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# Contextualizing Concerns & Empowerment: Somali Urban Refugee Women in Nairobi

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**CONTEXTUALIZING CONCERNS & EMPOWERMENT:  
SOMALI URBAN REFUGEE WOMEN IN NAIROBI**

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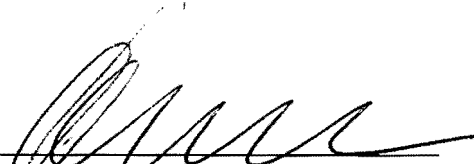
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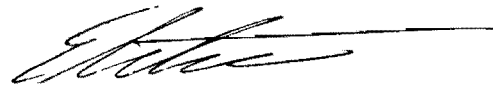
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts Degree  
in Diplomacy and International Relations at Seton Hall University

Fall 2012

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the central research problem of where, and how, Somali urban refugee women contribute to the rebuilding of their society. This includes during exile and the postwar period. The specific research questions asked are: a) what are the main concerns of Somali urban refugee women in Nairobi? b) what roles are they playing in exile? And, c) what do the conclusions mean for empowerment, women's rights, and the postwar period in Somalia? The answers to these questions reveal that Somali women have transformed into primary breadwinners in the refugee context of Nairobi, and thus face the most demand of their energy and resources in this role. Identifying their shared, main concern (*achieving better*) rendered a contextualized definition of empowerment. Likewise, understanding the behaviors they exhibit to resolve their concern (*investing in connections and self-development*) contributes to an understanding of *how* they can be empowered. These conclusions give way to an external support measure that can be implemented in Nairobi for the benefit of women and their community while in exile and into the postwar period in Somalia. Combined with the ideas put forth from the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the postwar period may find Somali urban refugee women to be contributors of the full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in Somalia, relating to women, peace and security. On a theoretical level, data analysis suggests that 'liberal' or 'western' feminist frameworks alone are insufficient in carving out an understanding of 'women's rights' in participants' context. Rather, 'third world' feminist frameworks act as a more appropriate point of departure.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Somali civil violence has carried on for two decades and created a refugee population of over one million people. Today this represents more than one-third of refugees in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>1</sup> An estimated 51 percent of these Somali refugees are women.<sup>2</sup> This continued conflict and refugee exodus has contributed to Somalia's characterization as the "worst humanitarian crisis in Africa."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, given the severity of these numbers and necessary resources to sustain the unique needs of refugees and war-affected women, academic literature, policy-making, and popular media attention often conducts analyses of these groups within the framework that they are at-risk, victimized, or needy.<sup>4</sup>

Based on research, this is in part a legitimate portrayal. Idean Salehyan and Kristian Gleditsch argue in "Refugees and the Spread of Civil War" that while most refugees never participate in violence, they can increase the risk of conflict in host and home states by the emergence of refugee "warriors" that expand rebel social networks.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, Assefaw Bariagaber purports that conflict and refugee formations give rise to cycles of violence and attendant refugee flows.<sup>6</sup> These theoretical admonitions have been documented by Human Rights Watch in overcrowded refugee camps, where adolescents and men have been "lured" into fighting by militant factions such as Al Shabaab.<sup>7</sup> As for



women, an abundance of scholarly and policy literature emphasizes their vulnerability to sexual exploitation, gender violence, and overwhelming familial and community responsibility during war.<sup>8</sup> In one example, Loveness Schafer describes how “many East African women suffered severe trauma, exploitation, rape, and humiliation in their efforts to escape violence.” Furthermore, that they often “assume responsibility for children, elderly, and sick relatives” in times of conflict.<sup>9</sup> Ultimately, it is critical to understand the unique circumstances and vulnerabilities of war-affected women and refugees, especially for institutions that construct policy aimed at their support and protection. Nevertheless their perceived vulnerabilities should not be allowed to dominate the discourse or monopolize the way they are portrayed.

Reconfiguring the portrayal of women and refugees can influence the way they are engaged. Vanessa Pupavac for instance, writes that while current modes of representing refugees “has been inspired by compassion... the exaggeration of [their] incapacity has dangerous consequences, which helps legitimize decisions being taken away from [them].”<sup>10</sup> This is particularly vital in the context of Somalia: As the country makes incremental strides towards violence reduction and effective state governance in the most volatile regions,<sup>11</sup> there must be less emphasis on women and refugees as needy victims and increased assessment of their potential contributions during exile and into the postwar period. Birgitte Sørensen argues that disproportionate emphasis on women’s vulnerabilities risks reinforcing “existing incapacitating processes by introducing welfare-oriented,” ad-hoc projects that jeopardize women’s long-term strategic interests.<sup>12</sup>

General discussion of these contributions is not absent. There is a body of literature that evaluates the positive impact both women and refugees have on rebuilding societies. Heidi Hudson for example, claims that empowered women will “kick-start” socio-economic development, good governance and democratization during postwar reconstruction.<sup>13</sup> Camille Pampell Conaway suggests that women have distinct wartime experiences and mind-sets, thus offer unique contributions during postwar reconstruction.<sup>14</sup> According to Sørensen, Sirleaf Johnson, and Elisabeth Rehn, these contributions include the establishment of important social networks of an economic nature.<sup>15</sup> In considering refugees, scholars perceive them as making indirect contributions to both home and host states, for instance through the resources they embody via international aid. Refugees are also described as making direct contributions to home state reconstruction by way of their labor or newly acquired skill sets while in exile.<sup>16</sup> While admitting its complexity, Sarah Harris Rimmer calls for more research into the potential contributions refugees can make to transitional justice in the postwar period.<sup>17</sup>

Overall, the literature points to the importance of including women and refugees when rebuilding societies. It also delineates specific roles they can play. The literature does not however, give detailed roadmaps for their inclusion in rebuilding a war-torn society, with special emphasis on engaging them *prior* to the postwar period. This thesis helps to bridge this gap in the context of Somali urban refugee women in Nairobi.

### ***Rebuilding Society: Engaging Somali Urban Refugee Women***

Somali urban refugee women are the focus of this thesis. The preceding section of this introduction illustrated that the current level of Somali refugee populations are ever growing and unsustainable, and moreover, women form a little over 50 percent of Somali refugees in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, based on the literature included here, roadmaps for including refugees and women in the rebuilding of war-torn societies are largely absent. The central research problem is thus to garner an understanding of where, and how, Somali urban refugee women can contribute to the rebuilding of their society. This includes during exile and the postwar period. The specific research questions asked are: a) what are the main concerns of Somali urban refugee women in Nairobi? b) what roles are they playing in exile? And, c) what do the conclusions mean for the postwar period in Somalia?

The answers to these questions reveal that Somali women have transformed into primary breadwinners in the refugee context of Islii—consequently this is where they face the most demand of their energy and resources. Identifying their shared, main concern rendered a contextualized definition of empowerment. Likewise, understanding the behaviors they demonstrate to resolve this main concern contributes to our understanding of *how* they can be empowered. These conclusions give way to an external support measure that can be implemented in Nairobi for the benefit of women and their communities while in exile and into the postwar period in Somalia. Combined with suggestions of United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW), in the postwar period Somali urban refugee

women may contribute to a full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in Somalia, which relates to women, peace, and security. On a theoretical level, data analysis suggests that ‘liberal’ or ‘western’ feminist frameworks alone are insufficient in carving out an understanding of ‘women’s rights’ in participants’ context. Rather, ‘third world’ feminist frameworks act as a more appropriate point of departure.

Data was collected through in-person interviews between January and June 2012. These interviews were primarily conducted in the urban neighborhood of Eastleigh (in Somali, *Islii*), a predominantly Somali enclave on the eastern side of Nairobi just a few kilometers from the central business district. An urban study based in Nairobi, Kenya was justified for the following reasons: First, while there are significant Somali refugee settlements in Yemen, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Tanzania, Kenya hosts the largest Somali refugee population in Africa, estimated at 534,229 people in August 2012.<sup>18</sup> Second, the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) has concluded that, “the refugee experience in Kenya is no longer solely played out in camps.” Today, growing urban refugee populations remain “hidden” and “little is known about their numbers, profile, status, location, and livelihoods.” HPG claims that this presents a challenge to governments and non-state actors in the development and humanitarian fields. Somalis are the largest refugee population in Nairobi, Kenya with numbers estimated between 46,000 and 100,000.<sup>19</sup>

## ***Roadmap***

The thesis proceeds as follows: Chapter 2 examines literature assessing perceived contributions of women and refugees when rebuilding a society. Literature of the postwar reconstruction genre is emphasized. This chapter also offers a brief analysis of the role that Somali urban refugee women play in Islii, elicited from analysis in later chapters. This summary, a) demonstrates how participants implicitly and explicitly perceive their contributions, and b) illustrates that they are transitional bridges for their society in exile, contributing primarily through roles as survivors and breadwinners. It is clear that the breadwinner role is a new space for Somali women when compared against tradition. Furthermore, while breadwinning offers them a chance at economic self-actualization, it presents more burdens as they still fulfill their roles as household caretakers. As such, it is in their role as breadwinners that women need the most support.

Chapter 3 provides a methodological overview of the study. I detail the basic tenets of classic grounded theory methodology and provide details on data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 follows with a brief contextual map of the participants' community of Islii. This is largely a descriptive chapter built from participant commentary and supported by my field observations. It is not exhaustive in portraying their environment but points to key characteristics as they themselves see it.

In chapter 5, I discuss the participants' emergent main concern, understood as achieving *better*. This is operationalized by sub-concepts of *circumstantial transcendence, enrichment, and securitizing*. Aside from integrating disparate

experiences into a shared concern. this chapter works to shape a contextualized understanding of the term empowerment, detailed in chapter 7.

Chapter 6 presents the substantive theory suggesting that participants are *investing in connections and self-development* to achieve better. Connections are placed in two categories, namely familial and created (non-familial) connections. Self-development is primarily marked by an educational dimension, particularly English language acquisition. By revealing participants' current modes of behavior to achieve better, we also garner a sense of *how* to empower Somali urban refuge women, which includes building upon their existing informal institutional practices.

The thesis concludes with chapter 7. There I delineate a refined understanding of the term empowerment to fit the context of participants' lives. This includes what empowerment means and how to achieve it. I also discuss the theoretical and policy implications, the former relating to the analytic framework of women's rights and the latter relating to a specific policy recommendation and suggestion of how this recommendation links to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Somalia.

## **CHAPTER 2 REBUILDING WAR-TORN SOCIETIES: THE PLACE OF WOMEN & REFUGEES**

The focus of this chapter is placed on women and refugees in the context of rebuilding war-torn societies. Drawing from postwar reconstruction definitions, rebuilding a society refers to restoring its economic, political, and social foundations. It is a complex and multilateral process that gives emphasis to security, social well-being, public service delivery, and proper governance.<sup>20</sup>

The discussion below is divided into two parts: Part I presents literature describing the perceived contributions that women and refugees make to home and host states during exile or following war. It generally suggests that women have disparate experiences during war compared to men, thus make unique contributions to a war-afflicted society rebuilding itself. Women are also perceived as collective thinkers and doers with relation to their families, communities, and other women. It is also suggested however, that women are excluded from higher levels of formal policy making. Their contributions are therefore conceived as mostly community-based.

As for refugees, their contributions are perceived as direct or indirect. For instance, they may contribute to a home state through elections or labor, or embody valuable resources for a host state of 'developing' nation status. Nevertheless, there is a sense that beyond their employability and indirect contributions they are not sought after

for their ideas or innovative capacities to rebuild a war-torn society. Ultimately, the literature included here puts forth a unified perspective that women and refugees have much to offer a society impacted by war. What is lacking however is any specific roadmap that outlines exactly *how* they can be engaged. And furthermore, an engagement that seeks their innovative capacities, speaks to their real-time concerns and existing coping mechanisms, and is conducive to context.

Finally in part II, I put forth a summary of the roles that Somali urban refugee women play in their community of Islii, Nairobi. This section was generated from data collection and analysis detailed in chapters 5 and 6. I note that this is not an exhaustive list of things that women do on a descriptive level. Rather, it is a conceptual picture that paints women as transitional bridges for their society, contributing through their roles as *survivors* and *breadwinners*. Participant commentary indicates that ‘women as breadwinners’ has emerged as a new space in society for Somali women. While this additional responsibility places greater strain on them to support survival and societal advancement, it is clear that women explicitly and implicitly perceive themselves as capable of these growing responsibilities. Ultimately, understanding women’s roles provides an understanding of where, in their society, Somali urban refugee women perceive themselves as contributing the most, and by consequence where they are feeling the most demand of their energy and resources. As will be discussed in later chapters, this helps to appropriately orient external support initiatives that seek to empower women.



## PERSPECTIVES FROM THE LITERATURE: PERCEIVED CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN & REFUGEES

### *The Contributions of Women*

In reconstructing a society following war, Camille Pampell Conaway outlines four key pillars needing attention: security, governance, justice and reconciliation, and socio-economic development. Accordingly, her analysis is tailored to the perceived “unique” contributions that women can make to each of these pillars. Women are described as having a distinct mind frame as a result of their comparatively different perspectives and experiences as women or “victims” of war. Conaway’s analysis portrays women as contributors to reconstruction by way of their mutually reinforcing advocacy: Whether it relates to issues of disarmament and reintegration or promotion of political representation and inclusion, women will fight for the place of other women.<sup>21</sup>

In her cross-country<sup>22</sup> literature review of women in postwar reconstruction, Birgitte Sørensen also underscores the roles that women play in social, political, and economic spheres. Three questions act as the point of departure for her review: How have armed conflicts influenced women’s lives? How have women in various war-affected countries responded to the challenges and changes induced by war? And, how have external actors attempted to address women’s concerns in postwar situations? She writes that the answers “give emphasis to women as war-affected persons, social agents of change, and beneficiaries<sup>23</sup> of assistance”<sup>24</sup> when rebuilding a society, and furthermore that women do not play any universal role. They are ultimately “highly differentiated social actors, who possess valuable resources and capacities and have their own agendas.” They are only initially categorized as a group because “wars affect men and

women differently.” As such, beyond this male-female distinction it is important to assess their varying wartime experiences. For instance, while women are at times more vulnerable they are not unanimously victims. Attention is also brought to the oft-cited perspective that women offer contributions to a rebuilding society through peacebuilding, attributable to their roles as caregivers and nurturers. Sørensen points out that overemphasis on this perspective neglects the fact that some women have directly or indirectly participated in wars as combatants or supporters.<sup>25</sup> Like other roles then, peacebuilding is a choice that women make rooted in differing political or socio-economic motives. She suggests that the roles of both women and men during reconstruction are ultimately cultural and social constructs.<sup>26</sup>

Aside from advising against universal categorization, Sørensen lays out specific spaces where women contribute during postwar reconstruction. Economically, she claims they work to form important economic social networks and make contributions to family and society at large.<sup>27</sup> Johnson Sirleaf and Elisabeth Rehn effectively illustrate such networks in postwar East Timor, where women formed a cooperative and built a community center used for events, meetings, and small business. These women also collectively shared labor and profits and furthermore, “they had succeeded in forming a tight unit that meets their immediate survival needs and provides social support.” This was accomplished without external assistance.<sup>28</sup> Loveness Schafer details a similar situation in the Rwandan context following the genocide, when approximately 70 percent of the country’s population was female. These women, Schafer writes, used cooperation as one key survival strategy. They formed communal groups and associations at both the

community and national levels. Through these cooperatives they were able to support survivors, widows, and returnees.<sup>29</sup>

As for social reconstruction, Sørensen claims that women contribute by developing the social services sector.<sup>30</sup> In the political sphere their roles are in part dependent on the positions they held in the “landscapes of conflict, as internally displaced persons, widows, single breadwinners, victims of rape or torture, ex-combatants, refugees, etc.”<sup>31</sup> This gives weight to one emphasis of the policy recommendation in chapter 7, namely to support Somali urban refugee women while they rebuild their societies in exile and not just when a vaguely defined ‘official’ postwar period begins.

Still, despite their active participation in all three realms, Sørensen contends that women are generally not recognized at higher levels of policy making and formal institutions. Sirleaf and Rehn agree with this in the context of transitional aid distribution during reconstruction, writing that,

“Although women may benefit broadly from the positive forces of reconstruction...the vast majority of aid for reconstruction and peace-building is not being directed to women. They certainly will not receive their fair share without *deliberate planning and we see little evidence that this planning is taking place.*”

In another example, they cite a Kosovar woman that was working for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo:

“It is really amazing...that the international community cared only about Kosovar women when they were being raped—and then only as some sort of exciting story. We see now that they really don’t give a damn about it. What we see here are men, men, men from Europe and America and even Asia, listening to men, men, men from Kosovo. Sometimes they have to be politically correct so they include a woman on a committee or they add a paragraph to a report. But when it comes to real involvement in the planning for the future of this country, our men tell the foreign men to ignore our ideas. And they are happy to do so—under the notion of ‘cultural sensitivity.’ Why is it politically incorrect to ignore the concerns of Serbs or other minorities, but ‘culturally sensitive’ to ignore the concerns of women? I wish someone would explain this to me!”<sup>32</sup>

In essence, the above lays emphasis to Sørensen's claim that at institutional levels of postwar reconstruction planning, women are often neglected or marginalized. They are perceived as being major contributors primarily at the community level. As a result, in the postwar period women risk becoming losers: If they are continually sidelined they will not have a say in the future direction of their countries and by extension the economic, social, or political spheres of their own lives. Sørensen argues that if they are included as was the case in Cambodia after Khmer Rouge, there may be an implementation gap when state institutions are unwilling or incapable of "translating [legislative] entitlements for women" into action.<sup>33</sup>

### ***The Contributions of Refugees***

Like war-afflicted women, refugees are largely portrayed as vulnerable victims. Sometimes these images are combined, rendering a "grief stricken [refugee] woman, clutching her head or child in despair."<sup>34</sup> The perspective of refugees as potential contributors however, is garnering increasing attention even at the institutional policy level. For instance, the United States Institute of Peace and the United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute writes that, "displaced populations represent a rich body of potential human and material assets and resources." Furthermore, they "bear characteristics of resilience, courage, and determination to thrive and employ a rich set of skills to survive." Consequently, refugees are capable and necessary contributors to their home states during the postwar period, for instance to stable governance by way of their inclusion in postwar elections.<sup>35</sup>

In her assessment of refugees and reconstruction, Sarah Petrin argues that refugees “provide the state with internal legitimacy, human resources, and international recognition.” Her analysis alludes to the direct or indirect contributions that refugees can make to their home states. With reference to the latter, she argues that when refugees repatriate “en masse” their presence forces governments to build both institutional structures and capacity. In Rwanda for example, the Ministry of Justice developed guidelines to facilitate dispute resolution between repatriated refugees and those who had occupied their homes. In Peru and Guatemala, massive refugee repatriation brought about the increased presence of state structures in local communities thereby increasing their mutual interaction. Refugees are also perceived as making direct contributions through the restoration of infrastructure or their participation in civil society. Petrin asserts that they will also frequently return to destroyed homes and infrastructure and “must work hard to rebuild” what was lost. International agencies may hire refugees for this physical reconstruction, providing the capital to do so. As such, refugees benefit through employment and cultivate a “sense of ownership in the renewal of the country.” As a whole the state will also benefit through development and the rebuilding of civil society. Petrin adds that refugees however, may risk adversely affecting state development if the state cannot cope with the pace of repatriation. This may result for instance in faulty reintegration plans, internal displacement, or continued instability.<sup>36</sup>

In a similar mode, Karen Jacobsen argues that refugees embody valuable resources for host states, particularly developing nations. They can directly contribute to the development of their local host communities through labor, skills, remittance flows,

and entrepreneurial abilities. For example, in Kenya's Kakuma camp, refugees employed local Turkanas to provide childcare or find firewood and water. As discussed in a later chapter, I observed similar occurrences amongst research participants in Islii. When it comes to indirect contributions, Jacobsen points out that international humanitarian assistance is channeled to refugees living in host states and as a result, rural refugee camps become sources of "relief supplies and food aid, vehicles, communication equipment, employment and transport contracts with relief agencies, and other locally valued and scarce materials." This allows host state governments to establish a presence in otherwise neglected "frontier" areas, therefore bolstering the country's security.<sup>37</sup>

James Milner also explores contributions that long-term refugees can make to their home states, albeit emphasizing their engagement *prior* to repatriation. By extension he advocates for measures that build the skills and self-reliance of refugees while they are in exile. This new "range of skills and qualifications" may "help address specific gaps in the provision of basic services in their country of origin."<sup>38</sup> According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), this new capacity may also contribute to consolidating peace and postwar economic recovery.<sup>39</sup> This empowerment is particularly critical in considering Loveness Schafer's assessment of refugee women from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Somalia. She writes that when refugee women "return home, they are at the forefront of reestablishing their families and rebuilding their lives, their communities, and their countries."<sup>40</sup> Indeed while not in their home country, Somali urban refugee women in Islii are doing just that. This is discussed below.

## **SOMALI URBAN REFUGEE WOMEN IN NAIROBI: CONTRIBUTING THROUGH SURVIVAL & BREADWINNING**

Based on the data analysis detailed in later chapters, I suggest that Somali urban refugee women in Nairobi are transitional bridges. Their self perceived contributions through roles as *survivors* and *breadwinners* act as fundamental pillars upholding their society through what is perceived as a transitory phase.<sup>41</sup> As one man remarked, *Somali women are the success of society*. In the paragraphs that follow, a brief summary of these roles is provided. I also make mention of how the analysis compares to Somali tradition.

### ***Somali Women as Survivors***

The data gives weight to the claim that "...to save themselves and their families, [refugee women] demonstrate surprising resilience and fortitude in the face of great hardships."<sup>42</sup> In that way Somali urban refugee women are survivors. Using this term is not simply an indication of their physical survival through war and in a challenging urban environment like Islii. Rather, it denotes an expertise of survival and adaptation; an ability to "cope well with difficulties"<sup>43</sup> using their creativity and personal resources, for instance developing connection networks as discussed in chapter 6.

Their collective narratives detail the risks incurred to arrive in their urban home hoping for a better life through greater opportunity for self and families. Most flee Somalia for reasons of vital security. Middle-aged and older women typically afford the journey to Kenya by selling livelihoods in Somalia, such as farms or businesses. One participant explained that she and her family *decided to flee Somalia because the violence*

*was unbearable: they sold their shop and left.* Younger women use family or peer connections to help them afford the journey. Alternatively, they may accompany an extended family relative. After leaving Somalia, what follows is a series of geographical moves within Kenya between rural refugee camps and an urban environment. Sometimes this process is repeated multiple times until the right dosages of vital and economic security are established. Single mothers often make this dangerous journey alone with their children: *When she left Somalia, she went from Somalia to Dadaab to Nairobi to Kakuma back to Nairobi. She did all this bouncing back and forth because she was looking for a better life.*

Perseverance to survive propels women of different backgrounds into common contextual circumstances in Islii. This is a departure from life in the motherland, where "...women's experiences in prewar Somalia were varied." This refers largely to disparities between those dwelling in urban and rural areas, and those leading pastoral versus agricultural livelihoods.<sup>44</sup> For instance, in the Lower Shabelle region, women themselves believed and were perceived as less intelligent than men. As a result they were excluded from "social, economic, and political power structures,"<sup>45</sup> a perspective that traditional liberal feminists assert as the root of "female subordination."<sup>46</sup> In contrast, other women in Somalia exercise indirect power and give "de facto input into the political process of the clan" by voicing opinions to husbands behind "closed doors" or using dual clan membership.<sup>47</sup>

Despite these varied experiences there are general conclusions maintained across scholarly literature with reference to traditional roles. Somali women "...whatever their



relative wealth or poverty, gain their social value from their role as wives, mothers and sisters.”<sup>48</sup> The role of mother is especially important in Somali culture as children “are considered a blessing from god.” Paradoxically, girls are perceived from birth as less valuable than boys, evidenced in traditional cultural practices: two animals are slaughtered for a boy’s birth versus one for a girl; female homicide requires only half the compensation of a male homicide; and in pastoral culture women are traditionally barred from owning livestock except those inherited following a husband’s death. This gender value disparity is attributed to Somali culture’s patriarchal nature where clan lineage extends through males.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, men have historically been the primary breadwinners of the family, acting as the “public economic and political face of the household.”<sup>50</sup> It is here—the primary economic support role—where women’s roles have experienced the most transformation in the context of refugee life in Islii.

### ***Somali Women as Breadwinners***

Participant experiences support the assertion that “one impact of the war is that women are increasingly replacing men as the breadwinners of the family.”<sup>51</sup> It furthermore evidences Birgitte Sørensen’s idea that “when men engage in war...it is women who are left with the burden of ensuring family livelihood.”<sup>52</sup> This space in Somali society—household breadwinning—is contrary to cultural tradition, where a woman’s sphere of influence and activity has been limited to the household. This is reflected in the responsibilities given to young girls, who are responsible for cooking, cleaning, and tending to younger siblings and children.<sup>53</sup>

As my field experience made clear, this norm of household caretaking has carried over into refugee life in Islii, where I conducted interviews in personal homes, lived part time with a Somali refugee mother and her children, and visited Somali friends, students, and families in the community: Male siblings are rarely held responsible for household duties. In addition, while the eldest female sibling contributes to running the household, younger female siblings were observed to do a bulk of the cooking and housework, illustrating the notion that “the war has made families more dependent on girls to substitute for or help their working mothers.”<sup>54</sup> However, as discussed in chapter 6, Somali refugees sometimes hire Kenyan or Somali ‘house-girls’ to help run the household as wages are almost unconscionably low. For single mothers with children in their late teens this may free up time for work or self-development.<sup>55</sup>

Judith Gardner and Judy El Bushra assert that women’s transforming role into primary breadwinners represents a “major change in gender relations,” as it is typically “shameful” for men to depend upon women.<sup>56</sup> Women perceive this transformation as a result of the absence and changing roles of men due to protracted civil war—it is not perceived as an outcome of intentional efforts.

Within male interview data, the transformation is not necessarily criticized nor frowned upon. Rather, men describe women as the *backbone* of Somali society. One participant told me that *while men are busy killing themselves... women are working on common goals - that's why women are the backbone*. Using the same analogy another participant explained that when the backbone breaks, so does everything else. Aside from men perceiving women as a foundational core of Somali society there is also a

shared belief that women should be privy to education and development opportunities so long as it does not impact their traditional roles as mothers and wives. One male participant frankly stated that the *more education [women] have, the less marriage they have – he believes that it's good they have education, but says that they should have both.*

In conclusion, Somali urban refugee women in Islii have become breadwinners in addition to fulfilling their roles as household caretakers and mothers. They are thus increasingly the center of support within and outside the household. It is no exaggeration then that they are doing 'everything' as supporters and providers in Islii:<sup>57</sup>

*I'm the mother and father for my sisters. They have nothing.*

*Somali women's role has changed and is different in Nairobi than in Somalia. In Nairobi, women are doing everything themselves, raising the kids taking them to school, supporting everyone.*

*Somali women are supporting for everything, financial support, moral support--they are supporting their families a lot.*

While the challenges presented by this additional responsibility present greater strain on survival, it has brought about positive developments: First, it is clear that participants understand themselves as capable of these new and growing responsibilities. And second, it demonstrates that refugee life “may also provide opportunities for development that might not have otherwise occurred.”<sup>58</sup> Wartime in general, is perceived as a time and space that allows for greater opportunity for women. For instance, in northwest Somalia a government official remarked that,

*“In practice, traditional misconceptions that men are entitled to more education opportunities than girls still exist but the effects of the war brought gradual positive changes to this traditional attitude, since diasporas, men and women, equally contributed to the national development, with women showing slightly more financial contribution than men.”<sup>59</sup>*

Finally, the additional challenges women face in this context forces us to consider how external intervention efforts should be prioritized to support women where they need it the most.

### **CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY & DATA COLLECTION**

This study used classic grounded theory methodology to identify a shared, main concern of Somali urban refugee women in Nairobi and generate a substantive theory that accounts for the behavior in resolving this concern (*investing in connections and self-development to achieve better*). The analysis also helped to inform the conclusions drawn in this thesis, which includes a contextualized understanding of empowerment and a summary of participants' roles in Nairobi. The remainder of this chapter will summarize the classic grounded theory (GT) process in general, data collection and analysis for this thesis, and brief methodological notes.

#### **OVERVIEW: CLASSIC GROUNDED THEORY**

Classic GT is an ideational methodology and attempts to transcend description in favor of conceptualization, allowing a researcher to integrate disparate descriptive experiences and theoretically explain patterns of behavior amongst participants.<sup>60</sup> It has three defining characteristics: 1) The main concern of the research participants and the recurrent solution of this concern is the primary focus of the study; 2) Discovery of the core variable, or category, is an essential step in the first stage of research; and 3) The researcher continually delimits the research to the core variable<sup>61</sup> which “organizes and

explains most of the variation in how the [participants' emergent] main concern is continually resolved." The core variable will relate to most other categories and properties that emerge from the data and both "provides and becomes the latent structure of the theory."<sup>62</sup> A proper classic GT study should result in "the generation of probability statements about the relationships between concepts."<sup>63</sup>

Classic GT is a general research method applicable to both quantitative and qualitative data. It is initially inductive but also employs deduction in that the emergent substantive theory guides the research. The GT approach does not seek to invent concepts. Rather, as the researcher jointly collects, codes, and analyzes data, she continually seeks to discover and understand what is occurring within the data.<sup>64</sup> The researcher thus enters into the field for data collection and analysis without specific *a priori* hypotheses or pre-defined research questions. Rather, the researcher is guided by a substantive topic and a general research question. The emergent research question controls and shapes the research.<sup>65</sup>

*Process.* The GT method seeks to systematically generate theory from data. The term "systematic" is understood as a "process by which every step throughout the research process leading to the generated hypotheses and theory is known and made clear to the reader."<sup>66</sup> These steps include data collection and open coding; theoretical sampling and selective coding; memoing; conceptual sorting; literature integration; and theory write-up.<sup>67</sup>

*Method of Analysis.* Data is coded and analyzed using the constant comparative (CC) method. The CC method is used during open and selective coding in order to

conceptualize the descriptive data.<sup>68</sup> It also entails joint data collection, coding, and analysis whereby the researcher is “constantly comparing or relating data or data incidences (line by line) to emerging concepts (ideas), then relating concept (ideas) to other concepts (ideas) or their properties.”<sup>69</sup> A concept is defined as “the naming of a social pattern grounded in research.” Concepts—or categories—are discovered within the data by making comparisons between incidents, or between concepts and incidents. These concepts illustrate the patterns found within the data and also their sub-patterns, which are a category’s properties.<sup>70</sup> Glaser notes that categories are operationalized by emergent properties, dimensions, and degrees which define, shape, and size, a category.<sup>71</sup>

In a GT study, the units of analysis are the incidents themselves—the processes and behaviors within the data. In fracturing data into these separate incidents the researcher is looking for variability between the units to generate separate categories and their properties, dimensions, and degrees. In this study the terms incident and illustration are used interchangeably. Incidents are specific pieces of interview commentary, which may be a sentence, a phrase, or paragraph.

*Data Collection and Open Coding.* During open coding, the researcher codes for “anything and everything” in an attempt to discover the core variable.<sup>72</sup> Coding itself is governed by a set of rules: First, the researcher continually asks three questions of the data: a) what is this data a study of? b) what category or property of a category, of what part of the emerging theory, does this incident indicate; and (c) what is actually happening in the data?<sup>73</sup> Second, using constant comparison the researcher analyzes data “line by line, constantly coding each sentence.”<sup>74</sup> In rules three and four, GT suggests

that the researcher performs her own coding and also allows memo writing to take precedence over coding. The fifth rule emphasizes the importance of staying within the parameters of the substantive area and the field study. And finally, the sixth rule states that the “analyst should not assume the analytic relevance of any face sheet variable such as age, sex, social class...until it emerges as relevant.” This is because GT does not assume *a priori* that such variables are differentiating. Rather, they must show themselves as relevant on an emergent basis.<sup>75</sup>

*Theoretical Sampling and Selective Coding.* In classic GT, the emphasis is on “behaviour patterns that transcend the limits of individual units.” As a result, data are not collected via statistical or representative sampling but by theoretical sampling.<sup>76</sup> This data is then selectively coded, whereby coding is “delimited to concepts or data fragments that are related to the core variable.”<sup>77</sup> Data collection and analysis informs one another in a cyclical pattern.<sup>78</sup>

*Memo Writing, Sorting, Literature, & Write-Up.* During data collection, analysis is recorded in the form of memos. These memos range from a few sentences to multiple pages<sup>79</sup> and contain ideas about codes and the relationships between codes.<sup>80</sup> It is also through memoing that theoretical sampling leads are found.<sup>81</sup> Memo writing is ongoing during data collection, analysis, and coding. Coding the data provides “conceptual familiarity” with the data but “emergence happens while memo-writing.”<sup>82</sup>

After data collection in the field is completed, the researcher will emerge with conceptual categories and analytical memos. These memos are sorted into conceptual piles according to concept headings.<sup>83</sup> It is also during this stage that the theoretical



framework for the grounded theory beings to emerge and the researcher considers what literature will be most relevant to weave into the substantive theory.<sup>84</sup>

*Evaluation.* Glaser writes that there are four main criteria for evaluating a grounded theory study, namely fit (i.e., validity), workability, relevance, and modifiability. In other words, do the emergent concepts *fit* into the data that it purports to conceptualize? Do the emergent concepts and their integration into hypotheses *work* to explain the participant's main concern and their continual resolving of the concern? Is the grounded theory *relevant* to the research participants? And is it amenable to systematically integrating new data and thereby able to be *modified*?<sup>85</sup>

#### **DATA COLLECTION & METHODOLOGICAL NOTES**

*Overview.* Thirty-five participants between ages 18 and 65 were interviewed for this study. Participation was limited to self-identified, ethnic Somali adults (age 18 and over) living in Nairobi, Kenya. While the perspectives within this study are those of ethnic Somali urban refugee women, I also garnered interviews from five self-identified ethnic Somali males and two self-identified Somali-Kenyan females (ethnic Somali, Kenyan national). These helped to shape the context of the study.

With the exception of the Somali-Kenyan females, all participants are Somali nationals. Participants also self-identified as refugees. Interviews were conducted in Islii, a predominately Somali enclave in eastern Nairobi, Kenya in the Pumwani District between January and June 2012. Of the 35 interviews, 18 occurred on a one-to-one basis and 17 occurred over four separate group settings ranging between 20 minutes up to two

hours in length. Simultaneous translation was used where necessary. Interview data was fractured into 724 separate incidents to inform analysis. This resulted in approximately 150 pages of memo analysis. Field-observations were recorded to buttress interview data, for example passive observations of community life, social support group meetings, capacity building activities for women, or personal social interactions in the community. This study adhered to the procedures approved by Seton Hall University's Institutional Review Board.

*Field Phase I: Initial Interviews.* As stipulated by classic GT, I initially interviewed anyone who met three basic criteria: 1) a self-identified ethnic Somali; 2) age 18 or over; and 3) currently living in Nairobi, Kenya. I asked these participants a “grand tour” question (Appendix A), which is a “non-leading, open-ended question...formulated so as not to indicate a preferred response.”<sup>86</sup> This question type allowed me to adhere to the spirit of classic GT methodology, which is to remain as open as possible to emergent concepts.<sup>87</sup> As the interview session progressed, I followed the lead of the participants by asking probing and clarifying questions about topics the participant mentioned (Appendix A). The interviews were not recorded. Rather, detailed field-notes were written immediately following the interview. This is discussed more in the data analysis section below.

The grand tour question was used until the participants' main concern and core variable (resolving of the concern) were identified followed by an initial conceptual sort as described in preceding section. During this first sort, I consolidated 89 questions asked of the data during analysis. These related to areas potentially relevant to the

emergent theory and also questions surrounding the research in general. After the memo sort was completed, an additional 26 questions were generated. All 115 questions were then arranged under concept headings and further consolidated into a total of 23 theoretical sampling questions (Appendix B). After the memo sort was finished, I revisited the memo bank to make needed changes. For instance, extracting memos irrelevant to the emergent study or changing the heading of memos if concept names had changed.

*Field Phase II: Theoretical Sampling Interviews.* After I confirmed the emergent main concern, core variable, and generated theoretical sampling questions, the second phase of interviews (theoretical sampling) commenced. This is “the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and [analyzes] his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory.”<sup>88</sup> More specifically, Glaser writes that,

“The general procedure of theoretical sampling...is to elicit codes from raw data from the start of data collection through constant comparative analysis as the data pour in. Then to use the codes to direct further data collection, from which the codes are further theoretically developed with respect to their various properties and their connections with other codes until saturated. Theoretical sampling on any code ceases when it is saturated, elaborated and integrated into the emerging theory.”<sup>89</sup>

In short, through theoretical sampling, I attempted to develop the emergent concepts as much as possible. The ultimate goal is theoretical saturation, whereby new data no longer yields additional categories or properties of a category; similar instances are seen time and time again—this is understood as “interchangeability of indicators.”<sup>90</sup>

During theoretical sampling, I attempted to garner interviews from individuals that would potentially have information relevant to emergent concepts. To illustrate, as the concept of connections emerged I interviewed those that were part of social network groups. Also, in addition to the women who had lived in Nairobi for a short period of time (up to five years) I sought participants that had been in Nairobi for 10 years or more. A list of the final theoretical sampling questions is found in Appendix B. Upon returning from the field, a second conceptual sort of memo piles was performed with subsequent write-up and literature integration.

*Data Analysis.* Data was analyzed in the same manner across both interview phases in the field. Following an interview session, I wrote out field-notes by hand as soon as possible followed by a four-step process of: 1) re-writing field-notes in a word processing document once I returned home from the field; 2) coding the data into fractured incidents to form comparative units—this was done electronically in the margins of the word processing document (see Appendix C for an example of data conceptualization); 3) Inputting the fractured incidents into an excel spreadsheet alongside its appropriate code, interview number, and initial thoughts on analysis if applicable; and 4) Organizing the inputted data in excel according to code for efficient constant comparative analysis, thereby generating categories, properties, and dimensions, and recording analysis and ideas into typed memos.

*Limitations & Reflections.* I attempted to adhere to the spirit and guidelines of classic GT. I was fortunate to have methodology guidance from a classic GT mentor.<sup>91</sup> This method is at times difficult to grasp and employ and understanding it comes by

reading the methodology resources, attempting to 'do', and accepting that there is indeed a delayed action learning curve as Glaser describes. Conceptualizing the data was initially challenging, as there is a tendency to describe specific facts, experiences, or moments rather than explain patterns of behavior. After time and experience, conceptualizing is not always easy but does become more fluid and natural.

Classic GT is also extremely rewarding as it afforded the integration of seemingly disparate participant experiences into a unified whole, in essence allowing me to grasp a general picture of what was happening on the ground in participants' lives. As described in an earlier part of this chapter, the methodology also allows the researcher to focus primarily on the participants' emergent concerns. This enabled me to mitigate my fear of unintentionally exploiting the participants. The nature of the method also frequently resulted in an immediate sense of trust between me and the participant, which was further aided by my study of Somali language.

Lastly, I cannot say with confidence that theoretical saturation was achieved. This entails being able to "maximize for differences"<sup>92</sup> in the data. This is attributable to two reasons: First, while I saw the same incidents over and over in the data, I was rushed during the last two or three weeks of interviews and thus did not have time to analyze some of the later interviews until I left the field. I also believe it would have been beneficial to interview additional participant types, including large-scale businesswomen or men in Islii; a Somali-Kenyan Member of Parliament in Kenya representing the district within which Islii is located; women who participate in what other participants characterize as deviant methods to generate income; and homeless women living in the

streets of Islii. Their experiences may have provided different perspectives on the concepts generated from the interviews. I was also limited by research permit restrictions and a sense of unpreparedness to interact with those coming from extremely vulnerable populations (e.g., homeless women or those engaging in prostitution). In the future, more time and developed skill will help me remedy this limitation. Ultimately however, this underscores a great quality of classic GT, in that it is constantly modifiable to new data.

## CHAPTER 4 LIFE IN ISLII, NAIROBI

Somali refugee women view their contextual environment as challenge laden:

*There are a lot of challenges we are facing living in Islii. Anything you can think of, we face it as a challenge.* Painful life experiences are recounted time and again, emphasizing that *Nolasha waa adag*, or *Life is hard*. Women do their best to juggle between competing responsibilities of refugee life. They are often primary caretakers and providers for families and peers. When possible, they participate in personal capacity building and educational initiatives. Anxiety arises over severely lacking health care, formal support systems, host-society integration, inability to pay rent, and separation from loved ones. Positive experiences are typically associated with the fruits of continued perseverance or one's personal connections. In some regards, the limitations that come along with participants' context are embraced as opportunity:

*Business is all we have...women without money will have business such as doing henna on the streets or selling tea.*

*These women facing obstacles are typically having small business, such as selling khat or are house cleaners.*

This chapter offers a contextual map of life in Islii, Nairobi built from participant commentary. It is not exhaustive in elucidating their social and structural surroundings. Rather it seeks to delineate key emergent characteristics of the participants' environment, as they themselves perceive it. Themes such as the vulnerability of women, insecurity,

support systems and intervention, Somali men, economic opportunity, and societal norms are included.

***Women's Vulnerability.***

Urban refugees in Nairobi often share similar issues as poverty-stricken Kenyan nationals, including “precarious living conditions in overcrowded slums and poor access to inadequate health and education services.” On the other hand HPG claims that “urban refugees often pay higher rents...are charged more for public health services and some schools request an ‘admission fee’ before admitting refugee children, despite the fact that primary education is meant to be free to all.”<sup>93</sup> These assertions are supported by my field observations in Islii. Somali refugee women however, in comparison to their male counterparts, experience additional vulnerability according to both male and female participant commentary.

Data illustrates that this is not a function of being a ‘weaker’ sex. In Islii women’s greater vulnerability extends from increased responsibility or a lack of connections. They provide provision for children, spouses, siblings, parents, extended relatives, or peers in need. Women also demonstrate a deep sense of responsibility in cultivating education opportunities for their children and close loved ones. As a result of their increased responsibility to support, they are less mobile thus unable to travel and seek after opportunity as their male counterparts can. A male participant remarked that, *when issues happen it's the women that are expected to provide.*



A lack of connections also leads to greater vulnerability. This is especially true for unmarried participants, ages 18 up to their mid-20s. Young women typically accompany an extended family member to Kenya from Somalia. As such they lack economic and social independence outside of this family connection. This can result in circumstances of domestic emotional or physical abuse they feel forced to accept until a viable alternative emerges. One young woman remarked that *the family I'm living with, they want to know why you are leaving [the house] and why do you want to learn. They'll tell you to leave and fend for yourself.* For women that lose or lack connections, other lifelines for survival are sought, including marriage, third-country migration, repatriation to Somalia, joining a gang, or prostitution.

### ***Insecurity***

There is a marked sense of insecurity amongst participants. This extends from personal security threats, such as potential robbery or rape. Observations buttress these fears as I witnessed public fighting and theft even in broad daylight. The resultant impact is a sense of community mistrust or separation, the need to constantly stay alert, and fear when traveling alone after dark to evening prayers or performing errands. There is also a frustration with the lack of formal institutional mechanisms that can deter or address personal security fears.

Immigration insecurity is also commonly cited during interviews. Participants hold a refugee mandate issued by the United Nations, an alien card issued by the Kenyan government, or no paperwork at all. Those without legal documentation accept the risk

of being arrested, being sent back to a refugee camp, or going back to Somalia. knowing that life in Nairobi is their best chance at sustainable opportunity. Even those with paperwork do not feel completely secure. Most have experienced or heard of Kenyan government officials targeting Somalis:

*The security I'm concerned about is being harassed by Kenyan police, specifically in relation to legal documents. For example, if you go outside your house to get something at night, they might stop you and ask for your immigration documents such as alien card or mandate.*

Participants respond by limiting their movement within and outside Nairobi. While there is a sense of comfort in being amongst the familiar in a heavily concentrated Somali community, this can increase their feelings of isolation or marginalization, which becomes compounded by their inability to speak English or Swahili.

### ***Support Systems & Intervention***

The scope of this study does not include a survey of support structures. However, it is clear that participants perceive formal institutional support as extremely limited in services or capacity. These formal systems are typically targeted towards capacity building and empowerment, language acquisition, health, legal issues, security, human rights, gender violence, and intra-community dialogue. They are offered or facilitated by local community centers, non-profit groups, faith-based institutions, or international organizations such as the United Nations, International Rescue Community, Deutsche Gesellschaft Für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, and Refugee Consortium of Kenya.

Informal systems of support are more easily accessible and thus highly favored, including personal connections through extended family, established Somali-Kenyans,

and peers. It also became clear that informal systems of support are favored because of an outreach gap between formal support and those in need: some women have no knowledge of available resources such as free English literacy classes.

Based on participant commentary, it is also clear that Somali refugees risk becoming exploited by part of western, Kenyan, and Somali non-governmental groups with ill intentions. One participant purported that:

*Refugees are friends with benefits. In other words, you might get funding to help refugees but you aren't really doing anything for them, especially anything sustainable...NGO's are a briefcase meaning they aren't really doing anything. They're giving out small amount of money or some sort of training certificate, but it's all a façade; it's not real.*

Another Somali participant who volunteers with an international refugee organization explained that after research and experience, she *found so many NGOs run by Somalis for Somalis, but many are nothing but a laptop. They don't actually put services on the ground.* In short, it can become difficult for participants to navigate through formal institutions that claim to be supporting refugee or poverty-stricken populations.

### ***Somali Men***

Female participant perspective of the male gender ranges: *Some Somali men are good and some bad—they're all different.* The strongest emergent theme relates to instances of male absence, attributable to divorce or abandonment, drug use, temporary geographic separation, involvement in the Somali civil war, work demands, or death. The most apparent implication is that male absence has only increased the sphere of responsibility of women, discussed in later chapters.

While participants talk about prostitution, rape, or domestic abuse suffered by male relatives or spouses, women still strongly crave love and a life with marriage and children. This was also evident in my personal encounters in the community. Without exception, I was asked about my marital status in every conversation, whether it was with a man or woman. Male participant commentary was surprisingly unified in discussing the role of Somali women. From their perspective, women are categorized based on perceived life stages: young and unmarried, married with children, and elder women. Men also seemed convinced that women are the *laf-dhabarta*, or back-bone, of Somali family life and society; that women are largely known as peace lovers; and that women should be entitled to education and leadership opportunities. A 21-year old male participant remarked that, *Me I believe that women need to be educated and go to University, get scholarships and build ability to become future leaders.* Another conversation with a young male teacher revealed his long-term dream of building a school in his Somali hometown, with specific aims of enrolling girls to help them become future leaders. It is also interesting to note that despite the opportunities men believe women should have outside the household, there was a strong agreement that women should also remain wives and mothers.

### ***Economic Opportunity***

Participants indicate that *business is the only option for men or women living in Isli* when it comes to income generation. However, it is a limitation that is embraced. They speak joyfully of their current or prospective business initiatives, which often

pertain to henna, food, clothing, or personal and household goods. Khat is also a popular business in Islii, particularly after sundown. While business is pursued as a path towards sustainable income generation and economic independence, women dream of having different options. Asking women about what they dream to become rarely elicited hopes of business. They typically envision roles of doctor, nurse, teacher, lawyer, pilot, translator, or journalist. Their ideal profession is one that is self-sustaining but also allows them to help their fellow Somalis. They perceive their limited economic opportunities as a function of their refugee status.

While observations and participant commentary make it clear that refugees are faced with extremely limited education and economic opportunities in Islii, there is evidence of opportunities opening up incrementally. For example, I visited four different education institutions serving primarily Somali populations that offer free or discounted literacy and capacity-building opportunities. I also observed part of a 17-day business empowerment training hosted by International Rescue Committee where female trainees learned both theoretical and practical components of business. This was highly motivating for women, with one participant starting a new business within a week of the business training's completion.

Opportunities to learn are also open to adults that are illiterate or missed out on primary and high school levels of education. This is occurring through free literacy courses and intensive two-year programs. There is also informal microfinancing within the community. During one interview at a participant's small outdoor business stand, an individual carrying an accounting book paid a visit. The participant explained that *rich*

Somali businessmen and women are providing small micro-finance opportunities for small business owners in Islii. The individual that had stopped by was checking to see if the participant needed any capital. These informal loans are given out based on trust and connections with little or no bureaucratic processes or paperwork involved. Informal microfinancing is discussed more in chapter 5.

### ***Societal Norms***

It is clear that Somali societal norms carry over into life in Islii. One participant believes that *Somalis in my community are trusting each other so much, and this has a lot to do with culture.* One of the most positive norms is that of money pooling, discussed in a later chapter. One participant explained that *in Somali this is called ayuta and this system is very important. Those participating give to one person to start what they want.* In sum, a group of women each individually contribute small shares of money into a group “pot” and each group member will receive this pot of money on a rotating basis. Participants indicate that positive consequences of this activity include trust building with peers and community members, assistance in buying basic provision, or providing small sums of capital to support small business.

Participants often display emotional distress when discussing the daily grind to survive and being away from their home country. Life in part also becomes more a response to context and less a purposive set of actions. It thus becomes tempting to imagine them as powerless. However, this thesis will encourage us to look beyond such easy assumptions.

## CHAPTER 5 ACHIEVING BETTER

Somali urban refugee women are primarily concerned with achieving *better*,<sup>94</sup> a term that integrates participants' disparate experiences into a conceptual whole. For participants, achieving better means to transcend their circumstances, cultivate personal and collective enrichment, and establish varying aspects of security. There is also an overarching sense that the ideas embodied by better act as a psychological coping mechanism for participants. It helps them endure the refugee mindset of constant uncertainty and perpetual transition, and deal with a reality of human and material loss, high-poverty, and extremely limited access to education and job opportunity.

Better as a coping mechanism is buttressed by Mary Watkins' and Helene Shulman Lorenz' writing on colonialism and depth psychology, whereby they purport that "interior journeys...may be chosen as preferred modes of being, protecting one from exterior realities that seem immutable and fixed."<sup>95</sup> The "interior journey" for Somali refugee women then, is keeping mind and heart fixated on a combination of concrete goals and abstract visions for a better future. This thrusts participants into seeing beyond their current circumstances.

Prior to confirming the salience of this shared concern, I collected, coded, and analyzed interviews from 20 (out of 35) participants to identify emergent patterns. This

was buttressed by field observations, five months of intensive interaction in the participants' urban community, and time volunteering at a refugee women's language school in Nairobi. The analysis in this chapter ultimately suggests *what* empowerment means in participants' context. Chapter 6 will turn to the current modes of behavior participants engage in to achieve better, shedding light on *how* they can effectively be empowered. These two chapters along with the summary in chapter 2, contributes to constructing an external support measure that can empower Somali urban refugee women where they need it most. This roadmap is discussed in chapter 7. The specific properties of better are discussed below.

### ***Better: Circumstantial Transcendence***

*Transcending Refugeehood.*<sup>96</sup> More than one-third of refugees in sub-Saharan Africa are ethnic Somalis.<sup>97</sup> They currently represent the largest refugee population in Nairobi, Kenya<sup>98</sup> concentrated in an eastern enclave known as Islii. Data tells us that participants are limited within the confines and consequent restrictions of this refugee identity<sup>99</sup> they seek to shed:

*Better also means to be free from this refugee status. There's no opportunity, no jobs for refugees. As a refugee, you're not free to travel. Also, as a refugee you are so dependent on family that live in the diaspora abroad. Refugee status is so isolating. I want the refugee status to go away.*

Participants hence make decisions or desire circumstances whereby the costs of being a refugee are diminished to the greatest degree possible and felt the least. This is supported by Idil Lambo's research on Somali refugees in Nairobi, which states that "for many



[refugees], ensuring the improvement of their quality of...life in exile represented a means to an end of years of displacement, struggle, and sacrifice."<sup>100</sup>

A prevalent implication extending from refugeehood in Islii is that of restricted movement, which is especially saddening to a culture whose most central organizing principle is kinship.<sup>101</sup> Indeed my personal encounters in Islii proved Somalis to be intensively collective and social with both family and peers, thriving off daily interpersonal interaction wherever possible.<sup>102</sup> Limited movement in their urban neighborhood is a result of crime, theft, or rape fears, particularly after dark. A majority of participants are mostly disturbed by harassment or predatory actions they have personally experienced by part of corrupt Kenyan authorities, also documented by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Humanitarian Policy Group, and UNHCR's Policy Development & Evaluation Service.<sup>103</sup> Movement is also restricted regionally. This is problematic for those wishing to visit family or explore job opportunities in eastern Kenyan cities such as Garissa. One participant remarked that if *you want to go to East Kenya, such as Garissa, you need to carry USD 300 with you, bribing police and others along the way. Otherwise, you risk getting arrested and falsely accused, they might say you're part of Al-Shabaab.*

Refugeehood also constrains opportunity. Women are worried over the unequal access their children will have to the job market if they are fortunate enough to make it through the high school or University levels. One participant describes how,

*...some women she knows are here for so many years...and they're asking themselves, 'am I still a refugee?' One woman has been living here [in Kenya] for 16 years and her two kids are still refugee status, meaning, they go to primary school, high school, and University here. They still won't have access to the job market unless they pay the KES 200,000 fee for legal documents.<sup>104</sup>*

This illustration additionally speaks to a lack of host-society integration measures available to long-term Somali refugees and their families. Furthermore, that “despite their long-standing presence and active contribution to the economy, the great majority of refugees [do] not feel assimilated into the fabric of Nairobi society.”<sup>105</sup>

Psychological and emotional effects are also visible consequences of the refugee identity. Pain is suffered from long stretches of familial separation or family members being killed. For some, life becomes a waiting game marked by uncertainty and setbacks. One participant recounted how she had remained patiently on a resettlement waiting list for years, only to have her case sold to another refugee family by a corrupt UN official. Others express a sense of local marginalization: *She doesn't really interact with her neighbors or fellow Kenyans. She says that Kenyans don't really like the Somalis.* Others feel a sense of global rejection: *I am grateful for Kenya, because other countries don't like us Somali refugees.* In short, participants yearn for their motherland. This is true for those that have resided in Nairobi for even 20 years. Negative experiences in Islii increase this longing, as demonstrated in one emotional testimony:

*I was once out around 7 PM at night with three other girls. Two Kenyan police started harassing us about our legal status, accusing us of having fake mandates. The police told us we needed to come to the police station. They started hitting us with flashlights, and were saying things like 'Somalis, you destroy your country,' 'you're no better than dogs,' and 'Somalis are prostitutes.' The police started leading us towards a really dark place, so we became fearful of getting raped. We started talking to each other in Somali, trying to figure out a way of escape. One woman who was on the verge of giving labor said she didn't want to do anything because of fear of being hit again and losing her baby. Me and one other girl said 'do what you want' but we are going to defend ourselves. We hit the police officers and then ran for it and got away.*

In the long term, participants ultimately envision transcending refugeehood through resettlement or repatriation. The latter is highly favored,<sup>106</sup> with more than 30 percent of participants expressing a strong desire to return to Somalia even if peace levels

increase only slightly. As one woman stated, *if Somalia becomes peaceful, I'll go back there and never look back.* Another participant that oversees approximately 150 Somali women during money-pooling (*ayuta*) meetings believes that most *Somali refugee women believe that a better life means returning to Somalia when there is peace.* While repatriation is in part a function of a lasting affection for their motherland, interviews also suggest that contingent upon decreased civil violence it is desired for reasons that include a perception of greater personal and economic security for self and family; a sense one's human rights are being observed; building a consensus government; investment opportunity; and reconnecting with family:

*Somalia is the best country. The hour that there is peace we will go back.*

*She talks about going back to Somalia and wants to form a government based on consensus.*

*When you are not in your own country, you're not feeling safe and secure. When there's peace, I'll go back to Somalia.*

*I'm really hoping for peace in Somalia. If there's peace, I'll go back and open a business. Doing business in Somalia is easy.*

Ultimately, repatriation is perceived as a total shedding of one's refugee identity thereby cutting loose the consequential weights discussed above.

Many participants also envision third-country resettlement in a wealthy nation. This is typically desired as a step prior to repatriation: *I want to get resettlement then take money to Somalia for a farm.* On an emergent basis, resettlement is equated with increased access to education and jobs. To illustrate, one participant had been twice divorced with her second husband stealing her life savings. She was left fending for her six children in Islii. Her wish is to send her younger sister and eldest daughter overseas, the former for job opportunity and the latter for higher education. In sum, participants

seek to liberate themselves and family from the constraints that retard their educational and economic growth or access to opportunity.

*Transcending Negative Societal Norms.* Negative societal norms are here defined as social customs that participants characterize as unfavorable. A negative norm that emerged during interviews is that of women being more homebound and barred from economic opportunity outside the household. While they do not desire to surpass their male counterparts as breadwinners they do wish for economic self-actualization:

*Men are at work and women are at home because that's how it is in Somali society. I don't like that life is that way; everyone [men and women] should be working.*

*I want to own a business because I want to feel that I've achieved something in my life; a sense of self achievement that I've earned on my own, not something that was given to me by my husband or parents.*

I note that this shared participant perspective however, differs sharply from my personal observations. Many business owners and wage earners in Islia are in fact women.

Without further data collection I suggest that this discrepancy is attributable to mindset:

Despite what we see happening on the ground, the dominant mindset of both women and men—that Somali women are homemakers, not breadwinners—still prevails. Women are thus accepted as breadwinners or significant financial contributors only because the context necessitates it. This does not mean it is now an accepted social norm in their society and would thus transfer into a different context that is not marked by high poverty or lack of opportunity.

While women desire to transcend this negative societal norm in favor of economic self-actualization, this has no impact on their views of other traditional roles typically held by Somali women, namely those of wife and mother. In fact, data suggests they

continue to cherish and long for such roles. This was true despite participants' age, education level, or years lived in Nairobi. One participant who runs a small scarf and dress shop remarked that,

*I want a good boyfriend and even a husband. There are so many men asking for me and asking me to give them a chance. However, I can't trust these men because many Somali men are marrying women but then leaving them later for other women. I don't want to suffer like that. I want love.*

In sum, women do not express a desire to be liberated from traditional gender roles nor be liberated from the male gender. On the contrary, participants generally desire truthful, deepened connections with the male gender and greater spousal assistance in navigating home life and child rearing: *She would like to see more fathers involved in house duties assisting their wives. [Men] are not that involved with the kids and the family.* This points to participants' orientation towards collective well-being, discussed in the below section on *enrichment*.<sup>107</sup>

### ***Better: Enrichment***

*Personal Enrichment.* Participants strive for personal enrichment, which typically refers to increased education or economic opportunity. In terms of education, this primarily refers to English language acquisition to better navigate their host-society environment and connect with the outside world. Key barriers to pursuing education initiatives include a tri-part lacking of connections, awareness of what opportunities might be available, or economic resources. Often, two or three components occur simultaneously. For instance, one unmarried participant is running a small business in Islii and desires to attend English language school. However, she lacks both family

members to help run the business or resources to pay someone to work for her. Consequently she is unable to attend even free literacy classes available by scholarship or at community centers. While referring more to a postwar period, education as a fundamental priority of participants finds support in the analysis of Sirleaf Johnson and Elisabeth Rehn, who emphasize that “rebuilding the education system is a key priority” for women when rebuilding society. Despite this, they continue that education is not given emphasis when it comes to the distribution of transitional aid. This circumstance would be especially detrimental for Somali women, of which an estimated 87 percent are illiterate.<sup>108</sup>

Finally, as most participants are reliant on some combination of small business income, short-term loans from peers or personal connections, remittances from family in the diaspora, or donations collected from their local mosques or business owners in cases of emergency, personal enrichment also entails achieving a degree of economic independence:

*I opened my small business because you can't beg everyday.*

*For her, better means independence from relying on support from others. It means not having to worry about the lives of her kids—their health, school, food, and more. Also, just being able to give her kids what they want. For instance, if her kids want a new toy, she says it's not like she can ask her sister for money to buy them that.*

*Better means I would be able to stand on my own without anyone's support, and to have my own small business.*

*Collective Enrichment.* While participants strive to advance themselves personally, it is perceived as the first necessary step towards a more important goal of collective enrichment. This underscores Cheryl Johnson-Odim's assertion that the struggles of Third World women are “...connected to the struggles of their

communities...<sup>109</sup> Data illustrates deep-seated aspirations of women to help enrich the lives of children and families; peers and other women; individuals that are typically marginalized; their urban Somali community in Nairobi; and their country of Somalia:

*I want to own my own company where I can help employ other women. I've seen bureaucracy in place because of a lack of [legal residence] papers. What matters is not the papers, but the experience and expertise of the women.*

*In Islii Nairobi [Somali] women are leading initiatives to strengthen education and make education more accessible for themselves and for the community.*

*I have a vision, which is to increase something or make things better for my family and even for my country. I cannot go back to Somalia empty handed.*

Participant commentary both explicitly and implicitly indicates that individual empowerment is never divorced from collective empowerment of the family or community. As one young woman remarked, *to be empowered individually you must empower those around you*. Women ultimately use personal gains to cultivate opportunity for family and community. For gender policies and programs implemented in the Somali context, this collective aspect of empowerment must be taken into account. This is discussed in chapter 7.

### ***Better: Securitizing***

*Comparative Thinking: Here versus There.* In analyzing interview data, I noticed frequent incidents where comparisons were drawn between life *here* versus life *there*, with 'here' referring to Kenya and 'there' being Somalia or a third-country destination. For instance, one elderly woman stated that, *in Somalia I was rich. Here in Kenya, I don't rest*. On a descriptive level, such incidents vary. Some make comparisons between levels of violence. Others discuss relationships, job or investment opportunities, or a

sense of protection. Incidents also indicate varying opinions on whether *here* or *there* is a more favorable place to be:

*When Somalia gets peace, she'll go back. She wants to be reunited with her family there, her cousins, other extended family members. She misses the nighttime, when you visit with family, sharing what happened during the day. She misses the happy life of Somalia. Everyone goes outside in the evening, neighbors and families are all together. They are outside. They are eating together, they are laughing together. Kenya, it's different. You don't really associate with your neighbors.*

On a conceptual level these types of incidents make it clear that participants are seeking various forms of security, or *securitizing*. In that regard it becomes irrelevant whether more positive comments are associated with Kenya, Somalia, or another destination. For instance, some participants favor Kenya for its general peace and lack of severe violence (vital security). Some recall Somalia fondly because of the successful and big business they had (economic security). Others are distressed because their refugee status makes it extremely difficult for selves, family, and children to have equal access to institutions of higher education when compared to host-country nationals (social security). As the preceding incident illustrates, participants also long for familial and relational security, an important part of Somali society that has been severely disrupted as a result of the civil war. In short, women desire greater security and *better* is any place that can provide it no matter what the geographical location. This is a perspective that patterns out across data and is also shared by a recent study released by HPG on refugees in Nairobi.<sup>110</sup>

In concluding, I note that the above discussion is not an exhaustive list of properties indicating better. Due to limited space and a timeframe for write up, I was not able to include all emergent properties. Some also lacked sufficient ideational development and were therefore not included. The properties that were included here



however, strongly patterned out across the data, thus synthesizing the experiences of participants to render a conceptual whole. They also give weight to an academic study suggesting that refugees move to urban areas "...in the hope of a better life"<sup>111</sup> and a compilation of testimonies asserting that Somali women "have in common...a resolve to overcome their adversity and help others by whatever means they can."<sup>112</sup> The following chapter presents the modes of behavior participants exhibit to resolve their main concern of achieving better.

## CHAPTER 6 INVESTING TO ACHIEVE BETTER

The last chapter suggested that Somali urban refugee women in Nairobi are primarily concerned with achieving *better*, defined by *circumstantial transcendence*, *enrichment*, and *securitizing*. In this chapter the analysis focuses on how women are *investing in connections and self-development* to resolve this primary concern. The term 'connections' is broadly divided into two types, namely familial and created connections. 'Self-development' is defined by developing oneself through education. From the analysis that will ensue below, the overarching suggestions can be made in the context of refugee life in Islii:

- 1) Familial connections give rise to: a) increased long-term economic stability or independence, or b) increased homeboundness and lessened self-development opportunity. The latter applies mostly to younger women that rely on family for basic needs, given they have few viable economic alternatives.
- 2) Created interpersonal connections based on *exchange* give rise to immediate or short-term gains. These connections however may be marked by instability. Created connections with *institutions* may also give rise to immediate gains of a financial nature, but are not as secure as family connections in resolving such issues. Created *opportunity* connections give rise to increased long-term economic stability and independence. Created *group* connections give rise to increased economic stability or independence; collective enrichment and community mobilization; increased social connections with peers and the host-community; and connections that transcend tribal lines.
- 3) Self-development gives rise to: a) increased interpersonal connections, or b) increased economic stability. Lessened self-development opportunity is a result of: a) security issues, b) economic instability, c) lacking or limiting connections, or d) the outreach gap.

As the content of chapter 5 informs our understanding of *what* empowerment means in the context of participants' lives, the above hypotheses elicited from the below analysis works to shape our understanding of *how* women can most effectively be empowered during exile and consequently into the postwar period as their society is being rebuilt. For example, the data suggests that personal economic stability or independence can be achieved through familial or created connections. However, the analysis points to *group connections* as the least limiting and most empowering on personal and collective levels. In another illustration, surface level observations might point to poverty as the main cause of limited self-development opportunities. While this is a fundamental contributor, the data suggests that lessened self-development is also attributable to other factors including security fears and an outreach gap, whereby women are simply unaware of free or discounted self-development opportunities that may be available to them. In sum, these implications act as key drivers of the suggested policy recommendation detailed in chapter 7. I emphasize that the above hypotheses are specific to the context of participants' lives in Islii, Nairobi and do not necessarily represent behavioral patterns that would be found in Somalia or in other diaspora communities.

### ***Connections***

*Familial Connections.* Greg Collins writes that, "connectedness has both endured as a protective arrangement and expanded on a global scale for the very reason that Somalis have continued to face unpredictable environment at home and abroad just as

they ‘always had in the bush.’”<sup>113</sup> The data shows connections as equally salient in participants’ context.

Family is the first choice connection network for Somali urban refugee women. This connection type is a crucial resource for securing long-term support for basic needs. It can manifest itself in remittances from relatives in the diaspora, which most women receive and heavily rely on to supplement the income made through small business. As one participant stated, *transfers are so important for food and rent and other basic needs. Without them means trouble.* Another explained how *Somalis get support from family outside. I get about two hundred [U.S.] dollars per month.* Indeed HPG has documented the importance of these money transfers, suggesting that approximately 36 percent of urban refugees in Nairobi depend upon remittances from relatives living abroad.<sup>114</sup> According to participants, these are predominantly used for daily food or paying rent. Within this participant group I did not encounter incidents where they were allocated into more sustainable investments. This may be attributable to the typically small amount of remittances and the need to prioritize their use first towards survival needs, such as food and water.

Familial connections also give one advantage in finding employment opportunity. It is common to work in an extended relative’s small business, such as a clothing or retail goods shop. For some, small-business start up is also made possible through family connections: *Women can become entrepreneurs by way of...support from families. Her family helped her open her business.* In general, *when a refugee woman comes in*

Nairobi, a relative will do anything to provide when possible. Families are also the first line of support in the event of an emergency:

*Before she arrived to Islii, she was living in Kakuma refugee camp. Her son and daughter stayed behind in Somalia. Her son was kidnapped by Al Shabaab, and they also took her daughter and forced her into a marriage at age 15 – she got pregnant and had a baby. The participant pleaded with her relatives in Nairobi to give her money so she could get her kids back and bring them out of Somalia.*

*The doctor told her the operation [for her stomach tumor] would be approximately USD 1,800. She was also thinking about how she would need money for food and the taxi while staying at the hospital. There was no way she had that money. She called a male family member that is living in Somalia, and she asked him for the funds. He said wait a bit. The next day, he sent her the money. She couldn't believe it.*

Participants thus take care to remain highly connected to immediate and extended family in Kenya, Somalia, and the global diaspora. As one explained, *traditionally in Somalia when people need help, they seek immediate family then extended family then tribe*. Local family connections are sustained through in-person visitations when possible and frequent phone calls. Connections with family outside of Kenya are maintained through Facebook, email, written Internet chatting, Skype, or phone. Those disconnected from family experience increased vulnerability when living in Islii. The range of opportunities narrow and some may face a series of difficult trade-offs:

*There are women that face many obstacles and these women are those that are by themselves. For example these women facing obstacles have no family, no fathers.*

*When the young woman gets to Kenya [to live in Islii], life might not be what she expected. For instance she might not get along with the relatives she is living with. A woman might then seek out marriage. She does this because she believes that life will be better if she's married. However, this can turn out bad too. For example, a husband might divorce her, taking their children and then leaving her to take care of his mother. After a young woman goes through all of this, she might go back to Somalia, go back to a refugee camp, or stay in Nairobi. This happens most to people that don't live with parents.*

Familial connections are especially important for the survival of young, unmarried urban refugee women ages 18 up into their early 20's. However, while these

connections may yield the provision and shelter needed to survive, they can be limiting for reasons detailed under the concept heading of developing: women are under the control of those providing for them. One participant illustrates this in her explanation that *there are free schools in Nairobi, but the timing is bad especially because you are relying so much on other families and people you are living with*. Young women without viable alternatives for daily provision are thus more homebound. This can be accompanied by either domestic abuse, depression, or a sense of emotional disconnect. One young woman recalled how *she came from Somalia when she was young and experienced being trapped in a house. The family she was living with kept her home all the time, she didn't even have friends and things were gloomy*. Young women without family connections that manage to make a living independently are freer to develop rich peer connections within the community. This appears to make up for the socialization they crave and otherwise receive from large families.

Participants also give support to immediate and extended families locally and in Somalia. After making the journey from Somalia or a refugee camp to their new urban home in Islii, middle-aged or elderly women are immediately responsible for children, grandchildren, and other family members. They provide food, shelter, clean water, and education opportunities. Younger, single women work to provide support for parents in Somalia, or siblings and extended families in Islii. In sum, women of all ages are frequently primary breadwinners with younger women more often being a secondary household contributor.

In addition to earning money to sustain a home, women offer support through *cultural work*: running the household responsibilities of cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children. On an implicit level, it is evident that some participants do not perceive their cultural work as a valuable contribution or support mechanism. For instance, during the second phase of interviewing I asked two participants about the emergent concept of *supporting*. They explained that they were not supporting anyone because they had no extra money; there was no mention of the laborious demands of running a home. In sum, this suggests that for some women, supporting is only valuable when it is marked by an ability to provide financially.

The increased levels of responsibility—being cultural workers' *and* primary breadwinners—is perceived by women as a sharp change from life in Somalia prior to the civil war. One participant told me that *after the civil war started, men's role began to change. It's not normal for women to be the breadwinners of the family.* Women universally root their changing responsibilities in the changing roles of men, as discussed in chapter 2. As such, their presence in the public sphere as primary breadwinners is not framed as a 'win' in some kind of gender battle. It is perceived as an outgrowth of context, namely life in exile during war: *Since the civil war in Somalia, women have jobs to support family here in Kenya and back home in Somalia.* Despite the positive feeling surrounding their ability to earn wages, women have fewer resources to match their increasing burdens of sustaining self and dependents. They also feel responsible for cultivating an environment of self-development for loved ones. One participant shared how her son living in Islii is,

*... going to school and learning. He can watch her, knowing that if one doesn't earn money one doesn't eat. She says he can learn here and then compare it with what it would be like to have another life such as with Al Shabaab. Another remarked that as a woman, all the responsibilities fall to your shoulders. You have to encourage your husband, encourage your children and family.*

*Created Connections.* In the absence of familial connections participants create non-familial connections. Especially for new arrivals to Nairobi this occurs primarily with fellow Somalis. Similar to family connections, this connection type can fill an emotional component for a people I found to be extremely sociable.<sup>115</sup> They are ardent conversationalists and love to talk in-depth about love, life events or crises, education, self-improvement, their country and culture, and Islam. Most hate to eat alone and meals are always shared on a communal plate. Dancing and listening to music with friends in someone's home are also popular past times in Islii. Laughter is strived for in every conversation and they enjoy teasing each other in ways other cultures might perceive as extremely offensive, giving weight to the idea that "besides their eloquent and ubiquitous poetry, the verbal art of humour binds Somalis together."<sup>116</sup> And furthermore, of the three types of Somali humor, one is centralized around "someone else's' stupidity."<sup>117</sup>

While this emotional aspect of created connections is important, data primarily illustrates the functional nature of created connections for survival. However as Greg Collins writes, it is "quite difficult (if not impossible) to separate these aspects of connectedness from the instrumental pursuit of connections as a means of advancing self interest."<sup>118</sup>

In this data set, the functional characteristic of connections is used for addressing immediate- to long-term needs. One elderly participant running a door-to-door business explained that *her customers are people that she knows*. They also come in handy when



needing daily food, paying for a child's school tuition, acquiring bribe money if needed, paying for a doctor's visit, or getting small discounts at a shop. These relationships can be based on exchange—such as housework and childcare in exchange for food and shelter. While exchange relationships present an immediate gain for those involved they can be marked by a degree of instability: if a woman is reliant on a single person she becomes subject to the ebb and flow of their circumstance. In one incident a participant described how,

*...she was originally working as a housemaid in Somalia for her friend. Her friend decided to move to Kenya, so she brought the participant with her to work for her as a housemaid in Kenya. She had everything she needed, and was feeling really happy. However, her friend resettled in Australia. So, the participant was left alone in Kenya. That's when she started to struggle. Her friend didn't help her find a job before leaving for Australia.*

Similar to family connections, created connections with institutions—such as local businesses or mosques—are sought as a last resort in cases of financial emergency. These however are not as secure as familial connections in addressing crises and may take longer periods of time to achieve the desired outcome. According to participant commentary, women have equal access to these connections comparatively to men.

In contrast to exchange connections, data also shows evidence of opportunity connections. This is an intermediary that helps link a participant to an opportunity, most often informal microfinance for small business. Trust (by part of the opportunity connection and financier) is the only precondition. The opportunity connection thus acts as a credit-check for the person on the receiving end. This connection type appears more stable than one based on exchange. This extends from the potential long-term economic independence that can follow microfinancing:

*She started a business by getting a loan. One of her female friends took her to see a Somali man who 'trusted me'. He loaned her start up money to start her business selling scarves and fabric for dresses and other clothing items. She took the profit she earned to pay him back. Now she's just earning money for herself.*

Opportunity connections can also be more favorable than family connections. One participant stated that *if she can't afford things such as rent, she asks for loans from friends. She doesn't like asking her family, saying this is problematic.* As previously discussed, family connections force some urban refugee women to face unfavorable trade-offs. They might have to choose between shelter and education opportunity, or free movement.

The last created connection type—group connections—feels natural to participants. It is a function of culture and past life in Somalia: *Before, in Somalia, people had social networks and community networks. For instance, when intending to marry you could have families talk together. If a man was behaving badly the families could really threaten to punish him to change his behavior.* Created group connections are largely reciprocal and used to increase long-term economic security. In this data set created group connections come in the form of ayuta groups:

*Women are participating in ayuta. This is a Somali cultural thing where a group of people are all contributing money to a pot and every week one person gets the pot of money. This is important to be able to excel...Ayuta is an important way to build trust between one another.*

*The [ayuta] group generates a small amount of money to lend as small loans with no interest so that women can start saving on their own to run a small business...Trust is built in the Self Help groups. They form a circle; money is able to be circulated freely.*

The ayuta groups I encountered are formally organized and facilitated by local community centers or international organizations. Those participating in and facilitating the groups are ethnic Somali females. The facilitators train, mentor, or visit ayuta groups

to ensure that financial transactions and bookkeeping proceed smoothly. Other than this basic facilitation the groups are self-sufficient. They include women of all ages and different regional origin: *tribal lines aren't really an issue in Islii; they're fading. People see each other as just Somalis. For example, we [in this group] are all different tribes including Mujerteen, Isaaq, and Hawiye.* While ayuta groups are set up for the central purpose of money pooling, they also provide a unique forum for social gathering, idea exchange, and community mobilization leading to palpably positive consequences: emotional fulfillment, development opportunities, a clear sense of collective enrichment, and a sense of connection with their host-community over time:

*The ayuta group is donating to the mama Fatuma Children's Home in Islii. Last week, they took snacks and clothes to the home. Now they have a list and are looking for even more things to bring...*

*A Somali woman was being really mistreated by her husband. For example, he would act crazy--making her sleep in the kitchen; telling her she could not eat the same food as their children; telling her in the middle of the night she wasn't paying rent and then kick her out. She was so afraid to leave him, partially because she was unsure how she would survive and make a living. The other Somali women in her group told her not to worry about such a thing and she shouldn't live like that. So, the woman moved out and became a tea vendor. The ayuta group helped her buy stuff, such as the teacups, thermos, and sugar. The participant says this woman has so much confidence now, and that no organization can do this.*

*They [the ayuta group] talk about connecting to the host society through World Refugee Day, where special events are held. They in particular participated by teaming with two Universities. They were doing cultural presentations and activities, such as Somali dancing; braiding their hair the "traditional" way; wearing traditional Somali clothing; exposing their culture.*

Even with the existence of these group connections in Islii, some participants perceive that *things in Nairobi are different; there's no community or social networks like in Somalia.* This may be attributable to two factors: First, the sheer scope of connections in Islii is less than those in Somalia, where “the ability to claim commonality at higher aggregates of clan identity in different contexts, combined with other kinship-based

avenues for forging horizontal ties such as marriage, maternal lineage (particularly mother's brother), and the invention of more proximate patrilineage, provides potential access to a geographically and genealogically widespread web of social networks and safety nets."<sup>119</sup>

Second, there is a severe outreach gap in Islii amongst the refugee community with regard to connecting people to available resources, whether they are informal or formal support mechanisms. In terms of the latter, most refugees are cognizant of only the largest international organizations such as the UN. These organization types are unable to address the overwhelming everyday needs of refugees outside the realm of legal and human rights, protection, resettlement, and repatriation. In some cases, the support refugees seek from a particular organization may extend beyond its mandate. As a result, when participants seek help from these institutions they are often deferred to multiple appointments or other organizations. They end up spending money and time they do not have for little or no results. Formal organizations are consequently perceived as incapable of providing the support they need. One participant for instance, described how *UNHCR gives out appointments but they're not helpful and nothing gets resolved*. Women thus remain reliant on the informal connection networks outlined above.

Ultimately, connections act as a fundamental ingredient for participants to resolve their concern of achieving *better* as defined in chapter 5. A Somali friend once remarked how she had no problem lending money to a relative *because you never know when you might need that person*. The nature of connections in participants' lives also points to "affective behavior" extending from the "economy of affection." In this informal

political economy, individuals survive without formal assistance from states or institutions by way of investing in personal relationships. Affective behavior is not “an expression of irrationality or altruism.” Rather it is driven and influenced by context to obtain otherwise impossible goals.<sup>120</sup> Recognizing the prevalence of this behavior amongst participants helps to inform appropriate external support measures. More specifically, it tells us that if we are to construct ways to support and empower Somali urban refugee women, formal support mechanisms must build upon existing informal institutions and modes of behavior. This is conducive to context, culture, and most importantly, has already proven to work.

### ***Being Disconnected: Implications***

Lessened connections result in increased vulnerability to context. Data indicates that those who are severely disconnected may attempt to generate income or obtain shelter through gang membership, rushed marriage, or prostitution. These can be characterized as negative connections, as they pose dangers to the physical and emotional health of women. Additional data collection is needed to establish the validity of these suggestions, identify variables that drive women to such measures, and shed light on why they have been unable to create more positive connections that do not endanger their security or health.

Lastly, most participants express a degree of disconnection from their host-community, the Kenyan government, and state institutions. They believe that *if you're a refugee, you have no rights*. While not frequently discussed in interviews, some also

perceive their connections to Somali-Kenyans (Kenyan nationals of ethnic Somali descent) as beneficial to their circumstances as refugees in a foreign country. As one participant remarked, *Somali-Kenyans are helping Somali refugees through family connections. Without Somali-Kenyans we'd have nothing.* Indeed at the time of data collection a Somali-Kenyan named Yusuf Hassan was a Kenyan Member of Parliament representing the district within which Islii is located. His political position provided participants and community members with a sense of hope, believing that *he talks for us.* According to community members, one of the most significant infrastructure projects I observed in Islii—a road on Second Avenue—was the result of Yusuf Hassan's representation. While the scope of this study does not cover issues relating to the legal frameworks in relation to refugee status in Kenya, I have included resources addressing these topics in the endnotes.<sup>121</sup>

### ***Self Development***

*Developing through Education.* Self-development is used as a first, crucial step for advancing personally. Over time, participants self-develop through various initiatives including language learning and computer classes; madrassa; tailoring; or workshops on small business training, household finance management, or health. Participants identify a linkage between a lack of education and lessened access to life-sustaining opportunities.

One described how,

*...when a person lacks education, they are just a plain person. Education is the key of life, that's just my opinion. If a person does have an education, this means they can use it to work and support and educate their kids and their community.*

While education is used almost universally as a vehicle for personal advancement it is a small part of a larger strategy towards collective enrichment as discussed in chapter 5. Somali urban refugee women do not conceive of themselves as capable contributors without it:

*Women are focusing on first educating themselves because they cannot benefit anyone else until they are more educated; without education they can't do anything for their own self or for their family.*

*To benefit the community she believes she has to improve on a personal level.*

*I have to be able to help myself first before I can help others. If you are not confident in yourself you can't be of help to others.*

In short, *education is the key of everything* in the eyes of participants. During personal conversations with Somali community members and students at local schools, education was often referred to as *light* or *life*. One participant even remarked that those without education *are like animals*.

Observations suggest that language education is one of the most immediately accessible self-development tools in Islii. This extends from scholarships, free or discounted classes offered through local community centers, schools, or non-governmental groups.<sup>122</sup> More specifically, English language capacity is perceived as the most fundamental element of self-development in the refugee context:

*We want and need many things, but first and foremost we want education, and first language education to learn English.*

*He says that language is a problem, that this is one of the biggest obstacles for refugee women in Islii...imagine, coming to a completely new country and trying to survive and not knowing the language. This is difficult.*

*Language education helps to strengthen [women's] ideas and also their access to business.*

In acquiring English or Swahili language ability in Nairobi, their world becomes bigger than the local Somali community. Host-society immersion for instance is more feasible: *Language is what really helps [Somali refugee women in Islii] to connect to host society; language breaks the barrier.* Language ability further helps a woman to independently address common problems relating to rent payment disputes, renewal of legal immigration documents, or their human rights. Job access is also broadened as many Islii businesses employing refugees service foreigners or locals. Through language participants also create meaningful social connections with female peers during class meetings. During one interview a participant remarked that *women in the English classes are becoming friends with one another and helping out one another, taking care of each other.* The significance of foreign language capacity is also highlighted in Loveness Schafer's writing on East African refugee women. She stresses that if women cannot speak the language used by officials during the asylum process, they face challenges in "negotiating the entire process of fleeing their homes and seeking refuge." It is for instance, difficult for them to "relate their experiences" or substantiate their claims to being a refugee.<sup>123</sup>

There are obstacles that prevent participants from taking full advantage of self-development opportunities, especially those that are free or discounted. For example, women of all ages face potential security risks when leaving the household. This most often relates to fear of run-ins with Kenyan authorities due to their refugee status:



*If they leave the house they're basically risking a run-in with police, which means possible bribes. They have to pay rent, bribes, everything to sustain life for selves and kids in Islii. These are primary obstacles to being able to develop oneself.*

Self-development opportunities are also hindered by economic instability. For instance, women working in a self- or family-owned business are unable to afford hiring additional employees. As such, they cannot afford time away from their business unless it relates to a short excursion for prayers when a neighboring business owner can look after their shop.

A third significant but immediately curable obstacle is the outreach gap. As discussed earlier, some women are unaware of free or discounted literacy and capacity-building courses even when institutions are a few minutes walk from their homes or workplaces. There are at least two reasons for this. First, Islii has inadequate modes of broad advertisement. Self-development opportunities are thus typically communicated through word of mouth. Formal modes of advertisement--occurring through banners and signs outside of buildings or popular Somali television channels such as Horn Cable TV or Universal Television--are largely geared towards business advertisement. The aforementioned fear of Kenyan authorities along with cultural norms and life responsibilities also precludes any exploratory wandering in search of available opportunities. Second, effective outreach is also hindered by poor program or institutional coordination. Islii has no major community hubs that can advertise and coordinate the many ad-hoc initiatives and programs that are available through various formal or informal institutions.

Single mothers lacking family or group connections typically forego personal self-development for the sake of their children, especially if they have reached the

primary school age.<sup>124</sup> A women's day will typically begin at five AM, waking kids, praying, cooking, working a full day, and tending to household affairs in the evening. This continues until 11 PM or shortly after midnight.<sup>125</sup> If they can afford it, Somali urban refugee women will rely on hiring 'house-girls.' These are typically local Kenyan women that clean and cook, working for the equivalent of approximately 60 cents to a dollar per day. Single mothers also rely on their young daughters to assist in running a home. Male siblings are rarely given household duties. The time to keep a home running is greatly increased by poor equipment. For instance, participants cannot afford refrigerators. This requires at least one or two trips to the market per day. Laundry is washed by hand and air-dried and gas or electric stoves are also an expensive luxury. Heat comes from burning coal in small traditional stoves that sit on the ground. As such, small tasks such as boiling water, making tea, or cooking a meal require copious amounts of time. They simultaneously pose health dangers as coal stoves are used inside the household with insufficient ventilation. When single mothers join social connection networks, their options begin to open up and their own self-development becomes more feasible: they gain new ideas and greater financial footing.

For young, unmarried Somali urban refugee women with no immediate family in Islii, self-development may be hindered by connections that are limiting. There is a great deal of reliance on friends, peers, or extended family members for basic needs and shelter. One participant reluctantly passed up an education scholarship offered by a Canadian NGO after her host family threatened to kick her out of their home should she go to class. She summarized how,

*...there is access to free education and schools, but because for those that don't have their families with them in Nairobi, they are relying on other people. You are safe when you're on their rules and regulations, which is to be there at home all the time 24/7. Shelter is the main thing.*

Some young women also bear the burden of supporting families outside of Somalia and feel forced to forego self-development: *She doesn't go to school, but is only working. She doesn't go to school because she feels responsible to take care of her family back home in Somalia. If she goes to school, she says that she's putting all her mind into school and not work, so she can't do it.*

#### ***A Lack of Self-Development Opportunities: Implications***

Self-development is a tool that helps Somali urban refugee women to transcend the constraints of context. Without it they are more homebound and miss out on meaningful encounters with people and programs that help them inject a sense of security and hope into their lives. A lack of self-development also has implications on connecting with the Kenyan host-society: *She wants to better herself academically so she can communicate with people around her.* This is problematic for long-term refugees that are not afforded the options of resettlement and repatriation and for the time being must grapple with host-society integration.

**CHAPTER 7**  
**SOMALI URBAN REFUGEE WOMEN:**  
**CONTEXTUALIZED EMPOWERMENT & WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

This thesis examined the research problem of where and how Somali urban refugee women can contribute to the rebuilding of their society during exile and into the postwar period. Specific research questions surrounded participants' main concerns, the roles they are playing in exile, and what these conclusions mean for empowerment, women's rights, and the postwar period in a Somali context.

Using classic grounded theory methodology, I was able to identify a shared main concern of participants (*achieving better*) in addition to explaining how they resolve this concern (*investing in connections and self-development*). Chapter 5's analysis of the main concern also rendered a contextualized definition of empowerment. In chapter 6, the behaviors involved with resolving their main concern shed light on *how* participants can be empowered. Together these helped to inform the policy recommendation outlined below. Amongst other benefits, this intervention will channel support into the comparatively new role that Somali women play in exile, namely that of breadwinner. This is one of the key areas where they need the most support.

The conclusions also have bearing on a theoretical level. They suggest that western or liberal feminist agendas alone are not sufficient in setting forth a well-informed understanding of what 'women's rights' mean for Somali urban refugee women

in Nairobi. This has much to do with participants' collective orientation, which includes a desire to see men increase their participation in family life. As such, the research gives weight to the importance of context when building a framework for understanding women's rights, and furthermore, it shows that 'third world' feminism is a more appropriate point of departure in building an analytic framework.

## **CONTEXTUALIZED EMPOWERMENT**

### ***What is Empowerment?***

Chapter 5 established that women are primarily concerned with achieving better, understood as circumstantial transcendence, personal and collective enrichment, and greater vital, economic, and social security. This renders a picture of empowerment specific to the context of participants' lives. A contextualized definition ensures that initiatives and resources aimed at the empowerment of Somali urban refugee women are prioritized towards the most critical areas of need and maximized to the extent possible.

While generalized definitions of empowerment are important to address issues such as gender violence or detrimental social practices, they may not necessarily apply in all contexts. As an example, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development emphasizes how globally, women have less education opportunity than men and are "over-represented among the poor and powerless."<sup>126</sup> While this is certainly true in other contexts it does not strongly apply in participants' urban community of Islii, where men and women are often facing the same challenges

and limitations. The analysis from chapter 5 suggests the following definition of empowerment:

- **Mitigating Consequences of Refugee Status.** Empowerment entails reducing the negative consequences of refugee status to the greatest degree possible *outside* of resettlement or repatriation. This includes addressing the impact that refugee status has on: a) women's ability to move freely on local and regional levels; b) the opportunity that participants' children will have following completion of primary school, high school, and University; and, c) emotional well being.
- **Overcoming Mindset.** Empowerment would also entail helping both Somali men and women overcome the mindset that women are only homemakers. As emphasized in chapter 5, in practice women are breadwinners in Islii. Consequently, it is the social norm, as it exists in people's minds, which needs to be overcome; it is not an issue of practice. This may ensure that in a different context, the practice of breadwinning will still be a socially accepted norm in Somali society if women so choose that path.
- **Access to Opportunity.** This includes access to, a) economic opportunity leading to economic stability *and* independence, and b) English language learning opportunity.
- **Collective Advancement.** As demonstrated in preceding chapters, women seek self-advancement but largely as a strategy towards collective empowerment. Empowerment should thus be understood within the framework of collective outcomes for the family and community, including their male counterparts.

The above finds definitional overlap with Guidelines on Women's Empowerment for the UN Resident Coordinator System, which describes empowerment as: 1) a women's sense of self-worth; 2) their right to have and to determine choices; 3) their right to have access to opportunities and resources; 4) their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and 5) their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.<sup>127</sup> At a general level this definition applies to participants of this study. However, it does not bear emphasis on the contextualized definition outlined above, which stresses that, "women's power is thus premised on a collective notion of

empowerment.”<sup>128</sup> This is a critical distinction as the ‘what’ of empowerment will ultimately inform the ‘how.’

### ***How is Empowerment Achieved?***

The overarching conclusions and emergent hypotheses from chapter 6 inform the way empowerment can be approached in participants’ environment of Islii. These conclusions include for instance, the empowering nature of group connections in comparison to other emergent connection types. In addition, the conclusion that self-development opportunity tends to increase when women have a higher degree of interpersonal connections. I suggest then, that the following key components should guide external empowerment measures in Islii:

- **Coordination.** Islii has a surprising amount of available social and economic resources, albeit some are informal and largely ad-hoc. Empowering women should start with, a) surveying the already existing institutions and resources in Islii made available to women. Heavy emphasis should be placed on existing services that offer self-development or economic mobilization opportunity, and b) coordinating, synthesizing, and increasing the visibility of these existing initiatives to cover the outreach gap.
- **Increase the Scope of Group Connections.** As illustrated in chapter 6, ayuta groups emerged as the most empowering and least limiting connection type in this research, giving rise to economic and social benefits of a collective nature. To the extent possible, these groups should be scaled-up in number and reach.
- **Integrate Informal & Formal Institutional Practices.**<sup>129</sup> Chapter 6 also demonstrated that integrating ayuta group connections with formal institutional oversight, helped to maximize the potential of these groups by offering encouragement, facilitation, and a formalized way to keep track of financial transactions between women. This melding of informal and formal institutional practices should continue, with other possibilities for integration identified.
- **Work Incrementally.** Data and observations suggest that refugee women perceive long-term goals as achievable despite overwhelming structural obstacles. They are satisfied working towards their aims incrementally no matter how small the step forward. One participant explained how money-pooling groups have *...a huge positive impact for Somali women. They are starting small and conducting small business with small amounts of money but they are being successful because they set small and attainable goals.* External support

measures would thus benefit by adopting a highly incremental strategy. It allows for the piloting of initiatives that might be effective and also a flexibility of process to drop and adopt various operational components.

- **Consider Proximity.** Lastly, while not elicited from participant commentary, my observations in the field suggest that empowerment should be approached in a way that is as local as possible in planning and implementation. This may ensure the longevity of empowerment outcomes.

To illustrate, I recall a Canadian non-governmental group that intended to start a Somali beading project for women in Islii. While it seemed that the project idea was well received by potential participants (and might be ‘better than nothing’) I question how empowering it is, particularly when asking: what happens if the jewelry women make are not sold in overseas markets? Will women be able to plan and control the types of beading they produce? Will such a project concentrate economic power into women’s hands? In short, women do not just need income; they need livelihoods that are built and sustained locally with control over the process and implementation.

It is important to emphasize that the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of empowerment derived from this data set is a contextualized one. As pointed out in an earlier chapter, Sørensen remarks that the initial categorization of women as a single group is meant to emphasize their different wartime experiences compared to men. Beyond this distinction we must recognize that within the category of women there is a wide range of wartime experiences and perspectives. As such, the conclusions emerging from this data set may be quite different from those derived from rural refugee camps, different diaspora societies around the world, and within Somalia itself. Indeed, prior interviews I have conducted with Somali women in the United States diaspora illustrate that asking about ‘women’s role’ in Somali society invokes a different set of struggles and questions. This includes a perceived struggle between competing identities extending from resettlement in countries outside Somalia and relations with the male gender. As pointed out in prior chapters, within this data set there are also differing categories of women, including those that are middle-aged or young and unmarried. While I have integrated their main concern and the



behaviors associated with resolving this concern, I have also shown that they can face varying limitations and challenges.

Overall, any external support measures that incorporate the above components may work to address the urgent humanitarian needs in the specific context of Islia, including those of an economic nature. They will also work to support participants where they need it most (the breadwinner role) and increase the chance of institutional longevity and transferability into a postwar period in Somalia. The method I used to identify these components could be employed in other diaspora environments to render yet additional context-appropriate measures of support.

### **THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS: CONTEXTUALIZING WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

I begin this section by discussing the first legal construct in Somalia to address women's rights.<sup>130</sup> This occurred during President Siyad Barre's tenure under the heading of the Family Law of 1975. Amongst other issues this law attempted to rid Somalia of the "gender hierarchy" between men and women. This would allow for women to become "...socially and politically active citizens"<sup>131</sup> and more purposively shape their roles outside of motherhood, childrearing, and the household. Ultimately these reforms did not come to full realization, attributed to failures in educating the public about women's equality and enforcing the measures outlined by the law. This was particularly true outside of urban areas.<sup>132</sup>

While today the Family Law is discredited due to its association with Siyad Barre's regime,<sup>133</sup> governing authorities in Somalia have worked towards rebuilding legal

structures that guarantee the rights of women. Recently, Somalia's internationally recognized federal government approved a draft constitution with important stipulations for women. For instance, banning feminine genital mutilation, addressing gender violence and discrimination, requiring that women "be included in all national institutions," and including quotas for political representation.<sup>134</sup> Semi-autonomous governing authorities such as Somaliland have done the same, their constitution stating that "all citizens of Somaliland shall enjoy equal rights and obligations before the law, and shall not be accorded precedence on ground of color, clan, birth, language, gender, property, status, opinion, etc...."<sup>135</sup> The problem however, reflects what followed in 1975 with Barre's Family Law, namely a lack of effective implementation. For instance, in Somaliland insufficient education and punitive mechanisms preclude practical adoption outside of ink and paper.<sup>136</sup>

The nature of these sought after changes by part of the Family Law mirror in part the liberal feminist framework, whose "main thrust...is that female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that blocks women's entrance to and success in the so-called public world." Women are ultimately perceived as less capable than men and thus face "systematic [disadvantage]." They are discriminated against in the "academy, the forum, and the marketplace." In short, according to this theory it is the playing field that must be equalized.<sup>137</sup> It is quite possible then that 'western' women's movements in the 1970's influenced what was happening in Somalia—indeed Shahrashoub Razavi and Carol Miller point out that the "resurgence of the women's

movement in northern countries in the 1970s” (equal rights, equity, employment and citizenship) influenced at least the “women in development” framework.<sup>138</sup>

The data suggests that western or liberal feminist frameworks on their own, and even the framework that was set forth in Somalia in 1975, are not sufficient to properly define or articulate a women’s rights agenda in the Somali refugee context, with radical feminism being another example. In this brand of feminism, it is patriarchy that is perceived as the problem. As such, radical feminists suggest ripping out the system “root and branch” which includes getting rid of its social and cultural institutions such as family and organized religion.<sup>139</sup> Given the collective orientation of research participants, with particular reference to family and greater male inclusion, this framework like other western frameworks do not appropriately apply.

With this in mind, an analysis of women’s rights in participants’ context would benefit from using third world feminisms as a point of departure. Like ‘western’ oriented feminism—which is “neither singular nor homogenous in its goals, interests, or analyses”<sup>140</sup>—third world feminism has a wide range of perspectives. It does however move beyond framing the issue of women’s oppression as solely attributable to gender discrimination. As Cheryl Johnson-Odim writes:

“While it is clear that sexual egalitarianism is a major goal on which all feminists can agree, gender discrimination is neither the sole nor perhaps the primary locus of oppression of Third World women. Thus, a narrowly defined feminism, taking the eradication of gender discrimination as the route to ending women’s oppression, is insufficient to redress the oppression of Third World women...”<sup>141</sup>

While in the most overarching sense, the history of all feminisms have emerged “*in relation* to other struggles,”<sup>142</sup> third world feminism emphasizes the specific histories that each brand of feminism has inherited *from*. Chandra Talpade Mohanty points out that,

“...black, white, and other third world women have very different histories with respect to the particular inheritance of post-fifteenth-century Euro-American hegemony: the inheritance of slavery, enforced migration, plantation and indentured labor, colonialism, imperial conquest, and genocide.”

As such, third world feminists stress context, both the “specific locations and histories of struggle of people of color and postcolonial peoples, and on the day-to-day strategies of survival utilized by such peoples.”<sup>143</sup>

In short, discussing women’s rights in the context of Somali urban refugee women cannot be limited to an analytic framework stressing solely gender, patriarchy or a leveled playing field. While these components may contribute to an understanding of why Somali women have traditionally found themselves to be of lesser status than men and thus have not enjoyed equal levels of self-actualization, they are not alone sufficient in helping us understand what women’s rights means to participants in Islii, which like empowerment is in part a collective phenomena.

I also note that giving shape to women’s rights for participants may require more thinking on the new spaces that both Somali women and men occupy as a result of war and changed context. While ‘women as breadwinners’ is a gain (in practice) for women, it does not yet seem as a completely socially accepted mindset, thus may lose ground in different contexts. As such, discussing the new roles of women may equally require research and analysis on the consequent new roles of men. Otherwise, as Nauja Kleist has shown, women’s rights or empowerment may be considered as “male misrecognition.”<sup>144</sup> It is perhaps safe to assume that while participants would like to keep the gains won in the space of war and refugee life they would also be concerned with

cultivating opportunity for their male counterparts, as these represent their husbands, brothers, and sons.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS: LEGAL CONSTRUCTS & A PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATION**

This final section puts forth a practical roadmap outlined below. In essence, it seeks to increase the scope, capacity, and visibility of an existing informal institution that helps mobilize women economically and socially. In this section, I will also address a gap pointed out by Birgitte Sørensen included in chapter 2, that in rebuilding societies women are often limited to community-based levels versus the formal institutional level. While the recommendation I put forth is indeed community-based, I use the argument of UN-INSTRAW to suggest linkage between this proposed external empowerment intervention in Nairobi and implementation of UNSCR1325 in Somalia, thus pointing out the potential of refugee women to have a direct hand in increasing peace and security for women at the highest of levels.

#### ***Policy Recommendation: Comfort Center (Meel Raaxo)***

Islia is severely impoverished and continues to grow as rural ‘camp’ refugees move towards locations that offer sustainable opportunities. It is currently saturated with a high amount of locally- and internationally-based organizations but also informal institutional practices. All of these operate on a largely ad-hoc basis. This acts as the driving rationale for the below policy recommendation.

This section outlines a roadmap for *Meel Raaxo*, which in English translates into a ‘comfortable place.’ The primary function of Meel Raaxo would be to streamline informal and formal institutional efforts that offer support for women and community members in Islii. I stress that this is not a suggestion for a new organization or program.

The following points were considered when constructing this recommendation: a) the role where women need the most support (breadwinner); b) what women are concerned about and the existing coping mechanisms they employ to support themselves and others; c) a contextualized understanding of empowerment delineated above; and, d) the outreach gap. The nature of this recommendation also borrows from a point made by Pierre Englebert, in that during reconstruction poor coordination between donors results in “grave consequences for state building where myriad actors claim to have a role.”<sup>145</sup>

The basic components of Meel Raaxo are as follows:

- **Primary Function.** Meel Raaxo would serve as a highly visible center of coordination, connection, and exchange. Initially, it would have two primary functions: First, it would offer a survey of the formal institutional landscape of Islii. Initially, most emphasis would be placed on institutions offering free, discounted, or reasonably priced English language classes.

Second, informal institutions—such as ayuta group connections—could be formally registered. Women in the community could thus come to register for groups that are close in proximity to their home or work places, register a new group, or scale-up existing groups through consolidation. As Meel Raaxo grows it may be beneficial to incorporate other incremental measures to increase community buy-in and inclusion. Learning from the participants of this study, initiatives in Islii may have the greatest chance of survival when they are incremental and feasible. During group meetings, amongst other topics women could be encouraged to share best business practices or discuss the gaps in business within Islii, as many women participate in some form of small business.

- **Location.** Meel Raaxo would be located in participants’ community of Islii. This urban neighborhood is predominantly occupied and run by ethnic Somalis. It is advisable for Meel Raaxo to be located along First Avenue, between 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Juja Road, with preference on the half of First Avenue closer to 12<sup>th</sup> Street. This area is highly visible, receives the most foot traffic, and also has the highest concentration of large-scale businesses. It also tends to be one of the safest areas in Islii, particularly after dark.

- **Rationale.** A place of coordination would address the severe outreach gap between existing resources and Somali urban refugee women. It would thus provide all women—whether long time residents or new arrivals—a ‘go-to’ place to determine where they can find a needed service or connect with an economic exchange (ayuta) group. The information provided by Meel Raaxo however, would be made available to the entire community.

Meel Raaxo is ultimately a way to collectively empower women, their families, and community. It may also subtly discourage the mindset amongst women and community members that it is only ‘western’ or ‘white’ people that can help them achieve better. As one participant remarked, *only the white Europeans can help us [at the UN]*. It will address this issue by synthesizing the organizations and practices that many community members themselves have put in place. It creates a strategy of intervention that builds upon existing informal structures rather than introducing superfluous new ones. In the final section below, I will discuss how this intervention may contribute to implementing UNSCR 1325 in Somalia.

### ***Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325***

In October 2000 the United Nations Security Council put forth the first resolution (S/RES/1325) on women, peace and security, marking the “first time” the Security Council “addressed the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women” and also recognized their unique contributions to peace and security.<sup>146</sup> In short, the Resolution encourages the protection of women and also a mainstreaming of gendered perspectives into planning and implementation of programs, operations, and initiatives.

In relating UNSCR 1325 to the Somali context, UN-INSTRAW writes that,

“Resolution 1325 needs to be put into practice in Somalia to ensure the involvement of women in the current Somali peace and state-building processes, and to improve the

security of women and girls in the country. At this stage of the Somali armed conflict, a National Action Plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325 is not feasible since stable institutions are needed to monitor its implementation. However, the work of Somali women's associations both in Somalia and in Diaspora countries is an important resource to strengthen the role of women in Somali society. These women's work should thus be taken into account in the ongoing peace- and State-building processes to prepare the ground for the future full implementation of Resolution 1325."<sup>147</sup>

If there is indeed a potential linkage between the “full” implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the work of “women’s associations” in the Diaspora, I suggest that the policy recommendation outlined above can serve the purpose of laying groundwork for UNSCR 1325’s implementation.

To be clear this thesis does not suggest the random mobilization of Somali urban refugee women or a building of new, formal institutions. As shown through the model delineated above, I suggest the strengthening and consolidation of existing group connections in the form of ayuta groups. This practice has been proven to work in perpetuating women’s survival and collective advancement. It also has been and remains a central part of social connection and collective mobilization for women in Somalia and in exile. Lastly, these groups are receptive to, and participate in, opportunities that help women advance on personal and collective levels. As such, in increasing their scope and capacity through Meel Raaxo, they can eventually be mobilized to help further the implementation of UNSCR 1325 if that is determined as a desired step.

The feasibility of this linkage is evident in the “Sixth Clan” example in Somalia. This was a successful initiative achieved by the Somali non-governmental group Save Somali Women and Children. By exercising their collective voice, women were for the first time represented in the formal Somali peace process during the Conference on



National Reconciliation in March 1998. This group was comprised predominantly of women with varying clan origins, thus rendering their name.<sup>148</sup>

In the postwar period in Somalia, women may thus become important drivers of economic and social development but also implementers of legal constructs that have been made for their protection and advancement. As the failure of the 1975 Family Law demonstrated, without implementation, advancements in legal protection are nothing more than a piece of paper.

In concluding, Fredrik Galtung and Martin Tisné write that the postwar period is a critical juncture during which the future of a country is decided. They cite Ashraf Ghani's characterization of this juncture as an "open-moment."<sup>149</sup> I question this characterization. There are millions of capable refugees living for extended periods of time all over the world. By scaling up and coordinating their existing coping mechanisms and demonstrated creativity while they are in exile, we can help them continue to build transferrable ideas and capacities to take with them into the postwar period. This may work to alleviate the pressure of an 'open moment.' It also recognizes that those who are frequently considered among the poorest and most needy are indeed capable of innovation and can directly contribute to the peace, security, and development of their country following war.

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#### Notes & References

<sup>1</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2012 Regional Operations Profile: Africa, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a02d7fd6.html>, accessed 17 July 2012.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Refugees in the Horn of Africa: Somali Displacement Crisis Information Sharing Portal, Regional Overview: Registered Somali Refugee Population, <http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/regional.php>, [accessed 3 September 2012]; Note that "in UNHCR statistics, refugees include individuals recognized under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees; its 1967 Protocol; the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee

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Problems in Africa; those recognized in accordance with the UNHCR Statute; individuals granted complementary forms of protection; or, those enjoying 'temporary protection'." Also, "registered" refers to a legal record created for a refugee, allowing for the administration of entitlements or delivery of services. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR Statistical Online Population Database: Sources, Methods and Data Considerations, Data Collection Methods, [www.unhcr.org/statistics/STATISTICS/45c06c662.html#refugees](http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/STATISTICS/45c06c662.html#refugees) [accessed 3 September 2012].

<sup>3</sup> Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah and UN officials quoted in Jeffrey Gettleman, "Somalia worst humanitarian crisis in Africa, UN says," *The New York Times*, 19 November 2007.

<sup>4</sup> For examples see United States Institute of Peace: United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, *Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2009), pp. 20, 39, 47-50, 53, 54, 81, 99 (women) and 40, 50, 54, 57, 175 (refugees).

<sup>5</sup> Idean Salehyan and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, "Refugees and the Spread of Civil War," *International Organization*, 60 (Spring 2006), pp. 335-366.

<sup>6</sup> Assefaw Bariagaber, *Conflict and the Refugee Experience: Flight, Exile, and Repatriation in the Horn of Africa* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Josh Kron, "Somalia's Wars Swell a Refugee Camp in Kenya," *The New York Times*, 11 November 2010.

<sup>8</sup> For examples see: Loveness H. Schafer "True Survivors: East African Refugee Women," *Africa Today*, Vol. 49, No. 2, Summer 2002, pp. 29-48; United States Institute of Peace: United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, *Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2009), pp. 47, 54, 96; Judith Gardner & Judy El Bushra (ed.), *Somalia the Untold Story: The War through the Eyes of Somali Women* (London: Pluto Press, 2004); Awa Mohamed Abdi, "Refugees, Gender Based Violence and Resistance: A Case Study of Somali Refugee Women in Kenya," in *Gender Migration and Citizenship: Making Local, National, and Transnational Connections*, Evangelia Tastsoglou and Alexandria Dobrowolsky (eds) (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), pp. 231-251; The Refugee Consortium of Kenya, *Enhancing the Protection of Refugee Women in Nairobi: A Survey on Risks, Protection Gaps, and Coping Mechanisms of Refugee Women in Urban Areas*, April 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Loveness H. Schafer "True Survivors: East African Refugee Women," *Africa Today*, Vol. 49, No. 2, Summer 2002, pp. 30, 31.

<sup>10</sup> Vanessa Pupavac, "Refugees in the 'sick role': stereotyping refugees and eroding refugee rights," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 128, August 2006, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Here I refer to comparatively reduced violence in the northwest and northeast regions of Somaliland and Puntland. I also refer to recent gains made in the south-central regions, including the election of a new parliament; election of the new president on 10 September 2012 (Hassan Sheikh Mohamud) and acceptance of election results by the outgoing president (Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed); an approved draft constitution by the National Constituent Assembly; and the ousting of Al Shabaab from the country's capital of Mogadishu and other strategically important regions. See also comments from Ken Menkhaus, "The Somali Spring: Is the poster child of failed states finally getting its act together?," *Foreign Policy Online*, 24 September 2012, available at [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/09/24/the\\_somali\\_spring](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/09/24/the_somali_spring), [accessed 24 September 2012]; Mohamed Ibrahim and Jeffrey Gettleman, "Islamist Rebels Flee Key Port in Somalia," *New York Times*, 29 September 2012, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/30/world/africa/islamist-rebels-pull-out-of-somali-port-city.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/30/world/africa/islamist-rebels-pull-out-of-somali-port-city.html?_r=0), [accessed 1 October 2012].

<sup>12</sup> Birgitte Sørensen, "Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Issues and Sources," United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies, War-torn Societies Project Occasional Paper No. 3, June 1998, p. 46.

<sup>13</sup> Heidi Hudson, "Gender, Peace-Building, and Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Africa: Breaking the chain between inequality and violence," in Dirk Kotze and Hussein Solomon (eds), *The State of Africa: Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development* (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2008), p. 9.

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<sup>14</sup> Camille Pampell Conaway. "Charting Progress: The Role of Women in Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations," United States Institute of Peace Working Group on the Role of Women in Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations, 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Birgitte Sørensen, "Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Issues and Sources," United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies, War-torn Societies Project Occasional Paper No. 3, June 1998; Johnson Sirleaf and Elisabeth Rehn, *Women, War, Peace: The Independent Expert's Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building* (New York: UNDP, 2002).

<sup>16</sup> Karen Jacobsen, "Can Refugees Benefit the State? Refugee Resources and African Statebuilding," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (2002); James Milner, "Refugees and the Peacebuilding Process," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 224, November 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Harris Rimmer, "Reconceiving refugees and internally displaced persons as transitional justice actors," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 187, April 2010. In her report, the term transitional justice is defined by activities including constitution drafting; new parliaments, trials and truth commissions; and "broader state-building and governance issues such as legislative agendas, security sector reform, national development plans, budgets, and so on," pp. 3,4.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Geographic Information Systems and Mapping Unit/UNHCR Regional Support Hub in Nairobi): Registered Somalis in the East and Horn of Africa Region as of 19 August 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Sara Pavanello, Samir Elhawary, and Sara Pantuliano, Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper: *Hidden and Exposed: Urban Refugees in Nairobi, Kenya* (London: Humanitarian Policy Group, March 2010), pp. 11, 7, 8.

<sup>20</sup> For perspectives on postwar reconstruction definitions and perspectives, see Janvier Nkurunziza, "Civil War and Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Africa," United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, July 2008; United States Institute of Peace: United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, *Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2009); Monica Llamazares, "Post-War Peacebuilding Reviewed: A Critical Exploration of Generic Approaches to Post-War Reconstruction," University of Bradford Department of Peace Studies' Centre for Conflict Resolution: Working Paper 14, February 2005; Pierre Englebert and Denis M. Tull, "Postconflict Reconstruction in Africa: Flawed Ideas about Failed States," *International Security*, Vol. 32 No. 4, Spring 2008; The New Partnership for Africa's Development Secretariat: Governance Peace and Security Programme, "African Post-Conflict Reconstruction Policy Framework," June 2005.

<sup>21</sup> Camille Pampell Conaway, "Charting Progress: The Role of Women in Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations," United States Institute of Peace Working Group on the Role of Women in Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations, 2005, pp. 1-8.

<sup>22</sup> Countries within Africa, Eastern Europe, South and Southeast Asia are discussed.

<sup>23</sup> For more on their role as beneficiaries, see Johnson Sirleaf and Elisabeth Rehn, *Women, War, Peace: The Independent Expert's Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building* (New York: UNDP, 2002), p. 124.

<sup>24</sup> Birgitte Sørensen, "Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Issues and Sources," United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies, War-torn Societies Project Occasional Paper No. 3, June 1998, pp. 1, 2.

<sup>25</sup> She cites Angola, El Salvador, Eritrea, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, Uganda, and Vietnam as examples.

<sup>26</sup> Birgitte Sørensen, "Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Issues and Sources," United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies, War-torn Societies Project Occasional Paper No. 3, June 1998, pp. iv, vi, vii, 1, 2, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Birgitte Sørensen, "Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Issues and Sources," United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies, War-torn Societies Project Occasional Paper No. 3, June 1998, p. 29.

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- <sup>28</sup> Johnson Sirleaf and Elisabeth Rehn, *Women, War, Peace: The Independent Expert's Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building* (New York: UNDP, 2002), p. 122.
- <sup>29</sup> Loveness H. Schafer "True Survivors," *Africa Today*, Vol. 49, No. 2, Summer 2002, p. 44.
- <sup>30</sup> Birgitte Sørensen, "Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Issues and Sources," United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies, War-torn Societies Project Occasional Paper No. 3, June 1998, pp. 30, 42.
- <sup>31</sup> Birgitte Sørensen, "Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Issues and Sources," United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies, War-torn Societies Project Occasional Paper No. 3, June 1998, p. 3.
- <sup>32</sup> Emphasis added. Johnson Sirleaf and Elisabeth Rehn, *Women, War, Peace: The Independent Expert's Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building* (New York: UNDP, 2002), pp. 124, 125.
- <sup>33</sup> Birgitte Sørensen, "Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Issues and Sources," United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies, War-torn Societies Project Occasional Paper No. 3, June 1998, p. 14.
- <sup>34</sup> Vanessa Pupavac, "Refugees in the 'sick role': stereotyping refugees and eroding refugee rights," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 128, August 2006, p. 1.
- <sup>35</sup> United States Institute of Peace: United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, *Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2009), pp. 118, 184. Examples include Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Guatemala, Mozambique, and Nagorno-Karabakh, in James Milner, "Refugees and the Peacebuilding Process," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 224, November 2011, pp. 2, 5.
- <sup>36</sup> Sarah Petrin, "Refugee return and state reconstruction: a comparative analysis," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 66, August 2002, pp. 5-7, 15; For more on potential adverse effects, see James Milner, "Refugees and the Peacebuilding Process," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 224, November 2011, p. 7.
- <sup>37</sup> Karen Jacobsen, "Can Refugees Benefit the State? Refugee Resources and African Statebuilding," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (2002), pp. 577-585.
- <sup>38</sup> James Milner, "Refugees and the Peacebuilding Process," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 224, November 2011, pp. 2, 5.
- <sup>39</sup> United National High Commissioner for Refugees cited in James Milner, "Refugees and the Peacebuilding Process," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 224, November 2011, p. 9.
- <sup>40</sup> Loveness H. Schafer "True Survivors," *Africa Today*, Vol. 49, No. 2, Summer 2002, p. 45.
- <sup>41</sup> Participants describe life in Islii as one of transition: *without education we couldn't make it through this transition phase*. This life-in-limbo perspective is shared in Idil Lambo, "In the shelter of each other: notions of home and belonging amongst Somali refugees in Nairobi," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 233, May 2012.
- <sup>42</sup> Loveness H. Schafer "True Survivors," *Africa Today*, Vol. 49, No. 2, Summer 2002, p. 30.
- <sup>43</sup> Excerpt from the standard definition of "survivor" as delineated in Oxford *U.S. English Dictionary* (Online), [http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/american\\_english/survivor?region=us](http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/american_english/survivor?region=us) [accessed 9 September 2012]. Full definition: "a person who survives, especially a person remaining alive after an event in which others have died; the remainder of a group of people or things; a person who copes well with difficulties in their life."
- <sup>44</sup> Debra M. Timmons, *The Sixth Clan—Women Organize for Peace in Somalia: A Review of Published Literature* (Switzerland: University of Peace, 2004), p. 5.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibrahim Nur, <<Annex 5: Somalia Case Study,>> *Gender-Sensitive Programme Design and Planning in Conflict Affected Situations* (London: ACORD, 2002, p. 7 cited in Debra M. Timmons, *The Sixth Clan—*

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*Women Organize for Peace in Somalia: A Review of Published Literature* (Switzerland: University of Peace, 2004), pp. 5-6.

<sup>46</sup> Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction, Third Edition* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2009), Kindle Location 121 of 10,239.

<sup>47</sup> Christine Choi Ahmed cited in Debra M. Timmons, *The Sixth Clan—Women Organize for Peace in Somalia: A Review of Published Literature* (Switzerland: University of Peace, 2004), p. 6.

<sup>48</sup> Judith Gardner & Judy El Bushra (ed.), *Somalia the Untold Story: The War through the Eyes of Somali Women* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p. xi.

<sup>49</sup> Judith Gardner & Judy El Bushra (ed.), *Somalia the Untold Story: The War through the Eyes of Somali Women* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), pp. 9-10; Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001), p. 126.

<sup>50</sup> Debra M. Timmons, *The Sixth Clan—Women Organize for Peace in Somalia: A Review of Published Literature* (Switzerland: University of Peace, 2004), p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> Judith Gardner & Judy El Bushra (ed.), *Somalia the Untold Story: The War through the Eyes of Somali Women* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p. 10.

<sup>52</sup> Birgitte Sørensen, "Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Issues and Sources," United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies, War-torn Societies Project Occasional Paper No. 3, June 1998, p. ii.

<sup>53</sup> Amina M. Warsame, *Queens without Crowns: Somaliland Women's Changing Roles and Peacebuilding*, Horn of Africa Series 4 (Kenya: Life & Peace Institute/Somaliland Women's Research and Action Group, 2001) cited in Judith Gardner & Judy El Bushra (ed.), *Somalia the Untold Story: The War through the Eyes of Somali Women* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), pp. 9-10; Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001), pp. 120-125.

<sup>54</sup> Judith Gardner & Judy El Bushra (ed.), *Somalia the Untold Story: The War through the Eyes of Somali Women* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p. 11.

<sup>55</sup> Participants also drive their daughters to focus on education. This is a departure from "traditional attitudes" in Somalia that have historically barred women from equal education opportunities as men. Maria Beata Tunganraza, NAGAAD: Women's Human Rights in Somaliland, 2010, p. 15.

<sup>56</sup> Judith Gardner & Judy El Bushra (ed.), *Somalia the Untold Story: The War through the Eyes of Somali Women* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p. 10.

<sup>57</sup> Urban refugee women in Nairobi are not alone in taking on growing burdens. In northeast Somalia "a high proportion of male urban dwellers are unemployed and depend on income from relatives, usually female, who in turn depend on informal employment, petty trading and remittances from relatives in the diaspora." Judith Gardner & Judy El Bushra (ed.), *Somalia the Untold Story: The War through the Eyes of Somali Women* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p. 9.

<sup>58</sup> Section 31 under "Refugee, Displaced and Returnee Women," United Nations Population Information Network, UN Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with support from the UN Population Fund: Guidelines on Women's Empowerment for the UN Resident Coordinator System, <http://www.un.org/popin/unfpa/taskforce/guide/iatfwemp.gdl.html> [accessed 29 July 2012].

<sup>59</sup> Emphasis added. Maria Beata Tunganraza, NAGAAD: Women's Human Rights in Somaliland, 2010, p. 16.

<sup>60</sup> Judith Holton in Barney G. Glaser, "The Coding Process and Its Challenges", *Getting out of the Data: Grounded Theory Conceptualization* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2011), p. 164.

<sup>61</sup> Olavur Christiansen, "A Simpler Understanding of Classic GT: How it is a fundamentally different methodology", in Barney G. Glaser and Judith A. Holton (eds.) *The Grounded Theory Seminar Reader* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2007), p. 415.

<sup>62</sup> Barney G. Glaser, *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions*, (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 1998), p. 26; Barney G. Glaser, *The Grounded Theory Perspective: Conceptualization Contrasted with Description* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2001), p. 199.

<sup>63</sup> Judith Holton in Barney G. Glaser, "The Coding Process and Its Challenges", *Getting out of the Data: Grounded Theory Conceptualization* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2011), p. 165.

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<sup>64</sup> Glaser emphasizes that understanding “what is going on” (literally) in the data is premised on one aspect of the constant comparative method, namely “explication de text”, where the researcher is “reading closely line by line to ascertain what exactly the author is saying without imputing what was said, interpreting it or reifying its meaning.” Barney G. Glaser, *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions*, (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 1998), p. 24; Barney Glaser & Anselm Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1967); Given the complexity of the GT process, scholars have sought to emphasize some of the key “hallmarks.” For instance, Odis Simmons emphasizes that there are three hallmarks of classic GT: a) The emergence of a “core variable” also known as the core category. The core category is the central concern of the research participants; b) Suspension of preconception. Prior to data collection, the researcher suspends her preconceptions and trusts in conceptual emergence. It is for this reason the literature is not incorporated into the theory until after data collection has started; and c) Allowing “abstract conceptualizations” to supersede “descriptive interpretations.” Odis Simmons, Grounded Theory Institute: Outline of GT Process, [www.groundedtheory.com/what-is-gt.aspx](http://www.groundedtheory.com/what-is-gt.aspx); Olavur Christiansen has emphasized that there are two key hallmarks: a) To delimit the study to the main concern and its recurrent solution of those being studied (their substantive interests), and b) To prevent preconceived professional concerns to mask what actually goes on in the field of study, and instead to stay open and let patterns emerge from the data. Olavur Christiansen, Grounded Theory Institute: Main Differences between “Classic” or “Glaserian” GT and other methods which call themselves GT, [www.groundedtheory.com/what-is-gt.aspx](http://www.groundedtheory.com/what-is-gt.aspx); Olavur Christiansen, “A Simpler Understanding of Classic GT: How it is a fundamentally different methodology”, in Barney G. Glaser and Judith A. Holton (eds.) *The Grounded Theory Seminar Reader* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2007), p. 404; Barney G. Glaser, *The Grounded Theory Perspective: Conceptualization Contrasted with Description* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2001), p. 51.

<sup>65</sup> Olavur Christiansen, “A Simpler Understanding of Classic GT: How it is a fundamentally different methodology”, in Barney G. Glaser and Judith A. Holton (eds.) *The Grounded Theory Seminar Reader* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2007), p. 403.

<sup>66</sup> Barney G. Glaser, *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions*, (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 1998), pp. 3, 12.

<sup>67</sup> Barney G. Glaser, *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions*, (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 1998), p. 15. Also on page 15, each ‘S’ is described: “Subsequent is what is to be done later as a part of current activity. Simultaneous is doing many things at once, as collecting, coding, analyzing, memoing, sorting and writing—keeping in mind that the relative emphasis keeps changing while proceeding toward the finished product. Serendipitous is being constantly open to new emergents in and from the data and analysis which come as surprise realizations. Lastly, schedule means, of course, the project should have an overall rough schedule with periods set out for collecting data, analyzing it, sorting memos, and writing the product.”

<sup>68</sup> Judith Holton in Barney G. Glaser, “The Coding Process and Its Challenges”, *Getting out of the Data: Grounded Theory Conceptualization* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2011), pp. 169, 170.

<sup>69</sup> For more on the process of constant comparison, see Barney Glaser & Anselm Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1967), pp. 101-115; Olavur Christiansen, “A Simpler Understanding of Classic GT: How it is a fundamentally different methodology”, in Barney G. Glaser and Judith A. Holton (eds.) *The Grounded Theory Seminar Reader* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2007), p. 409. Note that Judith Holton describes “incidents” as “the indicators of a category or concept”, Judith Holton in Barney G. Glaser, “The Coding Process and Its Challenges”, *Getting out of the Data: Grounded Theory Conceptualization* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2011), p. 170.

<sup>70</sup> Barney G. Glaser, *The Grounded Theory Perspective: Conceptualization Contrasted with Description* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2001), p. 10.

<sup>71</sup> Helen Scott, mentoring session with researcher, 2 December 2011.

<sup>72</sup> Olavur Christiansen, “A Simpler Understanding of Classic GT: How it is a fundamentally different methodology”, in Barney G. Glaser and Judith A. Holton (eds.) *The Grounded Theory Seminar Reader* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2007), pp. 408, 409.

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- <sup>73</sup> Barney G. Glaser, *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 1978), p. 57; Odis Simmons, Grounded Theory Institute: Outline of GT Process, [www.groundedtheory.com/what-is-gt.aspx](http://www.groundedtheory.com/what-is-gt.aspx).
- <sup>74</sup> Barney G. Glaser, *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 1978), p. 57.
- <sup>75</sup> Barney G. Glaser, *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 1978), pp. 57-60; Issue of face-sheet variables also discussed in Barney G. Glaser, *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions*, p. 84.
- <sup>76</sup> Olavur Christiansen, "A Simpler Understanding of Classic GT: How it is a fundamentally different methodology", in Barney G. Glaser and Judith A. Holton (eds.) *The Grounded Theory Seminar Reader* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2007), p. 409.
- <sup>77</sup> Olavur Christiansen, "A Simpler Understanding of Classic GT: How it is a fundamentally different methodology", in Barney G. Glaser and Judith A. Holton (eds.) *The Grounded Theory Seminar Reader* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2007), p. 408.
- <sup>78</sup> Barney G. Glaser, *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions*; Odis Simmons, Grounded Theory Institute: Outline of GT Process, [www.groundedtheory.com/what-is-gt.aspx](http://www.groundedtheory.com/what-is-gt.aspx);
- <sup>79</sup> Barney G. Glaser, *Getting out of the Data: Grounded Theory Conceptualization* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2011), p. 13.
- <sup>80</sup> Helen Scott, Online Grounded Theory Seminar, 8 October 2011.
- <sup>81</sup> Barney G. Glaser, *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions*, (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 1998), p. 177.
- <sup>82</sup> Olavur Christiansen, "A Simpler Understanding of Classic GT: How it is a fundamentally different methodology", in Barney G. Glaser and Judith A. Holton (eds.) *The Grounded Theory Seminar Reader* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2007), p. 410.
- <sup>83</sup> The researcher may have to go through more than one phase of conceptual sorting. Helen Scott, Online Grounded Theory Seminar, 8 October 2011.
- <sup>84</sup> Barney G. Glaser, *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 1978), pp. 116-127; Olavur Christiansen, "A Simpler Understanding of Classic GT: How it is a fundamentally different methodology", in Barney G. Glaser and Judith A. Holton (eds.) *The Grounded Theory Seminar Reader* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2007), pp. 410, 411.
- <sup>85</sup> Barney G. Glaser, *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions*, (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 1998), pp. 18-19; Olavur Christiansen, "A Simpler Understanding of Classic GT: How it is a fundamentally different methodology", in Barney G. Glaser and Judith A. Holton (eds.) *The Grounded Theory Seminar Reader* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 2007), p. 411.
- <sup>86</sup> Odis E. Simmons and Toni A. Gregory, "Grounded action: Achieving optimal and sustainable change", *The Grounded Theory Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2004), p. 98.
- <sup>87</sup> Odis E. Simmons and Toni A. Gregory, "Grounded action: Achieving optimal and sustainable change", *The Grounded Theory Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2004), p. 98.
- <sup>88</sup> Barney Glaser & Anselm Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1967), p. 45.
- <sup>89</sup> Barney G. Glaser, *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 1978), p. 36.
- <sup>90</sup> For more on theoretical saturation, see Barney Glaser & Anselm Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1967), pp. 61-62.
- <sup>91</sup> Dr. Helen Scott.
- <sup>92</sup> Barney G. Glaser, *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 1978), pp. 36-54.
- <sup>93</sup> Sara Pavanello, Samir Elhawary, and Sara Pantuliano, Human Policy Group Working Paper: Hidden and Exposed: Urban Refugees in Nairobi, Kenya (London: Human Policy Group, March 2010), p. 8.
- <sup>94</sup> I originally coded this concept as *an ideal future*. Upon discussion of the concept with a practicing grounded theorist, Helen Scott, I adopted the term she suggested (better) as it seemed to more accurately encompass the meaning of the concept, particular in reference to its more immediate properties.

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<sup>95</sup> Helene Shulman Lorenz and Mary Watkins, "Depth Psychology and Colonialism: Individuation, Seeing Through, and Liberation," *Quadrant: The Journal of the C.G. Jung Foundation*, Vol. 33, No. 1, Winter 2003, p.16.

<sup>96</sup> The term "refugeehood" was adapted from Assefaw Bariagaber, *Conflict and the Refugee Experience: Flight, Exile, and Repatriation in the Horn of Africa* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006).

<sup>97</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2012 Regional Operations Profile: Africa, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a02d7fd6.html>, [accessed 17 July 2012].

<sup>98</sup> Sara Pavanello, Samir Elhawary, and Sara Pantuliano, Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper: Hidden and Exposed: Urban Refugees in Nairobi, Kenya (London: Humanitarian Policy Group, March 2010), p. 7.

<sup>99</sup> For another perspective on refugee life and its impact on identity, see Idil Lambo, "In the shelter of each other: notions of home and belonging amongst Somali refugees in Nairobi," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 233, May 2012.

<sup>100</sup> Idil Lambo, "In the shelter of each other: notions of home and belonging amongst Somali refugees in Nairobi," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 233, May 2012, p. 17.

<sup>101</sup> Ioan Lewis, *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland: Culture, History, Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 49.

<sup>102</sup> See also Idil Lambo, "In the shelter of each other: notions of home and belonging amongst Somali refugees in Nairobi," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 233, May 2012, p. 12.

<sup>103</sup> See *Amnesty International*, *From Life Without Peace to Peace Without Life: The Treatment of Somali Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Kenya*, December 2010; *Human Rights Watch*, *From Horror to Hopelessness: Kenya's Forgotten Somali Refugee Crisis*, March 2009; Sara Pavanello, Samir Elhawary, and Sara Pantuliano, Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper: Hidden and Exposed: Urban Refugees in Nairobi, Kenya (London: Humanitarian Policy Group, March 2010); Idil Lambo, "In the shelter of each other: notions of home and belonging amongst Somali refugees in Nairobi," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 233, May 2012, pp. 11-12.

<sup>104</sup> 200,000 Kenyan Shillings is equal to approximately USD 2,375 using current exchange rates. Based on an average rent of approximately USD 150 per month, this would mean more than one year's rent, a nearly impossible number to achieve. This figure is based on my own inquiries into rent prices in Islii and conversations with a variety of residents.

<sup>105</sup> See also Sara Pavanello, Samir Elhawary, and Sara Pantuliano, Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper: Hidden and Exposed: Urban Refugees in Nairobi, Kenya (London: Humanitarian Policy Group, March 2010), p. 8.

<sup>106</sup> See also Idil Lambo, "In the shelter of each other: notions of home and belonging amongst Somali refugees in Nairobi," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 233, May 2012.

<sup>107</sup> It further suggests that beyond their collectively oriented concerns and behaviors, identity is also a collective phenomenon in participants' lives—a woman is a homemaker only insofar as a man is a breadwinner. Consequently, a shift in the 'normal' roles of one gender brings about a shift in the roles of the other, causing a sense of upset for both women and men. Amina Mama emphasizes the collective identity in an African context when writing that "asking a person who he or she is [in Africa]... and a name will quickly be followed by a qualifier, a communal term that will indicate ethnic or clan origins." Joseph I. Omoregbe, *African Philosophy: Yesterday and Today*, in Emmanuel Eze (ed.) *African Philosophy: An Anthology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998) cited in Amina Mama, "Challenging Subjects: Gender and Power in African Contexts," *African Sociological Review*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2001, p. 63.

<sup>108</sup> Johnson Sirleaf and Elisabeth Rehn, *Women, War, Peace: The Independent Expert's Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building* (New York: UNDP, 2002), pp. 132, 133.



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<sup>109</sup> Cheryl Johnson-Odim, "Common Themes, Different Contexts: Third World Women and Feminism," in Chandra Talpade, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds.) *Third World Women and the Politics of Gender* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 315.

<sup>110</sup> While their conception of security is largely related to vital security, researchers stated that, "most urban refugees said they were looking for greater livelihoods opportunities and increased security." Sara Pavanello, Samir Elhawary, and Sara Pantuliano, Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper: *Hidden and Exposed: Urban Refugees in Nairobi, Kenya* (London: Humanitarian Policy Group, March 2010), p. 8. In relation to those within Somalia that demonstrate similar behavior, see UN High Commissioner for Refugees, *Somali displaced continue to move, seeking safety and assistance*, 22 June 2012, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4fe852952.html> [accessed 21 July 2012].

<sup>111</sup> Sara Pavanello, Samir Elhawary, and Sara Pantuliano, Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper: *Hidden and Exposed: Urban Refugees in Nairobi, Kenya* (London: Humanitarian Policy Group, March 2010), p. 8.

<sup>112</sup> Judith Gardner & Judy El Bushra (ed.), *Somalia the Untold Story: The War through the Eyes of Somali Women* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p. xi; See also Idil Lambo, "In the shelter of each other: notions of home and belonging amongst Somali refugees in Nairobi," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 233, May 2012, p. 13.

<sup>113</sup> Greg Collins, "Connected: Exploring the Extraordinary Demand for Telecoms Services in Post-collapse Somalia," *Mobilities*, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 217-218.

<sup>114</sup> Sara Pavanello, Samir Elhawary, and Sara Pantuliano, Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper: *Hidden and Exposed: Urban Refugees in Nairobi, Kenya* (London: Human Policy Group, March 2010), p. 21.

<sup>115</sup> The highly social nature of Somali culture is also mentioned in Idil Lambo, "In the shelter of each other: notions of home and belonging amongst Somali refugees in Nairobi," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 233, May 2012, p. 12.

<sup>116</sup> Charles L. Gesheker and Said A. Warsama, "An Introduction to Humour and Jokes in Somali Culture," *African Languages and Cultures. Supplement*, No. 3, Voice and Power, The Culture of Language in North-East Africa. Essays in honor of B.W. Adrzejewski (1996), p. 142.

<sup>117</sup> The other two types are, 1) "the fantastic or the overstatement of the tall tale," and b) "clever or sharp wit that depended on an unexpected revelation." Margaret Laurence cited in Charles L. Gesheker and Said A. Warsama, "An Introduction to Humour and Jokes in Somali Culture," *African Languages and Cultures. Supplement*, No. 3, Voice and Power, The Culture of Language in North-East Africa. Essays in honor of B.W. Adrzejewski (1996), p. 144.

<sup>118</sup> Collins, "Connected: Exploring the Extraordinary Demand for Telecoms Services in Post-collapse Somalia," *Mobilities*, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 219.

<sup>119</sup> I.M Lewis, *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society* (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 1994), I.M Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 2002), and M.A. Mohamed, "Somalia: Kinship and the relationships derived from it," in: H.M. Adam & R. Ford (eds), *Mending Rips in the Sky: Options for Somali Communities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 1997) all cited in Greg Collins, "Connected: Exploring the Extraordinary Demand for Telecoms Services in Post-collapse Somalia," *Mobilities*, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 218.

<sup>120</sup> Göran Hyden, *African Politics in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.), pp. 72-74; Göran Hyden, "Introduction and Overview to the Special Issue on Africa's Moral and Affective Economy," *African Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 9, Issues 1&2, Fall 2006, available at <http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v9/v9i1a1.htm>, [accessed 15 September 2012].

<sup>121</sup> For examples addressing refugee perception of their status and its implication, in addition to the actual legal frameworks addressing refugee presence in Kenya, see Idil Lambo, "In the shelter of each other: notions of home and belonging amongst Somali refugees in Nairobi," *UNHCR Policy Development & Evaluation Service: New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 233, May 2012; The Refugee Consortium of Kenya, *Enhancing the Protection of Refugee Women in Nairobi: A Survey on Risks, Protection Gaps, and Coping Mechanisms of Refugee Women in Urban Areas*, April 2008.

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<sup>122</sup> These free programs can be problematic in effectively administering English language education, with a lack of rigorous or consistent curriculum; few evaluative methods; and inability to properly accommodate students of disparate capacity levels.

<sup>123</sup> Loveness H. Schafer “True Survivors: East African Refugee Women,” *Africa Today*, Vol. 49, No. 2, Summer 2002, pp. 38-39.

<sup>124</sup> For a concurring perspective in the Rwandan context, see Johnson Sirleaf and Elisabeth Rehn, *Women, War, Peace: The Independent Expert's Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building* (New York: UNDP, 2002), p. 133. They also write that this problem—women trading off their own education for the sake of their children—has been addressed in Eritrea through a partnership between the World Food Program and the National Union of Eritrean Women. They launched a program whereby illiterate women would get subsidies in the form of oil, cereals, salt, and pulses each month if they attended two hours of literacy a day. This was also available for some men. This however, is problematic for some women who may run a small business and are unable to leave that business, as is the case of the above cited participants.

<sup>125</sup> Supported in Johnson Sirleaf and Elisabeth Rehn, *Women, War, Peace: The Independent Expert's Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building* (New York: UNDP, 2002), p. 131.

<sup>126</sup> Section 3 under “Background” in United Nations Population Information Network, UN Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with support from the UN Population Fund: Guidelines on Women's Empowerment for the UN Resident Coordinator System, <http://www.un.org/popin/unfpa/taskforce/guide/iatfwemp.gdl.html> [accessed 29 July 2012].

<sup>127</sup> United Nations Population Information Network, UN Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with support from the UN Population Fund: Guidelines on Women's Empowerment for the UN Resident Coordinator System, <http://www.un.org/popin/unfpa/taskforce/guide/iatfwemp.gdl.html> [accessed 29 July 2012].

<sup>128</sup> Shahrashoub Razavi and Carol Miller, “From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse,” United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Occasional Paper No. 1 February 1995, p. 34.

<sup>129</sup> Note that the term “institution” can be generally understood as “rules that are upheld by society over a long enough time to make a difference to individual actors.” D. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) in Göran Hyden, “Institutions, Power, and Policy Outcomes in Africa,” The Africa Power and Politics Programme: Overseas Development Institute, Discussion Paper No. 2, June 2008, p. 2. Drawing from the context of affective economy, an “informal institution” is “a group of people [that] agree voluntarily on doing something together; they let a code of unwritten rules develop to guide their activities and their dealings with those who breach these rules.” Göran Hyden, *African Politics in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.), p. 74. Formal institutions are “openly codified, in the sense that they are established and communicated through channels that are widely accepted as official.” Gretchen Helmke and Steven Levitsky, “Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research Agenda,” *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 4, December 2004.

<sup>130</sup> Basil Davidson, “Somalia: Towards Socialism,” *Race and Class*, Vol. 17 No. 1, in David Laitan, “Revolutionary Change in Somalia,” *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) Reports*, No. 62 (Nov 1977), p. 8.

<sup>131</sup> Hamdi S. Mohamed, “Gender and State Policies: The Somali Experience 1969-1980,” in *What are Somalia's Perspectives? Science between Resignation and Hope?*, ed. Jorg Janzen (Berlin: Verl. Da Arab. Buch, 2001), pp. 114-115.

<sup>132</sup> UNICEF and The Academy for Peace and Development Hargeysa, Somaliland, “Women's Rights in Islam and Somali Culture,” December 2002, p. 6; Debra M. Timmons, *The Sixth Clan—Women Organize for Peace in Somalia: A Review of Published Literature* (Switzerland: University of Peace, 2004), p. 7; Judith Gardner & Judy El Bushra (ed.), *Somalia the Untold Story: The War through the Eyes of Somali Women* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p. 10.

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- <sup>133</sup> Judith Gardner & Judy El Bushra (ed.), *Somalia the Untold Story: The War through the Eyes of Somali Women* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p. 10.
- <sup>134</sup> BBC New Africa: Somali leader back new constitution, 1 August 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-19075685> [accessed 1 August 2012]; See also Articles 3.5, 15.2, 24.5, 27.5, 111D.2.c, 127.2 in The Federal Republic of Somalia, Draft Constitution Technical Review Committee, The Somali Federal Republic, Mogadishu 12 June 2012.
- <sup>135</sup> Article 8 of the Constitution of the Republic of Somaliland cited in Maria Beata Tungaraza, NAGAAD: Women's Human Rights in Somaliland, 2010, p. 14.
- <sup>136</sup> Maria Beata Tungaraza, NAGAAD: Women's Human Rights in Somaliland, 2010, p. 14.
- <sup>137</sup> Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction, Third Edition* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2009), Kindle Location 121 of 10,239.
- <sup>138</sup> Shahrashoub Razavi and Carol Miller, "From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse," United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Occasional Paper No. 1 February 1995, pp. 2, 3.
- <sup>139</sup> Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction, Third Edition* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2009), Kindle Location 121 of 10,239.
- <sup>140</sup> Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," in in Chandra Talpade, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds.) *Third World Women and the Politics of Gender* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 52.
- <sup>141</sup> Cheryl Johnson-Odim, "Common Themes, Different Contexts: Third World Women and Feminism," in Chandra Talpade, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds.) *Third World Women and the Politics of Gender* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 315.
- <sup>142</sup> Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism," in in Chandra Talpade, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds.) *Third World Women and the Politics of Gender* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 12.
- <sup>143</sup> Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism," in in Chandra Talpade, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds.) *Third World Women and the Politics of Gender* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 10.
- <sup>144</sup> Nauja Kleist, "Negotiating Respectable Masculinity: Gender and Recognition in the Somali Diaspora," *African Diaspora*, Vol. 3, 2010, p. 187.
- <sup>145</sup> Pierre Englebert and Denis M. Tull, "Postconflict Reconstruction in Africa: Flawed Ideas about Failed States," *International Security*, Vol. 32 No. 4, Spring 2008, p. 39.
- <sup>146</sup> Peace Women: Women for Peace, Peace for Women, "Security Council Resolution 1325" available at [http://www.peacewomen.org/themes\\_theme.php?id=15&subtheme=true](http://www.peacewomen.org/themes_theme.php?id=15&subtheme=true) [accessed 5 July 2011].
- <sup>147</sup> Women, Peace and Security in Somalia: Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325," United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, Background Paper August 2008, p. 29.
- <sup>148</sup> Women, Peace and Security in Somalia: Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325," United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, Background Paper August 2008, pp. 14-15.
- <sup>149</sup> Fredrik Galtung and Martin Tisné, "A New Approach to Postwar Reconstruction," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 20 No. 4, October 2009, p. 93.

**APPENDIX A**  
 Phase 1 Field Interview Questions:  
 Grand Tour & Probing/Clarifying

<b>Question</b>	<b>Question Type</b>
Please can you tell me about the role of Somali women in contemporary Somali society living in Kenya?	Grand Tour
You mentioned ( <i>insert topic of interest that participant mentioned</i> ). Can you tell me more about this?	Probing/Clarifying
When ( <i>insert topic of interest that participant mentioned</i> ) happened, what was that about?	Probing/Clarifying

## APPENDIX B

### Phase 2 Field Interview Questions: Theoretical Sampling

Emergent Concept	Theoretical Sampling Question
BETTER	I was wondering about the [IDEA OF A BETTER LIFE AND WHAT THIS MEANS TO SOMALI WOMEN HERE IN EASTLEIGH]. What do you think about this?
BETTER	I was wondering about the [PERSONAL and COLLECTIVE NATURE OF BETTER, e.g, future, current circumstances]. What do you think about this?
BETTER	This issue of [BETTER, e.g., future, current circumstances] has come up in discussions with people. Do you have any experience or thoughts on this?
BETTER	This issue of [GENDER INEQUALITY] has come up in discussions with people. Do you have have any experience or thoughts on this?
BETTER	This issue of [SECURITY] has come up in discussions with people. Do you have have any experience or thoughts on this?
BETTER	What do you feel about the [IDEA OF A BETTER LIFE]?
BETTER	What do you feel about the [OPPORTUNITIES IN EASTLEIGH]?
CONNECTIONS	Have you ever been in this situation [WHERE YOU MAKE CONNECTIONS TO ACHIEVE BETTER]?
CONNECTIONS	I was wondering about [YOUR CONNECTIONS WITH THE NON-SOMALI COMMUNITY HERE AND KENYA IN GENERAL]. What do you think about this?
CONNECTIONS	I was wondering about the [topic of SOMALI WOMEN AND CONNECTIONS]. What do you think about this?
CONNECTIONS	What do you feel about the [ISSUE OF LIVING IN EASTLEIGH AND ITS IMPACT ON HOW YOU CONNECT]?
CONNECTIONS	What do you feel about the [topic of MARRIAGE]?
DEVELOPING	Have you ever been in this situation [IN EASTLEIGH WHERE YOU EXPERIENCED OBSTACLES TO DEVELOPING YOURSELF]?
DEVELOPING	This issue of [SOMALI WOMEN DEVELOPING OTHERS] has come up in discussions with people. Do you have any experience or thoughts on this?

## APPENDIX B

(continued)

### Phase 2 Field Interview Questions: Theoretical Sampling

<b>Emergent Concept</b>	<b>Theoretical Sampling Question</b>
DEVELOPING	This issue of [SOMALI WOMEN HELPING INDIVIDUALS AND/OR THE COMMUNITY OF EASTLEIGH DEVELOP] has come up in discussions with people. Do you have any experience or thoughts on this?
DEVELOPING	This issue of [THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPING ONESELF] has come up in discussions with people. Do you have any experience or thoughts on this?
DEVELOPING	What do you feel about the [WAYS SOMALI WOMEN ARE DEVELOPING THEMSELVES HERE IN EASTLEIGH]?
INVESTING	This issue of [INVESTING] has come up in discussions with people. Do you have any experience or thoughts on this?
ROLE OF WOMEN	I was wondering about the [ROLE OF SOMALI WOMEN IN EASTLEIGH]. What do you think about this?
SUPPORTING	Have you ever been in this situation [WHERE YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPPORTING OTHERS HERE IN EASTLEIGH]?
TRANSITIONING	I was wondering about the [THE THINGS THAT HELP SOMALI WOMEN TRANSITION FROM LIFE IN SOMALIA TO LIFE IN EASTLEIGH]. What do you think about this?
TRANSITIONING	This issue of [TRANSITIONING, e.g., life in Somalia to life in Eastleigh] has come up in discussions with people. Do you have any experience or thoughts on this?
TRANSITIONING	What do you feel about [SOMALI WOMEN TRANSITIONING TO LIFE IN EASTLEIGH]?

**APPENDIX C**  
Classic Grounded Theory Method:  
Conceptualizing the Data

<b>Concept:</b>	Better
<b>Property of Concept:</b>	Comparative Thinking
<b>Dimension of Property:</b>	Here versus There

**Incident 1:**

*When Somalia gets peace, she'll go back. She wants to be reunited with her family there, her cousins, other extended family members. She misses the nighttime, when you visit with family, sharing what happened during the day. She misses the 'happy' life of Somalia. Everyone goes outside in the evening, neighbors and families are all together. They are outside. They are eating together, they are laughing together. Kenya, it's different. You don't really associate with your neighbors.*

**Incident 2:**

*She says the security in Nairobi compared to Somalia is good because there are no bombs.*

**Incident 3:**

*She was rich in Somalia. In Somalia she had a "big business and a big garden."*

**Comments:**

On a descriptive level, these incidents are different. One participant talks about connections with family and friends in Somalia versus Kenya. Another talks about the absence of bombs in Kenya as opposed to violence she experienced in Somalia. The third speaks of the wealth and space she had while living in her homeland.

While descriptively they might be different, conceptually they indicate the same concept: *Comparative Thinking*. On a conceptual level, we see that participants are making comparisons between their mother country of Somalia and their host country of Kenya. Details help us understand the concept richly, but they also fall to the wayside. In sum, on an implicit level it becomes clear what they perceive as 'better' versus worse.