate, but also because I had already a burning doubt about my sampling age. With a male interpreter, I also made the decision to exclude two questions that had not been very successful in the previous interviews. These were when I asked them tell me about their relationships with women and men respectively. Instead I added a question on how they would describe themselves. Once again, I was faced with the fact that the youngest, a 21-year-old woman, was the most reserved and short in her answers. It was also a bit to my surprise to witness how these women seemed to be just as, or even more, comfortable with the male interpreter, as the other young women had been with the female one. Later on, I realised that this male interpreter had helped them both in his professional role as an interpreter and informally in different situations through his community work. Through this he had established a trusting relationship and respect with the women, which resulted in the openness and level of disclosure that many of them displayed. Notwithstanding, it was not possible to eliminate the barrier and the filter that an interpreter produced in the storytelling process (Davies, 2012, p. 113), which created somewhat broken and disrupted narratives. This was complicated further by the low level of anonymity due to the physical space of the interviews.

After this second round of eight interviews I went back to the same eight women for follow-up interviews, using the same male Somali interpreter. In this way I could reach deeper into their stories and also explore more areas after close reflection on the transcriptions of their first interviews (Davies, 2012, p. 169). It was at this point that I decided to switch my main focus to the women aged 32-42 years. Thus, out of the 13 women I interviewed, ranging from 21-52 years old, I chose the narratives of seven women between 32 and 42 years to be the core material in my research; presented under the following pseudonym names: Fowsio, Xalwo, Leylo, Magool, Nasteexo, Haweeyo, and Jamilah. I held two narrative interviews with

each woman and these ranged between 15 minutes and one hour and 37 minutes. It is important to note that the issue of translation and mediation was larger with the six informants that required the male interpreter as compared to Fowsio, the first Somali-born woman that I interviewed. Fowsio is fluent in English, has considerable experiences of both Somali and Ugandan communities, and more importantly she was largely comfortable to discuss her life and views with me (Davies, 2012, p. 170). Consequently, the interviews with Fowsio were considerably longer and more descriptive. Considering this, I identified the possibility of gaining more knowledge by interviewing the male Somali interpreter as he had both insider and outsider status due to his Somali origin and his role as an interpreter. I therefore did an informant interview with him on 18th of March, 2019. I used a semi-structured interview guide (*see* ANNEX C) to elucidate his views around the issues that migrants and refugees face in Uganda as well as this specific group, Somali-born women in Kampala. Additionally, this informant interview served as an opportunity to get feedback and reflect on my engagement with the Somali women by asking him about the interviews I had done and his take on them. This interview material thus functioned as both a contextual backdrop and a check and balance on my own engagement with the primary interviewees.

Lastly, in this methodological journey I received confirmation that time since migration had a decisive bearing on the depth of narrativization and storytelling as was my initial assumption and reason behind primarily interviewing Somali-born women with at least two to three years in Uganda. I furthermore found support for the fact that an ‘older’, 30 years and above, age seemed to facilitate a more reflective and elaborate speaking around memories and lived realities in the specific case of Somali women fleeing war due to experiences of grave violence and great family losses.

4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All participants in the research were verbally informed about the nature of the research, voluntary participation, and full anonymity. At the first stage of interviews, participants signed a consent form where it was also clearly stated that participation was voluntary, and that they at any time could, without giving any explanation, withdraw from the research project (*see* ANNEX B). However, in the cases where I presented the elaborated consent

form, with a presentation of the research, and asked the women to sign, I noticed that the environment became rather formal, which raised a barrier in the subsequent conversational space I aimed to obtain. Consequently, I later opted to only seek for verbal consent (Bryman, 2012, pp. 138-141). Yet, I felt that it was not sufficient to only voice the ethical considerations of voluntary participation and anonymity. The questions that I asked can be seen as both sensitive and private to these women. Hence, already at the outset of the interview I emphasised their full right to only disclose what they wished to, to decline to answer whatever and whenever, as well as withdraw from the interview at any point. I moreover ensured to not pressure them if they indicated or stated that they were not willing to answer any of my questions. Instead I assured them that it was not a problem and I proceeded to another question. Furthermore, I actively took on the role as a listener acting on the cues given by the interviewees to create a space of trust (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 133). Still, in a wish to not brush off ethical, methodological, and epistemological concerns I offer a more critical analysis on this in the subsequent section, namely in analysis chapter 5.1.

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

There are seven migrant, Somali women between the ages of 32 and 42 at the heart of this study, you will know them by their pseudonyms as Fowsio, Xalwo, Jamilah, Nasteexo, Haweeyo, Leylo, and Magool. They all live in suburbs in Kampala. Fowsio is a 32-year-old business woman who masters the English language and, as compared to the other six women, she has a husband who works to also financially support the family. Through our informal conversations she further demonstrated ability in navigating the power systems of UNHCR, IOM, and different NGOs. The other women have a limited knowledge of English and generally less secure and profitable livelihoods. Xalwo (39 y/o) and Jamilah (38 y/o) work in restaurants, Nasteexo (42 y/o) sells washing powder hawking around different neighbourhoods, Haweeyo (42 y/o) deals with used clothes, and Leylo (34 y/o) and Magool (33 y/o) are currently jobless. They are single-mothers (Xalwo, Haweeyo, Jamilah, and Nasteexo), widowed (Leylo and Nasteexo), divorced (Haweeyo), separated from their husbands due to conflict (Jamilah and Xalwo), and single women without family members left (Leylo and Magool). With this brief background the following section 5.1 discusses the question of knowledge production and methodology, whereas section 5.2 up to section 5.7 are more concerned with the women's narratives and how these can be understood through an intersectional reading of gender identity, femininity, and other intertwined discourses. At times I have chosen to present longer narratives, including my own questions and comments, since a feminist narrative approach questions fraction and disembodiment of narratives. Additionally, it is a choice stemming from standpoint epistemology and theory, which emphasises the co-construction and situatedness of voice.

5.1 “What can you do for us?”

What can migrant, Somali-born women's narratives, considering their problematic position as research subjects to Western scholars, tell us about knowledge production?

I asked myself this question after I had gotten mid-way into the research process as I was feeling increasingly concerned about how I was seeking to produce knowledge. In order to discuss this intricate question of epistemology, methodology, and essentially knowledge and power I turn to standpoint epistemology; mainly aforementioned framework on “Situated Knowledges” by Donna Haraway (1988), following her claim that feminist objectivity is established through partial, embodied, and situated perspectives (pp. 581-584). This goes beyond standardised self-reflexivity by lining up my positionality and privilege; a Northern European, white, middle-class, female student and researcher at MA level, alongside epistemological, theoretical, and political identification; a critical realist who embraces standpoint epistemologies on the premise of intersectional and postcolonial feminism. It aims to deeply question and plodder the production of knowledge and power from different positions in a dialogical relationship between a Global North researcher and Global South research subjects. That is, to investigate the ability to partially “translate knowledges among very different – and power-differentiated – communities” (Haraway, 1988, p. 580). However, to do so I also rely on the argument by Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis (2002) of how situated imagination allows us to imagine beyond our own situatedness and reality as long as we are aware of how the same situatedness and positionality can limit our imagination and thus ability to connect and dialogue with differently positioned subjects.

Hence, as a feminist researcher I was acutely aware of and concerned with reducing the hierarchy and power imbalance between me as a researcher and the participants, even though I know that it is not entirely possible (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 128). My main strategies towards this were minimal directionality in interview setting, using attentive listening to let the flow of interviews originate organically from the interview subject (Hesse-Biber, 2007, pp. 132-133), but also self-disclosure and openness. This included telling my interviewees about my previous experience of working with teenage girls who had migrated from Somalia to Sweden and how this had made a positive impact on me as well as curious about knowing more about Somali-born women’s lives in different contexts. Offering biographical information on the part of the researcher has been recognised in feminist method as another means to build trust and to level out power and authority between the two parties in the interview (Davies, 2012, p. 101; Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 128). Hence, it is through these practices, and the narrative interviews themselves, that I foremost explore these

epistemological concerns. However, I do so without thematic separations as it would imply that the subject can be removed and disembodied from the object and so forth (Haraway, 1988, p. 583).

Given that it is additionally a researchers' ability to limit the extortion of control over the research process and by constructing narrative interviews as dialogues that narratives are engendered (Riessman, 1993, p. 56), I evaluated methods of reducing my own influence over the actual interview process. One of my tactics were to let the Somali women decide where they felt comfortable to be interviewed. Sometimes they asked me to meet them at their home where we would sit casually on the floor or a bed. We would share some beverages and sometimes snacks. I also met one of the Somali women at a public café, but most times it would take place in an office that belonged to the United Somali Community in Uganda, since this was an accessible public space for many of the Somali women. However, the interview setting developed as a metaphor of their lives: the Kampala suburban life, where there is no secluded, separated, isolated, quiet place. Thus, while they were individual narrative interviews, there was so much mixture, so much life, so many ears, and voices as none of the settings could offer complete anonymity and privacy with other women and/or family members, children, staff, and visitors present and with probability of hearing what the interviewee was saying. It was palpable that an ideal place for a narrative interview to happen was not within my or their reach and we had to make do with the imperfect conditions we had. This speaks to the ambiguity in doing research with marginalised groups in terms of ensuring their welfare, but also in our endeavour to fully utilise the methodological tools; methodological tools that could easily be experienced as re-traumatising due to the request of memorisation and narration. However, did the Somali women express such concerns and how did they frame their experiences of the narrative interviews?

“Yeah because I don't...**since there are so many people around I fear, I don't want them to hear my voice that I'm crying**, but I would love that me and you should be, maybe having a private side that which, even if I cry no one [can] hear me.”

(Magoool, 12th of March 2019)

Magool – So as you tell me you are asking some question, so is it, you're the one who asks eh? **Who is asking?** Or you just met me to, to say anything?

Me – Eh, I have a few questions that I want to ask, but I eh also want you to ask because it is not only, only me who decides.

Magool – Okay... and me **I really have a lot of problems, problems...and if, if I try to share or to talk about them, I, I may not feel well** like eh...[starts crying] it makes me to cry... [continues to cry]... Me I am alone. My brother was killed. My father was killed. And I became alone, all my family was killed.... So, I became alone. It is only God who is there for me and can help me. [...] ...and eh my full testimony, or my full story, is at RLP [an NGO]. [...] [But I suffer from] sickness, blood pressure and when I ever remember these things, what happened, I don't feel well. I really met a lot of problems back in my country, I met, like I was sexually abused, lot of problems that I faced...So I'm really, and **even the environment now here, because the people are sitting here and a few is not satisfied, and after, sometimes then, some they hear you and they may start narrating about you.** They start looking at you, you can't talk much about that...So that's the problem I am facing now. I would love to be helped if I can get to this other country, third country, live to be, to get a better future life because here I am failing to get what I want. So, I guess if I am resettled to another country and may, I believe that I will get better than this.

Me – I am thankful for what you've told me so far, and I...I haven't felt the same things and I haven't experienced the same things, but I know the feeling of feeling vulnerable so I don't want to ask you anything that will make you feel worse of course.

(Magool, 5th of March 2019)

Magool's narrations relate to the layers that disguise and compromise the voices that are spoken and heard. She specifically pointed out the problematic set-up of the interviews that left her, as a survivor of sexual violence, but possibly also the other Somali women, vulnerable and with fear of castigation, gossiping, and judgement due to the ears that were listening in. Neither she nor I saw any opportunity to change the interview setting and therefore I made a decision to not probe for more answers when Magool or other women expressed fear of speaking out. Still, my own feminist conviction is one of speaking out to dismantle and question shame and honour connected to women's sexuality, violent masculinity, and sexual violence, but my embodied, situated knowledge and imagination was louder; telling me to respect Magool's consciousness of the consequences of being known as

a survivor of rape in the migrant, Somali community. Thus, to acknowledge the voices and visions from below as to not make “unlocatable, and so irresponsible, knowledge claims” (Haraway, 1988, p. 583), but to find webs of connection, shared conversations. However, I also realised the danger of sliding from an embodied and situated knowledge position of shared conversations towards a romanticising, uncritical mediation of these Somali women’s narrations on the grounds of their subjugated positions. This would be irresponsible as it would assume that subordinated subjects are inherently ‘innocent’ and that there are no power dynamics at play (Haraway, 1988, pp. 583-584). Irrespective of Magool’s vulnerable position as a refugee woman and survivor of sexual violence, she is simultaneously knowledgeable of how to articulate and use this herstory that evokes empathy and that can construct an effective identity. She is able to immediately persuade me of her credibility as a Somali, refugee woman, which is undoubtedly paramount to her as she, similar to the other Somali women, is searching for ways to be ‘helped’; that is, to be resettled to a third country in the West. This goes to show the probability of a troubling side effect with feminist standpoint; a rally on researching the most, multiply oppressed subject as it is assumed to be the most accurate conveyer of the oppression and power hierarchies inscribed in the social order (Brooks, 2007, p. 70). By doing so, researchers sometimes partake in the surveillance of marginalisation while the hegemonic centres remain untouched (Stoetzler & Yuval-Davis, 2002, p. 319). As a feminist researcher I have to rebuff this, aided and guided by Haraway’s words: “The positionings of the subjugated are not exempted from critical reexamination, decoding, deconstruction, and interpretation; that is, from both semiological and hermeneutic modes of critical inquiry. The standpoints of the subjugated are not “innocent” positions” (p. 584). This is not concomitant with a docile subject, more accurately described as the envisioned object, but a conscious move to appreciate the agency of Magool. Notwithstanding her marginalisation, Magool is not short of seeing the possibility to make her claim of protection and resettlement as she visualises me as someone who is possibly influential in such processes.

Moreover, Magool’s narration arguably sprung out of my attempts to show openness and to reduce hierarchies by letting the Somali women know that they could ask questions at any time and of any kind at the outset of the interviews. I also re-emphasised this towards the end of the interviews. But did this have any visible influence on the knowledge

production and the power dynamics? Clearly such openings, as seen above, prompted Magool to question the conditions of our relationship, which forced me to be visible as an active researcher who can never completely escape from the role as the director of the conversation. However, as I reflected on this, I found that it is not through an either/or that knowledge is produced, but through a “contradictory self” of both researcher and woman, observer and empathiser. As Haraway (1988) phrases it, “[t]he knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and therefore able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another.” (p. 586). Still, did such points of connection, joining with others, occur between me and the Somali women with the use of narrative interviews, self-disclosure, and opportunities to ask questions?

“I think you can understand as a woman, and, a woman who her family is killed and also she was sexually abused like, raped [Magool starts knocking on the table with her fingers as previously when she became emotionally distressed], and how this, her situation may be. Maybe you see your father is killed in front of you and you are also sexually abused and no one is there for you. **I think that as a woman you can understand.**”

(Magool, 5th of March 2019)

I claim that my messages of shared conversations seemed to find their way to some of the Somali women. In interviews with Magool, as well as on other occasions with other women, I felt that our common gender and sex offered some closeness and a level of understanding and commonality, thus partially giving me insider status and ability for us to join together. Something that I was concerned with since feminist researchers often seek to analyse and locate the differences that influence the insider-outsider status in the research interaction (Hesse-Biber, 2007, pp. 139-140). However, did the Somali women also recognise my outsider status and did this play a part in the knowledge that was produced?

Xalwo – Because when **I saw this, that there was some research going on, I ran and came immediately.** I just wanted to meet with you and know what is going...

Me – Oh thank you, mahadsanid [Thank you in Somali]...ehm, so it’s because I’ve worked with Somali girls in Sweden and they told me a lot about their stories of growing up in

Somalia, also fleeing to Sweden, and I saw a lot of their struggles and I wanted to learn more and to people to understand more how difficult it can be, especially for Somali women.”

Xalwo – Okay, thank you and **I encourage you to go on** because we will, there is more, there is more coming up when you come to the Somali community. Because you may find someone abusing you. You may find someone accusing. You may find someone talking to you in good way. Some will welcome you. **You will see different faces, so you need to be patient and try to go on.** (*Xalwo, 5th of March 2019*)

Undoubtedly it did, as is seen on how Xalwo similarly connected to me, but also reminded me that as a Swedish, white, middle-class woman and researcher I was most likely considered an outsider to the Somali-born women that I interviewed; someone that was a stranger and thus unfamiliar with their community and culture and thus lacked some ability to easily see and know their specific realities. That is, she reminded me of Haraway’s (1988) argument of how the “god trick” is a deception of seeing everything from nowhere; it is a vision from above that claims to transcend limits and difference, rather ends up saying nothing by shouting universality (pp. 581, 589-590). Hence, despite moments of shared conversations, the women were not silent on the differences in our positions and lived realities. So how did our different positionalities affect the Somali women? How did they see me as a researcher?

Leylo – Yes, I just want you to make me understand this and make me to just to like describe or to make me understand, get it well. Because **we have seen so many just like you, doing research and they come and they ask many different questions. They go back. That’s the last day we see them.** They don’t bring feedback. You won’t see them again. So why? What is the reason?

Me – Mmm, I think, I can’t...

Leylo – **So you are just like them or you are different?**

Me – [laughing], good question! Very good question...I think ehm, most people, eh, they have a small world so when they need to do something for school or work, they do it and they like meeting the people but then they go back and they forget. Because they have their small world. They have their family, something.

Leylo – Yeah, it’s okay, it’s... Thank you and thank you for your time.

(*Leylo, 5th of March 2019*)

This extract shows that Leylo, and presumably all the other women, was coloured by previous experiences as a research subject as well as the image of ‘a researcher’. Particularly Leylo problematised the dichotomy that is often kept between the theoretical knower, the researcher, and the experiential example, the research subject (Haraway, 1988). While I aimed to resist such binary positions, at times it proved challenging to navigate and negotiate different roles of researcher, feminist, empathiser, and fellow woman (Liinason & Cuesta, 2014, p. 27). This also probed me to question the ethical of being a researcher seeking examples that one does not need to experience and the tendency to leave whenever the data is considered to be collected. Leylo’s question made me both enthusiastic and nervous. I felt left without a language to describe such tendencies in the academia to someone which I believe that the academia ought to be accountable. Thus, reading my own answer I hardly understand it myself. I just know that I was trying to join in on her critique, but also make her understand that I believe that it is not necessarily done out of outright devaluation of research subjects. While I felt like I failed, I was trying to take responsibility of my position of privilege and presumed ‘greater vision’ of the world ‘out there’. Hence, as much as I felt inept to give a satisfying answer, I realised that it related to how “vision is always a question of the power to see” (Haraway, 1988, p. 585) and that re-locating to a vantage point requires being accountable for that movement. Moreover, it exposed my difficulty to apply splitting and situated imagination as this allows critical, accountable thinking as well as ability to construct rational conversations, as compared to being and seeing from an unmarked position (Haraway, 1988, pp. 585-587).

In addition, Fowsio, a Somali-born woman of 32 caring for a family of eleven, repeatedly asked me before and after the interviews if she is really helping me and if I am getting the information that I need to make my report. She also made multiple excuses for her ‘bad’ English despite the fact that she speaks it fluently. Hence, it was evident throughout our interactions that Fowsio was concerned about giving me what I wanted and needed, ‘the right information’. At many junctures of our interviews Fowsio also stopped and asked me “isn’t it so?”. Most times I offered short confirmation to signalise to her that she should continue with her narration, but sometimes I engaged more and gave some of my opinions. I found these impasses both understandable and problematic. I felt connected to her concern of ‘getting things right’ and being useful/helpful, but I also realised that I felt confronted by her

assumption that there were some answers and information that were ‘right’ and ‘worthy’ as compared to other. This foremost stems from my identification with a situated knowledge positioning of feminist embodiment that undermines fixation of knowledge. However, it was also about my uneasiness with being read as a researcher controlling the flow of information when I believed that I was largely giving the women the space to speak to me about what they wished to disclose by open-ended questions and encouragement to tell me about themselves and their experiences. Inarguably, I have to admit that this is contradictory to my awareness of how knowledge is constructed situationally and contingent upon our visualising practices and the possible violence inscribed in these (Haraway, 1988, pp. 585-586, 590). Once again, I had to ask about the knowledge produced considering our different positionalities and how this affected the Somali women? Moreover, what visions did they hold of me and the research process?

Me – “Eh sorry, I forgot to ask as well, do you have any questions?”

Xalwo – “Yes, what can you do for us?” (*Xalwo, 12th of March 2019*)

“Me, I am just asking you, as, because you interviewed me, and I shared with you what is going on and how much I can share with you. So, what can you help me with?”

(*Haweeyo, 5th of March 2019*)

“I have, I want to ask you because my children they are not going to school. So, do you, can you help me, if you can help me with my children?” (*Nasteexo, 12th of March 2019*)

“So, I will request...yes, I will request you to see how you can help us to come out of this situation, to do your best to, to save us from this situation.” (*Magool, 5th of March 2019*)

Thus, as little as I could refuse my own reading of them, I could resist their reading of me. Such readings became apparent when I probed the women if they wished to pose any questions or add something towards the end of the interviews. I sat uneasily hearing these request and inquiries, especially because it displayed my privileged position in comparison to theirs but also because it retold a grand story of colonialism and white privilege maintained contemporarily through unequal globalisation and capitalism (Mohanty, 2003). It was not

only attestations of the lingering notions of the white saviour, but also of the embodied and material reality of our different positions in the global world order. Interestingly, it was only in Fowsio's case that these questions never arose. She never assumed that she could be helped by me, or at least she never asked me. Clearly these women were positioned and situated both differently and similarly as seen in the previous short presentation of them. With such situated knowledges it was easier for me to resist impulses to reinforce and seek for accounts that fit stereotypical images of the veiled woman, just as much as the Third World woman; or in Haraway's Haraway (1988) words, "the search for the fetishized perfect subject of oppositional history, sometimes appearing in feminist theory as the essentialized Third World Woman" (p. 586). However, it was still obvious to me that I felt more connected to Fowsio, easily located as an articulate subject of oppositional history with a ready narrative (Spivak, 1988, p. 84). It was tempting to focus on Fowsio's narrations that easily seemed unfettered to me. It was easier to listen to her. It was reassuring. I had to ask myself why? The answer is multi-layered.

In my interviews with the other women, the interaction was somehow broken; seated with an interpreter between us it was more difficult to connect, but sometimes it felt like we were actually speaking directly to one another. Still, those women tended to offer shorter answers and to display silence and/or reluctance as well as difficulty to answer some of my questions. I would notice my frustration at the event of this. When a participant offered short answers, were silent, or declined to answer altogether I recognised that I felt as if I had failed to establish a good relationship with her and it frustrated me as I imagined myself to be approachable and open. I therefore had to analyse my own tendency to value long speech and intimacy over short accounts, reluctance, and silence as the former confirmed my own preferred self-perception and my wish to be a feminist able to cross-culturally connect with women of different classes, races, ages, cultures, and so on. As argued by Davies (2012) these reflections were paramount as "no process of knowing is fully reflexive until it is explicitly turned on the knower, who becomes self-conscious even of the reflexive process of knowing" (p. 7). They were also important in order to consider and reconsider different forms of speech as equally valid conveyers of meaning and sources of interpretation within my study, which they inarguably are (Davies, 2012, pp. 113-114). Mark the importance of this as Nasteexo, in

addition to some other women, narrated silence and non-disclosure to be widespread among Somali women.

“Really, **Somali women most of the times they don’t share. They have a lot of difficult problems**, but they don’t come and they don’t share with you. [...] because eh, our, our girls most of them **they feel shy** so they don’t share what, whatever they feel or they face. So, they stay with it and it stays there, like that. [...] That’s, that’s their, their culture. Yeah **that’s their culture.**” (*Nasteexo, 12th of March 2019*)

Nasteexo’s account of how Somali women remain silent around the many issues that they face is important to note as this presumably means that the herstories in this research are fractured and incomplete. There were times that I noticed exclusion elements when the women were retelling their herstories, particularly sexuality and violations by men figured as an area where the women would speak little and in more general terms. In addition, in this narration Nasteexo differentiate herself from this cultural and gendered norm by saying that it is “their” and not “our” culture. She also did this by sharing her experiences of being abused and her inability to send her children to school.

Further, it was easier to connect to Fowsio as she constructed herself as a woman serving her community and actively building her own business. Still, the other women were not short of initiative and putting in hard work. So, what made me feel less connected to them? How did the other women’s visualising practices influence me and my ability to connect to them?

“Even me, if I go to another country, I will become like you and put the hardest to help the women.” (*Haweeyo, 5th of March 2019*)

“Thank you for visiting us, for checking us, but do your best to take our issues to somewhere.” (*Magool, 5th of March 2019*)

“So, you are the one who is moving around so don’t forget us.” (*Leylo, 5th of March 2019*)

As seen above, the other Somali women more strongly proclaimed the differences between them and me. To exemplify Leylo went further to point out that she was never educated and she had lost all her family and husband. She described that she had spent her whole life running, but still she was not going anywhere and that is when she matter-of-factly said the above. Hence, I realised that I was more hesitant about my interaction with them as it was more difficult for me to see them through a splitting vision and for me to remain embodied and positioned in relation to them. Or, as Haraway (1988) puts it, to inhabit “the embodied nature of all vision and so reclaim the sensory system that has been used to signify a leap out of the marked body and into a conquering gaze from nowhere. This is the gaze that mythically inscribes all the marked bodies, that makes the unmarked category claim the power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation.” (p. 581). I was easily leaping out of the embodied position in these interactions by my privileges that included moving around ‘freely’, while these women were dreaming about resettlement for reasons such as educating children, overcoming economic hardships, having health conditions treated; or as they often said: “to have a better future life”. Further, while they viewed themselves as “uneducated” and “poor”, they saw me as someone who could represent and help women and ultimately speak for them. While such representation is problematic on many grounds, it is not ungrounded as the power to represent is afforded a few with privileged positions. The Somali women’s requests of taking their issues somewhere and to represent them is for me unquestionably a call to not shy away from what Spivak (1988) names the imperative responsibility of the ‘intellectuals’ to thoroughly and reflexively carry out interpretation, deconstruction, and analysis of the narratives. Hence, it necessitates my ability to not only report, but to listen to the Somali women’s voices and herstories to be able to analyse, interpret, and translate them to a language that is readable to the academia and its listeners. However, was I able to hear their voices and their herstories?

Leylo – So...as if I bring it back to you, that question, how do you know it? Do you know the same me, the same as I’m saying or yours is different?

Me – Ehm...I don’t know if, what, the last thing you said, you shouldn’t ehh...cover your mouth when you are laughing?

Leylo – Yes

Me – For example, for me, eh, that is not important to be a good woman, but eh, but eh, the respect you talk about I think that is very important. That is something that I also think...

Leylo – So if you, you know it like that you're a good woman [Leylo says laughing]

Leylo – Yeah...it's really good to, to give the people peace, not to disturb them

Me – but you said eh, a good woman should not enter everywhere. Where should a woman enter and not enter?

Leylo – Yeah, because we, we are Muslims and we, we are Somali women. So as a religion and culture it is not allowed. There are some other places that is not good. It's, eh, the, the religion says don't do this and this or don't enter such kind of places. So, we just stay back, from those ones.

Leylo – Yeah, even I think, even you guys you don't want like a woman who is not good...

Leylo – I think you have seen some women, where you come from, they are bad women. They are not good. They, where they go even you yourself you don't feel to enter those places. I think you have seen them. Have you seen them?

Me – ehm, to me I think I have a different idea of what is a good woman. I don't like women who hurt other women; who try to be... eh better by eh, eh being mean to other women.

Leylo – It's the same as I've been saying.

Me – Yeah okay. So those women who are like that, I also have seen them and I don't like them... (*Leylo, 12th of March 2019*)

Particularly in this discussion between Leylo and I, of what a 'good' versus a 'bad' woman is, it was exposed that there were definitely difficulties for me in hearing their voices and their herstories. Which takes us back to the critical question of hearing across the differences in vision and positioning. Evidently, Leylo and I are struggling to find a common language, to construct a shared conversation through splitting visions. This anew speaks to the difficulty with semiotic-material awareness and ability to use the split and contradictory self as you are positioned and structured according to gender, race, nationality, class, and so forth (Haraway, 1988, pp. 585-588); a difficulty that is unescapable and therefore I try to stick with it and expose it. Thus, in this epistemological discussion, and by being explicit of my own interests throughout this study, I have aimed to reveal myself to the reader(s) as to invite you to make your own claims on my knowledge production as well as the interpretations of the Somali women's narratives that follow. *However, did I find a language of interpretation that takes account of the embodied and situatedness of the narrative?* Often, I had to caution my

eagerness to present the narratives at face value when I perceived them as ‘authentic’ expressions, in line with my theoretical and ideological groundings. I consciously had to remind myself of my gender-bias as not to single-down the narratives to ‘gender-only’, but to take them as multifaceted stories at the intersection of gender, class, race, religion, sexuality, and so forth, or as narratives with other importance than gender. Revisiting the narratives and my analysis of them, probed me to look at them as both accounts and performances with aims of persuasion, authenticity, and idealised self-construction. As this discussion has proven, seeing and knowing are power tools with ambiguous and multiple lenses based on our multidimensional subjectivity (Haraway, 1988, pp. 585-586, 590). Still, as Mohanty (2003) argues, the connexions and relationships between the local and the global are “conceptual, material, temporal, contextual, and so on”, which “assumes both distance and proximity (specific/universal) as its analytic strategy.” (pp. 521-522). This is central as the main discussion and analysis around the Somali-born women’s narrations unfold.

5.2 A SHARED HERSTORY(?)

The herstories developed and bounced back and forth in the same interview as well as between the different interviews. I tried to find a way to shuffle through the stories, to read them, and to have them speak to themes, to others, to me. I kept coming back to Fowsio’s narrations, but I did not want to mute the other Somali women’s voices. I have made efforts to weave them together without force, to move between the universal/common and the local/specific to make it visible that the herstories enrich and question one another and that the interviews are not only conversations between them and me, but between the Somali women themselves since I used different women’s words in my follow-up interviews, particularly with Fowsio. Thus, these women are also speaking to one another in the exploration of how Somali-born women living in Kampala narrate their lived experiences in Uganda and Somalia.

It is moreover striking how many of the Somali women’s individual herstories weave together and create a common herstory with specific yet common challenges, both in terms of their lives in Somalia and their lived realities in Kampala. This was even more palpable with the women who identified as single-mother refugees in Kampala, which

confirms the premise of standpoint epistemology where, as described by Collins (1997), groups are constituted upon their shared herstory and common placement within hierarchical power relations; a shared position of inequality (pp. 375-376). This comes with shared knowledge and experiences around systems of oppression and domination (Brooks, 2007). Thus, while the Somali-born women in Kampala hold disparate individual experiences, they simultaneously located commonality by being positioned similarly in different structures of inequality which can be traced through gender, migrant status, religion, class, race, and so forth. Interestingly, some of the women commented directly on this. Haweeyo, for example made striking connections to how structural conditions in Kampala hit refugee single-mothers across ethnicities and she therefore saw the need of helping them by joint efforts.

“I am really requesting you, here in Uganda there are soooo many nationalities, refugees who ran to this country and they are single-mothers. Soooo many women who are facing different problems. So, we would like you to see how we can help those women all, all of us together...Because I really love when one Somali woman [is] helped, also one Sudanese will be helped, one Congolese will be. Because we are all sharing. We are the same mother. We are suffering. We are single-mothers. We have children. So, we are sharing the problems...yeah, me I have that hope.” (*Haweeyo, 5th of March 2019*)

However, Collins (1997) raises the critical question of the fact that gender and the category of women, as compared to race and class, is structured differently owing to the fact that women cut across many of the other realities of oppression (pp. 378-380). Therefore, the common locus of women’s oppression is not as easily traced nor is it necessarily there, as has been pointed out repeatedly by aforementioned critique around class and race blindness within feminist theorisation and movements. This has similarly been apparent in this study around migrant, Somali women’s self-perceptions and lived experiences in Kampala and Somalia. To further exemplify this, the divergence and convergence between Jamilah, Leylo, and Fowsio’s Somali herstories are instructive.

“**I came here...to...marry my husband at first.** We were schoolmates in Somalia. Then he...you know...you know the problem...which is, which we are facing in our country. There is no safety, so they fled [...] So when he came here, we still communicated with each

other. Then...one time we have agreed about our marriage and he called my father, that time my father was alive...then when he called, my father agreed...[to] the marriage, then he, he, he sent some money, I came here to have my wedding and get married. Yeah, that is the, the, one of the main reasons that I came here to Uganda, to know Uganda. [...] by the time I grow up the country was not having eh...government... it was eh...they were having...**we were in a war. So, I didn't have a lot of good experience in our country and the life there. It was difficult to enjoy life there. Then we were living happily,** my father used to be...ehm...he was ehm...askari... yeah, he was a policeman in our country [...] Ehm, later on...2007...we have lost my sister...I don't know where she is up to now, we don't know. Luckily, we had two kids of hers, raising them, because she was producing many kids and she was young and the family was not having enough...ehm financial. [...] **Again, after losing my sister, 2010 also we lost my brother and my father at the same time. They've been murdered...Yeah that's the time when we...ran away from the country completely.** After losing two, three, important people in our family then we came here in Uganda and we lived. My mother came after one year, eh joined me, and the two, my, my nephew and my niece...also they came with mummy. Since then we have started our life in Uganda...Ehm...by the time my father was alive I was studying primary school...life was good...we had a...land...I don't know who is with the land now, it's abandoned, yeah...”
(Fowsio, 27th of October 2018)

“**I was so young I don't remember.** [...] and as soon as we grew up **the country started to collapse down and there is war** so we run to this side, you come to this side, then you run to that side. **You have been running, running until we came to this end...** Yeah, because, and we didn't have any school to go. **We are not educated.** So, EVERY TIME you are running places to a places, place to place, shift from this place...Until the time that has come, **two of my brothers died and my family I lost them there. I become alone.** Even me, I, I was, I got injured on that side of the left side. Then later on I decided to leave the country and come here...The problem even until now is there, until now...I used to run. I ran away from the country in 2003. So, every night going to a place, sleep this place, going to that place, going to next place. So, until now the problem is there in that Somalia.” (Leylo, 12th of March 2019)

“yeah, I was born in Somalia, I grew up in Somalia. Then when I, **when I became an adult, then later on I was given a man. Got married, then started delivering babies.** [...] I was

staying at home because my father was not accepting me to go out, and because that time my father was a foreigner. He was a Yemeni, then they used to not allow their girls to go to school, to go out. [...] the life was really fine that time when I was young and growing up. Then my mother was working in a restaurant, just what I am doing now. [...] the life was really difficult for me when my mother was killed. I buried her alone. I was alone at home. Nobody is there for you, just trying myself to survive. Then that's, there are so many reasons that make me to leave. [...] There, there was a war between the government and the al-Shabaab. Then later on, my husband was arrested by the government. When he was released then he ran away. Since he ran away until now there is no communication from him. So, we just lost him from that day until now.” (*Jamilah, 5th of March 2019*)

Hence, while many of the Somali-born women's accounts of their time in Somalia followed a storyline of growing up happily but with uncertainties and instability, there are marked differences in class, educational opportunities, freedom to choose who to marry, and so forth. Commonly, the Somali herstories shared the peaks of getting married, having children, and then experiences of violence and subsequent flight to Uganda. Jamilah arguably elucidates some of the aspects that are considered relevant and key in not only her life narrative, but arguably a Somali woman's life narrative; a woman becomes an adult, is 'given' and/or gets married to a man, and then starts to reproduce. It is noteworthy that Jamilah is 'given' a man; she thereby reveals how marriage was something that happened to her by the agency of others rather than by her own action; as compared to Fowsio's description of how she instigated her marriage yet sought her father's approval to it. Another marked difference is related to educational attainment. Whereas Fowsio sees herself as somewhat educated, for a majority of the Somali women education was largely non-existent. For example, in Leylo's herstory being a refugee with a life countered by running has come with the concomitant issue of not being educated. Interestingly, Leylo says "we are not educated" and thereby locates her own experience within a communal narrative of being deprived of education due to a Somalia countered by war and insecurity. Arguably, this is largely true with limited opportunities to education reported by other Somali women, but not all of the women were deprived of education. However, alongside these differences, in some significant ways the women's herstories merged; namely, in the dream of another future, the dream of resettlement, and in the experiences of horrific violence taking away beloved family members in Somalia. Despite

the differences in the year of flight, for example Leylo (2003) and Xalwo (2017), all of the women narrated their decisions to leave Somalia as a result of such violence resulting in severe losses of close family members and also sometimes livelihoods and businesses. However, some of the women mentioned that their lives were economically better before flight, which supports Anthias' (2012) claim that migrant women's translocal lives commonly entail physical as well as gender and class dislocations and relocations as they become subjected to local and global structures and discourses around gender (pp. 102-105). Lastly, such commonalities and disparities in the Somali-born women's lived realities and herstories are imperative in the analysis of their narrations as they follow.

5.3 CLAIMING AND SHAPING IDENTITIES

In this analysis chapter the Somali-born women's identity processes are explored as they are claimed and shaped in relation to local contexts, cultures, gender, religion, and additional aspects.

5.3.1 "To be a Somali lady in Uganda, to me it is amazing"

The Somali women's herstories show that the complexities in women's lived realities and identities are unmistakable, still normative and hegemonic gender discourses function to reduce such complexities by outlawing certain femininities (Budgeon, 2014). Contemporarily, postcolonial feminist Mohanty (2003) argues that global capitalism and neoliberalism, embedded in a naturalisation of masculine and racist values, shape current gender restructuration, masked as the freedom of globalisation and emancipation of women (pp. 514-517, 530). Building on this, cultural and feminist theorist McRobbie (2007) states that this neoliberal discourse is epitomised in a 'new sexual contract' where especially young women should conform to and perform a new normative femininity of individuality and success so that, particularly, the 'West' can fulfil its self-construction of (gender) equal societies. These are societies where patriarchy is bygone and feminism is henceforth not needed, since women are no longer domestic, wives, and mothers, but empowered, capable, and successful individual economic subjects (pp. 718-722). As a Somali-born woman largely finds herself discursively at the promise of being reached by the emancipated West either directly within its premises or indirectly through global development schemes, I argue that

these global and neoliberal gender discourses around normative femininity can be partially traced as they have travelled on the waves of globalisation and transnational ties and intersected with local discourses. However, is this the case when Somali-born women in Kampala narrate around their self-perceptions and their lives? The following narration by Fowsio on her experience of living in Kampala is an interesting case in point to explore this.

“Uganda...is really my second country...I love Uganda. It welcomed me very well, people are very generous and ehm...to be a Somali lady in Uganda, to me it is amazing. Yeah, I have got an amazing life, good friends, ehm... it educated, educated me to...how to live in this world, to be a hard-working person. Ehm... I also learned that I can create my life...anyhow I want. If I want to stay like, to be a poor person or to become a person or have a better life also I have learned in Uganda. It is not that I have learned that from the Somali community, no. I have learned from Ugandan people, when they saw me, “Fowsio you are young, you understand English better and why don’t you do some work? Why don’t you work? Why don’t you do some business?” People encouraged me always. Yeah, that’s the amazing life I have in Uganda. I can never forget. Yeah, to take care of a family of eleven [!] people, yeah. Ehm... I’m proud to be a Somali and I feel bad also that we don’t have peace and we cannot stay in our country, also I feel bad. Yeah, to see every day our people to get murdered for nothing, it hurts me a lot.” (*Fowsio, 27th of October 2018*)

In Fowsio’s account one can discern the tenets of a successful femininity discourse along the lines of unrestricted opportunities to create a better life for oneself by merely putting in the hard work. Fowsio depicts being a poor person or having a better life as an individual choice. However, as sociologist and feminist Shelley Budgeon (2014) argues, instead of replacing the dynamics of gender hegemony, entrenched in hegemonic masculinity, this new normative ‘empowered femininity’ functions hierarchically and in support of hegemonic masculinity by rejecting other femininities. These so called ‘pariah femininities’ are undesirable due to their destabilisation of the imagined neoliberal era of freedom, women’s empowerment, and gender equality, either by being ‘backward’, ‘too girly’, and/or by casting women as victims due to continuous critiques of the supposedly evaporated patriarchal order instead of accepting the new times of gender equality (pp. 325-327). How did such gender dynamics fit with the women’s narrations?

“Emh, in Uganda? No, it is the same, like you’re a woman, you’re a woman, you’ve been respected that you are one. [...] Sometimes...when you are travelling, going places, you face also some difficulties, but they don’t discriminate. [...] So, people who are living there, [in Somalia], they are living in fear. But here...I haven’t seen any problem, whether you’re a man or a woman. Sometimes I come at five am, four am, back home from travelling. I just take boda, [motorbike taxi], yeah. I don’t see any problem. I don’t even tell my husband escort me to this place, do that. I just inform him I’m there. I’ve arrived. I’m going to take boda [motorbike taxi] the number plate is this. I take a picture, such things, nothing else, yeah.” (*Fowsio, 27th of October 2018*)

In Fowsio’s narration the dynamics of gender hegemony come to the fore as she constructs an image of Uganda as a gender equal and highly safe place where she can even move around late at night and where she does not need male protection. Interestingly, Fowsio’s narration of her situation in Uganda concurrently exposes the negotiation and identification process where she is both adhering to a proud Somaliness yet rejecting parts of it by situating herself as someone who has adopted a ‘Ugandan’ notion of being a hard-working woman who creates her own future. Such mechanism was found Phoenix (2011) by in a study with young Somali female migrants who would use this as a strategy to climb up the local hierarchy of belonging. However, how did the other Somali women’s narrations around the lived realities in Kampala relate to such constructions?

“Really, being a mother and at the same time father, I am the one paying everything and the children are just looking at you, school fees, their clothes, whatever they need, the rent, and the daily. Everything that is needed they’re just looking at you and trying to survive. I am happy with my job, but trying to survive, but it’s like I’m squeezed in a cup, it’s like in a cup of tea, I feel like I am in that cup, veeery squeezed. Just eh, that life is very difficult and sometimes maybe you, I may, it happens even sometimes that I eat once a day.” (*Xalwo, 5th of March 2019*)

Following Collins’ (2015) argument of how individuals are placed differently within intersecting power hierarchies and henceforth hold different perspectives due to their

experiences with complex social inequalities and diverse lived realities (p. 14), Xalwo's self-perception and narration of her lived reality is markedly different from Fowsio's, yet largely overlapping with the other Somali women in the same social class. In comparison to Fowsio, the other Somali women's narrations on their lived realities in Kampala seem far removed from a new normative femininity of success and empowerment. While they all emphasised that they were happy to have met peace in Uganda, Xalwo, Leylo, Magool, Nasteexo, Haweeyo, and Jamilah narrated a reality of daily struggles and hardships with pressing health issues, joblessness and/or insecure, low-income jobs. Xalwo, Jamilah, Haweeyo, and Nasteexo were shouldering the roles of both parents as single-mothers. They emphasised their strife to cater for their children's multifarious needs, with obvious difficulties; Nasteexo was at the moment not able to send her children to school and Jamilah was unable to pay for all the treatments and medicine for her child's asthma. Apart from this the women commented on the daily risks of both physical and verbal abuse as they tried to make a living as well as the sacrifices that they were willing to make in order to get the best for their children. Thus, affirming what other studies have found while exploring the lived realities and harsh conditions for migrants/refugees in Kampala and Uganda (Bernstein, 2005, pp. 42-43; Dryden-Peterson, 2006, pp. 384-385; Monteith & Lwasa, 2017, p. 400; Stark et al., 2015, pp. 174-176).

In this regard it is important to re-emphasise that these other women do not share the same conditions as Fowsio in terms of language proficiency and a husband that also provides for the family's needs. Thus, while it is not possible to make a definite conclusion it is fair to say that such conditions did play a significant part in the appreciation of a successful femininity discourse. It furthermore supports the knowledge of how women's disparate lived realities are crucial in understanding their self-perceptions and identities (Cho et al., 2013, p. 795; Collins, 2015, p. 14).

5.3.2 “My mother used to tell me...”

“Me, I see myself, [as] a mother who is really tired and need to be given a hand.” (*Nasteexo, 5th of March 2019*)

Nasteexo's self-perception is not unique; all of the Somali women's identifications and herstories confirmed previous studies where it was found that a female Somali identity is closely linked to motherhood, marriage, and family (al-Huraibi, 2017, p. 64; Byrskog et al., 2014, p. 5; Jinnah & Lowe, 2015, pp. 373-375). The women who were mothers strongly identified in their parenting role, whereas Leylo and Magool, who were childless, either lamented it or longed for children and marriage in the future. Leylo and Magool, as widowed and single-women, faced personal hardships related to their physical and mental health with little to no treatments in addition to experiencing joblessness. Both of them mentioned their loneliness as a particular source of grief. Magool still nurtured a hope to have a future in which she gets married and has children whereas Leylo, after losing her husband at the Mediterranean Sea trying to reach Europe, expressed a sort of acceptance and grief related to her life ending without anyone continuing her story. Hence, normative and successful femininity for these Somali-born women in Kampala was arguably fundamentally connected to being a mother, bearing children, and having someone further your lineage and ultimately your story.

"I see myself as a woman whom, whom is suffering, with a difficult life and no one, someone does not know anywhere, whether you walk on this way, this way, this way, all the whole is the same to you because you don't know where you are going to. I am sick, I am suffering sickness...yes and even if I die nothing remains back for me, also. If I die, my story finishes there because it stopped there, yeah..." (Leylo, 5th of March 2019)

However, did such self-perceptions and lived realities extend further? Arguably they did as, crosscutting, the Somali women affirmed a notion of positive femininity with being educated. Some of the women commented and lamented on the lack of education that they had themselves while also expressing a strong support for education of girls as has been the case in other studies with migrant Somali women (Abdi, 2014, pp. 473, 478; al-Huraibi, 2017, p. 84; Langellier, 2010, p. 82). Thus, Fowsio's narration exposes this in her re-telling of a conversation with her oldest daughter where she narrates a notion of herself as a mother who is deeply concerned about the education and future of her daughter.

“Then I said, do you know why I’m struggling for you to study and [...] to study in a good, good school? Do you know why I am doing that? She said: “Yes I know”. “What is it?” “That I should get a good education.” I said no. “The reason why I’m educating you, the reason why I’m giving you all these...efforts for you to be a good educated girl and reach your goal is that tomorrow if anything happens to me, you will take care of that boy, your brother.” And she said “okay mummy, I have understood.” You understand? And I said, expect anything. God have this plan, I have my plan, every day I’m moving up and down. The reason why I’m moving up and down is to get you [pause] school fee.”

(Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019)

Such a “successful girls” discourse centred on girls’ educational progress forms part of the new empowered femininity as it affirms that women and girls are individual subjects that are no longer facing gender subordination (Budgeon, 2014, pp. 328-329; McRobbie, 2007, pp. 718, 729). Yet, these women’s herstories arguably expose the inherent tensions and contradictions that the new globalised normative empowered femininity, just as any normative femininity, harbours by exiling certain experiences and aspects of women’s identities (mother’s and community members) while strongly supporting and emphasising other (public, individual agents engaged in education and work). Thus, as argued by Mohanty (2003), “women are workers, mothers, or consumers in the global economy, but we are also all those things simultaneously. Singular and monolithic categorizations of women in discourses of globalization circumscribe ideas about experience, agency, and struggle.” (p. 527). Still, gender socialisation, following the lines of normative gender performance, tends to emphasise certain roles and expected behaviours (Ahmed, 2017, p. 39). Thus, which norms and roles were predominant in the Somali women’s construction of normative femininity and desired gender(ed) identities?

“My mother used to tell me...she used to say when you grow up be a, some lady who is educated and she used to tell me when to, where, when, how to get married, how to see [if] this man is [a] good man [or a] bad man. When I got married, how to protect my family, how to live with my husband. When I give birth, how to take care of the children, how to feed them, how to manage everything in the house when I get married. She used to tell me

everything in the future like whenever life comes, if I get married, if there is an education side, and the neighbours, she used to tell me, protect your neighbours and be aware of them, to look [after] them because you don't know if they have something to eat or not. And my father used to tell me be a good woman. Don't abuse anyone. Don't, eh, eh, talk to that bad people and don't, whoever, have abused you don't repeat to abuse them just tell them thank you and go away. Don't fight with everyone. They used to give such kind of stories, advices as a story." (*Magool, 12th of March 2019*)

While Magool's narration of how she was advised by her parents exposes the importance of a Somali woman to be educated, it foremost manifests the centrality of being a good wife, mother, and community member rather than being a subject that identifies by public work and individuality. Hence, identification by motherhood and family seemed to be extended even further by also including caring for your neighbours and the wider community. This was similarly apparent in Fowsio's perception around 'a good Somali woman' and the importance of being a positive force in the community. As will be explored further subsequently, this relates to how the Somali women highly located their female identity in relation to the symbolic representation that women often come to embody in the project of building a family and in extension a community and/or nation (Lewis, 2011, p. 212; Towns et al., 2014, p. 243; Yuval-Davis, 2004, p. 26).

"A good Somali woman is the, a woman who always think about a good future for her children; good future for her community. [She] always participates in all the activities taking place in her area...all the good activities [and] tries to prevent bad things [from] happening around her. People who are around her should not always eh...eh...should not always have conflict and disagreement and also [she should not be] harmful to other people." (*Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019*)

As explicated throughout this section, the Somali-born women strongly identified through their mothering and communal roles by narrating their notions of selves as self-sacrificing and strong mothers who would go lengths to get their children's needs met by shouldering the roles of both parents. However, they also mentioned the difficulty to more directly describe themselves and most women did not use any adjectives or characteristics in their accounts.

Further, while none of them went into physical appearances, they stayed with embodied descriptions of how their bodies were doing and feeling. This mirrors Pucherova's (2013) claim that a feminist understanding of subjectivities mostly touches upon "the dispersed self, identity as relational rather than autonomous and the focus on the body." (p. 2); and that interdependence and community are key elements in a woman's identity (p. 10).

"Really, I don't know how to describe, subscribe, like myself, but eh you know I am alone there. I am at the same time mother and a father. So, I start working 2am, 2am in the night. 2am I go to work in a restaurant. I do my work then I come back at eh at 8am, then for, I, I relax a bit then at 10 I go to another work. Another job." (*Jamilah, 5th of March 2019*)

"Even if I don't eat and I don't breakfast and I don't take lunch, I don't say ahh I'm feeling not good. I just say ah the stomach is fine. I am fine. I am okay and God is there. I just continue.... Because, my father is not there. My husband, I don't have a husband. My mother is not there. So, I have to control myself, because I myself I am mother to me and father to myself." (*Haweeyo, 5th of March 2019*)

Hence, these Somali women's self-perceptions were aligned to Butler's (1999) assertion of language having in-built constraints in relation to gender and imaginable identity (p. 13). However, did all of the women's notion of self take this 'restricted' form? Exploring Fowsio's self-description in comparison to the other Somali women, reveals variations as she is describing herself at length by characteristics and behaviour. In this way Fowsio seemed to make a more direct claim on being an individual subject, specifically by derailing from a fully embodied description to also mentioning her brain capacity. Yet, she did so by simultaneously emphasising the importance of being a mother and a community woman. In relation to this it is critical to mention that she was the only woman who could speak without an interpreter and that Ismail, the Somali interpreter, claimed that the other women would be influenced by the set-up of interpretation by giving summative and less-detailed answers, which sometimes meant that the most important details were left out. Thus, Ismail's view supported my own reflection around how some nuances and insights were obliterated when there was an interpreter channelling the conversations between me and the Somali women.

“[laughing]...that one, that one is a little bit difficult... It’s good when someone describes you, at least...it’s good that someone else describes...yeah, but I don’t know how to describe myself [...] ...where will I start, the...the behaviour? Okay, hmm. I am someone who is always friendly to everyone around me and eh...also...kind to people...and...I love children, someone who loves children and...maybe in my community, I mean how my people describe me let me say they tell me that I am someone who is very important to my community because I always help my community if they have any difficulties. I don’t know. I don’t have any knowledges, but God gave me this brain who thinks wisely. Whenever someone is in trouble or someone wants something or they ask me opinion they call me and they say “Fowsio we need that and that and we don’t know what to do or where to start” So uhm, maybe someone who is very important to her community, should I say like that? [laughing]...and hardworking...honest, that one...and...should I say very active? I don’t get easily tired, very active...ehm, religious...I don’t have anything else to say. I think that’s all [...] And eh, my physical appearance is like, like eh, ehm...I think, I don’t know whether it is centimetre or feet, I’m sixty-five centimetres should I say the length? One hundred sixty-five centimetre, isn’t it so? Eh...nothing else to say [laughs slightly] ... So ask me anything else!” (*Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019*)

Throughout her narrations Fowsio, in line with the other women, exposed her strong identification as a mother and as a person who supports her community. However, were there other less visible identities and self-perceptions?

“...even today they have gone somewhere to play, some, eh in a park, in Kisenyi, near Kisenyi. They have gone to play and they were counting on me and I didn’t tell that I am meeting you, I said that I’m still there at IOM [laughing], because he, [my husband], would say you choose your children over someone, today is their day you have to go with them. So, I didn’t want that, I said “I am still in IOM, the woman is not there, I, I’ve delayed.” Then he said “okay, okay, when you finish you go home straight, we are there.” (*Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019*)

In bypass, Fowsio expressed the above; that is, that she sometimes would make choices that would not put her children and family first. She jokingly told me about how she had not told her husband that she was meeting with me for the interview as he would then argue that she

should prioritise her children and come with them to the park. Instead she had said that her meeting at the IOM had dragged out. This bypassing comment was interesting as it shone some light on the liberty Fowsio took to make time for herself. It seemed to me that this was a way to give herself some space to be Fowsio and not the hard-working mother who puts her family first and tirelessly supports her community whenever she can. Furthermore, this supports Mohanty's (2003, 2006) as well as L. Ahmed (2011), Chakraborti and Zempi (2012), and Grinnell's (2013) critique of simple and dichotomous readings of Third World women and/or veiled subjects as inherently oppressed and submissive.

5.3.3 “Because we, we are Muslims and we, we are Somali women”

Xalwo – There are some stories like just to protect the children not to go out, like especially the girls not to go out at the night and we used to tell them there is, one night then in this village a hyena came and eh he has taken a girl when she was standing with a boy that they were talking to, then the girl she was taken and she was eaten. [...] Such kind of stories so that, when it switches to the night they don't go outside.

Me – Do you tell those stories now as well?

Xalwo – Maya [no in Somali], now I just give them the good stories like eh when they are sleeping at the night, like saying, telling them how the, the honey came out, how it was produced the honey. Like how the birds they sound and how good they are like I said you are sweet like honey, you are a good girl like that. (*Xalwo, 12th of March 2019*)

Just as was found in a study with Somalis in America, cautionary tales is a way to restrict and ensure a normative femininity and/or gender subordination within Somali culture (Abdi, 2014, pp. 479-480). The message of the cautionary story above clearly warns girls from being intimate with boys; it instructs them to guard their sexuality. However, there is also an option of contesting such tales as seen in how Xalwo claims to not pass on the cautionary stories to her daughters. While she did not go into details of why she had made that choice this could be read as a silent revolution; speaking out by refusing to pass on certain messages. As argued by Butler (1999), this is a strategy of subversive repetition, a new construction, that poses a possibility of contesting gender norms and identities by claiming new ones through

performative and repetitive acts (pp. 185-188). In addition to this, it was puzzling to me that Xalwo to begin with did not mention that she got separated from her husband while fleeing to Uganda. The following ensued as I probed her about this in the second interview:

Me – I didn't understand last time if you said you're here with your husband or you came alone with your children?

Xalwo – Yes, me and my children only.

Me – Okay, your husband stayed in Somalia or?

Xalwo – I don't know where he is. We got separated.

Me – Ah okay, would you like to be reunited if it would be possible?

Xalwo – Maya [no in Somali].

Me – Okay, do you eh want to tell me more about why or?

Xalwo – Yes, eh, because since we got separated me I ran with my children and him he ran with...he, they ran, he, he ran with one of our daughters so it has been for a looong time to stay alone so I, I feel like now it's good to stay alone. (*Xalwo, 12th of March 2019*)

While Xalwo does not offer much details on her separation from the husband and her wish to stay alone, I read this as another silent uproar and subversive repetition. This is in line with Butler's (1999) argument that subversive repetitions have to take place against the local and cultural matrix and its available openings (pp. 38-41), which can somehow be traced in the matrix of normative femininity, 'being a good girl/woman', which Xalwo and the other women connected to not talking back. It was moreover related to aspects of honour and respect with accounts given of how a woman should give answers in a nice way, respect elders, be calm, and refrain from fighting and showing stubbornness. Butler (1999) further argues that a woman, the feminine gender, becomes by what it is not, a man, the masculine gender (p. 30). How did such binary and oppositional constructs shape the Somali women's notions of normative femininity?

"The man if they love anyone that they see that they love you, they just come and say ah I love you. I need you. It's the woman that cannot express themselves, to mention their feelings." (*Jamilah, 12th of March 2019*)

Not only this observation by Jamilah hinged upon making a woman by not being a man. In reference to ‘good womanhood’ some women made such oppositional definitions by also making the connection to specific parts of a Somali culture and identity. It was furthermore explicated that the notion of a ‘good woman’ came with references to both culture and religion, being a Somali and being a Muslim. This is in line with an intersectional reading of identity as the Somali-born women’s gender(ed) identity constructs are shaped by interactive intersections of culture, religion, and yet other systems of beliefs (Cho et al., 2013, p. 795; Collins, 2015, p. 14). Leylo’s narrations below shed light on such:

Leylo – I can describe myself that I am a good woman [if] I don’t, I don’t disturb the people. I don’t, don’t disrespect them. I have to respect them whether they are old, young, whatever is the age. And everything that God, God has, everything that God has created, I have to respect them whether they are bad or whether they are good. So I have to, and as a woman, Somali woman, you have to, to, to be staying back like not to enter everywhere [...] not to [let] everyone see your mouth as you laugh, you have to cover, so maybe then I say, maybe I can say I am a good woman. [...]

Me – But you said eh, a good woman should not enter everywhere. Where should a woman enter and not enter?

Leylo – Yeah, because we, we are Muslims and we, we are Somali women, so as a religion and culture it is not allowed. There are some other places that is not good. It’s, eh...the, the religion says don’t do this and this or don’t enter such kind of places. So, we just stay back, from those ones... (*Leylo, 12th of March 2019*)

Even after being probed, Leylo did not mention these specific places where ‘good’ women were not supposed to enter. It might be that Leylo saw these ‘bad’ places as self-evident and therefore beyond need of explanation. This is commonly the case for gender norms and roles, which tend to be seen as normal, beyond explanation, and subsequently they leave little room for movement and change (Ahmed, 2017, p. 39). In support of this, when asked about a ‘good Somali woman’ most Somali women did not directly mention dress code and virginity, although this has been widely found to be essential in normative Somali femininity. Still, all of the women dressed in accordance to strict Muslim standards that did not reveal anything but parts of their faces. However, was this unspoken act also reflected in the narratives? Thus,

did the Somali women connect normative femininity with a certain way of dressing and virginity?

Me – Some of the other women, they told me that, like a good Somali woman she shouldn't enter everywhere, like she should know where to enter and where to not enter...

Fowsio – Yeah also that one, also that one is there. Like eh clubbing, like eh...eh...prostitute...things. Such, all the bad things that she, she should not do...Yeah and eh according to, I mean her dressing also. She should not dress anyhow. She should dress like a Muslim. That, that is a Somali lady and that's a Muslim lady. That is how she should be when she dresses.

Me – And what do you think about her if she doesn't, but she is thinking in a positive way, she tries to help the community and...

Fowsio – No problem, because, about dressing and...eh...and eh...because some people they like style, stylish clothes. That one it is between her and her God, no one should interfere. But the most important is for her to be a volunteer to her community. Being honest to her community, yeah. (*Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019*)

As seen in the extract from Fowsio, these notions were apparent. However, they were elicited through other narrations and/or by my probes and follow-up questions as is seen in the previous cautionary tale and the subsequent extracts. Fowsio, for example, emphasised these gender norms for Somali girls and women when I asked about the norm of “staying back and not entering everywhere” as well as in further explanation of how Somali men are ‘overprotective’ in relation to women and girls. Fowsio had not initially mentioned any of this when I asked her about the entities of a ‘good Somali woman’. However, in these accounts she firmly recognised that avoiding certain places, clubs and ‘prostitute things’, as well as adhering to a Muslim and Somali dress code were also parcel of normative femininity and that it would hurt a woman's image to derail from it. Yet, when probed about non-compliance with this normative Somali, Muslim femininity, Fowsio stated that this was not for anyone else to decide, but something that this woman had to negotiate between herself and her God. Still, the caution and care by male protectors that Fowsio mentions can be understood as an indication of how derailing from normative femininity is likely to make you lose the benefits from male protection (Hunnicut, 2009, p. 567). It furthermore speaks to the different norms

and standards for women and men as Fowsio laughingly pointed out that those men that counsel the women to not enter such places were likely coming from or going there themselves, but that it was not necessarily that 'bad' for them to have been there.

Fowsio – The...some, you know people are not the same, they are different...Some people you will see them, what we see as, as bad, is not bad to them. Yeah. So, they can think like eh...if us, if you go to a club, that is bad, a bad thing you have done. They can even come and, and until you enter, if a Somali man sees you: “my sister where are you going? What is it that you need from here?” And then to go, and he, he is from there maybe, because you cannot be nearby that area unless he is from there [laughing]. He can say “no, no, no, you are a woman don't go there, it's not good for you. It will, bad, eh, it will give you a bad image, to your life. Please, come with me, come with me”. You understand? And some boys they just take you that place...yeah. I mean they are used to that life.

Me – But is it giving the Somali man a bad image as well if he goes to the club or...it doesn't matter?

Fowsio – Ehm.... I don't think it will give [him a] bad [image], because, whatever he is telling her is her own good. When you go there, what will you do? Drink, dance, maybe do some drugs. Isn't it so? [...] You can also do bad activities, like...sleeping with anyone. Yeah, and you get later on diseases, bad diseases. You understand? So that's why I think, it will not bad them. They are just protecting their girls. To be in the good and right path. But some of them they go. Some of them they go.” (*Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019*)

In a similar vein, Jamilah expressed that a 'bad woman' was someone who was not respectful or hard-working, but entering wherever they want and abuse you without any reason. In her imitation of verbal abuse using the word prostitute it is once again emphasised that sex work is strongly non-normative as is widely reported in feminist inquiry since this, among other, goes against the sexually submissive and sexually restricted script of women (Tamale, 2011, pp. 157-158; 2014, p. 158).

“They try to work, to help their family or themselves. But if the person, they're, their face is not good they will just run away. They ent, they will go wherever they want [...] like someone they will, they will, the person she may just abuse you without nothing. She will

“oh you prostitute you go away from me!” something like that she may call you.” (*Jamilah, 12th of March 2019*)

5.4 WOMEN as SYMBOLIC BEARERS

“My father used to say, saving one girl, or one woman, is equal to saving a whole generation [laughing happily]” (*Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019*)

Retelling these words of her father, a beaming Fowsio ends the second interview. This strongly connects with the beginning of the interview where Fowsio enthusiastically talked about how highly she valued women and the importance she saw in ‘women’, which adds to aforementioned community serving aspects of positive femininity. It is conspicuous that Fowsio’s description of a ‘woman’ is an almost replica of how women are often described in relation to the project of the nation, the bearer and carrier of development and continuation of generations (Lewis, 2011, p. 212; Towns et al., 2014, p. 243; Yuval-Davis, 2004, p. 26). At the same time Fowsio mimics a notion of a normative femininity where there is no limit to what a woman can do and be and it similarly relates to the aforementioned ‘successful girls’ discourse. Additionally, this narration denotes some of the aforementioned key aspects in the notion of a normative Somali femininity, namely being a woman who is nurturing and catering for the positive development of her community.

“A woman is like eh...the most important person in a community, in a generation...because a woman can be a mother and raise a eh, good generation and eh...and eh...if we are to figure a good human being is that like a mother. There is no one like, I think there is no one better than mother in this world. So, a woman is everything to a generation. That’s how I can describe a woman. She can be a mother, a wife, a sister. And mostly people who are very kind, and if you see ehm a good community in somewhere, mostly they are women. If you see someone who is mostly developed in life, the person who is behind his development in life is a woman. So, a woman is like eh...is like an angel in this world [laughs], that’s how I can say, yeah. She can do anything. She can be a mother. She can be a father, if the father is not there. She can be a brother. She can be a sister. She can do, she can be anything. You

understand? So, I don't think there is any other good human being than a, a woman, in this world." (*Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019*)

Fowsio's conceptualisation of the 'woman' is essentially positive and celebratory. However, does that fit with the lived experiences and self-perceptions of the other Somali women? Further, is it exclusively positive to be conceptualised as the symbolic bearer of development and generations? That is, what are the effects of such symbolic representation and embodiment?

"I didn't, I didn't share this with so many people. What, when I say the Somalis, those who know are only my interpreters [...] and even some interpreters I don't want them to know because of the, because [...] [in the] Somali community [it] is something like shameful. Then you are, you say you have been raped they...they say ah you were raped, you were, ah she was raped, she was raped, how many people? Oh? They talk about you anytime and...you will not, your future is not going well. [...] So, I don't share with anyone about this. But the other living, in general, I live with the, have fun with the Somalis. I stay with them, but I don't share my...secret to them." (*Magool, 12th of March 2019*)

I argue that Magool's lived experiences as a rape survivor exhibit the precariousness of being a symbolic representation for generations. Namely, as women come to symbolise national identity and honour, both individually and collectively, the female body and behaviour, especially sexuality, recurrently come to demarcate the boundaries between the nation and the 'Other'; being a bearer of symbolic importance as the transmitter and definer of the national identity (Lewis, 2011, p. 212; Towns et al., 2014, p. 243; Yuval-Davis, 2004, p. 26). As explained by Yuval-Davis (2004), women's behaviour oftentimes signifies ethnic and/or cultural borders and this demarcation between one group and another is embodied in the sexual conduct of the woman (p. 25). This goes to explain the aforementioned importance of upholding a good image as a woman and the accompanying rigorous external and internal control as to ensure that the 'woman' does not deviate from the normative gender representation carried out tirelessly through everyday acts, i.e. in Butler's (1999) words – gender performance.

Such control was salient in most of the women's narrations around their notions of "a good Somali woman" and their own lived realities as Somali women. Clearly this centred on the female body and sexuality, with a palpable and strongly held norm of chaste femininity and maintaining virginity up until marriage as reported in other studies with migrant, Somali women (see Byrskog et al., 2014; Jinnah & Lowe, 2015; Johnsdotter, 2003). Magool's herstory, as a victim of rape, is a clear case in point, which furthermore shine light on the self-silencing that comes with derailing from a normative femininity of virginity. This was similarly described by Somali women in other studies exploring gender norms and sexual violence (Byrskog et al., 2018, pp. 40-41; Byrskog et al., 2014, pp. 6-8). But how did such disembodiment from normative femininity and desirable symbolic representation influence Magool's self-perception and behaviours?

"Really, you know in our community Somali, it feels shamed, like when you are saying you were sexually abused. So that is why sometimes I run away where there are and I don't feel well to talk about that when they are around." (*Magool, 5th of March 2019*)

"Yes, they see me as a bad woman if I tell them [...] because they say that ah she is not a virgin, she was eh, she was raped. There are so many people that was, such kind, some people have slept with her, on that side yeah [...] it is not good, because the people are not same, same. Some are good people. Some are bad people. So, you can't judge someone on that side, when you face something like [sexual abuse – rape] ...the majority of the people, there are some good people, but the majority of them they see you badly."
(*Magool, 12th of March 2019*)

Clearly, both of Magool's narrations reveal that by being raped she had not been 'successful' in guarding her virginity and thereby she was seen as deviating from normative chaste femininity. Accordingly, she expressed fear as well as blame and shame from the majority of the Somali community, which in turn led to different forms of silencing. Thus, even though Magool does not see herself as a bad woman, she is acutely aware of the general Somali view casting raped women as undesirables and in turn it makes her limit her speech around her experiences. She therefore makes a trade-off between speaking out about being raped and the prospects of the future she yearns for; a future where she is married and has children. This

was supported by Ismail, the Somali interpreter, who mentioned the fact that a Somali woman who has been raped is less likely to get a man to marry her and she is also seen to be sexually open for men as she lost virginity outside marriage. Consequently, Ismail claimed that being a survivor of sexual violence increases the Somali woman's risk of further violations. Hence, Magool's self-silencing is arguably also linked to Hunnicutt's (2009) claim on the increased likelihood of losing male protection by not upholding the notion of normative femininity (p. 567). Moreover, a discourse of shame associated with secrecy and silence has been found to be the ubiquitous cultural-religious matrix in Somali and other migrant women's sexual embodiment despite their differences in religious and cultural backgrounds (Ussher et al., 2017). This is supported by the fact that none of the other women in this study directly mentioned such a norm. Arguably, it is also tied to the feminist understanding of how women's sexuality is conceptualised as something that can be taken away, which inevitably means that as soon as a woman has sex, forcibly or voluntarily, she has immediately lost it as she is socially not given any autonomous ownership over it (MacKinnon, 1997, p. 43). To explore this further, I intentionally asked Fowsio about the perception of a woman who had been sexually abused and if/why this is considered shameful. Below you find her answer.

“Very true! So that's what I always advise my daughter. Marriage is not bad. Being in love is not bad. You understand? Please, please think about your image. That's what I tell her. When you are in love with the person, and you want to marry you have to come, even if it is my room and we don't have wedding whatever, whatever. I will vacate my room and you get married in my room and you stay there and you live happy. Even if he is a useless man, you know some, some men are useless. They don't work. They don't value of eh, getting good life for his children, for his wife, such things. Still I will respect him because of YOU. So, she, she doesn't hide anything from me. She comes and she tells me.” (*Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019*)

But, what does this tell us about the self-perceptions and desirable/claimed gender(ed) identities? Altogether it is shown that maintaining a 'good image' as a woman by a chaste sexuality is vital to ensure a normative femininity. By further analysis of Fowsio's account, it is also evident that marriage could be used to make sure that the image of a woman or girl is not tainted if pre-marital sex or intimacy might have taken place. In Fowsio's view it is

perceivably detrimental to not formalise an intimate relationship with marriage to the extent that she says that she would rather have her daughter marry that man even if he is “useless” and without the ‘proper’ wedding ceremony and space to host her daughter and husband.

All of these accounts speak to how control over women’s sexuality is majorly exerted by group members who uphold the virginity norms by surveillance and castigation. While the importance of women’s culturally accepted behaviours and bodies can become intensified and particularly significant in the multicultural society; the variations between individuals’ adherence and dedication to this symbolism is commonly conflated and thus misrepresented (Yuval-Davis, 2004, pp. 24-25). Further, Yuval-Davis (2004) argues that women are often overlooked as merely victims of these symbolic boundary projects, while they can also be the core players in upholding and creating them (p. 28). Fowsio’s narration displays this by her disavowal of how some members of the Somali community violently castigate daughters who have boyfriends as compared to her self-identification as a more tolerant mother who seeks to reason with her child as to make sure she gets a good future. However, as argued by Butler (1999) “[t]he culturally enmired subject negotiates its constructions, even when those constructions are the very predicates of its own identity.” (p. 182). This is seen in the extract below where Fowsio’s self-perception and identity construction takes places as she negotiates between a ‘strict’ versus a more ‘liberal’ retainment of the cultural norm of female virginity.

“some people...in our community, when they see their daughter or their son, especially their daughters, to have a boyfriend, they start beating her. They start...eh...abusing her, they just treat her like she has no right to decide, which is bad for the child, to do like that...My daughter now, in, in boarding, she is in boarding, you understand? When she is at home, she chats, she’s in Facebook all the time. Chatting with her friends, even friends come to visit her. But the only thing I always warn her is that, “if you have boyfriend no problem. He should not take you to his house. Whenever you want to meet him, meet him in public places and meet him at home...yeah, home, and eh you are free to have a boyfriend, but eh be careful. Think about your future. Think about what can damage your future. You understand? If you want to marry, please when you are ready to marry to that person, please don’t be shy and don’t be scared of me...Bring that person to me. EVEN if he is the worst

person, I will never object your opinion. I will respect you. You understand?" (*Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019*)

5.5 THE WOMAN'S CONDITION

In relation to their self-perceptions and lived experiences, the Somali women's narrations expounded on the condition of women particularly hooning in on the sexualisation and vulnerability of the female body. The preceding subchapters explores this in-depth.

5.5.1 "They may sexually abuse you"

In relation to the control around women's sexuality, an array of the Somali-born women's herstories explicated how the woman's body is approached and seen through a sexualised lens. It is a body that receives unwelcomed and intrusive touches to the breasts and the butt. As stated by hooks (2000), this is one of the most blatant expressions of sexism, which teaches women that they are sex objects under male desire and gaze (p. 48). This section explores how such sexism figured in the women's self-perceptions and lived realities.

"Everyone was dancing. Later on, they were doing the drinks...They were having, eh...eh alcohol, juice, everyone was drinking whatever his choice. Then...later on I said okay I'm, I'm going for prayers direct me where the bathroom is. I take Wudu, you know Wudu? This thing first you have to wash, yeah. I've, I've gone there...then there is a certain man who've entered. I came outside. I waited. When I saw him entering, I just, I just went without doing my thing. I waited. He came out. I entered. Then again, he knocked the door on me...and I came outside, I asked, I asked who is it? He said "it's me madam I want to talk to you." I said "I'm coming, when I come outside you will talk to me. You go out first." He refused [!]. He was drunk, somehow. I shouted, I said help me. He refused to go [!]. Then after shouting, someone came and they bolded him from the door and they said "why? Why are you doing this?" Somehow, he was okay. "Why are you doing this?" They ask him... "because I want to have this lady" [emulating manly voice], like that [laughing], "I want to have her, I want, I want, I just wanted to talk to her I want" [emulating manly voice]. He was insisting. Then I said, "okay you want to talk to me, talk to me now when people are here." He refused. Since then I get scared. And later on when I asked "who is this person, is he...eh...eh...visitor like me or he is a member?" They told me he is the uncle of the bride. Now that person, if he does anything to you, you came to his house. So I got scared. Immediately after, I left the

party because he kept on watching me every move I do. If I go for dancing, he comes near me and he wants to dance with me [laughing], if I sit, he sits. So, I got scared! [raising voice to high pitch and clasping her hands]. So, I told my friends let me go. Then they sent me back.”

(Fowsio, 27th of October 2018)

As seen above, Fowsio who was initially firmly stating that Uganda was a place where women and men did not experience differences in living and treatment gave a blurrier image of being a woman and its specifics in Kampala when she started narrating about relationships with men, particularly Ugandan men. Interestingly, it was only after longer interactions and stories which prompted follow-up questions that Fowsio mentioned the issues of sexual harassment and being frightened by aggressive and assertive male behaviour. Then, however, her narrations vividly exposed what Hunnicutt (2009) describes on how patriarchy through sexism teaches women to always be in fear of the male desire and violence, because it has no limits; it is a force that cannot be stopped and if subjected to it you will be blamed for it. In continuation, with the internalization of such fear women usually adopt to and accept the conditions of the patriarchal order irrespective of the presence of male violence (pp. 562-567). This is intertwined with the framework that guides sexual beliefs, desires, and behaviours where a male understanding and perception of sex, in accordance to heterosexual and coital sex, sets the standards. As these ‘normative sexual scripts’ are deeply gendered social constructions, they assign different roles to women (to submit) and men (to initiate) in sexual acts (Baber & Murray, 2001, p. 24). However, did such notions of sexism and normative sexual scripts shape Fowsio’s self-perception and behaviours? Further, did Fowsio’s narrations mirror an internalisation of these?

“and their men...their men...[laughing] I’m scared of them...yeah, I’m scared of them. To be in their places, you understand like, like, they always, if I tell them if you are going out and we go out together in a public it’s okay. But going with, their houses, I don’t go. Their men they are not controllable. They, they, they’re somehow womanizer. They like to have you in bed. Such things, I, I’m scared of them really. So, I tell them if you are...if you, if we, if you want us to go together it’s okay to, outing it’s okay, yeah. Public places, but not in your houses, yeah.” *(Fowsio, 27th of October 2018)*

Arguably, Fowsio's two narrations vividly manifest how she removes herself from situations where she believes she cannot be protected from male desire and violence since she holds a strong sensation of the impossibility to 'tame' such male assertiveness and sexual desire. Largely, Fowsio has internalised such notions and thus sees removal and restriction as her options to be protected against it. However, did such internalisation and corresponding behaviour figure in other Somali women's perceptions and lived realities? Jamilah's narration of the perilous state of women as sexually desired objects by men is telling.

"You know a man just puts an underwear and he can just go with the underwear, but a woman they can't go with their underwear or they can't go with the, tricota, we call it tricota, not a full, not a trouser but a half trouser. You cannot wear that because they, when they wear that, this, their bodies are attacked, attractful, so it is not safe for them. And us we are Muslims so we are not allowed. So, a man wears, they cannot walk as they don't have even here, the t-shirt and their necks are outside. [Men] just have small things that they hide their private some, it, it looks normal, but us women it can't be. [...] maybe some man can see you and he may like you that you are just wearing underwear and he say ah let me have this one. Or they may attack you, they may sexually abuse you, so it's, it's like you are really in a danger...ehm...if you don't cover yourself so it is not safe on that side. [...] if you can show up with your body or if you want to attract someone it is really hard. It is really dangerous for you, because you find someone around the street that, like eh...they're around the street, these people that are drunk or who are like chewing Mira [Somali term for weed], it is easier for them to attack you." (*Jamilah, 12th of March 2019*)

Jamilah's description of how men and women's body are read differently in the social arena corresponded with other Somali, women's accounts. As women are seen as sexual objects, Jamilah believed that the woman's body has to be shielded by clothes that can hide the attractiveness from a male gaze, particularly as you are out in the street and under the public view. Moreover, it touches on the complexity in gender norms as they intersect with religious morals, personal convictions, and lived experiences. It additionally hinges on the performative nature of gender/sex through dress and the weight of 'normal'. Through these 'normal' performative acts carried out in the daily one produces the gender/sex/sexuality unity

configuration in accordance to the locality, cultural-religious script, and time. This is done to an extent that, as Butler (1999) states, “it becomes impossible to separate out “gender” from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained” (pp. 6, 23). Furthermore, this ‘normal’ is in line with Butler’s argument of how “[g]ender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (pp. 43-44). However, can such denotations of ‘normal’ be challenged and contradicted?

“Some men they do that thing. Especially it happens girls who put on clothes which are tight on their body and eh, scarf only. It happens to them. And sometimes you, in the market, when you are shopping, you will see someone touched or so, inappropriate way, like touched your breast, sometimes when you, you are just walking, you look at that person and he already has gone. Sometimes they can do, touch you, touch your butt like this and they run away. It happens! Yeah, during the day. It happens.”

(Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019)

While this narration starts off with supporting the norm of ‘covering up’ if one wishes to avoid sexual harassment and violations, it quickly exposes contradictions and shortcomings in this notion as on the one hand, it is mostly women with a less strict ‘Muslim’ dress code that are subjected, while on the other hand Fowsio describes how she, with a strict Muslim dress code, also experiences unwelcomed touches. Thus, while Fowsio, Jamilah, and the other women explained ‘covering up’ as a self-regulation strategy to shield themselves from sexual harassment and a sexualised male view, they exposed the inescapability of it. Additionally, I would argue that ‘covering up’ and hiding the body from the sexualised male view would still pertain as it serves as a means for these women to cope with such a reality.

Lastly, these narrations profess that a Muslim and Somali gender identity is performed through a covered body. This is interestingly a deviation from the new empowered femininity which is argued to require women to display their liberation by appreciation and adoption of an open female sexuality and a largely uncovered female body endowed in consumerism (McRobbie, 2007, pp. 732-733). Rather, the Somali women’s self-perceptions and lived realities largely acknowledge the sexism and patriarchal order that threatens their

female bodies, yet with some kind of gender fatalism to it which makes them believe that it is not possible to change men and therefore they have to develop their own strategies to navigate it (Ahmed, 2017, pp. 26-27). Still, this could also be in line with Brooks' (2007) claim of how these Somali women use their knowledge and double-consciousness, which has taught them to read the dominant and oppressive group of men and learnt how to avoid and protect themselves from their violence and victimisation (p. 64).

5.5.2 'NOT ALL MEN' – IN NEED OF MALE PROTECTION?

In all of the Somali-born women's accounts it became undeniable that there are differences in the treatment and conditions for men and women, particularly where the body of a woman is approached as a sexually desired object by men (hooks, 2000, p. 48; Hunnicutt, 2009). Yet, intersectionality informs us that gender is a non-binary, dynamic concept and that there are multiple femininities and masculinities co-existing in any given time and place (Cho et al., 2013, p. 795). These are oftentimes hierarchically organised with a dominant masculinity in the top which perpetuates the subordination of women to men. While the hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to alternative masculinities, it is foremost defined in contradistinction to some sort of, real or imagined, femininity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, pp. 832, 848). Thus, within both masculinities and femininities there are hierarchical orders and these two systems moreover inform one another as they are relational (Budgeon, 2014). In a multicultural locality like Kampala, it arguably becomes even more complex as different cultures' constructions of normative genders and gender hierarchies intersect. Yet, did such gender hierarchies, including constructions of femininity and masculinity delineated by ethnicity and culture, come to the fore in the Somali women's narrations?

“They always, men are always overprotective...yeah about ladies. So, whenever they take you, they, they have to make sure they bring you back aaaand our men mostly they don't like having...women in their bed without marriage. So, they don't have any interest in that. Unless...this is your boyfriend or this is your fiancé. [...] But here, when I came it's different. It's a different country, different culture. But mostly our men they cannot tell you, you, let us go to bed straight. No. They want to be maybe your boyfriend. Like after some time, long period, maybe if you agree, marriage.” (*Fowsio, 27th of October 2018*)

This as well as previous narrations by Fowsio have hinged on the differences between ‘uncontrollable’ Ugandan men, a sexually predatory Ugandan masculinity, and ‘overprotective’ Somali men, a protective/restrictive Somali masculinity. Thereby Fowsio constructs culturally and ethnically distinct masculinities. This similarly relates to Mernissi’s (2001) analysis of how patriarchal domination and gender hierarchies are built differently in Muslim and Western societies with the former predominantly relying upon a control and division of space whereas the latter dominates through beauty standards and vision (pp. 192, 213-214). While, it is not as neatly traceable in a comparison between Ugandan and Somali patriarchal models they partially indicate such disparate patriarchal tactics of vision and objectification, Uganda, versus space and restriction/protection, Somalia. Fowsio’s narration thus exposes this and, I would argue, shows that it is not necessarily beneficial for a woman to be in either of these two patriarchal worlds.

“Even if he is a young boy, like age, age of...15...or 12, he can protect girls, always women. He’ll say “don’t do that, that is a girl, don’t fight with, this is a girl what are you doing”. Like that, but here, in Uganda, I didn’t see it, them taking women to, to protect women, to take responsibility to protect them. I haven’t seen that. They are just a community which are the same and they do whatever they want all together and like that. But US, they always value mother and the child, mhm, children. They protect women. They protect. If, if, eh, a Somali man sees you, you are in trouble, and you are a woman, they say “why, what happened to you? You have any problem? How can I help you? Do you want me to take you where you were going? What is it? Which fear do you have?” Such things, they will ask you. And eh, here they just look at you like this [showing a look of indifference] and they leave you.”
(Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019)

Hence, in her narrations, Fowsio locates a stark contrast in the normative masculinity between a sexually predatory Ugandan masculinity compared to a protective/restrictive and responsible Somali masculinity. In continuation, Fowsio explains that these cultural differences are prominent and that these cultural codes of separate spheres for men and women are part of Somali girls’ socialisation, irrespective of their current country of residence. This has largely been found in investigation of patriarchal expressions in a Muslim

context (Mernissi, 2001, pp. 192, 213-214), however it is not necessarily prominent when Muslims live in non-Muslim countries. Fowsio all the while emphasises that even ‘modern’ countries have not deviated from adhering to and passing down this norm with the justification that it is not safe to be with men. This is drawn from her translocal lives with cousins in different corners of the world: East Africa, USA, and Northern Europe. This is also somewhat related to how culture instead of biology becomes predestined if “the relevant “culture” that “constructs” gender is understood in terms of such a law or set of laws, then it seems that gender is as determined and fixed as it was under the biology-is-destiny formulation.” (Butler, 1999, p. 12). Still, Fowsio’s different accounts of Somali cultural norms regulating relationships between men and women uncover perceivable ambiguities conflicting with such predestination. On the one hand, Fowsio describes the ‘overprotective’ nature of Somali men caring for the Somali women, but on the other hand she strongly exclaims that Somali girls are discouraged from interacting with men as they cannot be trusted; anything can happen. This reveals what Hunnicutt (2009) terms a “protection-paradox, an irreconcilable double-bind between male protection and threat as men are simultaneously the protector and the predator; the ones to be guarding you and to be guarded against (p. 565).

“That’s how we are raised up. Yeah. All, all Somali communities. Even if they are now in the modern countries, they tell them don’t go with men mostly, go with ladies. Yeah, your age mate. Ehm, eh, I mean schoolmates you can have fun with them. You can invite them home. You understand? Girls, no problem. But...girls interacting with men...it’s not right. That’s how we are raised up. [...] I, I think that it is not safe for us to be with men, anything can happen, yeah, anything.” (*Fowsio, 27th of October 2018*)

Interestingly, altogether these accounts expose the contradiction with a simple dichotomous masculinity of women’s protectors (Somali men) and sexual predators (Ugandan men) as well as the perceivable contradictions between male protection and threat. Spurred by the question on negative experiences related to male relationships in Somalia, Fowsio furthermore retold a scary event of being kidnapped at age 15 or 16 due to her brother’s decision to break off an engagement with a Somali girl. In this narration the descriptions were laden with gender(ed)

notions; describing how distant relatives “wanted to give their daughter” to her “hard working” brother who “first agreed”, but later changed his mind. In the plot of the kidnapping she retold that the male relatives of the abandoned woman were encouraged to revenge on Fowsio’s brother by kidnapping his younger sister that is “somehow beautiful” and “innocent”. However, she later on added that kidnapping and rape are not common in Somalia. However, as Ryan (2011) argues, most situations of rape are not seen as rape and arguably both women and men uphold rape myths as it shields them both from seeing themselves as either perpetrators or survivors of rape. Thus, rape myths imply that rapists are essentially different from ‘ordinary’ men. Consequently, it may be that neither the rapist nor the raped is able to identify a rape that does not fit the script of rape as it narrowly pre-determines the setting, perpetrator, and victim (pp. 775-779). How does this fit with Fowsio’s perceptions around rape?

Fowsio – Later on...they have investigated who [kidnapped me] and why, because it is not common, mostly, in Somalia to, to kidnap, or to rape. It is not common. Only [!] village, deeeep [high voice] village. [...] they don’t stay close. So, in that distance, the whole area is empty, empty. People who are having, they are having livestock, livestock, I think? The goats...camels. When men are around there and they see women or young girls, sometimes they rape. You understand? It is not common [assertive voice] to rape in the city. Yeah.

R – Not even when...there was a lot of violence?

I – Yeah That time they do also. Because those people they, they, mostly who have the guns, they are heartless. They rape, they kill, they rob. Everything they do[!]. Bad, all the bad things. One, it is such places it is possible and also...those people who are...eh, living in the village. Also, it is possible to rape. So [...], they investigated [and] [...] they found out that it is the cousin brother of my brother’s ex fiancé [who kidnapped me], but nothing happened to me, Alhamdulillah [Thanks to God]

(Fowsio, 27th of October 2018)

As seen above, Fowsio conceptualises rape as a ‘village phenomena’. Though, when I questioned this dichotomy of village and city norms against the fact that there have been high levels of violence and insecurity throughout Somalia due to the civil conflicts and upheavals, Fowsio agreed that in that situation ‘it’, rape and sexual violence, happens, but it is still not

considered to be part of the ‘normal’ Somali way. However, as argued by Baaz Eriksson and Stern (2018), feminist scholarship has clearly teased out that sexual violence is not occurring in neatly separate spheres of civilian peace or militarised violence; it is rather a continuum of violence with different shapes and scripts where the heightened militarised sexual violence is a weapon of war within an already existing war against women and so called ‘weaker’ and less dominant men. It has shown that this so-called ‘abnormality’ of sexual violence is rather an erroneous image concealing and normalising the actual normalcy of its existence even in peace time (pp. 305-307). This normalisation of sexual violence is arguably contingent upon the construction of rape myths that delineate between accepted and coerced, violent sex, largely premised on a normative masculine sexuality; seen in how Fowsio circumscribe rape to certain encounters which result in other forms of sexual violence becoming delegitimised as they fall outside the rape myths. Arguably, this similarly serves the purpose of separating the acts of ‘normal’ men with that of ‘militarised’ brutal men which then makes it easier to deal with the issue of sexual violence as an exceptional occurrence and not as an act inscribed in the social fabric (Baaz Eriksson & Stern, 2018, p. 307). Such coping strategies and separation tactics are painstakingly at work in Fowsio’s perceptions of sexual violence in Somalia. Still, I would go further to argue that Fowsio’s construction of rape myths, by being connected to certain situations, men, female behaviour, places, and times, also bring her comfort as she thereby can believe that she can employ strategies to ensure that her body is not violated. It furthermore serves as a tactic to cast Somalia as a civilised space where such violence takes place in the form of abnormalities. However, I argue that, as these are myths, there are few women who can believe them deep down in their consciousness.

5.5.3 “Women are weak” – Narrating vulnerability

“Just to take an example [from] me. I have been working with Somali boys, cooking...cooking for them and washing the clothes, cleaning the house for them. So, there is, when the time comes for the salary, I asked for the salary and then they started beating me. After that, some arguments [came] and they hit me here until here [shows scars on the left eyebrow upwards and another one at the beginning of the scalp]. I think there is, still it is there. Then later on I went to the police. I reported and they ran away. [...] [So] there are so

many women who are facing different issues, different problems, who are like me, who are, eh...some other...who face the problem, the problem that I face and all the different forms that they face.” (*Nasteexo, 12th of March 2019*)

In contradiction to Oyewumi’s (1997) claim that lower-class women’s experiences of male dominance likely become muted due to their socio-economic struggles (p. 155), most of the Somali women narrated vividly around this. That is, intertwined with being sexualised, many of the women, particularly those that struggled as single mothers, narrated their own lived experiences of physical abuse as examples of the discrimination women face because they are ‘weak’. This phrase, “women are weak” recurred in the accounts around the differences between men and women and the explanations to it were initially centred on greater physical strength, which was seen as a key factor in how the women were disadvantaged and oppressed. However, the narrations around “women are weak” went further to reveal a diversity of issues that relate to differences that are attributed to ‘biology/physique’, gender roles and norms, religious practices, migrant/refugee status, and socio-economic factors. This was furthered by men using intimidation and threats to silence women and limit their resistance and retribution when subjected to violence. This was particularly prominent when Nasteexo, see above, and Jamilah retold their own experiences of being beaten by male employers at the point of requesting their pay. Though, they both commented on this being one out of many problems that women may face. Thus, these accounts are in line with Butler’s and Oyewumi’s argument of how it is impossible to separate the domination by pointing to a binary of either sex or gender as they are symbiotically creating one another (Butler, 1999, p. 10; Oyewumi, 1997, p. 9). So, how did other Somali women’s perceptions and experiences of vulnerability and male dominance manifest this?

“Yeah, most of the time the women are, are weak because where the man can sometimes enter or they reach, they cannot reach or they cannot enter [...] the side of the power we are not the same. Them, they are stronger than us. We, we are not strong enough as they are. [...] in the physical power, physical, but the brain is different. You, you can be better than a, the, your brain works better than as the man’s brain works, but when it comes like eh...power of lifting something, we are a bit not so, enough strong.”

(*Leylo, 12th of March 2019*)

Thus, while Leylo was confident that women could be mentally stronger than men the narrations also expressed the difficulty of getting there due to various constraints; one of them being the gendered work. Already in Nasteexo's experience of being denied her salary and being beaten while trying to request her male employers for the payment of her work as a house help, it is evident that the work avenues are gendered for these women. Cooking, house maids, selling food stuffs, second hand clothes, and washing powder were among the work experiences that the women mentioned; all of which support Tamale's (2011) account of a Ugandan notion of a feminine role of domesticity, caring, and nurturing (pp. 157-158). This analysis of a sex/gender and work bind that channel women's occupational choices and opportunities was part of the women's explorations and perceptions of the differences between men and women. It was somewhat part and parcel of performing a female identity (Butler, 1999, pp. 10-11, 23-24). But how did such gender roles, gender(ed) work, and male domination impact these Somali women's lived realities and self-perceptions?

“Yes, for example, the girls, most of them they don't work and those who want to work sometimes they may go as a house, and you want, maybe you work as a maid and that house you are working maybe there is, they have boys or the man of the house may like you. You may face a lot of problems there. They may want to sleep with you or they may need you to sleep with them so there's, there are a lot of problems that they can meet from there. [...] you know men they are stronger than women. The work that they can do, the women they can't...Because, and they can enter wherever they want. They don't face the many problems, they don't, no one will like them because they are not like a woman. The women they can't, they are not strong enough like a man. They can't do [...] But the men they, they escape and they can work [...] when they are youths or when they are old. They still, stay stronger, to do some kind of work [...] and they can enter everywhere they want. [...] because they are strong, they get educated, they, their brain is working so, so [...] for example like me I didn't get educated and the work I do I may do as a house maid or just little work, just to get the daily bread. But the most, the boys or the men that are here are educated and they get a very nice job which is, is paid well, so it is like that one [...] [but] if I, even me if I, I am educated and I have knowledge I, some problems that I have now I [would] try to fix it or try to look [for] a way to get out of those problems, but if we [women] are not educated you cannot reach far.” (*Haweeyo, 12th of March 2019*)

Haweeyo's analysis of the situation for women is firmly shaped against her own, and similarly positioned women's, lived realities of 'un-educated', low socio-economic status, foreign, refugee woman, and single mother. Her perceptions go further to support Hunnicutt's (2009) claim of how patriarchal domination and gender inferiority oftentimes work through intersecting systems of knowledge and power, that is through both norms and structures (pp. 554-556, 561-563); and in accordance with a hegemonic masculinity. This hegemonic masculinity is not maintained solely through physical domination and force. Rather it is a sophisticated interaction of holding socio-cultural status, discursive power, institutional legitimacy, and so forth (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 846). This, compounded with the sexualisation of women and girls, is seen as shaping women's vulnerability. In continuation, Haweeyo had also, in her first interview, similarly mentioned the structural constraints that you face as a single-mother and at the same time refugee, when there is limited state and family support to. Thus, the particular Ugandan context was also at the fore of such perceptions together with the assumed gender role of women who do not leave their children behind, whereas men would more likely move on and find ways to enter wherever they wish. Consequently, Haweeyo anew made clear references to how patriarchy is working through both gender norms and societal structures (Hunnicutt, 2009, pp. 554-556, 561-563), which disadvantage women by their assigned gender role as child-bearer and nurturer.

“You see a woman carrying children with no father. They are the father and the mother. They struggle. They can't leave them behind, to survive is really difficult. But the man they are alone sometimes. He is a man, and they can stay stronger than us so they enter wherever they want, but as a woman you cannot enter wherever you want and these children are behind you. So, it's a big difference between the men and the women...all the, I am not only talking about Somalis, but all the refugees...yeah [it's the] same. You find the single mother's carrying children, they are [the] same.” (*Haweeyo, 5th of March 2019*)

5.5.4 SITUATING VULNERABILITY – INTERSECTIONALITY

The previous sections have explored normative femininity as well as the discrimination and subordination that might come with being a woman. Still, it is apparent that these are not

simply narrations of ‘woman’, but of ‘woman’ and ‘refugee’, ‘uneducated’, ‘poor’, ‘foreigner’, ‘Muslim’, and so forth. Undoubtedly the women’s herstories pointed out this intersectional reality. In a similar vein, hooks (2000) argues that for many marginalised groups of women gaining social equality with ‘men’ as a group would not be emancipatory or transformative since a large majority of men is also oppressed through capitalism, racism, and imperialism (pp. 43-48). Thus, while feminism generally presumes that all women face sexist discrimination and oppression, working-class and minority women living in poverty arguably hold rather comparable social positions with their male counterparts through similar class and race exploitation and discrimination, maybe even more so than they do with upper-class, white women (hooks, 2000, p. 19). Hence, to presume that the Somali-born women in this study would fully identify with each other or other women per categorisation of “woman” would then be naïve at best. Against previous findings of Somali refugee women’s lived experiences of marginalisation and xenophobia in Uganda, compared to more privileged groups of women there, it is arguably more likely that they will have fewer points of reference and connection to other groups of women than they might have with their male counterparts. However, did such perceptions surface when the Somali women were asked about their lives in Kampala and how they perceived their situations in comparison to that of men?

“Yes, because last time you ask about the side of living in Kampala, the living-style, so when you, I am a woman I need a life, a better [life]. Maybe I’m not working, the man is not working. He needs a better future, even me [I need] the same. I need some capital of money or to get some income, the same as he needs. I need where to sleep, to eat, even [he is] the same. So that side, I think there is why there is no much difference.”

(Leylo, 12th of March 2019)

“It depends [on] how the situation of that person is. You may see a man that is worse than me, who is struggling with life. Some are better than me, some are just like me. So, it depends on the situation that person is in.” *(Xalwo, 5th of March 2019)*

Clearly, the Somali women problematised simple distinctions between women and men. Leylo’s answer to my follow-up question regarding her statement that she does not see any differences between women and men living in Kampala, underscores the complexity of

determining vulnerability and the importance of a situated intersectional analysis. It is as if she echoes the words of bell hooks in saying that reaching the status of ‘men’ is often far from emancipatory for women if they are sharing similar situations of vulnerability and marginalisation due to refugee and class position. Xalwo similarly rejects a simple equation of women equals marginalisation by saying that it all depends on the situation of that person. This further supports the rejection of accommodating the Somali women’s narratives to fit neatly into a simple journey from disempowerment in Somalia to disempowerment or relative empowerment in Uganda as would be easily assumed from the lens of the global gender discourses as described by Mohanty (2003, 2006) and McRobbie (2007).

5.6 A FEMALE MUSLIM BODY – A FOREIGN FEMALE BODY

As indicated in the previous section, intersectionality probes one to ask: what difference makes a difference? And why is there a difference among and within groups of women? (Davis, 2008, p. 70; McCall, 2005, p. 1791). Thus, investigating difference derived only from gender is clearly too simplified. Along those lines, it is argued that the nexus of gender and religion, in the case of Islam signified in the discourse around the veil, is crucial; yet, it has not received sufficient scrutiny and analysis (Chakraborti & Zempi, 2012, p. 274). These so-called veiled subjects, including Somali women, have been either exiled or misread according to the common and erroneous assumption that Ahmed (2011) revisits in *VEIL OF IGNORANCE*; that veiling among Muslim women would steadily decrease as they would get greater access to education and other opportunities. As she envisaged the veil to uniformly be a symbol of women’s oppression, she imagined that women would rid themselves from it as they gained greater prominence in public spheres. However, this has not taken place and Muslim women are still veiling, which prompted a reconsideration of the understanding of the veil (pp. 40-41).

Thus, instead of singularly symbolising patriarchal oppression, it is argued that a more nuanced and socio-politically grounded understanding of the veil is needed as it holds various symbolic and individual meanings in its localities (Ahmed, 2011, pp. 244-245; Grinnell, 2013, pp. 244-245). However, despite the argument for localised and diverse symbolic readings of the veil as it relates to a Muslim, female identity, the veil is more often relentlessly used as the primary marker of difference; identifying the Muslim ‘other’.

Consequently, the multifarious meaning is eliminated and the veil is one-handedly read as a symbol of gender inequality and unfreedom (Chakraborti & Zempi, 2012, p. 269; Grinnell, 2013, p. 244). But, does such varying discourses appear in the perceptions and narrated realities by the Somali women living in Kampala?

“I have a freedom with my religion. I go wherever I want. I go how I want. I go and do how I want. And no one is against me, with my religion. So, I am free and...free in that freedom.” (Xalwo, 12th of March 2019)

In addition to Xalwo’s self-perception of her religious identity as liberate and self-chosen, none of the other Somali women spoke of veiling and/or Islam as an imposed religious identity. However, just as gender norms and rules become normalised, so do cultural and religious norms which makes it arduous to explore. All the while, Ahmed (2011) further postulates that Muslim women’s choice to veil has become a site of resistance and struggle for justice, especially for Muslims in European or American exile where anti-Muslim sentiments are becoming ever prominent (pp. 40-41). The Somali female is arguably at the forefront of such struggles considering their commitment to Islam and their significant level of displacement. Yet, are such Islamophobic sentiments also felt by Somali women living in Kampala and can aforementioned struggles for justice and resistance be located within their narratives around their lives in Kampala?

“Everywhere you find bad people, especially when you go to the market. **They call you al-Shabaab**, they, those people that are bad that talk to, throw you those words to you yeah al-Shabaab...but it’s, it is normal. [...] You are working and you don’t think a lot or some other things you start forgetting. But when there is nothing to do you are really suffering, it is there. And there are some bad people around as I told you, but eh... **And the other way, I feel safe with my hijab, with my religion.** Just a few people that as I told you call you al-Shabaab, **but eh when you are like eh alone and you don’t have someone.** I don’t have anyone here. I don’t have my parents or siblings, or any relatives and eh and I’m not working. Even if I may work, yeah at least I will say I will feel better, because I’m, I will get busy to work, but to stay idle here at home doing nothing. Even **it takes you back sometimes.**” (Magool, 12th of March 2019)

Magool's narration around her experiences as a Somali, Muslim woman in Kampala give evidence of such discourses and struggles even in non-western countries, struggles which become harder to cope with at the face of being alone and with previous traumatic experiences of violence and rape. Still, the derogatory naming of "al-Shabaab" is not exclusively a term of Islamophobia since it is specifically attached to a Somalian, Islamic terrorist group. This begs the question of how to conceptualise and understand this specific type of harassment, which transgress a foreign Somali identity as well as a Muslim identity. Notwithstanding Magool, and some other women, mentioned that their religion and identifying religiously by wearing the hijab gave them a sense of safety, comfort, but also freedom. This is in line with Hopkins (2010) research with migrant, Somali women in Toronto and London where she argued that those women expressed their agency and identity through Islamic and Somali dress codes (p. 532). However, were there other experiences around holding a female Somali, Muslim identity and how did this impact on the notions of the self and the life in Kampala?

"Yeah really, so as a country, it is a Christian country, so many Christians live around, but I am happy. There is no one who disturbs me about my religion. Because I ran away from my country which is a eh Muslim country. I came to this Christian country and no one disturb me about my religion. And if I get another third country, which is a Christian country and there is a peace, I am happy with it." (*Nasteexo, 12th of March 2019*)

"Here there is no problem, because they also, they all, they have both religions, Muslims and non-Muslims. And no one will look at your dressing way. No one will look at it. It doesn't matter to me. [...] Sometimes they abuse, sometimes they joke, they want, they mean it as a joking when **they are saying that al-Shabaab** [said in a whispering voice]. They mean that they want to joke with you and eh talk to you and eh, you understand? To interact with you, such things, that's what they mean...So sometimes it is eh, being rude, a person, to be called such a crucial word. You will feel bad because you know what those people did. But to them it is just having fun and to say that." (*Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019*)

In addition to Nasteexo and Fowsio, Jamilah and Xalwo also expressed that they did not feel targeted in regard to their Muslim identity and that it was possible to peacefully and respectfully co-exist with large Christian as well as other Muslim communities in Kampala. Hence, while Fowsio attested to the issue of verbal and physical abuse, she did not connect this to being a Muslim but to being a foreigner, being a Somali. Still, the so-called ‘strict’ Muslim dress code that most Somali women adhere to distinguish them from local Muslim women’s dress-codes that are more often body-fitted and a bit more revealing. As argued by Chakraborti and Zempi (2012), as well as Stark et al. (2015), it is precisely such visibility of a Muslim identity in a veiled female body that is distinguished as one of the factors behind the predominance of Muslim women being targeted in Islamophobic acts (Chakraborti & Zempi, 2012, p. 271; Stark et al., 2015, pp. 176-177). Then, would it be possible to argue that this is transposed in the Kampala case of the Somali women as they are easily spotted against other, local Muslim women? Further, how does such verbal abuse affect these Somali women in Kampala and how do they cope with it?

“MHM! [al-Shabaab]. That’s the veeery common. That one we are used to, even we don’t know whether it is abuse or not. We are used to it. [...] Yeah, they can say it, and sometimes when you pass even through in Kampala somewhere they can say “Hey Somali, al-Shabaab” [Fowsio lowers her voice], like that and we say okay hi and we go through...even today [...] it affects us, a lot, because those, I mean people who had, who has been named on that, who owns that name, are murderers. They are, the cruelest of people on earth. And you, if someone calls you that bad name, you feel bad. But there is nothing to do...you just continue, keep walking or say hi my friend and you leave that issue to him. No matter how much he tells you. [...] we don’t answer back because that can lead you to somewhere bad. So, we just leave it like that.”

(Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019)

In continuation, Leylo narrates that:

“You will find like some people when they see her, they call al-Shabaab, al-Shabaab, al-Shabaab. **They call her like ah she is al-Shabaab because of this hijab**...you call it hijab...Yeah, EVERY PLACE, EVERYWHERE in the world you go you will see that bad

person who don't like your religion. So that's, **it's there. It's normal.** [So], I run from there. Sometimes it's the Owino market, inside Owino market so **you cannot fight with them. You cannot, eh...say a word to them or you cannot respond. So, you have to ignore, just go...**because I cannot fight with them [laughing]...So I have to run from there." (*Leylo, 12th of March 2019*)

Consequently, the Somali women's retelling of being called "al-Shabaab" impels one to consider that the abuse was not solely targeting these Women's Muslim identity, their veiling, but more specifically their Somali, Muslim identity. It furthermore became telling that the Somali-born women see these as largely unchangeable and they deal with it mainly by acceptance and avoidance, but also by increased politeness. This is expressive of these Somali women's use of double consciousness, which Brooks (2007) describes as interchangeably seeking to conform to certain roles and expectations alongside using it in order to protect themselves and their dependants from the dominant groups (p. 64). Additionally, these Somali women's lived realities partially mirror findings from Stark et al. (2015) research on discrimination towards adolescent refugees in Kampala where it was found that adolescent, female Somalis had been forced to remove their veil to be allowed to study, being verbally, sexually, and physically harassed in the streets by men who tried to remove their hijab, calling them "al-Shabaab", and saying that they are FGM women who are like meat without any feeling (pp. 176-177). On FGM, or more accurately female genital cuttings, do note that none of the Somali women in this study disclosed any information around this when they were asked about their experiences in Somalia and Uganda, differences between men and women, their self-perceptions, the entities of a 'good' Somali woman, and so forth. While previous research has centred on this aspect of Somali women's lives, I chose not to follow up on this as I was following on the ques of the study participants.

All the same, with probes and follow-up questions, the initial depictions of Uganda as a peaceful place without problems were blurred by the struggles around discrimination, abuse, and harassment connected to being a foreigner, but also a woman. Fowsio's narrations are adept to exemplify such shifting and contradictory depictions as she initially described Uganda in generally very positive terms and as 'safe', she would move around at any hour, with what she narrates later into her second interview:

“In Uganda, men and women, both [!], can do what they want when it comes to, in terms of living, they are like, and eh working. **Only that you should, you can, you have to be a little bit careful because you are a woman and you have to be careful because you are a foreigner.** You understand? You, you should not move at night, **very late at night**, such things.” (Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019)

This, as well as other narrations, suggests that the Somali-born women’s experiences of xenophobia and Islamophobia, were not neatly separable from gender discrimination. Expounding on this, Fowsio retold the following incident:

“**And sometimes...here in Uganda [lowers her voice] Somali women they suffer because of eh...because of their men, [Ugandans], they are, should I say they are horny? Should I say they don’t have good manners?** Or maybe, or maybe they want to sleep any woman they see. They can call you and they ask you funny question like are you married? Eh, I will give you money if you, if you go to lodge and like that. And eh...and I am shocked to, someone whom you don’t know to ask you such questions. [...] **Last eh, last Monday we were going to, to, IOM**, we had an appointment. My husband and my son, they took another boda [motorbike taxi] and I took another boda [motorbike taxi] also. **There was a taxi passing by, and the man stopped [!] the taxi, we were in jam, and he said [lowered voice] hey Somali woman are you married? Can I take you to lodge¹?** And the man [driving me] settled it, talking to him in Luganda what is wrong with you, such things. You, you are in a public place why are you speaking like that. And me I said you leave that person, let us go. Leave him, let us go and we left. So, it happens. It happens...” (Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019)

Apart from the intrusive experience of being sexually harassed on the street, Fowsio’s story elicits some hidden notions of sexuality and the distance she takes from a more ‘promiscuous’ sexuality. This is fairly interesting to juxtapose in relation to a western discourse of the veiled woman who is read as a sexually repressed and submissive subject under the subordination of a ‘traditional’ and ‘backward’ Muslim culture that is upheld by an oppressive Muslim man

¹ In the Ugandan context taking a woman to a lodge usually refers to going to a place where men go to have sex with women for money, or sometimes it would refer to casual sex outside marriage.

(Chakraborti & Zempi, 2012, pp. 275-277). This discourse is prevalent in relation to the Somali community in Western exile, transposed as the “troublesome Somaliness” hinging on perceptions of female subordination and problematic masculinity, notions that are closely tied to a narrow view of Islam (Kleist, 2008b, p. 138). However, do such discourses figure in the Global South, Uganda, in today's globalised and interconnected era and how do self-perceptions of Somali-born, women living in Kampala relate to such discourses?

“And when they go to Interaid [NGO] or to UNHCR they say only Somalis we don't have for resettlement and when we Somalis we, we are business people wherever you go I think you even see it in Sweden, in America, in Canada, in Europe, everywhere, wherever we go we like to work. We like to do a lot of business, then we will bring up that country. We will bring some profit to the country. And I don't know why they refuse us and we don't have any eh bad habits that is saying that you are a bad people we cannot take you. So, I don't know what is, what is wrong with us that they are saying they don't take us [for resettlement]. We don't have anything for Somalis.” (*Magool, 12th of March 2019*)

Magool's narration of 'Somalis' stands in stark contrast to such discourse as she describes a notion of a hard-working and business-minded culture that will be beneficial to any host society. Additionally, as can be noticed throughout the analysis chapters, the other Somali women neither exposed any direct sentiments of a 'troublesome Somaliness'. Rather, women like Fowsio emphasised the very respectful and responsible Somali masculinity. It can however be argued that it was there as undercurrents in the women's adherence to a norm of female virginity, covering up, avoiding certain places, and so forth, but that all depends on what you are searching for. If you believe that an open sexuality and an uncovered body is the elixir to women's liberation then without a doubt these Somali women will be symbols of women's subordination.

What the women did disclose in relation to their lived realities in Kampala, apart from the verbal abuse with comments like “this is not Somalia” and being called “al-Shabaab”, included having to pay higher school fees for their children and being less likely to receive fair treatment in the course of justice. Could this be an indication of the initially mentioned discourses on problematic immigrant? As De Genova (2016) has argued,

European countries' contemporary "problems of 'national identity', 'national culture', 'national values', and of course also 'national sovereignty' present themselves primarily as majoritarian projects, articulated first and foremost in relation to migration, if not plainly against migrants" (p. 346). This relies on a nationalism contingent upon a birth-right to the nation, which is closely followed by a hostile politics towards migrants and refugees who are seen as unwelcome and undeserving and similarly blamed and scapegoated for various ills felt by the national population (De Genova, 2016). Such discourses have however been foremost explored and traced in Western contexts. Thus, did the Somali women's narrations on their lived realities as foreigners and migrants converge with or diverge from such discourses?

"When Museveni goes, you also go. There is that tribe which always says and they also have I think, yeah, a Ugandan tribe, and I think maybe that is, the whole tribe [is] thinking that way, because it's not one person or two or three, many people can tell you that. Mhm, that they don't want foreigners. [...] I don't know why they are thinking that way. And one time, I asked one person why do people always [say] that if Museveni goes you will also go, why? What have we done? We are just refugees here that, they, those people they don't want, they don't want eh Somali people or foreigners... [...] [Those people that wants us to leave] I haven't asked [them], because I didn't want them to answer. Maybe they can even tell me something which hurts me more. So, I just kept quiet. I said okay. Okay, no problem, if we go, we also left our country so maybe we go to somewhere else, better. "Be ready, be ready! Be ready!" they can tell you [laughing]. And there is nothing to do. It hurts. Sometimes even me, when I am at home thinking, there are several times I, I was in the bed and I was thinking like what if it happens and this man goes, during the election time. What will happen? How will YOU carry all these children? What will you do? Will you leave some? Are they going to get food, enough? What will happen? Like, yeah. Sometimes I feel that way and which, which, exit will you use? Kenya? Sudan? Where? ...Congo? I was...I was, I, I felt bad...especially it happens [that] you will get scared when the elections are taking place." (*Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019*)

I claim that Fowsio's narration, reiterated by a few of the other women, exposes that it is applicable to the Ugandan context as well. It furthermore manifests the emotional stress that refugees face in immigrant hostile climates and the concern that Fowsio feels in relation to her

children, thus this also hints to the probable gendered outcome and responses in such situations.

5.7 “That’s their culture”

“Yes, because every place is not the same and you know we Somalis we say, if you go a place that there is, they throw, they remove one eye, you, when you go [to] that place you also remove that eye, you stay with one eye. So, whenever you go the situation how it is, you live with that situation, yeah.” (*Nasteexo, 12th of March 2019*)

In this metaphoric speech, with reference to co-habitation in Uganda with different religions, Nasteexo points out the cultural blindness that each one of us holds, which is often partially embodied and appropriated by an outsider seeking to become an insider in a new environment. However, it is often easy to become blind to this; that is, how your own responses, behaviours, and identities are cultural. It is far more common to scrutinise other people through a cultural lens and to point out the workings of culture. In the case of feminism, Mohanty (2003, 2006) and Oyewumi (1997), as well as other post-colonial and feminist scholars, have raised this issue, mainly through the swift dismissal of ‘foreign’ and Third World cultures as inherently patriarchal and oppressive to women who are concurrently singularised in a subject position of vulnerability compared to acultural and complex conceptions regarding the own Western context (Mohanty, 2003, pp. 518-519; 2006; Oyewumi, 1997, pp. 122-127). Not only Nasteexo noticed the cultural lenses we see through, as can be seen in Leylo’s reference to ‘my culture’ in her narration of what a good Somali woman is. In this way she was challenging me to take notice that even in ‘my culture’ there are certain gender norms and that certain women are regarded problematic by not conforming and performing according to the gender scripts.

“Yeah, even I think, **even you guys you don’t want like a woman who is not good...I think you have seen some women, where you come from.** They are bad women. They are not good. They, where they go even you yourself you don’t feel to enter those places. I think you have seen them. Have you seen them?” (*Leylo, 12th of March 2019*)

In addition to this, and as mentioned previously, migration is a factor that complicates the analysis of gender and culture. Migration is furthermore a process that often heightens and spurs the re-configurations of gender and social norms (Anthias, 2008, p. 5; 2012, pp. 102-105, 107-108; Hunnicutt, 2009; Pessar & Mahler, 2003). However, did this figure in the Somali women's self-perceptions?

“That’s their culture. That’s their culture and somewhere, **everyone, what they have in their culture is to be followed**, so, but when you, since we came to Somalia but we were still young and that’s when we get used to interact with other people, move around, come out of the house [...] I love the ladies to go far and to get educated. **Me, I have one girl...and me I [would] love [for] her to get a high education.**”

(Jamilah, 12th of March 2019)

Arguably, Jamilah's narration in regard to her opinions around her Yemeni father's decision not to send her to school and her own shifting views around the importance of, and support towards, female's access to education do confirm such gender re-negotiations propelled by migration. However, how did other Somali women narrate around cultural and religious norms?

[In the face of death, a man should be compensated by 100 camels and a woman with 50 camels]

Fowsio – “that one...it’s a different thing. That is a, a religious way of paying, to the...parents who lost their child and that is what the religion set for them. Yeah, it is not what, the rules, or that people have set for us, it is the religion and you know what God plans for you something you just have to follow. That’s what it is.”

Me – “But does that mean that some people take it as a man is more worth than a woman?”

Fowsio – “No. We all understand, US, as Somali, we all understand.”

Me – “That it is not because one is better than the other, or?”

Fowsio – “It is not like that. We all understand, because that’s the way we have been raised. It is not that the man is better than the woman. No. It is just that how God set for you to be, in the Islamic and it is all Muslims, not only us. Yeah, it’s all Muslims.” *(Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019)*

In the preceding discussion between Fowsio and I, Fowsio strongly affirms that even though there is a religious prescription in Islam of higher compensation for the death of a man vis-à-vis a woman this is not confounded with an understanding of valuing men higher than women. Fowsio exclaims that all Somalis understand this and she even goes further to claim that this goes for all Muslims. Such universal understandings and applications of religion in different context and cultures has been rigorously questioned by research with Somali women and other migrant groups, which has contrariwise shown that the interpretation of religious scriptures and norms vary according to time, context, culture, personal experiences, and other factors (Abdi, 2014; Byrskog et al., 2014; Jinnah & Lowe, 2015; Johnsdotter, 2003; Ussher et al., 2017). It is thus unlikely that Fowsio's claim is true; that all Somali's understand not to take the religiously inscribed higher compensation for a man's life than a woman's as evidence of men being better and more valuable than women. More importantly, Fowsio's claim of a common understanding around this is interesting to note as it could presumably serve the purpose to resist aforementioned constructions of Islam and Muslims as devaluing and subordinating women. In continuation, Fowsio made a comment about Somali culture being very "simple" and "easy". I probed her to explain this a bit further and in doing so she narrated the following:

"If it comes to dressing, if it comes to...eh...getting to know or use that culture it is also simple. We don't have a different kind of culture apart from the religion. Yeah, that is why I said it is simple, that you just have to be Muslim and you can, anyone can fit in that community. [...] [If you're not a Muslim] maybe...you can still fit in that community, but I think not now. Especially in our country...Because those are the people whom they are targeting...[...] those al-Shabaab people they are targeting people who comes from abroad, any other country than Somalia [...]...living in Somalia, right now, when you are non-Muslim, it is very hard...but still when you are in another country you can, you can still be in that community. You can be in that community because...these other countries they are mixed...they are mixed. That's why you can still be there, you can be a non-Muslim, again you can be with Somalis and they are there. They are there. [...] There is a certain man I know...mhm...and he is there, but I don't know how he feels. I don't know how he feels [...] but he is still there. He is still there. No one can do anything, he is free man, because

here both religions are respected...that's why, and eh...if eh...and eh...about the culture...if it comes to dressing, it is very simple...[...] behaviour...the only thing that we don't do is like eh...no alcohol...that is all, the rest, also there are some Somalis who take cigarettes ehm...mira [Somali word for marijuana]...[...] some women they do...and eh, and eh, if you are friendly, that's all. What I know Somalis they are interveners, they, they can fit anywhere, unless they are the ones who don't want to, to interact with those people...Yeah...but once they know that you are harmless you can be there, stay with them, be friends, anything...yeah...they are there. I saw so many Somalis even with eh, eh...with eh...with foreigners...eh...girls, some, there was a certain...man who used to park somewhere I used to work at, eh, 2011. I used to work with, with fuel industry so, yeah, with fuel. So, he used to come and park at the petrol station where I was working. He was a Somali and his wife was white, I don't know which country, somewhere in Europe I think, with a son...but the son didn't look like him, he looks like the mother, mmmm. So, he used to come and park there and he greets me and he goes and they go to Kisenyi, inside, you know Kisenyi? Where Somalis are staying mostly, yeah and he walks with his wife freely and she was not covered, normal like you. I saw another boy one day, also with another woman. So here there is no problem."

(Fowsio, 22nd of March 2019)

Interestingly, Fowsio starts by saying that the dressing is simple and that there is actually not another culture apart from the Muslim religion. However, later into her narration of Somali culture, she contradicts this by exploring the differences she perceives among different Somalis' cultural and religious expressions, as well as aspects of interculturality, and cultural change. To some extent this narration demarcates one of the central arguments in this discussion, namely how social beings, including gender(ed) subjects, and cultures are always in the being – in the making through performative acts that are either repeating the expected matrix or subverting it. Notwithstanding, it touches on how confining any culture can be as there is centrally one way of dressing, thus other forms are considered to be outside the normal. Moreover, I cannot help but notice that all the examples of people contesting or broadening the cultural-religious Somali notion are men. This essentially goes back to the aforementioned differences in how men and women's bodies are read, which oftentimes makes women's bodies more relentlessly controlled and confined.

6. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

These Somali-born women's herstories cannot be taken out of their context of a life that is largely lived at the margins of an urban place where the insecure and low-income employment, often within the informal economy, absorbs their bodies and minds towards a daily struggle for survival. The lack of safety nets and upward class mobility within their contexts fuel the dreams of resettlement and the image of a perfect life in Europe and America. These Somali women's voices are partially the voices of large masses of people living at these margins in Kampala, and in other places, but their lived realities still come with their specifics as they are simultaneously refugees, Muslim women, foreign female bodies, single mothers. Additionally, they have their own specific motivations and personal agencies. Throughout this research I have sought to argue for this; namely, the interactive movement between particularity and universality. Thus, sexism and patriarchy hits women, but not necessarily in the same places or with the same force or fist. Such chameleon moves that lie in patriarchy makes it elusive to most of us and it foremost makes us blind to its shape when it accommodates to our own culture. While I cannot categorically pinpoint Uganda's patriarchal shape, it is evident that the female body is dominated by a male gaze, touch, and words; all of which serve as reminders to women of their sexualised bodies, of their position as objects to male desire. Thus, Uganda functions more in accordance to a Western domination model as compared to Muslim, Somali culture where the differentiation is carried out by spatial separation and so-called male protection, guardianship, and restriction.

However, I encourage the reader to see both the Muslim patriarchal model of domination by restriction and protection as compared to the commodifying and sexualised visual, patriarchal domination foremost located in the West, but also detected in Uganda. I encourage you to sincerely consider that while they are widely different, they are still trails in the same landscape. I hope that this will caution you, as it has cautioned me, to use my own lens to measure the reality of the Somali women; to call oppression when her female body is covered and to call liberation when mine is made available for view. If not, we could easily justify that the veiled Somali woman becomes a symbol of aforementioned undesired femininities threatening the aforementioned self-perception of the West as a gender equal

entity in today's Neo-liberal era where women are supposed to express an empowered femininity which is enmeshed with an uncovered body and a liberal attitude to sex. The not so far-fetched argument is therefore that the 'veiled woman' is subverting the 'new sexual contract' and its concomitant legitimisation of Western superiority as it refuses such femininity and it moreover rejects the consumerism of the feminine body (McRobbie, 2007). However, I argue that it is less critical when women in the Global South fail to embody such femininity, as it could rather be another justification of the discourse of Western superiority as the locus of democracy, gender equality, and freedom. By no means did the migrant, Somali women's herstories and self-perceptions seem to clearly portray themselves as submissive, but their veiling and norms of chaste femininity can easily be turned to legitimise this if read against aforementioned discourse. Consequently, these herstories can easily be read as women trapped by a traditional, backward, patriarchal, and Muslim culture. But would that not be too simplistic and too convenient in our urge to picture ourselves as sexually freed and uncovered, thus liberated in the West? Is it not precisely such simplifications that prevent us from truly recognising how patriarchy intelligently disguises itself by taking a culturally acceptable shape? And by failing to see patriarchy's culturally specific shape we lose the battle against it before we have even started. Is it not also a slippery slope because it legitimises the Western knowledge regimes premised on universal claims and lingering colonial tendencies?

It is true that the Somali-women in this research proclaimed their identities through an adherence to a so-called strict Muslim dress-code and they often made reference to their Islamic faith. However, contrary to the construction of a repressive religious imposition some women commented on Islam and wearing the hijab as sites of comfort and freedom. Notwithstanding, their visible Muslim female bodies, made them vulnerable to verbal abuses in the Kampala streets and such abuses deeply impacted their well-being and behaviours. It moreover had the probability of awakening and reliving previous traumas that they had undergone in Somalia. Such traumas and pain of having lost loved ones through brutal killings were written on their faces. However, the verbal abuses they meet in Kampala were mostly being called "al-Shabaabs". Namely, the abuse was a clear reference to a Somali identity and henceforth it was evident that the Somali-born women's experiences of abuse took place at the interaction and intersections of xenophobia and Islamophobia. Neither were these abuses neatly separable from gender discrimination as their lived realities included

sexual harassment in public places and at work. This moreover spoke to these Somali women's self-perceptions and their views on how women's physical weaknesses and their female bodies sexual desirability make them vulnerable to men. Such self-perceptions and experiences fuelled coping strategies which included covering up – shielding the sexually desired body from the male gaze, avoiding certain places, limiting their movements, and refraining from engaging in social activities. However, in doing so the Somali-born women largely supported and rectified rape myths which function as sites of comforts and certainty for women who are vulnerable to sexual violence, while at the same time obscuring and limiting the ability to confront the same sexual violence. Arguably, such tactics to create certainty and clarity in a patriarchal world of irreconcilable contradictions were often central in the Somali women's narrations around their lived experiences and the imagined threats that follow in a world where women are considered to be sex objects and their virginity and or sexuality can be stolen and violated by men if it is not guarded properly.

In a similar vein, this feminist narrative inquiry into Somali-born women's self-perceptions and lived realities in Somalia and Kampala has confirmed previous studies in terms of strongly held norms of chaste femininity and virginity. Concomitant to this, it has pointed to the centrality of motherhood as a strong component of their desired gender identity. Further, it was painstakingly visible in the Somali women's narratives around normative femininity and women's vulnerability that Somali women, particularly their bodies and sexuality, are primary markers and symbolic bearers of national identity, culture, and honour. In turn, this representation fuels and furthers the control over women's behaviours and bodies to a much higher degree than that of men. It was moreover perceivable that migration did not seem to markedly affect such symbolic representation to heighten or lessen it. Thus, as symbolic bearers of representation, Somali women's sexuality and bodies were under both surveillance and control internally and externally, not only for the motive of sparing her from being sexually violated but also because of the importance to maintain a certain image. In association with this, it was clear that the brunt of being 'a raped woman' was severely compromising your social position within the Somali community and that this would negatively influence your likelihood to pursue marriage and possibly other areas of life.

However, this study has also exposed that such norms are not completely out of contestation and that there are variations in the upkeep of them. Some of the women in this

study exposed acts of resistance through breaking the gender performance of guarding and cautioning their daughters against having male friends and/or boyfriends. Thus, in line with Butler, I argue that these Somali women's gender(ed) identities, norms, and cultural matrices are constantly in the making at the centre stage of performance with the possibility of changing and re-making. This can for example be traced in how the Somali women attested to new norms of strongly supporting and advocating for girl-child education, which is somewhat a break from an otherwise central self-perception and identification as mothers and community members caring for family and communities rather than public actors. Notwithstanding, there was a perceivable silence and fatalistic attitudes around areas of sexuality and male violence, which was confirmed by comments around how Somali women remain silent on many of the hardships that they face.

Moreover, I claim that it is ignorant to believe that only Somali-born women in exile are caught between different discourses of normative womanhood that influence their gender(ed) identity and belonging, similar processes are central to 'native' women too. However, while their experiences are not homogenous, this study confirms that they to some extent have to position and measure themselves against both similar and divergent discourses to a more heightened degree than many 'native' women. With the risk of oversimplifying, just as other migrant women, the Somali women in this research generally hold a more vulnerable and complex location based on their in-betweenness, third-space, and exile from their birth country. This is however not to be mistaken for a conflation of the differences within this group of women in terms of their conditions, lived realities, and self-perceptions. Thus, while the women shared common herstories in multiple areas, they also diverged in some areas. For example, the Somali woman's class and economic status was relevant. It was shown that a higher class positively correlated to adherence to a notion of empowered femininity and a generally more positive outlook on the opportunities in Kampala. Moreover, some women had not had the opportunity to study and this also influenced their available options and lessened their ability for upward class-mobility. Hence, such differences cannot be forgotten while the Somali women in multi-folded ways experienced the same kind of abuses, discrimination, and herstories of violence and fear pushing them to flee from Somalia.

Yet, in this research I also asked "*what can migrant, Somali-born women's narratives, considering their problematic position as research subjects to Western scholars,*

tell us about knowledge production". In this inquiry around knowledge production, epistemology and methodology, the intricacies around situatedness and positionality were confronted rather than obliterated or reduced. Thus, I found that only through reflexively exploring our influences over the research process can we aim at making knowledge claims. Moreover, it is imperative to build on both situated knowledge and imagination in order to approximate understandings of other people's markedly different realities and meaning making. This includes analysing and exploring the interaction and co-construction of research, seen in how both the Somali women and I were actively reading each other in the creation of material and meaning. In this process, our differences, but also our abilities to join conversations, were inescapable. Hence, it was not through an all-seeing eye, but through an embodied, split, and contradictory vision that meaning and knowledge were established. While one Somali woman said "when you go [to] that place you also remove that eye, you stay with one eye" (*Nasteexo*, 12th of March 2019), as a researcher you have to try and add another eye, instead of removing one, to better visualise and understand our differences and commonalities, the particularity and universality. As such, this research project breaks with previous practices and colonial tendencies of doing research through a dichotomous, disembodied, and detached relationship between researcher and research subjects. This is of utmost importance if we seek to disrupt the continuation of hegemonic knowledge claims and dispossessions of certain people's subjectivity and agency. Hence, for further research to be accountable and ethical, the situated and embodied epistemological and methodological practices are key. To truly uncover silenced stories and subjects without perpetuating existing stereotyped narratives and voices it is necessary to acknowledge the basis of knowledge and the position as well as situation that it derives from. In order to also broaden the understanding of translation of global discourses around gender and femininity it would be valuable to compare Somali women's narrations and accounts from different local contexts, particularly contexts at both sides of the global divide. Additionally, it would prove interesting to more deliberately explore which stories and aspects they refrain from speaking about since just as much, or more, is said through the unspoken.

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ANNEX A – INTERVIEW GUIDE

Feminist narrative interview – Somali-born woman in Kampala

Date of interview:

Conducted by:

Interpreter:

Recorded: Yes No

Introduction of the study and me as a researcher:

My name is Fanny Rölander. I am a master student from the European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations, an Erasmus Mundus Master with African and European Universities. I am currently undertaking data collection for my master thesis revolving around the situation and experiences of migrant populations. The main aim with this interview is to learn about your experience, perceptions, and views on what it entails ‘being a Somali-born woman in Kampala’. I may cite you and use the material I get from this interview to write my report in accordance to the information on confidentiality and anonymity given by you in the consent form (attached to this interview guide). This feminist narrative interview will take about 45-90 minutes. Please feel free to talk about anything that you wish to. Lastly, thank you for taking time to participate.

i. Background information:

- Name: _____
 - Age: _____
 - Place of residency: _____
 - Occupation: _____
 - Family structure: _____
-

Interview topics

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself: your background and upbringing?
2. How would you describe yourself as a person?
3. Can you tell me a little bit about your life in Uganda, about living in Kampala?

4. For you, what does it mean to be a woman in Uganda, Kampala? Is the life the same for men and women? Are you treated the same? (feel free to share memories from your lifetime)
5. If you look back at your life, how has your life changed over the years? (how, why, why not?)
6. What is your experience of having relationships with other women?
7. What is your experience of having relationships with men (father, brother, relatives, friends, partners, husband, etc)?
8. What are your aspirations/goals for the future?
9. *Check if all topics have been covered if not, go back and try to get answers*
10. Do you have any questions or anything you would like to add?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!

FOLLOW-UP 2nd INTERVIEW - TOPICS

- A. Do you have any questions since last time?
- B. Where do you feel like you belong? Where do you feel at home?
- C. I have heard that Somalis are known for having a strong oral tradition and that they are good at storytelling. Could you share a story with me that maybe you heard while growing up or elsewhere?
- D. How would you describe a 'good' Somali woman?
- E. Can you tell me a bit about being a Muslim woman in Kampala where most people are Christian?

ANNEX B – CONSENT FORM

Request for participation in research project

"Understanding the Situation for Somali-born women in Kampala"

Background and Purpose

This small-scale, independent research project is undertaken for the purpose of a master thesis for the European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations (hereinafter referred to as EMMIR), an Erasmus Mundus Master with partnerships between African and European universities. This study is thereby undertaken in a partnership between University of Oldenburg (UOL) and Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST). The aim of the study is to explore the situation for migrant populations in Kampala, Uganda. This includes collection of data from interviews with migrant, Somali women and key informants working with migrant populations directly and/or indirectly.

This study holds the view that it is of utmost importance to explore the situation of migrants firstly and foremost from themselves. In addition to this, as migrant populations are of concern to both government bodies and civil society, their perspectives on and experiences of the situation for migrant populations are also valuable. This is an exploratory qualitative study mainly adopting inductive reasoning. The study also seeks to apply an intersectional lens by exploring the intersection of, among others, gender, locality, ethnicity, class, religion, and age as factoring in on the situation of migrant, Somali women in Kampala. Sample for this study is selected purposively from the migrant community itself and additionally from key informants working with migrant populations directly and/or indirectly.

What does participation in the project imply?

As a key informant interviewee participant in this study I request for your attendance in a semi-structured interview of approximately 30-45 minutes. Questions will revolve around your experiences working with migrant populations. Looking at the specific challenges as well as areas of improvements and how to better respond to the needs of migrant populations,

residing in both urban areas and settlements, in Uganda or Sweden. As a Somali, urban migrant woman participating in this study I request for your attendance in an in-depth narrative interview of approximately 45-90 minutes. The interview will concern your feelings, experiences, and views related to *your life as a migrant woman*. For all participants, you can at any point of the interview decide to interrupt it without providing any explanation. No remuneration for your time can be offered. The interviews will be sound recorded and later transcribed. Notes will also be taken during the interviews. After the material in this study has been processed you will be given the opportunity to read and comment on the results. Your feedback will be taken into consideration and any misrepresentation you might experience will be attended to.

What will happen to the information about you?

As an interviewee you can choose to be completely anonymous or to be represented with name and/or labelled as a representative of your organisation and/or place of work. However, full anonymity and no disclosure of your identity and your place of work are guaranteed unless you wish to have your name and/or other personal information recognised in the study. All your personal data will be treated confidentially. The project is scheduled for completion by June 2019. Personal data, recordings and other material gathered in this study will be stored electronically and it will be made anonymous. It is only available to the researcher of this research project for a master thesis in the EMMIR master programme.

Voluntary participation

It is voluntary to participate in the research, and you can at any time choose to withdraw your consent without stating any reason. If you decide to withdraw, all your personal data will be made anonymous. If you would like to participate or if you have any questions concerning the project, please contact Fanny Rölander (fannyrolander@hotmail.com; +46762762126; +256789617923).

Consent for participation in the study

I have received information about the project and am willing to participate

(Signed by participant, date)

I wish to have my information made completely anonymous

I wish to have my name and personal and/or professional information reflected in the research

I agree to have my story published anonymously on a public website aimed at amplifying women's voices and their lived experience

ANNEX C – INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Semi-structured interview guide for informant interview with professional working with migrant populations

Date of interview:
Conducted by:
Interpreter:
Recorded: Yes No

Introduction of the study and me as a researcher:

My name is Fanny Rölander. I am a master student from the European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations, an Erasmus Mundus Master with African and European Universities. I am currently undertaking data collection for my master thesis revolving around the situation and experiences of migrant populations. The main aim with this interview is to learn about your experience as a professional working with migrant populations. I may cite you and use the material I get from this interview to write my report in accordance to the information on confidentiality and anonymity given by you in the consent form (attached to this interview guide). This interview will take about thirty to forty-five minutes. Lastly, thank you for taking time to participate.

i. Background information:

- Name: _____
 - Profession: _____
 - Experience of working with migrant populations: _____

 - Work description (main work tasks and responsibilities in relation to migrant populations):
-

Interview topics

- 1. Can you tell me a little bit about your experience working with migrant populations?**

- 2. From your perspective and professional experience, what are the challenges migrant populations face in Uganda?**
 - a. Does this depend on certain factors? (gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, etc)

 - b. Differs depending on where migrant populations reside? (settlement, rural versus urban areas etc.)

 - c. Are these same for the general public or specific for the migrant populations?

- 3. How do you think that some of these challenges/issues could be addressed?**

- 4. How do you feel that your work is addressing the challenges that migrant populations face in Uganda?**

- 5. *Check if all topics have been covered if not, go back and try to get answers***

- 6. Do you have any questions or anything you would like to add?**

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!

ANNEX D – DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I hereby declare that the dissertation submitted is my own and that all passages and ideas that are not mine have been fully and properly acknowledged. I am aware that I will fail the entire dissertation should I include passages and ideas from other sources and present them as if they were my own.

Name: Fanny Rölander

Date: 3rd of June, 2019, Gothenburg, Sweden

Signature: 