



**GENDER COMPLEXITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF XENOPHOBIA-  
AFROPHOBIA IN THE TRANSNATIONAL SPACE: THE  
EXPERIENCES OF SOMALI WOMEN IN MAYFAIR, AND  
PRETORIA WEST IN GAUTENG PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA.**

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**JULY 2017**

## DECLARATION

I, Anthony Gathambĩri Waiganjo declare that:

The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

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Date:

## **DEDICATION**

Special dedication to my mom, Mary Nyawĩra and Dad, James Waiganjo, who brought me into this world, educated me and sacrificed everything for me.

To my ten siblings, Gabriel Mũraguri, Catherine Ngĩma, Elizabeth Mũthoni, Agatha Wangarĩ, Agnes Wanjikũ, Cecilia Wanjirũ, Anne Wangũi, Polly Wambũi, John Karanja, Fr. Patrick Mũrũnga.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

ACS	Action Support Center
AMISON	African Union Mission in Somalia
ANCWL	African National Congress Women League
AU	African Union
CBD	Central Business District
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CFVR	Center for the Study of violence and reconciliation
CRSR	Convention Relating to the Status of the Refugees
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
ENAR	European Network Against Racism
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GBV	Gender Based Violence
ID	Identification Document
IOM	International organization for migration
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JRS	Jesuits Refugees Service
KDF	Kenya Defense Forces
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation

OAU	Organisation of African Unity
SACISIS	South African Civil Society Information Service.
SCOB	Somali Community Board
SADAC	South African Development Community
SAPS	South African Police Services
SASA	South African Somali Association
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority
SASOWNET	South African Somali women's network
SAPS	South African Police Services
SWDO	Somali Women Development Organisation
UDHR	Universal Declaration for Human rights
UFH	University of Fort Hare
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UN	United Nations
UNDEP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNISA	University of South Africa
UP	University of Pretoria
USA	United States of America

## **ABSTRACT**

The migration of Somali women into South Africa is a fast growing phenomenon due to migrants fleeing intersecting factors of socio-political and economic nature. As compared to Somalia and Kenya, where they encounter socio-political and economic destabilization, these women arrive in South Africa with many expectations for a better life. Somali women leave their countries of origin due to civil wars, Al-Shabaab menace, economic crisis, a lack of opportunities and the need for the transit route to Europe and America. Despite this, women encounter several complexities within the transnational space, such as Xenophobia-Afrophobia. This study focuses on the Xenophobia-Afrophobia related complexities of Somali women in the transnational space. While Xenophobia is the fear of foreigners, Afrophobia is the fear of Black foreigners of African origin. The term Xenophobia-Afrophobia is adopted into the study because, in South African context, both Black Africans who are non-South Africans and foreigners from outside Africa are soft targets of the antifoigner's bigotry.

Bigotry among anti-foreigners poses a current problem facing contemporary South Africa, damaging the image of Africa and other countries who are resisting immigrant's influx into their countries. Due to Somali businesses being established amongst the poorest communities in South Africa, natives brand them as 'job stealers' and competitors of scarce opportunities manufacturing them as the main victims of Xenophobia-Afrophobia. (Niyigena, 2013). The upsurge of violence against foreign nationals in 2008 and 2015, and the isolated incidences of 2010, 2013 and 2014, are some of the examples that vividly speak to the issues of Xenophobia-Afrophobia in South Africa.

This study ushers in a gender perspective of the complex phenomenon of Xenophobia-Afrophobia, as it centres around Somali women. Existing studies in Xenophobia-Afrophobia tend to categorise migrants as a homogeneous entity. However there is a

huge diversity among foreign nationals with reference to their different social locations. This study examines women's multiple social locations by accentuating the diversity of their experiences of Xenophobia-Afrophobia. It also unearths underlying interconnected power factors that either impede or empower their capacity to navigate a transnational context.

This is an empirical qualitative study that adopts in-depth interviews for the data collection of Xenophobia-Afrophobia experiences of Somali women in the Gauteng province. The in-depth interviews were purposively conducted with forty interview participants that comprised 2 Action Support Centre officials. There were 38 Somali participants within and outside SASOWNET that were interviewed. The sample included Somali academics from various South African universities. The analysis of the *datum*, which was intended to give meaning to the social phenomenon facing complexities amongst Somali women, adopted a thematic analysis that capitalized on the salient themes throughout the analysis process. The study employed the theories of feminist intersectionality, Gendered Geographies of Power, and Social Network. This study found out that within the transnational space, women experienced overt and covert Xenophobia-Afrophobia within the intersections of their nationality, gender, clan, education, religion differently, because their social locations affected how they negotiated their spaces within the context of Xenophobia. Despite the Xenophobia-Afrophoba complexity affecting Somali women, this study rules out that women are helpless victims. However it proposes the thinking that women have agency which facilitates the negotiation within the transnational space.

Within the transnational space, women experience covert Xenophobia-Afrophobia in the Department of Health, Department of Home Affairs, law enforcement and educational institutions. Further, overt Xenophobia is also manifested in the violent attacks that have been prevalent in the province.

***KEY WORDS: Gender, Transnational migration, Transnational space,  
Xenophobia-Afrophobia***

## Contents

DECLARATION .....	ii
DEDICATION.....	i
LIST OF ACRONYMS .....	v
ABSTRACT .....	vii
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION AND THE STUDY BACKGROUND .....	1
1.1 Preamble .....	1
1.2 Background of the Study .....	2
1.3 The significance of the study .....	8
1.4 Problem Statement.....	10
1.5 Research Objectives.....	12
1.6 Key Questions .....	12
1.7 Structure of Dissertation:.....	13
Chapter Eight- The disjuncture between international protocols, state policies and departments' mandates and Somali women's lived experiences. ....	15
CHAPTER TWO .....	17
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	17
2.1 Introduction.....	17
2.2 Literature Review .....	17
2.2.1 International migration .....	17
2.2.2 Transnational migration.....	21
2.2.3 Incorporating gender into transnational migration .....	22
2.2.4 Migration in the African context.....	27
2.2.5 Migration to South Africa .....	29
2.2.6 Somali migration to South Africa .....	31
2.2.7 Xenophobia.....	34
2.2.8 Afrophobia .....	36
2.2.9 Gendered experiences in the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia .....	38
2.3 Theoretical Framework .....	42
2.3.1 Gendered geographies of power .....	42

2.3.2	Social Network Theory.....	44
2.3.3	Feminist intersectionality .....	48
2.4	Conclusion .....	50
<b>CHAPTER THREE .....</b>		<b>52</b>
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS .....</b>		<b>52</b>
3.1	Introduction.....	52
3.2	Research design.....	52
3.3	Research methodology .....	53
3.4	Data Collection Methods .....	54
3.5	Sampling procedure and sample size .....	56
3.6	Study Site.....	59
3.7	Population of the study.....	60
3.8	The background information about the interview participants.....	61
3.8.1	Female participants.....	61
3.8.2	Male participants .....	72
3.9	Ethical Appraisal .....	79
3.10	Data sources .....	81
3.11	Analysis and Presentation of data.....	81
3.12	Limitations of the study.....	82
3.13	Self reflexivity.....	85
3.14	Conclusion .....	88
<b>CHAPTER FOUR .....</b>		<b>90</b>
<b>SOMALI WOMEN’S MIGRATION INTO SOUTH AFRICA.....</b>		<b>90</b>
4.1	Introduction.....	90
4.2	The contextual background of Somali Nationals .....	91
4.2.1	The Country .....	91
4.2.2	Geography.....	92
4.2.3	Population.....	92
4.2.4	The Somali cultural system.....	93
4.2.5	Political background .....	94
4.2.6	Feminization of Somali migration .....	95
4.3	Factors influencing Somali Women’s migration into South Africa .....	97
4.3.1	Political wars.....	98
4.3.2	The Al-Shabaab emergence.....	100

4.3.3	Escape from economic crises .....	104
4.3.4	The role of social networks .....	106
4.3.5	The allure of opportunities in South Africa.....	109
4.3.6	Transit Route vis-à-vis resettlement .....	111
4.4	Gendered complexities during the migration process .....	112
4.5	The context of South Africa.....	115
4.5.1	The context of Gauteng Province.....	117
4.5.1	The contexts of Mayfair and Pretoria West in Gauteng.....	118
4.6	The gendered territories.....	120
4.7	Somali women’s expectations and frustrations on coming to South Africa .....	122
4.8	Conclusion .....	129
<b>CHAPTER FIVE .....</b>		<b>131</b>
<b>NEGOTIATION OF GENDER RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF XENOPHOBIA-AFROPHOBIA IN THE TRANSNATIONAL SPACE .....</b>		<b>131</b>
5.1	Introduction.....	131
5.2	Gender dynamics in the transnational space .....	132
5.3	Gender dynamics in the context of Somalia .....	132
5.4	Gender dynamics in the context of South Africa .....	137
5.5	Negotiating gender roles in the Somalia-South Africa transnational space.....	139
5.6	Xenophobia-Afrophobia and gender role rearrangement .....	146
5.6.1	Domestic violence and Xenophobia-Afrophobia.....	149
5.6.2	Ordeals of Rape.....	154
5.7	Conclusion .....	159
<b>CHAPTER SIX.....</b>		<b>161</b>
<b>THE NEXUS OF RELIGION, LANGUAGE AND RACE/ETHNIC IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF XENOPHOBIA-AFROPHOBIA.....</b>		<b>161</b>
6.1	Introduction.....	161
6.2	Somali religious identity.....	162
6.2.1	The religious context of Gauteng .....	162
6.2.2	Religious networks.....	164
6.2.3	Racial undertones in negotiating religion .....	166
6.2.4	Religious and cultural identity as a barrier to negotiating the transnational space 167	
6.2.5	Clan politics among the Somali women.....	168

6.2.6	Religious identity and Islamophobia.....	170
6.2.7	The role of religion in navigating the xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities	172
6.3	Language as a mark of “Somaliness” .....	174
6.3.1	Language barrier.....	174
6.3.2	Xenophobia-Afrophobia in Derogative naming .....	177
6.3.3	Language and Shades of Xenophilia.....	179
6.3.4	Language versus integration.....	181
6.5	Negotiation of race in the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia.....	184
6.5.1	Race vis-à-vis ‘foreignness’ .....	184
6.5.2	Race and religious/ethnic dressing .....	185
6.5.3	Body politics among Somali Bantus .....	187
6.6	Heterogeneity of Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities .....	192
6.7	Conclusion .....	193
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN.....</b>		<b>195</b>
<b>THE COPING MECHANISMS IN NEGOTIATING XENOPHOBIA- AFROPHOBIA COMPLEXITIES WITHIN THE TRANSNATIONAL SPACE</b>		
.....		<b>195</b>
7.1	Introduction.....	195
7.2	Institutional mechanisms .....	196
7.2.1	Action Support Centre .....	196
7.2.2	South African Somali women network.....	202
7.2.3	Jesuits Refugee Service.....	207
7.2.4	South African Somali Association .....	210
7.3	Individual initiatives .....	213
7.3.1	Economic partnerships.....	213
7.3.2	Somali business niches .....	214
7.3.3	Diverse sources of income .....	215
7.3.4	Sharing personal experiences as a way of dealing with trauma and stress ...	217
7.3.5	Emotional and material/financial support from friends.....	219
7.3.6	Drawing on resilience in reconstructing their identity.....	221
7.3.7	Education as an adaptation strategy.....	224
7.3.8	Marriage.....	226
7.4	Conclusion .....	227

CHAPTER EIGHT .....	229
THE DISJUNCTURE BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL PROTOCOLS, STATE POLICIES AND DEPARTMENTS’ MANDATES AND SOMALI WOMEN’S LIVED EXPERIENCES. ....	229
8.1    Introduction.....	229
8.2    International laws vis-a-vis antagonism against women migrants .....	230
8.2.1    United Nation Declaration for Human Rights .....	230
8.2.2    The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of the Refugees .....	231
8.2.3    The Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) .....	234
8.2.4    The 1969 OAU Convention .....	236
8.3    The South African constitutions and policies.....	238
8.3.1    The Constitution of South Africa .....	238
8.3.2    The South Africa policy of Migration.....	240
8.3.3    The South African refugee Act .....	241
8.4    The state institutions versus Somali women .....	244
8.4.1    The Department of Home Affairs .....	244
8.4.2    South African police services (SAPS).....	248
8.4.3    The department of health .....	255
8.4.4    The justice department .....	259
8.5    Conclusion .....	261
CHAPTER NINE .....	263
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMEDATIONS .....	263
9.1    Introduction.....	263
9.2    Study Findings.....	265
9.3    Study Contributions .....	270
9.4    Recommendations and suggestions for future research .....	273
9.4.1    Recommendations for the South African government.....	273
9.4.2    Recommendation to the International communities and African Union.....	276
9.4.3    Suggestions for future research .....	277
APPENDIX I.....	314
APPENDIX IV .....	317
APPENDIX V.....	318
APPENDIX VI .....	319

APPEDIX XI .....	328
APPENDIX XII.....	331
APPENDIX XIII .....	332
APPENDIX XIV.....	333

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION AND THE STUDY BACKGROUND**

#### **1.1 Preamble**

Xenophobia-Afrophobia in South Africa has been a thorny issue that is recurrent despite the State's and civil society organization's efforts to tame it. Somali migrants are some of the key targets of Xenophobia-Afrophobia due to the nature of their work as business people in the low income zones where foreigners are perceived as business competitors or rather, 'snatchers of opportunities' that are entitled to local nationals. In this chapter, I present the background that would place the study into context. In order to contextualize the study, I provide background, and a statement of the problem. The objectives and key questions that guided this study have been discussed. The study revealed that Xenophobic-Afrophobic attacks was a significant factor that propelled Somali women to redefine their traditional gender roles of reproduction and housekeeping. They assumed responsibilities that their husbands did before their household was affected by violent attack that led to the loss of the breadwinner status or the business which was the source of income. This chapter explains the significance of the study rationale. Lastly, the chapter provides the breakdown and structure of the dissertation.

## 1.2 Background of the Study

International migration<sup>1</sup> is a growing phenomenon, both in scope and complexity, affecting almost all nations across the globe (UN, 2012:3). As migrants enter the host country, they come with huge expectations of a better life, but find numerous complexities between the country of origin and the country of migration (Isike, 2012:208). Their political, social and economic backgrounds affect how they navigate those complexities within transnational space<sup>2</sup>. Their social locations<sup>3</sup> (Pessar and Mahler, 2003) within their new space, either complicates or facilitates their ability to negotiate the social and structural barriers they encounter. The ethnic backgrounds, clan systems, education levels/skills, nationality, faith groups, job types in the host country are factors that enhance or constrain adaptability to the new space. In this regard, in a quest to delve into the experiences of migrants it cannot be ignored that individuals living outside their home country are multi-sited and multi-connected. This affects their ability to adapt into the host country. Within the transnational space, migrants forge all kinds of relations with the country of abode, country of origin and with migrants from other African countries (Isike, 2012). Despite the challenges that migrants face, they seek relationships within transnational space. Uzodike (2012:200) argues that, for migrants to adjust to this space, their ability to meet and connect with other migrants from home country and other countries is essential.

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<sup>1</sup> International migration is the movement of people from their country of origin, or habitual residence, to country of habitual residence to establish themselves either permanently or temporarily in another country (see International Organisation of Migration, IOM, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Transnational space involves a complex ties, networks and realities that have an impact on migrant's lives as soon as they get into the country of destination. The idea of a transnational space is drawn from the concept of transnationalism which refers to the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement (see Matiniello & Lafleu, 2008).

<sup>3</sup>A Person's location within power hierarchies created through historical, political, economic, geographic, kingship- based and other socially stratifying factors (Mahler and Pessar, 2001).

The experiences of men and women as migrants differ worldwide. Most of those differences are due to their roles, behaviours and relationships that society assigns to them and expects from them in both sending and receiving countries (Phalane, 2010). Their experiences also differ because the migrants; both men and women are situated in different social economic, political and cultural locations which includes gender, race, nationality, culture, ethnicity, politics, family background, religious affiliations/creed. Those intersecting factors affect the manner in which they cope with the new environment and the way various experiences affects them and how they respond to them. Therefore in order to understand the migrants 'lived experiences' within transnational space, one cannot ignore the concept of "gender" because international migration experience/s impacts differently on men and women, and on different groups of men and women in their process of movement (Isike, 2012; Phalane, 2010). On the other hand, since gender is about power relations, the concept of gender is vital to understand the manner in which migrants negotiate transnationally the historical, political, economical, geographical, kingship-based power hierarchies (Grieco & Boyd, 2003; Pessar & Mahler, 2001).

In Africa, though a good number of migrants are on the move for business, tourism and work, war is a major element that triggers transnational migration. In this continent, which Aderanti Adepoju (2007:11) calls a theatre of internecine conflicts he opines that for the past three decades or more, political instability resulting from conflicts has caused many to flee their countries to safety. In South Africa, Landau and Kabue (2009) suggest that people migrate in order to seek profit, protection and passage to other countries because South Africa is perceived to have 'clean records' internationally with regard to immigration history. As a result of conflict amongst Somali nationality, a huge percentage of those migrants enter South Africa.

After the Somali civil war broke out in the eighties, the country saw a massive exodus of migrants fleeing the country to safety. Somalia was destabilized by war for two decades, resulting in *her* citizens dying of hunger and shootings. In recent years, the

nation has terribly been affected by Al-Shabaab<sup>4</sup> attacks that have resulted in the deaths of many Somalis. As a result, Somalis have migrated in large numbers to South Africa and other countries across the globe seeking safety. The first group to arrive settled in Cape Town and Johannesburg, but over the years, some Somalis moved to Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Western Cape (Jinnah, 2010). In Johannesburg, Somali migrants organized themselves into a large community located in Mayfair (Jinnah, 2010; Kalitanyi 2010; Niyigena, 2013). Somalis, well known for their retail trade, started their own ‘Spaza’ shops and ethnic clothing businesses in Gauteng, specifically targeting foreign nationals. Despite their contributions to the country’s economy, Somalis have been major victims of Xenophobia- Afrophobia.

Xenophobia is hostility towards foreigners regardless of their colour or nationality (Gathogo and Phiri, 2009; Harris, 2002). Although there are several factors that lead to this hostility against foreign nationals, the economic dimension is a major factor, whereby the locals vis-à-vis foreigners compete for the available opportunities. This hostility among foreigners “is not uniquely South African” but a global phenomenon, as the preliminary literature in the subsequent section attests. Donnelly (2015) argues that in America citizens fear Mexican migrants and other nations bordering from the South because they are considered to be taking American’s work opportunities and threatening American cultures. Hai (2005) observes that in China, despite migrants playing an indispensable role in the country’s development, they are not accepted as part of it and are met with discriminatory attitudes. In Germany, a good number of citizens have been demonstrating against the rising inflow of Middle Eastern and Arab migrants for fear of terror attacks (Haqopian, 2015). In 2012, after a bus bombing which left eight people dead and several people injured, a mob of Kenyans attacked Somali nationals in Eastleigh and their businesses indiscriminately blaming them for

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<sup>4</sup> An al-Qaida affiliated group that has risen rapidly to prominence in the midst of Somali decades long-anarchy (See WISE, 2011)

the deadly blast, claiming that Eastleigh<sup>5</sup> is the Al-Shabaab hideout (Jabril, 2012). On the other hand, there has also been frustration among “locals” who saw an increase in housing prices due to a surplus of successful Somali business activity, and this makes locals express some discontentment with them (Jabril, 2012). In Kenya, the recurrent terror attacks orchestrated by Somali militia affiliated to Isis and Al-Qaida has contributed to the antagonism against Somalis and even Muslims. These groups who are seen as sympathisers connive with the terrorists in spearheading attacks and dispatching false news about possible attacks. From an economic standpoint, this is a strategy meant to create ‘Al-Shabaab-phobia’ within the country, meant to stagnate or cripple the nation’s economy.

Due to the business competition among locals and migrants, South Africa has seen recurring Xenophobic-Afrophobic attacks in Gauteng and other parts of the country. Thus, considering that the attacks are mainly economic, Pakistanis and Chinese shops have also been disrupted. This shows the phenomenon is geared toward Xenophobia. Despite this, hostility towards black foreigners is more rampant compared to other foreigners (Harris, 2002; Gathogo & Phiri 2009; Abrahams, 2012). Harris (2002) argues that Xenophobia does not affect all foreigners uniformly, but targets black non-South Africans more. He accentuates the power of media representation that depicts outsiders from African countries in a negative way, i.e. criminals, illegal migrants, illegal miners, illegal businessmen etc. While it would seem that the black Africans are represented by the media as criminals and illegal in South Africa, operating illegitimate businesses. Foreigners from Western countries are considered as tourists or investors. This image leads to several people branding it Afrophobia. Afrophobia is hostility towards black African foreigners as opposed to attack on any foreigner (Gathogo & Phiri 2009; Harris, 2002). This study seeks to adopt both Xenophobia and

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<sup>5</sup> Eastleigh is a suburb in Nairobi County (Kenya), a home of many Somalis. The place is nicknamed as small Mogadishu due to its huge population of Somalis.

Afrophobia because, while black people (Somalis) are the main victims of this hostility, other races like Pakistanis have also been targeted. On the same stratum, the Xenophobia-Afrophobia phenomenon that the research focuses on is the overt (obvious) one; which involves the looting of shops and killing, and is directly associated to business competition, as well as covert (hidden) hostility which manifests itself in attitude, language and issuance of permits.

My study is located in the Gauteng province in the Mayfair and Pretoria West suburbs. The choice of Gauteng was inspired by the fact that it hosts the largest population of Somali women in South Africa, due to its status as the entry point and home of most Somali women. Johannesburg is the economic hub of Africa, and Pretoria is the city that hosts the Department of Home Affairs where Somali women seek Asylum.

Somalis have become major targets of the Xenophobia- Afrophobia attacks because of the lack of integration into the mainstream community and the fact that they set their businesses amongst the poor population that perceives them as competitors of scarce opportunities (Niyigena, 2013; Abrahams, 2012; Gathogo & Phiri, 2009; Harris, 2002; Shafer, 2012). The fact that Somalis form economic niches characterised by several *Spaza* shops that “compete” with local businesses makes them very vulnerable to Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks. Faced with Xenophobia-Afrophobia and other complexities, Somali women opt to carve-out their solidarity within the confines of Mayfair. They opt to stay within the confines of Mayfair in their homes for fear that they may be attacked. Shaffer (2012:157) points out that most of the women she interviewed cited fear of South Africans, including the police, racism, discrimination, and Xenophobia-Afrophobia as the worst experiences in their lives. Somali women also face gender related complexities because religion, clan system, ethnic community and institutions within Mayfair are predominantly patriarchal. Women are victims of domestic violence, and have tough choices to make; between reporting it to the police and using established male structures within the Gauteng

province that would only favour men (Shafer 2012; Niyigena, 2013; Jinnah, 2010; Ali & Ali, 2013). Crenshaw (1991), points out those immigrant women are also vulnerable to spousal violence because so many of them depend on their husbands for information regarding their legal status.

In the Gauteng province, Somali women faced with various challenges that impede their growth have joined various organizations/Networks like South African Somali Women Network (SASOWNET, hereafter) and Action Support Centre (ASC, hereafter) that promote their capacity to face their daily complexities (patriarchal clan system, patriarchal religion, language barrier, patriarchal community, race). The ACS is a non-governmental organization whose main mandate is boosting solidarity among migrants to enable them to face their challenges collectively and with a robust voice. In South Africa, the organization has succeeded in bringing Somali women together under the SASOWNET umbrella. ASC established SASOWNET with the intention of giving Somali women an empowerment platform on which to organize a collective voice of action. (Jennifer, 2015; ASC, 2014). The Action Support Centre, aware of the patriarchal structure that impedes Somali women's participation in public matters gives them a platform to actualize their potentials as women through programmes which they run themselves. Through SASOWNET, the Somali women in liaison with ASC enables the women to raise their voices that has long been silenced within the patriarchal structures contained by the transnational space. This empowerment initiative of giving them voice platforms has been manifested in their recently published work that engages Somali women's own voices, a book exploring some inspiring stories of these women.

In the existing literature, the study establishes gender<sup>6</sup>, international migration vis-à-vis Xenophobia-Afrophobia have received limited attention. On the same vein, none

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<sup>6</sup> Gender refers to the roles and expectations attributed to men and women in a given society, and changes over time, place and life stage (Philips, 2005:1).

of the existing literature about gender and international migration focused on Xenophobia-Afrophobia related complexities of Somali women. Nigeyena (2013) for instance, looks at challenges facing Somali refugees in Johannesburg, but not challenges facing Somali women in particular. The work of Sharif (2012) focuses on how both Somali men and women migrant negotiate gender in Gauteng province, but did not look at how Somali migrants (both men and women) in particular negotiate gender in the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia. These studies focus on the Somali population in Johannesburg without taking into consideration that the complexities women experience are different from those that men experience because they have to negotiate gender according to clan, culture, government institutions, religion and at home and in the context of Xenophobia- Afrophobia.

In sum, this study examined the experiences of Somali women in Mayfair, the Gauteng Province vis-à-vis Xenophobia-Afrophobia, in order to find out how they negotiate their complexities within their transnational space.

### **1.3 The significance of the study**

This study focused on Somali women (and not Zimbabweans, Mozambicans and Ethiopians who were also affected by Xenophobia-Afrophobia in Gauteng province) because of two reasons. Firstly, Somali foreigners are the most targeted members because they own the majority of *Spaza* shops in Gauteng, which are located in poverty stricken locations (Nigiyena, 2013). When the source of livelihood is terminated, through destruction of their shops, killing or displacement, Somali women bear the worst brunt of the circumstances, because they have to find ways of supporting their families, and are also vulnerable to abuses after economic disempowerment. As they go through these problems, their horrible experiences are not given keen attention. Secondly, the researcher was interested in examining how Somali migrants negotiate a hostile transnational space given the political instability

in their home country and the phenomenon of Xenophobia-Afrophobia in their host country.

The study is significant because it brings the gender perspective of Xenophobia-Afrophobia into the existing knowledge base, in the context of Somali women. Literature on Xenophobia-Afrophobia has shown that there has been less focus on the gender dimension of Xenophobia-Afrophobia. The existing studies on gender and Xenophobia-Afrophobia, however, seem to treat migrants as a homogeneous entity, yet there is a huge diversity among foreign nationals because of their different social locations (clan, kinship ties, family background, community, religion, politics of home and so forth). For instance, the work of Sanger (2013) which looks at the connection between Xenophobia-Afrophobia attitudes, gender and male violence among several communities in Cape Town which treats foreigners as one single entity (i.e. it speaks of attitudes of foreign women) holding a particular perception about the local community. On the other hand, the concept of gender has not been well incorporated because it is only used in terms of how foreign/local men and women perceive each other. He discusses several attitudes that local/foreign men and women have towards each other but he doesn't go deeper in interrogating their social locations which could have helped the researcher unveil why they perceived each other that way. On the other hand, Sanger's work did not look at Xenophobia attacks but dealt exclusively with xenophobic attitudes. Thus, there is a need for a study that focuses on Xenophobic-Afrophobic attacks experienced by foreign men women, highlighting the diversity of foreigners due to their different social locations. My study acknowledges the diversity among immigrants from different countries, and intends to engage women's multiple social locations (intersectionality) in highlighting Somali women's diverse experiences of Xenophobia-Afrophobia.

## 1.4 Problem Statement

The work of Sigworth, Ngwane and Pino (2008), focused on the ‘gendered nature of Xenophobia-Afrophobia in South Africa’. The study interviewed women from seven different nationalities located in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. The study found out that competition for resources and job opportunities between migrants and poor South Africans were the main reason for Xenophobic-Afrophobic attitudes and behaviours against foreign women (2008). This study did not consider the women’s multiple social locations in highlighting the diversity of women who experience of Xenophobia-Afrophobia. Although the work is titled as gendered nature of Xenophobia, it has only walked as far as reporting what foreigners in general went through before and after 2008 attacks, and has not gone deeper in comprehending the phenomenon through a framework that could unearth their experiences within the gendered social locations. Thus, there is a need for research on gendered nature of Xenophobia-Afrophobia that would recognise the diversity of women migrants, rather than seeing them as a homogeneous entity, as Sanger and Sigworth, Ngwane and Pino (2008), have done. There is a need for a study that would engage in women’s multiple locations (intersectionality) in highlighting diversity of Women experiences of Xenophobia-Afrophobia in order to unearth underlying interconnected power factors that either impede or empower women migrants’ capacity to navigate through Xenophobia-Afrophobia related complexities. This work sets out to do that. The study brings out the gender perspective of Xenophobia-Afrophobia in South Africa, through an intersectional analysis of a wider and complex picture of Somali women’s complexity within intersecting factors in transnational space.

The available literature on migration in South Africa seems to portray women as dormant participants in the host country. Refugees’ experiences cannot be a homogeneous unit with the same challenges and opportunities. Women contribute hugely to the South African nation and have stories to tell with regard to challenges facing them. This study focused on the experiences of Somali women who moved to

Johannesburg fleeing their country which had been destabilized by the frequent al-Shabaab attacks and other social political wrangles. This work identified challenges that Somali women faced in the Gauteng province. It also explored the impact that Xenophobia-Afrophobia has on Somali women in the Gauteng province and ways in which Somali women in liaison with Action Support Centre and Somali women network could work together to avert Xenophobia-Afrophobia. The study revealed various ways in which Somali women adjusted themselves to Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks and the role of South African Somali Women Network (SASOWNET) in South Africa in catering for their concerns. Above all, the study established possible ways that Somali women in liaison with local South Africans could develop possible solutions to the Xenophobia-Afrophobia crisis in the Gauteng province.

In Africa, migration has been a key concern to many countries receiving migrants due to its socio-political and economic impact on host countries. The rising numbers of migrants, who enter these countries either legally or illegally impact the host countries positively and negatively. In South Africa, despite notable contributions that migrants have made, they are still seen as a burden or competitors of scarce resources and opportunities. This attitude has led to hostility towards them, with many foreign nationals displaced or killed on conviction that they do not belong in the country and that they must leave. For a number of years Somalis have been the biggest victims of Xenophobia-Afrophobia (among many other challenges). This anomaly directly affects Somali women who are the “lungs” for the Somali community due to their role in the family and society. Thus, research in this area is warranted, in order to expose female Somali challenges and how they negotiate various structures of power that contribute to the complexities they face. Such an endeavor would be better realized through observing the complexities and an interconnectedness of those challenges. The intersectionality framework would enable the researcher to see their challenges as an interconnected phenomenon that needs a holistic interrogation.

The study seeks to investigate a gender perspective of Xenophobia-Afrophobia in South Africa, through an intersectional analysis of a wider and complex picture of Somali women complexities within transnational space, in the context of Gauteng.

### **1.5 Research Objectives**

The objectives for this research are the following:

- 1) To identify the reasons for Somali women's migration into South Africa.
- 2) To explore how Somali women negotiate gender relations in the transnational context
- 3) To examine their particular experiences of Xenophobia-Afrophobia in the context of livelihood, displacement and family.
- 4) To analyse how their social locations affect their experiences of Xenophobia-Afrophobia
- 5) To investigate their coping mechanisms in transnational space.
- 6) To identify policy recommendations that ACS and SASOWNET could explore in order to be effective in dealing with complexities faced by Somali women.

### **1.6 Key Questions**

- 1) What are the reasons for Somali women's migration into South Africa?
- 2) How do Somali women negotiate gender relations in the transnational context?
- 3) What are their particular experiences of Xenophobia-Afrophobia in the context of livelihood, displacement and family?
- 4) How do their social locations affect their experiences of Xenophobia-Afrophobia?
- 5) What are their coping mechanisms in transnational space?
- 6) What are the policy recommendations that could enhance the effective dealing with complexities faced by Somali women?

## **1.7 Structure of Dissertation:**

**This work comprises nine chapters:**

### **Chapter One -Introduction**

The chapter presents the study background, significance of the study, research objectives and their key research questions, problem statement, study rationale, and structure of the dissertation.

### **Chapter Two- Literature review and theoretical framework**

In order to establish the study gap that the researcher intends to fill, extensive review of the existing works related to this work was done in congruence with the research questions. This chapter provides the literature related to Somali migration along the transnational space with the aim of locating the study gap. The review revolves around gender and migration in the context of Somali women within the transnational space. I focus on the literature which relates to international migration, transnationalism, migration in the African context, migration to South Africa, Somali women migration to South Africa.

### **Chapter Three- Research methodology and methods**

This chapter provides the approach used in carrying out the study with the aim of responding to the key questions that guides the study. The qualitative approach which befits the study is applied due to its nature of making meaning out of the given data. This chapter also covers the data collection procedures, ethical considerations, the data analysis method and finally the limitations for the study. In order to understand the background of the research participants, the study looks at the demographic information of the participants.

## **Chapter Four – Somali women migration into South Africa**

This chapter examines migration of Somali women within the transnational space which is characterized by the interlocking social political and economic factors. The reasons for Somali women's migration have been discussed. This chapter gives the contextual background of Somalia in order to understand the context from which Somali women originated. This chapter also discusses the expectations that Somali women had before and after coming to South Africa. The Somali women frustrations are also discussed.

## **Chapter Five- Negotiation of gender relations in the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia in the transnational space**

The transnational migration experiences have to an extent reconfigured redefined and reinforced the gender roles and gender power relations among Somali women living in Gauteng due to the pressing socio-economic demands. In this chapter, I explore the ensuing gender roles and power arrangements that continuously shape the identity of Somali women within the transnational space. This chapter discusses the shifting gender roles and the manner in which the Somali women negotiate gender power structures within the transnational space. Additionally, I look at the negotiation of gender related violence that impedes their livelihoods in the Gauteng province.

## **Chapter Six- Religion, language and race/ethnic identity in the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia**

In this chapter, I discuss how the Somali women negotiate religion, language and race in the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia. Due to the fact that Somali religious identity cannot be separated from their culture, I discuss both factors in relation to each other in demonstrating how they enhance Xenophobia-Afrophobia among Somali women. Also, this chapter looks at the language which is a huge challenge in their negotiation of the space among the local community. Finally this chapter

highlights the race that renders them vulnerable to Xenophobia-Afrophobia that manifests itself both overtly and covertly.

### **Chapter Seven- The coping mechanism in negotiating Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities within the transnational space**

This chapter sets out to discuss those strategies that the Somali women adopt in navigating the Xenophobia-Afrophobia experiences within the transnational space. In dealing with those complexities, women have the institutional mechanisms that include the Action Support Centre (ASC), South African Somali Women Network (SASOWNET), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), and the South African Somali Association (SASA). Besides the institutional mechanisms, Somali women redefine the livelihood and household coping strategies which are self-initiated as opposed to the above mentioned agencies. They have economic partnerships, business ethnic niches, narration of their life stories through institutions like the South African Somali Women Network platforms and counselling agents, women's resilient nature that enables them to face the Xenophobia-Afrophobia challenges with fortitude, education which gives them hope for opportunities enables them to negotiate the transnational space perseveringly, diverse income sources to maximize their incomes. Also, the Somalis use marriage as a strategy to enable them to cope with the new environment of South Africa.

### **Chapter Eight- The disjuncture between international protocols, state policies and departments' mandates and Somali women's lived experiences.**

This chapter discusses the national laws, and international protocols that are significant to this study that focuses on Somali women in the transnational space. This chapter unfolds with a focus on the Constitution of South Africa which is the highest law from which all policies governing state institutions are based. The South African Refugees Act, Universal Declaration on Human Rights for Refugees, the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of the Refugees the 1951 Refugees Act, the

Convention for Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and OAU convention, are also discussed. In the light of these laws, I discuss how state institutions have been sites of covert Xenophobia-Afrophobia in Gauteng, thus contravening aforementioned laws.

### **Chapter Nine-Conclusion and recommendation**

This chapter provides the synopsis of the entire work. The study findings for this work are discussed, in cognizance with the research objectives that the work sought to achieve. The contributions that the study brought forth to the knowledge base are presented. Finally, based on my study contributions and findings, I propose further recommendations that would continue this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter proffers the basis for comprehending the manner in which I theorise and develop the study within the nexus of gender and migration. This chapter examines the existing body of knowledge on gender and international migration and their determinant consequences in transnational space in order to provide the basis for the study and to fill the gaps in existing literature. In so doing, I draw justifications for the study and highlight the contribution that gender makes to international migration and vice versa. I examine literature on international migration, transnationalism, migration in the African continent, gender and migration, migration to South Africa, Somali migration to South Africa and the Xenophobia-Afrophobia context. Finally, I discuss the theories that underpin this study of which are: Feminist Intersectionality, Gendered Geographies of Power and the Social Network theory.

#### **2.2 Literature Review**

##### **2.2.1 International migration**

The term ‘migration’ denotes the movement of people across geographical borders with the aim of establishing a new space that could either be permanent or temporary (Crush & Williams, 2007). Today, more than ever, this movement of people across such ‘geographical spaces’ has risen exponentially. Additionally it is a phenomenon that has increasingly provoked tensions in the host countries. According to United Nation’s (UN) international migration report (2013:1), the number of international migrants rose by over 50% (77 million people) between 1990 and 2013. The report however establishes that in 2013, there were 232 million international migrants in the world (UN Immigration Report, 2013:1). In the 2015 report on migration conducted

by the International organisation of Migrants, a total of 244 million people had moved across the globe in 2015 (IOM, 2015). This figure was lower than the statistics 2014 which was approximately 19.5 million migrants (IOM, 2015). The international organisation of migrants established that 244 million migrants have moved across the globe (IOM, 2015). Motivated by the rising levels of immigration influx and its ramifications within the transnational space, scholars have shown huge interests on the subject matter albeit from different standpoints.

People have always moved for social, political and economic reasons. Scholars have debated this phenomenon for several decades in order to explain what is behind the rapid rise in migrant's inflows. Scholars like Landau & Kabue (2009:5) point out that reasons for migration could be narrowed down to the three "Ps", namely; passage, protection and persecution. The migrants move across their borders seeking profit from the economic opportunities available in the host country. This movement could also be motivated by the search for passage to western countries that have more opportunities for the migrants. Thus, in pursuance of their destination country, a good number of migrants come to South Africa as a gateway to western countries.

Due to ever evolving political feuds in several countries, migrants flee their countries for fear of persecution (Landau & Kabue, 2009:5). The post-apartheid South Africa is Africa's migrant's labour epicentre that has had the skilled, unskilled and even illegal migrants traverse its borders (Kok et al, 2006:57). Kok et al (2006:57) argues that the migrants' desire to leave their home country in order to enter into South Africa would reduce significantly, if economic and political atmosphere of those countries were improved.

Proponents of neo-classical economics of macro theory maintain that labour supply and demand in relation to the wage paid is a huge factor that influences migrant's influx into another country (Masseh et.al, 1993:433). Thus workers from low-wage country migrate to high-wage country in order to maximize their earnings.

Nevertheless, this has not always been the case as Alonso (2011) notes that a migrant does not only focus on the wage differential but more importantly, he/she takes into consideration the chances of progression during his/her stay in the host country. He draws an example from Ecuadorian migrants. Here he argues that, if migrant flow was determined by wage differences, these migrants would move to Netherlands and not Spain. This is because Spain has a lower Gross Domestic Product (GDP) than that of the Netherlands.

The neo-classical economics of micro theory proponents hold the view that migrants decide to move only after a well calculated move that entailst the consideration of the cost of movement, work permit, maintenance – while also taking into account the net returns. The migrant moves after he/she is sure that the returns will be higher than what he/she invested in skill acquisition, movement and so forth (Masseh etal, 1993:434). The migrants cannot take the risk of migrating before they are sure that they can afford travelling and settling expenses. Thus, due to a deficiency of resources that would cover travel expenses, settlement migrants are unable to undertake migration.

Over the years, scholars have shifted their concern on the topic of the impact of global warming and climate change (which has posed a threat to humankind). The phenomenon of climate change interferes with the human habitat, thus pushing people to move to a more conducive environment that could provide them with favourable living conditions. There is a tendency to consider political and economic dimensions as the only factors that trigger migration, yet climatic change is a significant factor that prompts migration, for example, the Somali community has experienced massive property destruction and population displacement due to drought and floods- as a result of climate change (Griffiths, 2003). Gundel (2002: 264) notes that the main cause of Somali migration before 1991, for instance, was political which included clan-based feuds. While post-1992, food scarcity in the country led to massive

displacement that saw Somalis move to other countries to seek for better lives. Nevertheless, although climate change could provoke migration of a certain population, broadening the horizon to social, political and economic factors can help in determining whether or not; an individual will move or remain in their home country. The forces that lead to migrant's movement must be seen in conjunction with other factors like economic, social and political aspects.

Besides the aforementioned factors that motivate migration, globalisation has had a huge impact on the pattern of migration in terms of enhancing the flow of information and people across borders. Globalisation is a technological and political process that facilitates the cross border connectedness within limited resources and time. According to Hein De Haas and Czaika (2013), the correlation between globalisation and migration, globalisation does not only ease communication and transportation of goods by lowering costs incurred during migration, but it also strengthens migratory networks, hence allowing people to link with those that have migrated. This interconnectedness in the "global village" has allowed people to access information about opportunities available abroad, and therefore, migrate in order to have a better life elsewhere. According to Katenga-Kaunda (2015), globalisation integrates national economies into one whole global economy which unfortunately creates winners and losers in terms of wealth, living standards and wage differential. Due to these inequalities migrants move to countries that could offer better opportunities for low income earners.

Today, a large number of migrants are moving across international borders in pursuance of higher education and learning. Kofman (2003) observes that in Europe, a good number of female migrants that move as students opt to remain in the host country legally or illegally in order to get married or get employed. In Europe, women migrants tend to undertake humanity courses that lead them to welfare careers. Also,

India is overwhelmingly attracting academic migrants from Africa in the fields of law and medicine.

### **2.2.2 Transnational migration**

Transnationalism is not a new phenomenon, but it has existed as long as transnational migration has occurred. This is recorded in the works of Portes et al (1999) who observe that migrants had notable periodic movements back to their homeland, and the asylum Seekers that had been driven out of their countries on political reasons maintained political engagement in their home countries. Historically, the diaspora have economically and politically been involved in the building of their home countries while at the host country and when they go back to their countries. Schiller, Basch & Blanch (1995) noted that in America, migrants that hailed from Europe returned to their countries of origin in order to participate in the affairs of the country. Transnationalism has gone through a vast development due to the complex and dynamic nature of transnational migration.

Whilst the migrant's move, political and economic engagements in their home countries suggests the existence of transnationalism, such an activity lacked vital features that characterize contemporary transnationalism. According to Portes *et al* (1999) that kind of transnationalism did not manifest constancy, routine engagement and focused on mass rather than individual persons that were returning to their home countries. Transnationalism as known today denotes the process in which migrants forge and maintain the concurrent multiple web of ties that link together to their communities of origin.

Transnationalism is a concept that has increasingly received attention from social scientists who have noted that the lives of migrants traverse borders and that, those migrants have maintained familial ties, though their home country is faraway. Due to these multi-stranded ties that enhance migrant's adaptation within the transnational space, Levit (2004) argues that the perception that migrants reside within one space

that confine them to statutory and cultural norms is untenable, technological advancements and globalization have promoted the migrants ties with the home community, phenomena that have impacted on the citizenship and complexity in controlling migration in the host countries. This is because migrants will continue with ease, to participate in affairs of their countries of origin while maintaining their presence in the host country (Levit, 2004).

### **2.2.3 Incorporating gender into transnational migration**

Incorporating gender dimension into transnational migration is an essential element that cannot be ignored due to the fact that gender affects the migration patterns of people. This is because it shapes the process of migration along the transnational space. Hondagneu-Sotelo (2003:1) advances the significance of bringing gender into transnational migration by arguing that gender is crucial because it informs different sets of social relations that organise immigration and social institutions (eg. family, labour markets) in both migrant's place of origin and place of destination. In South Africa and across the globe, gender plays a key role in determining who migrates, type of employment they get in the host country and rationale behind migration. Male and female migrants have different reasons for coming to South Africa. While female migrants move to South Africa seeking employment, Dodson (1998:1) observes that, economic factors play a key role in motivating female migration. The female migrant's destinations in South Africa are town centres that give them access to informal sectors opportunities whereas males focus their interests on formal employment in industries (Dodson, 1998:1). Although international migration has developed over the years in terms of decision making process, the movement of female migrants into South Africa is still tied to their males on decision and motives to migrate. Thus, in South Africa, female migration, should be viewed as a communitarian endeavour organised by the household rather than an individual affair (Dodson, 1998:1).

According to Shafer (2012) women could make their own decisions about migrating by settling in the host countries, and choosing the occupations they intend to undertake in order to make a living. Despite gender roles rearrangements that result from political instability in Somali, Bushra & Gardner (2004:18) point out that males are still the decision makers among Somali communities. In South Africa on the contrary, Somali women are able to make their own choices which they could not enjoy if they were in Somalia (Shafer, 2012:91). They have migrated and provided for their families independently without the support of males.

However, the transnational migration of females in Africa has received little attention compared to male migrants because most of the researches are economically oriented. Women, argues Adepoju (2006) are stereotyped as migrants who accompany their male counterparts during the migratory journey and have no place in economic affairs. This obscurity happens in spite of a huge number of women migrants. Gows (2010:1) points out that huge population of women, pulled or pushed by varying factors are migrating independently, yet literature on female migration still remains limited. Traditionally, literature on migration was highly focussed on the gender neutral questions on the motivations of migration, remittances and experiences of migrants without addressing gender-specific questions. This phenomenon of not bringing gender into studying international migration made it hard to explain women's decision to migrate, the circumstances that lead women to move and why women predominate in particular jobs because there were no gender theories underpinning the study of their experiences. Androcentric biases are assumptions that women are too traditionally and culturally bound, or they can only migrate as family followers, also association migrants for family reunion, weigh heavily on literature (Sotelo & Cranford, 2006:105).

Gradually, gender and migration is receiving attention by scholars as they seek to understand how migrants renegotiate different existing migration male power

structures within the transnational space. Within the transnational space are gender hierarchies and gender relations that societies have socially constructed which reinforce subordination of women. Grieco & Boyd (2003) point out that it is within the family that their roles are defined and resources to migrate are distributed, in this light, the decision to migrate is largely affected by the patriarchal structure. Nevertheless, her status in such a society cannot be underestimated because if for instance she is educated, financially stable, family status will play a part in her ability to make her own decision, even though there are cultural influences. Muthuki (2013) examines the place of feminism today in addressing inequality among African migrant professionals, claims that most of African cultures have a patriarchal system which governs gender relations between men and women with men having position of authority over women. This remains the case in varying degrees as women migrate from one place to another especially within African context. Thus, patriarchal structures have also percolated into migrational law, making it hard for women to migrate. For instance, these migration policies often consider women in relation to their spouses that is, the accompanying spouses visa. For such a visa to be granted by the South African Department of Home Affairs, the applicant must prove to the South African Embassy that she is married to the person residing in South Africa or if she is a spouse by customary law. In which case, she has to produce documents which prove marriage. They are required to produce the certificate of marriage or prove of their cohabitation. Such policies assume that women cannot be independent and that their movement must comprise a male person with whom they can rely on while undertaking migration. Muthuki (2013:104) however, argues that migration experience and constant negotiations in different cultural contexts is expected to present migrants with an opportunity for changing their perspectives of gender and challenging unequal gender relations.

Aderanti Adepaju (2000:5) observes that due to the large number of professional women migrants who migrate independently, the traditional pattern of migration is

rapidly becoming feminised. This independent movement is determined by social cultural and political factors that either discourage or facilitate migration. According to Reed, Andrzejewski & White (2010:776), the more the migrant women are educated, the more they have the possibility of migrating than those that are not educated. Also, the existing female networks of the family and their acquaintances enhance their migration through supplying them with information, resources and security assurance. Women that are not in networks are less likely to migrate than those that are within those female networks (Curran et.al, 2005; Reed, Andrzejewski & White, 2010).

In interrogating the experiences of migrants within the transnational space, there is a tendency to paint the picture of women as helpless migrants who, faced by the challenges are incapable of navigating the discriminatory environment. Kihato (2009) interrogates the dynamics of urbanization, gender and migration in contemporary Johannesburg through the voices and images of immigrant women from the rest of African content. He argues that literature on gender and migration problematically present migrant women as their victims or heroines. Her work reveals that women have agency in the migration process, that they actively participate in order to make decisions that could assist them to move and forge a relationship that have strategic benefits. These agencies have the capacity of enabling migrant women realize their rights through pushing policies that are gender sensitive, as well as advocacy. Nevertheless, effective emancipation of migrant women could only happen if such agencies applied feminist theories that would help them analyze the nature of the problem within a particular power structure before making any strategic interventions.

The work of Kihato (2007:107), titled *Invisible lives, inaudible voices?* seeks to provide alternative ways of seeing and understanding migrant women and their experiences in the migration process. It challenges existing migration literature which treats migrant women as passive participants in the whole process of migration.

According to Pessar (2005), the common assumption that women migrants role within the transnational space are to accompany men or join their male counterparts facilitates the poor wages by the employers who use the myth to legitimize the exploitation. Nonetheless, as a result of the rising education rates among immigrants, women are now able to move on their own in search of better livelihood opportunities. Through education, migrant women are not only able to negotiate their way out in decisions towards beginning migration journey, but are optimistic about the possibility of getting a job that will require their skill.

The transnational migration has the potential of either reinforcing or addressing gender inequalities. For instance, when migrants enter into a host country which have policies that advocate for equal rights, they give women opportunity to access their rights, albeit transgressing their cultural norms. Forbes (2004:27) points out that transnational migration could be a platform to reinforce cultural and religious norms that buttress oppression of migrant women. On the other hand, migration could have some gender related consequences that could lead to their oppression. Women are subjected to social and economic deprivations, discrimination, and sexual abuse. They face these complexities because of their status as women and as non-citizens. Although international communities are calling nations to respect the dignity of women and heed the rights of women migrants, the policies agreed upon remain rights on paper that are hardly implemented (Forbes 2004:27). Most migrant women have no legal status that could shield them from discrimination, abuse, and the facilitative accessibility to many opportunities in the host country (Forbes, 2004:27). The work of Shaw (2007) focuses on the economic literature among 10 African countries, he observes that women and children abuse, and economic exploitation happen frequently in those countries. Due to lack of proper documentation, women migrants that have entered into the country illegally may be subjects of abuse and exploitation and suffer silently without calling for any help from the public that would question their right to be in the country. Even when they seek help in the homes for the abused,

Shaw (2007:14) observes that most of those homes will require the abused to have a South African identity card or at least an immigration document before they can admit any woman into their premises.

#### **2.2.4 Migration in the African context**

In Africa, international migration has become a way of life, with more and more people migrating as a strategy to ameliorate their livelihoods. The continent has a long history of both internal and international migration as migrants move across geographical territories for varied motivations. Although a significant number of Africans are migrating for business, work, and recently for tourism, political conflict is a major element that triggers international migration. According to Aderanti Adepoju (2007:11) the continent, which he describes as theatre of internecine conflicts has experienced terrible wars driven by political instability that has led to people fleeing their warring nations for more than three decades.

Traditionally, the African population has a history of fleeing to Europe for better livelihoods. This is what Isike & Isike (2012) call self-actualization. They therefore migrate to Europe in order to realise their potentials through available opportunities in those countries. Due to the labour differentials, economic and political instabilities, Europe and America have increasingly seen an influx of migrants from Africa. This South to North migration is well documented compared to intra-Africa migration due to the availability of resources and agents who promote such research. Nonetheless, literature on international migration indicates that the traditional pattern of migration in Africa is increasingly becoming feminised as women migrants move independently across the territorial borders in order to find a suitable space for their survival (Adepoju, 2000:5). Due to recurrent politically motivated civil unrests and social economic instability, the recipient countries are receiving both skilled and unskilled professionals, labour migrants and refugees. Post-colonial African geographical territories have increasingly experienced migration of people for trade, a phenomenon

that dates back to the pre-colonial period. African migration in the past was majorly characterised by pursuance of fertile arable lands for agricultural activities and later the trade among people located in various territories (Adepoju, 2000; Isike & Isike, 2012; Phalane, 2010; Gouws, 2010; Nigeyena, 2013). Today, migration motivations and patterns have changed drastically. This is because; the post-colonial regimes have established socio-economic conditions, political boundaries and taxation. The migration literature indicates that migration in Africa is complex and unstable, and suggests the heterogeneity of migrants coming from different backgrounds and responding to new challenges in the host country varyingly. Therefore, there is a need to look at African migration from those contexts that migrants navigate through. This study looks at the experiences of Somali women within the social locations that affected their propensity to migrate and adaptability to the host country.

Post-apartheid South Africa has been receiving a number of migrants including professional migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, especially Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Ghana. They come to teach in South African universities and further their education, while Senegalese, Mali, Congolese, Somalis have ventured into small businesses. In West Africa, women are independently migrating internationally, unaccompanied by their spouses to flee the rising levels of poverty, in order to meet their economic needs rather than relying on their husbands (Adepoju, 2005:2). The decision to migrate across regional territories is not a personal venture, but, a familial affair that involves family participation in deciding who, where and when to move. The migrants have a responsibility over those left behind in terms of sending remittances that caters for their needs i.e. fees, parent's upkeep, and so forth. Lalonde & Topel (1997) argue that, the family will continue to send to their family members in other countries in order to maximize their net income through foreign remittances.

Although a lot has been written about the migration of people to different countries, much of that literature seems to view migrants as a homogeneous group- that men and

women share the same experiences or women have similar experiences of international migration. Thus, this study focuses on the experiences of migrants, not as homogenous entities but as people having varying experiences based on their different social locations.

### **2.2.5 Migration to South Africa**

South Africa has a long history migrants coming from Africa and beyond, due to the social political and economic opportunities available in the country. This country is one of the huge recipients of migrants who come for various reasons.

The post-apartheid era characterized by the democratization of South Africa, saw the opening of the country's borders. This, observes Todes (2008) enabled migrants from Africa and beyond to move to South Africa, a country that was considered as an attractive destination due to the democratic space which was considered progressive. The migrants from Africa fled to South Africa due to high levels of poverty, poor wages and unemployment that challenged their livelihoods in their home countries. Thus, South Africa's economic dominance in the continent makes the country to be a preferred territory for international migrants across the globe.

A lot of work on 'migration into South Africa' notes Dodson (1998) is weighed heavily by some prevailing stereotypes. Though mining is a sector that has pulled many migrants into South Africa, migration has been made to look like it's about males moving to the mines in Gauteng province. This type of migration leaves women obscure in the migration literature yet women move in big numbers to South Africa. Illegal migrants entering into the post-apartheid South Africa because they are frustrated in their countries is another stereotype that makes migrants look like they are harmful strangers in a land that does not belong to them. Finally, migration in a South African context has been portrayed as a male preoccupation.

Dodson (1998) points out that due to the fact that the country has been a receiving country for black males from Southern Africa, women movements have been underestimated and are being rendered obscure, intentionally. The men undertaking migration journey aim at getting employment whereas women, who have lesser opportunities venture into informal sectors. Nevertheless, there has been notable development on focusing on the migration of women into South Africa (Buijjs, 2002; Camlin, 2014; Kihato, 2009; Piper, 2013). Further, the literature on migration into South Africa is heavily dominated by an economic migration focus whereby, people move seeking employment. The traditional pattern of migrants movements depict that most of the migrants, who are black originate from the Southern African countries (Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010). There have also been studies of other migrant communities such as those from Nigeria, DRC, Somalia, and Senegal and so on (Akanle, Alemu & Adesina, 2016; Barbali (2009); Dekoke, 2016, Jinnah, 2013; 2015; 2016). Akanle, Alemu & Adesina (2016) work focuses the experiences of Ethiopian and Nigerian nationals living in South Africa in terms of how their shared objectives could shape Pan-Africanism. Dekoke (2016) focuses on the experiences of Congolese migrants living in Gauteng, from the perspective of appropriation of South African languages. Barbali (2009) looks at the experiences of Senegalese migrants living in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Jinnah interrogates the experiences of self-settled Somali migrants in Johannesburg, South Africa (2003). Jinnah (2016) focuses on the manner in which social, political and economic factors intersect to provoke mental distress of the Somali community residing in Johannesburg. Jinnah & Lowe (2015) explore how Somali women negotiate and reinvent the meaning of the genital mutilation within Johannesburg and Nairobi cities.

Migration has increasingly been an important strategy used by Somali women to meet family responsibilities within the transnational space due to the absence of male partners, and less support from their relatives (Brown, 2014:8). Thus, the Somali women establish social networks (among relatives, friends) that enhances their

adaptation into a South African context, which differs from the home environment. In Gauteng, they settle in urban centres with vast communities of Somalis who help them establish gradually. In Pretoria West, for instance, where my study was carried out, there has been a well-knit and organised community which is a good destination for the Somali women. The Somali women get into those urban communities because they have security and a possibility of getting employment in Somali hotels, Indian and Somali shops.

According to Niyigena (2013), Somali women come to South Africa for protection and financial well-being only to find that their lives are in danger just as it was in Somalia. According to Sirkeci et al (2012:361), employment opportunities for women are limited because it is considered too dangerous for them to work in townships (2012:361). The Somali women are kept away from some locations because they are vulnerable to becoming victims of crimes such as, sexual violence. Despite this, in her work that investigates how Somali women negotiate barriers they encounter in Johannesburg, Shafer (2012) finds out that women engage in economic activities within Mayfair and may seek state interventions when spouses fail their culturally determined responsibilities. Shafer (2012:234) further argues that these acts are interpreted as cultural and religious defiance, and can lead to conflicts especially when Somali men accuse their women of adopting South African laws, values and ideologies.

### **2.2.6 Somali migration to South Africa**

For decades, Somalis have been some of the most well-known Diasporas in the world (International Organisation of Migrants, 2014:4). They are traditionally nomadic; a phenomenon that enhances their mobility internally and across Somali borders (IOM, 2014:4). Their fluid nomadic mobility can be seen in their manner of movement across Kenya-Somali borders through which they appear to constantly move in and out of, as they progress to other parts of the country. Also, most of the Somalis are pastoralists

who move from one place to the other in search of better conditions for their livestock. Above all, poor livelihoods facilitated by famine, civil wars and insecurity influences migratory patterns (IOM, 2014:4). Despite the inroads that the country have constructed, ethnic feuds continue flaring up that paint the picture of a fragile nation in terms of peace. However, with so many migrants returning home from its neighbouring countries, the Somalia migration pattern is gradually changing.

Migration of Somalis into South Africa and other countries has been provoked by political instability in Somali, a situation which led migrants to flee the country in large numbers. Somali migrants also arrived in South Africa from the regions of Kenya's Mandela, Wajir and Garissa, fleeing famine in the dry zones of North Eastern Kenya (Thomson, 2015). These regions have been affected by an unbalanced distribution of resources, due to the discriminative policies that are a perpetuation of colonial strategies. This disproportionate resource distribution has triggered animosity between the affected regions and the local government before a devolved government was ushered in.

Although politically motivated, violence is the main stimulus for Somalis fleeing to other countries, Moret, Baglioni & Efiomayi-mader (2006) point out that, some respondents in their study hinted at lack of education, medical facilities, unemployment and unfeasibility of reconstructing a better Somali as the reasons for why they left Somalia. They move to other countries expecting a democratic space where they can access opportunities that would alleviate their living conditions. Jinnah (2013) argues that the boisterous economy located in a democratic space of South Africa has attracted the Somali migrants from East Africa region. Further, she points out that unlike other African countries, South Africa has accommodative policy that allows freedom trade and movement of migrants. The entry of Somalis into other countries has provoked crisis among the citizens in the host country. In Kenya for instance, after repeated Al-Shabaab attacks that horrified the nationals and caused

economic disruptions, stringent measures were put into place in order to control the cross border movement. On the other hand, migration of Somalis into other countries like South Africa has provoked crisis, emanating from their businesses that are spread in the South Africa black locations. Mhlanga (2011) argues that, because of the substantive flow of those migrants, the humanitarian crisis facing Somali people has impacted on South Africa domestically.

In terms of the demographic figures of the Somali inflow into South Africa, Jinnah (2010) notes that there are no accurate figures on the number of Somalis that enter South Africa although estimates range from 27,000 to 40,000. The ambiguity in the number of Somali migrants is worsened by the increasing influx of the Somalis who use diasporic connections to enter and settle into the country undocumented. Most of those Somalis occupy the Mayfair suburbs located in the western fringes of the city centre, in close proximity to the important economic resources that the city holds (Shafer, 2012; Jinnah, 2013). Additionally a big community also resides in Pretoria West, next to the Department of Home Affairs. The two Suburbs (Mayfair and Pretoria West) offer the community ties that facilitate their local adaptation in the foreign environment.

The first group of Somalis established themselves in Cape Town and Johannesburg, but later, a good number of Somali migrants shifted to the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Western Cape (Jinnah, 2010). In spite of being physically located into these provinces, Somalis have a solid network with other Somalis within and outside the country. Mayfair, for instance, is an important network hub for most of the Somalis in South Africa. In Johannesburg, the migrants organized themselves into a large community located in Mayfair, a suburb predominantly occupied by Somalis and Indians (Jinnah, 2010; Kalitanyi 2010; Niyigena, 2013). Somalis, well known for their retail trade,

started their own Spaza<sup>7</sup> shops and ethnic clothing businesses targeting mainly foreign nationals.

The Somalis, notably known for acumen in business (Jinnah, 2010) occupy a trade niche characterized by self-organized business networks that enable them to increase price attractiveness through bulk buying and financing schemes for their stock (Mgayi, 2015). In order to attract more customers, Somali shopkeepers use a price discounting strategy and sell some items in smaller packs (Mgayi, 2015). They have organised business networks, whereby they contribute and buy goods in large bulk, which cuts down the cost of purchase and transportation. This enables Spaza shop owners to maximize their profits while selling other goods at a considerably low price, in comparison to other shopkeepers in the locations. The strategies employed by Somalis in order to offer competitive prices for their goods have led to the perception among local shop owners that Somalis are taking away their customers, a scenario that has provoked and motivated Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks.

Despite their contributions to the economy of the country, Somalis have been major victims of Xenophobia- Afrophobia. Jinnah (2013) observes that besides those attacks, Somali women face the paradox between opportunity and risks ensuing from the breakdown of family structures in the Diaspora.

### **2.2.7 Xenophobia**

The term xenophobia as contained in the Oxford Dictionary, (1994) stands for the ‘dislike/ prejudice against.’ This narrow simplistic definition could also be reflected among scholars who have drawn the meaning from etymology of the word xenophobia

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<sup>7</sup> Spaza-The term Spaza is a South African slang word used in the locations to denote the shop set for ‘convenience’ sake and meant to improve the family earnings for the person running it. Spaza is an informal shop, limited to the real shop which has wide variety of things outside household items (Liedeman, 2013; Perks, 2010; Von Broembsem, 2008).

which is Greek *Xeno* to mean foreigner and *Phobia* to mean fear, and thus define it as the fear of foreigners. Thus, Harris (2002) calls for the reformulation of the term in the dictionary because it is not merely a dislike or simply a prejudice, but it's also an activity that is violent and results to wanton destruction of property, maiming and the deaths of people.

In defining the term xenophobia, Moge kwu (2005) underlines the importance of cultural dimension by arguing that, the phenomenon happens when a certain nation/community cannot understand, appreciate and accommodate members from another culture due to poor intercultural communication. Moge kwu (2005) further points out that majority of xenophobes are ignorant or ill-informed about those outsiders who they hate, and this unawareness makes them uncertain of how to deal with them. The term xenophobia, understood literally (at least from the definition), suggests that, all non-nationals suffer the dislike, prejudice or the violent attacks equally the same because their foreignness makes them distasteful to the natives (Warner & Finchilescu, 2003). In South Africa, as the society finds the person to blame for the social, political and economic ills that have bedevilled the nation, a foreigner becomes the easy scapegoat (Harris, 2002; Momodou & Pascoet, 2013; Moge kwu, 2005; Tafira, 2011). Although the country is democratic and has one of the best constitutions globally, that upholds the dignity of every person living within its borders; a foreigner stands at the intersection of crime, violence, and outsider's antagonism (Harris, 2002; Warner & Finchilescu, 2003).

In spite of the recurrent brutal attacks and hate against immigrants, debates motivated by South African politics have argued that what migrants face is not xenophobia- but criminality. The denialism is deeply rooted in South African society and has been evident in comments made by the leaders that ought to protect the lives of the migrants. In 2013, when Somalis who owned Spaza shops were brutally attacked and properties worth millions were destroyed, Nkoana-Mashabane, the then International

Relations Minister said that, what happened was a criminal act of a few individuals whose intention was to disunite people, and should not be seen as xenophobic (2013). Police spokesman Zweli Mnisi branded xenophobia as crime in his statement that said *when people loot shops it should not be mistakenly considered as Xenophobia, but a crime* (Bauer, 2013). According to Crush & Ramchandran (2014), the denial of Xenophobia- manifests the lack of political will required to tackle the problem.

Charman and Pieper's (2012: 99) work on violent attacks against *Spaza* shop owners in Cape Town (Delft South and Eindhoven) take on both the qualitative and quantitative approaches to establish whether or not, the violence could actually be referred to as Xenophobia. The study points out that it cannot be called Xenophobia because, local owned shops have similarly been targeted and therefore another term must explain the occurrence. Crush & Ramchandran (2014:31) argue that, the tendency to reduce violent acts against xenophobia to criminality or violent entrepreneurship could exacerbate and legitimize it. Although the looting of businesses, and burning *Spaza* shops could be regarded as criminal acts, according to some interpretations of South African law, Crush argues that branding those mayhems as criminality would be reductionist and deceptive (Crush & Ramchandran,2014:22).

### **2.2.8 Afrophobia**

In the process of comprehending the violence against foreigners, there have been contentious debates on whether to talk about Xenophobia or Afrophobia. Momodou & Pascoet (2013) whose work focuses on strategies of dealing with Afrophobia in Europe, points out that Afrophobia is a form of racism, whereby black foreigners become victims of hatred by their fellow blacks. This form of racism argues Momodou & Pascoet (2013), is based on socially constructed inferiority sentiments towards other blacks, which is a legacy of dehumanising and oppressive structures of colonial governments, apartheid regime and slavery. In fact, scholars like Tafira (2011) argue that, what has been happening in South Africa since 2008 should not be simply

labelled as Xenophobia, Afrophobia or Negrophobia, but should be called neo-racism that is beyond skin colour. Tafira (2011) further argues that, this phenomenon is as a result of the racialized, colonised minds that find difficulty in assimilating other Africans into modern South Africa. The Africans from other countries are easily spotted by local nationals due to their appearance and behaviours that appear “foreign” to South Africans, like differences in dressing, accents, skin complexion (very dark colour), hair styles and hair type (Harris, 2002). The black foreigners are treated as the ‘despicable other’ whose main preoccupation is impoverishing the economy, stealing jobs meant for locals, involvement in crimes, while the whites are regarded as the ‘desired other’ who are beneficial to the economy a sort of addendum to the reminasence of white supremacy (Harris, 2002;Thakur, 2011). Long (2015) who adopts the term Afrophobia in his work points out that, South Africa has a displaced anger that the most vulnerable get subjected to in the society, the ‘Africans’, and therefore, the nation must face that unaddressed anger instead of incriminating the innocent black foreigners.

In view of the complexity and emerging controversies in defining the term ‘Afrophobia’, some anti-racists have considered calling it ‘anti-black’ in order to remove the element of fear contained in the term Afrophobia, while others have resorted to calling it Negrophobia considering that there are blacks that are non-Africans that are feared/disliked like Afro-Brazilians or Afro-Haitians (ENAR, Policy Paper, 2013). In his work on citizenship and Xenophobia in contemporary South Africa, Nyamnjoh (2002:49), holds the view that xenophobia is a racialized concept, where, very dark foreigners are easily spotted as non-South Africans and this hue serves as an excuse for exacting dehumanising acts against them.

Matsinhle (2011:295) who sees the usage of the term ‘Makwerekwere’ as a strategy to enhance governability of the black migrants of African origin in South Africa, points out that Africans are the authors of their own fear. As the violent attacks on

the African migrants happen, blacks have experienced the covert Afrophobia through police harassment, in the health sector, education and at the Department of Home Affairs (Duncan, 2012; Harris, Matsinhle, 2011; Thakur, 2011). Nonetheless, nationalities from other countries like Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, and Chinese have been affected by the same violence targeting Africans, albeit on a smaller scale. Thus, in cognisance of the fact that other nationalities outside Africa are also subject to the antiforeigner bigotry, I have adopted Xenophobia-Afrophobia into my study.

### **2.2.9 Gendered experiences in the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia**

The existing literature on xenophobia has not paid much attention to the gender perspective of xenophobia (Charman and Pieper's 2012; Crush & Ramchandran 2014; Gopal, 2013; McConnell, 2009; Tereva, 2013). This androcentric nature of the literature on Xenophobia/Afrophobia is as a result of the deep rooted patriarchy enshrined in society, and scholars are not immune to it. Nonetheless, several studies have treated xenophobia from a gender perspective, though not comprehensively, with their focus being on women. The work of Sigsworth, Ngwane & Pino, (2008) that was conducted at the height of the South African's most violent Xenophobic attacks of 2008, established that migrant women experience far-ranging complexities that have had both short term and long-term impacts that include identity loss, unacceptance by the local community and traumas. This work further established that, female migrants bear the brunt of the demeaning and trivializing attitudes and mannerisms displayed in the health sector, police department, immigration department, and most importantly the absence of vital services (Sigsworth, Ngwane & Pino, and 2008:35). Because of the wide-range of responsibilities that migrant women have in the society, it is crucial to delve into gender dimension of migration with special emphasis on how women are affected by Xenophobia/Afrophobia. A study conducted by Fuller (2008:8), underlines that female migrants experience double jeopardies because of their status as women and as migrants/outsideers. During the anti-migrant hostility, the incidents of gender based violence (GBV) such as rape, remain unreported due to women's fear

of police who are corrupt, hostile to foreigners, and because of their social location as foreigners/outsiders in other persons land (Charman & Pieper's, 2012; Fuller,2008; Niyigena,2013; Sigsworth, Ngwane & Pino,2008,).

These disproportionate Xenophobia/Afrophobia hostilities in South African locations have impacted terribly on female migrants through violence played out on women's bodies through sexual assault, emotional abuse, beatings, and -whenever their homes; family and an abode of safety are destroyed- through violent anti-migrants vandalism. The violence meted out on women, whether emotional or physical is as a result of patriarchal structures within cultures that reinforce gender inequality manifested in ideas, attitudes and practises that is expressed in times of war and conflict. In times of conflicts within societies, sexual violence against women and children which can work as a weapon of violence, not only harms the individual, it also has long lasting effects on the entire community of the raped person. In his book, "Body politics in development," Harcourt (2009:97) points out that rape, which is one of the most traumatic and hard to comprehend experiences is not about sexual gratification of the perpetrator, but it is a phenomenon that involves power and domination where the victim loses power over her own body, sexuality and above all his/her self-esteem. Thus, any violence disturbs the social, cultural and political structures that society has built in the processes of settlement. According to Ingrid (2008), violence cannot be limited to damage on the women's bodily integrity, but it also involves destruction of what connects and unifies a community who shares the same identity, values and history.

Nadia Sanger (2013:16) focuses on the intersectionality among gender, xenophobic attitudes and male violence within the context of Du Noon location (Cape Town), and establishes that, the construction of the 'otherness' by the locals have the feminine and masculine undertones that are evident between foreigners and locals. The study further observed that males were the key perpetrators of violence against foreigners. The male

violence that is also manifested in sexual harassment among women, and robberies, leaves the women suffering the trauma silently. The work of Shafer (2012), focusses on the ways in which Somali migrants negotiate gender structures within Mayfair suburb (Johannesburg). She found out that most migrants opt to keep silent whenever they are raped because if they report the incident, then everyone would start backbiting against them. Also they become 'unmarriageable', they can be divorced by their husbands and so forth. Hubbard (2007) opines that a culture of silence among the victims of sexual assault is maintained by the fear that the assailant could retaliate should she report the perpetrator. Consequently she could be rejected by her family members in whom they harbour shameful sentiments associated with rape. The migrant women who are at the receiving end of the sexual violence in the world, are often in a state of helplessness because the judicial system that should execute justice, is on the contrary, hostile to them. According to Mananzan et al (1996:71), the very state institutions mandated to execute justice for sexually violated persons are patriarchal and therefore reinforce and legitimize unequal male-female power structures that facilitates violence against female bodies through rape, domestic battery and so forth. Besides lethargic male dominated judiciary state machineries that have the duty to either reinforce law or execute justice. Religious and cultural norms cannot be overlooked if an honest search for the factors that reinforces the sexual oppression of women within the transnational space during times of the conflicts is to be pursued.

According to Shafer (2012) who looks at Somali's manner of negotiating gender relationships in a South African context, the Somali community encounters discrimination, racial segregation and xenophobia which hamper their movement, and denies the available opportunities in the country. Somali men take leadership and decision making positions in the daily affairs of the community. While women play the role of household management, they lack the ability to address patriarchal arrangements institutionalised in the community. Although Shafer (2012) cites crime and xenophobia among the social ills that impact on the Somali lives in Johannesburg,

the phenomenon of xenophobia has not been dissected deeply in her work. My work brings that element of Xenophobia-Afrophobia in the context of the transnational space.

The work of Brown (2013) explores the manner in which Somali women, supported by the existing social network forge identity and belongingness in Cape Town has not captured the dimension of transnationalism as my study does. The element of transnationalism cannot be ignored because the Somali women, besides being renowned for its mobility because of the wide-range of responsibilities that migrant women have in the society, always maintains ties with their homeland. Therefore, my work, explores the Somali women experiences within the transnational space, considering their history from Somali/Kenya to South Africa. In this regard, it differs from Brown's work. Much of the existing work on international migration has limited itself within the process of migration and settlement and has neglected the transnationalism dimension. This work has adopted transnationalism as crucial in the migration of Somali women- who have strong ties with the home country- rather than confining them within a particular geographical space. In advancing the transnationalism, Jinnah (2013) demonstrates that Somali women maintain the link with home through attending to the needs of their family relations back home. In that respect, they have multiple and diversified sources of income that enhances their survival in South Africa, as well as supporting their families in Somalia/Kenya.

These developments however have not focused on the experiences related to Xenophobia-Afrophobia (Charman and Pieper's 2012; Crush & Ramchandran 2014; Gopal, 2013; McConnell, 2009; Sanger, 2013; Tereva, 2013) in the transnational space. Therefore there is a need for such a study that would explore the gender perspective of the phenomenon. My work is uniquely different from the previous studies that focused on Somali migration in South Africa. The work of Niyigena (2013) which investigated on the challenges that Somalis face in Gauteng province views both men and women migrants as homogenous units who are experiencing

challenges the same way. My work focuses on Somali women, while Nigeyena's work focused on Somalis in general without acknowledging that women and men experiences cannot be similar. My work rules out such homogeneity of men and women and argues that Somali women and men experiences are complex in the Gauteng province in varying ways. They are impacted and respond to those challenges differently due to their social locations.

## **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

This section discusses the four key theories through which the study was conducted namely; the Gendered Geographies of Power, Social network theory and feminist intersectionality. I start with the Gendered Geographies of Power which encompasses four building blocks; geographic scales, social location, power geometries and imagination/mind work. This work incorporates all the four aforesaid elements of the Feminist Geographies of power theory.

### **2.3.1 Gendered geographies of power**

In their theory, gendered geographies of power, Pessar and Mahler (2001) focus on how gender is negotiated across transnational borders. The theory comprises four major building blocks, namely; "geographic scales", "social locations," "power geometries" and "imagination" (Pessar and Mahler 2001, Pessar and Mahler, 2003). The theory calls for scholars on gender and migration to keep in mind the correlation between gender and the state in the analysis of the migrant's experiences within the transnational space. Thus, notable works have adopted the gendered geographies of power to understand the lives of migrants within the transnational space. For Instance, the work of Shafer (2012) focuses on how Somalis negotiate gender relations within Mayfair adopts the Geographies of Power theory. The work established that women negotiated gender across national borders within the multiple factors that have had an impact on them in terms of their thoughts and actions.

### **2.3.1.1 Geographical Scales**

By geographical scales, Mahler and Pessar (2003:815) claim that gender operates simultaneously on multiple spatial and social scales (e.g. body, family and state) across transnational terrains. The geographic scale was crucial to this study because it enabled me to interrogate how the transnational space proffered the Somali women in Gauteng province an opportunity to buttress or challenge gender notions that affects their experiences at family level and within the South African state.

### **2. 3.1.2 Social Locations**

By social locations, Mahler & Pessar (2003) refer to persons' positions within power hierarchies created through historical, political, economic, geographic, kingship-based and other socially stratifying factors (2001:6). People are born into a given social location that confers on them certain advantages and disadvantages (Pessar and Mahler, 2003:816). A child born in a developed country like Germany would enjoy some privileges (i.e. health, education) than a child born in a poor country like Somalia who struggles economically. The social location is not a fixed phenomenon but a reality that changes with time. Although the social location is a fluid phenomenon that changes with time, people, argue Pessar & Mahler (2003), regardless of their personal efforts, are positioned in locations that they have never constructed. Their ability to act is impacted greatly by their social location (Parrenas, 2009).

The Social location dimension enabled me to explore the manner in which Somali women's position (in terms of nationality, class, religion, clan and education) influence their ability to negotiate power hierarchies within transnational space. Also, the social location element enabled me to explore how Somali women's social locations either facilitate oppression or enhances their capacity to navigate various Xenophobia-Afrophobia related complexities at Mayfair.

### **2.3.1. 2 Power Geometries**

Power geometries direct's its attention to the types and degrees of agency people exert given their social locations (Mahler and Pessar, 2003:816). The hierarchies of class, race, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality and, of course, gender operate at various levels that affect an individual or group's social location (Mahler, 2003:816). Multiple dimensions of identity shape, discipline, and position people in the way they think and act (Pessar and Mahler, 2003).

Within the transnational space, the institutions through which migration happens are patriarchal, a phenomenon that hampers women's navigation within the space. However, women are not just passive recipients of oppression rather they have a sense of agency. The power geometries enabled me to investigate how the power structures affect the Somali women's ability to adapt within the transnational space, and how they assert themselves in a South African context.

### **2.3.1.3 Imagination or mind work**

Imagination building block contains images: meanings associated with gender, place and so forth (Mahler and Pessar, 2008). The migrants engage in envisioning, preparation and strategizing activities pertaining to migration and settlement. This element is crucial because, migration cannot be successful without proper planning on how to mobilise resources, get documentation and reaching to the available networks that would facilitate the journey and settlement. The mind work dimension enabled me to understand how the Somali women engaged in the initiatives that involved envisioning, strategizing on migration activities within the transnational space.

### **2.3.2 Social Network Theory**

The social network theory maintains that people are embedded in thick webs of social relations and interactions (Borgatti et al, 2009). In the context of migration, the theory involves interpersonal links that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants

in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship and a shared community origin (Massey et al.1993: 448). According to Jennisen (2007), these interpersonal ties can either be intimate (family relations or close friend) or noncommittal (the so called weak ties).The Social Network theory affirms that migration is not an individual activity but rather a social activity that involves decisions informed by the interpersonal ties one has. These interpersonal networks make it easier for new migrants to find jobs and gain access to the required resources in their destination countries (Poston & Bouvier, 2010:213).Migration networks could also facilitate access to micro-credit needed to bolster businesses and support for other livelihood expenses. In migrant-sending countries, information about jobs and living standards abroad is transmitted through personal networks such as friends and neighbors who emigrated (Oishi, 2002:7).This information emanating from these networks informs the plans and decisions to migrate or not, as potential migrants are informed about the awaiting risks, possible opportunities, challenges and support systems. The work of Nieleesen (2004) focused on the migration of Darnish Somalis to Britain which indicated that the dissemination of information enhanced by a strong network among Somalis in Britain facilitated by their migration.

In receiving countries, immigrant communities often help their fellow men and women to immigrate, find a job, and adjust to a new environment (Oishi, 2002:7). According to Raghuram (1999), the aid channeled through the networks includes information about the area; travel costs; board and lodging on arrivals in the city and loans to cover the initial expenditure. The social network theory acknowledges the presence of various related cross-border linkages between individuals and groups (Bijak, 2006).This link facilitates and encourages new movements by providing resources in form of information and assistance to potential migrants( Vandererf & Heering, 1996:154).The more social relations one has at the place of destination and, consequently, the more information channels these relationships provide, the more influential such information is on the decision to migrate (Coombs, 1998; Haug,

2008). The network is also a powerful force in person's decision to move to another country, given that decision to move is often a family or household decision rather than an individual one (Vandererf & Heering, 1996:154). This decision to migrate is enhanced by expectations that the family members have on the one to move. Curran and Saguy (2013) observe that just as potential migrants expect kin or friends, who have already migrated, to assist them, so households of origin expect migrants to "help out" financially by remitting a portion of their earnings. Due to this expectation, households encourage select family members to migrate.

Thus, studying networks, particularly those linked to families and households, permits an understanding of migration as a social product, not as the sole result of individual's decision to move, not as the sole result of economic or political parameters but rather as an outcome of all these factors in interaction (Boyd, 1989; Spittle, 1989)." In her analysis of Mexican illegal migration, Dinerman argues that migration as a household strategy is conditioned by social ties at the community level as well as by the local economy (Boyd, 1978; Dinerman, 1989). The community and family support systems are catalysts for migration because they sponsor migration which could involve huge finances for transportation and immigration documentation. This therefore determines when and who migrates. According to Dinerman (1989), immigrants come mainly from those households which members can combine economic options and households whose members have consistently upheld their family and community obligations and consequently find that they are able to call in their social debts.

The Social Network theory is limited in the sense that it cannot explain why and how various networks were developed between one country and the other, and between one community/clan and the other (Oishi, 2002:7). This is because the development of such networks is dependent on historical, geographical and political ties which existed before large scale migration started (Oishi, 2002:7). These factors show that migration patterns vary from one country to the other. The Social Network theory, however,

cannot explain the pattern of international female and male migration because Oishi, (2002:7) argues that gender aspects of international migration have not been addressed due to the assumption that most migrants are men, and women are their followers. While usefulness of social network theory is increasingly being realized, its interrelations with gender have hardly been addressed and there has been little attempt to see how women access and mobilize social networks during migration process (Raghuram, 1999; Tacoli, 1995). Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994), laments that, while immigration literature underscores the importance of those social networks, insofar as they provide important resources and connections, most of the literature either ignores the gender-based character of those networks or assumes that male-dominated immigrant networks are natural and do not need further inquiry. Nonetheless, Doreen massey (1994) brings in gender into the geographical space within which, there exists the social networks. She buttress's the fluidity of the transnational space, which she argues that it is socially constructed. She points out that gender is redefined and reconstructed within the transnational territories.

The work of Niyigena (2013) adopts Social Network theory in studying the challenges that Somali migrants face in South Africa. These refugee's, argues Niyigena (2013), rely on the existing networks within their family members and acquaintances that supply them with information about South Africa, and also, when they arrive into the country, their settlements are eased by their friends within the community. Although Somalis are not a homogenous community, the members seem to be united by a phenomenon facilitated by the strong ties which exist among them. Brown (2014), focused on the Somali gendered integration and settlement, and how the social networks affect their lives within the transnational space. The work found out that, all the research participants responded that they had already established some connections with other Somalis in Cape Town who facilitated their migration and settlement to the city (2014).

Social network theory enabled the researcher to focus migration experiences of Somali women as a phenomenon affected by interpersonal interactions within the transnational space. In order to comprehend how Somali women adjust and integrate within the transnational space, the theory enabled the researcher expose the manner in which kinship ties, friendship ties, clan ties and religious ties assist Somali women who navigate transnational space amidst Xenophobia-Afrophobia related complexities. In view of the main work of SASOWNET, which is an advancement of a network platform where women can raise a robust voice together, the theory will unpack how those women link with other persons within and across South African borders.

### **2.3.3 Feminist intersectionality**

The theory of Intersectionality by Crenshaw is a feminist analytical tool based on the notion that women's lives are constructed by multiple intersecting systems of oppression (Carastathis, 2014:304). It claims that inequality of women is never a result of single distinct factors, but a result of interconnected social locations, power relations and experiences (Hanklvsky, 2014:2). The concept intersectionality, argues Squires (2008:55) emerged in response to the inability of various singular analysis of structural inequality to recognize the complex interrelation between forms of oppression. While all women are in some ways subject to gender discrimination, other factors including race and skin color, caste, age, ethnicity, language, ancestry, sexual orientation, religion, social economic class, culture, geographic location, and status as a migrant person (refugee, internally displaced person, child) in a conflict zone or under foreign occupation can combine to determine one's locality (Pheko,2011). The underlying power structures that impact experiences of migrants could only be understood when all those factors are examined concurrently. Conceptually, this framework proposes that various categories of oppression are understood as interconnected and interdependent, rather than as separate essentialist categories given the limitations of privileging one system of oppression over another and the

impossibility of explaining inequalities through a single framework of oppression (Valentine, 2007; Bastia, 2007). Thus, there are no easy answers here as the detailed pursuit of intersectional analysis is notoriously complex and the formulation of sensitive policy agendas is certainly no less challenging (Squires, 2008:55). Because the intersectional experiences and concerns of women are greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which black women are subordinated (Crenshaw, 1989:58).

Scholars have shown some interest on the theory of intersectionality, due to its ability to enable an inquiry into a given study, holistically without overlooking the intersecting power structures that affect the migrants. Ngunjiri (2013), who investigated the livelihood experiences of Somali refugee women in Norway, adopted the theory, to understand how those migrants negotiated the powers of family and of the wider society, guided by the gender dimension enshrines itself in the Quran. He pointed out that the theory of intersectionality was important because it facilitated deeper understanding of the Muslim community along intersections of race, gender as well as in both religious and cultural norms. Fraser and Mestry (2014) who sought to interrogate the experiences of black women principals in the context of South Africa, adopted intersectionality as the platform to analyze their stories. Fraser and Mestry (2014) further point out that the framework was adopted to examine the black women principals situated at the center of domination in a patriarchal society, at the work place. Watts et al., (2015) who focuses on the experiences of Australian mothers of African origin locates their study within the intersectionality theory, and acknowledges intersecting dimensions within which those young mothers exist.

Abdi (2014) applies the intersectionality theory to understand the experiences of Muslim refugees in America and demonstrates the change of gender dimension within the interlocking factors that affect their livelihoods. The study established that, within

migration, although women fight inequality through finding jobs to sustain themselves, they are also agents of patriarchy in terms of criticizing other women whenever they call emergency numbers/services to report domestic violence.

The rationale for adopting intersectionality framework illustrated a need to understand Somali women experiences within interacting factors that reinforce oppression, and affect their identity. Through intersectionality, the study will unpack existing interconnected power structures that interact to construct Somali women's identities such as gender, nationality, race, migrant's status, religion, social class and clan system. The framework enabled me to examine the complexity of Somali women's experiences in the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia in the transnational space along the intertwined factors. According to Crenshaw (1991), although intersecting identities among women could facilitate domination, they could also be a source of social empowerment and reconstruction. Thus, this platform enabled me to comprehend how how clan, class, nationality and gender enhanced women renegotiation of Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities within transnational terrains.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter provides the literature related to Somali migration along the transnational space with the aim of locating the study gap. The review revolves around gender and migration in the context of Somali women within the transnational space. I focus on literature surrounding international migration, transnationalism, migration in the African context, migration to South Africa and Somali women migration to South Africa. The literature close to the Somali women migration demonstrates that much has been written on transnational migration within the African context but, has not paid close attention to the heterogeneity of the women and men. A lot of what has been written has the androcentric undertones that views migrants, men and women as homogeneous entities. This chapter discusses literature on Xenophobia-Afrophobia, and establishes that there is less literature about gender perspective of Xenophobia-

Afrophobia. Furthermore, the chapter discusses theoretical frameworks through which the study was conducted, namely; Social Network theory, theory of Feminist Intersectionality, and the Gendered Geographies of Power. I highlight how relevant those frameworks are to my work and use them as an analytical lens. In the subsequent chapter, I discuss methodology and methods that the work adopts.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This study was done within the interpretivist research paradigm. The Interpretivist paradigm is a philosophical worldview that maintains that objective knowledge does not exist, rather, knowledge emanates from interpretation of a given phenomenon. In Interpretivist paradigm, both the researcher and the researched are involved in the meaning making process. The paradigm focuses on the complexity of the researcher's sense of making meaning as the phenomenon unfolds (Clavier, 2014). Due to the nature of the study that sought to establish a deeper understanding of the experiences of Somali women within the transnational space, it adopts the qualitative research methodology. In this chapter, I focus on the approach used in carrying out the study with the aim of responding to the question that guides the study. The qualitative approach which befits the study is applied due to its nature of making meaning out of the given data. The chapter also covers the data collection procedures, ethical considerations, the data analysis method and finally the limitations for the study. In order to understand the background of the research participants, the study looks at the demographic information of the participants.

#### **3.2 Research design**

Research design is the overall mode of thinking that guides the actions to be undertaken while carrying out a given study (Newman, 1996). It is the philosophical worldview that directs the researcher in carrying out the study (Creswell, 2007; Babbie, 2012; Vosloo, 2014; Babbie, & Mouton, 2001). Because of the nature of my study which requires a relative and flexible worldview, this work employed an interpretivist research paradigm, to interpret/construe the phenomenon of the Somali women. Interpretivist research paradigm allows a relative observation and

interpretation of datum in order to make meaning, as opposed to positivist approach which is rigid in its approach. The interpretivist paradigm maintains that the research participants are not mere objects but intricate beings who have varying understanding and experiences of a given phenomenon.

### **3.3 Research methodology**

The term research methodology connotes the systematic manner of generating data and analyzing within a given paradigm and theories, in order to achieve the study objective (Babbie, & Mouton, 2001; Hill, 2012; Maree, 2007; Newman 2011; Rebeck et al., 2001; Tongco, 2007). It entails a set of procedures and techniques that the researcher applies to guide the study (Rebeck et al., 2001). This study adopted a qualitative research methodology. Due to the nature of the study, that sought to understand the migrants experiences within the transnational space vis-à-vis Xenophobia/Afrophobia, the work could not have applied quantitative methods because that could not have explained phenomena which required a deeper understanding. Thus, attaining the right method to the study that succinctly sought to comprehend migrants' experiences which are dependent on their social, political, religious, and cultural standpoints, adopting qualitative approach was inevitable as the likelihood to present the lived experience of people in a given context was higher. Although a qualitative method would be the best approach to investigate about the experiences of a given population, the research outcome cannot be immune to the researcher and participants' biases and prejudices based on their own social, economic and political locations, and most importantly, the small sample studied cannot be used to represent other cases because the researcher and the participants are on different standpoints, and contexts that would influence them differently, as opposed to a quantitative method where the results do not rely on the aforesaid factors.

Newman (2011) opines that, qualitative research methodology is an approach that describes and gives meaning to a particular social phenomena (Newman, 2011). Silverman (2006) argues that, qualitative research methodology allows the access into the experiences of participants through an in-depth process of data collection (Silver, 2006). In view of the study that establishes experiences of Somali women in the Gauteng Province vis-à-vis Xenophobia-Afrophobia, this method, which enables the researcher's understanding of the reality on the ground, fitted the nature of my study. It was relevant to the study because, as Maree (2007), observes the qualitative methodology is a naturalistic approach that enables the researcher's understanding of the reality in a given context (Maree, 2007).

### **3.4 Data Collection Methods**

An in-depth interview method was adopted for this study. In view of the objectives that the study sought to achieve, semi-structured interview questions were relevant for this work because of their open ended nature. Mathers (1998:2), argues that open ended questions provide opportunities for both the interviewer and the interviewee to discuss some topics in a more detailed manner. The data was collected through in-depth interviews between the researcher and the interview participants. Also, free narration about their past life stories in both Somalia and South Africa was applied by the researcher, because it is only through this understanding that their social, political and economic background experiences can be best understood. According to Boyce & Neale (2006), the primary advantage of in-depth interviews is that they provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods. That approach was advantageous to this study which sought to establish experiences of Somali women in Mayfair, Gauteng Province vis-à-vis Xenophobia-Afrophobia.

The open-ended questions used for in-depth interview allowed the researcher to reformulate the question in a manner that the participants would understand as those

that understood Swahili grappled with some terms that do not exist ‘in their world.’ According to Hill (2012:87) interview questions in the form of open-ended probes could increase data output because the participants experiences, thoughts, ideas, feelings are stimulated within a free and non-judgmental ambience. On the other hand, the questions permitted some freedom for the interview participants to produce other information that was not asked in the question, but was very important for the study. The in-depth interview using open ended questions enabled the researcher to observe their behaviours and mannerisms as they discussed Xenophobia-Afrophobia related issues that were saddening, so much so that they sobbed as they narrated their stories. To deal with such a trauma, my research assistant would give them counselling therapy to calm their sad memories. Also, he would prepare me in the event of an interviewee who might be susceptible to any potential trauma. This enabled me to choose words carefully as well as to request a space that was private in order to maintain confidentiality. Having been involved with refugee programs in Gauteng, the research assistant had an experience of offering psycho-social support to the refugees. The research assistant was not an ASC member but he collaborated with the two organisations in most of their programs.

During my interviews, I used an audio recorder supported by an android phone, which captured audible voices from research participants. During the final week of my interviews, I began revisiting the recently recorded telephonic interviews to ensure that they had been recorded, only to find out that four participants had in fact not been captured, namely; one Action Support Centre official and three Somali students. This unanticipated experience was very stressful. After spending a considerable amount of time and money on telephonic calls to rectify the situation, I reapproached the research participants and explained the fault in the recoding gadget. Fortunately they were willing to be re-interviewed.

Throughout the study, I kept a diary in which I wrote down comprehensive notes about what transpired in the field in order to keep track of events after going back home.

This method of keeping notes provided at the field facilitated a deeper recollection of some details that were not captured by the audio recorder, for instance participants' behaviors. The note writing enabled me to be reflective about some major themes/issues that kept recurring, which I would later use for the analysis, which adopts a thematic approach. According to Borg (2001); Newburry (2001) during research, it's necessary to keep a diary because it records ideas, thoughts, occurrences and most importantly, it stimulates the researcher's reflective thinking.

I used the research guide that kept the interviews focused without derailing from the study focus. The semi-structured interview questions contained in the research guide centered on the Somali journey to South Africa, gender and migration, Somali coping strategies, Xenophobia/Afrophobia experiences and Somalis within the transnational space. Due to the nature of the open-ended questions asked, and the issues of interest to the study that emerged, the researcher asked more questions related to those in the research guide, based on the informants' responses, in order to seek further clarification. The challenge to the probing was that it consumed more time than expected, because some participants wanted to talk more on issues pertinent to the challenges they faced in the Gauteng province, especially about documentation, xenophobia and crime. Thus, the average time spent on each interview participant was approximately one hour. This time length spent on each interview was due to the researcher's probing and the need to understand the issues emerging from each participant. In order to deepen my understanding, I further interviewed the respondents that possessed more knowledge about the information that the study looked for.

### **3.5 Sampling procedure and sample size**

The term 'sample' connotes a selected small part of a population taken in order to represent the wider population. This study adopted non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling relies on a subjective attempt to pick a particular sample that can

generate the required data rather than random selection of the population to be studied (Battaglia, 2008). In this case, I was at liberty to decisively select the sample that I felt could generate the data my study required. The study adopted purposive sampling, because, “in purposive sampling, you decide what needs to be known and set out to find people who can and are willing to provide information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Bataglia, 2008; Tongco, 2007).” Other sampling methods did not suit this study, because I was looking for a population that had been affected by Xenophobia/Afrophobia, in order to hear their stories. Thus, this study used snowballing sampling technique where the participants interviewed were identified and reached through Somali Women Network (SASOWNET) and Action Support Center (ASC). The South Africa Somali Women Network is a group of Somali women that aims at building a platform on which they can raise their voices and develop their potentials collectively. ACS is a non-governmental organisation that acts in liaison with other Bodies like SASOWNET to create a robust and effective conflict and resolution network in South Africa intended to enable migrants to cope with challenges they face in the country. They work in liaison with each other in strategizing activities envisioned to improve Somali women’s lives. SASOWNET and ASC members were the means through which the researcher reached the individuals that could provide necessary information for this study. The gatekeeper’s letter that I received from the ASC was not an automatic guarantee of accessing the Somali women, but, it categorically stated that the organization would assist in establishing contacts with the Somali community. They had informed the Somali community board chair person, and the South Africa Somali women’s network leaders, who facilitated the search for the right participants targeted by the study. In Pretoria, for instance, it was not easy to establish those families that had been affected by the overt Xenophobia-Afrophobia, and were willing to participate in the interview process as the two informants/interpreters had not lived at that particular place for very long, and so they had to ask other people, who after interviewing them, revealed that there were

other people who were also affected. Thus, for that reason, the snowballing technique was appropriate. Also, I got in touch with Somali students Suleiman and Osman, from the University of Johannesburg, who gave me the contact numbers of students from the University. One of the students from Witwatersrand University introduced me to others, who in turn also introduced me to their colleagues. After interviewing those students telephonically, I would ask them whether they knew any students that would supply the study with information that the study sought.

The study comprised forty research participants. There were two Action Support members of management that were interviewed in-depth. The ASC members that were interviewed were the project manager and the organizational manager. Given their position in the Action Support Center, they were deemed suitable to generate information about ASC interventions among Somalis with regards to the Xenophobia-Afrophobia phenomenon. The ASC also provided information about how Somali women responded to Xenophobia-Afrophobia. There were 38 Somali people within and outside SASOWNET that were interviewed, a sample that comprised Somali academics from the Universities of Johannesburg, Pretoria, Fort Hare and Wits.

Forty is a good number for qualitative research according to several authors. According to Francis et.al (2010:1229), sample size in qualitative studies is justified by interviewing participants until reaching 'data saturation', where no more new information would emerge from the participants (Francis et.al, 2010:1229). Creswell recommends 20 to 30 participants; Dezin & Lincoln recommends 30-50 interviewees; Morse recommends 20-30 interviewees (Marshall et al 2013; Francis et.al 2010:1229). Thus, despite those contestations from various methodologists, the saturation number seems to overlap at 30 (Marshall et al, 2013:13). Barker & Edwards suggests that sample size of at least 30 participants is a saturation mean number (2012).

### 3.6 Study Site

The researcher chose Gauteng province as an appropriate site for the study because it's the entry point of most of Somali migrants into South Africa. On the other hand, Gauteng has a big Somali community as compared to other parts of South Africa. Pursell (2005:16) observes that majority of Somalis in Johannesburg live around the areas of Fordsburg and Mayfair; places that are historically Indian (Pursell, 2005:16). In Pretoria, the largest Somali community lives in Pretoria West, next to the Department of Home Affairs, where they come to seek asylum, and operate businesses. The data pertaining to Somali women experiences was collected from Mayfair in Johannesburg and Pretoria West; areas that have bigger populations of Somali women staying together than any other part of South Africa (Ali & Ali, 2013; ASC, 2014; Jennifer, 2015; Pursell, 2005:16; Niyigena, 2013; Jinnah, 2010; Shaffer, 2012:157 ). The interviews related to the interventions that the Action Support Center was employed in, in support of Somali foreigners were conducted in Action Support Center premises located in Merrivale, Johannesburg. The interviews were conducted in different places, depending on the convenience and the availability of the venues.

In Johannesburg, the Somali migrants were interviewed at the Somali Community Board of South Africa (SACOB) premises, in their board room. The venue was suitable for the study because, the researcher would get a good number of SASOWNET members that came to learn English or for office consultations at the Somali board office. The Somali women leader, JJ, who was one of the key informants through the interviews conducted in Johannesburg, would direct Somali women to the place for the interviews. Also, the premise's was very convenient due to the site's proximity. It was near Osman (my interpreter) whose office was adjacent to the boardroom. There were two interviews that were conducted at the Somali taxi terminal near Mayfair shopping centers. They were conducted on the victims of Xenophobia/Afrophobia who were from Katlehong (East of Johannesburg).

In Pretoria, interviews were conducted in the so called ‘Somali place,’ next to the Home Affairs offices, where the Somali community operates businesses of all kinds. The researcher and the key informants/interpreter moved from one shop to the other, and house to house to interview the community. Conducting interviews in Pretoria West was not easy because most people that were interviewed were at their business places, either employed or self-employed. They worked at the Somali hotels and clothing shops where the interviews were interrupted whenever a customer got in to inquire about the price from the interviewee (who was either the shop owner or employee). Some of the people that the informant had contacted turned-down the appointment by saying that they were not available. I remember a Somali woman student, at the University of Witwatersrand, whom I called in order to interview. She responded that she was not interested with interviews, because, ‘she had enough of them.’

### **3.7 Population of the study**

A “study population” comprises all the subjects the researcher wants to study (Yount, 2006). Target participants for this study included Somali women. They were reached through the South African Somali Women Network (SASOWNET), and Action Support Centre (ASC), and through the community leaders in Johannesburg and Pretoria. The study aimed at interviewing Somali women with the purpose of documenting their experiences. Although I was aware that highlighting women’s experiences from men’s perspective could reinforce gender biases, I interviewed men too on the justification that there were instances that women were not accessible. On the first and last days in Mayfair and Pretoria West respectively, women that I had planned to interview were not available. I ended up interviewing men that were connected to women. For instance, Osman was an official in the South Africa Somali Board, Abdul was a community leader and leader of South African Somali Board, Suleiman was a leader at Pretoria community, and assists women in the documentation

renewal and so on. Also, the study included men to be interviewed because there were instances in which women were shying away from revealing Xenophobia-Afrophobia experiences of a sexual nature (i.e. rape and other forms of Gender Based Violence). I learnt from men that women do not say directly that they were raped, but figuratively put it that they were bitten or harassed without mentioning the sexual dimension. Thus, given the sensitivity of the sexually related issues highlighted by interview participants, and the need to grant confidentiality to the interview participants, I used pseudonyms in writing this work.

### **3.8 The background information about the interview participants**

The interview comprised 20 Somali women participants who arrived into the country in different periods. There were 14 Somali women who migrated from Somalia, and 6 women from Kenya. The six Somali women from Kenya can communicate both in Swahili and English. The women from Somalia can speak Arabic, Somali and few in English (Particularly those that took English lessons in Mayfair or had stayed in Kenya).

#### **3.8.1 Female participants**

##### **Kuresh**

Kuresh is a Somali from Mombasa (Kenya). She is 34 years old. She is a single woman leaving with a network of cousins in Pretoria. She arrived in South Africa in 2008. She was married before coming to South Africa, but was later divorced. She trained as a nurse in Nairobi. After completing her nursing course she did not get a job in Kenya and so she decided to leave the country to pursue new job opportunities. In spite of attaining a nursing qualification, she was unable to secure a job in South Africa. In South Africa she hoped for a better life so that she could assimilate into the country comfortably. She has suffered a range of problems, from police harassment to discrimination in the health centre. Kuresh is employed in a Somali restaurant as an

attendant. She came to South Africa on a temporary visa which expired two years ago. She could not renew her visa because the first time she did that, her permit application was rejected and she did not have enough money to launch an appeal. Her desire is to go to a 'First World' country like The United States of America.

### **Fatuma**

Fatuma, a single mother hails from from Mogadishu Somalia. She is in the age bracket of 40-45. She left Somali for Kenya in 2000 where she met a Kenyan man with whom she bore some children. After several years of the union, they divorced. The man was not playing his role as a husband, in terms of providing support for his family. She decided to leave the country in order to be far from the husband. She came to South Africa in 2012 and left her children in Kenya. In South Africa, Fatuma met a gentleman who was running a business in a location and they became engaged. They both resided in Pretoria West. The new husband was killed in the 2014 xenophobic attack. Fatima was three months pregnant when her husband was killed. The thieves broke into her house and raped her. She later lost the baby after she was manhandled by thugs.

### **Zara**

Zara is from Somalia. She is married with two children, a girl (10 years), and a boy (12 years). Both the children are in Somalia. She can speak Swahili and English fluently. She is 30 years old. Zara is married to a Kenyan Somali. They work at a clothing shop where they sell sportswear and Islamic attire. Zara arrived in South Africa in 2011 and moved to Cape Town before coming to Pretoria where she lives. She left the country (She went back to Somali after losing her husband) because of war and subsequently also left behind her children who are looked after by her family in Somalia. She left Kenya and travelled to South Africa through various countries by boat, a journey that saw her through the experiences of hunger akin to starvation, sleepless nights, and varying weather conditions. Zara lost her first husband in

Somalia during a war (he often traveled to Somali). Her children were left behind with her family. When she came to South Africa, she met a Kenyan man, who she described as a gentleman owing to his caring nature. Every two months, she sends some remittance home to his mother for the upkeep of the two children.

### **Rahma**

Rahma is a Somalian national who arrived in South Africa in 2008. She is 45 years old. She is a single mother with two sons that are living in Eastleigh, Kenya. She lost her husband at war in Somalia. Rahma received her elementary education in Somalia and later completed a certificate in teaching in Kenya. She left Somali because of insecurity caused by the Al-Shabaab insurgents. She travelled through Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique to South Africa. She describes this passage as a very tough and insecure experience as at times they would have to cross through thickets. During her journey to South Africa, she envisaged an environment with a good future; where the government would provide them with jobs. She was unable to get a job in South Africa for two years. Her friends within the SASOWNET accommodated her for some time until she started selling Somali tea and “Mandazi” (An East African donut). This work enabled her to pay for her accommodation which was being shared with two other Somali women. Moreover, she was able to send home some money to her sickly sister. She resides in Mayfair.

### **Zeinabu**

Zeinabu is a Somali from North Eastern Kenya. She lives in Pretoria West. She is in her mid-forties. Her father and mother were killed. She has two daughters who are in The United States of America. She lost her husband to a long illness and got engaged to another Somali in South Africa. She has a certificate in nursing, for which she trained in Nairobi. She hoped that she would use the certificate in South Africa, but that never happened. Zeinabu travelled through Tanzania, through Mozambique to South Africa, a journey that took her several months. Through her journey she tried to

avoid police, who would arrest her for being an illegal immigrant or who might beleaguer her for a bribe in order to allow her progress in her journey. She arrived in South Africa around the period of Xenophobia-Afrophobia in the year 2008. A few days upon her arrival, her husband was attacked at the location and later killed by looters who raided and robbed their shop for all its goods and money. Life became hard for her, as a newcomer in a new environment without a spouse that could help her. She suffered some depression for long but later overcome it. She found a part-time job at a restaurant. She would also sell perfume to the Somalis. Her biggest problem in South Africa is insecurity. Zeinabu is nursing a wound on her left shoulder which she sustained when she resisted some members of a gang who had ambushed her for money.

### **Maria**

Maria hails from Somalia. She left Somalia because of war. She came to South Africa in 2007. She is 37 years old. She lost her two siblings in an attack that was carried out by the Al-Shabaab militia. Maria is the sole survivor of her family following the deaths of her sister and her parents who had died earlier on. She arrived unaccompanied to join her husband who was living in Mayfair. She joined her husband who was running a well-stocked shop that was later burnt down during the xenophobic attack of 2008. They lost everything in the shop. Her husband started a small Spaza shop which hardly sustains them because; they pay an amount of 2,500 rand per month for rent. Nevertheless, Maria works in the Johannesburg city centre in a Somali shop, where she supplements the little income her husband earns. Although Maria is not fluent in English, she is able to articulate herself reasonably. She learnt the language from a certain non-governmental organisation aimed at empowering migrants in South Africa. She is three months pregnant and has been receiving little support from her acquaintances.

## **J.Che**

J.Che is from Nairobi County (Kenya) but claims to have lived in Nyeri County (Kenya). She is 44 years old and is single. J.Che has two daughters who are in Kenya. Before coming to South Africa she was running a business in Nyeri County (Karatina open Air Market). She left Kenya for South Africa in search of employment opportunities. She holds a certificate in computer sciences and a diploma in dressmaking. She travelled to South Africa on a boat in order to avoid cross-border checks that could either have either resulted in paying fines or being arrested. She runs a shop in Johannesburg that sells Somali clothing and perfumes. Before she settled in Johannesburg, she lived in Cape Town. She has employed two people in her shop, both Somalis from Somalia. In addition to owning a shop, she has a restaurant that prepares Somali dishes. J.Che was married to a Somalian she met in South Africa. After experiencing an abusive relationship which she could not withstand anymore, her marriage ended in divorce.

## **Amaani**

Amaani, a Kenyan Somali comes from North Eastern. She is 37 years old. Her husband Mohamed is living with her in Mayfair. She came to South Africa alone in 2013 and was later married to Ahamed. Her husband is self-employed as a taxi driver on Mayfair to Pretoria West. Amaani had never met Abdul, her husband before. She was introduced by her relative who had worked with Abdul. Amaani works in a Somali restaurant where she gets some income to boost the family income. She says that it's good to do that because the husband income is not enough to pay the rent, and sustain the family back at home.

## **Amina**

Amina is from Somalia. She is 35 years old and married with four children. All four children reside with her. She is from the Ogaden clan. Amina came to South Africa alone. She left Somalia in order to flee the clan violence in her country. She left from Somali on 2007 after a missile hit their house. She lost her mother and father and all her family members, except her brother, Suleiman who ran away sustaining severe injuries. Amina has a wound on her left shoulder which she got after the missile strike. She still fosters an expectant wish to see her brother Suleiman alive again. Amina and other Somali women fled towards Kenyan borders. They entered into Kenya where they got some support from their relatives living in North Eastern Kenya before proceeding to other destinations. Amina travelled to Tanzania with the intention of settling there. Her husband, who by this time was a friend she had known for a long time encouraged her to come to South Africa. This invitation sounded promising to Amina who had by this time become very desperate. She left other women she was travelling with and proceeded alone to Mozambique by boat and on foot. The journey took her approximately one month, from Somali to South Africa. She had no documents when she left home. Her future husband arranged for her asylum in Pretoria. She was staying at home looking after her kids until her husband's Spaza shop was vandalised in 2012. She lost everything and it became hard for them to raise the house rent. The Somali community contributed some money so that the husband could start a business that would support her young family.

## **Aisha**

Aisha is a single woman from Mogadishu (Somalia). She is 27 years old and was married before she came to South Africa. In 2007, she was married by force to an Al-Shabaab militia who abducted her from her parents at home. As the mother resisted, the Al-Shabaab shot the mother on the arm and disappeared with Aisha. She stayed with her husband who abused her for a year and bore him a son. Aisha escaped from

her husband at night and left him baby behind. She is unaware of her baby's whereabouts and is uncertain whether he is still alive or dead. She describes it as a mystery. Aisha fled to Kenya, a journey that was very risky as a woman travelling alone. Aisha stayed in Kenya for a few days in the camp and later proceeded towards Tanzania and Mozambique, a journey that took her approximately one month. While in Mozambique, the police spotted her and arrested her for not possessing the correct documents. She was later released and eventually arrived in South Africa. When she came to South Africa, she was employed at a restaurant in Johannesburg. Aisha now owns a small shop that sells fruit and vegetable. Her aspiration is to be able to speak English so that she can be able to communicate with the locals. She also needs to make it her prerogative to communicate in English in order to better converse in public institutions such as Home Affairs, hospitals and schools.

### **Aiyana**

Aiyana, 38 year old woman is originally from South of Somalia. She moved to Mogadishu where she stayed several years before leaving the country. She left Somalia because of war that affected her family. She arrived in South Africa in 2008 to join her cousin who arrived in the country several months before her. Aiyana speaks English, albeit with difficulty. She points out there was a non-governmental organisation that offered English classes in Mayfair. She can also speak Arabic and Somali language. Aiyana runs her own Spaza shop in Pretoria West. She is one of the women leaders in her community.

### **Ayan**

Ayan left Somalia because of a high level of insecurity. The 24 year old, lost her father and mother. They were both killed in Mogadishu where they were running a textile business. Ayan left the country in 2011 after her parents were killed by the Al-Shabaab. She has cousins in Gauteng who encouraged and facilitated her coming. She runs a small business of perfumes that enables her to contribute R300 every month to

her cousin who is accommodating her. She is approximately 6 months pregnant and is dependent on her cousin to care for her. Ayan was married to a Somali in South Africa who later divorced her. Her husband was living in Johannesburg with her until the separation. He later moved to Mamelodi, but she has not heard from him since. She says that South Africa is better off compared to Somalia in terms of peace. The movement is not controlled as in Kenya, especially recently with the rise of the Somali Al-Shabaab militias within the country. She has a refugee's permit which she keeps renewing every month before it expires. She finds it hard to do because she cannot read, write, nor communicate in English and thus she has to use a third party to assist.

### **Sarah**

Sarah, a Kenyan Somali comes from Eastleigh (Nairobi). She is 30 years old and is married to Abdul who is far older than her. Sarah came to South Africa in 2015, alone. She lives in Pretoria West with the husband. She was introduced to her husband by her cousin and had never met him before that. Her husband is self-employed. Sarah is grateful because her husband, who distributes goods to other Somalis business people, is able to pay the rent, and sustain her. Sarah, who holds a certificate in accounts, is waiting for her husband's financial support so that she can start a small business selling Somali clothing. Sarah's journey was a risky one, especially because she was the only woman travelling in a boat with Somali and Kenyan men. At night she had to keep awake and stay vigilant. She was however fortunate enough to travel with a Somali gentleman who agreed to travel alongside her under the false pretence of being her husband.

### **Amira**

Amira, a 60 year old Somali woman is living in Pretoria West. She came to South Africa in 2005 to flee conflicts in Somalia. She cannot speak English but she can speak a bit of the Swahili language, because she stayed in the Daadab refugee camp for a few years, where she intermingled with some Somalis from Kenya. Amira lost her

husband in the Somali war that made her flee to Kenya and later to South Africa. She travelled through Tanzania, to Mozambique, on a boat and then proceeded on foot. She has lived in Mpumalanga, Thembisa and Johannesburg, before going to Pretoria. She recounted her numerous ordeals at Thembisa, and Gauteng where at one time she was told that South Africa is not Mogadishu and so she must go back to her home. All her businesses that she had started in the abovementioned towns were vandalised. Amira now owns a grocery shop in Pretoria.

### **Hilkam**

Hilkam, from Mogadishu has been in South Africa since 2008. She is 35 years old. She arrived in South Africa accompanied by her mother and her younger brother. She arrived in Johannesburg where herself and her family were accommodated by her relatives that reside in Mayfair. Hilkam and her family came to South Africa to flee political conflicts in Somalia. She lost several relatives including her brother who perished in the bomb blast that Alshabab militia exploded in a hotel in Mogadishu. Hilkam started a clothing business in Johannesburg, which is the only source of income for the family.

### **Sahra**

After war in Somalia, Sahra fled from her country towards Kenya. Sahra, a 30 year old arrived in South Africa after a few weeks of travelling in Kenya with her friends in the country. Sahra later moved to South Africa where she was looking for peace and a stable nation free from violence. She came to South Africa through Tanzania, Mozambique and eventually arrived in 1999. She is married to a Kenyan Somali who she met in Kenya on her way to South Africa. Sahra lives in Johannesburg and can speak English, which she is not too proficient in. She learnt it from a certain NGO that empowers migrants with the language.

## **Aisha**

Aisha, 44 year old is originally from Somali but later acquired Kenyan citizenship after marrying a Kenyan residing in Mombasa. Aisha has two children from her husband, tragically later on, she lost her son to Malaria. After their union, she stayed in Kenya before travelling to South Africa. The two had conflicts that led to separation. Aisha decided to leave Kenya with her children and go to South Africa. She has some relatives in Mayfair, who facilitated the journey to South Africa. Aisha speaks English, Swahili and Somali. After coming to South Africa, she met a Somalian man from her village who married her. After a few years the man divorced her. She is now employed in a textile shop in Johannesburg. Her daughter works and is studying toward a degree in Social Science at The University of Johannesburg (UJ).

## **Fatimah**

Fatimah, a 27 year old was born in the South of Somalia. Fatimah lost her mother when she was young, but was raised by her elder sister. She is married with two children. She left the country in 2012 after abandoning an Al-Shabaab member who she had been married to. She fell in love with him not knowing that he was an Al-Shabaab member. Her journey to South Africa was marked with many struggles because she had little money to spend on the way. She stayed for ten days without water and food. She remembers that on the Somali Kenya border her money and precious ornaments were stolen by the border check police. She arrived in South Africa on October 2012, in order to run away from the husband. Fatimah is not employed but relies on the husband she married several years after her arrival in South Africa. She discloses that a major reason for her marriage is that she relies on her husband for her upkeep and maintenance. She stays at home performing domestic chores and looking after her family. Her husband does not allow her to go out and work because he believes that women should stay at home.

## **Habiba**

Habiba from Mogadishu has been in Dadaab for ten years and regards Kenya as her second home. She is 37 years old. Johannesburg was Habiba's first destination, and she did not know anyone. However, she spotted a woman dressed like a Somali woman in Hijab, and had a conversation with her. The woman took her to the SASOWNET leader who welcomed her as a sister. After her money and clothes were stolen along the journey, Habiba had nothing left. She came without documents and therefore fell into a lot of trouble because she had no money for the "fine." She stayed with one SASOWNET member who assisted her until she got a job and was able to rent a house with another person. She is employed in a Somali restaurant in Johannesburg on a salary that cannot sustain their rent and bills.

## **Amran**

Amran is a Kenyan residing in Pretoria. She is originally from North Eastern part of Kenya, but later relocated to Nairobi to look for job opportunities. She left the country in 2011 to pursue job opportunities in South Africa. Johannesburg was her destination as she knew a few friends that had left the country before her. Amran's friends accommodated her for several months before she left to Pretoria. Amran is employed in a Somali shop that sells Somali ethnic clothing. She has a responsibility over her two sisters back in Kenya, who depend on her for education. In that respect, she has a small business of perfume in partnership with her friend in Pretoria.

## **Pretty**

Pretty is an Action Support Centre official residing in Johannesburg. Pretty is a South African, who is in her early forties. Pretty is in charge of the community liaison office, which connects the organisation with the surrounding migrant communities.

## **Jennifer**

Jennifer hails from Kenya, and holds a Kenyan passport. However, she was born of British parents who moved into Kenya. She is the project manager of the Action Support Centre. When she speaks, she shows great love for Kenya, where she stayed before migrating to South Africa.

### **3. 8.2 Male participants**

#### **Ali**

Abdi Farah is a Somalia national aged 30 years old. He is a Somali Bantu from the central part of Somali. He is single with no children. He left for Kenya but did not have documents that would permit him to stay in the country and so he ended up coming to South Africa in June 2011. He came to South Africa in pursuit of better life, after a friend told him that the country is fantastic in terms of peace and that he would get documents that could allow him to stay in the country legally. He is employed at a Spaza shop in the Pretoria west locations. Abdi has a kidney impairment after thugs shot him in 2012 in Pretoria. Ali is very much involved in community engagements that involve Somali women.

#### **Abdi Ha**

Abdi Ha is from the Northern part of Somalia which is currently referred to as the Somali land. He was born in 1978 in a camp. There was a war between Ethiopia and Somali, and children were among the targets for killers. He belongs to the Ogaden clan which is one of the largest ethnic groups. His mother had to take him out of the warring environment. Abdi is from among the first group to arrive in South Africa. He arrived in South Africa in 1996. He was a street kid in Somalia. He is employed by a Somalian business man in Mamelodi West. Abdi Ha is one of the reliable leaders of the community, given his vast life experience in South Africa.

## **Sien**

Sien is a Somali of Kenyan origin (Garissa county). He is 35 years old. He lives alone in South Africa, as his wife and children were left behind. His siblings live in the United States of America and he wishes that one day he will be able to relocate to America. He lost both of his parents and his younger brother in the Al-shabaab attack in Mogadishu. He arrived in South Africa in 2011. Sien is a taxi driver responsible for the route from Pretoria West to Mayfair, Johannesburg. He became desperate for a job after being unemployed and at home for a while. Sien tells me that he is responsible for expediting his wife, children and clan back home to the country.

## **Mohamed Abdulizak**

Abdulizak hails from Somalia. He is 32 years old. He is single. He left Kenya in 2008 in order to pursue his dream of getting employed. When he arrived in South Africa he could not get a job. He began a small business in the township after working for a Somali. Abdulizak is pursuing his undergraduate degree in Social Sciences at University of South Africa (UNISA). Simultaneously he is doing a course on governance with the Thabo Mbeki African institute for leadership at the same university. His intention is to start a non-governmental organisation at home that will work with the youth in the country. In Pretoria, Abdul is involved in community work with the United Nations, where he works with the youth in locations. After coming to South Africa, he started his own business until 2012 when he sold all his businesses in order to study for his degree. Abdul, has benefited from South African scholarships which supported his tuition and upkeep. Mohamed has a great love for the emancipation of the Somali women. He is one of the young leaders with the Somali community who is engaged with the the organisation working with refugees, by engaging him in research that involve men and women from the Somali community, in Pretoria West.

### **Abdulaziz**

Abdul-Aziz is from the South of Somalia. He is 40 years old. He fled Somali Al-Shabaab forcing young people into recruitment. He has lived in Kenya for many years at the refugee camp in Daadab. He completed high school in one of the schools in Kenya. Due to the fact that that he couldn't live and move freely outside the camp in Kenya without documents he left the country. His two options were to go to Uganda or come to South Africa. Nevertheless, Uganda did not have the democratic space that allowed refugees to stay in the country. He did not want to go back to Somali where he would be forced to join the Al-shabaab. He came to South Africa in 2009. Abdulaziz runs his own Spaza shop in the Mamelodi Township. He stays with his family in Pretoria west. He has three children and one wife. One of the children is in Standard four. He is one of the community leaders in his community.

### **Mohamed Omar**

Omar is originally from Mogadishu. He is 42 years old. Omar is married with two children. His wife Zari is from Somalia. She came to South Africa where she met Omar and married him. He has a daughter and a son aged eight years and three months old, respectively. He left Mogadishu to Busia (Kenya) where he grew up. Due to several challenges including poverty in the county, he left for South Africa. He is running a clothing shop with his wife. Omar is fluent in Swahili and English languages. The Somalis in the community use him when they require interpretation for their papers or in government institutions. His two children have no valid papers to allow them to stay in the country after they were both rejected. Most Somali women rely on him when they need a translator at Home Affairs.

### **Abdirahman**

Abdirahman Mustaaaf, aged 24 was born in Kismayo, a port city in Southern Somalia. Kismayo was known as a safe haven for the warlords and the Al-Shabaab fighters. His father and brother were killed by the Al-Shabaab militia. His father, who was a law

abiding citizen, soldier and loyal to the Siad Barre regime who opposed the warlords, was assassinated by those militias. In 2004, his father joined the federal transition government on a mission to fight the extremists and warlords. He was assassinated in cold blood in July 2009 at Maka Al Mukarama Mogadishu, Somalia together with the other Somali soldiers. Abdulrahman has been approached by Al-Shabaab leaders to be part of the group, but together with other five youths, he refused to be lured into their activities. After their refusal to become members of the Al-Shabaab group, the militias captured and jailed them for 30 days. During those days, they were being brain washed and indoctrinated. Fortunately, one of the five detainees was among the Al-Shabaab security that was in charge of night patrolling in their dungeon. He told them that he would set them free if they promised to immediately vacate the country, because the al-Shabaab leaders were planning to kill them the next day. Abdulrahman left Somalia towards the Kenyan border and later to Mombasa, where his departure point would lead him to South Africa. He called home and was informed that his mother and young brother were killed a night after he had escaped from prison as revenge. Abdulrahman was coming to South Africa to seek security and an environment that champions human rights. When he arrived in South Africa, he went to Home Affairs in Pretoria to seek asylum. After an interview and providing an account of his story, his application was rejected. Even the appeal board rejected his story too. Abdulrahman has been moving from door to door to launch his appeal against his rejection, including Public Protector's office (6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015) only to be rejected. After finishing his degree of Social Sciences at Fort Hare University (in 2015) he claims that he is unemployable because he is in the country illegally. He cannot go back to Somalia for fear that they would kill him. He described going back to Somalia as a suicidal move.

His situation is desperate; he is unemployed and fears going back to his country that is at war. Abdurahman is the only male child left in family. He looks after his single wife who was widowed during the Somali war.

### **Abdalla Hasan**

Hasan, a Kenya from Garissa County resides in Pretoria West. He came to South Africa in 2007. He came to look for employment because he heard from his cousins that South Africa was a land of opportunities. Hasan has a high school certificate although he has completed some courses in computers. Before he established himself in Pretoria West, he lived in Mpumalanga, Cape Town and Eastern Cape and has been affected by Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks in the aforementioned places. Hasan is a cashier at a Somali restaurant in Pretoria west. He is on a valid business permit. Despite his valid status in the country, he claims that it doesn't make any difference in terms of the states and locals' perceptions about them. Abdalla is married to a South African Woman. Abdalla tells me that he plays the role of an intermediary between Somalis and the South African locals, especially when there are conflicts.

### **Mohamed**

Mohamed is originally from Kismayo. He has lived in the Dadaab refugee camp where he fled for safety. He went to the camp for fear of persecution by the Al-Shabaab because he did not want to join the group. His nuclear family was killed by the Al-Shabaab Islamists who claimed that they were spying on them. Mohamed, aged 25 years is single and is employed in an Indian shop as a shop attendant. He can speak English and a bit of Swahili which he learnt in the Dadaab refugee camp. He travelled by boat to South Africa in order to avoid the border checks as he had no documents to show. He arrived in South Africa on October 2010, in order to seek peace and security. After arriving in South Africa, he sought asylum in Pretoria. It was suggested that he use bribery in exchange for assistance but he had no money. Mohamed helps the women whenever they want to fill forms pertaining to the permit renewal process.

### **Abaz**

Abaz is a Somalian aged 60. He came to South Africa in 1999 to seek asylum after the war escalated in Somalia. He has two children, a daughter and a son, who are living

in USA as refugees. He lived in the Dadaab refugee's camp before going to Somalia and later began his journey to South Africa. Mohamed travelled on a boat that was overloaded with migrants of different nationalities. He had no documents while coming to South Africa. His movement without documents was possible because he travelled on a boat without traversing any country border. Mohamed is a respected member of the community and is sought to be one of the custodian of the history of Somali in South Africa. He lived in the Eastern Cape and Western Cape and is now in Pretoria west (Gauteng). He has no valid permits. Mohamed was running a shop in Eastern Cape until his business was vandalised. He has never been compensated for the loss he incurred. He is now living on the remittances from his two children who are overseas, and depends on temporary jobs that arise whenever a certain NGO wants some orientation into the community or language interpretation.

### **Bashir**

Bashir is from Garissa, Kenya. He is between 28-32 years old, and is not married. He was employed at a cell phone accessory business in Nairobi, where he would sell the gargets on commission. The income that he generated from his commissions could not sustain him. Also, Bashir is a provider in his family-he supports his three young siblings that are in high school. After losing her husband to sickness, his mother, a widow, had no reliable source of income that could sustain her family. He came to South Africa in order to maximise his income, so that he could support his poor family. He arrived in South Africa in 2008. He lived in the Eastern and Western Cape, and is currently in Gauteng. He started a Turk shop at Katlehong location (Johannesburg). In 2016 March during the Xenophobia/Afrophobia attack, his business burnt. He lost everything except his car which he uses to purchase the stock. Bashir is the main provider in their family as the only person that is fairerly stable in the family.

## **Bishar**

Bishar is originally from Juba, Somalia. He came to South Africa to find security. He left Somali after his family was accused of supporting the ruling government through spying for the war militia. He came to South Africa in 1998. He is 65 years old and is one of the first Somalis to arrive in South Africa. Bishar lives in Pretoria West with his wife who he remarried after his first wife was killed by the robbers that broke into his house. He has two sons and one daughter, who are overseas. Bishar owns a restaurant that sells Somali food in Pretoria and Johannesburg. Bishar is a respected Somali community leader who helps women obtain information about the justice system i.e. lawyers for human rights.

## **Ahmed**

Ahmed left Somalia after experiencing war that resulted in him losing his two brothers and a sister. He is the last born of the family and takes responsibility over the late brothers' children in paying school fees. He is twenty years and is studying toward an undergraduate degree in Social Science at the University of Witwatersrand. He came to South Africa in 2008 looking for peace and opportunities in the country. Ahmed, 32 year old is single and lives on the bursaries that he gets from the school and income he generates from his shop. He has employed a Somalian to help manage it. He speaks English, Arabic and the Somali language fluently. Ahmed is also hired by the NGOs as an interpreter whenever they need one. He is usually in direct contact with the Somali women seeking support from such organisations. He has plans to pursue his studies to a Doctorate level and become a researcher.

## **Suleiman**

Suleiman has lived in South Africa, Pretoria for seven years. He says that Somali is too insecure to live. He recounts several moments that he escaped from bombs that were either set up in concealed places or through suicide bombers. He has gunshot mark on his abdomen which a bullet from the Al-Shabaab missed the target and fell

on him. Suleiman position for the Al-Shabaab is that they are not true adherents of Islam because they have no respect, even to their fellow Muslims. Suleiman is 50 years old and came to South Africa to Pretoria after staying with his brother who lives in Johannesburg. He gets some support from his son occasionally. His son is 'well-up' because his big shop is doing well. Also, he receives some constant remittances from his daughter that is in USA. His children have to send this money because he has some health problems too. Suleiman is one of the many men that have served as a community leader for so long. He is relied upon by the Somali community as a mediator whenever disputes arise among the Somali community members.

### **3.9 Ethical Appraisal**

In his work, understanding research, Newman (2009) notes that research is intrusive and could affect feelings and behaviors of the people interviewed. The research unfolded with the clarification of the study, to interview participants and assure them of confidentiality in the entire process of the research in order to gain trust from them. I obtained the gate keeper's letter from the Action Support Center (ASC) which allowed me to interview the members from the same organization, as well as from the Somali Women Network (SASOWNET), an organization that was founded by the ASC.

The ethical clearance was obtained from the University's Research office as part of the protocol required before conducting any interviews. Before the interviews, I informed the participants that I would record information they gave and thus, asked for their consent, and made sure that they were fine with the audio recorder, rather than hiding it in my pocket in fear that they would refrain from producing information that was sensitive to them. The research participants were at ease with audio recording, but asked for protection of their identity, especially on issues pertaining to sexual assault, or information about authorities like police force, immigration and information that would jeopardize their stay in the country. The informed consent procedure was

followed to ensure the respondents were at ease during the interviews, and in fact, most of them were enthusiastic to hear that their information was being recorded. Also, they actually asked for the replay of their voices to hear how they speak. In fact, after I had assured them of confidentiality, some said that there was no problem with quoting them without hiding their identity.

The Somali community members were informed about their freedom of participating or refraining from participating in the interview should they have felt so. Nonetheless, a few withdrew from participation, while others said that they did not want their images taken by cameras for fear of victimization. Some interview participants, especially the young women shied away from the male interviewer. I decided to get a woman, who was a SASOWNET member whose support I enlisted in order to give them confidence to speak to a male researcher. I introduced myself and explained the rationale for the study before conducting the interviews.

The Somali community was curious to know what the interview data was intended for, and whether it could jeopardize their life in Gauteng. On the other hand, some thought that I was a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or a non-governmental organization official that came listen to their problems and later give them financial assistance or facilitate resettlement in a Western country. I clarified to them that I was not an NGO or a United Nations official but a student from the University of KwaZulu-Natal solely interested in research that would hopefully facilitate the migrants' welfare in South Africa. For the sake of their confidentiality, I guaranteed them anonymity and confidentiality of the information they generated. I did this by assuring them that pseudonyms would be used in the data presentation and that the information they granted would be destroyed after the research report was generated.

### **3.10 Data sources**

I sourced the primary data from Somali women through South African Somali Women's Network (SASOWNET), Action Support Centre (ASC) and community leaders in Pretoria and Johannesburg, who facilitated contacts with men and women that provided the study with a considerable amount of data.

Accessing all the research participants targeted by this purposive study was not possible because some individuals that were interviewed lived outside the study site (Mayfair and Pretoria West). With regards to that, telephonic interviews were conducted with more learned Somalis at the University of Johannesburg, Pretoria and UNISA. There was a need to source information from such individuals in order to improve the quality of responses and most importantly to see reality from the standpoint of educated participants. Sourcing this information was also a challenge, because it was expensive and the telephonic sounds recorded by the electronic recorder were not clear. Nevertheless, the telephonic interviews were able to generate adequate information that added to the interviews done, face to face.

The study drew secondary information from the newspapers articles (on Afrophobia - from 2008 to 2015), journal articles, books, theses, and conference papers.

### **3.11 Analysis and Presentation of data**

The study adopted a thematic analysis, where the data collected was organized according to emerging themes based on the research questions. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analyzing and interpreting patterned meanings or 'themes' in qualitative data (Braun, Clarke & Terry, 2014). The analysis of the data began with the transcription of the voice records from the audio recorder, in a period of one and a half months. In order to facilitate fast data transcription, I used the online speed changer that allowed me to follow the recorded information at slow motion, instead of repeatedly rewinding the recorder, which could have taken a lot of time. It was

necessary to use it because the interpreter and some Somalis that spoke English or Swahili talked fast or mispronounced some words. The length of the transcribed data was 144 pages normal spaced (1.5). Transcription, argues Hill (2012), is a vital undertaking through the research process because the data that would be used for the analysis is made available in writing.

The main themes were identified after perusing through the transcribed data word by word and at the same time, using the University's facilitated codification software, dubbed *Nvivo*, a program for qualitative data analysis.

### **3.12 Limitations of the study**

The language barrier that the study anticipated earlier prior to field work was one of the constraints that the study encountered. Most of the research participants spoke Somali only and therefore, getting an interpreter was a prerequisite to successful communication between me and the research participants, especially those that migrated from Somalia, a country that predominantly speaks Somali and Arabic languages. However, the Somalis from North Eastern Kenya and Eastleigh, Nairobi did not pose any communication challenge to the study, because they were fluent in English and Swahili, languages that I was proficient in. On the other hand, although there was an interpreter, for the non-English/Swahili speakers it was likely that the interpretation distorted some meanings that would have been understood clearly if there was no intermediary person (no interpreter) between the interviewer and the research participant.

Being a Christian researcher who was to interview Somali women was initially daunting because Somalis are predominantly Islamic adherents but later, I was able to access the community thanks to the commonalities that we share such as being East Africans who are proficient in; language, nationality, and most importantly the research assistant that introduced me to their social-cultural and religious norms. This orientation was inevitable, because Somali community has a closed culture that needs

an outsider to be aware of, before interacting with them. For instance, in the first few days at Mayfair, I stretched my arm to shake hands with women, only to be greeted by the word of mouth. Such an experience was embarrassing to me because I never knew that men are not allowed to shake women's hands unless, she is your spouse, or having some close relation with you i.e. by blood or affinity.

Interviewing Somali women as male was not an easy task due to their cultural and religious backgrounds because it limits their interaction with males, especially the outsiders. The young Somali women would shy away from some questions related to gender and sex politics, albeit their significance to the study. Nevertheless, I solicited the support of a female leader who accompanied me during the interview process, and had an informant that contacted women of whom she knew would give information that the study sought for.

In the initial stages of my field work preparation, many people cautioned me against conducting the study among the Somali community for security reasons. This is because Al-Shabaab militias who had massacred Kenyans for religious, political and economic interest had sympathizers and funders outside Somali borders including South Africa. Such a perception was fear-provoking. As a Kenyan I had watched innocent people massacred at the Nairobi Westgate mall, Garissa University, Mandera quarry, and other repeated attacks on Kenyan soil in the media. This had brought into my memory images of the Al-Shabaab militias, whenever I intermingled with the young people. This fear of Somalis, enhanced by memories of Al-Shabaab attacks, would later end after realizing that Somalis living in Gauteng had fled to South Africa due to political instabilities exacerbated by the Al-Shabaab militias. One of my assistants was a victim of the Al-Shabaab in their cell/prison. He expressed succinctly that if he had gone back to Somalia, they would hunt him down and place an assassination attempt on him (because he would be seen as a traitor).

Xenophobia/Afrophobia was a very sensitive topic to Somalis, especially women, who expressed some hesitation to uncover their experiences, because they feared the interpreter who was known to them. On the other hand, fear of victimization by the society or authorities made some Somali women shy away from elucidating on what had transpired within the transnational space, especially gender based violence that was the aftermath of wars and Xenophobia/Afrophobia. Some of the refugees did not have valid papers, after their permits were rejected by Home Affairs. This made the Somalis reluctant to expose some information pertaining to their status which would jeopardize their stay in the country as it could lead to deportation or imprisonment. Thus, getting information from the Somali women was not an easy task due to the aforementioned aspects. These members of the community would have generated very rich information that could have been of help to this study, if there was no fear of victimization.

At Mayfair, I discovered that the responses that were transpiring from the research participants had little information about the overt xenophobia. Therefore, after some inquiry from the Somali Community Board of South Africa (SACOB) and South African Somali Women (SASOWNET) and a few of the research participants, it was clear to me that most of the Xenophobia/Afrophobia victims (overt xenophobia manifested through violent attacks) were not residing in Mayfair. This was because violent attacks happened in townships. Although there were some narrations from those that were affected directly by the violence, most of them had come to the suburbs seeking refuge, and when the situation was calm, they went back to their businesses in Pretoria and other parts of Johannesburg. Due to this factor, I had to follow the victims of violent Xenophobia/Afrophobia attacks in Pretoria as well as continuing the interviews within Mayfair.

The language barrier was encountered because most Somalis from Somalia could not speak English- Somali and Arabic are the languages spoken in their country of origin.

The researcher had anticipated that he would use Swahili for those who could not express themselves in English. To my disappointment, most Somalis that originated from Somalia could neither speak Swahili nor English. Those that spoke Swahili and English came from Kenya (Coast, North Eastern provinces and Nairobi provinces) or were Somalis (from Somalia) that had interacted with Kenyans through trade, relatives and education, in Kakuma and Daadab refugee camps and so forth. Nevertheless, those that could speak Swahili had difficulties in understanding some terminologies that were asked by the researcher in Swahili because it was not easy to reformulate the question in Swahili, due to the fact that English terms have no Swahili equivalent, apparently or if they have, Somalis could not comprehend them. One of the interpreters, Osman, is an official in the Somali Community Board of South Africa (SACOB) office based in Mayfair and the rest of the two, Suleiman and Abdulrahman, were from Pretoria. With regards to their education background, the three of them are graduates from the University of Johannesburg, University of South Africa and Fort Hare, respectively.

Lastly, the study intended to conduct focus groups whereby, twenty research participants were to be interviewed. However this was not possible due to the targeted participant's nature of work which could not allow their availability. Therefore, the twenty people that were to be interviewed through focus groups were interviewed in-depth.

### **3.13 Self reflexivity**

The qualitative research method involves the researcher making meaning from a given phenomenon, whose outcome relies on both participants and researcher's viewpoints. Thus, due to researcher's prejudices and biases, the concept of self-reflexivity cannot be overlooked in the research process because it helps the researcher to introspect how factors such as belief systems, politics, clan system, religion, age, education level, stereotypes towards the participants have impact the data collection, interpretation,

report writing and thereafter, the recommendations (Hill, 2012; Jomeen & McSherry, 2010; Lambert, Mruck & Breuer, 2003; Roller, 2012). According to Hill (2012), any knowledge generated from the research cannot be absolutely objective due to researcher's bias. Therefore, dealing with such a shortfall demands the researcher to acknowledge and deal with the effects. The self-reflexivity aims at an honest inquiry and talking about one's self in relation to the research. It is a difficult process as it is not easy to reflect and discuss oneself. Thus, in order to have an honest research outcome devoid of researcher's prejudices and biases, I considered introspecting on how those social locations (language, gender, nationality, education and so forth) could affect data collection, and the thesis writing.

Being a Kenyan and a Swahili speaker was advantageous to me because most Somalis from Kenya could speak the Swahili language, our national and official language. Those that had migrated from Somali considered Kenya significant for their lives due to the bilateral trade relations between the two countries, remittances, intermarriage with Kenyan Somalis, and importantly a country of refuge. More recently they have been the key player in the Somali peace process, through anti-Al-Shabaab combat missions undertaken by the Kenyan defense forces (KDF). This was part of the African Mission in Somali (AMISON). The Somalis from Kenya preferred to speak to me in Swahili whenever they wanted to talk about sensitive issues about their bodies or other aspects that would make them victimized (that is, if the Somalis (from Somalia) heard the information they were giving me). This strategy was applied only when they realized that the interpreter and the people around us were non-Swahili speakers from Somalia.

I was a fellow foreigner, from East Africa, this seemed to make them feel secure and develop trust with me on matters pertaining to Xenophobia/Afrophobia realities that they would otherwise be hesitant to share with people whom they may not share any commonalities with. A Somali leader said it best when he revealed to me that Kenyans and Sudanese are knowledgeable in several social, political and international affairs

and therefore they call them to advise the Somali community whenever they face crises within the country.

Due to the fact that the female experiences were of a sexual nature, which they sometimes were diffident unveil, I interviewed men as well who seemed to express such incidences with more ease. The information that emerged from them revealed sexually related abuses that women could hardly speak of, simply because of my gender and their fear of victimization in case I revealed this information which ought to be confidential. On the other hand, I had to constantly reassure them that confidentiality would be maintained at all times especially to the rest of the community as they risked victimization should the society know that they were rape survivors.

After numerous correspondences with the Action Support Centre and South Africa Somali women's network, I was introduced to the South African Somali board chairperson, and the head of SASOWNET who were anticipating my arrival however this was not possible due to the ethical clearance delay. As soon as the ethical clearance was granted, I left for my residence Pretoria. The actual place of residence was Mamelodi East Township, Pretoria, where I used to commute to the study site daily. In Pretoria, I was accommodated by a priest at Waverly Catholic Parish, where I resided for some time and later moved to Saint Peter Clever Catholic Parish, Mamelodi, where I would stay until I completed my interviews. Travelling every day to the 'Somali Place' in Pretoria and Johannesburg was an expensive venture because, each of those journeys required me to use more than one vehicle (one way) –from Mamelodi to Pretoria, then to Somali place and back to Mamelodi. I would board 6 vehicles, and from Mamelodi to Mayfair (Johannesburg) I would board 3 vehicles + Metro-train (Gautrain), one-way.

Despite the constraints that I experienced throughout the data collection in the Gauteng province, and the anxiety prior to the field work, I was able to gradually

access the Somali community, thanks to the four informants/interpreters, that enabled me to build a good rapport with the Somalis. This established relationship with the community members, and the link with my fellow countrymen and women who spoke Swahili, made me feel part of the community and I was naturally absorbed into it. Due to the trust that I built with them coupled with the realization that I was a foreigner like them, who originated from the territory they fled, East Africa, they unveiled their traumatic experiences more easily and that was sentimental to me. This experience of women narrating their past experiences in Somalia, and thereafter, stories about problems related to Xenophobia/Afrophobia, exposed deep seeded wounds which presented as an emotional phenomenon for me. I solicited support from my research aides who helped them deal with those traumatic experiences. Although I was following the research guide in detail, I allowed the research participants to narrate their past life, a phenomenon that provoked much information for the study. I was overwhelmed with their emotional expressions that caused them to cry, especially the women. For this reason I allowed them adequate time after interviews to recuperate from that emotive experience.

One of my informants, Abdurahman, made sure that I ate and was always safe. In Marabastad (Pretoria West), next to Home affairs, one of the most dangerous places in South Africa, he would walk me through the place and escort me to the bus terminal where he would leave me until he was sure that I boarded the minibus. In Johannesburg, Suleiman and J.Che were always ready and available for contacting the research participants who were residing in different parts of Mayfair.

### **3.14 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I discussed the qualitative research method which this study adopted for its nature of allowing the researcher to construct meaning out of a given phenomenon. This study which looked at the experiences of Somali women migrants needed such an approach for a deeper understanding of the datum. I expounded the

data collection method that the study used, the method of data analysis, ethical considerations and the study limitations were also highlighted. Also, I presented the reminiscence of the field work, by discussing my experience, and the fieldwork challenges.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **SOMALI WOMEN'S MIGRATION INTO SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter critically analyses the journey of Somali women migrants from Somalia and neighboring Kenya, with special concern on the rationale behind their migration into South Africa. Although these reasons for Somali migration unpacked in this study are arranged according to particular categories (like economic, political wars and so on), their responses cannot be limited to neat and clearly cut driving forces, but are intertwined forces that overlap each other. For instance, a woman that migrated for economic opportunities in South Africa could at the same time have been affected by fear of the Al-Shabaab and that same person could have been a victim of clan politics. The driving forces for Somali migration cannot be limited to war or economic instability, but intertwined factors that forced them to flee Somalia or Kenya, and opportunities that attracted them to South Africa. The migration of the Somali women is affected by their social locations which impact their migration patterns and ability to navigate the transnational space. Thus, this chapter unfolds by providing the social political, religious and cultural backgrounds of Somali nationals.

## 4.2 The contextual background of Somali Nationals

### 4.2.1 The Country

Figure 1: The Map of Somalia<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> Availabel at <http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/somalia-political-map.htm>

### **4.2.2 Geography**

Somali land is an Eastern African country that borders Kenya towards the South West, Ethiopia towards West and Djibouti towards North West. In terms of sea location, the country is on the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean coastlines that stretch as far as 3025 kilometres, and that puts the country into a very good position for transnational trade with its East African neighbours as well as the Middle East (Hadden, 2007;Putman, 1993). Further, Hadden (2007:6) points out that the country has 637,540 to 637,657 square kilometres land size curved out like the rhino horn, hence the reference ‘horn of Africa<sup>9</sup>.’ Somali has arid and Semi-arid land that has unreliable rainfall distribution and therefore is predominantly nomadic pastoralists. Among other challenges facing the country, draught that has been exacerbated by the rising environmental degradation activities has been a huge threat to the food security in the country (African Development Bank, 2013:4).

### **4.2.3 Population**

According to Vaidyanathan (1997:3), the demographic figures are not reliable due to the nomadic population that keeps moving with their cattle. This inaccuracy, notes Vaidyanathan (1997:3), is intensified by the erroneous estimates and unaccounted figures of the returnees and those leaving the country. According to the United Nation Population Fund (2014:18), the Somali population as per the year 2014 was 12, 316, 895. The United Nation Population Fund (2014:42) notes that Somalia is a young population with 45 percent accounting of the youth below fifteen while seventy five percent of the population represents the young people below thirty years. The Somali

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<sup>9</sup> Somali is also referred to as “the Horn of Africa”

population faces a multifaceted poverty facilitated by terrorism, inter-ethnic/clan conflicts and climatic changes worsened by the massive deforestation.<sup>10</sup>

#### **4.2.4 The Somali cultural system**

Although Somalia has a diverse population, the nation has often been misrepresented as a homogeneous community with one language, one clan and one ethnic group. The country comprises four major clans, namely, Hawiye, Darood, Dir, Digil-milifre or Rahanweyn, and also ethnic, religious and occupational minority groups like, Reer, Hamer, Barawani and Bajuni (Gundel, 2009:11; Home Office, 2015). The four major clans share power and resources inequitably in the country at the detriment of the minority. This inequality orchestrated violence in Somalia. Understanding this diversity within the clan system and kinship ties among Somalis is crucial, because, it's the key to comprehending the country's social-economic and political affairs. The majority clans are the privileged group that continue to enjoy state favours and opportunities at the expense of the minority clans that are socially, economically and politically side-lined (Hill, 2010). The human rights abuse and discrimination among the minority groups comprise the denial of equal opportunities to education, health, livelihood, jobs, and being prevented from intermarrying into the so called noble clans/majority groups, and being subjected to hate speech, among others (Hill, 2010; Hinds, 2013; Home Office, 2015). These majority groups have had differences because they struggle for resources and power as Barise & Elmi (2006) point out that they are the major factors that contribute to the internal feuds. In Somalia for instance, the Somali Bantus, are among the most marginalized group. This group originated from the East African coast and were brought by Arabs as slaves. Besides the Black

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<sup>10</sup> Most of the Somali households rely on charcoal and this causes destruction of the tree cover.

Somalis, Benadiri people and Somali occupational groups have been socially, politically and economically marginalized.

#### **4.2.5 Political background**

After the Somali civil war broke in the eighties, the nation saw a massive exodus of migrants fleeing the country for safety. Somali was destabilized by war for two decades, resulting in her citizens dying of hunger and killings. In recent years, the nation has been terribly affected by Al-Shabaab<sup>11</sup> attacks that have resulted in the death of many Somalis. Somalis as a result, have migrated in large numbers to South Africa and other countries across the globe seeking safety. The civil war and the Al-Shabaab militia that precipitated in the Somali crisis led to the migration of Somalis to Kenya and other countries within East Africa, and outside South Africa. The Somalis living conditions were exacerbated by the 2011 famine that saw many lives lost, and huge number of Somalis migrate to the neighbouring Kakuma and Daadab camps in Kenya, seeking humanitarian aid. For the last 25 years after the collapse of the Siad Barre regime, the nation has been marked by a disorganised stateless society; where a few are accumulating wealth for selfish interests, while the wider part of society suffers economic marginalisation. Although the country democratically elected President Sheikh Mohamed in 2012, the country has been experiencing ongoing insecurity and politically orchestrated conflicts among clans. Odowa (2013) rhetorically asks the question, ‘What is wrong with Somali leaders and our politics?’ Odowa (2013) argues that the nation faces a high level of insecurity and political instability and has never produced a leader that would rise above negative politics of clan, and fight against corruption, in order to address the social, economic and political upheavals that negatively impact on Somali livelihoods.

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<sup>11</sup>An al-Qaida affiliated group that has risen rapidly to prominence in the midst of Somali decades long-anarchy (See WISE, 2011)

#### **4.2.6 Feminization of Somali migration**

Due to gender hierarchies and the societal expectations toward a migrating population, the decision to migrate has been portrayed as a communal and a familial affair defined by those institutions. Also, the decision is motivated by the migrant's responsibility over the family left behind, in terms of sending home the remittances that would support their livelihoods. The family, argues Lalonde & Topel (1997), will continue to send family members to other countries in order to maximize their net income through foreign remittances. This sending, however, suggests a gendered migration, whereby the migrant women can only be sent and that the decision to migrate cannot originate from them. Nevertheless, notable literature (Brown, 2014; Shafer, 2012; van der Velde & Naerssen, 2016) points out that woman can also migrate on their own right and above all, they can move unaccompanied, within the transnational space.

The Social Network theory affirms that migration is not an individual activity but rather a social activity that involves decision informed by the interpersonal ties individuals have. The theory of Social Network points out that migrants have ties within the transnational space that provide migrants with information about risks involved, opportunities in the recipient country, cost of migrating[...] (Borgatti, et al, 2009; Poston & Bouvier, 2010:213; Oishi, 2002:7; Raghuram ,1999; Vandererf & Heering, 1996:154). Such information coupled with material support from existing ties in diaspora could facilitate migration of women unaccompanied by male counterparts or even a reliance on their families for a decision to relocate. These ties, which proffer information about the expectations in the country of destination, enable the migrants to strategize and envision activities to undertake in preparation to setting off on a journey to a new territory (Mahler and Pessar, 2008). Under the theory of Gendered Geographies of Power, there is imagination or the mind work element, that underpins the necessity of proper strategizing and envisioning activities to undertake before a migrant can set out on a journey. This study establishes that, before migration,

Somali women were imagining their mobility and the future of their destination country (South Africa). I argue this because, most women pointed out that they mobilized some resources (this involves a lot of planning) to support their long and risky journey to South Africa. Also, a handful of them envisioned a particular place to stay and who might potentially accommodate them. South Africa, an attraction to most migrants due to her multifaceted opportunities, was a source of admiration to most Somali women who overlooked several countries in Africa to get into her borders. In this respect, the cognitive perspective played a part in constructing images about South Africa that ensued planning their mobility in order to fulfill their expectations. When Zara heard that South Africa was a good country in terms of the opportunities, she started planning on coming to South Africa through mobilizing some resources.

After hearing that South Africa was a good country in terms of security and employment, I thought about moving into the country. I had too much expectations and hope in my mind of South Africa. Before I started my journey, I had to ask some friends and family members to give me some money so that my journey could be successful.

Mahler & Passar (2003) argue that people are born into a given social location that confers on them certain advantages and disadvantages (Pessar and Mahler, 2003:816). Zara was able to migrate to South Africa because she got financial support from her family members who are financially stable. If she had not been born into a family of stable family members and friends, it would be hard for her to migrate due to the fact that migration requires a lot of resources mobilized in view of the anticipated journey.

During the interviews, the researcher established that the Somali community in Mayfair and Pretoria comprised of economic migrants from Kenya, and refugees who fled from Somalia for fear of persecution. Amina who was a victim of Somali conflict came alone unaccompanied after losing her husband and father in the war. Due to the

harsh and insecure environment created by war, it's obvious that the decision to migrate was on an involuntary basis, given lack of alternatives to adapt in such an insecure environment. Amina's decision to migrate is well expressed in her story in that;

There was no one that decided or told me to move. When there is war, you just move in order to save your life first. There was terrible war and therefore I had to run away and save my life. I left our families who, some were killed. This was the time that husband or wife is on their own. I believe my husband died in that war, because I have never heard of him up to today. I left my child and run away. It's a real challenge because no one wants to be separated from their children. But I ran away, to save my life.

The independence of the Somali women in their decision to migrate unaccompanied by their spouses is propelled by the circumstances which they find themselves. In fact, due to the fear of the unknown reality ahead, one of the interview participants revealed that relatives would often discourage them from migrating and would advise them to just stay and endure the predicaments that every other Somalian encountered.

Shafer, is originally from Somalia but married a Kenyan from the North Eastern province, who later divorced her with her two children. Due to that experience she decided not to go back to an unstable Somalia but to move on to another country. Shafer said:

They did not allow me to go to South Africa. My family knew that South Africa is not peaceful. The only way I came to South Africa, I left my children behind and later found my way of bringing my child to South Africa.

### **4.3 Factors influencing Somali Women's migration into South Africa**

#### **4.3.1 Political wars**

Somalia has experienced politically orchestrated conflicts that are clan based, as members of the minority groups fight for power and control of the nation's resources. These clan divisions that ensued during Siad Barre's regime, and marginalized minority clans have determined the Somali politics, where the warlords constantly fuel conflicts aimed at the control of resources (Jinnah, 2010:92). As a result of this violence, most women left independently without consulting any of their relatives or husbands in the decision making, because war and left them in a state of displaced hopelessness. Although religion, culture, and gender play a significant role in decisions to move to a foreign country, the difficult situations Somali women are placed in pushed them to cross the border of Somali-Kenya and enter into the country as a passageway to migrate to South Africa or Europe or America. From the standpoint of literature on forced migration, violence threatens the community's wellbeing, and leads people to leave so as to escape its impact. Scholars like Williams & Pradhan (2009) point out that, due to the constraints arising from conflicts, people migrate independently without much consultation with their relations. Williams & Pradhan (2009), argue that in a community affected by conflict, migrants have no choice but to move, hence the concept, forced migration.

The Somali people prefer to travel to Kenya using a transit route for Somali women to South Africa, and also to a country inhabited by their relatives that could act as a support network in their process of migration. Nevertheless, the migrants from Somalia cannot stay in the country because of the documentation requirements, as Abdulizak, a Somalian, and former refugee in Kenya, points out that: 'one cannot live in Kenya, but unless you are a Kenyan citizen you won't have that freedom to live there.' Moret et al, (2006) argues that Somalis neighbors are crucial to the lives of Somalis because they provide refuge to these migrants through camps (notably,

Kakuma and Daadab), job opportunities and most importantly the transnational migration transit routes without much emphasis on their travel documents. Due to the numerous Al-Shabaab attacks that have hit the country in the recent past, and the youth radicalization, the Kenyan government monitors Somalis from Somalia crossing into the country very closely. South Africa, however, is more receptive and open to the Somalis seeking asylum, and that image has been conveyed to their friends living into those countries. Through social networks in the country such as kinship and clan ties, the Somalis are more attracted to migrating into the country.

These movements triggered by widespread insecurity, facilitated by clan divisions which are very significant factors to consider when talking about Somali women migration. During interviews, it emerged that Somalia is heavily divided along clan lines, and due to the conflicts arising from those divisions, women consider migration as an option to flee the violence and seek better opportunities. Despite the fact that women experienced the violence based on clan, they were not affected the same. They had varying mobility, because of their varying socio- economic status, clan and political background.

According to Plümper and Neumayer (2006), while conflicts have direct effect on men, women are affected indirectly on a larger scale. The negative ramifications that impact on the lives of women disrupt their means of livelihood. Pauper and Neumer argue these indirect impacts that affect women more than men are usually ignored (Access to public health, Agriculture etc.). In the context of Somali women, although violence affects everyone (children, women and men), the interviews conducted demonstrated that women were affected differently from men due to their social location because they are women (gender) and mothers (associated with home). The women are traumatized by the disappearances of their children, after leaving Somali haphazardly, leaving behind no information about their children or husbands'

whereabouts. This phenomenon has been exposed in an interview with Pretty, who stated that:

During wars Somali women run away, some they come not as families. They leave the children behind and run away. It's a real challenge because no one wants to be separated from their children. If you think about how the kids feel without the mother or father is horrible. And how does the mother or the father feel wherever they ended in another country not knowing where their child or where their husband is as the wife? Shoh it's a problem!

The Somalis women are not homogeneous entities, but individuals that have diverse social, political and economic backgrounds that affect the manner in which war affects them and consequently the transnational migration. Their mobility within and outside the country, their adaptability into war torn Somali were all affected by the different social locations i.e. the clan one belonged, their political affiliations, etc. The Somali women demonstrated that their migration into South Africa and other countries was as a result of both insecurity and the lack of peace in what they called a collapsed state. Women's access to basic and social amenities like education and health care were compromised by war and therefore, the Somalis had to flee the country for education, economic and health opportunities in South Africa and other countries.

#### **4.3.2 The Al-Shabaab emergence**

The Al-Shabaab group is a militia group whose main mission is creating an Islamic territory devoid of western ideologies which they perceive as detrimental to Islam as well as their political and economic dimensions. The young people who were interviewed painted Al- Shabaab as a dangerous group that has political and economic interests under the guise of western infiltration. Abdullahiman said:

This is a terrorist group which has a link with Al-Qaeda. They claim they are fighting for the sake of Allah. They are telling us that they are defending the country from what they call infidels. They are protecting the country from African Union peace keepers/ America and all western countries who they say they are going to colonize Somalia. Al-Shabaab doesn't allow all those infidels to come and colonize Somalia. They are claiming that if those Americans and its allies come to Somalia they are going to take the land of Somalia, they are going to change religion of the people. Al-Shabaab is a minor group, they are terrorist group, and they are not fighting for the common good of Somalia. They are fighting for their own interests. And I believe everyone in Somalia was directly/indirectly affected by Al-Shabaab. And I think they have less than 20 percent of Somali supporting them.

After the emergence of Al-Qaeda backed Al-Shabaab insurgents whose full presence was felt both locally and internationally following the newly democratically elected government ensuing Sheikh Mohamed's ascension into power, the country's instability worsened. The Al-Shabaab militia has posed a huge security threat, and economic destabilization of Somalia, a phenomenon that has led to Somalis running away from their homeland to Kenyan camps and other parts of the world seeking security and peace. The Al-Shabaab group, backed by Al-Qaeda and recently, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) are great threats to Somalis whom they perceive to be cooperating with the western backed African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISSON). During the interviews among Somalis in Mayfair and Pretoria, it emerged that the Al-Shabaab presence in the country affects their livelihoods in terms of destroying their homes which are symbolic representation of woman and an abode for the family. The Somali women are an essential backbone of the Somali

community, who not only bring together the family but play the role of caregiver in a community. Besides losing their husbands to the militias, women have lost their children through Al-Shabaab recruitments that take place in their camps which are heavily protected by the same militias.

#### **4.3.2.1 Al-Shabaab threat to Somali women**

The Somali women are vulnerable to sexual violence meted on them by the Al-Shabaab who use rape as a tool to oppress women who are anti-Al-Shabaab. Besides the sexual assaults that ensue among the Somali community, women are regarded as commodities of marriage and forced or lured into unions with the Al-Shabaab forces, a phenomenon that jeopardizes their safety and the lives of their families. In the interview with Fatuma she said that;

Most of Somali ladies are being forced by Al-Shabaab members to marry them and I think Al-Qaeda groups including Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram<sup>12</sup> they are well known in forcing young ladies to stop from going to school and get married to an old man.

Somali women turned into brides for these terrorists after being abducted or lured with money and other promises. The abuse by the Al-Shabaab is also manifested in their dreadful acts of massacring Somalis and Kenyans disapproving of their activities. Also, due to the gendered nature of terrorism whereby the perpetrators are perceived to be men, the Al-Shabaab takes advantage of that gendered stereotype and recruits women for terror acts. Aware of such jeopardy, women run away from Somalia to South Africa and other countries. Pretty in Mayfair said:

And the women especially young women are forced to marry the Al-Shabaab or recruited to be suicide bombers. So most of them they

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<sup>12</sup> Boko haram is a terror group that has been operating in Nigeria since the year 2009. The term Boko Haram is a term derived from Hausa language, and it literary means that western education is forbidden.

don't want to be part of that and so they run away. And obviously Most of them are killed, they are raped or they see their family members killed. That is what they tell us. That's why they leave.

Thus, Somali women, faced by the aforesaid Al-Shabaab related challenges opt to migrate from Somalia in order to flee for safety and find peace in South Africa and other countries. The Somali women, observation of their peers in the neighboring Somali community in Kenya (their relatives and friends) who communicate with them, incite their need for education which is denied by the Al-Shabaab groups, due to the western ideologies that are greatly opposed by the Islamists. Most of the women and men that were interviewed showed some detachment from the Al-Shabaab ideologies and actually pointed out that if they went back to Somalia, the group would assassinate them. This is because of the Al-Shabaab belief that South Africa is a Christian country and most importantly an advocate of western ideologies, and thus, women from such nations are 'contaminated' with ideologies they are opposed to.

I established that, although the Somalis have migrated into South Africa, a country guided by the most progressive constitution and has several voices championing women rights, Somali women have not fully accessed those rights because they are not aware of their rights as refugees and people living in South Africa. This lack of awareness of their rights is exacerbated by their inability to communicate in English (especially those from Somalia) and a local language. Also, a lack of valid documents makes them soft targets of police harassment and domestic violence as men are aware that they cannot report them because the police would need to see their documents before they can listen to their cases at the police station. The Somali women need initiatives that would enable them to understand the rights entitled to them and language empowerment in order to enable them fight for their rights.

Due to the ‘Al-Shabaabphobia’ among the Somalis, after execution of innocent civilians through suicide bombings and indiscriminate shootings, the mobility of women have been affected within the country. It has also tampered with their livelihoods in terms of their economic welfare. The Somalis in the Gauteng province, expressed frustrations aimed at their homeland which has recently been destroyed by the Al-Shabaab group that continuously changes its manner of operations, thanks to the foreign interventions of other terrorist groups.

### **4.3.3 Escape from economic crises**

The Somali communities are renowned for their entrepreneurial skills that harness huge capital into the Somalia economy through domestic operations and foreign remittances derived from diaspora, Somali businessmen and women. The Somali women, contrary to the generally held perception that their participation is only limited to their homes as house wives and care-givers of the family, are gradually venturing out into the business of foodstuffs and clothing in East Africa. However, the ongoing political atrocities have undermined the once vibrant business environment that has recently been affected and constrained mobility due to insecurity. The economic vagaries and the climate change manifested in draught and poverty have led to migration of Somalis as they look for better places to settle in and establish their economic activities. This phenomenon was enunciated by Omar who said that:

I moved with my family from Busia (Kenya) to South Africa after experiencing poverty and came to South Africa where I wanted a comfortable life. I came from Mogadishu when I was still young because we were poor and it was difficult to survive since no one was employed in our family. We moved to Busia in Kenya where we grew up. Due to poverty and several challenges of life we left for South Africa.

However, buoyed by their endurance and acumen in entrepreneurship, Somalis have migrated to other places across the borders, in order to optimize their returns and support families left behind, through remittances.

In Pretoria and Johannesburg, the Somali community which originated from the North Eastern province, pointed out the unequal distribution of resources that led to the economic marginalization of the area for several decades which hampered their development and motivated their decision to move out of the country. Thus, the Somali from Kenya are economic migrants that journeyed to the Gauteng province for employment and business ventures, with a lot of expectations of better earnings prior to arrival but faced several difficulties that Kuresh from Kenya relays:

Myself I can't say that my country is facing war. I came to work because my country is still good. I come from Kenya myself. There it's okay. The only problem at home is we don't get jobs on completing the school. But here still it's not the way we initially thought its like.

The Somali women have huge responsibilities of supporting their families and they struggled to sustain their homes with limited economic resources while in Kenya therefore a need to migrate arose in order to support them. The women interviewed, indicated that their background as women to sustain their families in Kenya as bread winners enhanced their ability to start and manage money generating business like grocery shops and clothing.

Economically, foreign remittances are huge revenue sources to the Somali government and a survival strategy for most Somali families that have family members abroad. The family's dependence on such foreign incomes pushes them to send a member to other countries in order to boost the family income. Thus, due to the fact that Somali women are cognizant of the responsibility of sending some remittances back home, these women will explore opportunities that are gendered as

being male roles within the Somali community. Gundel (2002:256) points out that the foreign remittances support livelihoods more than any other means, including foreign donations and the state's development projects combined.

#### **4.3.4 The role of social networks**

Although political and economic instabilities in Somalia are the primary factors that led to Somalis fleeing their country, social ties played a significant role in motivating women's migration. Social Network theory maintains that migrant's interpersonal ties makes it easier for migrants to access support on information required before beginning their journey (Borgatti, et al, 2009; Jennisen, 2007). Most participants interviewed indicated that the familial ties and friends facilitated their coming to South Africa through providing the right information about their country of destination. Aisha said:

There are some Somalis who were working here and told me that South Africa is better than Somalia; South Africa you get nice government, in South Africa people are working. So I was looking for a better place than Somalia. I called some of my brothers and my sister who is staying in Loliam who supplied me with the right information about South Africa.

The Social Network theory underlines the role of friends in providing information about the destination country. Their acquaintances informed them that the available opportunities portray the country as good for: security, employment and business opportunities. Zara, a Somali from Kenya says that;

We heard before that South Africa is a good country where you are given some security, and at the same time there are laws to be followed by everyone. We were made aware that the country is better than Somalia that is lawless.

Social ties were not only the means by getting into the host country, but it enabled the migrants to get into the community and relate with South African Somalis. In receiving countries, argues Oishi (2002:7), immigrant communities often help their fellow men and women to immigrate, find a job, and adjust to a new environment. Upon arrival the new migrants have a way of appreciating support they get from their acquaintances; it is through giving back resources that were invested on them and proffering help at the business premise of the host. Ali, whose journey to South Africa was facilitated by a family friend living in Pretoria, says;

After arriving in South Africa, I went to Hatridge Field Township to work among Somalian family friends that were running shops there. I also went there to support the family that welcomed me to South Africa and at the same time earn a living.

The Somali women, as soon as they arrived into the country, eased their adaptability into the new environment of South Africa (Pretoria and Johannesburg) thanks to the familial and friendship ties that facilitated communication prior to migration as well as the new networks that developed after their arrival. The Social Network theory buttresses the role of familial, clan and friendship ties which enable migrant settlement in a new territory (Jennisen ,2007; Massey et al.1993: 448; Oishi,2002:7) . Upon arrival, the Somalis search for their relations and friends who accommodate them in their homes as well as support them in the documentation process, which some have cited as one of the most depressing experiences. The assurance of the country that would give the documents upon arrival motivates them to leave their homeland, as reflected by a response from Ali, who said that while in Somalia, he was in constant communication with a longtime friend who knew the situation at home well, in terms of what she was experiencing and thus told her that she could get documents that would allow her to live in South Africa. Ali said:

There was a gentleman who was in South Africa and back in olden days me and that gentleman used to stay in the same village in Somalia. So the man knew the situation which happened to me when I was in Somalia and the reasons that made me run away from Somalia and that I didn't have the documents that could allow me stay in Kenya. And that gentleman told me that I could get some documents that could allow me to stay in South Africa.

Besides social networks facilitating the movement of the Somalis into the Gauteng province, there are crucial survival strategies that enable them adapt into the new environment which has different social cultural, political and economic settings. The members of the same clan, friends and relatives make sure that, the new migrants get jobs in their shops or recommend them to their other ties. In the Gauteng province, those networks prior and post migration are significant during the xenophobia-Afrophobia related complexities, as Somalis feel comfortable being in solidarity with their fellow Somalis whom they share religious, political, and cultural backgrounds. During Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks in the Gauteng province, the Somalis fled to Mayfair (popularly known as the small Mogadishu) and their stay in the host suburb was facilitated by families, relatives and friends who resided at Mayfair.

The Somali migration expedition through several borders was eased by contact with other Somalis who were either moving towards South Africa or those who had settled along their migration routes (i.e. in Kenya, Mozambique and Tanzania), and would draw some commonalities that they shared. This would provoke more support to those migrants in terms of information, material support and so forth. Sadoun (2009) who underscores solidarity based on ethnic and cultural identity of Somalis argues that, the ethnic enclaves are crucial in sustaining the journey to their destination (South Africa) and therefore they tell the drivers to take them into those Somali territories.

#### **4.3.5 The allure of opportunities in South Africa**

South Africa is an attraction to African nationalities, but also, people from other continents because of its social, economic development, and its position as a democratic nation, ahead of most African countries. Such a positive image of South Africa as perceived by the migrants before migrating gets dented when they later experience the pervasive intolerance towards non-South Africans. However, whether they are aware or not about South African complexities, their love for the country was evident when they pointed out that South Africa had opportunities which they hoped to explore. During the interviews in Pretoria, I established that education opportunities in South Africa was an important motivation for some Somali women who pointed out that they chose to pursue education rather than get married young. That urge to pursue education is heightened by the scenario unfolding in neighboring Kenya where they see Somalis benefitting from good education, while in Somalia they cannot access such opportunities. The Somalis prefer migrating to South Africa, more than other African countries, because, as a democratic nation, Somali refugees can get good education without too many restrictions. This lack of education opportunities coupled with the push to join the Al-Shabaab or get married to the militia as well as contact with educated Somalis in Kenya, provoked migration for education. That mission was raised in the interview with Fatima who said that:

The Somali women prefer to move to other countries to pursue education because it's not easy to access it in Somalia. Those that are in refugee camps of Daadab and Kakuma, after finishing their studies are not allowed to leave the camp. This is because, the Kenyan government fears that they might get involved with Al-shabaab groups. They end up going back to Somalia. But going to Somalia doesn't help because, education conditions are not good and they can't move freely in Kenya. So they come to South Africa to get

education. So they came to South Africa for security reasons as well as to continue my studies.

Although the Somalis continuously make reference to Somalia in terms of their origin and family left behind, the interviews conducted demonstrated some hopelessness about the possibility of the Somalia situation improving, in terms of having structures like health and education facilities necessary for their wellbeing. This was rightfully put by Abdul who said that “the situation in Somalia will not improve anytime soon and it will take time to develop the necessary facilities because the Al-Shabaab and clan wars have and are still destabilizing the country”

However, the study established that, although some Somali women (especially those from Kenya) come to South Africa with outstanding skills and expertise in some fields like trading, education and nursing, hoping for work opportunities, their expectations are dashed after realizing that South Africa has restrictive policies regarding ‘employability’ of nationals from other countries. Kuresh, a Somali from Mombasa, migrated to South Africa seeking job opportunities as a trained nurse. She says:

I am a Somali from Kenya. I am originally from Mombasa and why I came to South Africa because of the opportunities of work that are here in South Africa. I am a nurse by profession and I decided to leave Kenya because there was no job for me despite my qualifications. I thought I could get job in South African hospitals, but here it’s very hard to get one.

Refugees driven from warring countries or migrating for other reasons, are great assets that have been underutilized in South Africa, due to closed policies that limit them from full engagement in the growth of the economy. According to Machiavello (2003:29), Sub-Saharan African migrants have potential that are never harnessed even though they can propel social economic growth among African countries, and consequently reduce poverty. Despite the huge potential among refugees, institutions

among states (South Africa) and the government's lack of interest in the skills that such refugees could bring to the country, there are still huge obstacles that prevent them from being seen as contributors to the country's economy. The country could absorb them into the system, rather than seeing them as people taking opportunities meant for local nationals.

#### **4.3.6 Transit Route vis-à-vis resettlement**

Landau and Kabue (2009:5) point out that a good number of migrants come to South Africa as a gateway to western countries. Europe and America are considered as the ideal countries for most Somalis that were interviewed, due to better livelihood standards and opportunities available as compared to African countries. In Africa, South Africa is considered as a transit route to the so called First World countries. Those countries are considered to be the epitome of success and development. This is an image painted by their acquaintances and family members who share stories about those countries, and the media, thanks to globalization that facilitates constant flow of information across transnational space. After encountering Xenophobia-Afrophobia related challenges, crime, and constraints in accessing state institutions, contrary to their expectations, Somali women consider another country for resettlement. Somali women become frustrated as they cannot go back to their country; simultaneously they encounter excruciating experiences related to Xenophobia-Afrophobia and thus seek a third country where life would be better than the first two countries. During an interview with Ali, she said that:

Going back to Somali is like committing suicide, since the consequence is predictable and certain, and being in a country like South Africa as an illegal migrant is too much to handle. I have been consulting with friends back home of whether it is safe to come back. The message I received was not an encouraging one. The war has intensified between many opposing militant groups who are fighting

not for the interest of the common man on the street but for their selfish gain. I am still hopeful that one day my application with UN on seeking a Third country will be considered because I cannot go back to Somalia, and living here is also difficult.

The resettlement is a long process that involves intense scrutiny by the UNHCR. It comprises checking all their documents, interviewing them and listening to refugees stories in order to vet individuals who deserve relocation. Recently, due to the escalating Islamophobia provoked by the terrorist attacks, the once porous borders have toughened the migration policies, a phenomenon that negatively impacts Muslim migrants coming from Somali and other Muslim countries that have a history of terrorism. During the interviews, it emerged that among Somali women, there are those that came with the intention to migrate to America and Europe, while others, due to the unexpected reality in South Africa, start applying for resettlement.

#### **4.4 Gendered complexities during the migration process**

The route to South Africa exposes women to gender based violence by the people who proffer them services in the areas of border checks, accommodation and transportation in exchange for sexual favours. These women succumb to the sexual overtures in pursuit of greener pastures and for fear of losing crucial services required for their survival in order to reach their destination. In this case, Somali women stand at the intersection of oppressing forces based on their gender (as women), nationality (foreigners), religion (Islam) and race (hair texture and skin tone). On the other hand, although migrants moving towards South Africa consider themselves as migrants sharing the common focus of getting into South Africa, for green pastures, they are aware of dissimilarities with such Cushitic communities from East Africa. The Somalis (especially females) will not open up easily to the other migrants on transit, because of their cultural and religious differences as well as a fear of the fellow foreigner who does not belong to their community.

Within the transnational space, the Somali women encounter social and economic challenges along social locations, like gender, religion, education, nationality and cultural identities that complicate their journey from the country of origin to their recipient country. During migration, whereby the Somali female migrants find themselves travelling with other female and male migrants from other nationalities, they are affected differently when compared to female migrants from other countries. According to Lininger (2008), female foreigners dressing in Islamic attire, like the Hijab are more likely to be spotted as non-citizens and increase their vulnerability to verbal/physical sexual abuse during migration, a phenomenon that is common among the Somali women within the transnational space. Although other Muslims within South Africa also dress in the Hijab, Somalis Hijab can be easily singled out due to its conspicuous variations like the colorful Jilbab<sup>13</sup> and Garbasaar<sup>14</sup>. Sarah said:

During the migration process, we are sexually harassed. When they see somebody with Hijab they say you have duvet, how are you wearing with this heat. Why you don't throw it away, you are young you are beautiful? Why don't you wear the trouser? They say why are you nigger? Are you having a cramp? You are coming with something that we don't know.

Through the feminist intersectionality theory, one is able to argue that Somali women suffer several jeopardies that are not only gender based but racially and religious based, all impacting the same women at the same time. South Africa is a predominantly Christian nation with minority Muslims; who are perceived to be Indians and therefore, Somali women's Islamic dressing as black people with soft hair categorizes them as “outsiders” not only in the host country but in Africa. Using the

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<sup>13</sup> Jilbab is Muslim female costume that covers the whole woman's body as opposed to Hijab that covers the upper part of the body.

<sup>14</sup> Gabasaar is a Shawl worn by married Somali women. The wear is fashioned in different colours.

intersectionality framework it's clear that the kind of stereotypes and abuse that Somali women face within the transnational space is different from that of their male counterparts who are Muslims. Also, under intersectionality, it's clear that other women who are still Muslims yet with a different skin tone such as Indians, are perceived differently and in higher regard. The Somali women's skin tone coupled with the Muslim identity and their language depicts some "foreignness" even among fellow foreign African nationals. This was expressed by Ali who said:

You know some tell us that we are from Pakistan because they have no experience of other Africans that have some different physical features? You know the Somalian the way they look like exactly like African people. You know the Ethiopian and Somalian hair does not look exactly as African hair which is strong and blacker than ours. Assuming as Africans is because of our structure and our hair. Somalians we are a bit different from them.

The Somali women commence their journey to South Africa wounded, raped, and traumatized by political and economically related problems that they experienced while in Kenya and Somalia. Most of those women do not want to share those experiences because of their emotive nature and the stigma associated with sexual violence. During the interviews it emerged that, while leaving Somali and Kenya, a good number of women separated from their spouses or lost them into the wars, which posed a challenge to travelling alone as women, as well as sustaining their families within the transnational space. This occurrence impacts the whole family during the journey to South Africa in terms of their adaptability. In Mayfair, Amina, a single woman who lost her husband in the war said:

When our men are killed, it pains us so much, we get stressed. Our children are impacted a lot because they don't have the source of

livelihood or no father figure. We don't want to remember what happened because it troubles us so much.

Due to lack of proper documentation while traversing several countries borders (i.e. Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique) towards South Africa, female Somalis remain vulnerable to police (who arrest them) and the local civilians. The vulnerability is high because they are considered as illegal at border checkpoints albeit their identity as refugees seeking suitable space to reconstruct their lives. The complexities facing Somali women do not impact on them the same, but rather variously along social factors that either enhance or impede their resilience. Those that come from a higher social status would adapt better than those from a low status because they have resources to facilitate the journey of migration. Also, Somali women who find social networks of members from their clan, acquaintances and relatives along their journey often get support on the way to South Africa, thus boosting their fortitude within the transnational expedition. Fatima from Somalia said:

When I was travelling to South Africa, I passed through Kenya, where my relatives accommodated me for few days before I embarked on my journey to the coast where I would exit the country. My relatives in Kenya supported me with some little funds. I am grateful for that!

#### **4.5 The context of South Africa**

The Somalis started arriving in South Africa after the fall of Siad Barre (1991) who ensured violence after clan-based systems took over. Somalis, have since then spread into different provinces in the country, notably, Gauteng, Western and Eastern Cape. Their mobility in those provinces has rapidly grown as they moved into locations and city centers (Brown 2014). The Somalis entered into the county at a period of transition from an Apartheid regime (which was white ruled) to a democratic state. Although transition occurred, and a more democratic landscape created, Apartheid legacy has

hitherto affected the social, political and economic landscape. The Black South Africans have been disproportionately affected by what Ramphele (2008) calls the 'ghosts of the apartheid', namely 'the sexism, ethnicity, authoritarianism and racism.' The South African blacks were pushed into the townships, away from the city centers. It is in that context or location that the Somali population took their businesses so as to take advantage of being the intermediaries between the city and the local peoples in the townships. This entry of Somalis into entrepreneurship has been met with opposition from the locals who consider it as a threat to business and other opportunities. The Somalis, due to their ability to lure many customers with their lower prices and smaller quantities of packaging (i.e. half a loaf of bread) creates competition which eventually ensues within the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia.

The theory of Gendered Geographies of Power accentuates the need to put into cognizance the role of social locations in understanding the lives of the migrants within transnational territory. Somali women come from a socio-political and cultural background which is different from a South African context. This study found out that most Somali women relate much with their own community than the rest of South Africa, this is because they feel that they are a minority who are vulnerable people who seek safety and livelihoods within the Somali community (Brown, 2015). These women consider themselves as non-citizens, refugees, and Muslims which becomes a status that alienates them from integrating with the local community. It is in this respect that I buttress the negotiation or navigation into the transnational space rather than reinforce the concept of integration. Integration entails acculturation, whereby, in our context it would mean Somali women changing or compromising their lifestyles, culture, religion and socio-political structures as a result of a cultural contact. This is not the case for Somali women because they keep to their cultural and religious and political confines, as Amina succinctly expresses it. Amina disputes integration due to the differing social locations which confines them into their own comfortable spaces within their community. She says:

I feel that this thing of integration with other people is not possible. Somali women don't marry the South Africans to start with. They marry themselves. Our religion and culture are different from that of South Africans. We come with our religion and culture that is not easily compatible to the South African context. So I don't think it's possible to integrate as people would think. Cultural integration is very hard because we are coming from two different backgrounds.

#### **4.5.1 The context of Gauteng Province**

South Africa has nine provinces which hosts both locals and migrants, albeit at varying capacities. Gauteng is the smallest province in South Africa, in terms of land mass, but hosts the largest share of the South African population. According to 2015 statistics, Gauteng has 13.20 million people, which is 23 % of the South Africa population. KwaZulu-Natal follows Gauteng province, with a total population of 12.92 million people. It comprises of Ekurhuleni, Pretoria and Johannesburg municipalities. The province is important for the Somali migrants as it hosts a huge population in Pretoria and Johannesburg cities. The province is their entry point and a place of settlement for Somalis who settle in Mayfair or Pretoria, or proceed to other provinces like Western Cape. Gauteng offers a good business environment to migrants. Most of them are involved in informal businesses. These business proffer an entry point to the people that have been marginalized by the formalized systems of State for lack of education, citizenship, and so forth (Charman et.al. 2012).

However, Gauteng province has experienced numerous Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks that have hit the migrants running Spaza shops and other forms of informal businesses. These attacks in the townships are the worst. The Somalis and Ethiopians, who are in those informal sectors, are the main targets of the attacks in this province due to their involvement in businesses that offer competition to the locals. When the xenophobic-afrophobic attacks happen, Somali women are vulnerable to sexual

violence. They also lose the husbands who are breadwinners in the family. Their presence in the township which are competed with locals was expressed by Fatuma who said

Somalis are the primary targets of Xenophobia-Afrophobia in locations because they are having the most shops in locations. Nigerians and other foreign nationals; the majority of them are not opening their tuck shops outside towns. Somalis go to locations. Not one percent Nigerian or any other nationality open tuck shop in townships. And when Somalis go there they offer competition to the locals who were monopolizing businesses there, thus causing enmity between them.

#### **4.5.1 The contexts of Mayfair and Pretoria West in Gauteng**

##### **4.5.1. Mayfair Suburb**

In South Africa, the largest population of Somali women is located in Mayfair Suburb (Jinnah, 2010; Shafer, 2012). The Suburb was an attraction to the Somalis due to the presence of Mosques which were constructed by South African Indian Muslims. The social and cultural environment was conducive to Islamic adherents (i.e. foods permitted by Islamic faith, attires etc.) and its proximity to the Johannesburg Central Business District (CBD) (Jinnah, 2010; Sadouni, 2009; Shafer, 2012). Due to the fact that the Somalis are business oriented with a high acumen in entrepreneurial skills, the proximity to the City Centre enabled them to benefit from the available opportunities for the success of their businesses. Jinnah (2010) cites the nearness to the railway station and main bus station that connects people to other regions of South Africa as one factor that influenced the choice of Mayfair as their residence. The Suburb consists of different nationalities, but has Somalis as the majority who run several businesses at the place. Somali symbolisms are conspicuously manifested in their shops and restaurants which sell food and clothes that have come to serve the

Somali ethnic community. The model of Somali businesses in Somalia and Kenya have shops attached to their residential places. This is evident in Mayfair, and it is a strategy that enables women to do business while performing their domestic chores. Cason and Hikam (2016) makes note that in Mayfair, business enclaves are clan based and that their closeness to each other bolsters security. During the interviews, the Somali women told me that despite Mayfair being a ‘hive of activity’ and a place of many nationalities where one would expect a high crime level, it’s on the contrary, feared by the criminals. Whenever a criminal is spotted, the Somalis run after him and punish him through ‘mob justice’.

The study established that Mayfair is a significant district with agencies that support the Somali women. The South African Somali Women Network in the Gauteng Province and the South African Somali Board (SACOB) are based in Mayfair Suburb. These offices connect the Somalis with the other Somalis members located in other regions in the country (Cape Town, Eastern Cape, Pretoria etc.). Whenever there are new Somali arrivals within the country through Gauteng, Mayfair is considered a home because SASOWNET and networks in the province offer the New Comers with the necessary adaptable information before they settle in a place.

#### **4.6.1.2Pretoria West Suburb**

The city of Pretoria is one of three South African capital cities due to the fact that the executive arm of the government and the State’s administration is headquartered in the city.<sup>15</sup>Pretoria West, which is one of the Suburbs located in the West of Pretoria Central Business District (CBD), has the biggest population of the Somalis. The region hosts the highest number of Somalis on permanent and temporal basis due to the presence of Home Affairs Department which is in front of the ‘Somali Place’.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Other capital cities are Bloemfontein (Seat of Judiciary) and Cape Town (Seat of legislature).

<sup>16</sup> The site is popularly called the Somali place due to the high population of the Somali people.

Besides, Pretoria west has a big business center at Marabastad which is a few meters from the ‘Somali Place.’ Also, its proximity to the Pretoria Central Business District makes it a preferable choice for the Somalis. The main nationalities residing in Pretoria west are Somalis, Ethiopians and Zimbabweans. Somali community is the highest among foreigners, and runs the businesses within the ‘Somali place’. The Somali Place in Pretoria West is characterized by the Somali ethnic enclaves range from the shops to the restaurants which sell Somali food. In Pretoria West, I discovered that women play a significant role to sustain the vibrant economy in terms of hawking to selling big volumes of stalls i.e. Hygiene items, clothing, groceries etc.

Pretoria West is a safe haven for the Somali women in terms of crime and Xenophobia-Afrophobia. Here, the community is ever vigilant on any outsider. I spent the first few days in the area with my informant whereby, the residents were curious to know who I was. My informant told me that Somalis are very alert on any intruder in their community because they have had criminals that come into their territory. During the overt Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks that happened in 2016 which saw several Somalis killed, most Somalis ran to Pretoria West for safety.

#### **4.6 The gendered territories**

Due to rampant crime and Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks, it’s not usually common to find the Somali women in locations running Spaza shops on their own or hawking items as they would in suburbs and urban centers. The locations, also known as townships are predominantly ‘male spaces’ because they are considered to manifest some strength to withstand criminality and Xenophobia-Afrophobia as opposed to their female counterparts who are regarded as, not able to withstand crime. Thus, women rely on earnings derived from their male partners or relatives working in the locations, or small jobs they perform within suburbs like Mayfair and Pretoria West. This is considered safe because of the huge Somali community residing there, gives women a good social network force against any intruder. The Somali solidarity

manifested collectively in clan, religion and ethnic identities among communities living in the suburbs which provide women with a safe haven because the criminals and locals that would target foreigners cannot intrude into the place. When I was conducting my fieldwork among Somalis at Pretoria West, a thief was running through the “Somali place” thinking it was a safe place in which he could hide. Unfortunately, they beat him up with much anger before police came to rescue and arrest him. There was Fatuma, who told me that, at the Somali Place in Pretoria West, crime has decreased because criminals are afraid of the Somali community that deal with them. She said:

As women we are protected in this community. Our community is feared by the criminals so much that anyone that thinks about coming to steal, must be prepared for death. It’s hard to do a crime here because we will just lynch or stone the criminal. Not so long ago this robot was a place that women would lose their money to the pickpockets. You know that the police also fear this place because they are aware that Somalis are like a fire. You don’t joke with fire. We have fire arms to protect ourselves from criminals.

The study established that some jobs are predominantly male orientated. And due to the social expectations within the Somali community, women shy away from pursuing such jobs. The gender expectations with regard to those roles are justified through the cultural and religious norms which hamper women from pursuing such jobs. In an interview with Aisha, I learnt that roles like driving taxis<sup>17</sup> are within men’s domain and any woman that attempts to venture into such careers would be perceived as transgression of their cultural and religious norms. Aisha said:

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<sup>17</sup> In Mayfair and Gauteng, taxi industry is common among young males who drive Somali community from Pretoria to Mayfair.

Imagine myself driving a taxi. It doesn't happen anywhere, and so it would look odd. Maybe one day the Somali women will take that challenge, although it will take quite some time.

#### **4.7 Somali women's expectations and frustrations on coming to South Africa**

The Somali women who were interviewed expressed great optimism in a prosperous South Africa. They hoped it would be a green pasture for them and for varied reasons that informed their decision to migrate. After a dehumanizing and stateless environment in Somalia, which placed their livelihoods and homes into a mess, the Somali women voiced their desire for a space they can call home that is safe, regardless of the distance from their homeland. Majority of the Somali women cited security as their greatest expectation. This expectation was expressed mainly by those that originated from Somalia, a nation that has expressed killings from Al-Shabaab or abducted by the insurgents for marriage. Ayan who hails from Mogadishu said that;

The main expectation is to create a home. A place you can call home, where there is no danger. Coming to South Africa, I was searching for security. My main goal was to be safe! My expectation was to at least live better life, have better security, and live in a better shelter.

After migrating into the country, Aisha established that the scenario was different from what she had in the mind, because the security that she expected was not fully achieved. She experienced crime which was also experienced by South African locals that lived in grey crime zones. According to her;

My expectation was to at least live a better life, better security, with better shelter but when I look at security it is not only constrained in towns of foreigners. There are also South Africans who are victims of south crime. So we face the same challenges like any other South

Africans but we are susceptible to crime here in South Africa because of our status as foreigners.

When focusing on the security dimension, one might be tempted to embrace the simplistic view that entails freedom from crime and murder arising from war. According to Cecorulli (2009), security of the population is wider because it involves not only safety from military, criminal threats but also freedom from social, political, and economic threats that disrupt the interests of the people. In tandem with Ceccorulli (2009), expectations in terms of economic security were cited during the interviews. The Somalis hoped for a space free from the factors that disrupt the survival of their businesses in Somalia. Ali said:

I came to South Africa in order to flee conflicts in my country that put to risk my own security. Also, I lost some investments to the wars. I lost so much of my businesses. I had to come here through Kenyan border. I expected a place where I would start businesses and earn a living without any disruptions of war and Al-Shabaab as it is in my country.

After experiencing political upheavals in Somalia, Somali women hoped for a peaceful South Africa. Fatima who hailed from Somali who was experiencing unprecedented violence in Somalia, anticipated that South Africa was a place where peace was realizable. She had friends living in South Africa who told her that the country was peaceful. Through the theory of Social Network, which underscores the significance of social ties, one is able to deduce that her expectations are facilitated by the network of friends she had in South Africa. Fatima says

My expectation in South Africa was getting a peaceful place, free from chaos like in Somalia. I was told that situation in South Africa is fantastic when it comes to peace, by my friends living in South

Africa, and that I will get the document that could allow to stay in South Africa legally.

However, Fatima pointed out that, although there were incidences of crime in South Africa which she experienced, South Africa is a peaceful country. She said that South Africa is far better than Somalia in terms of peace. She lauded the democratic space that allowed the people to move peacefully anywhere in the country without clan violence as opposed to Somalia. She says

I can't compare South Africa and Somalia because this country we have peace. In Somalia there is no peace. I am happy to find peace in this country, though crime is also a problem in the country.

The economic migrants who came from Kenya had huge expectations of a nation that would offer many business opportunities which might enable them to sustain their livelihoods and save some money in order to send remittances back home. Despite being affected by crime and Xenophobia-Afrophobia, migrants still expressed a great appreciation for their new environment which proved to be better than their homeland, where they had scarce economic opportunities. Zeinab, a Somali woman from North Eastern Kenya said:

I had many expectations. I wanted to transform my life and be self-sustaining through setting up a business. I entered without anything but now I have been able to sustain myself through small business of perfume that has done well and also small jobs here and there in restaurants, shops that belong to Somalis. I arrived in South Africa and started working for my people and I am able to also help them at home. Here, business is good than in Somalia.

Zeinab, Zara, a Somali woman who fled from Somali after losing her family to the Al-Shabaab militia, expected a country where she could experience work opportunities. She was asked if she would like to go back to Somalia. She admitted that she would prefer to stay in South Africa because South Africa was better off

compared to Somalia in terms of business opportunities that supports their livelihoods, albeit incidences of crime.

During the Siad Barre regime, women had more access to education opportunities, thanks to the women movements that championed their rights for it. After the fall of the regime, female Somali education was highly affected because the clan-based regime crippled most of the female agencies (such as Somali Women Development Organisation, popularly known as SWDO) that advocated for women rights in education (Brown, 2014; Gardner & Warsame,2004; Akou,2011). Propelled by the need for education, Somali women moved into other countries including Kenya and South Africa in search of education opportunities. Through social networks, women are informed about education opportunities in the country that could improve their lives and those of their children's future. Ayan says that because most Somali women have little or no education they expect to enter into a country where they would give their children the best. Ayan says;

Many Somali women in this place had great expectations of a prosperous South Africa with many opportunities including education. You know we regard South Africa highly. Most women cannot access education back at home and so they came here expecting to access education. They came to South Africa hoping that their children will get education for their future. They have no education but they make sure that they look forward to giving their children that possibility.

Due to the Somali women's status as 'non-citizens,' female Muslim access to education was a challenge in Gauteng. Lack of proper documents and resources also posed as a great impediment to accessing education in South Africa. Most Somali women cited access to university and other higher learning institutions as a huge challenge because of the need for a SAQA (South African Qualification Authority)

certificate. Most of these women do not have the qualification that match up to the SAQA requirement. Also, most Somali women struggle as refugees to raise money for tuition. This challenge cannot be the same to Somali women because some women said that they received help from their kin. Other members struggled to access education for themselves or for their children. Somali women cited the role that family connections played in supporting their education. According to Poston & Bouvier (2010:213), interpersonal networks make it easier for new migrants to gain access to the required resources in their destination countries. Somali women cited South African Somali Women and the Action Support Center as institutions that facilitated women's access attaining education. Aisha says:

In South Africa, Somali women find hard to get education especially when they do not have varied documents. Universities need SAQA, that most of us cannot meet to its standards. The lack of money to educate our children are part of other challenges we have. But some people are just lucky because they have relatives and friends who support their education. There are also some few organizations that facilitate women acquisition.

Somali women are susceptible to sexual assault which instills fear among them, and for that reason, they could not go to work in townships or travel by taxi. That lack of freedom facilitated by the fear of rape and other sexual molestations was considered worse than being in Somalia, where they could travel without being harassed on the basis of their gender and nationality. Zaria said:

Yes, here we are facing many challenges, like as a lady you are not secure. First thing you are not secure. You know there is good business only in town. We can't afford to open businesses in town. So when we go to location as a Somali woman you can't work. They will rape you, they will rob you. Even when you board taxi they will

rob you, they rape you. Sometimes even they kill. So it's very difficult. Even in town we are scared even when we are going work. When you go work the job is 3000 Rands and the house rent is 3000 Rands. So we are suffering. We don't get anything even to save or to keep it. Even it's not enough for ourselves. Even when you come from job you are scared to board any taxi because they rob you they rape you and they kill even. We are not safe and life is too hard also for us because the little we get is not enough for our demand.

This study established that the manner in which Somali women traditionally dress which is different from the majority of South Africans, contributed to the attraction of hate sentiments among the locals. The Somalis women cited discrimination in some departments (health, police and Home Affairs) based on their Islamic garb that branded them with a Muslim identity which intersected with other factors. The frustration was due to a result of lack of proper orientation about the religious, cultural contexts of South African people, which would enable Somali women and prepare them for any religious and cultural resistance against their faith especially with symbolism like the the Islamic attire. The Hijab and Burqa are required when a women is going out in public as a symbol of modesty and in order to keep their privacy especially in the presence of male company. Amina says;

South African culture is different from ours as Somalis. You know we dress differently from most of South Africans who are Christians. So when we put on Hijab, we become targets of Xenophobia. When you travel on a taxi, go to market like Marabastad everyone is able to spot you from a distance. They ask why we should cover ourselves with those clothes different from their women. Sometimes they can even rape you because of that cloth that shows that you are Muslim and a foreigner.

The Somali women expressed their frustration regarding the high cost of living as compared to Somalia and Kenya. They pointed out that access to basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing was very challenging in South Africa due to their high cost. After the first few days of arriving in South Africa, Somali women express their amazement at the high cost of living as they grapple in the comparison of the cost of goods and services between South Africa and Kenya/Somalia. This study established that, the challenge of the cost of high rent and house bills was a salient among Somali women in South Africa. In order to cope with these exorbitant costs of rent and utility bills they hire a house and share the cost among themselves. Amira said:

In this country women suffer a lot. Some of us are not working and have no husbands to cater for their needs. We suffer in this suburb too because if you are not employed, where do you get money to pay for your bills? The landlord wants money at the end of the month, light bills and you also have to eat. It's hard to live here where the cost of living is high.

During the interviews, I established that most Somali women had challenges with South African food which they considered different from their ethnic dishes. The Somali migrants interviewed, preferred food prepared in their own homes, or alternatively eating from Somali restaurants when they needed a change. They avoid South African eateries which they observe did not sell 'strong food' which is sold in their restaurants. Added to which the Islamic faith contains laws for its followers that permit to eat certain foods and restricts them from consuming other foods, (Halal<sup>18</sup>) a phenomenon that posed challenges to women in South Africa. In South Africa, there are many canned foods that have pork mixed in them, albeit in small quantities. However, retaining the Somali ethnic food was not an easy task for most of the Somali

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<sup>18</sup> Halal, also Halaal food is the one permitted by Islamic laws such as vegetables and beef. The Muslims are forbidden to eat pork or food that have pork.

women because of the affordability of the imported ingredients. Thus, because of the high cost of importation of items from the East Africa region, as well as the strict border checks, cost of Somali food is high. Therefore, Somali women forge tastes for their food using what is available in South Africa, by using similar but not same recipes.

We find it hard to adapt to the food in South Africa, because it's very different from what we eat. As Muslims, we have halal where you are allowed to take as well as food that you are not permitted to eat. Most of supermarkets are full of halal and even the canned food you have what has been prohibited by Islamic laws. It's a challenge to eat Somali food also because we lack ingredients or they are expensive. They are expensive because of the difficulty in bringing them here.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

This chapter examines migration of Somali women within the transnational space which is characterized by the social political and economic factors that are intertwined. This chapter provides the contextual background of Somalia in order to understand the context from which Somali women originate. This study argues that, although political feuds are the key factor that leads to massive migration to South Africa, Somali movement is also motivated by Al-Shabab, escape from economic crisis and the allure of opportunities. The aforesaid stimulus to migration is interconnected because one factor like war could lead to the other, such as seeking opportunities in another country.

However, before coming to South Africa, the Somali women had huge expectations of a nation that would offer security, peace, business opportunities and education. The study found out that, although the aforementioned expectations were met, they still expressed challenges in

accessing education, a new diet that is foreign to their culture and the high cost of living.

In the subsequent chapter, I focus on the negotiation of gender relations in the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia experiences.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### NEGOTIATION OF GENDER RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF XENOPHOBIA-AFROPHOBIA IN THE TRANSNATIONAL SPACE

#### 5.1 Introduction

The transnational migration experiences have to an extent reconfigured redefined and reinforced the gender roles and gender power relations among Somali women living in Gauteng due to the pressing socio-economic demands. In this chapter, I explore the ensuing gender roles and power arrangements that continuously shape the identity of Somali women within the transnational space. This chapter unfolds with laying a background on the identity of a Somali woman in the context of Somalia in order to understand the setting from which she gets into the Gauteng province. In Somalia, the community operates from a very male-controlled belief system that legitimizes the socio-economic dependence on men, though women are making remarkable inroads in redefining gender relations<sup>19</sup>. This chapter discusses the shifting gender roles<sup>20</sup> and the manner in which women negotiate gender power structures<sup>21</sup> within the transnational space. Also, I look at the negotiation of gender related violence that impedes their livelihoods in the Gauteng province.

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<sup>19</sup> Gender relations denotes social, economic and political relations among females and males that occur in institutions like family, religious institutions, schools etc.

<sup>20</sup> Gender roles are the socially constructed roles that are defined according to ones gender i.e. among Somali community, cooking and child rearing is considered feminine whereas herding is seen as masculine.(see Reeves & Baden,2000).

<sup>21</sup> Gender Power structures is a systems that influences male and females within a given society. Gender power structures reinforce gender inequalities and restricts certain gender to particular roles and certain limit for decision making (Koester, 2015; Reeves & Baden,2000 ).

## **5.2 Gender dynamics in the transnational space**

The phenomenon of gender relations is crucial in the transnational space because it contours the migrant's decision-making before they begin their journey, as well as, during migration and settlement. The gender relations either circumscribe or facilitate women's migration and settlement within the transnational space (Pessar & Mahler, 2001). It's worth noting that, within the transnational space, there are gender powers that are sustained by the male dominance that impacts women's navigation through the space. The migrant women negotiate various power dynamics that are male gendered. Women's access to the rights that they previously couldn't enjoy in their countries of origin, acquiring jobs that provides women with higher wages than their male counterparts empowers women, a phenomenon that reconfigures gender relations (Bastia & Buste, 2013). The women's acquirement of the jobs is propelled by the need to meet the economic responsibilities, in both the recipient and the country of origin. Bastia & Buste (2013) opines that the accessibility and employability of the migrant women within the transnational space provides them with the audacity to quit their abusive relationships, as opposed to economically independent persons that would fear leaving their unions because of financial dependence on their male counterparts. Nonetheless, although access to opportunities within the transnational space bolsters the capacity of women to challenge existing power structures, it individuates women, a phenomenon that makes them look like people seeking individualistic causes that raises tensions within their relationships (Abdi, 2014; Romero et al, 2014).

## **5.3 Gender dynamics in the context of Somalia**

In order to understand the manner in which Somali women migrants experience the transnational territories and how migration shapes their lives within transnational territories, a quest into the gender relation discourse in the context of Somalia is of paramount importance. An honest expedition into the concept, while establishing their

background from the Somali context, would enable the study to establish the manner in which the activities of women are impacted by the religious, cultural, statutory structures that reinforce their subordination or reconstructions of their lives.

Gender relations in Somalia has historically been shaped by the religious and cultural institutions that define the plight of Somali women. This has seen women's inclusion in the public arena suffer, despite the push by the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the country. Ali (2015) observes that Somali women have been sidelined by male structured institutions that have less political will to recognize their leadership and decision making roles, a condition that is reinforced by the fact that men are socialized in a society that is overtly patriarchal. The gender inequality which was shaped by the deeply rooted patriarchy was exacerbated by the two decades of military rule that saw boys and girls socialized in an androcentric environment. Also, the aftermath of the collapse of the Siad Barre regime saw the gender segregation of Somali women in education institutions and places of work. The absence of national policies that are gender empowering has resulted in a slow progress of power structures that have impacted negatively on gender relations (Ali, 2015).

Under the Gendered Geographies of Power theory, there is the Social Locations concept that underscores a person's positions within power hierarchies created through historical, political, economic, geographic, kinship-based and other socially stratifying factors (Pessar & Mahler, 2001:6). They are born into such power hierarchies that either offers them advantage or disadvantage in navigating through the patriarchal institutions within the transnational territories. For instance, Somali women coming from Kenya have a Swahili and English language background and a more open culture over other Somalis from Somalia that enables them to interact with people from other nationalities from Africa. Also, a Somali black woman continues to negotiate their 'Somaliness' within Gauteng in relation to their race and skin tone.

In Somalia, the community operates from a very male-controlled belief system that legitimizes the social economic independence of men. In the precolonial era, women were expected to be the house keepers and care takers of livestock, a gender role that was very significant for the survival of the household. Political engagement was a no-go zone for Somali women, and so were the roles outside the household domain (Abdi, 2014). The man was regarded as the bread winner in line with religious and socio-cultural requirements (Abdi, 2014; Kapteijns, 1995). This dependence of women on men would later be reinforced by the colonial masters, thus, placing women in a state of subordination by the community and the state, which were both androcentric (Abdi, 2014, Kapteijns, 1995). The women were socially, politically and economically marginalized so much so that they had to depend on men in varied ways.

Somalia is highly patriarchal with few policies that safeguard the rights of women against Gender Based Violence and discrimination against women at border control (Kapteijns, 1995; UNDP, 2012). The patriarchal systems buttress the overlapping complexities based on their gender, culture and religion. Due to their gender, women are discriminated against, in terms of access to inheritance and land rights. In addition to discrimination on land rights, Connor et al (2016) points out that, women are also subject to limited access to education facilities in Somalia as a result of the country's inequalities. The religion has significantly intersected with gender to trivialize the Somali women, as Abdi (2007) observes, [that] in Somalia, conservative Islam is practised and this regulates the sexuality of women and their way of dressing.

The Somalis, who are predominantly Muslims, hold fast to the teachings of Prophet Mohamed, as contained in the Holy Qur'an, the Islamic doctrines taught by their Imams, and cultural norms and belief systems which are significant in ordering the lives of the Somali community. Nevertheless, the place of women has progressively improved due to the emerging economic demands that push women to challenge norms that tie them to traditional gender roles. In both Somalia and Kenya, Somali women have notably engaged actively in public circles, albeit with complexities due

to patriarchal institutions. The new Somali constitution which was adopted in 2012 in Mogadishu advocated for women's political rights while suffocating the clan system of governance that hampered women's public participation. Although Somali is a United Nations Member state, it has not yet ratified the Convention for Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This poses a challenge to the Somali women who face various forms of discrimination, while they could use CEDAW as the international law to safeguard their rights. The Federal government of Somalia that has the constitution guarantees women's participation in the public arena, despite the presence of the conservative institutions that do not believe in the strength of women. The Hadith or Koran does not exclude Somali women from playing any public role in the public but the belief that women can fall prey to temptation and conflict because of their moral vulnerability, hampers their struggle towards public participation (UNICEF, 2002).

Although there are ongoing efforts to further improve women's lives in keeping with the constitution and women's call for their emancipation through various agencies and roles women's expectations are still gendered. Their belief systems and traditions continuously weaken full participation of women outside traditional gendered roles within patriarchal institutions. Most Somali women are not aware of their rights in Islam. This adds to fear of women pursuing certain roles that would involve public participation. According to Farooq (2004), Islam considers men and women as equal so much so that it advocates the right to education and the owning of property that would give them power to negotiate gender roles. When Muslim women (Somali) have access to rights such as education, property, political participation and are aware of those rights, they are able to negotiate gender powers that define their gender roles. In fact, there is a school of thought among Muslims scholars that advances the view that Islam is positive about equality of men and women in the society (Farooq, 2004; Henning, Sattelberger, 2016). They argue that, in order to comprehend the dimension of justice, equality and being considerate to the other person, the reader of the Qur'an

has to apply contextual analysis.<sup>22</sup> The Islamic faith allows women to access rights to inherit and possess property, access education and any other treatment that a man would have based on equality of persons (Farooq, 2004; Henning, Sattelberger, 2016). The Islamic faith, as Warsame (2004) argues, does not prohibit women from having their own incomes as long as one doesn't engage in illegal business and dress outside of Islamic attire. Although Islam has been used as a tool for reinforcing androcentrism<sup>23</sup>, some Muslim scholars are increasingly engaging the religion of Islam by comprehending the rights of women within Islamic jurisprudence.

In Somalia, women continue to undergo rape and other forms of intimidation. This is being used as a strategy for instilling fear among them. Their stories demonstrated that Al-Shabaab would use rape, forced marriages, graphics of kidnapped women to intimidate them, and consequently demonstrate their power over a society that is anti-Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab uses culture and religion as a tool to justify their acts of violence. In this regard, women pointed out that rape and sexually related intimidations were a way of keeping women indoors, as women are traditionally perceived to belong within their households. Thus when those insurgents realize that some members of the community are supplying the African Mission to Somalia (AMISON) and the Somali government with the intelligence information, they use all manners of intimidation including sexual violence. Abdulizak said:

The Somali women would narrate horrendous stories about rape, kidnapping and torture. The Al-Shabaab would show them graphics of women that had been kidnapped, raped, forced to marry and those

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<sup>22</sup> Contextual analysis is reading the Holy Books (Bible, Koran, Gita) while keeping into consideration the context it was written and putting it into the context of today. The bible exegesis use this methods a lot.

<sup>23</sup> I.e. women have to cover their whole body because it could be a source of temptation to men-yet Islam doesn't order men to cover their bodies as it does to the Muslim women. The traveling of women during migration is also discouraged in some communities by invoking the sacred teachings within Islam.

that were used as suicide bombers as a ploy to make them fear Al-Shabaab. This was also to make them fear to report them to the government. This made the Somali women leave the country and come to South Africa.

#### **5.4 Gender dynamics in the context of South Africa**

In order to understand the context into which the Somali women negotiate gender relations, a focus into gender relations and expectations of women in the recipient nation cannot be overlooked. Thus, due to the fact that my study is located within Gauteng, a focus on gender relations in the context of South Africa has been done in order to understand migrant's new context.

In South Africa, gender relations were hugely affected by apartheid that reinforced policies and laws that perpetuated inequality. Under the apartheid regime, South African black males were emasculated individuals. They had power before the apartheid regime, but under the apartheid regime, that power was stripped from them by white males. Naledi Mackenzi (2011) points out that the stripping of their male privilege led to increased violence as black males looked for ways to make-up for their emasculated identities.

The context of South Africa is however not a homogeneous one and the same can be expected of the experiences of South African women of whom the apartheid regime positioned down the social, economic ladder. The reality of South Africa is uniquely different from that of other African countries, because the colour-based cleavage defines women's position. Walker (1982) emphasizes that the manner in which black women experienced disenfranchisement out of their 'blackness' is in varied ways. This is because they are not a homogeneous entity. In South Africa, black women differ in terms of their social political and economic status (i.e. the wealthy/poor, educated/uneducated, affiliated or non-affiliated to the ruling party, members or non-

members of certain organizations, rural/urban centers). South African women should therefore be conceptualized along interlocking factors of gender, class and race. Due to those intertwined forms of domination, black women were not permitted to vote, possess bank accounts and own land, among other inequalities. In order to obliterate suchlike imbalances based on the interweaving forms of domination, Black South African women began an activism geared toward realizing change (Veeran, 2006). As these women envisaged a citizenship devoid of disenfranchisement along gender, race and class, they organized themselves into political liberation movements that fought the dehumanizing 'Pass Laws (1956).' The law required every black to carry the Pass that was designed to segregate the black population. The South African nation celebrates womens day on the 9<sup>th</sup> August to commemorate the day when black women demonstrated change at Union Buildings against those Pass laws.

The roles played by women in South Africa, in the early twentieth century were of a domestic nature. Their responsibilities in public and at workplace were determined by the gendered roles at home. Due to these phenomena, women were relegated to roles that limited them from participation in decision making and public domains that were of an economic and political nature. Nevertheless, the post-apartheid era had been characterized by women participating in the social political and economic spheres, albeit with several challenges. The South African women have however made remarkable headways in their struggle for the inclusion into the public domains. For instance, the phenomenon of 'gender mainstreaming' has been enhanced by vibrant women movements that have called for the inclusion of women into public institutions (Hassim, 2003; 2011 McEwan, 2002; Rai, 2008). The gender equality<sup>24</sup> agenda was hitherto neglected because the black women were obsessed with the eradication of

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<sup>24</sup> Gender equality denotes that men and women should be treated the same,irrespective of their gender.Its different from gender equity which maintains that men and women ought to be treated according to their respective needs i.e. reproductive needs to women.

racism. Gender equality was also brought into the limelight through several years of struggle by South African women organisations. The South African Women force has also been felt in their fight against Gender Based violence, political inclusion of women and decision making process. This is thanks to women organizations. Although the South African women have brought about remarkable progress in addressing the forces of apartheid, Veeran (2006) argues that they still grapple with those forces in order to eradicate societal imbalances. The forces of Institutionalized racism challenges women activism and their access to opportunities that the government provides (i.e. the poor service delivery in some rural areas and poor urban centres). This alienation of Black South Africans is advanced by McEwan (2002) who opines that one of the key causes of that alienation is women's disengagement in decision making roles, and lack of economic developments in poor locations that lead to poor service delivery. Thus, it is in this context of South Africa that Somali women assert themselves. In contrast, Somali women's alienation is based on ethnicity which defines where the person belongs in terms of the socio-economic opportunities delegated by state.

### **5.5 Negotiating gender roles in the Somalia-South Africa transnational space**

Gender is not a natural phenomenon. However it is a social construction that changes with time. Thus, gender roles and power relations, which are important components of gender, cannot either be static or natural, but change with time. In South Africa, the Somali women, are redefining their gender roles that were originally traditional because of the need to meet livelihood demands. According to Shafer (2013), Somali women are managing their homes without the assistance of their male counterparts and are engaging themselves in economic activities which enable them to earn their livelihood. Nevertheless, the change of gender roles is complicated by the customary norms coupled with Islam which confine women to traditional roles. Further, it

enhances their inability to fully participate within the social realm. Also economic activities outside traditional roles is facilitated by the South African scenario of the overt and covert Xenophobia-Afrophobia, sexual abuse and inaccessibility to opportunities because of their gender, nationality, education and other intersecting factors. Most of the Somali women, due to lack of education are unable to access rights enshrined in the South African constitution and international treaties for refugees. During the interview, one participant indicated that Somali women, when assaulted, cannot report to the police because of their fear of victimization and being unaware of their rights as refugees.

This study however established that the transnational space is an important site for Somali women's gender role change due to the daily demands that leave them with no other option than to acquire it for their own benefit. Education has been a key player in facilitating the shift in gender roles. There is an increase in enrollments of Somali women in South African tertiary institutions within Gauteng province. The students that I interviewed came from University of Pretoria, UNISA, Johannesburg and one from Fort Hare University. Somali women are realizing that education is a necessary prerequisite for decent lives, so much so that the traditionally held idea of a woman being a housewife is fading away. Aisha says:

There is a big number of Somali student's enrolment in the universities, especially around Gauteng province. Initially they used to be house wives but they came to country where education is the main target to cross the bridge. Now at least they are learning something. So when you look at the statistics of the number of Somalis enrolling in the universities there are so many young ladies doing so. So that tells you that, women who were initially considered as mere housewives has changed.

Sudha (2000) argues that education makes the women realize their basic rights, thus influencing their response to traditional gender expectations enshrined in their cultural and religious norms. Besides, education offers them higher status which enables them to challenge gender expectations that are defined and reinforced by patriarchal institutions.

According to Pieper (2005), international migration has the potential to remodel gender power relations and the gendered expectations. In the context of Somali women, international migration offered the Somali women a viable space for transgressing gender roles and expectations of the community. Nevertheless, in terms of women performing roles out of their gender expectations, men play a significant role in determining what they can do and what they cannot do outside their gender expectations (Abdi, 2007, Ali, 2015; Kapteijns, 1995). For instance, Ali demonstrated that women are free to work outside their homes as long as their men allowed them to do so, otherwise if they did it without their permission it would be very disrespectful. Fatima on the other hand pointed out that women have the first responsibility of looking after the family and cooking, but they can also perform other activities, if the husband allows them. She says:

My primary work as a woman is to look after the children. I have to remain at home. But, other women are working, same as South Africans. This however is not written anywhere; on whether to do other works or not. It depends on your husband.

Due to huge responsibilities left within their home countries, remittance becomes demanded; Somali women are negotiating the traditional gender roles that confine them to housekeeping and child rearing. Thus, to deal with this pressure, they improve their income through venturing into the informal businesses, some of which jeopardize their lives. Social Network theory maintains that people are embedded in thick webs of social relations and interactions (Borgatti, et al. 2009). Women keep those ties through remitting money home in keeping with familial expectations of supporting

their families. Curran and Saguy (2013) observes that, just as potential migrants expect kin or friends, who have already migrated, to assist them, the households of origin also expect migrants to “help out” financially, by remitting a portion of their earnings. Due to this expectation, households encourage select family members to migrate. Although the women in Gauteng engage in the informal businesses that are lowly paid, it does not deter them from sending remittances. However, they make sure that they send some little money home whenever they find it in order to support the family back home. Zara, a Kenyan Somali from North Eastern Kenya says that she left her children with her mother, but sends little money to her for their clothing, food and school fees. She says:

I am Zara, a Somalian from Somalia and was first married to Kenyan from North Eastern province of Kenya. I lost my first husband in Somalia in war after he travelled there at my home. After that happening, I had to leave Kenya and go back to stay in Somalia. Life wasn't easy for me, and so I had to come to South Africa. I left behind my children with my elder sister and mother. Although my daily wages are small, I save and send some money to my family in order to support my children because I have a big responsibility over them.

Pessar and Mahlers' (2001) theory of gendered geographies of power focuses on how gender could be negotiated across transnational borders. In terms of social location, they refer to a person's position within power hierarchies created through historical, political, economical, geographical, kingship-based as well as other socially stratifying factors (2001:6). The theory posits that people are born into a given social location that confers on them certain advantages and disadvantages (Pessar and Mahler, 2003:816). The Somali women are located within power hierarchies created through clan, religion and cultural norms that are androcentric. The South Africa context gives them the possibility of negotiating these power hierarchies within the

aforementioned Somali institutions more easily than in Somalia/Kenya. For instance, in terms of Somali customary laws, it's not easy for a woman to divorce a husband without his consent (Jenifer, 2015). While in Somalia, it's hard for women to get a court order for the provision of child's support, in South Africa such a provision would be highly considered. The women would be favored for the sake of the children's welfare (Jenifer, 2015). Fatima says:

Somali we are a very patriarchal society by nature. We are living in South Africa where the institutions protect the rights of woman. When they come to me to seek for help I will channel them to the right institutions where they seek for their rights. In South Africa, due to such "fluid" territory, women are visible in social, political and economic activities where they make decisions of their own and contribute to the building of those communities.

In a study conducted by Abdi (2014) in relation to the experiences of Somali men and women in Minnesota (USA), he recounts how men, after establishing that women are getting income and support from the government, felt threatened for fear of losing power. Abdi (2014) opines that such a threat would affect the relationship between a husband and wife who are from a patriarchal background. In Pretoria, Kuresh from Kenya argues that some men don't like their wives to work because they feel that they are taking the place of men who are "supposed to be the family providers." Their power as head of the house is compromised, a phenomenon which she finds resonates with Somali men. According to her, men are jealous of their women working, and would prefer it if they stayed at home. Nevertheless, due to the financial needs of the family that the husband struggles to meet (rent, food, bills, fees and health) women negotiate these gender confinements in order to maximize the family income through finding a job. Women feel that their men are failing in their obligation to look after

their families and thus, negotiating the gender relations becomes inevitable. Kuresh a Somali woman from Kenya observes:

When a woman is working, the man feels jealous. He doesn't want you to work. He says it's our tradition for a woman to stay at home. So the man forces you not to work. He wants you to stay at home and yet what he gives you does not sustain the family. So you suffer because you have to obey your husband. Sometimes it happens to many ladies here, who have to go out of their homes and irrespective of regulations that confine them because the money he gives you cannot sustain us.

Although international migration does not necessarily lead to the emancipation of women within the transnational space, Pessar (2005) argues that there are notable gains that come with women crossing borders. Through those transnational territories, women are able to access resources and more rights that enable them to reconfigure the existing gender hierarchies that impede decision making within the community. When women have their own wages and access to resources, they gain more control over decision making, the household budget and their flexibility. This trend has not been perceived well by some men. These negotiated gender power relations is as a result of access to resources and rights in the South African context and have in some cases become detrimental to wife-husband relationships. Aisha argues that they have acquired too much freedom that competes with the male presence as the head of the household. Aisha says:

In my own opinion women have seen much changes here. Woman have a voice now. She can talk. She has freedom. Most of women do not sleep at home. She is doing her own business. Sometime most of them have brought up their families on their own. Somali families today are breaking away because of this new issue, women want to walk on their own self, and they say am not staying home 24hrs.

The cultural and religious dimensions are fundamental elements that determine a women's place and role in private and public domains. The religious and cultural norms among Somali women, argues Naim (2002) are aimed at safeguarding the dignity of the family. Further, Naim (2002) observes that Somali women are excluded from occasions that are more readily open to men, though the custom is gradually losing the meaning as women get educated or interact with other cultures that change such restrictive culture. When Mohamed in Pretoria West took me for lunch while I interviewed him in his restaurant renowned as Aljazeera, I learnt that women were not eating together with the males. The Aljazeera has an upstairs in the apartment where I did my interviews with the owner of the restaurant, Mohamed. Men were down stairs in the apartment while women ate separately upstairs. They were sharing meals among themselves at a separate apartment, away from men. After some inquiry, Mohamed said that the separate eating in public was part of the cultural norms within the Somali community. When those women saw us, they became disquietened by our presence in their eating area.

The patriarchal setting reinforced by religious and cultural institutions impedes a woman's full expression of their identity in public. This was expressed by Pretty who pointed out that during meetings women actively participate in debates, but whenever there were men around they would shy away from talking. Pretty points out that this is because of their androcentric cultural background that makes Somali women believe that they should not talk when a man is talking. However, the Action Support Center encourages women to come out of their social cultural confinements that hamper the full expression of their identity and speak out even in the presence of their male counterparts. They create a forum that would allow both men and women to speak or actively participate in various activities.

## **5.6 Xenophobia-Afrophobia and gender role rearrangement**

The Xenophobia –Afrophobia attacks is a significant factor that forces women to redefine their traditionally gendered roles; of reproduction and housekeeping. The women assume responsibilities that their husbands did before their household was affected by Xenophobia-Afrophobia. During the interviews, it emerged that most of the women find it hard to adapt to the new roles as bread winners in the family, as most of them previously stayed at home looking after their children. The women who were used to getting everything from their husbands had difficulties in assuming the responsibilities of their husbands. Sahra says:

It's too difficult for those women to support those children in South Africa, alone. Economically they suffer terribly. I knew a lady that her husband was killed in Soweto during 2015 xenophobia attacks and was suffering so much. The lady used to get every support she needed from the husband. She is now a street vendor in Johannesburg selling watches and other small things from Somalia.

Somali women use their networks to negotiate gender relations in the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia. Al-sharman's (2010) study that focuses on Somalis networks in Egypt argues that, social networks are important support systems that enable Somali women to adjust in a new territory. This was also found in Gauteng, where the Somali women's social networks enhanced their ability to take roles that were previously done by their husbands before Xenophobia-Afrophobia affected the household. The reliance on the social networks ties is common among the Somalis in Mayfair and Pretoria, where they rely on the kinship ties they have in South Africa and elsewhere to source capital or get jobs to support their households in Gauteng and remit back home. The social networks are not only necessary for the financial support, but most importantly, they share information that could help those within their network. Fatima said;

My husband was attacked last year in the location. I received the news at night that he was beaten and was rushed to the hospital 'half dead.' They took away everything that he owned. I don't want to recall that happening because it pains me so much. After that attack he never went back there. He is now employed in a restaurant in the city. He brings home R 2000 which is too small for our sustenance. After I disclosed my predicament to my cousin who lives in Pretoria, she informed me about a job of translation which gave me some income. When we added my income to my husband's income, we were able to pay the bills, and I was able to assist my family back home. Unfortunately, the job was temporary and had to look for other ways of surviving. My family in South Africa and in Mogadishu needed my input so much, yet I had no money. A friend of mine whom we grew up in Mogadishu told me that she knew of a church organization that helps migrants called the JRC (Jesuits Refugees services). I contacted them and they gave me some money to start small business. Now am able to support my husband in meeting household responsibilities and at the same time send some reminder to my family in Somalia.

The Somali manner of renegotiating gender roles after Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks is not homogenous. The strength and length of social networks created through clans, relatives and nuclear family, offer support to the affected, different from one woman to the other. There were those that had stronger networks and more ties that would enhance more support to the widowed women. Habiba said:

When attacks happen, we Somalis as usual support each other because we believe that we are one people regardless of our small differences like clan, family background. We get help from various people and groups from outside our community. But, I would say that the help varies from one person to the other. You see, it's obvious

that some people have relatives and friends who support them during the Xenophobia and others have not.

Somali women find ways of improving the household economy in order to add up to what the husband earns, after the man loses his job and his property to the Xenophobia-Afrophobia violence. The two incomes are necessary in order to make up for the earnings that were affected by the violence. Some studies on the Somali community have underscored the inevitability of two incomes from the husband and wife, for their economic sustainability. In Gauteng, however, it is hard for the women to get employment due to the intersecting factors of language, nationality, skin colour, education, etcetera. Similarly, Ladan (2004), argue that in Canada, Somali women are the most disadvantaged community in terms of accessing the opportunities that the state offers. The fact is that they are non-Canadians, who cannot access land acquisition and training programs. In the context of South Africa, Somali women encounter challenges that are intersecting with nationality in an effort to negotiate their gender roles. This complexity was expressed by Kuresh who said:

The women here cannot get employment from the companies or in other institutions because they lack proficiency in the English language. Also, we are discriminated for being foreigners, and regarded as incompetent for the jobs. We suffer too much as women. When you go out to look for job you are also thinking about your safety. We live in fear of being sexually harassed too.

The womens' efforts to find opportunities that would allow them to become independent economically are thwarted by discrimination based on the intersectionality of gender, nationality; race is eloquently expressed by J.Che who concurs with Kuresh. She says:

In South Africa, Somali women suffer discrimination for being women, for being non-South African, and for being blacks. We are

all over looking for jobs but don't get. Some of us have good papers showing that we are qualified for some jobs but they looked- down upon us. We are educated but that education doesn't help you in anything. They discriminate us in the sense that when we ask for job they give them to males, yet we are the ones taking care of the children. That's not fair!

### **5.6.1 Domestic violence and Xenophobia-Afrophobia**

Discussing domestic violence is significant to this section as it focuses on Xenophobia-Afrophobia experiences of Somali women and the violence is linked to those anti-foreigners attacks. The anger espoused by men out of frustration after losing their Spaza shops is directed towards Somali women. During the interviews, a handful of Somali women argued that it is during the Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks that cases of domestic violence are on the increase due to the frustration provoked by economic loss. Habiba said:

The women abuse and beating is a common phenomenon in some homes. And this violence at home starts with a small quarrel from the husband who maybe would like the woman to react. The men are frustrated when their shops are attacked and due to the feeling of anger after losing their source of livelihood they fight women.

Larkin and Renzetti (2009) draw a connection between domestic violence and economic stress, provoked by shortages of resources to sustain family needs. They argue that a sizeable body of knowledge attests to the idea that domestic violence could impact the gender relations in the family. When Somali women realize that their husbands do not have a reliable source of income, due to the loss of his livelihood precipitated by Xenophobia-Afrophobia, they seek employment in order to make up for the financial shortfall. However, when women get jobs, especially with bigger

earnings than the husband, it could cause tension in the family. This was expressed by Somali women, who said that some husbands are jealous when Somali women are working, and earning more than their husbands. They said that the salary difference could make the husband feel threatened due to the fear of loss of power to command household. Although women are involved in economic activities within the Somali community, men are principally perceived as the primary breadwinners. Thus, conflicts when women earn more are inevitable in some homes due to this social construction that gender men as the breadwinners. According to Larkin and Renzetti (2009) when men experience the feeling of the loss of power in the family, they could decide to be abusive in order to regain control over their household. After Somali men lost their work and property in the Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks, they resorted to domestic violence in order to regain the power lost as expressed by Kuresh who says:

The man feels jealous when we work. He doesn't want you to work. He says it's our tradition for a woman to stay at home. So the man forces you not to work. He wants you to stay at home and yet what he gives you does not sustain the family. So you suffer because you have to obey your husband. Sometimes it happens to many ladies here. And when those husbands lose what they have during Xenophobia-Afrophobia we can't just stay home doing nothing. Women go out to seek job. And when you find one that is paying more than he gets, there is fight between you and him. They believe that men are the ones supposed to be the providers.

The violence against the Somali community affects women who are significant symbols of the household. The study established that, Somali women's status as foreigners, women, uneducated, without valid documents and some not able to express themselves in English, leaves them vulnerable to their abusive husbands. The husbands are aware that they can never report the matter to the police because they

cannot express themselves in English; in addition they also fear police harassments. One of the interviewees, Amira said that they are trapped in a miserable situation whereby they can do nothing but to keep quiet to avoid getting into trouble with Somali traditional authorities. These predicaments were eloquently defined by Ayan in the following manner:

It's tough to be a Somali woman here. You can go nowhere when your husband abuses you because you are a foreigner and you fear that the government will arrest you should you report your husband to the police, because you don't have the right documents. So you better keep quiet when the man beats you at home. On the other hand, you lack the language (English) to report what happened to you. It's not easy to find justice and therefore we chose to remain silent in order to avoid the trouble.

The social networks are significant means through which the Somali women are able to negotiate the phenomenon of domestic violence promoted by Xenophobia-Afrophobia phenomenon. The Somali women lean back on those ties, either new or old, that facilitated their coming to South Africa. During my interview with a South African Somali Women Network, (SASOWNET) member, I learned that she was divorced while she was three months pregnant. Aisha was married in South Africa. After the Xenophobia-Afrophobia attack saw him lose all the property he owned, her husband divorced her. She said that, before her husband left her, they would quarrel a lot and this would result in violence which she would report to the police. The husband could not withstand the constant reporting to the police and so he had to end the relationship. These quarrels happened after the Xenophobia-Afrophobia incident that saw the husband lose his source of income. Aisha says that since the Xenophobia-Afrophobia attack in April 2015 she has never seen him. She went to her acquaintance that had facilitated her coming to South Africa. She expressed gratitude to her sister who accommodated her after her husband abandoned her.

After the 2015 attacks my husband lost everything and life was not the same. It was hard to survive on well-wishers that gave us some groceries and little money from the Somali business fraternity. This was the time I needed much attention as a pregnant woman. He didn't care. He left me and has never come back. And also, before he left, I had numerous fights with her, almost every day. I meet some of my friends who tell me that they see him in Pretoria West and that he is married to a young lady. My friend who helped me when I was coming to South Africa took me to her house. She is my sister, a friend, a mother...she is everything. I thank her for accommodating me. Before I came to South Africa, we lived together in Karatina (Kenya) and hawked perfumes and watches, but she left me behind and came to South Africa where I would join her later.

Most of the women who were interviewed expressed a fear of reporting domestic abuse to the police for fear of victimization by the community. Contrary to Somalia where they feel confined to patriarchal institutions that curtails their freedom, women gained the 'power' to choose South African justice systems or the machineries within Somali community for help (Social ties, machineries such as The South African Somali Board, Clan members, South African Somali Association and the South African Somali Women Network. Also, some women chose to confide their predicament to close friends within SASOWNET, whom they trusted, as well as close relatives to solicit support. The South African Somali Women Network creates a platform on which women can express issues surrounding their lives (about domestic abuse). Apart from providing this platform, the SASOWNET in liaison with The Action Support Center links women with bodies that can offer support to the women undergoing domestic abuse. The familial and friendship ties offer support through advice, providing information about lawyers and intervening in case the woman feels that she is helpless. Although some Somali women opt to report to the police station,

some Somali women expressed that the choice of the South African law enforcement system precipitates some fear of being victimized. When the woman used such means, it was considered as transgressing the community norms that directs the affairs of the Somalis. In fact, reporting domestic violence was considered as an element of not being a good wife<sup>25</sup> and it sent a bad image to the community. This however is changing as more women are getting exposed to certain organizations like The South African Somali Women Network, The Action Support Center, South African Human Rights Commission and more importantly coming into contact with other nationalities that explore other avenues for justice execution. On the other hand, when domestic violence happens, the Somali women would also consider using individuals that are respected within the family-who could be relatives or friends to arbitrate the matter, rather than using the means that could jeopardize the life of the husband who he may be imprisoned or subjected to police harassment as a foreigner. Ayan said

Yes, we can opt to report to police. It's a choice that we have as Somalians living in South Africa. But, this doesn't sound well among the Somali community, because it can jeopardize the husband, who could be jailed for domestic abuse. However, sometimes it could be good thing to report to police so that you can instill fear to the abusive husband. If you are abused everyday by your husband what do you do? Myself in the beginning, I didn't report to the police for some time, but afterwards, I reported because he was abusing me every day. All that I cared was my life and that of my young child.

However, the rise of the Somali women, socially and economically which is buoyed by opportunities available in the country and the support from civil society organization, leads to men feeling disempowered. This sentiment is exacerbated by

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<sup>25</sup> The Somali society traditionally expects a women to be very submissive to the husband and the male authorities.

the perception that Somali women are becoming alienated from cultural norms that are considered to be among the community's hinges. Thus, divorce ensues after the husband considers the rising woman as a threat to his authority in the family.

Several participants pointed out that women cannot exonerate themselves from the escalating cases of divorce. Among them was Sarah who argued that when a man comes home tired and stressed by factors that foreigners experience in South Africa, she adds stress to the already stressed husband through quarrels. The outcome of that is the fight which leads to a man divorcing the wife. She advocates for the respect of the husband no matter what he has done, because men love to be made to feel that they are in charge of the household. Sarah Said;

Women are part of the today's broken relations. Instead of respecting and supporting the husband who comes home tired, they stress him. Why should you do such a thing yet you know that it will spill on you? They work in townships and come back home tired and stressed, then you stress him. This cannot end up well.

### **5.6.2 Ordeals of Rape**

The Somali experience of rape within the transnational space goes back to the time of civil wars, and lately, the Al-Shabaab in Somalia who have destabilised the country. Rape was adopted by the Al-Shabaab or the warring clans as one of the reliable weapons to instil fear to their opponents. The manifestation of violence and aggression to their enemies was underscored, when the Somali migrants pointed out that rape was directed to them in the presence of their family members. Pretty said:

The Somalis are both victims of rape in Somalia as well as in South Africa. Most of the rapes that happened to us were carried out in our own villages mostly by members from another region. This was done by those rebels and the Al-Shabaab group where women would be

raped and tortured in front of their families. A lady was raped in front of the father, the brothers, and then taken to some place where she was raped. She managed to run away.

The topic of rape has attracted much interest within feminist scholarship in pursuit of comprehending what moves the perpetrators to the act, and how it connects with gender equality. Among those scholars is Susan Brownmiller, an American feminist. In her engagement with the politics of rape, she refutes the generally held views that rape is as a result of indecency on the part of women that entices men to rape them. She maintains that the phenomenon of rape should be understood from the context of violence (Brownmiller, 1975; Rehman, 2012). In Somalia, rape could be seen as a violent act of dehumanising, degrading and debilitating nature. Their dignity as women and mothers are harmed, which leaves them in a traumatic state. During the interviews, the few who agreed to talk about the rape looked sentimental as they reminisced over their horrendous experiences. Such violence is also an enactment of inequality in a patriarchal community like Somalia.

In Mayfair and Pretoria, it emerged that Somali women eschew reporting incidences of rape. Thus, the victim of rape will not directly narrate the incidence but will circumvent around the incidence, especially to an outsider. They avoid reporting it to the police force, and most importantly to the Somali community for fear of victimisation after the incidence is known to the public. The Somali women experience the fear of stigma in the event where the public know that the woman has been raped. The Somali community refrain from sharing the news about rape or the sexual violence because such discourses are regarded as a taboo and have multifaceted ramifications to the raped women and their families. The community exacerbates pain to the already traumatized women and their families, when they isolate them and perpetuate stigma. Also, rape could jeopardize the future of the young women in terms of their “marriageability.” In this case, the women pretend that they have not been raped or say that they were beaten by a man. Marriage is a highly valued institution

among the Somali community and therefore girls are reluctant to report rape or other sexual harassment that are likely to lessen their chances for marriage. During the interviews, Mohamed said:

In this area, ladies are sexually assaulted/raped but they pretend that they haven't been raped/harassed because they can't get somebody to marry them. They say that they were beaten instead of directly telling you that they were raped. They feel that by reporting or sharing the news with some community members, they risk being the laughing stalk of the community which would inflict pain on the traumatized woman. It's very disgraceful experience and they always avoid to talk about i.e. good number of women in this community have experienced sexual harassment or rape but they chose to keep quiet. They opt to remain silent, yet they have a haunting memory of the poignant rape story.

The stigma of rape and the sentiments of shame affect the Somali women so much that they decide to leave for another community as a coping mechanism for that feeling. This gives them some space to deal with the trauma and evade the feeling of shame after they realise that the community is aware of their situation. Amina said that her friend was raped by a Kombi driver who drove her to the wrong destination. She was raped by the driver and the men that were inside the vehicle. She opted to keep quiet because she thought that everybody knew about her situation and eventually left for another place, far from her former house. She said:

My best friend was raped while she travelled to Johannesburg town. She boarded the kombi that was heading to the town but the bus took another direction. The bus was driven towards a deserted place where they started raping and robbing her. She never reported the incidence

for she feared stigma associated with rape. She decided to move to Pretoria because she felt that every Somali she met knew her story.

Most of the women that were interviewed expressed their fear of walking alone in some areas like Marabastad, where rape and crimes targeting foreigners were high. In spite of the presence of the “crime stop” police, Somalis said that they seemed uninterested whenever some crimes against foreigners occurred. Thus, the Somali women would be accompanied by men or they would walk as a group in order to bolster their security. Besides the fear of rape while walking, the women expressed that they hated boarding the kombis<sup>26</sup> or taxis<sup>27</sup> driven by strangers/non-Somalis. Thus, the Somali community in Pretoria West and Mayfair have an ‘ethnic bus station’ where they transport Somalis between the two towns. This offers them security as the drivers and owners of those taxis are well known in the community. The worry of rape incidences as a result of travelling by taxis was eloquently expressed by Maria from Pretoria who said:

We Somali women don’t use the public taxis. It’s dangerous! As a woman you are not secure at all. Even when you board taxi, they will rob and rape you. Sometimes, even they do kill. So it’s very difficult to be a woman in South Africa. Even in town, we are scared even when we are going to work. So we are suffering. Even when you come from job you are scared to board any taxi because they rob you they rape you and they kill even. When they see you looking different from them-not able to speak the local language, or just your appearance, they can hijack and rape you. Before they rape you they

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<sup>26</sup> Kombi a South African term for a minibus.

<sup>27</sup> Taxi is a vehicle hired for transportation of people and goods.

will say; “I want to have sex with these Somali ladies and feel how they taste.”

Somali women use social ties as an important means to deal with rape related trauma, and other forms of gender based violence. Due to the need for support when rape happens and at the same time the fear of stigma, most women decide to disclose their stories to their closest friends whom they can expect confidentiality from. While in Somalia, the Somali women would report their incidences to their closest relatives. In South Africa, Somali women without close relatives feel helpless because their relatives are far from the country. However, they choose to confide the news to the available social ties within their vicinity. Thus, they inform their closest acquaintance- who could be a friend that helped them before coming to South Africa or a new friend that they established relations with after arriving in South Africa. Habiba said:

A while ago, there was a young Somali lady that was raped in this on this street as she walked back from work. She never told anyone else besides her best friend who lived in our neighbouring suburb. I guess she felt afraid of reporting to police or even inform her immediate neighbours whom they shared the roof.

Due to the patriarchal nature of the Somali community, Somali men down play the reports about the rape cases, and doubt their credibility. In fact some Somali women reported cases of their husbands having forced sex with them without proper consent. After being raped by their husbands, Somali women either inform their close ties or request them to talk to their husbands. Nevertheless, when such efforts are futile they call the 10111<sup>28</sup> and inform the police to deal with abuse. A handful of Somali women pointed out that their husbands were disappointed with Somali women taking such

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<sup>28</sup> 10111 is the South African Police Service (SAPS) call centre. The number is called whenever there is an emergency that needs a quick response

channels to address rape and other forms of domestic abuse. Their husbands doubted the credibility of such reports and said that Somali women made up stories about the violence. Reporting to the police made their husbands feel disempowered, in a country that empowered women with rights to equality. The Somali women said that their spouses could not cope with such pressure and either divorced their wives or engaged in extra-marital affairs. Some went into substance abuse such as alcohol and chewing of Khat<sup>29</sup>-also known as the Miraa. All the same women reported that their husbands showed less concern about the sexual violence against Somali women that happened in South Africa. In fact, it emerged that some of the women avoided disclosing the rape news to their brothers for fear that their brothers would reveal and even blame them for walking out alone or using the wrong taxis. Among the married couples, women negotiated the gender relations by not reporting the rape or avoiding the report of the rape even to their own husbands for fear that they would be beaten or divorced. Amina's cousin was travelling near a school to check on her daughter at school. She was grabbed by two men and drawn to a nearby bush and raped. When she came back home her husband noted that things were different, and she was asked to tell him what the problem was. She decided to disclose the rape to her spouse, not knowing that the news would have negative ramifications. Her husband was angry and blamed her for that. After few days he abandoned her.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the manner in which Somali women in Gauteng negotiate the gender roles and relations within the transnational space. Somali women who come from a culture that is patriarchal, redefine and renegotiate their gender relations in the transnational space. This shifting of the gender roles and power relations has

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<sup>29</sup> Khat is a green looking drug that arouses excitement and is of nicotine family. The people leaving in the horn of Africa (Djibuti, Somali, Ethiopia, Eritrea,) chew it a lot. Somalia is a major importer of the Khat from Kenya.

been born out of demands for attaining livelihood and thus pressures them to venture into new domains in order to maximise the family returns. The Somali women are subject to social, cultural and political challenges that hamper the integration with the local community and adaptation within the transnational space. I argue that these barriers should be seen from a perspective of the intersecting social locations in order to better understand how they experience them. I also argue that, due to the intersecting social locations, Somali women are subject to gender based violence (domestic violence, rape) albeit experiencing them differently.

The subsequent chapter explores the manner in which Somali women negotiate religious and language related barriers in the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE NEXUS OF RELIGION, LANGUAGE AND RACE/ETHNIC IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF XENOPHOBIA-AFROPHOBIA

#### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the Somali women's experiences at the nexus of religion, language and race in the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia. In the context of Somali women, religion, race, and language are concomitantly linked, because their foreignness is felt in these three conjoining factors (i.e. a Muslim who speaks a strange language, and has soft hair). It is on these grounds that I choose to discuss the three factors in this chapter, in order to understand the experiences of Somali women through the intersectionality of religion, language and race. The religious identity of Somalis in a country that is predominantly Christian makes the women experience Xenophobia-Afrophobia differently from other nationalities. Due to the fact that Somali religious identity cannot be separated from their culture, I discuss both factors in relation to each other in demonstrating how they enhance Xenophobia-Afrophobia among Somali women. Also, this chapter looks at the language which is a huge barrier to integration with the local community. Thus, the Somali women are subject to covert Xenophobia-Afrophobia because of their inability to understand and speak the language of the locals. The Somali women suffer verbal abuses that are derogatory. Finally, this chapter highlights the race dimension that renders them vulnerable to Xenophobia-Afrophobia that manifests itself both overtly and covertly. Nonetheless, no single dimension that can affect the Somali women responds to Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities, alone, rather, it is interconnected factors that affect women, varyingly.

## **6.2 Somali religious identity**

The Somali people are easily spotted in most countries where they settle as refugees due to their social economic and political identity. This visibility has facilitated their vulnerability to prejudices based on religion, culture and physical appearance. The Somali religious and cultural identity manifests itself in the architectural structures of Madrassas, Mosques, small businesses which sell Somali food and clothing. (Jinnah, 2010:96). In his study that focused on Somali migrants in Austria, Hebbani (2014) points out that Somali women, due to the *Hijab*<sup>30</sup> and *Jilbab*<sup>31</sup>, that are strong markers of their identity as Somalis and Muslims from Africa, are victims of covert discrimination evidenced in employment (they are either unemployed or underemployed). Kusow (2006:545) notes that in North America, Somali migrants experience new classification that locates them into an inferior status with labels loaded with negative connotations that disadvantages them. Although the Somalis migrants are racially categorised as black people who share blackness with other blacks in North America, black American natives still consider them as outsiders with different language, faith and culture (Kusow, 2006:544).

### **6.2.1 The religious context of Gauteng**

Before delving into the nexus of gender and Somali religion in Gauteng, I deem it necessary to discuss Somali religion in the context of the Gauteng province, because of the stratified nature of Somali communities of faith which differ due to the varying contexts. Although the Somalis share the same religion-which is Islam, the modus

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<sup>30</sup> Hijab is a cloth worn by Muslim women to cover their heads and chests. It is in the Islamic teaching that women should dress modestly, especially outside their families where they come into contact with Adult males. Hijab safeguards women from lustful men.

<sup>31</sup> Jilbab also Jalabib (plural) is a long loose dress worn by the Muslim women. The Jilbab wear covers the whole body excluding head, face and hands. Today, the dress has been modified to fit the needs of contemporary time i.e. Sport Jalabib that allows Somali women to participate in sports without derailing from Islamic dressing code.

operandi of those worshipping communities, and architecture of their sacred space could differ from each other. The Somali religion in Gauteng is both transnational and inter-cultural because of religious and cultural interaction with other Muslims from other communities (Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshi and so on). After Somalis arrived in the Gauteng province, they came into contact with existing South African Indians and Malay Muslims that are the key adherents of the South Africa Islamic faith. Due to the pre-existing Islamic faith in the province, Somalis were now able to develop their own religious communities, albeit with the influence from Indian Muslims. Further, Tablighi Jamaat, a Sunni missionary groups that are non-political and non-conservative, have also shaped the transnational religious communities in Gauteng (Sadouni, 2015).The Jamaat disassociates themselves from jihad and other political engagements like terrorism.

In Mayfair and Pretoria, Islam is an important identification mode that augments solidarity among Somalis, who come from different social locations (clans, political affiliation, ethnic grouping, and nationality). Thus; these social, political and economic social locations seem to be obscured by Islamic identity which transcends them. During the interviews, the Somalis' enthusiasm was evidently manifested when they discussed the significance of Islam in their lives. The religion is not only an institution of worship but a way of life and an adaptation strategy which enhances their networks with Muslims of other races and nationalities, namely Indians, Pakistanis and African Muslims. The Islamic symbolisms and gestures are manifested in their places of work through Islamic writings, Qur'an recitation while working, their manner of dressing, and honoring the midday prayer-they attend the prayer service at the mosque (located near their business centers). The Somalis in Gauteng consider Islam as a strategy that can create solidarity with the wider community of Muslims in South Africa, especially Indians who have supported them in times of need. Thus, religious identity has helped the Somalis get some social and economic support from other Muslims within South Africa, and also facilitated networks with other Muslims outside South Africa. During

my stay in Pretoria, I visited most shops that are owned by the Somali community. I discovered that, nearly every shop had an Islamic text hanged on the wall. Also, the Somalis held their Qur'an and recited the prayers without shying away from the customers. The Somali religious identity depicted in the aforementioned symbolisms is a significant element that forges networks based on religious affiliation as the next section elaborates.

### **6.2.2 Religious networks**

The religious networks have been instrumental in enhancing support for Somali women in negotiating the social political and economic barriers within the transnational space. In the Gauteng province, there are many businesses that are owned by Muslims, which are either owned by Indian or Muslims migrants from Asia (Pakistanis and Bangladeshis). The religious commonalities enhances the feeling of connection with one another, albeit their different social locations. The Somali women utilize those religious networks to get employment from these Muslim business people who prefer employing their fellow Muslims. Most of the Somali women that had jobs said that they were either employed by their fellow Somalis or other people who shared their faith. Working under a Muslim employer was more comfortable than under a Christian one, because they are able to recite the Qur'an and attend prayers at the stipulated time without it becoming a problem at work. Migration literature has shown that religious networks could support the migrants in adapting into the host environment, through offering financial assistance, employment opportunities, legal and justice information. For instance, the work of Oosterban (2010) demonstrates how the Evangelical church communities in Brazil facilitated migrant's settlement in the country through their networks. The Brazilian Evangelical churches explored the internet to make the information that Brazilian migrants needed before migrating to Europe more available. The Brazilians who were already in Europe were interacting with the church as a platform to provide more information to people that needed to

travel to those countries. The Social Network theory posits that, social ties are paramount in sourcing information about opportunities, potential risks, the cost of travelling and so forth. Han's (2011) work underscores the benefits that migrants received from the Chinese church in Canada. The church offered multilingual and multi-cultural religious celebrations in the spirit of inclusion of the cultural and lingual diversities. The Chinese church organized English classes that would enhance communication with the wider population. Through this religious network, many had access to job opportunities.

In Gauteng, religious organisations are key entities that offer support to the migrants during Xenophobia-Afrophobia experiences. Specifically, Somali women access support from South African Muslims networks who consider supporting them as a religious obligation. Islam impresses upon the concept of brotherhood to encourage the solidarity of Muslims as an expression of love for one another. This brotherhood is manifested by the South African Muslims, whenever Xenophobia-Afrophobia happens. Fatuma points out that during Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks, most of their help came from the Indian Muslims in Gauteng and the Somali community members who are united in Islamic faith. However, she posits that, Christian organizations like Jesuits Refugees Service (A Catholic Church organization popularly renowned as JRC) offer support to the affected population. The provision they get is only temporary, and is meant to help Somali women establish themselves through paying house bills and starting small businesses that would enhance self-reliance. She said;

I want to mention that when Xenophobia happens, the government does not care about us. The only support we get is from the body called the JRC that gives women small money to start some small businesses and pay our bills for few months. Also, the Somali business community contributes some money and give us some little support. Indian Muslims in South Africa have also helped us with

food, groceries and accommodations (in mosques) in this time of Xenophobia-Afrophobia. And of course some friends and relatives that are located in different parts of the country.

### **6.2.3 Racial undertones in negotiating religion**

Feminist Intersectionality theory argues that women are subject to intersecting forms of discrimination based on race and skin color, education background, caste, age, ethnicity, language, ancestry, sexual orientation, religion and social economic class among others (Bastia, 2007; Crenshaw, 1989; Squires, 2008; Valentine, 2007). In the context of Gauteng, Somali women find themselves entangled in these intertwined factors at the mosques after coming into contact with the Indian and Malays Muslims. Somali women suffer discrimination from the Indian Muslim community by virtue of their race and nationality. The Indian Muslims consider themselves as superior to the Somalis and other non-citizens due to multifaceted factors such as race, language, education, nationality etc. The legacy of the apartheid regime which categorized people in accordance with their skin colour became evident in the mosques. Among the South African Muslims in Gauteng, there are two main communities-Indians and Malays who also consider themselves as different from each other. During the interview, I established that, there is racial segregation among the Muslims despite the community worshipping under one roof and sharing the same belief systems. Maria said;

This country has a bad history of racial segregation. Because of this history, white cannot mix with blacks, Indian cannot mix with blacks. Somalis cannot mix with the Indian communities. We cannot mix with Indians because they are racists and they don't want to have business with Somalis. And because they want to protect their own business from competition. This racism is also manifested in our worship areas. In our mosques, we go to pray under one roof, but the

irony is that they won't greet you or talk to you because you do not belong to their race. I wonder whether we are worshiping the same Allah.

#### **6.2.4 Religious and cultural identity as a barrier to negotiating the transnational space**

While their religious identity enables Somali women to form networks with other Muslims, albeit with challenges, the Somali women find it hard to navigate through the transnational space due to the religious and cultural differences between themselves and other local nationals. Their conservative nature in terms of dressing, religion in face of other cultures cannot be compromised in order to integrate with other communities because doing so would be tantamount to compromising their identity, which is core to maintaining social networks with their acquaintances and kins who expect them to manifest their “uncompromised Somaliness.” Zeinab says that despite the Xenophobia-Afrophobia vulnerability linked to their appearances, they try to keep their identity without compromising it because religion and culture are significant elements that reinforce bonding within the community. Zeinab says

In South Africa, although it's better because there is security and no war, we face challenges because of the fact that we look different from the local population. No one can deny that we are different, in terms of religion, which is Islam as well as the culture. These elements are part of us and we cannot hide what we are part of the wider Somali community. If you lose these elements, you risk being rejected by your Somali friends and even your family close to you.

The lack of prior preparation before entry into the South African culture hampers intercultural communication. Hasan Islow (2011) in his article that investigates why Somalis find it hard to integrate into the locations, blames cultural misunderstanding for its inability to relate with the local community. He adduces the scenario whereby,

Somali males often dropped money on the counter because they did not want to touch female hands while giving back the change. Thus, the South African women read that behavior as un-African and disrespectful to them, because they see it as money being thrown to them rather than handed to them on hand. At Mamelodi location I recall Somali shops that were a short distance away from where I stayed. I discovered that most of those Somali shops had a small metallic protected window that had small opening for receiving money and giving back change. The male shopkeepers dropping change was unusual to some women who visited the shop. I asked for clarification from my informant who told me that men are prohibited from touching female hands. I learnt that the Somalis are prohibited from shaking the hands of the members of the opposite sex if they are not family relatives, although not all Somalis share such a stance.

### **6.2.5 Clan politics among the Somali women**

Among the Somali community, clan is an important element of culture that places the members within a certain group. The theory of gendered geographies of power maintains that people are born and brought up into a given social location that gives them certain advantages and disadvantages (Pessar and Mahler, 2003:816). In Gauteng, there are clan differences that impede integration. By geographical scales, Mahler and Pessar (2003:815) claim that gender operates simultaneously on multiple spatial and social scales (e.g. body, clan, family and state) across transnational terrains. Somali women experience gender complexities that are facilitated by clan and cultural differences that manifest themselves in Gauteng. Although most of the Somalis interviewed tried to hide that division, the Action Support center and South African Somali Network (SASOWNET) officials and some Somalis were frank enough to point out that clan division was prevalent among the Somali women. When I asked Pretty, the Action Support Center official what were the main challenges that they experienced in working with Somali women, she was quick to categorically mention that clan was the main impediment to SASOWNET's growth. She noted that

at several occasions organized by SASOWNET, clan politics had become evident. The most common clans in Gauteng are Ogaden, Abgaal, Habargidir, Majeerteen, Mareexaan and Isaaq. Through Social Location, I argue that, in Gauteng Somali women's Somali insertion into the the Gauteng province is affected by their clan group. A large clan like Ogaden with many Somalis in Gauteng would insert easily in the transnational space because they have more people in South Africa whom they can connect with, than the Bantu Somalis who are a minority group. The political history of the majority clans illustrate that they are more privileged than minorities like the Somalis Bantus and this provides them with more resources and power to negotiate within the transnational space. Also, being the majority in Gauteng would mean that they have well established clan networks. These interpersonal networks make it easier for new migrants to find jobs and gain access to the required resources in their destination countries (Poston & Bouvier, 2010:213). Nonetheless, the politics of division are evident, albeit covertly. It emerged from Pretty that whenever the organization convenes for a meeting, they have the propensity of inviting women from their own clans. This is a way of eschewing criticisms or differing opinions that could arise within the meetings. Pretty decried the divisions among SASOWNET based on their clans and wonders why they would leave their countries that are fighting only to South Africa and fight among themselves again. She also pointed out that the clan division is also prevalent in Somali leadership. She observes that The Somali Association of South Africa (SASA) and Somali Community Board of South Africa (SCBS) do not mix because of the clan differences. Pretty says;

My brother, SASA and SCBS do not mix, because of the clan difference. Even the SASOWNET we are having a big challenge of how to strengthen its structure throughout South Africa because every clan wants to be on their own. We ask them "why did you all ran from Somali and then came here to fight one another along your clans? How will it help?" And they laugh and say that they are trying

to ensure that there is peace among clans. South Africa has its own challenge but if you bring your own fights from Somalia and how is that going to help?

### **6.2.6 Religious identity and Islamophobia**

Due to the rising wave of terrorism across the globe that exacerbates Islamophobia among nations, Somali religious mannerisms and dressing evoke these anti-Muslim sentiments which complicate their survival and their integration with the citizens and other nationalities that are non-Muslim. Hebani (2014) observes that Muslims from Africa have the potential to attract negative feelings associated with terrorism and oppression of women through their hair, names and above all, *burqa* and *hijab* dress. South Africa is predominantly a Christian nation (Rule, 2002; Ashston, 2008; Kritzinger, 1994), while Somalis are Muslims, and due to this difference coupled with cultural differences of the two communities, Somalis integration into South African environment is difficult. When Habiba went to the Home Affairs to renew her visa, she was accompanied by her cousin who would guide her in the process. She claimed that one of the staff did not treat them with respect. They said that the officer made a comment that, insinuated that they looked like terrorists. Habiba said:

I went to Home Affairs last year with my cousin that stays in Pretoria. He accompanied me because I needed some guidance in the processing of my document. I was dressed in burqa and he had the Ghutra.<sup>32</sup> The officer looked at us and checked our papers thoroughly. He said that we have to be careful because there are some terrorists among your community who dress as you are. She looked at my dressing with a hateful look. I can say that I was not treated kindly because of how I was dressed.

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<sup>32</sup> Ghutra is a Muslim rectangular clothing worn around the head and neck by men. It's a Muslim scarf.

In recent years, many nations are increasingly showing antagonism against Muslims due to the recurrent terror attacks that push countries to either reject Muslims entering into the host country or complicate the documentation process (Ramberg, 2004; Moosavi, 2014). Nevertheless, this anti-Muslim hostility could be as a result of several intersecting factors and not just hatred for their faith. The work of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (2006) that studies discrimination and Islamophobia in Europe points out that, hostility towards Muslims in Europe should not be limited to Xenophobia because it's a complex phenomenon that entails discrimination of a Muslim along his/her religion, race, nationality, politics, language, education, hue, ethnic and clan backgrounds. Hebani (2014), who focuses on Somalis migrants living in Austria, argues that, due to their religious identity, Somalis are subject to Islamophobia facilitated by the media that negatively portrays them, hence complicating their integration into the Austrian society. Hebani (2014) further points out that all Somalis in Austria are easily identified as Muslims from Africa through their hair, names and above all, *burqa* and hijab dress that have attracted negative feelings associated with terrorism and oppression of women.

In the context of South Africa, interviews with Somali community revealed that anti-Muslim bigotry is a common phenomenon in Gauteng province, albeit inconspicuous. Habiba from Johannesburg decries her treatment by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) officials when she went to renew the documents, accompanied by her cousin. Thus, Habiba and her cousin were stereotyped as terrorists because of their Muslim attire, yet there are many moderate Muslims who are against extremism and terrorism. Although the sentiments against Habiba and her cousin pointed to Islamophobia, I argue that the intersectionality of his nationality (Xenophobia-Afrophobia), religion (Islamophobia), race (racism) and the other forms of discrimination, led to his victimization because she was not just seen as a Muslim alone, but a Muslim standing at the entanglements of religion (Islam), nationality (foreigner), race and so forth.

In Gauteng, the Islamic dressing intensifies women's vulnerability to crime, which is covert Xenophobia-Afrophobia (especially in hospitals, and from the police force). Their vulnerability to locals is not only because of their attire, but the religious codes intersecting with race (black skin tone) and language (inability to speak English). Despite Indian women Muslims wearing the Islamic garb, they are not targets of crime and covert Xenophobia-Afrophobia in the same way as Somali women because their religious identity as Muslims is normalized. During the interviews, it emerged that Somali women hide their identity as Muslims, especially when they are travelling to a place they think they would be singled out and discriminated or maltreated as a result of the aforesaid intersecting factors. Thus, instead of dressing in ethnic and Islamic attires, they wear western clothes in times of Xenophobia-Afrophobia or any other time they want to travel on public means as a way of avoiding possible attacks. Zeinabu said:

I do not speak any of the local languages spoken here. I do not speak English either. The only language that I know is Somali my home language, and Arabic, and a bit of Swahili because I have interacted with Kenyans during my stay in the country. When I arrived into this country, I had no document and even now my documents are no more valid. Whenever I travel, I dress western attires in order not to be spotted by the police or even criminals. I know many of my Somali friends who have been targeted easily in their Islamic attires.

### **6.2.7 The role of religion in navigating the xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities**

The Islamic religion plays a significant role in giving hope and meaning to the Somali women in facing the multifaceted complexities within the transnational space. They gain hope from the conviction that whatever happens has been ordained or predetermined by the Omniscient (All-Knowing) God. Confronted by the

Xenophobia-Afrophobia phenomenon, the Somali women said that Allah who is all-Knowing had preordained unforeseen mishaps. I was amazed when a handful of the women pointed out that crimes, deaths and other forms of sufferings that arise in the community are within God's prearrangement. As they expressed that conviction, indications of hope were reflected on their faces. Religion provides meaning to their suffering during migration and settlement, as expressed by Rahma that:

Most of us go through many sufferings that make us frustrated. Every day, we are experiencing violence and discrimination that make us ask ourselves whether we deserve such treatment. However Islam gives us hope, because we know that everything that happens is willed by Allah.

Zara attributes her predicament related to refusal of her documents by the immigration to a prearranged phenomenon. She feels that she has been discriminated by the South African system in terms of the opportunities that require one to possess the valid documents. She wishes she could get those documents in order to pursue her education in South Africa that can place her in a position to apply for a 'third country' in order to be resettled. Nevertheless, she says that her situation, as any other complexity is within the predetermined arrangements of Allah. She says:

In South Africa, life is very hard. I do not know what I should do to deal with the documentation problem. I believe that God is aware of the outcome of all these troubles that I am experiencing. I could be lucky one day to get education and also be relocated to the First World country. In all this, God knows what will happen in future and I just hope that things will be fine for me because God is in control and He knows about tomorrow.

### **6.3 Language as a mark of “Somaliness”**

The Somalis from Somalia can speak Somali and Arabic (due to the long ties with Arabic nations, the influence of Arabic media and Islamic religion), while those from Kenya can speak Somali, Swahili and English. The language of Somali women cannot be separated from religion because; the Somalis speak the Arabic language, which is the language the Quran is written in and the medium of worship. Their inability to speak the local language and Islamic identity speaks of their foreignness among the locals, thus attracting Xenophobia-Afrophobia sentiments. The Somali community in Gauteng prefers to speak Somali language which is an important hinge for the Somalis from Somali and Kenya. Although, some women can speak other languages like English, Arabic and Swahili, they consider the Somali language a significant mark of their identity as Somalis living in Gauteng. Despite Somalis standing on the varying social locations that affect their experiences and guides their responses to Xenophobia-Afrophobia, an ability to communicate in the Somali language reinforces their solidarity. Through this language, they are able to negotiate their own space where they can express their culture and religion within their own normality.

#### **6.3.1 Language barrier**

The language dimension is an important factor that affects their vulnerability to the Xenophobia-Afrophobia experiences. Nonetheless, understanding heterogeneity of Somali women cannot be ignored because, they experience the problem of adjusting to the new environment as a result of language barrier and other interconnected social factors, varyingly. The Somalis from Kenya spoke English and Swahili and that enabled them to communicate with the locals and other foreigners who spoke Swahili. In the Gauteng province, a good number of people speak the Swahili language (Congolese, Tanzanian, Kenyans, Rwandese, and Burundians). Thus, due to the ability to speak English and Swahili, the Kenyan Somalis are better off in terms of integration with other Swahili speaking communities compared to Somalian Somalis because

they are able to interrelate with them. Kuresh, a Kenyan Somalia has several friends who speak Swahili in Pretoria. She argues that despite her nationality, her ability to communicate the language gives her confidence to claim her identity as proudly Kenyan. Nonetheless, language alone cannot facilitate this bond because a Somalian is highly attached to religion and culture. A man who agrees to marry a Somalian woman despite sharing the same language, would require the women to compromise her religion if needs be in order for such a union to occur. I posed a question to Kuresh, in Pretoria West about whether she would allow me to marry her daughter if I fell in love with her. She said;

We don't have any problem with marrying somebody from outside our community. After all, if you ask a hand in marriage for my daughter or sister I have no problem so long as you are a Muslim. We Muslims can marry anyone so long as he is willing to follow our faith.

The migrant's ability to communicate in the language that the migration officials understand facilitates their ability to navigate through the transnational barriers, like border offices. Amira from Mogadishu recounts her experience at the Mozambique-South Africa boarder where language enabled her to connect with the locals who were friendly with her after establishing that she spoke English unlike most Somalis who used that route. She told them her origin and they were moved by her ability to communicate in English. They were more curious about her background after creating a rapport that was facilitated by the language factor. A fellow Somalian friend who did not speak English experienced lukewarm attention from the border control officials because she could not speak any English. Amira said:

When I arrived at South African border I was so happy after a three months journey of hardships. I was much excited when I saw the soldiers at the border doing the checks. I greeted them in English. I am lucky I could communicate in English. "My sister" from Somalia was not able to speak any single word in English. They didn't show

much concern for her. They asked me several questions, like where I originated from, about my family and so on. They told me that they were amazed to see me speak the language because most Somalis who they met didn't.

The inability to speak the language was expressed by women as a hindrance to mobility and opportunities that require interaction with the local community. Those Somalis who spoke English were able to support others with interpretation. Also, due to the fear among Somalis to move to some areas that are black dominated, those who knew the language of the people were a huge support to the Somali community. The theory of Social network which talks about ties that make it easier for new migrants to find jobs and gain access to the required resources in their destination countries (Poston & Bouvier, 2010:213) are actualized more, when the community member is able to communicate in the language of the locals or comprehend what they are saying. The Somalis that can communicate the local language are a huge asset to the Somali community in terms of sourcing information from the local community, about Xenophobia-Afrophobia hints, communication with the customers, interacting with the community leaders and so forth.

During the interviews in Pretoria West, Aisha said that the problem that hampers negotiation of Somali women among the local community was a lack of the common language. There is a possibility that others who do not understand the language being spoken might harbor resentment, especially during Xenophobia-Afrophobia circumstances. Thus, whenever one does not understand the language, there is a possibility of saying that the other person is gossiping about them, which might not be the case. She opines that Somali interaction with South Africans and other nationals will always remain a big challenge due to the language factor. She says: "if you cannot understand the language of the other person talking, he could be saying to you thank you and you hastily judge that he is saying get out of this place. *"The main problem*

*is that we do not have the language, and thus we cannot understand what the local nationals are saying. In the townships, lack of the language is even worse because Somalis do not have the community there.”*

### **6.3.2 Xenophobia-Afrophobia in Derogative naming**

The Somali women experience Xenophobia-Afrophobia through language that hints antipathy towards migrants. There are derogatory names have been used as a tool for covert Xenophobia-Afrophobia among Somali women in the Gauteng province to remind them that they do not belong in a certain local community, but are outsiders. Somali women expressed that whenever they travel with the public transport, they are made to feel like outsiders through the calling of names. The pejorative names like ‘Amakula’ and ‘kwerekwere’ are common among Somali community. The term *Amakula* was commonly used during the apartheid era to denote Indians who were not of South African origin. The Somalis who have body features that are different from black Africans such as; soft hair, majorities are light skinned, are perceived by the locals as being of Asian descent. This makes the locals address them using derogative names like *Amakula* to remind them that they do not only not belong to South Africa, ‘but Africa as well.’ During the interviews, Bishah told me that this terminology is mostly used to disparage the business owners that are of Somali or Ethiopian origin to suggest that their origin is not clear. Thus, this kind of Xenophobia-Afrophobia trivializes women within the intersections of race and nationality. Their physical features which are more close to those of Indians (who were originally called *Amakula* during the Apartheid era) categorize them as *Amakulas*. The tone of their skin and hair that is more close to Indians puts them into the Indian category. Their nationality which some locals believe is not among the African countries exacerbates their predicament. Thus, under the theory of intersectionality, I argue that the Xenophobia-Afrophobia experience through derogatory name, *Amakula* affects Somali women differently from women of other nationalities due to the aforesaid axes (race,

nationality). Bishar says that whenever they are looting their shops, they shout at Somalis calling them *Amakula*. This term signifies that they are not only non-South Africans but are also outsiders in Africa who have characteristics that are different from other Africans. Bishar States:

While they are looting Somali shops they calls them the Amakula, a term that was used during the Apartheid era to refer to that Indians that came into the country and settled without the locals knowing about their origins. They use the same term to refer to the Somalis Ethiopians and Indians today. It's a terminology that was used by black people to refer to Indians that were business minded, and you don't know their background. You just find them here. So in this regard, Somalis are people that are perceived to have unknown origin because we are told that we look different from other Africans.

Nevertheless, women expressed that they suffered abuses from the locals that referred to them as *Makwerekwere*. Despite Gauteng hosting migrants of different origins, the women pointed out that the term *Makwerekwere* was only used to refer to the African foreigners who were seen as a threat to economic opportunities in the province. Rahma said:

We are verbally abused whenever we are walking along the streets. They call us the *kwerekweres* and say that we should go back to where we came from. It is sad to hear them call us *kwerekweres*, and not call other migrants like Bangladesh, Chinese or whites, those derogatory these derogatory words.

It is in this context cited by Rahma that Matsishe (2011) accentuates the phenomenon of *Makwerekwere* as referring to other nationalities of African origin. Matsinhle (2011:295) who sees the usage of the term *Makwerekwere* as a strategy to enhance governability of the migrants of African origin in South Africa, points out that

Africans are the authors of their own fear. The usage of the term *Makwerekwere* which denotes the ‘outsider’, who cannot be able to communicate and understand local languages, is ‘racialised.’ This ‘racialisation’ of the term *Makwerekwere* serves to control the black Africans by reminding them that they are still ‘outsiders/intruders’ who cannot be understood by those that belong into the country (natives). Thus by using the term *Makwerekwere* as a strategy to enhance control over the migrants, underlined the fact that it was Afrophobia rather than Xenophobia that targets all migrants of different hue. This dimension of considering the term *Makwerekwere* as a strategy of controlling the outsiders is expressed by Ayan who said that these pejorative terms cause Somalis to feel like prisoners:

When you get into the taxi they look at you and realize that you are a foreigner, they start referring as you as *Makwerekwere*. You have no freedom in life. They do this to make you feel that you are nothing before them, so that they can disempower you. They are much aware that such antagonistic words would make you fear them and consider going back to your country of origin. They call you those names out of fear of business competition or just because they hate foreigners. You are a prisoner here.

### **6.3.3 Language and Shades of Xenophilia**

Although confessions of covert and overt Xenophobia-Afrophobia experiences dominated the Somali migrants’ responses, I identified some traces of Xenophilia among South Africans. The term Xenophilia as defined by Sichole (2004) is the love of foreigners after a period encounter with the nationals. The ability to speak the language of the locals attracted Xenophilic sentiments among the local South Africans. Maria pointed out that there were some Somalis, albeit few, that spoke the language of the locals (mainly Sotho, Zulu). The interaction with the locals buoyed by the ability to speak local languages ameliorated good rapport with locals. Maria

pointed out that due to the trust and love that developed between locals and a few Somalis, they gave them local names. Maria says;

I know a few Somali people who when they go to the local community they are given local names as a way of accommodating them into the community. They have even learnt the local language. You get to the shop they greet you Nijani/Sawubona. They feel that they are part of the local community. The local community loves such people to even giving them local names. You hear that-aaaa that one is Thando or Mkhize, but she/he is a Somalian. Why? Because that person made an effort to be part of the community through learning the local language and the peoples culture.

Although language, religion and body morphology heightened their vulnerability to Xenophobia-Afrophobia among the Somali community, Somali women pointed out that some locals demonstrated love for them. They put aside their aforementioned differences and supported them during the attacks. Also, the Somali women who were able to speak the local language, including English experienced better treatment from the locals. During the interview, it emerged that before the Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks, some local people participated in supplying the Somalis with some information in order to prepare them for such tragedies. The Somali community also accentuated the role of their social network in ‘disaster preparedness.’ Those social ties supplied the Spaza business owners with information that enhances their vigilance, due to the possible attacks. The moral and material support was offered to the affected families by organizations that had hired mostly the locals that demonstrated the love for the Somalis affected. Maria cited the politicians as the main agents of the rift between the local communities and the locals. She said that locals are generally ‘Xenophilic,’ but the anti-foreigners incitements from the local politicians fuel Xenophobia-Afrophobia sentiments.

Not all South Africans are bad. In fact, South African locals are generally good people. The problem is with our political leaders that provoke crisis through their reckless comment. A good example is Zwelithini, the Zulu King in KwaZulu-Natal who provoked antagonism against foreigners. Such comments are unexpected from such leaders who should be uniting South Africa. Such leaders makes us hate each other. I believe that South Africans don't want to fight. The problem is those leaders! In fact, some local people gave us an alert warning before the Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks that ensued such pronouncements.

#### **6.3.4 Language versus integration**

Language is an important element of communication that affects migrant's integration into a new environment, because, it's through this medium that both locals and migrants can express their feelings, opinions and ideas concerning themselves. The inability to communicate in the language that can be understood by the locals adds to foreigners complexities in the transnational space, so much so that it attracts some antagonism from them. Thus, in order to ameliorate a healthy coexistence amongst locals and migrant, the language factor cannot be overlooked because it permits what Dyer & Wanker (2010) call intercultural communication. Dyer & Wanker (2010) advance that the non-vocal language could cause miscommunication and misunderstanding between two meeting cultures because, what one expresses non-verbally could be interpreted differently elsewhere.

Thus, this study established that the social and cultural misunderstanding enhanced by the Somali's inability to speak the local language played a significant role in attracting hatred from the local South Africans. The Somalis do not show much interest in learning local languages, a phenomenon that caused the cultural and religious misunderstanding between the two parties. The study conducted by Niyigena (2013)

found out that the Somalis are a 'closed community' in terms of integrating with the members from other nationalities. This closed nature of the community inhibits learning other languages that could enhance integration with other nationalities. When I asked some of the Somali women why they did not show much interest in learning other languages, a handful of them said that the religious and cultural settings limited them to their own communities.

Pretty from the Action Support Center pointed out that the lack of political will to learn the language as a big cause of the misunderstanding among the Xenophobia-Afrophobia affected zones. The inability to communicate in the language of the locals deterred them from participation in the community functions. Despite the social significance of such functions in the local community, where everybody is supposed to be involved, the Somalis never showed up. While the local shopkeepers kept their shops closed during such social functions such as funerals, funeral vigils and weddings in order to join the community in function, the Somalis kept their Spazas open, a phenomenon that was considered to be very disrespectful to the locals. Pretty said:

If you came to my place, am I the one supposed to learn your language or you are the one supposed to learn the language that I speak? [She poses].I believe that the outsider should take the initiative to learn my language so that she/he can find it easy in living with the locals who are the majority, anyway. It is unfortunate that most of the Somalis living in South Africa cannot speak the South African languages yet they work in the midst of the local communities of the locations where local languages are predominantly spoken. This is not right. Also, they are never involved in the community ceremonies because they do not have the language to intermingle with them. The locals complain a lot for the

Somalis not able to get involved in their social functions like the funeral.

Contrary to other African nationals inhabiting Gauteng, most Somali women do not speak the local language, a phenomenon that cuts them off from the mainstream society and increases their vulnerability to crime and Xenophobia-Afrophobia. Somali women face this barrier more than men because they do not integrate with the local community as men do due to their cultural and religious settings that confine them within private domains. During my interviews in Mayfair, I established that the women (especially young ones) are more reserved when speaking to an outsider. Also, they are reluctant to shake hands with men, a phenomenon that would create some antagonism to an outsider who has not yet fathomed their religious and cultural background. I felt embarrassed in Mayfair when I stretched my hand to greet a Somali woman who was in her late sixties, who resisted the handshake. It happened in front of other women (who belong to SASOWNET), and my interpreter. Later he told me that they would only share a handshake with their spouses or close relatives. Although I was embarrassed, I was not offended as the woman were aware that I was an outsider and reverentially greeted me verbally by bending a little bit towards me, folding their arms on their chests saying '*Is ka Warran*'-which translates to good morning.

Besides migrants inability to speak the local languages as a factor that attracts antagonism against them, foreigners have been identified by their accents and sounds that appear strange to the local citizens. In the context of Somalis who are mostly Cushites, their language is distinct from the South African Blacks languages who are Bantus. The Somalis language, besides being Cushitic possesses Arabic accents and words that sound different from a non-Somalian.

## **6.5 Negotiation of race in the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia**

### **6.5.1 Race vis-à-vis ‘foreignness’**

In understanding the experiences of Somali women, race which intersects with religion as well as language, cannot be excluded from the debate because Xenophobia-Afrophobia targets women’s bodies with the aforementioned factors combined. A Somali woman is targeted as a ‘foreigner’, ‘Woman,’ somebody with different language and ‘somebody who has body features that are different from other Africans’ along with being a Muslim. All those factors intertwined enhance her vulnerability to Xenophobia-Afrophobia. Besides, women’s race and their religious and ethnic dressing impact on their experiences to Xenophobia-Afrophobia. Due to the migrant’s features that look different from the natives, they are treated as outsiders and even discriminated in some host countries. This race rages from the skin tone, to body shape, hair and the mode of dressing. Ortiz and Telles (2012) highlight the heterogeneity of the Mexicans migrants in United States of America who have different physical features that determine their status in the country. Although the Mexicans look the same to the outsiders, Ortiz and Telles (2012) argue that they are different in terms of skin tone and eye colour. Due to the varying physical appearances, Mexican migrants are treated differently from the lighter toned individual has a higher status. In such an environment, the social, economic and political advantages that light toned migrants have are conspicuous. Nevertheless, these advantages based on their skin hue could be limited in certain environments that may favour the originality of the dark skin. Hunter (2007:244) argues that, within certain ethnic communities, a dark skinned person may be considered as the advantaged. This is because; in such a community black skin is viewed as an authentic or original as opposed to the light skin which is as a result of interracial unions.

Literature on migration has demonstrated that, migrant’s physical appearances have accented their ‘foreignness’ in the recipient country. In South Africa for instance, Vaj

(2003) accentuates the element of skin tone as the criteria of identifying the ‘illegal aliens.’ Thus, with the recurrent incidences of crimes in the Gauteng province, police have arrested many Africans who are dark-skinned, only to find that they are actually South Africans (Vaj, 2003). This identification through the racial lens is rooted in apartheid, which put the black communities at the bottom of the ladder. During the search for criminals, police use such racial identification (dark-skin) when the victims left their identification documents at home. Matsishe (2011) advances the race factor in saying that the categorization of the foreigners among the law enforcers is done through the looks, because the outward appearance is given so much attention. Through the body appearances the criminals are able to identify the South Africans and other African nationals, and this ability of the criminals renders foreigners vulnerable (Matsishe, 2011).

Maria points out that in Johannesburg, Somalis are soft targets of criminals in the location. She says that twice she has been attacked when she was going back home in the evening. She remembers one of those criminal attacks when the thugs identified her from afar and shouted *Amakula* after ordering her to drop everything she had and lie down. She says that the criminals know who is a Somali and who is a South African on site. She argues that criminals like Somalis because they think of them as “walking ATMs,” given that they cannot open bank accounts due to bank restrictions. She says that criminals know them by their hair and tone of the skin as most Somalis have soft skin and fair skin. Matshishe (2011) argues that criminals deploy the physical looks to target foreigners as they are also aware that there is a general acceptability of antagonism against foreigners among communities.

### **6.5.2 Race and religious/ethnic dressing**

Somali women are subject to Xenophobia-Afrophobia related experiences that target them in both private and public places. They are easily identified by their ethnic and religious dressing that makes them conspicuous among other nationalities. Their body

appearances coupled with the religious and ethnic dressing are strong imprints of their identity. Those body appearances are conspicuously made noticeable by their curved business niches that sell items like Somali ethnic dressing, perfumes etc. Most of the women that were interviewed pointed out that their physical appearance outcasted them. This categorization based on their superficial looks, skin-tone, religious and ethnic dressing that facilitated their victimization was against their expectations before arriving in South Africa. The Somali women stressed that they expected the local South Africans to have some resonance with them, since the country is predominantly inhabited by black Africans. Amira said:

This was not what we expected this country to be. Before we decided to come to South Africa, we thought that we were coming to a country that is similar to other African countries, where people are the same. When we came we found out that they don't treat well the foreigners. We Somalis are even worse because we are considered as people from another continent, like Asia. We are like aliens here. We thought that, them being Africans like us would enhance good relations with them.

The Somalis are light-skinned and have soft hair as compared to other Africans. Besides, they are very religious and cultural in terms of their dressing so much so that women wear Islamic apparel that have ethnic connotations. These body markers of their identity have attracted antagonism among the locals. The women in Gauteng feared travelling by taxis because they would be singled out, because of their completion and manner of Somali dressing. During Xenophobia-Afrophobia occurrences, the Somalis are easy targets of Xenophobia because of these factors (ability to speak local language, nationality, religion, culture etc.) that intersect with the body to render them vulnerable to it.

Zabib expresses her ordeal when she was travelling in a taxi from Johannesburg town. Her mistreatment had undertones of racial segregation as she was compared to Indian people, whom the attacker claims he hates. The pronouncements directed towards Zabib highlighted the notion that foreigners are considered to be what Matsinhle (2011) calls the ‘bogyman’ of the nation-which denotes Africans being used as an imaginary fear, that takes the place of the fear of colonizers.

I was travelling from Johannesburg to Soweto in a bus that was fully loaded with passengers when a bus stopped and one guy jumped in. He began telling pronouncing ‘I don’t like foreigners, I don’t like Indians, I hate both of them-they are not good at all.’ The guy was moving seat to seat checking whether there was any of those he mentioned. I was the only one that they spotted. There were other foreigners-Zimbabweans who sat next to me but they were not identified. The guy singled me out and pulled me out so much so that I fell on the ground while everyone watched without saying anything. I was kicked out of the bus and left out to look for another taxi. It was bad!

### **6.5.3 Body politics among Somali Bantus**

The Somali Bantus were originally from other Bantu speaking nations in Africa. They are progenies of the black slaves that were captured in 18-19<sup>th</sup> century from Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique (Veney, 2006). Their ancestors came to Somalia as slaves from those nations to work in the Somali plantation, but later intermingled with the host communities. They preserved their cultural practices derived from the Eastern Southern Africa Bantus (Malawi, Mozambique), and the Bantu language that they speak to-date, although they can communicate in Arabic and Somali as the rest of Somalis. During the interview, I encountered some Bantu Somalis who looked like other Black Africans, or even darker than most of the other Black Africans from other

nationalities. The Somali Bantus have been subjugated since their arrival into Somalia and have been excluded from economic privileges provided by the ruling governments. The Somali Bantus have endured much subjugation in the hands of the Siad Barre and the subsequent regimes due to their physical features that look different from the majority groups. They were denied land, education, health care and told that they are not Somalis but people from other African countries. By geographical scales, Mahler and Pessar (2003:815) claim that gender operates simultaneously on multiple spatial and social scales (e.g. body, family and state) across transnational terrains. They are discriminated by the state based on their dark skin, their social status, cultural resemblance to other African countries etc. Amina said:

Since Somalia attained independence, the Somali Bantus have been sidelined. Even today, Bantus are treated as slaves who are meant to serve other people. While other Somalis enjoy the rights entitled to every Somali, they don't have rights, yet they share the same nationality. The schools, hospitals and all the government institutions discriminate them.

In terms of race, the Somali Bantus differ from the other Somalis that claim to be the Somalia natives. While the other Somalis who are perceived to be of Arab origin are tall and have soft hair, majority of the Somali Bantus are short and have coarse/kinky hair that resembles that of other African people. Although they speak the Somali and Arabic language, they are treated differently by the Somali government that invests a great deal to the majority groups who are pastoralists. The Somali Bantus are predominantly farmers and inhabit fertile lands along river Juba.

Although the Somali community seems homogeneous to an outsider, due to several commonalities spelt out through religion and culture, it is heterogeneous. Besides, diverse political and economic backgrounds that are covert, the Somali skin-tone conspicuously tells their difference even to the outsiders. The Bantu bodies are very dark in complexion, a phenomenon that works to their disadvantage. The theory of

gendered geographies of power suggests that migrant's social political background affects their experience in the recipient country. The dark Somalis are discriminated against by the other Somalis, who consider themselves as the 'real Somalis', given their skin tone. By geographical scales, Mahler and Pessar (2003:815) claim that gender operates simultaneously on multiple spatial and social scales (e.g. body, family and state) across transnational terrains. Somali women are subject to the double jeopardy from their own community, due to their dark-skinned bodies and their lowly status as slaves. In this context the gender discrimination is manifested on multiple spatial and social scales (e.g. body, family and state) across transnational terrains. Similarly, they suffer from Xenophobia-Afrophobia related experiences as outsiders. Thus, just as in Somalia, the Somali Bantus are treated as non-Somalis and inferior to the other Somalis. Ayan is a Somali Bantu living in Pretoria. Her own community does not consider her as a Somali because her hair is not as soft as the other Somalis. Her skin colour which is very dark stains her with a lowly status that cuts her off from opportunities like, Somalis offering employment at Spaza shops, hospitality and community acceptability. Ayan says:

My parents talked to me about the possibility of escaping this discrimination. They asked me to leave Somalia and go elsewhere that treated everybody equally. My parents just advised to leave Somalia and find somewhere else where everyone is treated the same. Our community has been sidelined to be honest with you, and we are the minority in the Somalia and South Africa. Our skin-colour makes as be considered as outsiders in any Somali community we are in.

In addition to being affected by the covert and overt Xenophobia-Afrophobia experiences, the Somali Bantu women experience rejection from the other members of the Somali community. Thus, their complexities cannot be limited in the sentiments from locals but extends beyond Xenophobia-Afrophobia experience. Due to their physical appearance and the social political and economic background of the Somali

Bantus, intercultural union between the Somali Bantus and the majority groups is not easy. Most Somali Bantu women cannot express themselves in English, as they are less privileged in terms of education. Due to this marginalization that denies them opportunities, including education, Somali women, who are predominantly subsistent farmers are illiterate, uneducated and cannot speak English (Besteman, 2013). Their inability to speak English attracts Xenophobic-Afrophobia sentiments from the Department of Home Affairs as well as in hospitals. Ayan, a Bantu Somali woman expresses this predicament of antifoigner Bigotry.

I cannot speak English. This has made me face terrible problems in the Home Affairs and the health sector. I remember one day I went to a hospital and they almost turned me away because I could not communicate in English. My friend, a Somali woman that was with me intervened and helped me to understand what they were saying as well as respond to them. In the Home Affairs Department, they were impatient with me when I submitted my documents and couldn't speak English. Luckily there was a Somali man that assisted me interpret what the staff was saying.

The theory of intersectionality which posits that the underlying power structures that impact experiences of migrants could only be understood when all those factors are examined concurrently. The Somali Bantu women negotiate skin-tone in an environment that has low regard for people with dark skin colour. In the Gauteng province, Somali Bantu women are subject to manifold complexities based on their background. The theory of Gendered Geographies of Power (Pessar and Mahler 2001, Pessar and Mahler, 2003) underlines the social location dimension among other dimensions that affect migrant's lives in the transnational space. Somali Bantu women experiences within the transnational space are affected by their past history of

enslavement as farmers, skin tone categorization and political marginalisation, whereby they are seen as an ‘outsider community.’ They are ethnically, culturally, politically, and even physically distinct from the wider Somali community, a phenomenon that increases their ‘foreignness’ even among Somali community members. Sahara, says,

Being here in South Africa, we face many challenges. Some are from within the community and others from outside our community face Xenophobia among the local institutions like hospital that do not give us the help that we deserve. I can’t speak English and that is a problem when I go to renew my documents also. If I may talk about the challenge within, we have a problem as black Somalis because we belong to the minority group both here and in Somalia. I feel that there is still some sort of division and lack of acceptance because of our history which is different from other major groups.

Nevertheless, the negotiation of the social, political and cultural barriers is not homogeneous to all Somali Bantus, because their backgrounds which could either enhance or impede marriage union would vary. For instance, if a Bantu man is wealthy or highly educated, he would find it easy to marry a woman from the majority clans (light in complexion) than a poor or uneducated one. Veney (2006:118) advances this heterogeneity in his work that focuses on refugee’s situation across East African countries. He posits that Somalis Bantus are not the same-Some are well immersed into the cultures of other clans and so they are more open to other cultures, while others are educated. Similarly, Somali Bantu women are gradually redefining their status, albeit cultural and political restrictions that are historical.

In the South African context, the Somali Bantus negotiate their ‘blackness’ within experiences of covert Xenophobia-Afrophobia. Despite the Bantus Somalis having dark-skinned bodies, a characteristic that resonates with the majority of local South

Africans, language barrier and Islamic attire identifies them as non-South Africans. This intersecting factors buttresses discrimination that cuts them off from access to some opportunities that are given to Somalis. The Somali Bantu that was interviewed said that, in South Africa, they are left in a space between two communities where no one recognizes them-the state and their own community. Ayan said:

The Somali people whom I live with do not believe that I am a Somalian like them, neither does the government recognize them as Somalis. Thus, when the Somali women go for their permits, the immigration officials doubt their claim that they are Somalis, and becomes hard for them to get papers from the department. When I tell people that I am a Somalian, they do not believe me. This happens here and in Somalia. In Somalia, life was so hard. In Somali too, most of Somalis could not believe that we were Somalis like them. Here in Pretoria and community in Johannesburg, the story is the same. Locals don't believe that I am a Somalian. I hate going to the Home Affairs because they do not trust me whenever I say that I am a Somali. They tell us that we don't look like the Somalis, because Somalis people have the soft hair and are fairer in completion unlike us. When we went to the department of the Home Affairs, they denied us an asylum. They couldn't recognize us as Somalis. This sucks! When you are not recognized in your own country and in the host county feels so dehumanizing. We are rendered stateless.

## **6.6 Heterogeneity of Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities**

However, the manner in which Somali women negotiate their gender within the complexities facilitated by religious symbols, ethnic, language, and nationality differs. The gendered geographies of power theory have social location, a dimension that rules out the possibility of heterogeneity of migrants even when they are from the same

community. In the context of Somali women who share the same language, territory of origin (Kenya/Somalia), they differ because some women belong to a wealthy class and others to a poor one; some can communicate fluently in English while others cannot. Some of the elite Somalis who own businesses or have husbands who are wealthy, attend prayers in urban areas and are able to command authority due to their status. Further, most Somali women are enrolling for English classes that have been arranged by the non-governmental organizations, while others are educated youth who belong to a higher status than the unschooled or with no English language. The South Africa Somali board main office located in Mayfair, South African Somali Women Network in liaison a non-governmental organization offers Somali women English lessons, and platforms to speak-out as a means to empower them with mediums of communication and interaction so that they can be able to access immigration, health, education services and employment with ease. Fatima said:

Our joy as SASOWNET is to see our women getting empowered through English language. When they learn the language, they will be able to go to hospitals and get help they require. They will be able to express themselves in taxis and other public places. It is also a platform for women to open up and express themselves boldly.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

This chapter set out to discuss the Somali women's experiences at the nexus of religion, language and race/ethnicity in the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia experiences with the transnational space. Language, religion and race are factors that affect the Somali woman intersectionally, as Somalis who are Muslim with 'un-African' body features and unable to speak the local languages. I discuss religious identity of Somalis in the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia. The research establishes that Somali women, due to their religious identity which intersects with their nationality, language and race are more vulnerable to Xenophobia-Afrophobia. I also

discuss the language dimension which is a huge barrier in navigating the transnational space. Thus, the women's inability to speak the language exacerbates their vulnerability to Xenophobia-Afrophobia. Finally, the chapter highlights the body morphology dimension that renders them vulnerable to Xenophobia-Afrophobia that manifests itself both overtly and covertly.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE COPING MECHANISMS IN NEGOTIATING XENOPHOBIA- AFROPHOBIA COMPLEXITIES WITHIN THE TRANSNATIONAL SPACE

#### 7.1 Introduction

In the transnational space, Somali women are subject to multifaceted complexities that demand adopting strategies that would enable them to cope with Xenophobia-Afrophobia related complexities. This chapter sets out to discuss those strategies that the Somali women adopt in navigating the Xenophobia-Afrophobia experiences within the transnational space. In dealing with those complexities, women have the institutional mechanisms that include the Action Support Centre (ASC), South African Somali Women Network (SASOWNET), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), and the South African Somali Association (SASA). Due to the fact that the Xenophobia-Afrophobia related challenges are intertwined, the aforementioned agencies need each so as to offer an integrated support to the Somali refugees. Also, women redefine the individual initiatives coping strategies which are self-initiated as opposed to the above mentioned agencies which are externally initiated by individuals outside Somali community. They have economic partnerships, business ethnic niches where they sell ethnic clothes and Somali foods, narration of their life stories through institutions like the South African Somali Women Network platforms and counselling agents. The women's resilient character enables them to face the Xenophobia-Afrophobia challenges with fortitude. Education which gives them hope for opportunities enables them to negotiate the transnational space perseveringly, because it would secure them good jobs and good status in the future. Also, the Somali women diversify their income sources to maximise their economic resources. Marriage to Somali men is also

used by Somalis single women as a coping strategy to enable them cope with the new environment of South Africa.

## **7.2 Institutional mechanisms**

### **7.2.1 Action Support Centre**

The Action Support centre, abbreviated as ACS is a non-governmental organisation that acts in solidarity with other bodies to create a robust and effective conflict and resolution platform. The organisation which was founded in 2002 works in solidarity with individual persons, communities and organisations involved in conflict and change processes. The organisations headquarters lie in Johannesburg, where it was initially established, but later spread to other parts of the country such as Port Elizabeth and Cape Town. Thus, with the realization of the collective potential that Africa has in dealing with conflict, the ASC acts as the focal point for other stake holders in order to create a better society which everyone can enjoy, their rights and privileges included. The main activities of the Action Support Center constitute mobilization, setting up organisations, support communities in advocacy, mobilising education programs and policy engagements. Aware that people have the capacity to avert, resolve conflicts they initiate the platform which facilitates such potential, rather than being the key players in the conflicts and change.

In the context of this study which focuses on the Xenophobia-Afrophobia related experiences of Somalia women, ASC is of great significance because of its involvement in initiatives meant to avert conflicts before they ensue and also resolve conflicts like Xenophobia-Afrophobia. Apparently, the ASC is directly involved with the Somali women more than any other community in Gauteng because of the proximity to the community and the urgency of improving their *status-quo*. As part of their initiatives to set up organisations, which is meant to link the refugees, they facilitated the foundation of the South African Somali Women Network. This will be discussed later in this section. The ASC has actively been involved in the capacity

building of those women throughout South Africa as a process of giving them a voice that would allow them deal with factors that antagonize them. They engage the Somali women so as to identify their problems and most importantly build their capacity in dealing with those complexities.

The Action Support Centre members have significantly engaged themselves in proffering coping strategies to the Somali women within the transnational territory. Through the theory of feminist intersectionality, one is able to understand that any approach adopted by an organisation such as ASC must take into cognizance intersecting factors which impacts migrant's experiences. Such an understanding that would facilitate working together with other bodies would bring forth a holistic approach. The approach would allow the communities to cope with the complexities along the transnational space. In an interview with Pretty, an Action Support Center official who I made aware of the interconnection of the Xenophobia-Afrophobia related complexities and their link with other stakeholders like the UNHCR, Home Affairs, Jesuit Refugee centre, counselling agents and so on. Pretty told me that the ASC worked with other groups after they realised that no organisation can support the Somali women without the help of the other.

During the meetings with Somali women, we have identified with Somali women tell us about challenges like language, having no knowledge in accessing Home Affairs and lack of information to access State services. Because we think if they are well formed they are able to access some of these services. So what we are doing is partnering with different organisations and other women, because ASC cannot solve all their problems, alone.

Jennifer advances the importance of linking with other Bodies in order to build an environment which would help Somali women cope with the daily manifestation of covert Xenophobia-Afrophobia. She accentuates that the ASC is a small organisation

compared to the magnitude of the Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities that the Somali women report to them. Interestingly, she underlines the intersectionality of those Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities which demands the ASC to work with other Bodies. She says:

The challenges that Somali women in Gauteng are wide ranging. You got language issues. You got getting jobs, getting documentation, xenophobia, the trauma. And all of it connected in their experience. You can't separate out these different things. With ASC, it's a small organization. So, I think what is key for the ASC and other organizations that are working with the refugees and migrants you have to learn how to work together and to be connected because alone ASC can't address all those things. And we find hard even when working with Somali women because everyone is asking for our help but you can't help them in everything, and we try to be connected to others. So we are connected with organisations such as the Center for the Study of violence and reconciliation (CVRC), Jesuit Refugees Center. We organize some meetings with Home Affairs Department to talk about documentation service. So you have to work with others and then and address different components that make their lives difficult. You have to work with South Africa community as well, as well it doesn't work in isolation we can now say that we have accomplished our mandate for helping them.

Language plays a huge role in enabling women to cope in the new territory. Their inability to express themselves in English or local languages complicates accessibility to opportunities (Job and Education opportunities) and services (Health services, Home Affairs, Police services,) executed by the state. The ASC partners with some organisations to either improve their English proficiency or teach them from scratch. Some Somalis can speak little English while others cannot speak it at all, and therefore

they need English classes from the beginning. In Mayfair, I discovered that, at the Somali Community Board (SCOB) premises Somalis were coming every day to learn the English language. Such language programs are mobilised by the ASC in liaison with other organisations. According to Pretty, ASC enhances the Somali women's navigation within Gauteng province by offering them language opportunities, in partnership with other stake holders. Pretty observes:

We are at the city of Johannesburg which has the language classes. We are going to teach them the English, Zulu or any other language they are interested in. And then there is another American company but is an NGO, at Mayfair where people come every day for language classes.

Through Power Geometries, this study argues that Somali women exercise agency through organisations such as Action Support Centre which facilitates their ability to face Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities. ASC supports the Somali women in terms of documentation renewal. This is very stressful for them because of the delay and demand for bribes which is sustained by the corrupt nature of the office. The lack of information about the permit issuance is also a big problem which Somali women grapple with. The ASC organises some seminar that involves Home Affairs officials coming to talk about the permit renewal issues. Also, the organisation passively engages the Home Affairs Department to accelerate the permit issuances that has often been delayed. Some of the Somali women cited their disappointment with issuance of the refugee permit, and painted an ugly picture on the Department of the Home Affairs. The engagement of ASC with the Department of Home Affairs was underlined by Pretty who said:

And there is also the issue where we work with Home affairs and asylum seeker management where we constantly engage home affairs in terms of their status. We have some of our officials that liaise

Home Affairs with concerning the refugees' status where we try to push their cases because you find that some are 5-10 years in the country and don't have the refugees' status.

As part of their mission to give the communities the platform to improve themselves, the ASC has significantly contributed towards building the capacity of Somali women. They do this through organising programs whereby they train them to speak in public with confidence and articulation. During the interview, I realised that the Somali women are shy when speaking with people from outside their communities, especially men. In the first day of those interviews in Mayfair, about five young women were very hesitant to speak to me even after being introduced by my informant. Such lack of boldness makes them not able to speak for themselves when their rights are being infringed as foreigners. Jenifer observes that one of the greatest achievements of the organisation, since its foundation, is that it has enhanced Somali women who are coping with new territory through giving them a voice. This platform is necessary because it enables them express themselves boldly and confidently in hospitals, Immigration Departments, police stations and so on.

We organize programs to enhance capacity building and invite them to so many events because now we have so many Somali women that can stand up and speak which is something that they were not used to because culture was a problem.

Action Support Centre members are aware that Somali women come from different social locations which affects the manner in which they navigate the transnational space. For instance, ASC acknowledged that the Somali women belong to different clans which affect their participation within the public domain. Pretty, an official in the ASC, points out that women are from different backgrounds, among them clan and political affiliations which manifests in their meetings. She argues that, this is one of

the greatest challenges that the organisation has to work on in order to connect them with other organisations. Pretty says

We have a big problem whenever we call for the meeting. The Somali women are divided along their various clans, and this is one of the greatest challenges that we are currently facing. You can see them fight each other during discussions, and when we see this, we are aware that it's normally people from different clans and regions. One then wonders why they should be here, instead of settling their differences first.

Thus, aware that Somali women come from different social locations, the Action Support Centre collected their stories door to door, and listened to them as they narrated those stories individually. This project was mainly intended to document their life history in Somalia/Kenya and South Africa, and encourage women to speak about what they have shied away from disclosing to other people outside their community. Also, the project was intended to help other people to learn how Somalis live from the stories that were recorded by the Action Support Center.

During the interviews Somali women pointed out that the Action Support Centre, in liaison with the South African Somali Women Network, played a significant role in organising platforms where they shared their stories and showcased their cultural practices through songs, poetry, symbolism (food, dressing). Fatuma points out that the Action Support Center has engaged the Somali Women Network officials in creating empowerment platforms where they narrated what they experienced both in Kenya and Somalia.

We have meetings where we gather as Somali women that are supported by the Action Support group. In these meetings we discuss issues that concern our lives here and home. It's a moment when we share stories with each other and courage one another. We also tell

stories, sing songs and do poetry that represent our culture as members of Somali community.

Power Geometries theory directs its attention to the types and degrees of agency people exert given their social locations (Mahler and Pessar, 2003:816). The Action Support Centre has supported the Somali women in linking them with groups that impart language and other skills to the migrants. The Somali women acknowledged the role played by the ACS in liaison with Somali Women Network in empowering them with life skills which enabled them to cope in South Africa. Maria said:

The Somali women network works hand in hand with Action support centre to enable Somali women acquire skills like tailoring and driving. They also offer other skills like driving lessons which I think is something good for us.

### **7.2.2 South African Somali women network**

The South Africa Somali Women Network is a group of Somali women that aims at building a platform on which they can raise their voices and develop their potentials collectively. Although the organisation was a Somali women initiative, the ASC facilitated its foundation through offering material and human resources to set it up. Jenifer of ASC buttresses the fact that SASOWNET is actually Somali women organising themselves, albeit receiving some support from several bodies like ASC. Thus, women cannot be said to be helpless victims, but are people with support that enhances their negotiation within South African context. Jeniffer says:

The idea behind starting SASOWNET was to give Somali women a platform that they can organize together with each other and we would support initiatives that they come up with. SASOWNET was

not ASC taking ownership. It's about them taking ownership and Action supporting and them coming with initiatives.

SASOWNET engages in the reinforcement of initiatives that are aimed at supporting Somali women to cope with the challenges within the transnational space. The Somali women had hitherto not been engaged enough in leadership and decision making roles due to the space that is male gendered. Some few Somali women and the Action Support Centre, motivated by this marginalisation of women, set up the organisation which has enabled Somali Women to negotiate their space in Gauteng. Jennifer points out that before SASOWNET was initiated, men would monopolise the discussions and wouldn't give a chance for women to contribute. Such male domination manifesting in meetings would hamper the Somali women from raising the Xenophobia-Afrophobia related challenges which they encountered in South Africa. Therefore, they saw the need to develop a platform where women would share and tell their stories. She says:

There was some meeting with the Somali community and it was men who were just speaking and contributing. And we had to crack the whip just for the women because then they feel disabled by the presence of men like from culture or pressure not to talk over a man. And they have these belief that the women are is in their own culture but if you can put them together they can talk through that aspect and they can organize together.

As a network of individuals, it has connected women with other Somalis through meetings, social media; whereby they share their stories with one another as a strategy of finding solutions to the problems they encounter as refugees, including the Xenophobia-Afrophobia related complexities. During my interaction with the SASOWNET members, I realised that, the network connects Xenophobia-Afrophobia affected women with individuals who support them with financially. Fatima an

official in the organisation emphasized that the Somali women support each other to negotiate their space in Gauteng. This support is crucial because, it's the main strength they have since they do not integrate much with other nationalities to form a robust force against the perpetrators of the violence. Fatima ruled out the integration with other communities as a way of countering Xenophobia-Afrophobia because Somalis opt to fight it alone as one community of Somalis. Fatima says:

We are not in solidarity with other nationalities during the Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks because as you know we have a culture that is so distinct from other nationalities. This doesn't mean that we do not mix with other nationalities but it's just to let you know that we as usual chose to support each other as Somali women whenever one has a problem i.e. when one is sick or gave birth to a child, whenever they have been attacked by the local people. But that support is not much.

The SASOWNET is gradually expanding its network to other Somalis within South Africa and outside its borders. In this regard, the network keeps into cognizance the value of solidarity with each other in order to ameliorate their coping strategies within the transnational space. Nevertheless, this progress is challenged by clan politicians who manifest themselves during meetings and other programs. Aisha pointed out that SASOWNET would be much stronger and accomplish if they shunned clan politics. She said:

In South African Somali women network, one of the biggest problems that we are facing is the division among members, who belong to different clans. If we reach at that level where we can see beyond the clan, then we will say that we have reached somewhere.

The Social network theory buttresses the importance of the already existing ties and the newly formed ones (new acquaintances) that the migrant comes into contact with

in the host country. The Somali women who experience Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities in a new environment get support from the new acquaintances within the SASOWNET members. They consider any Somali coming to South Africa as their 'sister' which deserves support. Nonetheless, the perception of the SASOWNET towards migrants could differ because of their varying social locations (clans, politics, body morphology, nationality etc) between them and migrants. For instance, a Somali refugee from same clan or race (i.e. black Bantu) would obviously enjoy likeability than those from different clan or race. This likeability is provoked by the tendency among Somali women to feel connected to the new migrants from the same region, clan and nationality (i.e. those from Kenya) because of the commonalities that each associates themselves with. This phenomenon leads to some women feeling a sense of belonging in the SASOWNET while others feel distant from the group. However, I discovered that women within the network play a significant role in coping with the complexities within Gauteng. The interview with Fatima highlights this support to their fellow Somali women upon arrival. She says:

I am a refugee from Somalia who came to seek an asylum because I heard about South Africa before-that it's safe and that they don't fight. I came to stay with my cousin who was staying in Johannesburg at Mayfair. My cousin who is a SASOWNET member welcomed me and gave me accommodation for several years. I am grateful to other SASOWNET members that came to my help at this time that coping with the South Africa environment was not easy for me. I remember that it was not easy for me to get an asylum. My cousin took me to one of the leaders of SASOWNET who supported me with some accommodation and facilitated the process of the getting an asylum permit.

After focusing on the Somali women's negotiation of Xenophobia-Afrophobia related complexities, one could be tempted to claim that those women are desperate and

helpless victims. Such a temptation could be provoked by making a comparative look between the so called the 'helpless victims' and the local community which is perceived as the 'privileged one.' Also, the media has misrepresented the situation of violent attacks whereby agencies that offer help (Jesuit Refugee service, Action Support Centre, South Africa Somali Women Network, South Africa Somali Association etc.) are hardly mentioned anywhere in the news. Power Geometries postulate that the migrants have agency which enables the refugees to cope within the host country. Thus, with an organisation like SASOWNET and other Bodies that enable the Somali women to cope with Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities, it would be improper to postulate that they are 'helpless victims.' Veney (2006) buttresses the availability of the agency amongst the refugees by stating that they exhibit agency, as they engage themselves in some economic activities like selling food items, hygiene commodities and clothes that attest that they are not helpless victims. Similarly, Hamdi (1999) establishes that, although migrants are victimized by patriarchal institutions, traditions and multifaceted forms of discrimination, they are not "victims," but are community that continues to struggle and circumnavigate through their lives to carve out their own identities. They are persons that make use of the self-support groups that serve as their platform to discuss their interests and exchange information regarding available assistance, and explore the ways of integrating with the culture of the locals (:1999).

In South Africa, Somali women have agencies like the South African Somali Women Network that is involved in various activities which facilitate their self-sustenance. In the premises of Somali Community Board (SCOB), I discovered that there were sewing machines and clothes placed in one room. After some inquiry, I learnt that the SASOWNET members are equipped with skills to enable them to cope with the situation in South Africa. I spoke with Fatuma who said that through SASOWNET, women are taught several skills including sewing, computer literacy, driving and languages (English), which can enable them to make use of available opportunities in

Gauteng. This is in cognizance to the fact that it is very hard to get employed in South Africa as a foreigner. Even with their formal skills from their countries of origin which become informal as they enter South Africa, because the skills are not South African certified, entering the employment system with the foreign qualifications become difficult. Besides, the requirement for immigration documentation also demands some validation that would require some migration status in order to get employed (i.e. work permit, temporary Residence). She says:

As South African Somali Women Network Members, we help one another access the opportunities available in this country. You know it is not easy to get employed in South Africa. You will be required to have a skill for a particular job, specific papers like the permanent Residence and you know most of us have either an Asylum or refugees paper which they are looked down by some employers. Because of that, we provide an environment where they can learn English, driving, Sewing and the computer. English will help them express themselves better when they go to police, to hospitals, the Home Affairs and in the normal interaction with the local people. If one does not have those skills, how will he be able to live here?

### **7.2.3 Jesuits Refugee Service**

The Jesuit Refugee Service is a Catholic Church institution whose main mission is to support refugees. This project, which was founded by the Society of Jesus congregation, popularly known as the Jesuits<sup>33</sup> is apparently present in fifty two countries. In 1980, Fr Arrupe, the then superior General of the Jesuits decided to found the project in order to support the displaced refugees. His concern for the displaced

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<sup>33</sup> Jesuits is a religious 'Order' within the Catholic Church dedicated in following Jesus, within the rule of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. They are the known to work in the education, social justice, research works, refugee missions etc.

led to the initiation of the Jesuits Refugee Service (JRS, thereafter). The foundation was also inspired by the call to live the Gospel teaching of love, the Social teachings of the Catholic Church on social justice and the Ignatian<sup>34</sup> spirituality which defines the characteristics of a Jesuit priest.

The South Africa context was a fertile ground for the foundation of the JRC due to the ever-increasing influx of the refugees and the intersecting forms of complexities that demand an action from agencies like JRS. Due to this pressing need of the support of the refugees in advocacy and relief, the Southern African Catholic Episcopate<sup>35</sup> asked them to initiate the JRC program in the country. The Jesuits heeded the Episcopate invitation and decided to set up the JRS in 1998 in the Gauteng province (Pretoria and Johannesburg). This is a strategic undertaking that started in the two provinces is because, it is a major entry point of refugees coming into the country. Besides, Gauteng hosts the largest population of the refugees. In South Africa, due to the unavailability of refugee camps poses challenge to the refugees who are mostly from urban centres. In this regard, they have to forge the strategy of finding the basic necessities like food, shelter, clothing, health and so on. Pretty observes that:

South Africa doesn't have camps and therefore the State does not allocate any budget to them. She says: You must understand that the South African context of the refugees is different from other Countries like Kenya that have the two refugee camps, Kakuma and Daadab. In our own case here, refugees have no camps and so the government does not offer a monetary provision to them.

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<sup>34</sup> Ignatian -named after St Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits.

<sup>35</sup> Episcopate is derived from the Greek, *episkopatus* to mean an overseer or a bishop. In the context of this study it denotes that collection of the Bishops of Southern Africa (Church of South Africa, Botswana, Malawi, Zambia, Namibia, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, Swaziland, Angola).

During the interviews, the Somali women cited JRS as one of the key players in enabling them to cope with the Xenophobia-Afrophobia related complexities. They support Somali women starting small businesses after losing property to Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks. Also, the JRS sourced fund is an emergency kitty that helps the refugee women to pay for rent (household) and other utility bills (electricity and water). Before they can receive those funds, the JRS scrutinises women in order to ensure that their support helps the right people for the right causes. This scrutiny is important because Somali women, though affected by the same problem (Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks), could differ in their response to it. A Somali woman could be affected by the Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks but she could have other means of generating income elsewhere. This is while other women may have nothing left after the attacks. Social network theory maintains that people are embedded in thick webs of social relations and interactions (Borgatti, et al. 2009), and through these ties, some women may be more advantaged than other women faced by the same challenge. Maria said:

My husband had a shop that would support our family and even get some surplus. After Xenophobia attacks, we lost everything. Nothing at all was saved. We actually lost property worth 150,000 Rand. We heard that there was a certain religious institution that supports people like us. We applied for the aid and they gave us. They gave us the money to pay our rent and support our children for a period of three months. This organisation, I think it's called the JRS, which is renowned for supporting Somalis whenever they have problems. This organisation also helps the women to start small businesses, but before they give you the money they have to establish whether it's really meant for the business or not.

Aware of the need to restore the human respect and dignity among the refugees as the Social teachings of the Church and the Gospel teachings demands, the JRS engages in

supporting women in the procurement of education. Besides supporting the refugees with school fees, the JRS makes some basic provision like buying food and giving medical support. Nevertheless, such support is temporary while the Somali women have life complexities. The JRS underlines the need to uplift women through giving them hand-ups as a strategy to build self-reliance, rather than support that makes them perpetual dependents. Amina says:

The business that supported me and my children was destroyed during Xenophobia attacks. My husband did not have any other sources of the money. So I applied to JRS for some small funding so that I could start a ‘Smallanyana’<sup>36</sup> business. The JRS responded fast by providing some money to start the business and on top they gave me food parcels, school fees and grocery vouchers.

#### **7.2.4 South African Somali Association**

The South African Somali Association is a non-governmental organisation which began in 1995 in order to unite the Somali community in South Africa. The South African Somali Association (SASA) which started as a small group in Gauteng and Western Cape has apparently spread to about nine provinces in South Africa (Brown, 2014). This spread happened in towns because of the presence of several refugees in the South African urban centres who are running businesses. Before the foundation of the Association, the Somali embassy was non-existent and so the Somali community had to start one organisation that would unite them which is now known as SASA. It was formed by the Somali business people who realised the need to have one voice as a Somali community. Also, this platform is used in order to address their rights with one another.

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<sup>36</sup> Smallanyana- a slang word that refers to a small thing. Its common among local people in Gauteng .In our context it’s a small business.

The SASA has notably been involved in facilitating women's navigation in the transnational territory through advocacy and empowerment. In Gauteng, the Somali community received the information about Xenophobia-Afrophobia from the organisation before the attack happens in order to keep Somalis vigilant. They inform the Somalis what could happen in the next few days, in order to enable the Somalis to prepare for any possible eventualities. Through Power Geometries one can argue that, Somali women are not helpless but have an agency called SASA which empowers them with information about the lurking threat of violence. The women are warned not to move to certain places because of the Xenophobia-Afrophobia bigotry that could take a dimension of gender based violence. Rape and other forms of sexual violence could happen as a tool of instilling fear among the Somali women and the entire community. This has happened in other countries where war has been used as a tool to inflict pain, male domination and fear to the warring population. For instance, sexual atrocities in Congo and Somali have been used for demonstrating power over one group while instilling fear on another group. Amina says:

Here in Pretoria, we are always updated on how things are going. When there are signs of Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks, SASA informs us in time so that we can avoid certain places. The SASA gets that information from the leaders of the local communities who work hand in hand with the Somali community. Also, some Somali business people working in the township get such information and pass it to the SASA. The Somali women are warned not to visit some places because they could be raped.

The significance legal advocacy among the Somali women cannot be ignored due to the numerous injustices meted out on them. For instance, the wanton destruction of Somali property has negative ramifications on women. Most of the Somali women that were interviewed, expressed that when the Spaza shops located in townships are vandalised, they are badly affected. There are many Somali women that do not have

any other source of income rather than the money that comes from the Spaza businesses which are run by their spouses or the male children. Also, a handful of Somalis pointed out that they had shops which they owned. However they were later destroyed during Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks. In that respect, SASA has engaged itself in defending the Somalis when the local population wantonly destroys the Spaza shops. I talked to one SASA member, in the quest for understanding how they engage in the fight for the rights of the Somali women. She said that SASA has ardently pushed the government to compensate the people that lost their properties in the attacks. Amira says that Somali women had many cases where they called the government to compensate those that lost their businesses during those attacks. Those court cases have not come into fruition despite their efforts to push those cases through lawyers for the sake of human rights. Amira says:

My name is Amira a member of South Africa Somali association (SASA).Till 2012/2015 the police came to the shops and took the items from Somali shops and said that we are illegal migrants. We reported to the government, but they were not understanding our complaint. Then we wrote to the Lawyers for Human rights. The lawyers for the human right started to go to the sites. We started to go to the affected places, all the organs of the government. We explained to all those organs but they never understood us. The Human Rights lawyers explained to the government organs but couldn't understand. Then we took the case to magistrate court and then to the Supreme Court. They called the ministers and told them that they must give them the right permit in order to operate the business. This has been our duty as South Africa Somali association, to fight for the rights of our people who are victims of the Xenophobia. Women are affected when our shops are burnt and so the question you asked on how you are involved in serving women is

through this kind of work. Remember women too lost their small business in the townships. They have also been affected when the only source of bread is vandalised.

### **7.3 Individual initiatives**

#### **7.3.1 Economic partnerships**

Due to the crimes directed towards foreigners, the Somali women avoid setting up their businesses in crime zones in locations. Thus, they opt to start business and reside in the suburbs where the wider community of Somalis exists. Nonetheless, due to the lucrative nature of those places (like locations), Somali women have forged ways of generating income from locations albeit the risks involved. Aware of the risks involved in some Xenophobia-Afrophobia zones like townships, they initiate a business partnership and employ the male shopkeepers to operate them. The males employed by those women would manage the shops, safeguard it. Also they are expected to bring an account of the business transactions involved. Besides setting businesses collectively, the Somali women contribute the money which will then go round to all the members. This money enables them to pay for some unexpected costs or even in supporting their small businesses of perfumes, groceries and clothes.

In terms of the supply of the goods to their shops, the Somalis benefit from the wholesale supply from the Somali network of distributors. Their partnership enables them to enjoy a bulk purchase at a cheaper price that eventually maximises their overall returns. Also, such networks means that the Somali women do not have to travel in order to buy and then supply those goods themselves because of the of the safety problem involved. Zeinab pointed out that travelling from Pretoria suburb to Mamelodi Township in order to distribute goods is a big risk. She has a vehicle that supplies kerosene to the Somali shopkeepers. She says that she cannot distribute such goods by herself because she would be risking too much. The theory of Social Network accentuates the importance of familial ties and is evidently manifested in

Zeinabu's decision to hire her relative whom she feels confident in working with as a distributor of the fuel. She hired her cousin to do the distribution of the item to the Somali shop owners. Thus, women take such advantage of the network of suppliers to avert security risks while maximising their profits, without incurring travel expenses.

### **7.3.2 Somali business niches**

When I entered the so called Somali Place, which was located behind Home Affairs in Pretoria. I realised that there is a lot of Somali businesses selling ethnic clothes and perfumes of Somali origin. I happened to interview most of those women, who told me that they chose to set their businesses in the Somali Place because of safety reasons. Although businesses do not bring more returns as in the locations, setting their businesses at that place was a way of negotiating a safe place. Also, they told me that women are supposed to be more domestically and culturally portrayed when out of their households and without their husbands. In that respect, the proximity to their homes enabled them to cope with the domestic tasks that the Somali women are supposed perform at home. The attachment to their households can also be manifested in their shops in town through the type of the items they sell. Besides, selling clothes and body cosmetics, I discovered that they were having tea in a flask that the Somali customers bought as they negotiated prices. This enabled the women to generate more income besides their daily sales from the clothes, while maintaining their domesticity. In both Pretoria and Mayfair, I realised that the Somali women sold the same type of things that are identical to the Somali culture and Islamic religion. This manner of carving their own niche and being next to each other is a way of coping with the insecurity. The Somali community is attracted to buying from them because the customers can compare the cost and the quality of the goods in such an environment supplying ethnic clothes in huge amounts. Aware of the fact that they are soft targets of Xenophobia-Afrophobia related complexities, including the criminals, they open stores next to each other as a strategy to protect each other. Nonetheless, selling the same type of items creates a huge competition among the Somali women so much so

that they end up having fewer returns compared to what they would receive if they diversified the sales by selling different items. Besides receiving low returns as a result of the heavy competition, most Somali women cited that it was not easy to own a store in towns because hiring the store and paying monthly utilities was expensive as compared to the locations.

### **7.3.3 Diverse sources of income**

This study establishes that the Somali women in Gauteng forge several sources of incomes in order to cope with the high cost of living in South Africa. The refugees are required to pay the permit dues and above that, the illegal bribes which costs them much money. More so, the women expressed the high cost of groceries, clothing, shelter, medical expenses and transportation. In view of the aforementioned expenses the Somali women look for more opportunities in order to maximise their incomes. When women lose husbands in Xenophobia-Afrophobia related attacks, they forge the way of coping with the new reality which demands fulfilling the jobs that were previously done by the deceased husband. This was clearly verbalised by Fatuma who told me that after losing her husband in the Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks in the location, she had to diversify her income so that she could be able to support her children who are in Somalia. She tells me that the transnational complexities are numerous. But the worst of all was losing her husband in the Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks. She underlines that she does not have any specific job. Thus, she does many menial<sup>37</sup> jobs in order to increase her income which would enable her to support her household needs. She says:

I left Somalia and came to Kenya where I married a Kenyan man. I got some kids with him but later we divorced each other. The man

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<sup>37</sup> Somali women do menial jobs such as such as washing clothes, cleaning people's houses, cooking and washing dishes at Somali restaurants.

was not giving anything to me that could enable me to support the kids. When I came to South Africa, I met a gentleman who was killed last year. One of the challenges I face in South Africa is not something that I can count. They are too many challenges in this country that we face as non-citizens. I have children in Somalia and it's only me who is supporting them. In order to support them, I have to work hard. I do not have any specific job but all the jobs. I do everything that can support the kids. I also work in the restaurant you found me here now. On Fridays, I go to the Home Affairs to sell tea and Samosa<sup>38</sup> and the stuff like that to support my kids. I also take some vegetables and sell and everything I get from my sales supports my children.

Remittances are very significant to the lives of the migrants as it boosts the household economy. The theory of Social network argues that migrants have networks that facilitate the adaptability in the host country by minimising their financial risks (Borgatti, et al. 2009; Massey et al.1993; Poston & Bouvier, 2010; Jennisen, 2007). A handful of the interview participants pointed out that they have friends and relatives that send them money from other countries. This helps the women not to rely on one source of income, a phenomenon that strains their lives in Gauteng. The Somalian women considered Europe and United States of America as the best countries with opportunities and more incomes, so much so that they regarded them as a viable means of soliciting more money through their relatives. Zeinab says:

My name is Zeinab. I come from Kenya. I try all manners of things to buy groceries and be able to pay the rent and other bills. South Africa is not an easy country to live if you do not have a reliable

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<sup>38</sup> Samosa is a pyramid shaped pie that is filled with several ingredients such as meat, potatoes, onions, red pepper etc. The Samosa is a common food among the Somali restaurants in Pretoria and Mayfair.

source of income. I do sell these groceries in order to provide for my sustenance. The money I get here is not enough because I have to pay rent, feed myself and my children. I am however blessed because my daughter who went to the USA sends me some remittances because she is aware that it is not easy to survive here in South Africa without a good income.

However, the search for diverse sources of income, which Somali women espouse, are challenged by the societal and cultural norms which “boxes” Somali women into sex-based roles. These women are basically expected to perform roles that are domestically related (i.e. housekeeping, childcare) so much that any deviation should have a relation to such roles. For instance, selling clothing and body care products are proper for Somali women as it connects to the domestic environment. However, Somali women in Gauteng have challenged such a gender norm in order to cope with the demand of providing for their livelihoods. They overcome what Shafer (2012) calls the paradox; whereby, there are certain social-cultural roles expected of a woman and at the same time, the economic strain that demands the women to break those sex-based roles. In Mayfair and Pretoria West, I encountered many women in the streets hawking vegetables and foods like Samosas and tea. These types of jobs, where women are always on the street, vending, are looked down upon because of the cultural-religious stereotype where women are supposed to be ‘domestic.’ Through Power Geometries, this study argues that the Somali women are able to use ‘the space’ to challenge the cultural dynamics that determine the kind of jobs which Somali women are expected to do.

#### **7.3.4 Sharing personal experiences as a way of dealing with trauma and stress**

The Somali women expressed a wide range of stress and trauma that made them sentimental whenever they narrated a particular traumatic episode in their lives. The

Somali women's experience of the Somali civil war, gender based violence, high crime level and Xenophobia-Afrophobia realities are the main sources of trauma and stress. As a way of coping with the aforesaid trauma sources, the Somali women share their traumatic experiences to their close acquaintances and families, albeit with caution. Narrating stories about past experiences could have a therapeutic impact on the lives of the migrants. Women have meetings organised by various agencies like the Action Support Centre whereby they talk about their lives while being involved in various creative activities like poetry, songs and discussions. Narrating life stories while engaging in activities that bring out horrific experiences has the potential of recovering their meaning of life. Also, in order for refugee women to overcome the trauma, they have to be willing to break away the denialism spirit and pronounce verbally their past experiences of that 'unspeakable' phenomenon hidden in them (Goldstein, 2001; Babugura, 2007). Refugees have deep-seated appalling reminiscences of traumatic experiences, which if they could share, they could recapture their dignity and confidence. The Somali women, through various platforms like South African Women Networks have broken their silence by sharing their experiences with a purpose of rebuilding their lives and those of other women who have similar experiences. Nonetheless, due to the shame and stigma that is involved in narrating Xenophobia-Afrophobia related Sexual abuse (rape, sexual harassments as foreigners), Somali women still find it hard in reconstructing the story and expressing it verbally. According to Johnson (2005), trauma shatters the refugee's value of their existence and trust in other people. The narration is however done cautiously to those that they have built trust like their close friends, counsellors, South African Somali Women Network and the religious organisation known as Jesuits Refugee service (JRS).

Riki (2004) advances the debate on trauma coping mechanisms by introducing the cyberspace dimension. She argues that refugees, especially the young people are turning into various websites in order to seek solace and relief. In such platforms, the

affected people get connected to the confessions shared by people who are struggling or have actually overcome their traumas. Through identifying themselves with those individuals that have overcome their traumas, refugees redefine their hope and strength to overcome and face their own trauma in order for the healing process to take place. In the context of Somali women, trauma-coping strategies through cyberspace are not easy in Gauteng. This is because of the challenges of accessing cybercaf  and a lack of skills to access them. In Pretoria for instance, there is one Somali cybercaf  that serves the whole suburb near Marabastad. In this caf , which was my meeting place with my informants and the interpreter, I noted that the majority of the Somali people using the computers were not women, but men. The few Somali women that came to the place were mainly coming to work on their documents for submission (Scanning, downloading Immigration documents etc.). The few women that came to use the cybercaf  would be assisted to use the computer because most of them had no computer literacy. Apparently, Pretoria does not have any centre that is offering the computer and English classes for the Somalis, as opposed to Johannesburg where the SASOWNET and ASC in liaison with other NGOs offers lessons to those women. I happened to speak to Kuresh who revealed to me that most of the women in the suburb got assistance from male counterparts and their spouses to access the information that needed the use of the computer. She highlighted that the loss of their spouses in Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks is a big blow to Somali women because they are the ones that facilitate documentation process that would require access to some documents on the internet. Due to the patriarchal setting of the Somali community, migrant women tend to keep away from public places (Shafer, 2012; Al-Sharmani, 2007; Cawo, 2012; Jinnah, 2010) and this seclusion limits them from accessing such information from the cybercaf s. In this context Somali women, are seen as lacking computer skills. Also a lack of education hinders access to the information that could allow them to gain solace from cyberspace.

### **7.3.5 Emotional and material/financial support from friends**

Somali women's experiences of covert Xenophobia-Afrophobia in the context of the documentation process shows that police harassment and health institutions add up to the trauma of their past complexities in their country of origin. Such women who lost their husbands in the Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks said that the role they assumed as the breadwinners was not easy. Thus, forging sustenance as single women, caused stress among them because they had lived in the house for long period as they were dependent on their husbands for everything. Among them was Zeinab who underlines her daily struggle that stresses her so much, after the 'Father' responsibility shifted to her when she lost her husband in Xenophobia-Afrophobia attack.

When our husbands, sons are killed we are disturbed so much. We are stressed on how to carry the responsibility of being the mother and the father at the sometime, because we have lived in the house for years without thinking where the food came from. When you begin to realise that you are alone as a single woman and have to provide for your children, blood pressure rises. You become sick every day; fever rises and other unexpected illnesses like headache and stomach-ache arises because of stress. We are stressed! And most of our women are single because the locals killed their husbands during the Xenophobia attacks. I have never known the price of some things used at home because my husband bought them. Now that I am the breadwinner I have to assume that responsibility. This stresses me a lot and especially when I think that this burden of looking after my family was as a result of other people killing my innocent husband whom I loved so much!

The theory of Social network maintains that within the transnational territory, migrants have social ties that support them in negotiating their space (Borgatti, et al.

2009, Oishi, 2002; Coombs, 1998; Vandererf & Heering, 1996:154; Haug, 2008). In the context of Somali women experiencing the daily stress and the haunting traumas that shatters their meaning of life, Social ties are sources of hope and resilience. The resilience and the ability to reconstruct their lives shattered by the daily stress and trauma are determined by the support they have from the existing social ties from family members and acquaintances, and the environment they come into contact with. For instance, a woman that comes into a contact with a hospitable community open to the foreigners is able to cope better than the one that experiences a hostile one. In terms of the social ties, the Somalis support each other in order to cope with stress through offering moral and material support. Aisha said that coming from a war torn country (Somalia), she arrived in South Africa and luckily, she was accommodated by her sister who was like a mother to her. Aisha expressed the hospitality she received from her sister which was a source of strength that enabled her to face challenges in her new environment. However, the experience of that type of environment manifests hatred towards foreigners and exacerbates the deep-seated trauma among the Somali women. I met several women that exhibited pain whenever they narrated how they left their countries hoping for peace only to find other forms violence there. Coming from persecution in their country of origin to another type of persecution manifested in the form of the Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks frustrated their ability to negotiate the transnational territory.

### **7.3.6 Drawing on resilience in reconstructing their identity**

Somali women are very resilient people, a phenomenon which they learnt from their countries of origin that demands endurance in order to withstand hardships. They come from a nation experiencing recurring social political and economic feuds, paucity to basic necessities, and the insecurity, but were able to withstand those hard encounters. This resilient nature of the women was accentuated by Sarah who believes that they endure any form of challenges in South Africa because of what they went

through in Somalia. She pointed that they have no access to the loans as citizens do here, but they will eventually rise to the top due to their resilient nature. She says:

I will give this credit to Somalian woman. They crawl if they cannot walk. If they cannot walk they see themselves trying to survive. No matter how it is they do everything possible to make sure they reach to a destination. And now you see that they do not have an access to the bank loans as many people here do but they will do everything necessary to find money to setup business or sustain themselves. Put them into any situation, they will survive. Somali women are tough! We have gone through several hardships in Somali and so what we face here is nothing as compared to our country. People here have never tasted war but we have, people here have not tasted famine but we have, we have Al-Shabaab threats as women but they haven't. All that terrible experience has made us tough people.

In a study like this which looks at the experiences of Somali women in the transnational space, one might be tempted to view Somali women as weak bodies burdened with traumas and daily stresses so much that they must always depend on a male counterpart in negotiating the transnational space. Dorset & Hutchinson (2012) point out that there is a tendency among the professionals working with the refugees to concentrate much on their trauma and stress without focusing on their strengths which they could use to overcome the daily challenges. That kind of argument would be simplistic and improper in the context of Somali women living in the Gauteng province because; their strength during the interviews reflected their experiences. In fact some Somali women who I interviewed attested to the fact that Somali women have a high fortitude. Amina advances this argument by pointing out that Somali women are very strong and that the Somali community is sustained by them and cannot do without them. This resilience is a form of 'power geometry' that gives Somali women the strength to negotiate their daily complexities, thus, it would be

improper to brand them as helpless beings. Due to their enduring strength, Amina points out that they work unremittingly to ensure unity reigns in Somalia and South Africa. She says that there is a tendency to underestimate the strength of women, but the truth is that they are strong beings that are able to sustain the community. She says:

Somali women are very strong people. Our women in their resilience have worked hard towards bringing peace in Somalia and in South Africa within our own communities. In our communities, no one can deny that we are the pillars and that our strength cannot be compared with anything. The Somali community relies on us in several ways and so it can't stand without our presence. When our community fights we talk to our husbands to talk the fight and think about bring peace. Woman, we hold the Somali community.

The resilient nature of the Somali women enables them to face the Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities with bravado within the transnational space. After surviving all manner of problems in their countries of origin, women are able to cope with insecurity, Xenophobia-Afrophobia as well as Gender Based Violence, which targets their bodies. When I engaged them in a discussion about the challenges they face in this country as women, I learnt that although they have fears and trauma, their past life shaped their strong identity. This proved to withstand transnational complexities without giving hope. Maria told me that her past life in Somalia had played a major role in building her resilience which enabled her to adapt to any transnational territory. Her experience of civil war, a gruesome journey to South Africa and Al-Shabaab threats have hardened her so much so that she considers South Africa's complexities trivial when compared to her past experiences. She says:

I am coming from a country that has experienced war and hardships for many years. My parents were persecuted and some of my family members were killed. I have gone through a lot when I lost my

parents. I learnt how not to depend on other people for everything. If I know I can do something, I try to be self-reliant. This independent spirit is in me because the loss of my parents and some family members strengthened me instead of breaking me. I am a strong woman after experiencing war, loss of my parents, poverty and so on. Today, due to that strength, I am able to cope with any challenge that comes my way. I am able to adapt in any environment.

### **7.3.7 Education as an adaptation strategy**

Gladden (2012) argues that education could be a coping strategy for the refugees in terms of giving them hope for a better life after completion. The migrants hope is sustained by the awareness of the opportunities awaiting them should they attain the required skills that would enable them to fit into the job market. Similarly, the young Somali women whom I interviewed manifested a yearning for basic and tertiary education. Due to the fact that they originated from Somalia where they did not have the opportunity to access quality education systems, they sought excellence in education for progress. Their own women also considered the transnational space as a viable space for acquiring education for their children. Thus, this space which proffers Somali women an access to education is a ‘power geometry.’ Aware of the fact that education for their children would secure them good jobs and good status in the future, they made sacrifices in order to provide education for their children. The Somali community members feel that they have an obligation to support each other and therefore success of one family member is considered a success to all the members. Thus, the women’s hope is sustained when educating their children because when a member gets an opportunity through education, it’s for the benefit of the entire family/clan. Thus, women, motivated by the hope in the outcome of education are able to cope with the challenges they face while searching for money to educate their children. The Somali women faced with the Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities showed much resilience in pursuing education in order ascertain progress.

Zara, an alumnus of the University of South Africa (UNISA) told me that she had completed her bachelor's degree in Social Science, but she does not have a valid permit to allow her to stay in the country legally. Her permit expired while she was in South Africa and was rejected when she applied for its renewal. She fears that she can even be deported by the State if the police arrests her. However, she says that she is still strong despite rejection of her application for a permit because she has an education. According to Zara, education gives her the strength to move on despite the rejection of her documents by Home Affairs. Zara says:

I did my bachelors in Social Sciences in University of South Africa (UNISA) and was to graduate last year but one. My permit is expired. I have applied several times but they have always rejected it. Although I am facing this problem, I still have faith in good things ahead of me. I have a degree that will give me a better life in the future. I will move on strongly despite the challenges that I face here because I believe that my degree will save me one day and all these troubles that I am currently facing will be over.

Aisha has basic education and wishes she was more educated in order to enjoy the opportunities available in South Africa. However, she has a daughter who is at the University of Johannesburg. She does several menial jobs in order to support her daughter's education. Aisha believes that education is the best legacy you can give to your children. Despite the challenges she faces in South Africa as a foreigner, she believes in persistence and perseverance believing that her daughter will one day lift up her standard of living. Also, memories of the people in her country who have succeeded through pursuing education motivate her to sustain her hope in actualising the dream of giving her daughter a good education. She confesses that as a foreigner in South Africa getting education is not an easy task, if you don't have good papers. Aisha says:

There is nothing better to give your children in this world than education. Myself I have little basic education that enables me to survive. My daughter is in grade six and that is my only hope and my future. I am facing many challenges as a foreigner here, but this cannot stop me from working hard to ensure my daughter gets good education. I believe that one has to persevere in order to get what he wants. I am that person. I want my child to have education which I never got. Seeing her studying feels me with joy despite challenges that I face. It makes me move on with a strong heart.

### **7.3.8 Marriage**

According to Moret et al (2006), migrants turn to marriages as a practical coping mechanism meant to eschew refugee's deprivation of resources, in the host country. Apart from the process of migration, marriages have been considered as viable strategies for averting refugee's risks such as sexually related abuses and female trafficking during migration journeys among women (Johnson,2012;O' Neil et al, 2016; Anjali, 2016; Truong, et al, 2012). However, this does not dispute the fact that migration has progressively shown that women have actually come alone unaccompanied, to flee social economic and political destabilisations in their home countries. In host countries like South Africa, although the 'unaccompanied female phenomenon' has been manifested by Somali women during migration and settlement, accompaniment in the settlement process is equally evident among some Somali women in the Gauteng province. During my interviews, Sarah who lives in Pretoria found a husband (in Pretoria) with the help of her cousins. She says that she needed somebody that would help her cope with the complexities within South Africa. She says,

I found my husband in South Africa through my cousin that lives in Pretoria West. To be honest with you it was hard for me to pay rent

and meet other expenses like food and medical ones. Then one day my cousins who I was staying with connected me with a gentleman who is currently my husband. I needed somebody not just because I loved him but because I needed somebody that would accompany me in daily struggles.

Fatima points out that, in Gauteng a number of Somali women enter into a relationship that is provoked by the challenges they face while navigating the new territory. She says that she is aware of women who require support either through marriage or a male counterpart to help them cope with the challenges of earning an income after entering South Africa. In one instance, Fatima observes that some women seek male providers, driven by financial pressure and social cultural expectations, rather than marrying for love. Power geometries concept, enunciates that marriage is considered as a form of agency that women hold onto in order to cope with complexities in the country. Fatima says:

Here, women come to South Africa and when they get into this country, they have to look for a man. They get into marriage as a result of pressure to cope with the realities affecting other migrants. They sometimes marry not for love but in order to get security or another form of support. Unfortunately, some of these unions are not done out of love, but because of challenges that women encounter when they come here.

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I discuss the various coping strategies that the Somali women adopt to cope with the Xenophobia-Afrophobia related complexities in the transnational space. Contrary to some studies that see refugee women as helpless victims that have no possibilities of facing the complexities that confronts them, I argue that Somali women have agency that facilitates the ability to navigate through their challenges. Among

the institutions that Somali women are affiliated with in Gauteng are; the Action Support centre (ASC), South African Somali Women Network (SASOWNET), Jesuits Refugees Service (JRS), and South African Somali Association (SASA). Also, women redefine the livelihood and household coping strategies which are self-initiated as opposed to the above mentioned agencies which are externally initiated by individuals outside the Somali community. In this regard, they have economic partnerships whereby they set up businesses together in places perceived to be dangerous like the South African townships. The women have business ethnic niches where they sell clothing, Somali foods etc. This acts as a safety net for the women, which they claim affects their businesses as foreigners. As a way of coping with the deep seated traumas and the daily stress, women narrate their stories to their close allies and through institutions like the South African Somali Women Network platforms, and counselling agents. Also, the women's resilience conditioned by their harsh environments where they migrated from, enables them to face the Xenophobia-Afrophobia challenges with fortitude. Moreover, education which gives them hope for opportunities also enables them to navigate the transnational space perseveringly. Finally, women have invented several sources of income as a strategy to maximise their incomes base.

In the subsequent chapter the study focuses on the role of the state institutions and refugee protocols in the context of xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **THE DISJUNCTURE BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL PROTOCOLS, STATE POLICIES AND DEPARTMENTS' MANDATES AND SOMALI WOMEN'S LIVED EXPERIENCES.**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

Although the state institutions are required/mandated by the constitution to treat everyone indiscriminately, experiences of Somali migrants uncovers institutional antagonism based on their nationality, language, body, culture, religion and so forth. In this chapter, I discuss how state institutions have been sites of covert Xenophobia-Afrophobia against the Somali women in Gauteng. Due to their nationality that intersects with other axes of their identity, Somali women experience anti-foreigner antagonism in the Department of Home Affairs, Police, Health and Justice Departments.

The chapter also discusses the national laws, and international protocols that are significant to this study that focuses on Somali women in the transnational space. Due to the fact that my study is carried out within the Gauteng province, the South African Refugee Act has been elaborated in order to understand what is within the rights and privileges of Somali women in the country. In order to understand the law within which the state institutions works, the study expounds the non-discrimination article under the Bill of Rights. Due to the fact that South Africa is signatory to protocols that are related to the plight of the refugees, I discuss the Universal Declaration for Human Rights (UDHR), The Convention Relating to the Status of the Refugees(CRSR), Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the 1969 OAU Convention.

## **8.2 International laws vis-a-vis antagonism against women migrants**

### **8.2.1 United Nation Declaration for Human Rights**

The focus on United Nation Declaration for Human Right (UNDHR) cannot be overlooked by this study because it is the foundation of other treaties that champion the rights of the refugees. The United Nation Declaration, also called Universal Declaration for Human rights was adopted by the United Nations member states in 1948 in Paris, France. The United Nations General assembly was convened after the Second World War that caused several atrocities that violated human rights. The declaration is significant document to the nations because it defines freedoms and human rights that are inherently fundamental to human beings.

The Universal Declaration for the Human Rights assembly which was motivated by the mass movement of populations fleeing persecution during World War II came up with section 14 that talks about the rights of those seeking Asylum. Article 14 invites all the nations to open borders for the Asylum seekers, but clearly states that this right is solely for the refugees that have genuine claims of political persecutions. The migrants who are running away from prosecutions as a result of crimes they committed in their countries of origin as it happens quite often cannot invoke article 14 because it doesn't guarantee them protection. Most of the Somali women that come to South Africa would enjoy this inalienable right guaranteed by the article, because their persecutions are of political nature. During the interviews most of them, especially from Somalia expressed that they fled persecution in Somalia in order to find peace and safety in South Africa. Nevertheless, although the majority claimed to enjoy peace and security in the country, they expressed that South Africa had its own persecutions, albeit of a different nature. These persecutions continued when they come to South Africa where their rights were violated during Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks. The Document underscores the value and dignity of every human being under

article 14. The Somali community is subject to the violation of right to life, in instances where lives are lost in Xenophobia-Afrophobia violence.

I deem it important to consider discussing the Universal Declaration for Human Rights in my study, because, besides the refugee concerns, it has a section that talks about the rights of women. This study being a study on women experiences cannot overlook the fact that the rights of women are within human rights. The declaration underlines that the rights it entitles to humanity are meant for both men and women alike, without any discrimination based on their gender whatsoever. Article 2 of the documents takes into account the plurality of humanity located in different social locations of sex, gender, race, sex, language, nationality, political affiliations etc. It is worth noting the non-sexist language that the drafters of the UNDHR apply throughout the whole document. They use the term ‘everyone’ and ‘human beings’ to accentuate that the declaration was meant for both men and women equally (United Nations, 2014). In the Gauteng province, I found out that majority of the women have suffered violation of human rights for being women, concurrently so have foreigners who have several deviations from the citizens in terms of language, body morphology, complexion, accent, and culture.

### **8.2.2 The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of the Refugees**

Due to the great need to address the problem of the influx of migrants into different countries, which was provoked by World War II, the Universal Declaration for Human Rights (UDHR) had to be elaborated more by defining who the refugees are. Thus, three years after the United Nations adopted the UDHR (1948), it convened another general assembly to look into the refugee’s affairs, which was called ‘the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of the Refugees’ or simply ‘the 1951 Refugee Convention.’ On July 1951 the refugee convention was adopted in Geneva by the United Nations member states. The protocol called all member states to set up the policies in their own nations that allowed free access to the migrants that are undergoing persecutions. The term refugee denoted anyone that had a genuine fear of

being persecuted because of their skin colour, faith, country of origin, political backgrounds and were not able to go back to their countries for fear of being persecuted (United Nations High Commissions for Refugees, 2011). This designation shows that the document provides a very comprehensive definition of the term refugee, contrary to other conventions like UNDHR which specified that persecution must be of a political nature. The only requirement needed for one to invoke the protection from the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of the Refugees was that the persecution should show that the person was discriminated based on their social locations such as race, clan, nationality, language and culture. The Somali Bantu women have been discriminated within the transnational space, Somalia because of their skin tone and hair texture that intersects with other axes like status (known in history to work as slaves in Arabs plantations). In such a scenario, the Bantu who leaves Somalia because of discrimination against their identity is protected by the 1951 convention and not any other declaration that preceded it.

Although the 1951 convention is still relevant to-date as a comprehensive document from which several refugee policies are based, the document does not bring out the gender dimension of the persecutions. Although women are subject to the same persecutions (i.e. Alshabaab, civil unrests in the case of Somalis, Xenophobia-Afrophobia) they do not suffer the same way as men. In the Gauteng province for instance, the Somali men and women inform me that during the Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks (a form of persecution), they encountered gender-based violence like rape and sexual harassment by criminals who took advantage of their vulnerability.

I argue that this refugee convention is not gender specific. It goes back to the debate on the public/private dichotomy whereby, gender-based violence is considered a private affair nonetheless such persecutions are evidently manifested in public spheres. For instance, the Somali women in Gauteng who claimed to be subjects of rape, sexual violence, and sexual harassment cannot be told that it's a private matter,

because whenever it happens their closest acquaintances come to know about it. The assembly that guided the drafting of such declaration used the traditional approach that considers sexual violence against women during war and Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks as a male pursuit and a violation of the rights of man who 'owns' the woman. Thus, women abuse would therefore be narrowed down to persecution of humanity and in this case the nations do little to address women persecution. In addition, the rights of women as contained in the convention and in the national policies inspired by the treaty would need to be gender specific. This approach of seeing the women abuse as a private affair is an incorrect way because it leaves the responsibility of changing the status quo to the state, while forgetting that there are religious and cultural beliefs that need to be challenged (Binder, 2000). The faith institutions in South Africa play a significant role in reinforcing women abuse through the language of worship, rules and regulations. For instance, the scriptures have selectively been used to remind women of their lowly status, without bearing in mind the context in which the bible was authored. In South Africa, cultural beliefs are also a hindrance to the access of the rights of women. For example, during the mourning process, the women are subjected to demeaning practices.

Raj (2001), advances the gender deficiency of the international convention definition of the persecutions that could force female migrants to leave their home country is inadequate, because, women not only flee politically motivated wars but their reasons for migration could be caused by a violation of their social and economic rights in their homes and communities. This could jeopardize their lives as humans. Thus, women risk marginalization and denial of rights to asylum because the refugee law is blind to the gender factor, besides the differing experiences of female and male refugees. Raj (2001) further points out that this non-recognition of gender poses difficulty in refugee interpretation, and that, denies women the possibility of resettlement and issuance of a refugee status, yet their reasons for fleeing their home countries could be genuine. The female refugees cannot adequately be addressed by

mere changing of the law pertaining to refugee women. Raj (2001) argues that that the problem needs a broader and a more holistic approach that comprise transforming social, cultural institutions that reinforce patriarchy, because the officers dealing with asylum issuance, institution that give basic needs would still segregate them if mere change of law was implemented.

Crawly (2000) advances Raj's argument by saying that the violence against women is overlooked because it is considered not to be of political nature. The refugee women are victims of rape, genital mutilations, battery, and such occurrences leave them traumatized and frustrated and that leaves them with one option, fleeing from such social and cultural persecutions. Crawley (2000) observes that the Geneva Convention has not included gender among other factors as nationalities, race, group religion and political opinion that could lead to the prosecution of persons, and that shortfall has the potential to marginalize women.

### **8.2.3 The Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**

The Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, also called the 'Women's Bill of Rights' was adopted by the United Nations Member states in 1979 (CEDAW, 2014; UN, 2005). The United General Assembly sought it crucial to consider coming up with a resolution that would address the rights of women that were undergoing gender-based violence. The term discrimination was defined by the CEDAW as any sex-based restriction that could bar women from acknowledgement or ability to access and enjoy, regardless of their matrimonial status, the rights and freedoms within social, political, religious and cultural spheres (CEDAW, 2014; UN, 2005; UNW, 2011; CEDAW, 2014; UN, 2005). The protocol invited all the United Nations member states who are signatory to the treaty to adopt a *de facto* equality in their policies in order to eliminate every law that disenfranchises women, and

embrace laws that safeguards them from being discriminated (UNW, 2007; UN, 2005; CEDAW, 2014).

The Gender-based violence against women is a prevalent phenomenon that cuts across all the geographic territories; in their countries of origin and recipient countries. The United Nation General Assembly made a huge step in bringing forth the dimension of Gender-based violence which is one of the Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities. Article 19 of CEDAW calls the member states that are signatory to the treaty to avert with diligence, probe and punish the perpetrators of gender-based violence within public and private spheres (Sledziska, 2013; Beyani, 1995). This was a major breakthrough for the conventions that had been drawing the dichotomy between the private and public sphere, and risking inaction as a result of not dealing with patriarchal structures enshrined in religious, cultural and social institutions. The CEDAW is a significant instrument in the context of the Somali women who in their transnational territories encounter gender-based violence both in public and private spheres. The dimension of private sphere which CEDAW brought on board speaks to this study in relation to gender-based violence because most Somali women chose silence in the event that one has been raped, sexually harassed or battered in order to ‘safeguard their dignity’ and maintain the ‘good wife syndrome.’ The Somali culture of silence resonates during my interview with Zeinab, who says,

The Somali women, both here and in Somali have the experience of rape. But women cannot accept to reveal such experiences because they are embarrassing and would bring shame to her and the family. I want to state this to you honestly that we have bad memories of sexual violence but we choose silence because of fear of what the society will say about ourselves.

#### **8.2.4 The 1969 OAU Convention**

In 1969, the Organization of African Unity adopted the collective initiative of its member states, the OAU Convention, to address the problem of the refugees in Africa. The African Assembly of States realized that it was high time for the Africans to find solutions for themselves within Africa. These countries, had hitherto relied on the preceding conventions such as the 1951 refugee convention to the letter, but later realized that Africa needed a broader refugee definition that would relate well with emerging problems. The step made by the OAU to revisit and eventually reform the definition of refugees in their context was momentous move to the African nations, which most of them were, at this decade, working towards their own independence. The Convention is still relevant to-date, when Africa is experiencing political upheavals and dictatorship regimes that precipitate people moving into exile (i.e. the case of Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Burundi and Somalia).

The OAU protocol adopted the previous 1951 Convention on Refugees on the Article 1 of the document, but brought a broader perspective in the succeeding Article that was provoked by the varying contexts of leaving ones nation. The expanded version of refugee's definition includes any person that has been compelled to flee their country of origin or of regular residence, due to, or as a result of pressure of an illegitimate action like belligerence of a certain nation due to partial or complete incursion (Rwelamira, 1989). Contrary to the 1951 Refugee Convention that demands that any claimant must prove that they have been discriminated, the 1969 OAU Convention does not require that in determining the authenticity of one seeking asylum in a country.

Although the OAU Protocol is lauded for being an integral and progressive treaty that is pertinent to most African issues, it faces challenges in its implementation. Most African migrants are not welcome in their own continent for fear of economic pressure should there be an influx of the refugees. In order to handle such a scenario while at

the same time not contravening the OAU's convention, the host countries provide the privileges and rights that are within some limits as stipulated within their national refugee acts. In some African countries, migrants from Africa are also seen as a burden while the persons from western countries are considered to be 'bringers' of fortune and are thus, accepted without any problem. The Somalis in Gauteng are seen as a burden and therefore discriminated in opportunities like employment, housing etc. The Somali women voiced their concern over such discrimination that not only targets them as foreigners from Africa but as Somalis. Amira said that due to their nationalities they have been turned away by landlords whenever they seek residence for rent. She says that those landlords do not have a problem with other tenants from other communities.

It's better to be at home in Somalia because you have freedom to go wherever you want. Here the law doesn't work. When you are looking for a house to rent they ask your nationality .When they realize that you are a Somali they don't allow you to rent their houses. And if it's another person from a different country, they have no problem with them. Why should they ask my nationality yet I would be paying the amount he needs. They tell us that they do not want to rent us because when you rent one Somalian he brings all his community around.

The issue of Xenophobic-Afrophobic attitudes has also challenged the spirit OAU Convention; of opening borders to the refugees and looking after them as part of Africa handling her own problems related to refugee crisis. In the Gauteng province, a handful of Somali women told me that they feel that they are not wanted in the country and have been told to go back to their countries of origin. Habiba said:

Most of our Somali community are doing so well in business and this causes competition between locals and the Somali shops. This reality

makes the local business people ask us questions that will make us feel like we are not wanted in their community. For instance they will ask you, why are you here or why did you come to South Africa? You should go back to your countries you ‘Amakulas’. This pisses me off knowing that I am from this continent!

## **8.3 The South African constitutions and policies**

### **8.3.1 The Constitution of South Africa**

The constitution of South Africa has been commended as one of the world’s most progressive constitutions in terms of safeguarding the rights of individuals living in the country. The constitution was birthed after serious negotiations whose main goal was to address the post-Apartheid injustices that excluded non-whites from the social-political and economic sphere. The interim constitution was drafted whilst the government went through a transition process. In 1994, first elections were held and Nelson Mandela came into power. Two years later, a comprehensive constitution that would guide the country to-date was drafted. The new constitution which would be considered as one of the best constitutions in terms of its social, political and economic rights of the people was adopted in 1996. In the Bill Rights, the rights of the population are articulately expressed.

In terms of its relevance to the migrants, the constitution of South Africa maintains that the no one should be discriminated against based on any particular grounds. Nonetheless, although the constitution accentuates the equal enjoyment of rights and freedoms engraved in it, by everyone, it’s worth noting that the citizens have the prerogative to define the modus operandi in terms of how the nation’s opportunities and resources are to be disseminated. Although the constitution speaks with the tone of inclusivity, under the concept, ‘Everyone’, the experience of Somali women and other migrants has shown that, its implementation of that inclusivity has not been fully realized. However, the constitution was mentioned by the interview participants as a

crucial document that should equally benefit the locals and the migrants. The Somali women appreciated the South African context as one that champions their rights as opposed to their home contexts that are highly chauvinistic. The Somali men acknowledged that in South Africa, women have more rights than men and that was seen by most of them as a problem. This phenomenon was cited by some participants as a disempowerment to men and was not good for the Somali community which places men at a higher echelon. The Somali women enjoy the constitution which proffers to women some possibilities of actualizing themselves with more freedom than in their home countries where the constitution is not as progressive as in South Africa (Shafer, 2012; Brown, 2014; Niyigena, 2013; Sadouni, 2015).

Women who were interviewed suggested that there was a huge discrepancy between what the South African Constitution says about what they are entitled to and what they experience in South Africa. Ayan observes that despite the fact that the constitution provides for the rights of those living in the country, they are subjected to stress and hate sentiments among migration officials. She said:

We are disturbed when it comes to the documents. There is an article in the constitution that says that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, but it seems that they don't adhere to it. I am here for about 15 years. This is just a right in book but it's not real. Look now, am still an asylum, yet there are such provisions that allow one seeking asylum to get the document without going through the hustle we encounter. I am still an asylum.

Fatima expresses that South Africa is a great hope for most nationalities like Somali that are torn by intermittent wars. She observes that these women leave their countries hoping for the safety of their families, only to experience Xenophobia-Afrophobia related violence and crimes in the country. Fatima argues that, although the constitution guarantees safety for those living in South Africa, the state has not

performed well in the implementation of the clause on the right to safety which is entitled to everyone.

### **8.3.2 The South Africa policy of Migration**

During the apartheid regime, the South African migration law that regulated the entry of migrants into the country was referred to as ‘Aliens Control Act’. The term ‘Aliens control Act’ insinuates that the prime concern for the Apartheid state before 1994 was to regulate the ‘Aliens’ coming into South Africa. The act was so radicalized such that ability of the migrants to assimilate to the South African white population was among the entry requirements. The entry of migrants from other African nations was highly restricted by the white government. It only permitted them to come in as laborers in their farms or in mine fields. Even after getting into the country, the restriction was perpetuated through contracts that allowed the foreign laborers to work for a given duration and go back after the contract expires.

The South African immigration policy is clearly embodied in the immigration Act of 2002. The act is the most imperative document in terms of the foreigner’s admissibility into the country. Discussing the act in this study cannot be overlooked because, in addition to being refugees, Somali women are immigrants whose admissibility is determined by both the South African immigration Act and the South African refugee Act. The Apartheid Control Act’s restrictive nature is similarly reflected in the immigration act of 2002. The immigration Act specifies clearly that, any foreigner coming to South Africa for work must prove that the occupation they applied for is indeed for workforce. Today, this selective admission of migrants demands that those entering into the country as workers must be professional or skilled. This selective nature of the Act, which is not open to unskilled workers, endorses the policy that is highly restrictive to black Africans. Similar to the ‘Aliens control Act,’ the foreigners are regarded as outsiders/Aliens whose entry should be highly restricted, in the name of protecting the opportunities meant for South African citizens.

### **8.3.3 The South African refugee Act**

The South African government is a signatory to several world convention migration policies. In keeping with her commitment to implement the international migration policies, South Africa passed the refugee Act 130 in 1998. The act, which succinctly defines the rights of the migrants, was later effectually implemented in 2002. In tandem with the South African constitution, which proffers rights to everyone within South Africa, the Act provides right based policy that guides what a refugee is entitled to. Chapter Seven of the Act talks about the ‘rights and obligations’ that a refugee is entitled to, provided they possess the valid documents. The refugees are entitled to services and opportunities that the South African government provides to its citizens like health, education, and employment opportunities (Refugee Act, 1998; Kavuro, 2015). Nonetheless, these entitlements are solely rendered to refugees who are legally in the country. The migrants that are in the country illegally are cut-off from these State services because they are not refugees as defined by the Refugee Act. The basis for definition of the concept refugees by the Act is the aspect of persecution, where the persecuted migrants have no possibility of returning to their country of origin. The Somali women whom the study interrogated were predominantly refugees, and asylum seekers who were waiting for the validation of their refugee status.

Despite the integrative and progressive document that guarantees the protection and rights to the refugees, the experience of Somali women attests that implementation is lacking. The Somali women are subject to challenges of accessing health care, education, employment opportunities in the Gauteng province, despite such rights guaranteed in the Refugees Act. Most of the Somali women that I interviewed pointed out that, from their own experience, they have in many ways been discriminated for being non-citizens because they lacked the green ID (Identification), despite the fact that they are refugees by law. They have difficulties in accessing education, health care, financial institutions (opening banks accounts, accessing loans) and employment

opportunities. It emerged that most of the refugees that are in Gauteng possess the maroon ID that symbolizes that one is residing in the country legally. The maroon identity card limits the refugee from several opportunities, albeit the Refugees Act guaranteeing them with those rights. According to Shafer (2012) the maroon IDs have the stigma of the state of non-citizenship as opposed to having the green IDs, and thus, the local employers often capitalize on that stigma in denying the refugees employment. This feeling of foreignness provoked by the maroon ID as opposed to the green identity card exacerbates the women's fear of seeking employment among local companies.

The experiences of women in Gauteng, demonstrates that the rights enshrined in the Refugees Act are rights in theory and not in practice, especially if the Refugee has no Green ID. Rahma articulates her predicaments of being discriminated in social and economic spheres (like health and job) despite being legally in the country. She says;

I have been selling tea and 'Mandazi' (a form of fried bread from Eastern Africa) to people in town. This has helped me support my family which relies on the income that comes from the sales. After the Xenophobic attacks my husband lost everything and became sick such that he cannot work anymore. Due to all these strains as the only breadwinner in the family I want to start a small coffee shop that would serve Somalis working and have no time to take breakfast. I cannot be permitted to open it because I do not possess the Refugees Green ID. Although my husband has the Green ID he cannot get a job because of his health condition. In South Africa, getting a job is a problem for me and many other Somalis without the Green ID. I know how to work at the cash machine in the shops but I am not lucky to get such a job because all these supermarkets need that documents. Also, they employ mostly their own people. I have a skill to bake bread and cakes but I cannot open a business here.

However, getting a Green ID is not an 'automatic license' for the opportunities that the South Africans nationals enjoyed. The Somali women inform me that even when in possession of the the Green ID, they are still considered 'outsiders' in the South African system which they termed as segregating the Somali women. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the system that views the Somali women as people that have come to take the opportunities that are meant for the local citizens. Zara acknowledges that the state has accommodated and provided them with documents through the department of the Home Affairs. However they they still face challenges when seeking employment due to their identities as non-South Africans.

As women, we cannot deny that the South African government has been good to us refugees. We are grateful for the safety that we got after fleeing Somalia where we experienced conflicts at our doorsteps. South African Home Affairs has given us documents that allows us to stay here. But, the only problem is lack of employment. Most of us cannot get job here because we are considered as foreigners, in a country that is not open to the 'Outsiders'. We are seen as people that have come to take the jobs of the citizens.

In Gauteng, Somali women are business oriented and are doing well in their small businesses. They have challenges in the banking systems which demand that they have the green ID. Thus, they fear opening business outside their vicinity because thieves are aware that they are habituated to carrying money in their purses or hiding it in their stores because they have no bank accounts. Moreover, they are limited in importing goods from other countries (preferably Kenya and Somalia).In order to import goods that they could use for their own sales or distribution to the other Somalis, a green ID or business permit is demanded. In this scenario, they have to rely on the networks they have from their family members and acquaintances who are travelling to Kenya and Somalia to transport goods for sale. I remember when I said that I was from Kenya; a handful of them asked me when I will be travelling to Kenya or if I knew

anybody who would be traveling to or from Kenya. For instance, Fatima, who sells food items, said that she needs tea leaves from Kenya in order to distribute to women that make Somali tea. She also said that her sister who resides in Nairobi would give me some things to bring with me if I was going home.

## **8.4 The state institutions versus Somali women**

### **8.4.1 The Department of Home Affairs**

Most of the Somalis expressed a lot of dissatisfaction with the South African department of Home Affairs (DHA) due to the high levels of corruption that derailed the documentation process. In terms of transnational migration, corruption, which is a national and international issue and has been identified as one of the major complexities facing migrants in South Africa and across the globe (Onuoha, 2006)? It affects the implementation of policies that are meant to safeguard the rights and privileges of the migrants in South Africa. The 1998 refugee's act (130) succinctly mandates the department of Home affairs to issue asylum to refugees in order to facilitate their access to the rights and privileges entitled to them. The implementation of the rights enshrined in the Act is frustrated by the corruption in the Home Affairs department.

Corruption in Africa is a phenomenon that has been ignored in the field of social sciences for several years, due to its complexity and the need to discuss it with great limpidity (Anasi, 2006; Onuoha, 2006). Social Science scholars are increasingly interested in the subject matter because of its impact to the wider society. Thus, debating around corruption cannot be overlooked because; it has affected negatively the social, cultural, religious, political and economic spheres of the nations.

During their journey to South Africa, and even after settlement, Somalis expressed how they encountered a high-level corruption as they traversed the national borders

towards South Africa. This corruption was manifested through bribery that would facilitate smuggling of some people through the border. Zeinab from North Eastern Kenya experienced an attempted bribery in order to be smuggled through South Africa. She was saved by a South African who threatened to call the police. She said:

I came to South Africa in a company of several other nationalities, and so I didn't experience problems. But, when you arrive at the border of South Africa, you see people smuggling people and living on that. They are asking for the money before they smuggle you through the border of South Africa. These people never tried to do that to me. What I encountered was some people spotting me because of the Hijab that I wore, and told me to give them money. While they talked to me, a South African women heard them, and threatened to call the police. They left me.

Most of the participants expressed that it is so hard to get asylum and a refugee permit without either knowing certain individuals at the Department of the Home Affairs (DHA, thereafter) or through bribery. Asylum seekers are told that the only way to accelerate the documentation process is through paying a bribe, which is labeled as "cold drink." Those who don't pay the stipulated amount end up not getting any assistance or waiting for a longer period. Despite the fact that the officers are aware that Somalis are fleeing persecution and economic instabilities, they still ask them for bribes. Anna recounts her ordeal the first day she went to apply for asylum at DHA. After handing in the documents needed for the permit, she was told that the issuance would take long because of the backlog; several applications that were in the queue needed to be processed. She later learnt from a friend of hers that she had to pay 'some money' in order to get the document. The interview participants observed that the officials at the DHA were aware that foreigners have a lot of money and so they made sure they got *that money to their pockets by any means necessary*. It emerged from

the interviews that unprecedented levels of malpractices are normalized such that there seems to be what Vaj (2003) calls the ‘price tag’ for every form of service that a migrants asks for, despite the fact that they are entitled to those services.

Thus, pursuing the permit is a preoccupation that most Somalis consider crucial in order to attain a sense of belonging. The need for recognition in the South African context and access to opportunities in the work system, study, hospitals, and in order to avoid trouble with the police pushes most women to pursue the acquisition of the permits. Nonetheless, the Somali women pointed out that the situation did not change much even after getting the permits from the Department of Home Affairs. In terms of accessing job opportunities in South Africa, women lamented that they could not access most jobs even after acquiring the refugee’s status. This was because they did not have the skills and academic qualifications that most of the companies demanded. Amina, who got a refugee permit after waiting for several months, says that, although she was entitled to privileges that South Africans have, after attaining a refugee’s permit, except voting, she still cannot get a job. She points out that most Somali women like her end up working in shops owned by other Somalis because they can’t be absorbed into the South African employment system.

Despite the states obligation of safeguarding the interests of every person living in the country as pronounced in the South African Bill of Rights, there is a conflict between the politics of belonging and of citizenship. As the nation prioritizes the rights and privileges of her own citizens, the neo-colonial policies underscore the ‘othernesses’ rather than inclusivity become enacted. Kessi (2010) advances the idea of citizenship and belonging in saying that the Africans are seen as a ‘problem’ by other Africans, a phenomenon that fuels their anger towards other African communities. A handful of the Somalis noted that even after receiving the permits, they are still regarded as ‘outsiders’ who are not supposed to be in the country as it belongs to South Africans. These sentiments resonated in the statement made by Aisha who was born in Somalia

but has lived in the country for a decade and was never granted a permanent residence permit. Despite being in the country for that long, she has been using a refugee permit that is renewable every two years. She has been trying to apply for South African Permanent Residence Permit which entitles the applicant to several privileges in the country like importing goods, possessing bank accounts, opening businesses, sending remittances through banks etc. Aisha says:

I am Somalian but have lived in this country for more than ten years. I possess a refugee permit despite being in the country for more than ten years. This kind of policy whereby you are never recognized as a South African by your ID is uniquely South African. I have no ID which would allow me enjoy certain privileges in the country. And even though we as refugees have rights to work in South Africa like a lot of people we don't get job unless they see the green ID. So it makes difficult for us to find job, to keep the money safe, and when we move around we feel insecure; we feel we might be attacked. Also when we go to the clinic, this paper doesn't help us. And because we have different background sometimes we are under suspicion. Sometimes we don't feel welcome. We feel marginalized. For us that possess the asylum paper, we feel like we are carrying any other ordinary paper because it doesn't help you in times you need to access state institutions.

The xenophobic stance against Somali women was evident in the manner in which Home Affairs officials verbally abused them in order to intimidate them. Such abuse from some of the DHA staff was experienced when the women were unable to communicate in English or local languages (in this case Sesotho and IsiZulu). It emerged from the interviews that the staff would use the language to gossip about

them, and such maltreatment made them feel like ‘outsiders.’ Maria captures the maltreatment:

Whenever Somalis visit the Home Affairs, we are affected by xenophobic attitudes among the staff members in the department. Due to the fact that most of Somali women don’t speak English properly and if they need assistance from home affairs, they are affected. They abuse and call them names whenever they get into the office to get our papers. They always face gossip, and lot of bad things from people who are working in the Home Affairs.

#### **8.4.2 South African police services (SAPS)**

Despite the fact that the South African police services (SAPS, hereafter) is a law enforcing institution mandated with the role of safeguarding the safety as enshrined in the constitution, interviews with Somali women showed that SAPS has on the contrary been a site of maltreatment and Xenophobic-Afrophobic attitudes. I established that police harassment is a common phenomenon among the Somali women since, most of them are not aware of their rights as refugees. Most of the participants expressed their disappointment with the police force that are supposed to safeguard their life and property but instead, violated Somali women. The women said that, whenever crime happens sometimes they chose not to report because they end up being victimized by police. Aisha argues that it’s pointless to report when they are robbed because, among the police force there are rogues who connive with criminals, and so they end up maltreating them. She observes that the Somali community loses trust in them during the Xenophobia-Afrophobia occurrence because they participate in stealing instead of helping the Spaza shop owners.

In Gauteng, the crime is very high. I have an experience of robbery, verbal abuse, and many other forms of crime that you may think of. These crimes like robbery is committed by the criminals that

cooperated with some locals including some bad police. I believe are some policemen that together because when the criminal robs you and you inform the police about it they do nothing. Sometimes they even rob you instead of assisting you. They tell you this is an accident, no problem. You didn't open case.

Among Somali women, there is a widespread fear of police because of their brutality towards foreigners. They are used to incessant patrols of the metro-police who harass them and take their goods and even go further by receiving bribes from them. The Somalis succumb to paying bribes in order not to get into trouble with them, as they would either fine them exorbitantly or arrest them. Aisha said: *"I would rather give them what they ask rather than getting arrested because I don't have valid permit. That would attract a lot of animosity from the police, and will put me through hell."*

Social network theory maintains that, migrants have ties which enable them to adjust in the new environment (Oishi, 2007; Borgatti, et al. 2009), which includes minimising the risks that a new migrant would encounter. In Pretoria, the Somali communities have a very sound network which informs the people about the state of the affairs, especially whenever they foresee police raids or Xenophobia-Afrophobia related attacks. Aware of the police laxity, unwillingness to secure them, and their antagonism towards Somalis, they utilize their ties to handle insecurity in their community. These networks enable them to inform any outsider who looks suspicious among them. Sarah said:

Here, no single thief can dare to put his leg in this Somali community because what we will do to him he will never forget the rest of his life. We do not need police, because they do nothing when we call them during crime. So, we have good networks that keeps check any outsider here and establish his mission before he commits crime.

Somali community is united in securing the area. Several years down the line, many people were being robbed along that road and the corrupt police would just watch as if nothing had happened. They started robbing the Somali women purses. One day we said it's enough, and we mobilized ourselves so that we could take teach them a lesson. We beat one thief who was now the lesson to the others who kept terrorizing our women. We did this because police don't do what they are supposed to do to curb crime and protect the foreigners. They always turn against us whenever we report crime.

For the most part of the interview, participants lamented due to the arrogance police who aimed at reminding Somali women that they do not belong in South Africa, and that they must go back to their country of origin. Amira recounts her ordeal with the police when she was at Thembisa where she worked as a shop attendant. Their *Spaza* shop was raided and everything was stolen by the locals under the watch of the police. She was thrashed severally by the violent mob as she tried to helplessly stop the mob from taking away goods from the shop. The mob kept telling her that she should go back to her country if she does not want trouble any more. She went to police station to report the incidence but they instead asked her why she is in South Africa. This had occurred during the scene of the incident. She said:

When a group of violent people that spoke their native language ran to my shop I quickly jumped out of the shop to save my life, for I feared that they would burn me alive. They beat me hard with the long stick but I was able to escape. I went to report the nearby police station, but they asked me, "Why are you in South Africa in the first place?" "Why don't you go back to your country of origin? That is why you are not secure here. If you want a secure place, you better go back to Somalia." "This is South Africa and not Somalia. Go back to your country."

Zara who worked in a Spaza shop in Pretoria recounts bitter memories of the South African police who she described as corrupt and unreliable. When her shop was raided, she called the police who took more than an hour to arrive. She says that that when you call the police, they don't come or if they come it's too late. In her case, they took more than an hour. Zara pointed out the police's unreliability and waywardness as they seize the remains of her shop stock after the mob raid. She says:

And when they come, they are the ones who start to rob. They come to help themselves with what they consider more valuable and portable. They start to take cold drink and airtime.

The Somali women choose not to report the case to the police for fear that they would lose the case. The family of the offender would rally behind their sons and hire a good lawyer in order to win the case. Also, the police do not have the determination to follow up on the statements that the women file. As a result these women tend not to report it. Zara also points out that one's life can be jeopardized just by reporting to the courts. She says;

The police just take statements and they will never follow them because even you yourself you go out here you can do nothing. Immediately you go and write a statement and you arrest this thief, their family will come after you and will kill you.

Most of the respondents painted South Africa as a very unsafe country where crime occurs daily. Women are vulnerable to various forms of insecurity that range from armed robbery to pickpocketing. This usually occurs in broad day light under the watch of the police and locals who do nothing about it. They are soft targets of pickpockets who wait for them when they are going to the market or in the evening when they are coming back from work. They are aware that Somalis, who they refer to as 'walking ATMs' do not have bank accounts travel with their daily wages in purses., next to the Department of Home Affairs (Pretoria) is one of the most feared

places in South Africa, albeit police presence. At the DHA perimeter wall, there are long queues of foreigners who travel from all over South Africa to renew their asylum and refugee permits. I felt so unsafe the first day I walked through the place but pretended to be was fine. My informant cautioned me against walking alone through that place as it had a reputation for being perilous. It is a place where Somali women are sexually harassed and then robbed of their belongings. Marabastad is protected by police who are supposed to ensure security so I found it hard to believe that it was possible for crime to occur in such a place until I saw a women being pickpocketed in the presence of the police who pretended as if nothing had happened. Aisha recounts her ordeal at Marabastad when she was harassed by saying:

I do not want to remember about that place [Marabastad] because my heart pains when I do so. It was few months ago when I was harassed at Marabastad. Two guys who I have never seen held me at a gun point and slapped me. One was holding a long sharp knife about and threatened stab me on the left side of the neck. I gave them all the money that I had before they threw me to the ground and disappeared. This was the most traumatic experience for me in South Africa since I arrived in the country. I couldn't shout because they threatened to shoot me if I did so. All this happened under the watch of the local people and the one police who watched from a distance.

Using feminist intersectionality theory, I argue that Somali women are subject to criminality at Marabastad because of the intersecting forms of domination. They suffer not only because of their gender, but because of their nationality as foreigners, their culture, education level, and religion (as Muslims-from Africa). In South Africa, women are subject to endless forms of violence, and criminality facilitated by intersecting factors (race, class, gender, ethnicity, level of education) that buttress inequality (Misango et al, 2009; Crush & Tawodzera, 2012; Abrahams, 2010; Ramphele, 2008). In the case of Somali women, nationality and clan add to the list of

the aforementioned factors that increases their vulnerability. Nonetheless, according to the gendered geographies of power, these social locations could enhance their capacity to navigate various complexities in transnational spaces. When crime ensue, or police harass a member of the community, they intervene to support one of their own, and thus the ‘Somaliness’ (ethnicity) becomes an advantage to the one receiving community support. Kuresh pointed out that police fear entry into the *Somali place* (Pretoria West) as they will encounter trouble from other Somalis if they invoke harassment on the people there. Also, criminals dare not enter this suburb because they are aware that Somalis will “deal with them” severely. During the data collection in Pretoria, I saw a criminal who ran into the place after snatching some money from a Somali woman at an intersection next to the ‘Somali place.’ The Somali community went into swift action and dealt with the criminal harshly. They beat him while hurling abusive words at him, after collectively arresting him.

The Somali women fear going into the locations due to the high level of criminality which they are vulnerable to. Although the place is dangerous, the Somalis take their business there because there are more opportunities for maximizing profits than in their suburbs, as Abdulizak observes;

Crime is too much in location than it is in our Suburbs. Somalis open businesses where crime and unemployment is very high. The chances for you to be robbed and killed in locations is very high than in our suburbs. They go those areas because there is money than in the towns.

Thus, women hardly work in the crime zones of the locations for fear of violence being meted on them based on their gender and nationality. However, in order to eschew risky environments in the townships while at the same time utilizing a lucrative environment for business (in township), some women interviewed said that they negotiate the risks involved through setting up businesses and hiring workers to run them. Habiba said:

We Somali women avoid going to work in townships because it's not safe for us. Nevertheless, we cannot stay at home and die of hunger. Seven of us have jointly started a business in Soweto. Due to the high-level crime in the location, we cannot go there. We have several male Somali employees that are working at our business. They sleep at the shop at night in order to secure the property.

In Gauteng it emerged that Somalis experienced antagonistic attitudes from the police who discriminated them against the locals. They were made to feel that they do not belong in South Africa, let alone the Gauteng province. During the Xenophobia attacks, the Somali women who reported the incidences of sexual harassment and the loss of property were blamed for the violence. Some police blamed them by saying that the attacks happened because they were disturbing the harmony of the local community through setting up businesses that were branded illegal. After Ayan lost her property, she called the police at the scene to help arrest the criminals. Instead of supporting her, they asked her what she was doing in a foreign country (South Africa). The police told her to go back to her country if she did not want trouble in South Africa. This antagonistic sentiment was also echoed in the manner in which police responded to their desperate calls to protect their property against vandalism. They showed laxity in responding to the telephonic calls reporting attacks made on foreigners so much so that they would arrive in a tardy fashion and only after a large amount of property had been stolen or destroyed. Ayan says:

When my shop was vandalized in location we called the police, but they took a lot of time to arrive at the scene of the violence. We watched helplessly with my husband as they stole all that we had invested. These police arrived so late after everything was cleared by the locals. I do not want to remember this incident because it makes me cry. When I told the police that somebody slapped on the face and that we had lost everything we possessed, they asked us what we were

doing in the location. They said that in the first place we were not supposed to be in the country. This hurt me badly knowing that we possessed legal documents and paid taxes to the government as any other business person.

In contestation to the responses made by most of the women who were interviewed, there were some Somali women who confessed that the police department had played a significant role in their lives. The police were a “necessary evil” that the Somali women used to intimidate their husbands whenever they were abusive. The men became frightened when their wives threatened to call the police because they were aware that they were in a country that constitutionally upholds the rights of women as opposed to Somalia. Also, the police were said to protect the Somalis by evacuating them from the scene of violence to avoid lynching by the angry mob.

#### **8.4.3 The department of health**

In South Africa there has been an outcry from the society poor service delivery in public hospitals. This phenomenon is in contravention of the Constitution of South Africa section on 27 (1), which states that every person living in the country is entitled to basic health. In line with such a constitutional clause, the health workers are obligated to offer treatment irrespective of one's status in the country in terms of the permit one holds. However, despite clear constitutions and policies that provides for the rights of everyone that require health services, implementation of such constitutional mandates remain a difficult task given the fact that the state prioritizes the health rights of her citizens, and the underlying antagonistic attitudes among the local health workers. In this section, I intend to focus on the maltreatments of Somali women in hospitals based on their nationality and other social locations that intersect with them as ‘foreigners.’ Crush & Tawodzera’s (2012) work alludes to the negative experiences that migrants encounter due to their identity as non-South Africans. Their study found out that, a number of health

staff display attitudes that are antagonistic towards migrants. The antifoignier bigotry, argue Crush & Tawodzera (2012) is depicted in the requirement to produce valid permit documents before they are treated. Failure to do that, deprives them of treatment. Further, their permit documents have to be validated on the computer system in order to establish their authenticity. Their inability to communicate in English or the local language was a huge factor that attracted negative attitudes towards foreigners.

In line with Crush & Tawodzera's (2012), I established that Somali women have similarly been subject to Xenophobia-Afrophobia attitudes based on their nationality that intersects with other factors like language, body appearance, status and religion. They suffer more than their male counterparts because of their reproductive roles as mothers. Their pre-natal and post-natal treatments raise their need for medical attention. Also, due to the fact that the health care of the household is gendered, Somali women bear the responsibility of constant attendance in hospitals. In Gauteng, there are many Somali women with no husbands as a result of death or divorce which separates them from their male companions. On the other hand, the absenteeism of their male spouses is a common phenomenon in the province. In addition to providing other basic necessities like shelter, clothing and food, women in such homes struggle to provide for the health of their children on their own as well. One of the salient issues that emanated from the interviews is the hate sentiments towards Somalis because of their high level of fecundity. Due to this phenomenon manifested in their tendency to produce many children, Somali women were seen as a burden to the hospital midwives, and to the economy of the country. Thus, they received insults and statements that have undertones of Xenophobia-Afrophobia. Maria, a mother who has experienced giving birth in South African and has encountered the maternity hospital services, says that having a big family is part and parcel of her community and that this tradition is challenged in the South African context where they are expected to limit their family sizes.

As a way of continuing our ancestry it's our responsibility to give birth to the number of children we want. And Somali women have the tendency to produce many kids as big as ten or even more. This tendency of giving birth to many children receives a lot of criticism from the health staff whom we meet in these maternity wards. When they see that the same women keeps coming year after year to deliver a baby in the hospital, the nurses inject some medicine that stops them from producing more children. They also use the local language to insult us or even call us names that tell that they don't want us to come again in hospital to deliver the babies. At times the expectant mothers die in the process of long waiting because the locals are given more preference than them.

This study established that, the perpetuation of the antagonism which was manifested in verbal abuse, gestures and poor treatment was common among the black South African nurses. On the contrary, the White, Coloured and Indian health practitioners were generally nice towards the Somali women. The Somalis confessed that black South Africans were generally arrogant and displayed reluctance when tending to them, especially if the women could not communicate in the local language or at the very least in English. Other nationalities (i.e. Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland and Zimbabweans) that came for treatment had an 'easier time' than the Somalis. In addition to having similar features as the black nurses, the aforementioned nationalities also shared Christian names, similar body shape and skin tone and hair texture which the nurses identified themselves with, they also spoke or at least understood local languages (Mainly, Sotho, Zulu). The aforementioned nationalities belong to the Nguni<sup>39</sup> community, which Zulus and Sothos are part of. The deviation

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<sup>39</sup> Nguni languages are Sesotho, IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, SiSwati, Ndebele from Zimbabwe, Lala and Nhlanguwini.

from the already normalized characteristics of 'Africanness', attracted antagonistic sentiments from Black nurses. Thus, in the context of Somali women, their Xenophobia-Afrophobia experiences of South African hospitals are located at the crossroad of language, nationality, race (hair/body complexion) and religion.

Under the gendered geographies of power, this study is able to look at the Somali women experiencing the Xenophobia-Afrophobia related complexities in hospitals not as victims but as people who have agency that engenders supports to them. Due to the challenges that women encounter in providing health for their children and even for their own wellbeing during pre-natal and post natal stages, the Somali community offers support to them. The existing familial and clan ties are significant support system that gives the women material and moral provision. Among the Somali community there are women who have the knowhow in 'midwifery' albeit, informal. Such women assist the expectant mothers in delivering their children safely in the right environment. Also, because the Somali community tend to have big families, and financial problems, they try to eschew undergoing caesarian section birth that limits them from having as many children as they would like. The Somali communities have their own "midwives" who help their women deliver naturally in case a woman gives birth at home. A handful of Somalis women pointed out that some midwives in hospitals insist that they should have an operation as a way of limiting the family size. This happens after they are bombarded with an avalanche of questions about why they should "make babies."

It emerged that Somali women are living in constant fear of falling ill because they lack valid documents that would permit access to health institutions. There are many Somali women whose permits have expired but they have not renewed them because they have been rejected so many times that they have lost hope in applying for new ones. Fatima expressed her fear of getting sick because she knows that they would be turned away if they lack proper documents that would locate their status in South Africa. The lack of valid documents evokes a lot of suspicion about the legality of the

migrant in the country. Thus, Somalis are not comfortable in situations that could potentially brand them as criminals. Fatima says:

What I long for is the day that I will have the proper documents that would allow me access health and other opportunities enjoyed by South Africans and Somalis with the right documents. And I would like to request any organisation to intervene and help out with this situation of mine. I am always in fear because if I get sick today I have no way of accessing health status because I have no documentation to show. I will just die because they won't treat me. Anytime I can be arrested by police who are always looking for illegal migrants or criminals in the province. I can be deported any time. But one of my great fears is that I cannot go to hospital.

#### **8.4.4 The justice department**

The focus on the Department of Justice cannot be overlooked because it's one of the most crucial organs of the state mandated with executing justice to the victims of the Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks. The high level of impunity by the perpetrators of hatred against non-nationals frustrates any efforts to bring to an end the recurring Xenophobic-Afrophobic attacks against migrants. In South Africa, the reckless pronouncements from the political leaders have evoked tensions in the locations. The sentiments aroused by those leaders lead to wanton destruction of property and human lives (Maina et al, 2011; Misango, Landau & Monson, 2009; Jager & Hagesen, 2009). For instance in 2015 March, Zweliwethini the Zulu King made bigoted pronouncements to the Pongolo community in KwaZulu-Natal (The Citizen, 2015). He was accused of fuelling the tension but in his defense he blamed the media for misquoting his message. He also complained about the leaders not being vigilant about the rising influx of the migrants who take the opportunities 'meant for the locals' (Bekker, 2015). What ensued was a series of attacks after his comments raised

tensions among the locals, and eventually, what was initially considered as a small crisis in Pongola spilled over to the rest of the country. There were numerous attacks in Durban with an ostensible motive of evicting foreigners, especially business people out of the city. Several weeks later, Gauteng experienced a similar wave of separate attacks in different locations. Thus, such violence orchestrated by the political leaders cannot be controlled without holding leaders accountable for their antagonistic comments.

In Mayfair and Pretoria West, most of the women expressed their disappointment with the Department of Justice who they believed were not doing enough to punish the perpetrators of the violence against the Somali nationals. Maria recounts her ordeal in 2008 when she lost her property in the Xenophobic-Afrophobic attacks. She does point out that together with other business people; she has never been compensated for her losses. She argues that if proper procedure is followed by the justice system the phenomenon of Xenophobia-Afrophobia would take a positive turn. There are many Somalis *Spaza* shops that have been closed down because of a lack of capital to start a business after the attack. Through the justice system, the people who lost their property could be compensated and this might enable them to revive their businesses which were closed down. Maria said:

Whenever Xenophobia-Afrophobia attack happens, we lose all the stock which no one compensates us. So when you lose your stock, you have to shut down your shop because you don't have capital. When no one is held accountable after such destruction, what else do you expect? If the criminals that destroy the property are arrested and taken to court and charged, at least it could discourage further destruction in the future. The law should be followed by everyone. Leaders that perpetrate such violence should also be charged in court. It is unfortunate that when we continue losing our property into violence it becomes hard to start the business again because of lack

of capital. If the judges could order the migrants compensation, that would be good.

The justice system was frustrated by the Somali women's fear of being victimized by the perpetrators in case the accused won the case. Further, if the Somali women took the matter to the court, they confessed that they feared that the family members of the culprit would turn against them regardless of the accused being wrong. This fear of victimization was cited as a factor that hindered the Somali women from filing cases of robbery and sexual violence which was at the top of the list of challenges that Somali women faced. The realization of justice was a problem because the cases needed concrete evidence which the Somali women did not have. It emerged from the interview that police lacked the resolve or were sluggish in investigating the crime committed against these women.

According Bruke (2011) underreporting of gender based violence among women is as a result of fear of shame, especially in case of rape, whereby the young girl risks not being married in some communities. Further, Bruke (2011) points out that even the married women could opt not to disclose the harm done to them, because their husbands might divorce them. The fear of reporting the sexual offender to law enforcement is a major impediment to the justice process. Snowball & Birdsday (2013) argue that women opt not to report to the police for fear that the sexual perpetrators might attempt a revenge plot with the police. Similarly, the Somali women underreporting is provoked by the fear that the offenders may revenge directly, a phenomenon that could lead to death or other physical harm to the victim.

## **8.5 Conclusion**

This chapter provides the Somali women experiences of Xenophobia-Afrophobia within state institutions in Gauteng province. In keeping with the South African Constitution, state institutions, are required to offer services non-discriminately and

without any negative attitude to anyone. Nonetheless, this study demonstrates that the Xenophobic-Afrophobic attitudes against Somali women within state institutions are prevalent. Due to the salience of Xenophobia-Afrophobia antagonism in the departments of Home Affairs, Health, Police and Justice as discussed by Somali women, I chose to focus on them. Although the Somali's identity as non-citizens is a key player in attracting the antforeigner bigotry among the local staff in those institutions, the study argues that it is as a result of intertwining multiple axes that put Somali women in a vulnerable position.

The chapter also presents both national and international instruments which are of importance to the plight of the Somali women in their state as refugees within the transnational territory. This section unfolds with a focus on the constitution of South Africa which is the highest law from which all policies governing state institutions are based. Also, this chapter discusses the South African Refugees Act, Universal Declaration on Human Rights for Refugees, the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of the Refugees, the Convention for Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and OAU convention.

## CHAPTER NINE

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 9.1 Introduction

This work was an analytical study on the Somali women's experiences of Xenophobia-Afrophobia related complexities, within the transnational space. The study was located in Mayfair and Pretoria West in the Gauteng Province, because the province hosts the largest population of Somali community. Gauteng is a strategic point for most Somalis because; it is the entry point of most migrants and the province that hosts the Department of Home Affairs where those refugees came to seek asylum. In cognizance of the varying experiences of Somali women, and due to their diverse social, economic, cultural and political backgrounds, the study was an intersectional analysis of interconnecting complexities of Somali women in the transnational space.

The literature reviewed revealed the dearth of migration work that focuses on migrant's experiences in the transnational space from an intersectional perspective. Most of those works either focused on the migrants without taking into consideration that migrants' experiences of their complexities are transnational, and most importantly, the fact that those challenges are interconnected. In addition, a lot of literature available on the migration treats migrants homogeneously and therefore fails to see the diversity amongst migrants. This study puts into cognizance that heterogeneity of the Somali women's experiences based on their social locations, and the connection with their social political background. Also, though the literature review established that there are copious works about Xenophobia-Afrophobia in South Africa, which looks at it closely from an economic and political perspective, there seems to be paucity on the gender dimension of the Xenophobia-Afrophobia phenomenon. This study investigated the gender perspective of Xenophobia-

Afrophobia in South Africa, through feminist intersectional perspective in the context of the Somali women residing in the Gauteng province.

Though the study was located in the Gauteng Province, it accentuated the transnational perspective whereby their experiences, ideas and expectations traversed any social, political, religious and cultural boundary. In establishing their experiences within this space, the study adopted the theory of Gendered Geographies of Power, Feminist Intersectionality and the Social Network theory. Under the Gendered Geographies of power, this study applied its four concepts, namely imagination/mindwork, social location, geographical scales and power geometries. This study establishes that, before migration, Somali women were imagining their mobility and the future of their destination country (South Africa). Most women pointed out that they mobilized some resources (this involves a lot of planning) to support their long and risky journey to South Africa. Also, a handful of them envisioned a particular place to stay and who might accommodate them. I was able to expound how Somali women social locations affected their negotiation within the transnational space. The Social Location dimension that underscores a person's position within power hierarchies created through historical, political, economic, geographic, kinship-based and other socially stratifying factors (Pessar & Mahler, 2001:6) enabled this study to examine how Somali women are born into power hierarchies that either offer them an advantage or disadvantage in navigating through the patriarchal institutions within the transnational territories. For instance, Somali women coming from Kenya have a Swahili and English language background as well as a more open culture over other Somalis from Somalia. This enables them to interact with other nationalities from Africa. Also, a black Somali woman continues to negotiate their 'Somaliness' within Gauteng in relation to their race and skin tone and their political and cultural background. Through the concept of power geometries, this study understood how the Somali women, who have been perceived as helpless victims, make use of their agency that support their navigation within their new space. Social Network theory assisted this study to

understand how women's social ties enhanced the movement and settlement of refugees. The clan, family and acquaintances formed this network that minimized their risks, organized opportunities and supported their ability to counter Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities (in The Department of Home Affairs, South African Police Services and The Health Department). The theory of feminist intersectionality was very beneficial to this study which required an intersectional perspective of how Somali women experience Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities.

This study used purposive sampling to select forty participants, who were interviewed using semi-structured questions contained in the interview guide. There were two Action Support Center members that were interviewed in-depth. The ASC members who were interviewed were: one project manager and one member in the management. Given their position in the Action Support Center, they were deemed to possess information about ASC interventions among Somalis with regards to Xenophobia-Afrophobia phenomenon. The ASC also provided information about how Somali women respond to Xenophobia-Afrophobia. There were 38 Somali participants within and outside SASOWNET that were interviewed, a sample that comprised Somali academics from various South African universities. The study which was intended to give meaning to the social phenomenon of Somali women complexities, adopted a thematic analysis that capitalized on the salient themes throughout the analysis process.

## **9.2 Study Findings**

This study revealed that, although economic and political reasons were cited as the key drivers for the Somali migration, their movement cannot be limited to neat and clearly cut motivations, but intertwined forces that overlapped with each other. Social networks are primary factors that facilitated the movement of Somali women into South Africa. Family ties, clans and acquaintances provided the right information about the available opportunities and risks involved upon entry into the country. Upon

arrival, the Somalis searched for their relations who accommodated them in their homes, and supported them in the documentation process, which some cited as one of the most depressing experiences. The assurance from social ties in South Africa who would provide the documents upon arrival motivated them to leave their homeland. Also, the study found out that political war was cited as a major force that drove Somalis out of Somalia. Due to those political unrests, most women leave Somalia independently without consulting any of their relatives or husbands in the decision making, because war displaced and scattered them and left them in a state of hopelessness. Though violence affects everyone (children, women and men), interviews conducted demonstrated that women were affected differently from men due to their social location as women (gender) and mothers (associated with home). The women were traumatized by the disappearances of their children, after leaving Somali haphazardly, without any information about their children or husbands' whereabouts. The Al-Shabaab militia has also posed a huge security threat to the economic destabilization of Somalia, a phenomenon that has led to Somalis running away from their homeland to the Kenyan camps in Daadab, Kakuma and other parts of the world seeking security and peace. Additionally, women migrate in order to escape economic crises in their home countries so that they can maximize their returns in the host countries. Finally, women come to South Africa as a preferred gateway to Europe and America.

The study established that Somali women negotiated androcentric power structures within the transnational spaces in order to meet the pressing needs of their household. Due to the dire financial straits of the family, women negotiated gender confinements and expectations in order to maximize the family income through finding a job or starting small businesses. Women felt that their men were failing in their obligation to look after their families and thus, negotiating gender relations became inevitable. This gender rearrangement where women pursued jobs outside their domestic domains, made men feel that their roles as the head of the family were being compromised.

Through those transnational territories, Somali women are able to access resources and more rights which enable them to reconfigure the existing gender hierarchies that impede decision making within the community. When women have their own wages and access resources, they gain more control over decision making, the household budget and their flexibility. The Xenophobia-Afrophobia attack is a significant factor that propelled women to redefine their traditional gender roles; of reproduction and housekeeping. They assume the responsibilities that their husbands did before their household was affected by violent attacks which led to the loss of the breadwinner or their source of income.

The study established that, due to the religious identity which intersects with nationality, language and body morphology, Somali women are subject to Xenophobia-Afrophobia related complexities in the Gauteng province. The Somali women find it hard to navigate through the transnational space because of their religious and cultural differences between the locals and themselves. South Africa is predominantly a Christian nation while a number of Somalis are Muslims, and due to this discrepancy coupled with cultural differences of the two communities, Somali women's navigation within the transnational space is difficult. In Gauteng, there are clan differences that impede integration. Although most of the Somalis interviewed tried to hide that division, the Action Support Center, South African Somali Network officials and some Somalis who were frank enough pointed out that clan division was prevalent among the Somali women. Also, the Somali women negotiated the language barrier within Gauteng, in which their inability to communicate in the local language precipitated Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks and attitudes from the locals. The derogatory names have been used as a tool for covert Xenophobia-Afrophobia against Somali women in the Gauteng province to remind them that they do not belong in South Africa, but are outsiders. This study found out that due to the migrant's features (body morphology) that looks different from the natives, they are treated as outsiders and even discriminated against in some provinces.

This study found out that the Department of Home Affairs, The South African Police Services, The Department of Health and the Department of Justice have been sites of covert Xenophobia-Afrophobia against the Somali women in the Gauteng province. Despite the fact that the aforesaid state institutions are mandated constitutionally to discharge the services indiscriminately, they demonstrated a tinge of antagonism which contravenes refugee's rights and freedoms enshrined in national and international refugee's laws. In The Department of Home Affairs, corruption was a salient phenomenon, so much so that the permit applicants were required to pay bribes which were dubbed the 'cold drink.' Even after receiving the permit, the status quo did not change among Somali women in terms of access to opportunities available in Gauteng, because they were still regarded as 'outsiders.' This study found out that Somali women have numerous reservations that stem from fear about the South African police. They expressed that instead of safeguarding their safety as constitutionally mandated; they connived with the locals during the Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks in the vandalism of their Spaza shops. They expressed a fear for reporting crime to the police. In addition to verbally and physically assaulting them, the police were also infamous for sexually harassing them. A general lack of trust existed among the women because they connived with some criminals who, aware of the inability of Somali women accessing their rights as foreigners, could come back and harm their household. Somali women also experienced covert Xenophobia-Afrophobia in health centers through ill-treatment and verbal abuse during child's delivery. Due to their high fecundity which enabled women to produce many babies and still remain strong, they were regarded as a burden to the midwives and the South African economy. The Somali women were treated differently from other African foreigners, because nurses were not able to associate with them. Additionally, the similarities they shared, such as the tone of the skin, hair texture, and at times an understanding of the local languages as opposed to Somali women, they were able to get along well with the nurses. In terms of the justice system, the women expressed

dissatisfaction due to its role of tolerating impunity among the criminals that terrorized Somali community. The Justice systems were reported to be doing little in prosecuting those that orchestrated violent attacks (political leaders and those that vandalized their businesses) against the Somali women, and facilitating compensation of the property lost during the attacks of the *Spaza* shops.

Findings for this study suggest that, despite South Africa ratifying international protocols and having an inclusive and progressive Constitution, Somali women continue to experience antagonism as foreigners. Despite the tone of inclusivity that the South African constitution adopts, the Somali's experience exclusivity in terms of job opportunities, access to health services and financial institutions. The experiences of Somali women in Gauteng demonstrated that the implementation of the international and local law on refugees is still problematic because of the politics of the citizenship which prioritizes the needs of the local nationals at the expense of the foreigners. This stratification of the citizens against foreigners was accentuated in the case of the national identification document (ID) whereby even when the Somalian possessed the Green ID, it was not an 'automatic license' for the opportunities that the South Africans nationals enjoyed. The Somali women told me that even when you had the Green ID, you were still regarded as an 'outsider' in the South African system which they termed as segregating the Somali women.

The Somali women adopted several coping mechanisms that facilitated their negotiation of Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities within the transnational space. Thus, through the concept of power geometries in the theory of gendered geographies of power, the study showed that women who have been portrayed as victims of intersecting forms of Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities demonstrated that they have agency, thus demystifying the whole notion of portraying women as helpless victims. It emerged that Somali women make use of Action Support Centre (ASC), South African Somali Women Network (SASOWNET), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS),

and the South African Somali Association (SASA) to enhance their negotiation in Gauteng. They also engage in individual initiatives as a coping mechanism. Due to the fact that Xenophobia-Afrophobia related challenges are intertwined, the aforementioned agencies need each other so as to offer an integrated support to the Somali refugees. Women also redefine the livelihood and household coping strategies which are self-initiated as opposed to the above mentioned agencies which are externally initiated by individuals outside Somali community. They have economic partnerships, business ethnic niches where they sell ethnic clothing and Somali foods. Through a narration of their life stories through institutions like the South African Somali Women Network platforms and counselling agencies, womens' resilient nature enables them to face the Xenophobia-Afrophobia challenges with fortitude, education which gives them hope for opportunities enables them to negotiate the transnational space perseveringly and diverse income sources to maximise their incomes. Also, the Somalis use marriage as a strategy to enable them cope with the new environment of South Africa.

### **9.3 Study Contributions**

#### **(1) Insights into Xenophobia-Afrophobia phenomenon using Somali women's experiences**

Earlier studies have not paid much attention to the Xenophobia-Afrophobia phenomenon within the transnational space. I chose the term Xenophobia-Afrophobia because, as much as black African foreigners (Somalis in this context) are attacked, other non-African nationals are also targeted. Nationalities from other countries like Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, and Chinese have been affected by the same violence targeting Africans, though on a smaller scale. Thus, in cognisance of the fact that other nationalities outside Africa are also subject to the antforeigner bigotry, I adopted Xenophobia-Afrophobia into my study. Much literature on Xenophobia-Afrophobia has been located within certain geographic territories without considering the wider

picture of how the phenomenon relates to their social locations outside the borders of the host country. This study puts into cognizance the fact that migrant's lives are transnational and that they cannot be limited within the national borders. The manner in which Somali migrants experience Xenophobia-Afrophobia is shaped by their interaction with their social locations that goes beyond their borders. For instance, Somali women resilience which was as a result of the hardships they experienced in their home country enabled them to cope with Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities. Also, through the Social Network theory, this study is able to see how women connection with their acquaintances, friends helped them to navigate through Xenophobia-Afrophobia phenomenon. This was articulately elucidated by the study finding that demonstrated that a handful of the interview participants have friends and relatives who send them money from developed countries. This helps the women not to become reliant on one source of income, a phenomenon that strains their lives in Gauteng.

Through the work of Mahler and Pessar (2003, 2001, 2006) that elucidates geographies of power, my work was able to bring forth literature on Xenophobia-Afrophobia within the migrants social, political, economic and religious social locations that define their responses to that phenomenon. Understanding their social locations cannot be overlooked because they define how they experience and respond to the Xenophobia-Afrophobia violence.

## **(2) Examining migrant women's experiences using Feminist Intersectionality hence highlighting their heterogeneous experiences**

Key to this study is the intricacy of the Xenophobia-Afrophobia that requires an approach such as intersectionality which this study adopted. Through intersectionality, this work was able to accentuate that, Somali women's experiences and responses to Xenophobia-Afrophobia are dependent upon intersecting factors that either facilitate or hamper their negotiation within the transnational space. It was interesting to see

how factors such as gender, religion, body morphology and nationality simultaneously affected the manner in which women negotiated complexities within the transnational space. For instance, Somali women were targeted in while using public transport as foreigners, as women, as Muslims and at the same time because of their complexion. Also, the study accentuates the heterogeneity of the Somali women in terms of how they experienced the antforeigner bigotry. For instance, women who were educated would be treated differently from those who were not educated and had no English literacy because they were able to express themselves in English. Inability to communicate in English or the language of the locals was cited as a factor that attracted antagonism from the locals.

### **(3) Incorporating a gender perspective on the xenophobia-Afrophobia phenomenon**

Much of the existing literature on Xenophobia-Afrophobia has not focused on the gender perspective of Xenophobia-Afrophobia. This study brings forth the gender perspective of Xenophobia-Afrophobia through highlighting the manner in which women are affected by gender complexities within the transnational territory. The study demonstrated how women due to their gender which intersected with other factors became the subject of Gender Based violence during the Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks, during maternity services, sexual harassment and verbal abuse in police department and Home Affairs Department.

### **(4) Show-casing Somali women agency using the Power Geometries concept**

My work establishes the importance of the agencies in supporting Somali women's negotiation within the transnational space. The women encounter power structures and antagonism that complicates their ability to access rights and privileges enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa. The study has adopted the geographies of power to understand how women make use of the agencies to cope with the Xenophobia-Afrophobia realities.

## **9.4 Recommendations and suggestions for future research**

### **9.4.1 Recommendations for the South African government**

In light of the prevalent covert and overt Xenophobia-Afrophobia which has been occurring in the Gauteng province among Somali women, this study recommends initiatives which would facilitate education among local South Africans. Government, Civil Society Organisations and development partners (companies) could actually use the University students who come from those rural areas in order to educate their communities about the social and economic contribution of Somalis and other foreigners who come into South Africa. The program would not only help local South Africans to understand Somali contribution to South Africa but would also help locals to unlearn negative perceptions of seeing Somalis and other foreign nationals as villains. Such an initiative, which buttresses solidarity with “Outsiders,” would require the state to put resources at their disposal. This then would enable students to carry out task motivated activities with ease.

Civil Society Organisations (such as Action Support Center, Jesuits Refugees Service, which are mentioned in the study) have proven to be indispensable support systems to Somalis and other foreign nationals in addressing Xenophobia-Afrophobia complexities. In order for those Civil Society Organisations to be more effective in their support towards those affected by Xenophobia-Afrophobia, they need to collaborate more with other CSOs, South African government and the development partners<sup>40</sup>. This would not only enhance a better understanding of the violence from those affected (and the perpetrators of Xenophobia-Afrophobia) but would also enable them to ask fundamental questions like, why are black Africans targeted?, why in particular Somalis? And what ought to be done? .This would bring a long lasting solution to Xenophobia-Afrophobia.

This study recommends the need to harness entrepreneurial skills and potentials among the Somali women that could be of use to South Africans who are interested in setting up their own businesses. A pro-growth approach would encourage foreign investments from Somalis

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<sup>40</sup> Development partners in my context denotes the big companies that have invested in South Africa. Their voice can be highly influential because they play a huge role in the South African economy.

and other nationals to thrive, while at the same time promoting local investment needs to be adopted by South African government.

Somali political war, Al-Shabaab menace and the allure of opportunities in South Africa are highlighted by the study as the principal elements which propel Somali women to come to South Africa. In light of the aforementioned drivers of Somali (women) migration, this study argues that rebuilding a more habitable Somalia is a necessary prerequisite in order to reduce the number of Somali's who come into South Africa. This study also recommends that the Somali community in South Africa must participate more in the socio- political and economic affairs of their home country. For instance, the Somalis in South Africa could be involved in the political voting process of their home country. A case in point shows that Kenyan-born Somalis (in the voter registry) will be participating in the forthcoming Kenya's elections (8<sup>th</sup> August, 2017).

The South African government should ensure that Somali women and other foreign nationals can access information concerning health rights in their communities. This should assist them to be aware of what to do, what they are entitled to in terms of health and where to direct their health related complaints. Due to the fact that a good number of Somali women cannot understand English or South African local languages, information about such rights should be written in their language.

The South Africa judiciary should expeditiously deal with impunities caused by perpetrators of Xenophobia-Afrophobia. Any leader that triggers hate among foreign nationals should face the full force of the law regardless of their socio- political and economic status. Further, people involved in the murder of foreigners, destruction of their businesses and the police force (who watches helplessly as vandalism goes on) need to be held accountable. If perpetrators of this caliber were arrested and made to face the consequences of the law, it would leave a huge lesson to hate-mongers or those who want to wantonly attack foreigners or discriminate against them.

This study recommends that Somalis should contribute more to the social improvement of local communities rather than just being preoccupied with money-making affairs. In liaison with the leaders of the local community and the wealthy Somali entrepreneurs, they could

roll out several programs aimed at reforming young people who are indulging in drugs like “Nyaope”<sup>41</sup> which is a common drug in Mamelodi and other parts of South Africa.

The Department of Home Affairs ought to exercise vigilance on corruption. Additionally, corruption makes it hard for Somali nationals to renew their documents. In order to hunt down corrupt officials, the department of Home Affairs needs to cooperate fully with other organisations such as the Anti-Corruption Unit. This would require the Somalis to repudiate corruption and report it to the anti-corruption unit.

This study recommends the review of the immigration act in order to extend the permit period. This would be one of the strategies that could reduce the backlog of the permits in the Home Affairs Department. Extension of the permit period would save Somalis and other foreigners a lot of time and money, which are usually spent on transport, permit renewal and “bribery.” The study establishes that a good number of Somali women complained that they were issued with permits which would only last for three to six months.

This study acknowledges the intricacy of terminating the recurrent Xenophobia-Afrophobia phenomenon among the Somali community in Gauteng. There is a need for an intersectional approach that would allow a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon before engaging into any intervention. The policy makers should actually adopt a theoretical framework, for example, intersectionality can be used in order to unearth interconnected root causes of inequalities that yield to antagonism.

Programs aimed at integration of Somalis and the local community should be initiated in the Gauteng province. Intercultural meetings coupled with sport activities could have a huge impact on locals in unlearning ‘phobia’ of Somalis. The Somali community could also use their key celebrations such as Independence Day and Iftar<sup>42</sup> in order to reach out to the local community and offer support to them.

In light of crime, which targets vulnerable Somali women in Gauteng, this study recommends that the South African Police Service (SAPS) collaborate with, and engage the Somali

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<sup>41</sup> Nyaope is a mixture of cannabis sativa, heroin and anti-retroviral drugs.

<sup>42</sup> Iftar is the time when Muslims break their Holy fast (Ramadhan).

community in the pursuit for secure environments. Such collaboration could assist in sharing and gathering of intelligence which could thwart crime and Xenophobic-Afrophobic violence. It could also enhance a speedy response to the crime before it is executed.

The Somalis should be compensated for what they lose during Xenophobia-Afrophobia related violence. This would enable them to proceed with their businesses without incurring unnecessary problems (such as lack of capital).

The South African Police Service should provide enough security to Somali owned businesses. The police should act in accordance with Article 205 (3) of the South African Constitution which mandates police to protect the inhabitants of the country.

A comprehensive investigation should be carried-out on police who allegedly connive with criminals and harass the Somali community. Those police, when convicted, should face the full force of the law.

National and local media should initiate more awareness campaigns aimed at promoting tolerance towards foreigners. Besides, the media can improve live debates on Xenophobia-Afrophobia by pointing out caravans with the conspicuous slogans aimed at repudiating antagonism. This would enhance the call for solidarity with other African nationals.

Cognizant abuses meted out at Somali women on their way to South Africa and at the border point remains to be a problem. In order to address this, the Department of Home Affairs ought to collaborate with the United High Commissioner for Refugees and the South African Human Rights Commission. The two organizations could monitor the manner in which Human rights are exercised (as expected by international treaties).

The Department of Health should provide HIV-Post Prophylaxis treatment to Somali women who have been raped. In any case, this study recommends that the Somali community should be provided with urgent and equal treatment equivalent to the citizens of South Africa.

## **9.4.2 Recommendation to the International communities and African Union**

In light of the gender related complexities experienced by Somali women during and after migration, this study recommends that the African Union intensify gender mainstreaming in the migration related policies.

To safeguard the safety of the women migrants, regional and international communities ought to come up with strategies that could tackle the trafficking of women migrants, gender based violence along the migratory routes etc.

The regional and international communities need to do a proper audit on implementation of the protocols that safeguard the rights of migrant women.

## **9.4.3 Suggestions for future research**

The study recommends a more integrated research that would involve interviewing both the migrants and the local people about the phenomenon of Xenophobia-Afrophobia. Such involvement of the locals would produce more integrated findings about what motivates the emergence of Xenophobia-Afrophobia and what local nationals could do to avert antagonism in Gauteng. It also highlights and unveils stereotypes that both migrants and the locals share and that could ameliorate their relationship, instead of constantly exposing mutual hatred for each other. A future study would also interview key figures in the department of Home Affairs, Justice and Health to obtain their views on their role and experiences in dealing with migrants

This study used the Gauteng province as the research site due to the fact that it's the entry point and a home of many Somali migrants, a phenomenon that is also motivated by the fact that Johannesburg is the economic hub of South Africa and Africa. There is a need for a similar research that would focus on Somali women experience of Xenophobia-Afrophobia in other cities like Cape Town that also has a large population

of Somali community. It would be interesting to see how the dynamics of Xenophobia-Afrophobia are affected by different contexts and how their responses to the antagonism would vary from one place to another depending on the circumstances under which the antagonism manifests itself.

In chapter four of this study, I discussed the journey of Somali migrants into South Africa with special emphasis on the rationale for Somali women migration into South Africa. The wars and Al-shabaab menace orchestrated by political and economic landscape of the country were the main driving forces that incited the Somali refugees to leave the country. In the context of Kenya, the Somalis left the country for economic opportunities in South Africa. In view of the aforementioned reasons, which intersect with other factors to provoke the movement, it's worth asking what role Somali diaspora is playing in rebuilding Somali and Kenya (North of Kenya). There is a need for a study that interrogates the Somali women's role in rebuilding the Somali country. Much of the South African literature on diaspora engagement in their home country takes the remittance dimension. It would be insightful to do a study that would unveil the Somali social political and economic participation in reconstructing a better Somalia.

Findings for this study suggest that Somali women play a significant role in the daily activities of their communities in Somalia and in South Africa. The Somali women seem to be involved in economic activities meant to support their household. As much as there is a need for a study that would focus on women's role in reconstructing Somalia as abovementioned, it's equally worthwhile to have a study that would look at the role of Somali women in building a better South Africa. A study that would focus on the role of Somali women in the context of South Africa would counterbalance the position that Somalis are here to take advantage of opportunities.

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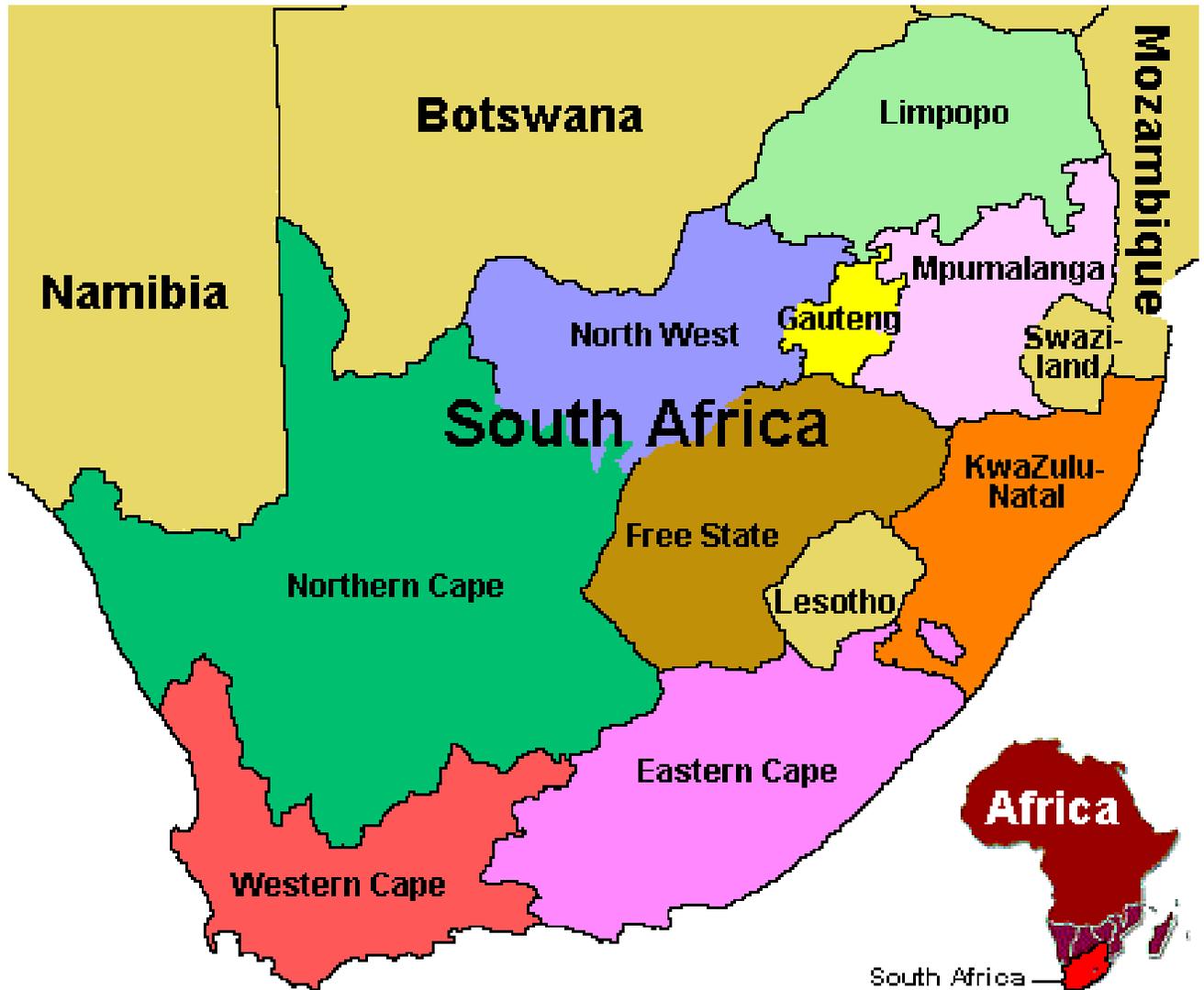
**APPENDIX I- East Africa<sup>1</sup> region; the homeland of the refugees in Gauteng**



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<sup>1</sup> Accessed on <http://commentary.historyguy.com/2011/10/kenyan-invasion-of-somalia-update-10-18-11/264#.WIXp0tJ961s>

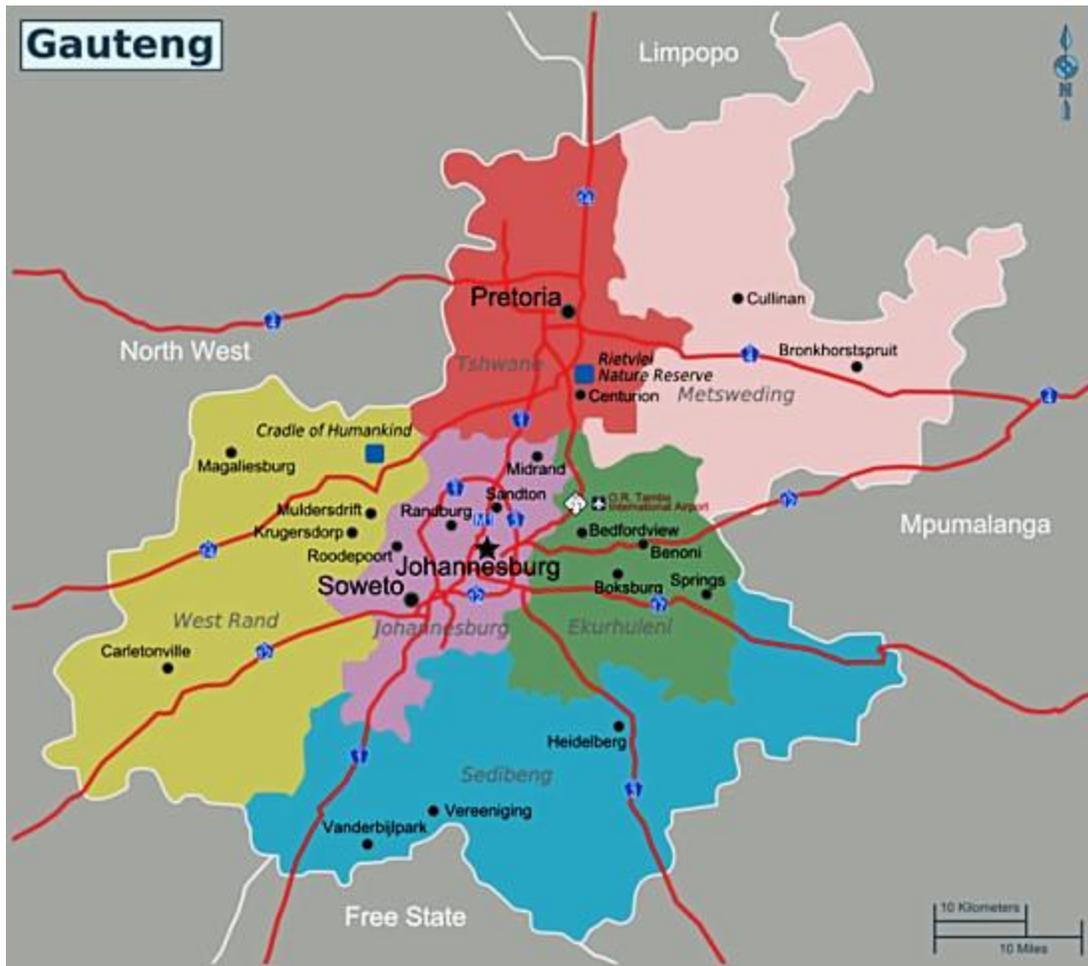
## APPENDIX II- MAP OF SOUTH AFRICA<sup>2</sup>



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<sup>2</sup> Accessed on <http://maps-africa.blogspot.co.za/2012/05/south-africa-map-pictures.html>

### APPENDIX III-MAP OF GAUTENG PROVINCE<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Accessed on <http://www.south-africa-tours-and-travel.com/images/map-municipalities-gauteng-mapofjohannesburgsouthafrica.jpg>

## APPENDIX IV-THE DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS, IN PRETORIA WEST<sup>4</sup>



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<sup>4</sup> Accessed on <http://rekordmoot.co.za/25304/security-guards-assault-asylum-seekers/>

## APPENDIX V -A Section of Marabastad in Pretoria West<sup>5</sup>



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<sup>5</sup> Accessed on [https://www.google.co.za/search?q=MARABASTAD+IMAGE&rlz=1C1CAFB\\_enZA609ZA609&espy=2&biw=1024&bih=654&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUK\\_Ewizq77Tm-](https://www.google.co.za/search?q=MARABASTAD+IMAGE&rlz=1C1CAFB_enZA609ZA609&espy=2&biw=1024&bih=654&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUK_Ewizq77Tm-)

## APPENDIX VI -A SECTION OF MAYFAIR IN JOHANNESBURG<sup>6</sup>



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<sup>6</sup> Accessed on [http://cdn.mg.co.za/crop/content/images/2015/01/29/mayfair-somalicomunity7194\\_landscape.jpg/1280x720/](http://cdn.mg.co.za/crop/content/images/2015/01/29/mayfair-somalicomunity7194_landscape.jpg/1280x720/)

**APPENDIX VII –EXAMPLE OF SOMALI CLOTHES SHOP OWNED BY SOMALI WOMEN IN PRETORIA WEST.<sup>7</sup>**



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<sup>7</sup> Gathambiri, A.2016. A photograph of Somali women owned shop at Somali Place in Pretoria West.

**APPENDIX VIII -A SOMALI WOMAN SELLING CLOTHES WHILE DOING HER DOMESTIC ROLE OF CHILD REARING, IN PRETORIA WEST.<sup>8</sup>**



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<sup>8</sup> Gathambiri, A.2016. A photograph of Somali woman hired in a small clothing shop

**APPENDIX IX -DESTROYED SOMALI SHOPS IN KATLEHONG ON 12<sup>TH</sup>  
MARCH 2016, EAST OF JOHANNESBURG.9**



## **APPENDIX X -Interview schedule English version**

1. What are your reasons for coming to South Africa?
2. What were your expectations/frustrations on coming to South Africa?
3. What challenges did you face as a woman when you said that you are coming to South Africa
4. What structural and institutional barriers do you face back home in your decision to migrate?
5. What structural and institutional challenges do you face while in South African Context?
6. What are the ways that you have integrated in the South African context?
7. What are the ways in which you have not been able to integrate in the South African context?
8. What are the roles that women are expected to perform in your community?
9. What happens when women transgress their genders roles and perform men's roles?
10. In what ways have these roles changed or not changed since you came to South Africa?
11. What are your own experiences of Xenophobia-Afrophobia?
12. In what ways are your experiences similar or different from those of men?
13. What impact does Xenophobia-Afrophobia attack have on Somali women?
14. What other ways does Xenophobia-Afrophobia manifest itself besides the Attacks?
15. Why do you think Somalis have been targets of Afrophobia?

16. In your own opinion, in which ways have your nationality, culture, race, and language, gender affected your own experiences of Afrophobia?
17. How have the above factors reinforced solidarity among you, in times of Xenophobia-Afrophia?
18. In which way do Somali women forge identities with locals and other foreigners as a strategy to curve-out belongingness, relationships or resistance to Afrophia?
19. What support systems (in South Africa or outside), do you have in times of Afrophia attacks?
20. What strategies does SASOWNET and ASC use in assisting you to deal with Xenophobia-Afrophia?
21. What do you think is the role of the local community in combating Xenophobia-Afrophia?
22. What do you think is the role of the government in protecting you against Xenophobia-Afrophia?
23. What strategies should the government put in place in dealing with Xenophobia-Afrophia?

### **SWAHILI VERSION**

1. Sababu zipi zilizokufanya uje Africa Kusini
2. Ulikuwa na matarajiyo gani ulipokuja Afrika Kusini
3. Ulipata changamoto zipi kama mwanamke uliposema unakuja Africa kusini?
4. Ni vikwazo vipi vya kimiundo na kitaasisi ulivyokumbana navyo ulipofanya maamuzi ya kuhama?
5. Ni changamoto zipi za kimiundo na kitaasisi unavyokumbana navyo ukiwa katika mazingira ya Afrika kusini?

6. Ni njia zipi zilizokuwezesha ukajisikia nyumbani katika mazingira ya Afrika Kusini?
7. Nini kinachokufanya usijisikie nyumbani katika mazingira ya afrika kusini
8. Majukumu yapi wanawake wanategemewa kufanya katika jumuiya yako?
9. Nini kinachotokea wakati mwanamke anapochukuwa majukumu ya mwanamume?
10. Ni njia zipi haya majukumu yamebadilika ama hayajabadilika ulipokuja Afrika kusini?
11. Nini uzoefu wako mwenyewe wa kuogopa wageni wanaotoka Afrika?
12. Ni namna gani uzoefu wako ni sawa ama ni tofauti na wanaume?
13. Ni madhara yapi yanayowapata wanawake wa Somalia wanapokumbana na hili tatizo la kupigwa kwa wageni wanaotoka Afrika?
14. Ni njia zipi nyingine ambazo kuogopa wageni kunajitokeza licha ya kupigwa?
15. Kwa nini unafikiria wanasomalia ndiyo walengwa kwa mashambulizi haya ya wageni?
16. Kwa uzoefu wako mwenyewe ni njia zipi taifa, tamaduni, ubaguzi, lugha na jinsia zimedhuru uzoefu wako wa kuogopa wageni wa kutoka Afrika?
17. Ni namna gani vitu ambavyo tumetaja hapo juu vilivyochangia umoja wenu wakati wa pambambano na wageni?
18. Ni njia zipi wanawake wa kisomalia wanatumia kuwa na vitambulisho vya wazawa na wageni kama mikakati ya kukwepa mashambulio ya wageni?
19. Ni msaada gani mnapata kutoka Afrika Kusini ama kutoka nje ya Afrika kusini wakati mnapokumbana na shambulio la wageni?
20. Ni mikakati ipi SASOWNET na ASC wanatumia kuwasaidia wakati wa mashambulizi ya wageni?
21. Unafikiri ni majukumu yapi ya jumuiya katika kuzuia mashambulizi ya wageni?

22. Ni majukumu yapi ya serikali katika katika kuzuia mashambulizi dhidi ya wageni?

23. Ni mikakati ipi serikali inatakiwa kuchukua katika kupambana na mashambulizi dhidi ya wageni?

### **ACTION SUPPORT CENTER (ASC) QUESTIONS**

1. What structural and institutional challenges do you Somalis face while in South African Context?
2. What are the ways that they have integrated in the South African context?
3. What are the ways in which Somali women have not been able to integrate in the South African context?
4. In what ways have women roles changed or not changed since they came to South Africa?
5. What are some of their experiences of Xenophobia-Afrophobia?
7. Why do you think Somalis have been targets of Xenophobia-Afrophobia?
6. In your own opinion, in which ways have their nationality, culture, race, and language, gender affected your own experiences of Afrophobia?
7. How have the above factors reinforced solidarity among Somalis, in times of Afrophobia?
8. In which way do Somali women forge identities with locals and other foreigners as a strategy to curve-out belongingness, relationships or resistance to Xenophobia-Afrophobia?
9. What support systems (in South Africa or outside), do they have in times of Xenophobia-Afrophobia attacks?
10. What strategies does SASOWNET and ASC use in assisting Somalis to deal with Xenophobia-Afrophobia?

11. What do you think is the role of local community in combating Xenophobia-Afrophobia?
12. What do you think is the role of the government in protecting Somalis against Xenophobia-Afrophobia?
13. What strategies should the government put in place in dealing with Xenophobia-Afrophobia?

## APPEDIX XI-INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Dear Participant,

My name is Anthony Gathambiri Waiganjo (214581192). I am a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus. The title of my research is: *Gender complexities in the context of Xenophobia-Afrophobia in the transnational space: The experiences of Somali women in Mayfair, Gauteng Province in South Africa*. The aim of the study is to to examine the experiences of Somali women in Mayfair, Gauteng Province vis-à-vis Xenophobia-Afrophobia, and find out how they negotiate their complexities within their transnational space.

I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about (*how long?*).
- The record as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.

- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures).

I can be contacted at: School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg. Email: [anthonygathambiri@yahoo.com](mailto:anthonygathambiri@yahoo.com)

Cell: 0844664901

My supervisor is Dr. Janet Muthuki who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Pietermaritzburg Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details: email [Muthuki@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Muthuki@ukzn.ac.za) Phone number: +27332606462

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: Ms Phumelele Ximba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: [ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za), Phone number +27312603587.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

## **DECLARATION**

I...Antony Gathambiri Waiganjo hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

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SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

**APPENDIX XII-AUDIO RECORDING CONSENT FORM**

I----- agree to allow all my research participants in the in-depth interview to be recorded using audio record device.

I understand that this devise is being used to accurately record what I say during my participation in this study and will later be transcribed and possibly used in the final research report.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date                      Participant name                      signature

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## APPENDIX XIII – GATE KEEPERS LETTER FROM ACTION SUPPORT CENTRE



16<sup>th</sup> July 2015

School of Social Science at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

**Re: Agreement between Anthony Gathambiri (Student no. 214581192) and the ACTION Support Centre concerning research with the South African Somali Women's Network**

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter serves to confirm that the ACTION Support Centre (ASC) has agreed for Anthony Gathambiri to work with the ASC and the South African Somali Women's Network (SASOWNET) to inform his research on Somali women living in South Africa and the structures that support them.

This agreement has been made on the understanding that Anthony Gathambiri will collaborate with the ASC in developing an appropriate and ethical approach to conducting his research, such that the process and outputs will also be of benefit to SASOWNET and the Somali women with whom he interacts.

We will assist Anthony Gathambiri in establishing contact with the community, however their involvement will be subject to their own consent. The details of timing and process are to be worked out with us well enough in advance to ensure suitable preparation has been done by all involved.

We look forward to working together,

Kind regards,

**Richard Smith**  
Steering Committee Representative  
ACTION Support Centre  
richard@asc.org.za

# APPENDIX XIV -ETHICAL CLEARANCE FORM



31 August 2015

Mr AA Adejuwon 213573573  
School of Social Sciences  
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mr Adejuwon

Protocol reference number: HSS/0965/015M

Project title: Understanding the relationship between rural healthcare facilities and wellbeing of patients:  
A proposed Healing Centre in rural KwaZulu-Natal

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 21 July 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenika Singh (Chair)

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Dr Janet Muthoni Muthuki  
Cc Academic Leader Research: Prof Sabine Marschall  
Cc School Administrator: Ms Nancy Mudau

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

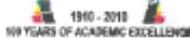
Dr Shenika Singh (Chair)

Weetville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3567/8050/4357 Fax: +27 (0) 31 260 4809 Email: [synsac@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:synsac@ukzn.ac.za) | [gsmsrsm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:gsmsrsm@ukzn.ac.za) | [msudau@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:msudau@ukzn.ac.za)

Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)



Fostering Excellence: Edgewood Howard College Meloid School Pietermaritzburg Weetville