



**A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH IN A COMMUNITY  
PSYCHOLOGY EXPLORATION OF IDENTITY NARRATIVES OF  
YOUNG SOMALI AND YEMENI MUSLIM MALES LIVING IN  
LIVERPOOL**

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requirements of Manchester Metropolitan University  
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# Abstract

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This dissertation reports qualitative research aimed at developing an understanding of the meaning and significance of processes of social identity of young Somali and Yemeni British Muslim males living in Liverpool, UK. By taking a Community Psychology approach within a Participatory Action Research (PAR) project, the relevance of intergenerational community life stories in these males' social and cultural worlds was explored. The role that PAR played in these social constructions of identities is also examined. An ethnographic methodology was employed. Identity was conceptualized in terms of the constructive, intersubjective, inescapable relationship between the 'self' (I) and 'other' in a relational psychoanalytic framework. The different methods of collecting data included meal based narrative community workshops, local focus groups, semistructured interviews, the production of a magazine and a DVD. Reflexive analysis examined the researcher's positioning as an inevitable influence in the research process. Thematic discourse analysis highlighted emergent partial, situated and relative themes of multiple versions of self, 'performative' masculinities and localization and appropriation of context through language and attachment of place. Main findings highlight narratives which maintained shared world views (mental models), preserved immediate categories such as religion, ethnicity and family values and presented identity contestation through ambivalent cognitive beliefs. Results were discussed in terms of psychoanalytical, post-modern, post-colonial and feminist thought. These experiences contribute to new understandings of how these young males reconcile their social identity conflicts, and emerge as ecologically valid 'narratives in context,' 'performative' but 'routinized' or 'habitual' practices within a 'semi permeable, multi-strata' model, in a 'contextually based dynamic continuum'. The Participatory Action Research process supported participants' and researcher's active involvement and demonstrated the utility of the method for community psychology interventions as part of 'new practical arrangements' that can support implementation of similar innovative proposals in mainstream mental health services, as well as community engagement tools for participation and 'conscientization'.

# Author's Declaration

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I hereby declare that the work has been done by the undersigned and no portion of the work contained in this thesis has been submitted in support of any application for any other degree or qualification on this or any other university or institution of learning.

Anne-Marie Micallef

# “Listening, witnessing and hope....”

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Listening, witnessing and hope...the themes come from you narrative practitioners.... We have heard stories of how our failure to listen can choke the voices we most need to hear, how our refusal to witness can blind us to what we most need to see, how our fear can chase away hope.

As healers our first job is to generate hope.... my ancestors who were sold here and then sold in Georgia and who then grew the cotton that was sold here and around world, they tell me to listen real close. And my father and my uncles who fought in WW2 and who followed the news of what was happening at the Pan African Congress in Manchester in October 1945, they tell me to witness the unexpected. And when I do that I feel just the tiniest little quake of hope. Not optimism, but hope... To quote Cornel West...the...African American scholar:

‘Hope and optimism are different. Optimism ...(is) based on... enough evidence out there that allows us to believe that things are gonna be better, much more rational, deeply secular, whereas hope looks at the evidence and says, ‘it doesn't look good, it doesn't look good at all’. Gonna go beyond the evidence **to create new possibilities based on visions that become contagious to allow people to engage in heroic actions always against the odds, no guarantee whatsoever.** Now that's hope. I'm a prisoner of hope, gonna die a prisoner of hope.’

Anita Franklin, 2006

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# Dedication

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To each and every person I have met throughout this project. I thank them for their openness to share their stories and their lives with me. It has truly been an unforgettable and enriching experience.

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# Preface

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Researching identity is an encounter with social change. In a time of rapid social change, identity becomes the key to many significant developments for community engagements. To begin with, identities can be seen as narratives or stories where people tell themselves and others about who they are, who they are not and who and how they would like to be (Cavarero, 2000; Ricoeur, 1991). How they would like to be provides an inevitable, significant link between identity and social action (Yuval-Davis and Kaptani, 2010). The question of who people think they are is central to the kinds of communities people build. Identity narratives are not only verbal in nature but are also constructed as particular forms of practices (Fortier, 2000). These stories often describe what it means to belong to specific groupings and collectivities, and can either resonate or be dissonant with the perceptions of self and others. This performative aspect of identity (Butler, 1990) is performed within given discourses, which if combined with Bakhtin's (1981, 1984) dialogical element of identity construction, can be understood within the wider communal context. In this regard, various local government and Public Health entities (Public Health Involvement Act 2007) are placing a 'duty to involve' on local authorities whilst higher educational institutions are moving towards public involvement by working in partnerships with local communities (Wetherell, 2010). In any case, it seems that the traditional idea of individuals being set in firmly defined places that class, region, family, local community and nation provide, is being challenged by the more recent social theory that promotes subjects as self-conscious, capable of a high degree of reflexivity and always on the move. Subjects tend to deal with others privately, yet hold "globalized alliances" (Wetherell, 2010). Our once fixed notions of borders and boundaries around social categories and identity, whether imaginary or real, have been disrupted (Lee and Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2009) as current contextual contexts of trans-nationalism, neo-liberalism, non-state policies, technological and communication advances and globalization, have completely re-shaped the way we build and sustain

discourse around subjectivity and the self as well as social relationships with others, space, place and time. Identities are far more complex than simple self-selected ethnic identity labels. They present first and foremost a methodological challenge. Whether or not one feels affiliated to and accepted by mainstream groups is also related to the ability to integrate elements of the culture into one's sense of self. Do individuals value their culture of origin? Do they feel accepted by others of that culture? Are they drawn in any way to mainstream culture? Do they wish to be incorporated into this culture or is it experienced as alienating? These attitudes will have much to do with the fusion of culture that is internalized (Maestes, 2000). Psychological methodologies are best suited to determine these phenomenological, emotional and cognitive dimensions of experience. Providing and implementing new strategies of intervention helps complete the story of how a social identity came to be, what it was at a particular historical moment as well as to how it might be changing in the process of re- formulation (Abdellal et al., 2004).

# **PART I**

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## **Introduction, Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks**

# Chapter 1

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## Introduction

### **1.0 Contextualizing Identity experiences and action in minority groups**

The disruption of what was traditionally considered a permanent concept of clearly- set definitions of social categories and identity, particularly resonates with some minority groups' experiences, especially those of migrant origin, where developing a coherent identity (Erikson, 1963; Marcia, 1980), can be particularly challenging when multiple worlds, between mainstream culture and children's and young people's culture of origin are often experienced, traversed and lived as contradictory and discriminatory (Suárez-Orozco, 2000, 2001; Talbani and Hasanali, 2000). Identity and culture change evolve in a dynamic process of continuous interaction between citizens with a migrant culture of origin and mainstream or 'host' societies (Hall 1992; Sen, 2006), as well as within 'migrant' countries and families.

Dislocations in search for better employment, family reunions or forced migration due to wars or persecution underpin migratory flows (Castles and Miller, 2003). Many children and youths of second generation (Traversi and Ognisanti, 2008) are fully citizens of receiving countries, where the country of reception is their only home and they have not known any other. They have not actually moved themselves but are sons and daughters or grandchildren of earlier migrants.

These identities become simultaneously 'created' in context, in social and political practises and are rooted in institutional forms and local communities of practise where individuals are usually deeply and emotionally engaged in a variety of practical, technical and interpersonal activities, which become central to their sense- making role of their self and social representations. Action is central to people's lives and is therefore central to understanding

their lives. Understanding activity consequently becomes essential to understand social representations.

## **1.1 British Black and Minority Ethnicities and Identities**

Eight per cent of Britain's population are from an ethnic minority (Hall and Marzillier (2009). Black Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) individuals make up approximately 10 per cent of the working population (National Audit Office, 2008), whilst in England, the estimated proportion of ethnic minority pupils in maintained primary schools in 2006 was 20.6% compared to 19.3% in 2005 and 18.3% in 2004 (Department for Education and Skills, 2006).

As a construct, British identity is relatively recent and was gradually superimposed on earlier national identities of English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish (Heath and Roberts, 2008). The majority of British residents continue to have 'dual' identities, as both British and Scottish, British and Welsh or British and English yet a small but growing number (around 10%) of people reject all four national identities leading to 'exclusive' identities (Moreno, 1988).

### **1.1.2 The role of identities in social cohesion**

The term 'British identity' is more than an official category as it may also provide a sense of attachment to the state and may thus have a role in promoting social cohesion within the country. In the classic formulation of what constitutes national identity, Anderson (1983) perceived the nation as an imagined political community – one that is both essentially limited and sovereign. It is imagined in the sense that:

....the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their members ...yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion", and that it is a community because "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship (pp. 6-7).

For Miller (1995), this sense of belonging to an imagined community can be an important source of national cohesion:

In acknowledging a national identity, I am also acknowledging that I owe a special obligation to fellow members of my nation, which I do not owe to other human beings (p. 49).

Although individuals will always retain compound identities, nationality can then become a basis of mutual obligations and social solidarity, where metaphorically speaking, national identity can provide the social glue that holds a nation together (Smith and Jarkko, 1998). This is in line with the 2007 Commission for Integration and Cohesion Report (The National Archives, 2007) where a cohesive community is defined as one where strong and positive relationships are developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

## **1.2 Rationale: A Research design that takes into account the diversity and complexity of local communities**

Over the last decade, sociologists seem to have become more negative about modern society. Marx's process of 'verelendung' or 'immiseration' (Sutton, 2009a) gives an insight on some of the poverty-profound structural inequalities (Nettle, 2009) under which some people live, giving rise to a "them and us" dichotomy (Richards, 2010) that calls for change. In spite of policies of inclusion and respect for diversity like the Social Inclusion Task Force (The National Archives; 2010) and the Government White Paper- Communities in Control- real people, real power (Communities and Local Government, 2008), stories of displacement, dislocation and social exclusion, maladjustment and marginalization inform daily discourse around racism and discrimination.

Moreover, current research with black and minority groups was conducted in the context of widespread discussions about migration and integration in the light of the 9/11 and 7/7 attacks, events that have been perceived as a real sign of a more general failure of multiculturalism. Society was presented to

the general public as having a phantom of migrant communities who are turning in upon themselves and developing or maintaining identities often opposed to mainstream societies. Multicultural policies were perceived either as naïve or at worst as significantly contributing to a breakdown in social cohesion (e.g. Liddle 2004). Public programmes that were aimed at the integration of society now had to show how they were actively promoting this integration rather than catering exclusively for specific ethnic groups (Goodhart, 2004). Another influencing factor was an importance given to the pronunciation and commitment of migrant populations to 'British values'.

Individuals' social and cultural worlds (Goodley et al., 2004) reflect the diversity and complexity of local communities. Moreover, indexes of social and economic deprivation, negative experiences within the criminal justice, poor mental health and failed education systems point to a degree of corrosion in the psychological health of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities (BMEs). Sutton (2009b) writes about Zimbardo's work on psychological research that highlights the value of psychological science in our everyday lives, where a better understanding of the psychology of systems means focusing on building psychological resilience rather than fixations on traditional therapy as models. Maintaining community engagement means offering the capacity to draw on a range of ways to conceptualize human behaviour, bio-psycho-social initiatives that are non-pathologizing, non- labelling and non- stigmatizing and ones that can formulate presenting psychological challenges that individuals and communities face in a way that accounts of their unique multidimensional complexity. This highlights the need to find alternative ways of going beyond conventional mainstream services and to provide unparalleled opportunities for more accessible psychological services to enhance the well being of local communities. This can include primary care services that are multi- culture friendly, which can enhance social networks that can encourage niches of happiness (Fowler and Christakis, 2008), and which according to Seligman (2002) can promote positive emotion (the pleasant life), positive character

(the engaged life) and positive institutions (the meaningful life) The Centre of well-being at the New Economics Foundation sees this as a call on psychologists to help create a narrative for change, narratives that actively promote psychological well-being and do not scare people away (Sutton, 2009c) as they build on the strengths, resilience and resources of these communities.

### **1.2.1 Looking at Social Identity**

Social identity concepts such as self-categorization or inter-group social comparisons are usually posited within a social cognitive perspective (Abrams and Hogg, 2004). This qualitative dissertation, however, offers a new way at looking at social identity constructions of young Somali and Yemeni males living in contemporary Britain. This work arises from a Community Psychology systematic intervention carried out with children, young people and families in Liverpool, UK. It is a qualitative research design, originating from an initial intergenerational active parenting project with Black and Minority ethnic (BME) local communities and which focuses on these young British Muslim males' shifting identities in a post modern era. This is especially important, as according to the Centre of Prevention at the University of Manchester (Windfuhr et al., 2008), young BME males are least likely to make contact with mental health services.

The design is presented within a Participatory Action Research (PAR) project, which through Community Psychology, embeds people in context (Kagan, 2007) and seeks to represent them as agentic beings, who have a purpose and who have the potential to influence and change their own situations. People are also capable of looking outside themselves to explore explanations of their social experiences and to find different solutions to the challenges they encounter (Kagan and Burton, 2001).

From an ecological perspective, the use of Participatory Action Research leads to a process and a 'practice of liberation' with its responsibilities

(Duggan et al., 2000). In this process, research becomes directly linked to other processes of change and development and becomes co-responsible for the achievement of certain results. Gustavsen (1996) defines these achievements as new practical arrangements that contribute to transcending the world as it is now and to work towards the accomplishment of a better one.

The choice of community psychology praxis involves an inter-disciplinary perspective- it informs theory, policy and practice in a way that celebrates diversity and works within a social justice framework to enhance people's lives, their health and wellbeing. Interested in the positions of different stakeholders, community psychologists analyse for progressive social change (Kagan, 2007; Montero, 2000) and have at heart the empowerment of those most marginalised, which is best achieved through the development of alliances and working across boundaries. As a liberated academic psychology, it positions itself in solidarity with the marginalized others, those without a voice, both in the discipline and in society (Kagan, 2007). It also tries to combine practical outcomes with new understanding on these communities and to produce practical knowledge useful to participants in their everyday lives (Reason and Bradbury, 2001).

Community- based participatory action research (CBPAR) positions itself in an alternative way of engaging local community members in practices that use the community's own resources as a way to mobilize social change. This leads individuals to empower themselves through their own engagements creating a ripple effect within the whole community itself. Active involvement of both participants and myself as researcher in different phases of the research, aimed at redirecting locus of power and control to participants (Montero 1980, 1984), at regenerating and empowering these communities and to enable the acquisition of new resources that transforms their self-representation in society. Life stories enable community participants to experience stories as affecting and resonating with one's one life (Frank, 1995) and enable them to explore their social and cultural worlds and make

sense of their lives.

This research design in fact attempts to combine understanding and development of theory of how young Muslim men living in Britain, process their construction of their social identities, through a participative process of action and change, whilst remaining grounded in experience. This is why ethnography was chosen as one of the main methodologies. According to Malinowski (1922 cited in Edgerton, 1984), ethnography tries to 'grasp these community's members' points of views, their relation to life and to realise their vision of the world.' (p.498). A community psychology approach combines perfectly with ethnography as both seek to represent the realities of the personal and social worlds of the participants.

### **1.3 Contextualizing the research choice: Creating a research space**

Creating a research space (Edwards and Gibson, 2007) to explore social identities came about through an initial intergenerational project, which acted as a primary scaffolding element. As researcher, I first came in contact with the Somali and Yemeni local participants after accepting a research assistant post at Manchester Metropolitan University that was working collaboratively within a larger inter-disciplinary collaborative partnership- The Urban Regeneration Making a Difference Project. This £3.2 collaborative venture had at the time, at least 45 projects running across four partner Universities- Manchester Metropolitan, University of Northumbria (UNN), University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) and Salford University. These were in turn, supported by the Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) Strategic Development Fund. The major aims of this Urban Regeneration Programme was to demonstrate how universities are well- placed to provide a neutral forum to engage and facilitate effective solutions in understanding and promoting what the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM, 2004) defines as sustainable communities, as well as promoting the building of beneficial partnerships across a diverse range of stakeholders and encouraging a continuous exchange of knowledge.

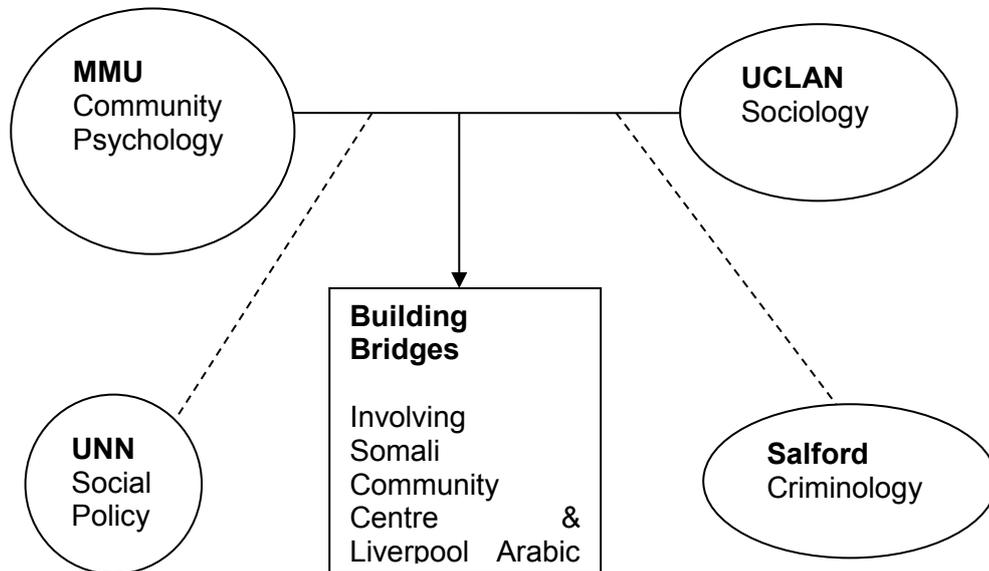
### **1.3.1 Building Bridges**

“Building Bridges” was one of the community partners taking part in this Urban Regeneration Programme. At that time this clinical psychology team which formed part of the Royal Liverpool Hospital Children's Trust, was promoting a series of positive fatherhood initiatives in a regeneration area of Liverpool and initially my role was to evaluate these initiatives, as an external. The team was based in the local Liverpool community, situated in an old school building within walking distance to the Somali and Yemeni local community centres, rather than within the premises of the main hospital. Building Bridges was made up of multi- ethnic practitioners including a Black British Clinical Lead, a Sudanese Counselling Psychologist, an Asian assistant psychologist, two social workers-a White British and a Black British, two bi-lingual support workers- an Asian and a Chinese, a white British administrator and myself, a Maltese.

Their aim was to maximize and support the psychological and emotional well-being of Black and Minority ethnic children and their families through working with existing services and being involved in the development of accessible, racially and culturally appropriate services. It included early intervention, prevention, mental health promotion, capacity building for voluntary and statutory services as well as local communities, training and awareness-raising and community user participation. Specific services included counselling, advocacy, family group conferences, bi- lingual support and advocacy for families of disabled children from BME backgrounds. It also engaged in community development work aimed at tackling social inclusion and inequalities in the field of mental health. This included strengths and needs assessments and facilitating mechanisms through which local communities could influence the provision of services that affected their mental health. The service was well established and evaluated externally and internally as having good outcomes. Figure 1.3.1 is a visual map of how

this collaborative process came about, whilst Appendix 1.3.1 is a list of the various local organizations involved in the different research phases.

**Figure 1.3.1 Foundations of this collaborative process (Kagan, 2008)**



### **1.3.2 Liverpool- a local context for a Research- Practitioner Model**

Liverpool Primary Care Trust has a mid-2008 estimate resident population of 434,900 and a GP registered population of 419,463. Being a port city, Liverpool has a diverse population that has become a historical melting pot for different people, cultures and religions. Minority groups in Liverpool are not homogenous. According to Yuval Davis and Kaptani (2010), different social locations, identifications and values and values in terms of ethnicity, religion, gender, class, stages in the developmental life cycle and histories of people’s migration also affect individuals’ identity constructions.

#### **(a) Ethnicity:**

Liverpool is home to Britain's oldest Black community, dating to at least the 1730s. Some Black Liverpudlians are able to trace their ancestors in the city back ten generations. The largest group of African origin are often called ‘Liverpool- born black people’, including those born in Africa as well as those born in the city to parents one or both of whom were born in Africa. In Liverpool the idea of British-born black is synonymous with mixed origins

unlike elsewhere in the country, where they are presumed to be of exclusive African origins, in that they have two parents that are defined as black (Commission for Racial Equality 1986; Gifford et al., 1989; Ben-To vim, 1989). The term 'black British' refers to those born in this country as well as the population of mixed origins. The majority of black people in Liverpool are not of West Indian origin while the majority of black people elsewhere in the country are (e.g. Commission for Racial Equality, 1989; Gifford et al., 1989). Liverpool 8, where the community psychology team was situated, has a high proportion of black and African minority groups including asylum seekers and refugees as well as long time settled communities and strains, in terms of community cohesion between and within different communities of practise living in close proximity, were often experienced.

In 2007, 8.1% of the city population was from black and minority ethnic groups. From the estimated resident population by ethnic group and sex (mid-2007 experimental statistics), 11.2% of children aged 0-15 come from BME communities in Liverpool (11.5% males and 10.8% females). The Department for Communities and Local Government (2007) shows evidence of a relationship between overall deprivation and non-white ethnicity in Liverpool, and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA, update for 2009/2010) shows that approximately 65% of Liverpool's non-white ethnic groups' population are in the most deprived deciles. Currently there are three mosques in Liverpool with a 1.4% of the population of describing themselves as Moslem in the 2001 Census.

#### **1.4 My positioning as researcher**

As a qualitative researcher, I needed to consider my own positioning within the research process, the impact this had on the Muslim men I met and how it impinged on our interactions and its effect within the research framework. My own educational, social and political practises were informed by the complexity and volatility of the different identities I encountered, which in turn influenced my thoughts, my perceptions, the construction and revision of my

research questions, the methodologies chosen as well as interpretation of the data analysed. Perhaps at this point, it will suffice to position myself as a white, middle- class, single woman from Malta, (therefore a minority community member myself) who lived and worked in the UK and who came from a Christian background also impacted on the research process in terms of race, sexuality, class, religion and gender issues.

As a practitioner myself, (I have trained in Developmental Psychopathology and hold a warrant to practise Clinical Psychology with children and adolescents), I believe that identity development is a constructive, culturally based process. (Johnson, 2009) As a clinician, I often felt that individual therapy may not always be the best way to help people and that psychologists need to work more with communities and social groups as ways to empower individuals to affect social change (Orford, 2008). In fact, Hall and Marzillier (2009) highlight alternative ways of working that are not 'either-or' choices as White (2008) argues, but because psychology is often linked to social issues, it can target whole populations, rather than individuals. This could be a source of community reciprocity (Jarrett, 2009a), and communal empathy that would foster an inter- subjective theory of mind (Casement, 2009; Gilbert, 2009).

Community narratives could perhaps transform clinical consultations to conversations, where people can discover a freedom preserved for them, where they can, according to Traversi and Ognisanti (2008), discover their own version of themselves, a social construction of collective memory. In line with Campbell (2009), these articulated personal values are hopefully embodied in this research's objectives and in its operating processes.

## **1.5 Research Aims and Objectives**

This dissertation aims to answer a key ethnographic research question, adapted from Goodley et al., (2004:58): **What can life story narratives tell us about the social and cultural worlds inhabited by Muslim males in Britain today?**

The following aims are meant to explore different aspects of this research question:

1. To develop an understanding of the meaning and significance of processes of social identity of young Somali and Yemeni British Muslim males generated from intergenerational dialogue and action research activities, mainly narrative community workshops, local focus groups, semi- structured interviews, the production of a magazine and a DVD
2. To explore the relevance of community stories in participants' quest to narrate about the social and cultural worlds they inhabit
3. To examine the role that Participatory Action Research (PAR) plays in the social construction of identity transitions through narratives and to encourage methodological innovation in the study of identities
4. To develop new understandings of how these young Somali and Yemeni British Muslim males reconcile conflicts of social identities with their contemporary life in Britain
5. To articulate implications for policy and practice in community psychological interventions in community engagement projects.

## **1.6 The structure of this dissertation**

**Part One (Chapters One to Three)**, frames the introduction of the study. As we have seen, **Chapter One** contextualizes this community based Participatory Action Research project in Liverpool with the main aim of eliciting social identity stories of 'people hood' (Smith, 2003) through a process of reciprocity and discovery of expertise with young Somali and Yemeni British Muslim male participants living in Liverpool. It explores the rationale of this particular context chosen, as well as its relevant links with other Community Engagement Projects that are fast becoming a highlighted political focus, although participants in disadvantaged communities, according to Del Grande (2007), might still not feel that empowered. **Chapter Two** goes through the major research findings around social identity perspectives and community psychology as ways of thinking about identity experiences of these Black and Minority Ethnic community participants. Pro-

social behaviour has been central issue in social psychology for decades, although the idea that people's thoughts and behaviour are affected by their identification with social groups has been sorely missed in the literature.

**Chapter Three** attempts to inform the readers on the main epistemologies and theoretical frameworks that underpin and impinge on the life stories encountered, the 'data' collected. **Part Two (Chapters Four to Eight)** includes underlying methodological Strategies, methods used and analysis of data through relational psychoanalysis. **Chapters Four and Five** deal with the creative methodologies and multi-methods that were utilized to personalize these young Somali and Yemeni men's participative community experiences and to explore and understand core aspects of their social identities. In this context, narratives were seen as creating experience where the projection of degrees of agency could be explored and constructed (Baynham and De Fina, 2005). **Chapter Six, Seven and Eight** analyze data findings that emerge as themes elicited through life story narratives that articulated a sense of coherence, expressing agency and moral vision (Baynham and De Fina, 2005). **Chapter Six** highlights themes of multiple versions of selves, masculinities and productivity that are co-identified and re- formulated by the participants, whilst **Chapter Seven** explores themes of the contextualization, localization and appropriation of language and attachment of place. **Chapter Eight** is a piece of literary criticism, a non-participatory analysis of localization and appropriation of social identity through hip-hop. **Part Three (Chapter Nine)**, draws together different research strands from the data analysis and uses psychoanalytical thinking, as well as dimensions from post modern, post colonial and feminist thought to discuss these narrative experiences from a performative and modern perspective. Narratives come across as maintaining shared world views (Denzau and North, 1994) of immediate social categories such as being Muslim, ethnicity and family values, whilst identity contestation is discussed as diversity in cognitive beliefs related to a number of in-group and out-group's constitutive norms, social purposes and relational comparisons. In terms of the semi- permeability concept in cellular biology, reciprocal and active aspects of PAR have contributed to the processes of social

construction of change in this community engagement. Social identity can be applied to processes in relevant real life situations, 'mentalizing' and bringing people together for mutual support (Casement, 2009). This has contributed to the generation of new knowledge in a more complex framework to understand social identity and community psychological interventions.

## **1.7 Summary of Chapter**

Current contextual contexts of modern cultures often present identities as transient, complex processes. This chapter contextualizes this dissertation as a community-based Participatory Action Research project in a local, heterogeneous community in the UK today, with a central objective to elicit, understand and theorize on the meanings and significance of social identity stories generated with young Somali and Yemeni British Muslim male participants. The main underlying principles of the need of this study are explored, as are its pertinent links to current community engagement and community cohesion policies. The positioning of the researcher is introduced as part and parcel of a reflexive, interactive, reciprocal process between 'researcher' and 'researched'. The structure of the dissertation as well as its aims and objectives are clearly defined and presented.

# Chapter 2

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## Literature Review

*“Action without reflection and understanding is blind, just as theory without action is meaningless” (Reason and Bradbury, 2001:2)*

### **2.0 Introduction to Literature Review**

This literature review focuses on current, mostly qualitative, research studies which contribute directly to social identity development and their relation to social action, as well as the challenges this often represents to first and second generations of migrant origin belonging to black minority ethnicities. Different social identity perspectives and traditional British identities are reviewed as well as post- conflict identities and Muslim identity. Although some international studies are included, more focus is given to UK studies conducted with male British Black Minority cohorts with the aim of linking this to epistemology and data analysis.

### **2.1 Social Identity discourse- origins of social identity and self-categorization**

This past decade or so has seen a significant revival of interest among social psychologists in the study of groups and group processes (e.g. Abrams and Hogg, 2004; Abrams and Hogg, 1998) In the seventies, social identity was almost immediately linked to how the self is conceptualized in inter-group contexts, where a system of social categorizations constructed and defined the place an individual had in society (Tajfel, 1972). Individuals know that they belong to certain social groups to which a certain degree of emotional and value significance is attributed. To its members, the level of attachment to a group goes beyond its meaning and for Brubaker and Cooper (2000), it is related to the idea of salience or “groupness,” i.e. the degree to which individuals identify with a group, or how salient that particular collective identity is to its individual members.

Inter -group relations emerge from an interaction between psychology and society. Social identity is based on social comparisons between groups that seek to confirm or establish a sense of distinctiveness from their out-groups and enhance in-group favouring. Abrams and Hogg's (2004) idea of social identity having an underlying need for self-esteem is now leading current social psychology researchers to qualify how belief systems about the nature of relations between groups influence the way that individuals or groups engage in positive social identity.

### **2.1.1 Social Identity: a meta- theory discourse**

Pro-social behaviour has been a central issue in social psychology for decades, although the idea that people's thoughts and behaviour are affected by their identification with social groups has been sorely missed in the literature (Sturmer and Synder, 2010). Currently researchers are more interested in how the self is defined by group membership and how social and cognitive processes produce 'group behaviour' (Hogg and Terry, 2000). For Hogg (2000), this definition of who is with 'us' and who is with 'them,' reinforces a group's social identity.

Abrams and Hogg's 2004's meta-theory approach places social identity within a broader framework that recognizes a distinctive social or collective level of psychological processes- people act not only as individuals but also as group members with a shared perception, goals and identity. This "meso" level of analysis (Pettigrew, 1998) works to show how these social and individual variables become expressed in social situations within a societal context. Abrams and Hogg (2004) work from an inter-actionist theory, a meta-theory that aims at discovering how an intergroup perspective based on social identity theory could transform the way various psychological phenomena could be explained. Within a social psychology perspective, Hogg and Abrams (1988) argue that social identity includes action or behaviour that is strongly affected by the alignment of people in terms of social group and category memberships (Abrams and Hogg, 2004).

Since real life is not a neat and clear cut social process, but a more complex intertwined phenomenon, a strong meta-theory helps to put different strands together in a meaningful structure and also enables the identification of useful links to other theories.

### **2.1.2 Self -Categorization discourse**

In their self- categorization discourse, Abram and Hogg (2004) provide a cognitive element of social identity theory and it expands ideas of category-based differentiation between people to include the self (Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987). It specifies how social categorization causes people to perceive, think and feel and behave as psychological group members. It also tries to explain how people become a group and the psychological basis of group processes. Through self-perception, the self is assigned a social category membership and becomes subject to the same processes of depersonalization and stereotyping (Abram and Hogg, 2004). When self-categorization as a group member is salient, a person is influenced by group norms, behaves in line with them and shares the group's concerns and interests.

Hogg's (1993) social attraction hypothesis claims that in salient groups, patterns of attraction among members, i.e. the affective aspect of group solidarity, are depersonalized and based on *proto-typicality*, not personal qualities of each member (Hogg and Terry, 2000). A prototype is a cognitive representation of context-dependent features that describes and defines attributes that characterize groups and distinguish them from others. These are expressed as representations of exemplary members, or as "ideal types", abstractions of group features. Prototypes include beliefs, attitudes, feelings, and behaviour, and are important as they tend to maximize similarities within and differences between groups, thus defining groups as "distinct entities".

Prototypes also act as moral support and consensually validate one's self-concept and related cognition and behaviours. When uncertainty is high, prototypes need to be simple, clear, highly focused, consensual, have

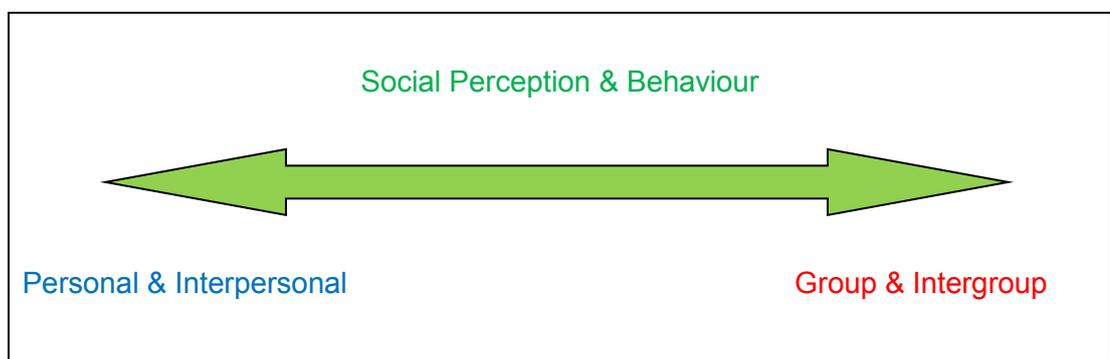
pronounced entities (Brewer and Harasty, 1996; Hamilton and Sherman, 1996; Hamilton, Sherman, and Lickel, 1998; Sherman, Hamilton and Lewis, 1999) and are very cohesive (Hogg, 1992, 1993). These provide a powerful social identity and will be attractive to individuals who are contextually experiencing situations characterized by great uncertainty (Hogg and Terry, 2000) and over a longer period of times, as in adolescence.

Self- categorization discourse also provides a new way to understand the consistency of people's behaviour with their attitudes (Terry and Hogg, 1996), and provides a new explanation for aspects of de-individualization phenomena, linked to the social categorization of self. De-individualization is not a loss in identity but reflects a transformation of self in the process of identification with the in-group (Abrams, 1985, 1994; Reicher, 1984).

### 2.1.3 Social identity theory and social perception

In social identity theory, social perception and behaviour falls on a continuum where the personal and interpersonal are at one end whilst group and intergroup are at the other end (Abrams and Hogg, 2004) as Figure 2.1.3 shows:

**Figure 2.1.3: A continuum scale for social perception and behaviour (Based on Abrams and Hogg, 2004:101)**



At the group end, people perceive others as representatives of social groups and categories rather than individuals. These sociological factors influence people's actions through the social psychological medium of social identity. Divisions of ethnicity, gender and class persist not because of inherent characteristics of members of the different groups but because people identify with groups that exist in specific relation to one another. Social stasis or social change reflects people's acceptance or rejection of the relations between these groups (Abrams and Hogg, 2004).

Social identity is sometimes treated as a 'thing' rather than a process underpinning multiple social phenomena. People do not simply conform to their role or stereotype of their group but are actively involved in characterizing their place and purpose. People still seem to maintain a coherent sense of who they are, despite of being able to behave quite differently in different settings. Abrams and Hogg (2004)'s uncertainty reduction hypothesis suggests that social identity processes might be motivated directly by people's need to reduce uncertainty, to make their world and their place within it meaningful. This enhances their self-image as a group member, instilling confidence in how to behave and what to expect from the physical and social environment they find themselves in. The 'self' in inter-group behaviour should be 'operationalized' as a collective self and a social self (e.g. Abrams, 1992, Abrams and Hogg, 2001, Hogg and Abrams 1990).

It seems that one cannot explain inter-group behaviour wholly in terms of uncertainty reduction or depersonalized self-categorisation discourse (Abram and Hogg, 2004). Identity in real groups today is often more complex and a mixture of personal identity, gender and relational identity and a degree of out-group identification, the latter being a new focus of social identity research (e.g. Brewer and Gardner, 1996; Mummendey and Wenzel, 1999; Wright, Aron and Tropp, 2002).

## **2.2 Gaps in Social Identity Literature**

Social identity studies have been mapped out in different forms and to different degrees. Fearon (1999), like Brubaker and Cooper (2000), distinguishes between personal identities and social identities, the latter of which includes type identities and role identities. Brewer and Gardner (1996) distinguish between personal, collective and relational identities whilst Brubaker and Cooper (2000) are dissatisfied with the use of individual identities to describe or account for individual practices and actions. Chandra and Laitin (2002) present a general tri-classification scheme for identities, where categories, attributes, and dimensions are the three main components of an identity. Identity is seen as the category individuals use to describe themselves. Examples include 'Black,' or 'French-speaking.' Identity categories of the same type are arrayed on some dimension. For example, categories like 'Black' and 'White' are both arranged on the dimension of 'race', whilst categories such as 'Bourgeoisie' and 'Working Class' form part of the dimension of class. Each identity category has some qualifying attributes that allow the separation of insiders from outsiders. Some categories have just a single qualifying attribute (e.g. having a grandchild is the single attribute that enables membership in the category 'grandparent.' Others like social class need multiple qualifying attributes such as income, occupation, education, parents' income, parent's education, and parents' occupation. Some attributes such as skin colour are present at birth and may remain stable across generations whilst attributes such as education, tribal markings or language may change within and across generations.

### **2.2.1 An analytic framework to Identity: Identity contents and contestations**

Abdellal et al. (2004) understand individual practices in terms of social identities. Their analytic framework takes up collective identities as social categories that attempt to bring together various strands around identity studies. Smith (2003 cited in Abdellal et al. 2004) considers 'the study of identities as among the most normatively significant and behavioural

consequential aspects of politics.’ (p. 695)

Techniques are needed to highlight how authentic or internalized identity factors need to be to obtain their mobilizing effects in influencing the behaviour of social actors and thus delineate the relationship between identity and action Abdellal et al., (2004).

The definitional anarchy in identity studies is challenged and explored through a positivist and interpretative analysis already implicit in the existing literature and which provides a methodological road map that considers the relative stability and constant fluctuations of identity. Contestation, whether explicit and intentional or implicit and unplanned, is according to these authors, a process occurring within groups and not in a vacuum or in isolation. Individuals who form part of a group often seek recognition of their identity from others. People’s ethnocentricity encourages self-improvement through positive social identity through which they try to establish a positively valued distinction for their own group when they compare it to other groups. Moreover, formal or informal recognition from others clearly influences the particular goals associated with a particular identity. Discourse data extracted from a group clarifies, in manner and degree, members’ consensus and disagreement about their constitutive norms, social purposes, relational comparisons and the cognitive models pertaining to their collective identity.

### **2.2.2 (a) Social Identity expressed through constitutive norms**

Constitutive norms are distinctive practices that define identity boundaries and lead other actors to recognize it. Group membership is defined by formal and informal rules and social norms that can be unwritten (social) or codified (legal). An example of codified rules would be the ‘Sharah’ law. Constitutive norms fix meanings, expectations and ‘role’ identities and come from multiple centres of authority. As in role theory, they have a regulatory effect: they identify proper and appropriate behaviour for a particular identity and enable recognition of expectations by members of a particular social category. These can lead to different degrees of contestations between group members.

Constitutive norms are different from social purposes, which describe group members' shared interests or preferences. Norms help to define social meanings and establish collective expectations and individual obligations. Practices can either be conscious or taken for granted and the degree to which they are habitual or internalized is an empirical question. However, they are integral parts of the social meanings of an identity. Group members that hail from communities of origin where the concept of a civilized state, in terms of democracy, is not a shared community notion will inevitably experience a process of adjustment to the new community of practice and the constitutive norms that mainstream society functions on (Abdellal et al., 2004).

### **2.2.2 (b) Socialization as the internalization of constitutive norms**

In this perspective, these authors see socialization as the internalization or “habituation” of constitutive norms, a process where collective expectations of members of an identity group come to feel taken for granted by other group members. Norms may bias choice according to the group member's “logic of appropriateness,” where certain behaviours are unconsciously ruled out as inappropriate to one's identity. Norms may decrease the level of consciousness in choice, what is known as the “common sensible”, where options are barely considered as they do not form part of one's identity's constitutive norms. Norms can be so deeply internalized that they are acted upon completely unconsciously. Fierke (1996) links this to Wittgenstein's “logic of habituation,” when with the passing of time, rules are lived rather than applied and practices are just followed.

### **2.2.3 Social Identity expressed as social purposes**

Through social purposes, purposive contents of a collective identity are expressed. The group attaches specific and shared goals for its members. Identities can lead actors to endow practices with group purposes and to interpret the world through lenses defined in part for those purposes. Normative content refers to practices that lead to individual obligations and

social recognition, whilst purposive content defines the group's interests, goals or preferences. Both normative and purposive content may impose obligations on group members in different ways. Whilst constitutive norms necessitates social actors to engage in practices that reconstitute the group, social purposes create obligations to engage in practices that make the group's achievement of particular goals more likely. The construction of identity scholarship is based on a shared purpose, where according to Gutmann (2003), our sense of who we are, is influenced by what we want. In other words, what the group wants depends on who they perceive themselves to be. This resonates with Smith's (2003) concept of stories of people hood and creates the basis for narratives of purpose.

#### **2.2.4 Social Identity expressed through relational comparisons with other social categories**

The content of a collective identity is also relational to the extent that it is composed of comparisons and references to other collective identities from which it is distinguished. This will be further explored below in relation to what constitutes 'Britishness' and traditional identities. Relational comparisons define an identity group for what it is not, i.e. the way it views other identity groups, especially where those views about the 'others' are a defining part of the group's identity. The relational content of collective identities can be thought of as the discursive formulations of the relationships between groups of people that compose social reality.

Barnett (1999) sees identity as the understanding of one's self in relationship to others. Group identities then are fundamentally social and relational, rather than personal or psychological. They are exclusive to the extent to which one social identity excludes the holding of another. Sometimes there are different levels of hostility presented by other social identities. For Derrida (1994), the relational content of an identity is more revealing than other supposedly self-referential narratives.

### **2.2.5 Social Identity expressed through cognitive models**

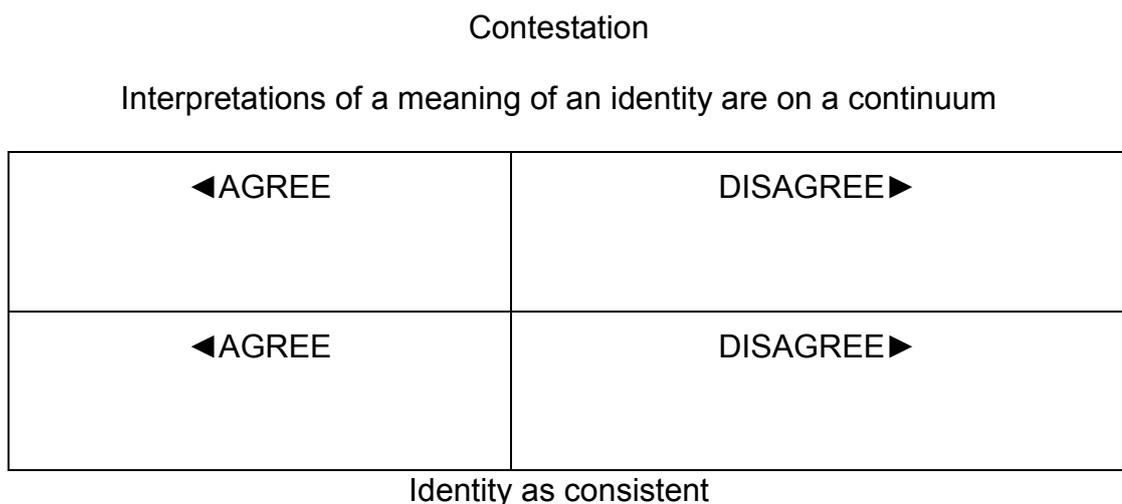
Goldstein and Keohane (1993) visualize cognitive models as world-views, frameworks and/or understandings that allow members of a group to make sense of social, political, economic and material conditions and interests. Cognitive contents of a collective identity describe how group membership is associated with explanations of how the world works as well as descriptions of that group's social reality. This is a group's ontological epistemology. This "cognitive turn" in the study of identities is critically important.

Cognitive perspectives are also defined by Denzau and North (1994) as ways of seeing the world, or shared mental models. Shared mental models enable ways of understanding and of identifying one's own self. It also makes sense of one's problems and difficulties, identifies one's interests and orients one's actions. It also offers ways to recognize and identify and classify other people as well as construing sameness and difference of 'coding' and making sense of their actions. Peng and Nisbett's (1999) study shows ways of reasoning that are specific to particular identity groups. For Guring (2003), different cultures have different understandings of what constitutes "knowledge". For instance, there are different readings of festivities and different mental universes. Identities can strongly affect interpretations and understandings not just of the present but also of the past. Cognitive content implies a theory of interpretation as it enables us to understand how identity influences actors in their understanding of their world and how their material or social initiatives for particular actions will be affected by their identities. Subjective perceptions and understandings of the communal past for each generation is a defining element in the concept of cultural identity. Azzam (1991) for instance, found that Muslim Identity could shape memories of shared colonial experience. Identities may also shape conceptions of the future, different views of 'well being' and a 'good life'. For Herrera (2005), these could also shape perceptions of territory that in turn also shape perceptions of culture.

### 2.2.6 Social Identities expressed through contestations over aspects of Identity

The idea of contestation preserves the restless dynamism that characterizes current identity work. The content of collective meaning is not fixed or predetermined. Identities cannot exist without meanings, attachment or identification. Much of identity discourse is the working out of the variety of meanings of a particular collective identity through the process of social contestation of its members. Contestation then is the degree of agreement or disagreement within a group over the content or meanings of a shared identity. Contestation varies and addresses the fluidity and contextual nature of identities where individuals are continuously proposing and shaping the meanings of the groups to which they belong. The higher the degree of disagreement about a certain meaning, the higher chance there is for identity to be fragmented into conflicting and potentially inconsistent understandings of what the group's purposeful relations are or should be. Figure 2.2.6 is a grid that explains the interpretations of meanings of an identity on a continuum:

**Figure 2.2.6 Explaining interpretations of meanings of an identity on a continuum (adapted from Abdellal et al., 2004)**



### **2.3 Current research with ethnic minorities**

Recent academic literature has focused on stresses between parents who are first generation migrants and their children, who are, by default, second-generation migrants and who are often viewed as caught between two cultures (Watson, 1977). The underlying assumption is that these parents are predominantly conservative, and strive to maintain their background cultures by trying to cling to their idealized identities, images and practices from their cultural heritages. The assumption is that they try to pass these on to their children, who inevitably become gradually assimilated with the values and norms of mainstream society and this would then present a source of tension within families. On the other hand, children are represented as finding their parents' cultures stifling and would like to experience that sense of freedom they perceive from their peers in their wider community everyday experience. This framework sees children's identities as caught between the making of painful choices between accepting and rejecting parental cultures, values and aspirations (Watters et al., 2009).

This approach nonetheless, has a number of serious limitations. First, it assumes that all first generation immigrant families are fundamentally traditional in outlook. Secondly, it assumes that children and young people find mainstream cultures as more attractive than their heritage ones. For Shaw (1994), young people have a strong attachment to their parents' cultures and in certain aspects they may, at times exceed them in terms of their eagerness. Acceptance or rejection of mainstream society is not an all-or- none response. There are aspects in mainstream communities that community members may happily engage in for instance playing football, while other aspects like going to the pub to drink might be disapproved of.

Moreover, certain community processes generate specific social, political and economic spaces that inhibit cultural fluidity. These plural mono-cultural (Sen, 2006), processes assigned fixed identities to groups that are systematically reinforced by the practices of public and private institutions. Minority groups'

public engagement may be seriously confined to cultural 'exclusion zones' due to exclusionary and racist attitudes within the wider society. This can also apply to engagement with public or statutory services, where BMEs often report negative experiences.

### **2.3.1 Studies of children's social identities**

There has been a shift in the way studies examine children's agency and the way they make sense of their own lives. The new paradigm sees children as independent individuals, with a present social potential and as James et al., (2005) explain, with a sense of 'being that can no longer be nested into the family or institution' (p.6). In issues of identity, however, there is a differentiation between processes occurring in adults and in children. James et al., (2005) explain that 'children learn who they are through interaction with...the adult "other" (p.203).

The wider context of both family and community has an important role to play in the process of children with migrant origin since identity and social action are linked to both historical and political contexts. Different local UK communities have a specific definition of what it means to be black and Somali or Arab and Yemeni. Groups which might have had diverse cultural, linguistic and traditions are often ascribed identities on the basis of assumed cultural homogeneity and/or pheno-typical characteristics. Although these 'ascribed identities' can be reduced to generalizations that do not reflect the subjective diversities between different groups, they have also created a discursive space that could be utilized by these children themselves, a space that has contributed to the development of self- identification processes which are then internalized.

This enables the understanding of why identity is ascribed, incorporated and used strategically within specific social, political and economic contexts where 'consciousness' of specific belongings to specific identities may result in groups feeling threatened such as the reinforcement of Muslim identities in response to the 9/11 attacks. For Mohammed-Arif (2007), groups may also

assert themselves in an attempt to be distinguished from other stigmatized groups such as that that has followed between Hindu and Muslim communities in the US, again after 9/11. Bureaucratic categories functioning in mainstream societies, like census procedures, may also help in reinforcing group identification, but which have little to do, according to Hollinger (2000), with the way communities and solidarities are actually formed. In this light, these children might be perceived as having a particular 'problematized' space that is different from their peers. However, for Watters et al. (2009), this sense of common identity might actually encourage identification of a set of common experiences that elicits social support from mainstream community and enables implementation of programmes that aim at generating a sense of solidarity among different groups.

Children's responses reveal a rather nuanced way of constructing aspects of social identity. In their study, Watters et al., 2009 considered questions of racism within the context of the Big Brother race row and the 7/7 bomb-attacks in London. Some children believed that there was greater caring and understanding within their own ethnic group while others gave examples of key trusting relationships outside their ethnic group.

### **2.3.2 Children's and Youths' Investment in social capital**

These examples also indicated important ways in which social capital was being maintained by children and young people, within contexts of social change. Cultural traditions such as visiting their home country were often depicted as an enjoyable experience, where they played with friends and meeting relatives. The majority of children interviewed extend the concept of family as they include frequent availability of their extended and often transnational family networks. Children spoke of adults (e.g. neighbours) who were considered 'like family'. This kind of family acts as a bridge to the wider social world and highlights central aspects of their social existence, a factor that contributes to their emotional resilience and sense of self. It also seemed that children were experts at crossing social boundaries and used these as a

way to actively contribute to their own and to family/community's social capital.

Children in Watters et al.'s (2009) study seemed to have secure and strong attachments that reinforced positive self-conceptions and feelings of self-worth. Leonard (2005) suggests that children give a higher value to the 'immediate use' of social capital, as they experience emotional satisfaction that arises from family relations. Peers are also a source of social solidarity and emotional support. This challenges Coleman's (1988) view that a large number of children reduce a family's levels of social capital.

Children's social spaces contained various 'doors', i.e. distinctions based on binaries for instances girls/boys, adult/child or Indian/English, although the boundaries of the latter pair of categories were less fixed. These could be used either to connect and/or to separate depending on time and context. Simmel's (1997[original 1908]) theorizing around symbolic connotations of 'doors' and 'bridges' draws our attention to the importance of concrete, physical symbols of unity and distinction and the ways through which children and young people relate to these markers.

The concept of social capital is increasingly becoming influential in social research. Putnam, (2002) argues that it forms part of: 'social networks and the associated forms of reciprocity' which help to '...create value, both individual and collective...' and which is something that people '...can invest in...' (p.4)

Social capital is not only seen as essential for the examination and analysis of societies and social processes, but is seen as a social good that enhances the social well-being of countries. High levels of social capital are linked with the trust people feel towards institutions, lower crime figures and higher educational achievements. However, some US Studies, e.g. Putnam (2002) suggest that ethnic diversity has a negative impact on social capital. In "hunkering down" processes, people tend to limit their social contact with

people from the same ethnic group. Putnam makes a difference between 'bonding' that takes place between similar individuals and the 'bridging' that takes place between members of separate social groups. This is also linked to Berry's concept of integration. Close interaction with similar individuals is linked to a subsequent development of bridging social capital that generates social networks across different groups. Qualitative research around social capital is now focusing on adolescents or young adults. Some researchers such as Bankston and Zhou, (2002); Modood, (2004) and Crozier and Davies, (2006) have focused on the role of social and ethnic capital in educational outcomes, employment and political participation of ethnic minority youth.

### **2.3.3 Acculturation Frameworks**

Research has also focused is on acculturation theory as a valuable framework within institutional settings like classrooms and playgrounds which play a pivotal role in the formation of identity and the processes of socialization. Younger children's social worlds may be more confined than their older peers, as schools become an important setting for interaction for younger children.

Social and developmental psychology offer some particularly influential theoretical frameworks that help us understand the interaction between identity and social action. Berry's acculturation framework for example, enables the understanding of socio-psychological dynamics of host-immigrant relationships (Berry, 2001) and second-generation immigrants.

This particular framework identifies four acculturation strategies based on the desire to maintain (or let go) of an ethnic identity and the desire to interact (or otherwise) with other groups. Strategies include: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. There is currently some consensus that the integration strategy is usually associated with favourable implications in terms psychological well-being and mental health, whilst marginalization is

associated with the least favourable outcomes (Berry, 1997; Phinney et al., 2001).

**(a) Children's interactive strategies**

(Brown et al., no date: online) and Watters et al. (2009) have carried out research with children from first generation migrant minority groups. Both studies reported less peer acceptance, self-esteem and in-group bias and more peer problems and discrimination experiences compared to white British majority group children. Children as young as five, have well-developed ideas about acculturation. The majority of minority children opt for an 'integrationist' strategy. Between 60 and 83 per cent of them preferred a simultaneously high level of ethnic cultural maintenance and degree of participation with the majority culture, especially in the older age group.

Bourhis et al. (1997)'s interactive acculturation model describes the 'fit' between one group's acculturation orientation and others' orientation. Where 'own' and (perceived) 'other' orientations coincide, particularly if these are '*integrationist*', inter-group attitudes are more positive than if the orientations are discrepant. Ethnic identity is so central to these frameworks, that according to Brown (2000), the role of individual differences can play an important role, as social identity theory also tends to indicate.

These integrationist and interactive strategies among ethnic minority children was predictive of later higher social acceptance and self esteem but also associated with more emotional symptoms and increased perceived ethnic discrimination. This might be one of the negative implications that ethnic minority children have to face in trying hard to achieve these benefits. The benefits of higher self esteem and peer acceptance may be achieved sometimes through working through experiences of bullying and discrimination. For Watters, et al. (2009), families were crucial in the development of bonding social capital and trans-national links were also highly valued by these children.

There is little research about how young immigrant children view the challenges of maintaining or giving up their heritage cultures as they interact with other members of mainstream society (Knight et al., 1978; Pawliuk et al., 1996; Costigan and Su, 2004). Multi- method studies by (Brown et al., no date: online) and Watters et al., (2009) have shown how identity transitions, among young children from different backgrounds in English schools, affect children's perceptions of each other and how processes of acculturation impact on their feelings of well- being and social acceptance. Heightened concern about immigration and social cohesion have led researchers such as Brown et al. (no date: online) to link these children's acculturation orientations to different outcomes such as self esteem, well being, social acceptance, cross-ethnic friendships, perceived discrimination and emotional behaviours.

**(b) Ethnic constancy in children**

From a developmental perspective, children soon develop an understanding of social categories which becomes more elaborate and does not only depend on physical cues like skin colour. For Rutland et al. (2005), when ethnic constancy sets in, children understand that ethnic group membership is typically stable and does not depend on superficial transformations like clothing or context. When children and young people develop a mature and stable ethnic identity, there is more confidence built in one's own group membership and also a greater openness to other ethnic groups. This is linked to a more enhanced inter-group attitude (Cross, 1991; Phinney and Ferguson, 1997; Marks et al., 2007). There are links between Berry's integration acculturation strategy and secure and mature ethnic identification, as both positions imply openness to multiple identities.

## **2.4 Reviews on degrees of attachment to Britain**

When exploring identity changes over time, Heath et al., (2009: online) highlight an important distinction between the relative incidence of identities—that is the proportion of people willing to describe themselves in a particular way and the strength of those identities, as to how strongly people feel attached to their group. In their study on British identity, British national pride and a sense of belonging or attachment to Britain, Heath and Roberts (2008) give an invaluable insight on ‘British identity’. Their evidence of long-term declines in the social significance of traditional identities, i.e. those based on social class, political partisanship, religion and the British nation, is a shift that could lead to important policy implications.

Levels of attachment or sense of belonging to Britain, which may be a more important factor in the context of civil society, is below European average and attachment to one’s country, rather than pride (Tilley and Heath, 2007), is perhaps a better indication of the aspects of national identity relevant to the strength of the ‘imagined community’. Heath and Roberts (2008) investigated whether some groups, particularly ethnic, religious and socially excluded ones, would exhibit a weak attachment to Britain and thus be less inclined to feel a sense of civic duty, or might be more vulnerable to dissident movements of various kinds or be more disengaged. Identification of any groups with an unusually low degree of attachment was explored using the Home Office Citizenship Survey (Home Office Research Study 270 (2001). This survey has large ethnic minority sub-samples and is ideal for investigating patterns among ethnic minorities.

Their research indicated that those born in the Commonwealth (including Pakistan) appear to have quite a strong sense of belonging to Britain, but those born overseas in a non-Commonwealth country, those who have arrived in Britain only recently, those experiencing socio-economic marginality, are non-home owners or have a long term illness, tend to have a weaker sense of belonging. A higher sense of belonging is strongly associated with length of stay in Britain. There was no significant difference

by ethnicity or for Muslim religion.

In fact, Heath et al., (no date: online) argue that ethnic minorities show levels of attachment to Britain as their white peers and although Muslims and members of other religions responding to this survey felt less likely to feel very strongly that they belong to Britain, it is also important to recognize that rather few Muslims felt that they do not belong to Britain at all (Heath and Roberts, 2008). Both studies conclude that religious identity is the identity that has declined the most, but is one which still leaves a greater impact on social attitudes. Newer group identities may be smaller in membership but show higher levels of attachment. Groups such as young people, graduates, feminists, ethnic minorities and Scots now appear to be the most salient social identities in British society (Heath et. al., no date: online).

Young people are a relatively vulnerable group, especially given their very high unemployment rates and their greater propensities towards protest and resistance. Lower levels of belonging to Britain were found in young people aged 16-24 (Heath and Roberts, 2008). A similar pattern was found among main ethnic minorities: Black Caribbeans and Black Africans in particular were less likely to feel a strong sense of belonging. Around one fifth have a relatively weak sense of belonging. However, survey data confirms that ethnic minorities tend to feel a strong sense of belonging to their own ethnic groups, but this does not necessarily exclude a sense of dual identity, say as both Yemeni and British or Somali and British. This is similar to the dual identity reported by those who describe themselves as 'British and Scottish' or 'British and Welsh'. Exclusive ethnic minority identities are actually less common than exclusive Scottish or Welsh identities.

## **2.5 Identities and Social Action**

Qualitative research investigates the mechanisms that connect identities and social action and clarifies the relationship between both constructs. The following reviews are a result of a five- year funded research programme on

Identities and Social Action (Wetherell, 2010), that have focused on work carried out with ethnic minorities in the UK and other countries, and brought together latest research and expertise across the social sciences.

### **2.5.1 Reviews on white British perceptions on multiculturalism**

BME participants in this research often hinted about perceptions that mainstream society has in their regards. Clarke and Garner (2010) have used qualitative work and psychosocial methods to generate data on emotion and perception of white British identities on multiculturalism. A very small proportion of people in Britain live in areas with 5% or more BME communities and there are aspects of white British identities that are strained due to anxiety about perceptions of unfairness and resource allocation. Participants talked about 'others' 'not fitting in' and referred to resource management in a way that evoked fear of the 'unentitled' consuming the shares that belong to the 'entitled'. Nonetheless, the idea of community is seen as a very positive and powerful one. Participants view communities as a result of a project- they do not happen on their own. Moreover, communities identified at the very local level are deemed as far more important than those at a national level. The idea of community is perceived as generational, in that it is kept alive by older community members. Participants yearn to return to more traditional aspects of community and try to recreate what they imagine a better community had been like in the past. Social class is still an important part of identity construction and influences the way people narrate their life stories and make sense of their identities. Unprompted talk on a multi-cultural society generated contradictory messages. Some participants distinguished readily between new immigrants and long- standing BME British but majority took "non- white" to be immigrant and believed that integration was a personal choice. Overall, cultural diversity was seen as a positive experience, although some felt that Britain has lost or is losing some of its identity and expressed the view that 'Britishness' is now 'diluted'.

### **2.5.2 Reviews on Post- conflict Identities**

Young children who were born in war- torn countries and who have now settled here in the UK, often encounter challenges of racism and hostility towards their cultural identity practices and affiliations. Contemporary multi- method studies like Sporton's et al. (2006) combined quantitative and qualitative aspects in their work conducted with Somali refugee children. This explained how young Somalis' identities and affiliations are shaped by their histories of mobilization due to civil war in their homelands and their experiences of home, school and community life in the UK. Their key findings highlight the implications of these complex experiences of mobility on these young people's sense of identity and social integration. A database of 3313 responses was collected from a survey administered to pupils in Year 7, 9 and 11 in eight Sheffield secondary schools and one further education college, allowing the comparison of Somali respondents' affiliations and identity practices with children from other minority ethnic groups and white majority children. The qualitative part included in- depth semi- structured interviews with young Somalis and their guardians who had arrived in the UK via different routes, who had different policy interviews and who participated in a WebCT online discussion forum and identity art workshops. An international dimension included in- depth semi- structured interviews with young Somalis and their guardians living in Aarhus, Denmark.

### **2.5.3 Reviews on being Somali and Yemeni**

Literature reviews covers research mostly carried out with Somali communities. There has been no similar research on young Yemenis living in the UK although the push-pull factors influencing their migratory ambitions bear resemblance to those from Somalia.

Sporton et al. (2006) find that children and young people who were either born in the UK or on the move, or those who left at an early age have no direct memories and have gained their understanding of what it means to be Somali or Yemeni from a second hand source, which they have gathered along the years from family, friends, local communities or media

representations. Young Somalis and Yemenis must position themselves in relation to public narratives about what it means to be Somali or Yemeni, on narratives which are not of their own making and which sometimes offer differing and contradictory accounts of their motherland. In their accounts to their children, parents often present their motherland as a beautiful country emphasizing more on a positive representation of a family life lived there, leaving out the hardships they may have had to face whilst living there. This contrasts the mental representation that the media presents through reports of war- struck towns and terrorism attacks.

Somali and Yemeni parents acknowledge their children's lack of understanding of their homeland, and this has led to family trips back home in the recent years. Families place their emphasis on their homeland, yet children recall feeling 'out of place' on their return visits as they were stared at and accused of not speaking their mother tongue properly. Young Somalis and Yemenis are aware that it is not enough to claim a self- identity; it must be recognized or accepted as such by a wider community. Visits to their homeland helped them to be appreciative of their lives in the UK. Return visits consolidated these young people's recognition of Britain as a positive place to live whilst some reconsidered whether they should self- identify as British as well as Somali or Yemeni. For those who remember their motherland directly, these memories become a powerful part of their identity and emphasize their pride in their homeland.

#### **2.5.4 Reviews on social positioning of some Somali British groups**

Many Somali young men have grown in the UK in single parents, female-headed households or in households where fathers played a minor role. In Somali communities, high levels of male unemployment led Somali women to become the public face of the family, responsible for the house and welfare issues. These common scenarios have led some Somali community representatives to argue that there seems to be a general crisis of masculinity and that the lack of male mentors was contributing to a high incidence of youth offending among young Somali men (Sporton et al. 2006).

Moreover, educationally disadvantaged youth Somalis may find it difficult to achieve the 'British' lifestyle to which they aspire through conventional education and employment routes. Increase in drug and other anti-social criminal activities can become alternative sources of material and chosen as a demonstration of their masculinity or social status. Alcohol consumption and smoking are also on the rise. For these authors, community spaces for these migrant groups are important as they provide the security to feel they belong to the nation and enable a clearer definition of their own identities.

### **2.5.5 Reviews on Muslim identities and hyphenated identities**

The place that Islam plays in people's narratives may vary from group to group. The Home Office Citizenship Survey (Home Office Research Study 270, 2001) indicated that for Muslims as a group, religion is second only to family as the most important factor in describing themselves. The Department for Communities and Local Government (2007) highlights Islam as a strong identity that provides a strong sense of belonging, and offers a context of social support that plays an important buffering function. The 2006 PEW poll (Choudhury, 2007) confirms the importance of religion as a marker of identity, where 72% of British Muslims said they believe that Muslims have a very strong (28 per cent) or fairly strong (44 per cent) sense of Islamic identity, whilst 77 % feel that this sense of identity is increasing. In a study by Saeed et al. (1999), hybrid identities (Scottish-Muslim or Scottish-Pakistani) were more popular identifiers than the singular identities (Muslim/Pakistani). Similarly, in a study of English and Pakistani populations of Scotland, 40% of the Pakistani population chose to be identified as Scottish-Muslims when offered hyphenated identities of different kinds of identities.

In a participatory theatre project, Yuval Davis and Kaptani, (2009) studied construction and politics of identity as well as belonging to further develop theoretical insights on the performativity and performance of social identities as well as to highlight the process of integration within the dual processes of inclusion/exclusion in minority groups. For the different minority groups

involved which included Kosovan, Kurdish and Somali participants, being Muslim meant different things. Religious affiliation ranged from an almost 'vacuous' identity marker of origin, to a boundary marker of national belonging or even a central cultural and religious mode of selfhood. The experiences of forced mobility and forced history of migration leaves people with a rootless identity that has no strong attachment to place and is one that leads to a rather confused attachment to place.

Loss of attachment to place means that the identity 'Muslim' becomes for many young Somalis, the most powerful determinant of their identity, the most important focus and a consistent way that they have of defining who they are. In experiencing authority arising from multiple centres Goodley et al., (2004), religion consequently becomes an important and specific anchor within children and young people's broader experiences of mobility. For parents this is a means of ensuring that they do not lose their children to western individualistic culture. Ninety- two (92%) of young Somalis claimed that their Muslim faith was important to their everyday life. Islam becomes an identifying marker, a unifying way of life (Yuval Davis and Kaptani, 2009). This was significantly higher than for all other minor ethnic groups surveyed in this study. Alexander (2000) identified specific duties and responsibilities as key defining features of being a Muslim man where the importance of family values was an essential part of their identity. Respect for older people in the community, as well as reciprocity in terms of finance and care, were described as key features of family duty to parents.

#### **2.5.6 Reviews on disavowal of the identity 'black'**

In defining their relationship to the white majority community in Britain, Sporton et al., (2006) report that young Somalis defined themselves as 'Somali,' or as 'refugees', not as 'black.' For these young people, the term 'black' refers to the British Afro-Caribbean population. The apparent absence of the racialized identity 'black' among young Somalis, impacts on their understandings of their encounters in everyday places. Whilst the majority of

the young people interviewed did not self-identify as 'black', it became apparent from their accounts that their identity was read as such by others, even by other minority ethnic groups.

### **2.5.7 Reviews on ambivalence about being Black British**

In the Sporton et al. study, (2006), only 19% of the Somali respondents stated that being British was important to them, although most of them acknowledged that Britain had given them a safe home and education. Intercultural differences emerge between the generations within the Somali community. Young people often feel their parents do not understand their experiences in trying to integrate in the UK. There have also been differences reported between Somalis living in the UK and those living in Aarhus, Denmark. Aarhus Danish Somalis identify with being Danish rather than Somali. This may be due to local government policies of migrants becoming Danish and consequently with not enough places for migrant Somalis to identify with their own community of origin. Many Somali families living in Aarhus actually speak Danish at home too, whilst Somali families in Sheffield tend to speak their native language at home. However, young Aarhus Danish Somalis still encounter discrimination. Despite the fact that the Danish traditional mental representation is liberal, tolerant and fosters a strong commitment to social equality, there seems to have been a shift in social attitudes and policy since the early 1990's so much so that a growing number of Somali families have opted for a secondary migration from Denmark to the UK. Here the expectation is that Britain is the perfect multicultural society where members of each community could live according to their traditional cultures (Yuval Davis and Kaptani, 2009).

The objective of Danish society to foster integration seems to have legitimized negative attitudes by the majority population towards minority groups in society. Young Aarhus Danish Somali feel that they do not belong in Denmark; their networks and their abilities to reproduce a community of practice are fragile, leaving them in a position of vulnerability in the face of

the somewhat 'narrow' definitions of Danish nationhood. In spite of their reluctance to identify with a British identity, Sheffield Somalis feel safe and at home in the UK. They feel secure in their local community without necessarily being included in or self-identify with the nation, because at a local level, they have defined their own community in terms of shared values, networks and practices and in doing so, they have made the place their own. Even in instances where they talk on racism, these events were countered by a broader perception of safety and trust that comes from belonging to a strong and stable local Somali Muslim community. Stability and an emotional sense of being part of a larger whole, resonate from the sense of having a place, and enable the Sheffield Somalis a freedom to define their identity beyond the narrow prescriptions of 'Britishness'.

### **2.5.8 Reviews on Ethnic Identities**

The majority of research on identity formation for immigrant adolescents has focused on ethnic identity (e.g. Phinney, 1989, 1990; Rosenthal and Feldman, 1992; Lay and Verkuyten, 1999; Suárez-Orozco, 2004). Developing a positive identity that incorporates elements of both parental and mainstream cultures is one of the most important developmental tasks immigrant origin youth face (Suárez-Orozco and Qin Baolian, 2006). Individuals who can move comfortably across cultural contexts and who are able to incorporate affective and instrumental dimensions of the cultures they traverse will have better outcomes. For example, fast assimilation into the American society and losing one's ethnic identity is associated with higher levels of psychosocial risk and lower educational achievement in minority youth (Phinney, 1990; Rosenthal and Feldman, 1992; Portes and Zhou, 1993), whilst a trans-cultural identity appears to be most adaptive to immigrant children's development (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

## **2.6 Challenges to Male Identity Formation**

For adolescents, an essential task of development is forming a coherent identity (Erikson, 1963; Marcia, 1980). For youth with immigrant origin, this task can be particularly challenging considering the multiple worlds they traverse and live in and the contradictions and discrimination between mainstream culture and their native culture. There is a great deal of literature around this (e.g. Aronowitz, 1984; Vigil, 1988; Grinberg and Grinberg, 1990; Kohatsu, Suzuki, and Bennett, 1991; Goodenow and Espin, 1993; Phelan, Davidson, and Yu, 1993; Phinney and Landin, 1998; De Las Fuentes and Vasquez, 1999; Suárez-Orozco, 2000, 2001; Talbani and Hasanali, 2000). Cultural dissonance and inadequate cultural guides reflect a negative social mirror, where adolescents may find it difficult to develop a flexible and adaptive sense of self.

### **2.6.1 The role of the social mirror on ethnicity and identity**

The general social climate or ethos of reception plays a critical role in the adaptation of minority groups with immigrant origin (Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Unfortunately, intolerance and discrimination against immigrants of colour is particularly widespread and intense in Europe (Suárez-Orozco, 2004), the U.S. (Espenshade and Belanger, 1998), and Japan (Tsuda, 2003), with increased pervasive social trauma of prejudice and social exclusion (Tatum, 1997) due to diversities in ethnicity, skin colour, and religion, even if they have been living in mainstream society for decades.

Youths with an immigrant origin are challenged to navigate between achieved identities and assigned or imposed identities. Assigned stereotyped identities, can be particularly damaging for youths' identity formation. In the process of negotiating identity, immigrant youth, often challenge and resist negative social mirroring and stereotypes about their group of ethnic origin. A variety of sources within mainstream society – including school authorities, police officers, and the media offer either positive reflected images that make individuals feel worthwhile and competent, or distortions that contribute to

extreme difficulties in maintaining an unblemished sense of self-worth (Suárez-Orozco, 2000), especially if there is no social support which plays, according to Short, (1996) an important buffering role.

According to Messerschmidt (1993), boys from immigrant backgrounds demonstrated a tendency to derive their self-worth or identity by engaging in 'masculine posturing,' through delinquent or violent behaviours, to gain status on the street:

the persona power struggle with other young, marginalized, racial minority men is a resource for constructing a specific type of masculinity – not masculinity in the context of a job or organizational dominance but in the context of 'street elites' and, therefore, in the context of street group dominance. (p. 116)

### **2.6.2 Conflicting Messages**

Conflicting messages are another challenge immigrant youth receive from school and home. Researchers have documented important gender differences in immigrant youth's ethnic identity development (Waters, 1996; Lee, 2002; Schwartz and Montgomery, 2002; Qin-Hilliard, 2003), where boys were significantly less likely than girls to keep their country of origin's identity (Qin-Hilliard, 2003) and appear to have less flexibility in choosing an ethnic identity (Rumbaut, 1996; Olsen, 1997; Waters, 1999). Their identities appear to be less fluid and less permeable (Rumbaut, 1996; Olsen, 1997). Boys tend to choose less "additive" or "hyphenated identities," and appear to have more difficulty in assuming bi-cultural competencies and making successful bi-cultural adjustments (e.g. Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). This challenge seems to be at least in part a result of the highly racialized identities and negative expectations strongly imposed upon them by the dominant society. Immigrant black boys in particular, are more likely to perceive that they are unwelcome by mainstream society (Suárez-Orozco 2000). They face more pressure by their peers to take on a racial identity, and are more likely to respond to the frustrations of communication and integration difficulties by being disruptive. Negative consequences like punishments may reinforce their sense of marginalization and mirrors their educational disadvantages (Sporton et al.,

2006). Popular media has often stereotyped Latino and African immigrant boys as gang members, dangerous and delinquent (López, 2003).

In the Harvard Immigration Project (Suárez-Orozco, 2000), when asked to complete the following sentence: “Most Americans think that [child’s country of origin] are\_\_\_\_\_ “, sixty-five (65) percent of them described themselves negatively such as “bad,” “stupid,” “useless,” “garbage,” “gang members,” “lazy,” and “we don’t exist.” This is an indication of the negative way they see themselves in relation to others and could result in adverse developmental outcomes.

### **2.6.3 Reviews on African Masculinity**

Muslim boys ‘perform, enact, challenge and resist a range of identities and their identities are intimately tied up with issues of masculinity’ Archer (2001:79). Masculinity is constructed through different positionings of self and others, especially through the ‘ownership’ and ‘control’ of women. A gender analysis of young men needs to take into account both the plurality of masculinities in sub-Saharan Africa as well as the culture of socialization of the boys and men living there (Barker and Ricardo, 2005). Religious identity is viewed as trans-national and emphasized over their ethnic and national identity.

Versions of manhood in Africa are socially constructed. They are plural, fluid over time and according to the settings they are in. There is no typical young man in sub-Saharan Africa and no single African version of manhood. There are numerous African masculinities that change historically from urban to rural and which include versions of manhood associated with war, with being warriors, with farming or cattle herding. There are indigenous definitions and versions of manhood defined by tribal and ethnic group practices, and newer versions of manhood shaped by Islam, Christianity, and by Western influences, including the global media. The essential social requirement for achieving manhood in Africa is achieving some form of financial independence, employment or income, and which becomes a prerequisite to

start a family. In most places in Africa, 'bride price' is routine and marriage and family are directly linked to having income and/or property. In this regard Barker and Ricardo (2005) argue that men's social recognition and their sense of manhood suffers when they lack work. For these authors, achieving manhood in the African context often depends on an older man—one who holds more power—who decides when a young man is able to achieve socially recognized manhood. This issue of the older men in general holding power over younger men is a widespread and defining aspect of manhood in Africa, manifesting itself in numerous contexts in contemporary Africa.

## **2.7 Reviews on Participatory, creative and community- based action research and life story projects**

Using participatory action research is one of the ways to enhance personal involvement in community projects and consequently captures the rich realm of identity formulations in a more concrete way. Such changes can bring about change in self-categorization discourse and also on people's internalized attitudes and behaviours (e.g. Terry and Hogg, 1996).

PAR researchers are addressing contexts of social inequalities and using approaches to promote critical self-reflexivity about subjectively lived experiences. Current literature shows a variety of qualitative visual methods like video diaries (Apelmo, 2009); thinking with photographs for social change (Koobak, 2009) and presentations in workshop showcases (Wetherell, 2010).

Maiter et al., (2008) have explored, developed, piloted and evaluated innovative ways of providing mental health services and support to people from diverse cultural backgrounds. They focused on active participation of all collaborators towards tangible and meaningful change. This was a collaboration among academics (from three universities and one university-affiliated hospital), a community-based research centre, four community-based mental health/health organizations, two umbrella organizations (in mental health and diversity), and five cultural-linguistic communities: immigrants and refugees originating from Somalia, Poland, China (Mandarin-

speaking), Latin America (Spanish-speaking), and India (Punjabi speaking Sikhs) in two sites – Toronto and Waterloo Region.

In the first phase, academic and community researchers gathered data to develop a framework that formed the basis for pilot projects. These projects were then designed and implemented by communities in partnership with organizational partners. Evaluation led to shared findings among collaborating partners, the larger communities, policy-makers, funders, as well as local, provincial, and federal government. This project's strong point was reflected in the relationships created, tested, and deepened with each new stage as well as proving to be an effective means to open up discussion and, eventually, to create change. In order to examine these relationships, and the underlying concept of reciprocity, their project was divided into four stages: planning and design (initiating relationships); initiation (developing relationships); data collection and analysis (exchange of knowledge and capacity building); and dissemination (exchange of information and resources). These stages raised awareness about mental health issues in each community. Although concerns have been raised that researchers may have developed relationships with the purpose of forcing participants to reveal stories that they do not want to reveal, (Fontes, 2004; Yassour-Borochowitz, 2004), researcher-participant relationships were reciprocal and based on ethical dialogue, resulting in a deeper understanding of participants' life experiences and in empowerment and change for the group under study (Hill, 2004; Yassour-Borochowitz, 2004).

Morsillo and Prilleltensky's (2007) study on social action with youth utilized a participatory action research framework to promote personal, group and community wellness with a group of gay and lesbian youth. Interventions included drama representations, designing an aboriginal public garden, children's activities in a cultural festival for refugees, an underage party and a battle of the bands and were evaluated through self-reports, videotapes and ethnographic data.

Personal developments as result of these interventions included enhanced socio-political awareness, an enhanced sense of control and social responsibility, hopefulness in participants' perceptions, ability to make change and increase in community participation skills. Group outcomes included group independence and motivation, group effectiveness, cohesion, solidarity and enhanced youth involvement in local affairs. Psycho-political validity, which focuses on the central role of power in explaining and altering conditions of oppression, in understanding processes of liberation and in fostering wellness for individuals, groups and communities at large, was evaluated by examining the degree of epistemic (i.e. the extent that power is considered in political and psychological domains affecting oppression, liberation and wellness) and transformational validity (i.e. the extent that actual change takes place in these domains as a result of particular interventions).

Broad and Reynes (2008)'s research collaboration is between the Community, Economical and Social Development Programme, (CESD) which forms part of a Canadian university located in the North- Algoma University college, Northern Ontario, and a community located in the South (the Asopricor Holistic Association, Colombia). Through the sharing and creation of knowledge, a collection of community processes as a tool for social transformation was used. In this PAR project, the possibility of establishing respect of relations across cultures particularly within a European indigenous context was questioned. Ermine's paradigm of ethical space was considered, as researchers and community members accepted differing worldviews and addressed unequal power relations.

The community's needs for change agents was addressed, and holistic work identified the political, social, cultural and economical needs of smaller, northern, rural and indigenous communities, who had suffered a continuous death of identity through forced displacements, slavery, extermination, sexual assault and destruction of their beliefs under European colonialism. Their location in relation to this research was informed through exploring

similarities of rural/ urban experiences rather than oppositional experience, learning in informal and formal settings and initiating life projects that develop alternative models of relating to each other and the world around us.

The history and context of the two organizations concluded that economical and/or political tools are only part of the solution. Social transformations need a holistic approach, socially transformative dialogue and exchange benefits from a variety of perspectives and which are cultural appropriate. Creating spaces for these exchanges brought together the formal and informal spaces of learning and contributed to social transformation.

Bianchi's (2008) collaborative arts production project was an international exploration of young people's construction of visual image and identity. The project was more than a body's work- it widened cultural participation and facilitated opportunities for young people who may not usually have had access to the arts. It generated models of wider participation through innovative participatory approaches to visual art and interdisciplinary practice. Experiences of people concerned were listened to and acknowledged and advocacy networks were developed to 'operationalize' voices through PAR.

Sixsmith and Kagan (2005)'s participatory and inclusive 'Pathways' project aimed at delivering participatory arts practice within communities in Manchester while addressing issues of mental health, well- being and social inclusion. The project aimed at articulating the processes that artists were engaged in from the perspectives of both artists and participants, at examining and understanding some of the mechanisms and outputs of artistic processes, the extent in which they captured 'change' throughout the project and the impact of these ways of working. It also aimed at identifying changes in mental health and/or social support and/ or inclusion of participants as a result of participation. The project contributed to the PSA (Public Service Agreements) target of improving outcomes for adults and children with mental health problems and improving quality of life, as well as identified strengths of different forms of data evaluation of arts and mental

health work. Evaluation of outcomes indicated an impact on their sense of personal and social identity. Participants worked through their own personal journeys and a shift in discourse from disempowerment to a sense of worth was captured as they discovered what they were capable of achieving through this participatory process. Participants reported an enhanced degree of well-being, a better quality of life as well as enhanced sense of self-efficacy. Developing skills related to art forms, building mutual trust and confidence, and increasing communication and social capital were reported factors that positively affected other domains such as employability or the furthering of education by improving their interest base and opportunities for their future.

Gorney (2004: online) used a community arts approach to positively investigate issues surrounding adoption. A post-adoption service was set up and parents and young people conversed therapeutically together around this theme, within a community context and with the help of interviews and questionnaires. Stories about adoption were shared by the young adopted participants through narratives, drawings and photos and a CD ROM video was created to help others understand and come to terms with different facets of adoption. Through informal group work, participants also reflected on help they would have liked from people in their lives to help others in the future. All action initiatives were based on aspects like 'understanding', 'imagining' and 'creating'. 'Understanding' included sharing and reflecting on past experiences. Stories enabled them to think about people in their lives and the effect of their experiences on everyone involved. 'Imagining' or envisioning enabled the identification of a process of discovery, including what strengths and qualities had been developed and had worked in the past as well as effective support systems and alternatives to mismanaged experiences. Moreover, in 'creating' the future together, previous discussions were used to construct questionnaires about the future to advise other families and professionals. Through continuous dialogue, they discussed what would need to happen to help others in the light of what happened to them. This highlighted the two-way process of reciprocity and reflexivity

between the researcher's subjective life and the resonance this created with the participants. Community art and narratives managed to capture the process of transition, to enhance the experience of belonging in adoption as well as eliciting transformatory effects that this experience brought about in the identities of both researcher and participants. The project led to more flexibility in terms of how participants viewed their own adoptive experiences as well as promoting the idea of enriching people, so as to offer a different model of service. Instead of therapeutic interventions, community- building was provided and this contributed to the exploration of dominant discourse around the meanings of distress in adoptive experiences.

### **2.7.1 Ethno-mimesis and PAR**

Participatory Action Research methodologies and life stories were represented in photographic form in a project with young Bosnian Muslim refugees in the East Midlands (O'Neill, 2005). The arts were used to highlight the processes of social inclusion as well as the civic role and responsibility that higher education institutions have. Creating a safe place for dialogue was vital and this supported processes of restorative justice and reconciliation. Intervention strategies based on collective responsibilities were used to develop, according to Benhabib (1992), 'a civic culture of public participation and the moral quality of enlarged thought' (p.140).

O'Neill (2005) utilized mimesis to project critical tension to constructive (instrumental) rationality and to elicit feelings of sensuousness. Art was used in three levels – the first *textual* level was performed through documenting life stories that served as witnessing what participants passed through in their historical past. The second *visual* level was performed through the production of art forms to re-present participants' life stories with the help of free lance artists, to capture and represent what O'Neill (2005) describes as 'the unsayable' (p.4). The third level combined visual and textual elements and included sharing art forms with audiences in community spaces with the aim of supporting and fostering dialogue, as well as the understanding of

processes of community development.

## **2.8 Summary of Chapter**

This chapter has provided a detailed overview of the major literature reviews around social identities in black and minority ethnic communities. Current social identity perspectives are first explored through self- categorization and meta- theory discourse to understand people's identities as group members with shared perceptions and goals. Next, social identity is presented as an analytical framework where identity contents and contestations are expressed through constitutive norms, shared purposes, relational comparisons and cognitive models. Social identity frameworks around ethnic minority children and young people have also considered some general assumptions in first and second generations as well as the role of social capital and acculturation frameworks. Current identity research shows ethnic groups as having similar levels of attachment to Britain as their white counterparts. Black Muslim Somali and Yemeni youth experience challenges in formulating coherent identities, which are understood in the light of a local context of mainstream misconception and an negative social mirroring. Religion offers significant social support and is an essential marker of identity, in particular in those communities that have a war- torn past. Community- based participatory action research (PAR) reviews present PAR as a very useful process for exploring social identity dynamics through creative methods undertaken which are deemed effective to engage communities. Narrative approaches were also found valuable in capturing social identity dynamics and eliciting 'active' voice.

# Chapter 3

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## Epistemology and Theoretical Frameworks

### 3.0 Introduction: Underlying theoretical assumptions

This chapter takes into consideration the 'buried assumptions' (Goodley et al., 2004:97) and underlying theoretical agendas and frameworks that surround researchers, and how these impinge on the whole research process and on the engagement of perspectives taken for the construction of meanings. It also considers how epistemology shapes methods, methodologies and theoretical positions and how it influences ways in which methods are chosen, materials are dealt with and how analysis is conceptualized. This chapter also explores a community psychology praxis, together with other theoretical strands such as life-story research, post-modern and post-structural thought, afro-centricity, feminism, psychoanalysis, post-colonialism as well as discourses around the self ('I') in relation to the other ('we') in a context of inter-subjectivity.

### 3.1 Rebuilding psychology

According to Goodley et al., (2004), methods are never used by researchers within a theoretical vacuum. Epistemology can be defined as the backbone on which researchers build up theories or hypothesis. As a basic philosophical orientation, epistemology directs us to see the world in particular ways and in making sense of what we see through the use of related theories (Goodley et al., 2004).

According to Parker (2005), qualitative social research enables psychology to do something radically different in its mission to connect human experience to social action. The 'status quo' within psychology needs to be challenged (Martin-Baro', 1996). A new vision of community engagement has been found necessary to deal with the deep contradictions of a neo-liberal globalization. Rebuilding psychology (Burton, 2008) then becomes a possible and needed way to engage social actors back to their own local communities and to enable them to 'bounce back' as active citizens (Davis, 2010). In clinical settings, one often encounters people who have experienced their identity gradually eroding by others' views and behaviour, and who are reluctant according to (Davis, 2010), to accept '...a new but false identity' that puts them in the position '...a passive recipient' (p.32). Sometimes, people catalyse their way to recovery and well being with the realization that external not internal factors are largely responsible for distressful situations.

Understanding wider causes of exclusion enables people to address their concerns. Friere's work (1972) around dialogically active subjects who become active participants in the enquiries of research, as well as critical psychology and psychology of liberation, have gradually affirmed emancipatory ways of doing psychology and have actively engaged with the often deprived subjective realities of those oppressed within current social systems (Kagan and Burton, 2000).

### **3.1.1 Epistemology of relation**

The idea of an '**epistemology of distance**' (Ferdinand Christlieb, 1994; 1995) where subject and object are separate and apart from one another, has given way to an '**epistemology of relation**' (e.g. Montero, 2007), where knowledge is not constructed by isolated individuals in their unique subjectivity but by the relations which people form part of, where the subject is constructed and the 'we' is created. The 'other' is inevitable: it is involved in the complexity of the inter-subjective relation. Because the 'I' is an individual subject, it is often thought to coincide with a bio-psychological reality that is

independent as respect to the social context in which it operates. However, apart from its indispensable mental and biological dimensions, the 'I' is an acquired outcome, a social and cultural product, a human artefact rather than a natural reality (Remotti, 2010). In relational psychoanalysis, social context and relationships are not merely random and contingent but are part and parcel of self-identity and daily life.

### **3.2 Well- being and collaborative relationships**

For Davis (2010), genuine collaborative relationships lie at the basis of successful recovery stories. Genuine collaboration means that people have the power and possibility to share the value of their experiences on their own terms. This is linked to the concept of wellbeing. Recent research work in the social sciences, in education, policy making and in politics, is focusing on the many intertwined factors that contribute to well- being:

#### **3.2.1 The 5S model of well- being**

Organizational elements are also influential to personal wellbeing (Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2006). The 5S model of well being (sites, signs, sources, strategies and synergy) highlights how personal, relational, organizational and communal well- being are interrelated and need to be effectively integrated in order to be able to influence action.

##### **(a) Sites and Signs**

Well-being takes place in different locations. It can belong to individuals, to relationships, organizations or communities. Certain sites enable us to understand whether wellbeing is experienced. Knowledge of having control over one's life is a sign of personal wellbeing. According to Marmot (2004), this may not be present in many people's lives) since many decisions may not be taken by persons themselves. Personal health is another sign, whilst signs of strong emotional relationships include love, affection and caring bonds between different people (Gottman, 1999; Ornish, 1997). Signs of

organizational wellbeing could imply clear roles at work, productivity and effective communication, thus enabling people to exercise voice and control. Signs of communal wellbeing benefit everyone (Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2005) and include safe neighbourhoods, employment opportunities and good schools.

### **(b) Sources**

Different sources contribute to personal, relational, organizational and community wellbeing. Environmental sources are intrinsically connected to cohesion and wellbeing, and in these communities strong and positive relationships develop between persons from different backgrounds, in the work place, in schools and within neighbourhoods (Commission for Integration and Cohesion Report, 2007). Experiences of achievement and accomplishment enhance self-esteem and personal wellbeing (Thomas and Chess, 1977) whilst relational wellbeing is based on nurturance and early positive experiences (Hazan and Shaver, 1987; Mikulincer, 1998). For Bolman and Deal (2003), organizational wellness is based on efficient practises, participatory structures and well- defined roles. According to Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005), community wellbeing includes factors such as a sense of belonging, cohesion, equal opportunities and full access to healthcare and democratic processes.

### **(c) Strategies and Synergy**

In web-like social systems, best results are obtained when one simultaneously works on all fronts. Effective well-being strategies need a synergic plan of action where personal solutions consider organizational solutions, sustained within a functioning ethical practice and collective norms of respect. When community needs are unmet by public institutions, collective norms are undermined. Collective problems need collective solutions (Nelson et al., 2011) and problems need to be addressed comprehensively and synergistically. Processes rather than mere outcomes enable people to work together on collective problems, thereby increasing self- esteem, self- efficacy, social support and empowerment. Wellbeing is

both personal and social (Smith, 2005). This informs, empowers and defends. For Putnam and Feldstein (2003) 'organizing is about transforming private aches and pains into a shared vision of collective action' (p.282).

### **3.2.2 Tackling issues of sustainability**

To translate a shared vision into action, there is a need to cross interdisciplinary boundaries and deal with issues of sustainability. At times, psychology is still linked to an internal phenomenon, happening inside our body and in our 'brain'. Devine-Wright (2009) argues that this position seems to influence all other factors as being external to one's perspective and that other factors are the responsibility of other disciplines. The physical or natural environment is still narrowly interpreted within the social arena and still considered as a backdrop, even in aspects of social psychology. In theories of place, focus on the environment can become a more prominent, practical and conceptual tool that highlights understanding of how people's essential interactions are intrinsically linked to attachment and identification to place.

### **3.3 The pattern of 'racialised relations' in Liverpool**

Although many believe that most black people live in Toxteth, (e.g. Benyon and Solomos, 1987), they only live in segregated, smaller parts of this district, like Granby, Princes Park, Arundel, Abercromby and Smithdown (e.g. Gifford et al., 1989). 'Liverpool 8', the postal district where this project took place, is still most frequently used to represent the areas where black people live. This situation seems to be worse than in other parts of the country as black people are significantly concentrated in a very constricted geographical area (Smith, 1989; Brown, 1984).

Moreover for Gifford et al. (1989), the historical absence of black faces in the main city centre stores is still today a sign of employment segregation. Black people go to a limited number of schools in the city and are noticeably underrepresented in higher education. For Ben-Tovim (1989) and Gifford et al; (1989), this can be described as systematic 'racialized' discrimination.

Black people do not often venture out of Liverpool 8 and are largely absent from football games and have a history of being persecuted by all, including the police (e.g. Hill 1987, 1989). Across the country today, there are signs of marginal improvement in the areas of businesses, educational and political representations and these improvements can be strengthened (e.g. Goulbourne, 1990). However, there are still few black people in the professions or in a black middle class and black political power is minimal. (For more details on the historical background of Black experiences in Liverpool see Appendix 3.3).

Wider social ideologies in Liverpool include a strong white sentiment and an insular identity. The 'Scousers' are a closed inclusive group, fiercely proud of their identity, with a strong sense of local emotions, common affiliations and values, a strong commitment to family and friends and a class-based ideology in particular trade unions (e.g. Parkinson et al., 1989). 'Scousers' foster a sense of community and solidarity; they are hardheaded, defiant, have a no-nonsense self-confidence and can be arrogant (e.g. Hill, 1989). Yet at the same time, positive close links between Liverpool and Northern Ireland have replicated similar divisions between Catholics and Protestants.

Although this description seems to have little to do with 'racisms', when themes involve black communities, the context can become quite heated. The ideology of insiders/outsideers excludes black 'Scousers' except when there seems to be a conflict between 'Scousers' and those hailing from outside the city (Hill, 1989).

For Wilson (1990), some of these attitudes reveal deep historical roots. For instance, there seems to be a sense of 'racial amnesia' where 'Scousers' believe that there are no problems as regards to race relations or integration. However, for Gifford et al. (1989), whites living in Liverpool 8 are still considered with suspicion and white women who date or marry black men are often considered as degenerate, whilst attitudes of black women are not considered. Black people of mixed origins are still perceived as inferior,

psychologically unstable and socially maladjusted. For these authors, a 'virulent racial hostility' exists in the belief that black people want to and should stay in Liverpool 8. Moreover Toxteth is still perceived as a black ghetto and a 'no- go' area for many whites. Repeated actions of taunting, aggression and violence are almost considered as an 'absence- of- mind' way, part of the broader 'Scouse' persona (Hill, 1989: 142).

### **3.3.1 Re-conceptualizing 'race relations'**

Presenting a new framework means moving towards analyzing 'racialised' relations, 'racisms' and 'whites' rather than 'race', 'race relations,' and black people. This approach questions the existence of 'race,' strives to separate the idea of disadvantage from discrimination and looks at how particular groups have come to be defined as 'races' by evaluating the different factors involved in these processes (e.g. Green and Carter, 1988). It is an approach that goes beyond the economic, political and cultural priorities of white people. Focusing on black people means that inequality is positioned within the black population rather than an outcome of white attitudes and actions (Lawrence, 1982). Discrimination is present not because people are black but because people are 'racist'. Going back to Liverpool's history, the early 1919 riots were explained in terms of black sailors 'taking' white jobs and women rather than that due to racism in white employers and trade unions' discrimination (e.g. May and Cohen, 1975). The 1930's riots were explained in terms of black people of mixed origins having a biological inferiority and a social maladjustment, rather than due to the presence of stereotypes and discrimination. Whites were seen as the best guardians of black futures and black people were perceived as incapable of self- empowerment and self-realization. (More details on the 1981 riots can be found in Appendix 3.3.1)

Endorsing 'racial harmony' or 'racial equality' does not mean turning a blind eye to discriminatory practices. This is a very reductive way of understanding the more complex conceptualizations of attaining harmony and equal opportunities between white and black people. In a city where there is a high

degree of inter- dating, often considered as a sign of inter-racial harmony, there are high numbers of black people who are unemployed, with a low educational achievement and who are still secluded in poverty areas and who are in danger of attack (Gifford et al., 1989). Regardless of the social policy initiatives put forward by mainstream educationalists to deal with a growing black population in British schools (e.g. assimilation or anti-racist policies), crucially, Black British presence is still viewed largely as problematic and a threat to the 'British way of life' (Christian, 2005), a theme echoed in the broader society and political realm. When 'problems' are identified, they are still 'located' in the black community (Small, 1991). Promoting dialogue and dedicating equal energies to analyse the complex dynamics of 'racialized' attitudes and ideologies is needed. Racism cannot be just 'condensed to the whims of the state' (Fenton, 1980:165). For this author, racism is:

...deeply persuasive psychologically and physically...racial and ethnic meanings are also deeply embedded in religious, kinship and citizenship structures and in patterns of residence and settlement.....[There is]... the necessity of a certain special attention to this order of social fact (p.165)

This ideology of racism can be a critical area of inquiry (Miles, 1988). Few analysts have given much thought to the fact that black people have considered themselves as a 'race,' have taken up 'racialized' definitions and rejected the inferiority associated with them and have acted on them in particular as a political rallying call. This is reflected in contexts like the Garvey movement, the black power in the 1960's in the US and affiliations in the UK to the Liverpool Black Caucus, the Federation of Liverpool black organizations and the Consortium of Black Organizations (Liverpool Black Caucus, 1986; Gifford et al., 1989).

The idea of race is not fixed, concrete or immutable but it is flexible, elastic, and changeable. It continues to be a means to an end, and although as an issue it has often been oppressive, it is also used to achieve equality (Gilroy, 1987). Many aspects of class and 'racialised' disadvantage are profoundly

interlinked. For Gilroy (1987), if all racial discrimination had to cease, black people would still be at the bottom because of their economically disadvantaged position. Few whites are discriminated against because they are whites and only black people face psychological hostility arising from white supremacy, with negative impacts on education, distortion of history and a denial of acknowledgement to black heroes, a pattern that is clear in the city (Small, 1991).

On the other hand, there are local and EU projects which focus on positive action, ethnic monitoring, lobbying local government, Saturday schools and black businesses and can enable black people to confront co-optation and negotiate for consultation and partnership with different institutions that minimize inequality and move towards excellence (Young and Connolly, 1981). Moreover, the increase of mixed origins in the black population can bring people together, where black and white become family members and therefore stand by each other in injustices.

### **3.4 Community Psychology**

For Davis (2010), community psychologists have identified a dilemma. In this regard, he cites Melliush (1998 cited in Davis, 2010):

Community psychology has limited capacity to 'empower' when the onus for social change is so often (mis) placed (solely) onto (changing) people with the least resources (p.33).

The vital transaction between the 'included' class and the 'excluded' person is respect- for who people have been, who they are now and what they could be in the future. This allows the courage to put aside 'the straitjacket of accepted wisdom' and the 'excluding power of diagnostic labels' (Holford, 2010: 33). Practitioners, who by definition are in positions 'of power to exclude,' need to be prepared to create contexts that support practice values and service principles that are intrinsically inclusive, offer hope and understand people's struggle to go beyond victimhood. They need to acknowledge society's part in maintaining exclusion, and share their power

and resources and keep going long after their own energy for change has dwindled. This is the ‘magic’ in collaborative discovery, collaborative enquiry and the co-creation of support systems that weave in individual work, community psychology and community engagement and promotes choice and opportunities (Davis, 2010). Community psychology strives, although not always manages, to position itself to disciplines within and outside it and to move towards radical praxis where action, research and theory are intrinsically connected (Kagan and Burton, 2001; Burton and Kagan, 1996). The elements of a radical community psychological praxis (e.g. Prilleltensky and Nelson, 1997; Montero, 1995), coincide with the researcher’s own values and beliefs and have been summarized in the table below. (Details of these elements are found in Appendix 3.4).

**Table 3.4: Elements of a radical community psychological praxis (from Kagan and Burton, 2001)**

Element	Implication for community psychology praxis:
A just society and its underpinning values	A just society is underpinned by shared values of justice, stewardship and community. These same values should underpin our community psychological practice.
Ecological metaphor	Community psychology looks outside the individual for explanations of social experience and sometimes for solutions, whilst simultaneously viewing people as agentic, purposeful beings.
Whole systems perspectives	Community psychology, so long as it recognises the contradictions inherent in systems perspectives, has the potential for enhancing the supportive features of (some) elements of the systems in the interests of the people and for identifying the causes of oppression.

Interdisciplinary	A radical community psychology practice would seek interdisciplinary understanding about how oppression is caused and maintained, and use this understanding as a guide to appropriate action.
Dialectical relationship between people and systems	Community psychology praxis may provide opportunities for enhancing the creative, determining potential of people.
People's consciousness	Community psychology must work as near to the people as possible and participate with them in order to challenge the status quo and achieve social change.

### 3.5 Life Story Research: Post- structural discourse, subjectivity and the self

For many authors (e.g. Clough and Nutbrown, 2002; Goodley et al., 2004), life story research challenges long held traditions of positivistic and post-positivistic approaches to research in social sciences. Life stories have an **idiographic** perspective that assumes that research is interested in the private, individual and subjective nature of life, rather than the public, general and the objective of the nomethetic approach. Life story research takes a **hermeneutic**, rather than a 'veistic' perspective, in that it captures the meanings of a culture or person rather than measuring their observable aspects. This is linked to the social construction of reality and phenomenology. By taking a **qualitative** approach, rather than a numerical, quantitative representation, it focuses on the nature of the world through discourse, which is **specific**, in that it generates specific descriptions and explanations of a few people rather than generalizing on a wider population. It is also **authentic** by engaging with the genuine meanings of a story and its narrators rather than focusing on validity, i.e. finding 'measures' which measure what they claim to measure. Finally, language used is **creative**, not

descriptive, in that creative discourse recognises the constructive effects of language rather than the use of language as a transparent medium for describing the world.

### **3.5.1 Community Narratives**

Thinking with a story enables community participants to experience the story as affecting and resonating with one's own life (Frank, 1995). For instead of hiding the struggle that creating a text involves, writing stories reveals the human labor with its 'emotional, social, physical, and political bases' (Richardson, 1995:191). For Ellis (1995) it introduces readers to reflection, to: ...exist.... within uncertainty, where plot lines circle round and round, where endings are multiple and often unfinished, and where selves are fractured and often contradictory (p.162).

No self or personal experience story is ever an individual production. This narrative of self is framed and set in dominant scripts made by western culture in terms of constructs like gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age, social class and race as well as cultural, ideological and historical contexts (Denzin, 1989 p.73). In any story, there is no guarantee of a sustaining, coherent narrative of the self. The 'united' self, needs constant vigilance and identities need to be continuously work upon, to be reflexively distributed (Shilling and Mellor, 1994). Flexible narratives of the self can be created, re-created and sustained by the individual (Frank, 1995) and depends upon cultural repertoire of stories, available for blending into personal stories (Gergen, 1994). Throughout their life, people may develop greater potential in telling different life stories and may develop the capacity to reconstruct their lives in ways that enhance their present situations, relationships, and needs (Sparkles, 1996).

In a very uneven postmodern world, there is an increase in the narrative resources and genres available for people to make sense of their lives. These narrative resources provide greater space and opportunities for people who desire to design who they can and would like to be (Shotter, 1993). Not

all people have easy access to 'narratives' within a political economy of developmental opportunities. This limits who or what people can become. Shotter (1993) argues that:

We cannot just position ourselves as we please; we face differential invitations and barriers to all the 'movements' (actions and utterances) we might try to make (p.6-7).

In modern society narratives are inevitably fragile. The particular biography individuals hold on to is only one among many that could be constructed about their embodied lives (Shilling and Mellor, 1994). Individuals engage in a reflexive project of the self where they try and keep a coherent yet continuously revised biographical narrative (Sparkles, 1996). As individuals negotiate various lifestyle choices, the body and self become more in line with a reflective project of self-identity. The body becomes more increasingly related to the identity the individual promotes. The integrity of any identity is maintained not only for the individual 'self' but also for other 'selves'. At times, there are discrepancies between how we see ourselves and how others see us so that some identities are flawed. Knowledge about bodies is always open to uncertainties that take the form of hypothesis, that are open to revision and at times abandoned.

Stories reaffirm, create, and possibly redirect the relationship within which the story is told (Frank, 2000). People tell stories, not narratives, stories which are 'acts of telling', and are self-repeating elaborations of the relationship between those sharing the story. Shared memories are made present, and shared futures are projected. Stories reaffirm what people mean to each other and who they are with respect to each other. When life is hard, stories can provide distance from whatever threatens those in the storytelling relation. Storytellers protect their relational self when threatened by some crisis. According to (Atkinson, 1997), stories have 'a recuperative role' (p.327), where people use stories as part of their re-moralization, where they discover others who answer their story's call for a relationship. Social scientists engaging in stories become part of the network of relationships

created by the story. Storytelling restores persons, relationships, and communities.

Stories are more than 'data' for analysis. Atkinson (1997) argues that if stories are transferred too quickly outside the story-telling relation and changed into a "text" for analysis, the purpose for which people engage in storytelling, i.e. relationship building could be lost. He cites Mishler in this regard. Although the storytelling relation includes those analyzing the story, the intention 'is to shift attention away from investigators' problems . . . to respondents' problems'. (Mishler, cited in Atkinson, 1997:334)

### **3.6 Other theoretical frameworks that underpin analysis of stories generated**

Theoretical frameworks such as post-modern and post structural thought can be considered as major epistemological persuasions that greatly influence current research in social sciences (Gordon et al., 2001). The following sections explore how such frameworks can underpin analysis of stories generated.

#### **3.6.1 Post-modern and post- structural thought**

Post-modern and post-structural thought are often seen as a challenge to the status and function of meta or grand narratives, typical of modernist societies (Lyotard, 1979) which often supply 'the needs, actions and demands of omnipotent social groups' (Goodley et al., 2004:98) and marginalize certain groupings (e.g. black people, gay, women, mentally ill and disabled), to the status of 'other'. Post- structuralists feel that modernist values of justice and freedom are embedded in oppressive discourses. They try to understand human beings, the 'raison d'etre' of modernist knowledge, as deconstructed and 'problematized', where the idea of a free notion of the human subject as embodied, agentic, and humanist needs to be deconstructed (Foucault, 1980). In the social sciences, this falls under social constructionist critiques (Burman and Parker, 1993; Burr 1995) and generates alternative, more empowering stories that highlight how subjects are fragmented, de-centered

and multiple where selves emerge and are constructed from discourses of the culture in which they are created. This resonates with some of Derrida's and Lacanian texts (Stronach and McLure, 1998), as well as Butler's (1990; 1993) and Foucault's (1973a; 1973b; 1980; 1983) writings. For Butler (1990), this view of humans is in itself a reflection of the dominant discourse of modernity where the individual self is a fiction, an ever-changing historical construct. For Assiter (1996), it is 'a product of the relation of power exercised over bodies' (p.9).

### **3.6.2 Constructing identity through social reality**

The concept of identity is linked to the concept of representation of self in a social context made up of actors that recite in a social scene. At the basis of a social science perspective, social contexts determine the type of representations and constructions that emerge (Remotti, 2010). These contexts, with their interactions, discourses and matrixes gradually represent and construct themselves. Identity has to do with projects, choices, negotiations, conflicts, compromises, expectations, affirmations, successes, failures and requests. All of this occurs within the social context, where subjects are gradually invented, constructed, or imagined, rather than merely discovered.

### **3.6.3 Afro-centricity, Grounded Theory and Social Change**

Afro-centricity is a regenerative paradigm that emphasizes the central role of the African subject within the context of African history (Molefi, 1998) and believes that African people should re-assert a sense of agency to achieve sanity. Thinking black means a revolutionary shift in thinking. It refers to thinking from a centred position, from a subject place, and an agency location, a structural adjustment to black disorientation, de-centeredness and lack of agency (Mazama, 2003). Like grounded theory, it is firmly grounded in the participants' contributions, their own words and subjective experiences. This approach sees conceptual developments as grounded in

social research, an 'emergent process' where theory 'surfaces through assembled data' (Goodley et al; 2004:119) and where theoretical claims remain connected to the phenomenology of the object of study which can, according to Strauss and Corbin (1994), '...be elaborated and modified as incoming data are meticulously played against them' (p.273). More details on afro-centric thought can be found in Appendix 3.6.3.

This leads researchers to take up an epistemological shift and change their approach by changing the focus of questions posed, which also leads to an ontological shift (Ewert, 1987) in that they are trying to understand reality in a different way, where human interaction can be understood in terms of marginalization, considered a process rather than a condition (Hall, 1999). Critical social science does not only explain social behaviour in terms of power dynamics, but also tries to balance the decision-making power among individuals (e.g. Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994). In this, it provides an apt theoretical basis for researching the marginalized, in that it reframes existing, taken-for-granted norms and reviews possibilities of cultural exchange and collective social action leading to social transformation (Hall, 1999). Foucault's view of discursive practices in given cultural places (Goodley et al., 2004) provides 'the basis for conscious knowledge' (Cheek and Porter, 1997:119), an approach that shapes understanding of ourselves through bodies of knowledge and current discursive assumptions, enabling the understanding of social and cultural worlds through individual participant stories from local communities.

#### **3.6.4 Feminist, Psychoanalytical and Post-Colonial Strands**

The idea that personal is also political underscores the way through which the realm of individual experiences and relationships function to reproduce or challenge patterns of power (Rowbotham et al., 1979). This intrinsically connects psychological knowledge and research with feminist work, and can be applied to other groups who experience positions of oppression in society. Feminist theorists like Bowden, (1997) explain the local and unique conditions that spread oppression, challenge rigidity and spread a sharp

awareness of the:

...dynamic complexity and diversity of specific situations, and the particular needs, desires, intellectual and emotional habits of the persons participating in them (p. 3).

Feminist thought is linked with the Marxist viewpoint in that it highlights other visions and forms of psychology, in particular emancipation, the studies of language and social construction of reality where language is woven into a historically constructed reality that could be transformed into something better.

Other psychoanalytical writings like Fromm and Marcuse understand society itself as almost engraving pathology at the heart of human relationships. Modern world is experienced as dislocating with culture offering false solutions to human needs. According to Lasch (1984), human beings become increasingly disconnected from the other since social life is itself broken. This creates a breakdown in local and historical meanings and continuity in the public area. Mass produced commodity generate fleeting and temporary images that blur inner and outer boundaries and negatively impacts on the construction of positive selfhood. This modern stunting of human relations involves the perversion of that intermediate sphere between the inner world and the outer world, i.e. Winnicott's transitional space. The commodity world has no transitional character, so it stands as something completely separate from the self.

Marcuse takes up psychoanalysis from the inside, emphasizes psychological and social transformation and reveals its innate critical edge. To understand how these social structures influence and shape selfhood, Fromm connects Freud's theory to Marxist social theory, which distinctively views reality as emerging historically through contradiction (Parker, 2005). For Fromm, late capitalism not only negatively affects economic mechanisms and institutions, but re-proposes dominion in the inner life and psychodynamic struggles of each individual. Other persons are experienced as ambivalent, in what Kovel

describes as 'de-sociation' (Kovel, 1988 cited in Elliot, 2002:62). Late capitalism with commodity as a 'non- human other,' creates a loss of social texture, which is deeply assimilated within struggles in self- organization.

Post colonial literature has gone beyond its interest in socio- economic forces to explore mechanisms like anxiety, tension and psychic trauma in relationships established between imperial cultures and cultures of resistance. Fanon explains certain patterns of dependence and resentment in colonial societies as well as the internalization of a projected image of inferiority emerging from the terrible physical and emotional oppression under which the colonized suffer and which is rooted in fantasy. He positions himself 'deep within the struggle of psychic representation and social reality' (Bhaba, 1994:40) where annihilating forms of black identification arise when belief systems and values of the white Western world are assimilated. For Fanon(1968), 'in the white world, the man of colour encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema' (p.110).

Nandy (1983) argues that colonized societies have inevitably changed their cultural priorities through the colonialization of both minds and bodies. Western modernity is not only a geographical and temporal entity but becomes a psychological category. 'The West is now everywhere...within the West and outside; in structures and in minds.' (ibid: xi).

Psychoanalysis enables the understanding of the complexity of identity in the post-modern world. Colonialized subjects are different from those that propose these strategies. Consequently, it is important to undo attempts to imitate or blend 'racialized' identities. Bhabha tries to understand this racial stereotyping in colonial discourse through the psychoanalytic idea of repetition. Repeated racial insults perpetuate highly ambivalent colonized-colonizer relationships, where social actors try to work out derogatory meanings to make and re-make relations of domination and submission.

### **3.7 Conclusions and Summary of Chapter**

Where does this chapter leave us in terms of research aims, stance, methods and analytical focus? At the end of Part One, the introduction to this dissertation, major theoretical frameworks underlying this research design have been highlighted. Psychology can be rebuilt through a new vision of community networking and engagement that enable the understanding of wider causes of exclusion and where the 'I' and sense of 'we' can be seen as involved in a complex inter-subjective and dynamic relationship. The pattern of racialized relations in Liverpool gives an insight of how social discrimination, structural inequalities, as well as language and power discourses can lead to positions of oppression. This confirms that a community psychology praxis and pre-figurative action research can intervene in the existing social order through models of wellbeing, collaborative and reciprocal relationships that can be effectively integrated to inform and influence action. Using an epistemology of relation, based on strands from feminist, psychoanalytical, afro-centric and post-colonial thought, there is an ontological shift that firmly grounds this project in the lived experiences of people, in particular when thinking black becomes a centred position. Creative community narratives in an inevitably fragile, dislocated modern society can generate personalized meanings that can capture this fragmentation and ambivalence in a loose social texture where the free notion of human subjectivity needs to be deconstructed. These frameworks will underpin the analysis of data and will be revisited in the final discussion chapter. This leads us to Part Two of this dissertation, which focuses on the underlying methodologies and methods embraced, as well as the findings and analysis of data collected.

## **PART II**

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# **Methodologies, Methods and Analysis of data**

# Chapter 4

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## Methodological Strategies

*“Research in the social sciences will only find in its theatres of enquiry what it puts there” (Goodley et al., 2004)*

### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter explores Hoffman's practical approach to methodology where two of his three major framework elements, also highlighted by Creswell (2002) and Denzin and Lincoln (1998), are used to clarify the ways through which relevant, reliable and valid knowledge was generated in this research project. The two frameworks highlighted in this chapter include the **General Approach** taken up, which considers why a qualitative approach was suitable for the chosen research question, and the underlying **Methodological Strategies**. The third framework, that is, the actual **multiple methods** used, is elaborated upon in Chapter Five, the next chapter. Distinctions are also made between interchangeable definitions of 'methodologies' and 'methods'. Particular methodological position/s or “rationales”, which have informed my specific choices in methods, are substantiated, since in its nature, social research methodology sets out to specify the purposes that each methodological position offers and aims to persuade the reader of the significance of its claims (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002). My positioning as a researcher as a valid methodological tool is also weaved in.

### 4.1 Accounting for and achieving a sense of research coherence

In his multiple methods data collection protocol, Hoffman (2009) explores the constant struggle of many researchers in trying to account for, and achieving a sense of coherence in the ontological and epistemological links of their research, between the research topic chosen, the general approach adopted,

the research design implemented, the analytical strategies taken up, the versatility of their data gathering, (as in this piece of work), the subsequent data analysis and the final write-up of their research design.

Following Hart (1998), being clear about the underlying features of qualitative research work, in particular that based on intercultural interaction as in this research enquiry, enables the accomplishment of the research goals, produces good descriptions as well as valid explanations and interpretations. The three major frameworks taken up in Hoffman's multiple methods data collection protocol include:

- **A General Qualitative Approach** to research
- **Methodological Strategies**, analytical strategies or 'traditions' (Creswell 2002), which are linked to very specific assumptions about the nature of knowledge (ontology) and how such knowledge 'can be known', accounted for or researched (epistemology)
- **Multiple Research Methods** implemented, which will be elaborated in Chapter Five

#### **4.2 Distinguishing between 'method' and 'methodologies'**

Distinct academic disciplines such as psychology often tend to function as 'regimes of truth' where 'knowledge about objects' is formed by the very practises through which they are known (Parker, 2005:3). Defining 'methods' and 'methodologies' becomes a vital aspect of the life cycle of any research design because *the way* knowledge is produced is an intrinsic value, at times almost weighing more than the actual discovery behind research questions posed. Methodological positions used in this research reflect an understanding of knowledge generated ('verstehen') based on a phenomenological process as experienced by the participants involved, rather than the generation of an objective knowledge ('wissen'). Within this participatory action research process, method is presented separately as a

tool kit, which I as researcher, have searched and used to elicit and answer my particular research question. Consequently, methods in Chapter Five refer to the doings of research, 'how' the research process was carried out. This does not necessarily lead to the position of total relativism where what is known or discovered does not really matter. Rather, in my strive to explore distinct methodological positions adopted, the data became the act of research itself, as Goodley et al; (2004) describe, rather than the mere consequence of the research process. The need to resort to 'method' however, is to clarify, to be able to offer a public, accountable knowledge reservoir that at the same time, also satisfies the academic and institutional drive.

On the other hand, for these authors, methodologies are understood as the persuasions from which our stories emerge. The use of particular methods in the different phases involved was directly influenced by underlying methodological persuasions behind that choice. Although in social research practises, these terms are sometimes referred to interchangeably, there is a difference between the two processes and these terms are distinguished accordingly in this chapter and the next.

### **4.3 “A Goodness of fit”- Adopting a Qualitative Research Approach**

Adler's (1985:2) studies on ethnographic and subjective understandings on how people 'live, feel, think, and act' can be applied to how second generation male Muslims in the UK today relate to their social identity. This can be processed in a way that tries 'to understand the world from their perspectives' (ibid, 1985:11). The literature review chapter has clearly demonstrated that there is a felt need to employ new ways of understanding the presence of the various minority ethnic communities in Britain today. Researching minority groups within a host society opens up other debates connected with power, authenticity, ethics, stance, subjectivity, research applications and political dimensions. Within this context, a qualitative research approach seemed the best possible option to provide an in- depth

perspective of these local Somali and Yemeni community members. Voicing these experiences was essential to understand and interpret the social matrixes of these participants from their point of view, the perspective of those 'being studied' (Byrman, 1988), focusing primarily on their culture, behaviour and group belonging.

The relatively not- so- distant idea of a research concept of traditional objects of study has moved towards the concept of subjects that need to be 'known'. Methods employed then need to primarily generate reflection about recent developments in the discipline and implementation of community psychology, which in turn enables us to focus on the underlying assumptions that guide the theoretical frameworks on methodology. This distancing enables the production of a different kind of knowledge in a different way (Parker, 2005) and is one of the main methodological aims that this research study has sought to employ.

#### **4.4 Methodological Strategies**

In the previous epistemology chapter I considered how narrative researchers' theoretical frameworks become an underlying base for the analysis and interpretation of stories recounted by participants. These frameworks have informed as well as influenced this study's choice of methodological strategies. This section primarily considers participatory action research as an overall process of enquiry, as well as different methodological strategies through which knowledge was profiled (Edwards and Gibson, 2007). Tables 4.5.1, 4.5.2, 4.5.3 and Table 4.5.4 provide summaries of the interconnections made between the underlying methodological persuasions and belief systems, the knowledge profiling process as well as methods utilized.

##### **4.4.1 Pre-figurative action research**

The idea of pre-figurative action research is intrinsically linked with critical psychology and emphasizes, according to Kagan and Burton (2000) 'the relationship between action research and the creation of alternatives to the

existing social order' (p.73).

In a context of emancipation, it creates images of possibility for a different way of ordering social life, oriented towards social change. These alternative social settings challenge the existing social order and are pre-figurative in Gramsci's sense, of the importance of the struggle of exploring, defining and anticipating new social forms (Gramsci, 1977; Williams, 1979). Pre-figurative action research is an organizing orientation that conceptualizes an active and systematic process of learning, born from the experience of attempting progressive social innovation.

It introduces a possibility of reform and the need for transformation within a vision of a just society and also identifies limitations. It is assumed that though action learning is about social change, more resources are developed through focused and dispersed social learning (Ray, 1993). Action learning brings about the catalysis of social movements around reforms (e.g. Burton and Kagan, 1996; Kagan and Burton, 1995). Through direct experience it analyses, reflects, tests and confronts the structural and ideological forms of power and oppression, including that of the pre-figurative action researcher. It includes multiple cycles of reflection, doing and knowing and gives simultaneous attention to both agency and structure. It can have an investigative nature and different degrees of involvement in creating, understanding and designing new agendas and making decisions about the development, innovation or improvement of social projects.

#### **4.4.2 Action Research**

Action Research (AR) can be defined as a collaborative process of inquiry. It is an orientation to enquiry, rather than a particular method (Kagan et al., 2008) and it attempts to combine an understanding of the development of theory with action and change, through a participative, democratic process. This seeks to remain grounded in experience, in the historic moment and in the subjective worldview of the people it works with. Reason and Bradbury's

(2001) working definition of Action Research (AR) draws on a continuum of AR practices:

It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practise, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people and.... the flourishing of individual persons and their communities (p.1).

Using a geological mental representation, action research can be described as operating simultaneously at diversified strata, a cyclical rather than linear process. Apart from being ecologically valid, it can be distinguished in different forms (Grundy, 1982) and can oscillate between the individual participant to interpersonal, group and organizational levels, leading to a more impartial and sustainable relationship with the wider communities:

- It seeks to investigate action, implements this investigation through action and consequently transforms research 'data' into further action.
- This process involves an active and dynamic spiraling, moving back and forth among reflection, data collection and action.
- It involves others from their own positioning and any development of a plan of action involves the 'researched population', at different levels of the research.
- Its main aim is a personalized and 'felt' participation from the 'researched' and the 'researcher'.
- It is linked with empowerment in that it researches 'with' and not 'on' the particular community. This creates a position of personal involvement for the 'researched,' where the issue researched is somewhat relevant to their worldview.
- A degree of interest and motivation is generated and a development of a plan of action is ensured as a response to an issue that has been generated by those 'researched'.
- Transformation is brought about through the collaboration process between the researcher and the participants. Through this process

change can be constructed. Mirroring continuous participator validity is sustained over the time in which the collaboration is taking place.

Action and findings are shared with the relevant stakeholders at different stages of the research that contributes to the degree and level of transformation in people's lives. The working knowledge generated in the process increases the wellbeing and social capital of individuals and communities.

#### **4.4.3 Community- based Participatory Action Research**

Community-based participatory action research is a process of reciprocity and discovery of expertise of participants about their lives, their own culture, their relationships, their expectations, their concerns, their hopes and their own 'know how'. It creates experience where the projection of degrees of agency can be explored and constructed (Baynham and De Fina, 2005), it elicits 'stories of people-hood' (Smith, 2005), and creates the basis for narratives of purpose. Mobilizing stories through daily conversations in routine contexts like community centres is a 'non-pathologizing' approach, it is accessible and enables the use of community resources, thus breaking culture of silence and disempowerment and puts '...together different sources of knowledge...to produce new knowledge' (Montero, 2000:134).

Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) argue that because approaches like action research, participatory action research and community-based participatory action research are based on a philosophy of partnership and on principles of self-determination, equity, and social justice, they manage to break down barriers between the researcher and the researched as they do not only assume that people are able to assess their own needs and to act upon them (Minkler, 2004; Minkler and Wallerstein, 2003), but that moreover, community partners are valued as equal contributors to the research project.

Usually, in participatory action research projects, it is important not to decide

to use one particular approach before participants are consulted. In this research design, PAR enabled the gradual and dynamic development of a plan of action to respond to a practical issue (the construction of social identity), which was sought together with different local community members. Collaboration between researcher and participants enabled space for creation of change.

**a) Applying evidence- based PAR principles to this research design:**

Carr and Kemmis's (1986) three conditions of critical practical research and Reason and Bradbury (2001)'s purposes of Action Research were combined to implement aspects of this PAR project:

1. Social Identity was identified as a 'subject matter, a social practise and a form of strategic action susceptible of improvement.'
2. An elaborate interconnecting PAR cycle was set in place through the stages of Planning, Acting, Observing and Reflecting.
3. Various stakeholders were involved in various stages of the design through a process of active collaboration.

**b) Using a Knowledge Profiling Process (KPP) Method**

Many sources of valid knowledge are relevant to a research question. According to Edwards and Gibson (2007), communities need a mechanism to explore the full range of knowledge that could enrich community-based research. To assess the impact on social identity through action initiatives of these young Muslim men, a knowledge profile was used as a purposive process by the initial research team starting in the mother project and then expanded as additional sources of expertise within the local community. This knowledge profile is an integrated description and source of expertise that, once assembled, became part of the method that enabled me to explore the construction of social identity through narratives. The objective was to identify what kind of knowledge was needed to articulate and refine the research

question and establish the most appropriate resources to the research space created, in order to bring about transformations. These phases of knowledge profiling have been used as a baseline and include: creating the research space, articulating, negotiating and identifying the research question and creating a resource inventory.

#### **4.5 Methodological Persuasions behind PAR**

Two methodological persuasions were behind the choice of participatory action research. The first involved a centralisation on the subjective standpoint and worldview of the different stakeholders involved and the second entailed the importance of understanding practise by generating a shared knowledge base. This baseline enabled short and long- term strategic goals to be established to achieve this outcome.

Another related methodological persuasion behind PAR was adopting a non-positivist flexible approach to change where dealing with immediacy was fostered. A phenomenological paradigm that assumes realities are multiple, constructed and holistic was taken up. Here, the researcher and the 'researched' community are interactive and inseparable, inquiry is value bound and cause and effect cannot be distinguished as entities, as they are in a state of mutual and simultaneous shaping and transformation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

##### **4.5.1 Methodological Persuasion 1: Ethnography**

Ethnography is based on inter-subjectivity and on the dialectical relationship between people and systems as Table 4.5.1 below shows. Choosing ethnography as a methodological persuasion enabled a constant process of discovery of the 'viewpoint of the subject' (Bergold and Flick, 1987 cited in Flick, 2002:9) and profiled knowledge through the establishment of a research space. Considerations of the relationships between the self, the actual experience and the large context in which it occurs, has led to a development of a more clear articulation of different aspects of social identities, based on the synergistic effect between the participants, the

researcher and other team members (Trujillo, 1999).

Critical ethnography was chosen because of its emancipatory implications and offers a more direct style of thinking about the relationships among knowledge, society, and political action, becoming for Thomas (1993: vii), ‘a way of applying a subversive world view to the conventional logic of cultural inquiry.’

**Table 4.5.1: Methodological Persuasion 1: Ethnography**

<b>Methodological Persuasion 1</b>	Ethnography
<b>Elements/Belief System</b>	Inter-subjectivity; dialectical relationship between people and systems
<b>Knowledge was profiled through:</b>	The creation of the research space
<b>Methods used</b>	Participant observation

Ethnography can be both scientific and critical and offers a powerful means of critiquing culture and the role of research within it. It also contributes to the understanding of community working as a real phenomenon, where networking exists at different levels, is socially created and can be evaluated and viewed with a critical eye because it was born out of real experiences by real people (Goodley et al., 2004)

Ethnography also involved an 'immersion within' and an 'investigation of' (Goodley, et al., 2004:56) the culture of these young males and their social world, where as researcher, I have attended to the rich generation of

meanings generated by these social actors as a consequence of various structures and decisions made by these individuals. Ethnographic research as conceptualized today, attempts to make the strange familiar. Terms like 'Black and Minority Ethnic Groups' or BME's, although deemed politically correct, might still denote a constructed image of the 'unknown', as might be perceived by other members of the community who are neither black nor part of an ethnic minority group. Children and young adults who participated in our research have elaborated on incidents at school and in the community where being black and part of a minority group evoked racist attitudes and racist behaviour from other local community members and which in turn affected their construction of social identity. Consequently, the idea behind an ethnographic approach was to elicit a process that enabled me, as researcher, to get to know the participants by being there, alongside them, during ordinary day- to- day community activities and capture their experiences 'first hand' (Goodley, et al., 2004: 56). Being with the participants meant deeply engaging within the culture of a social group, so as to try and experience both the group's 'hidden treasures and submerged dangers' (Corbett, 1998 cited in Goodley et al., 2004: 57).

Ethnography as a methodological persuasion, tries to represent the actions of "insiders" of a social group that may be either unknown or oppressed and ignored. This study then tries to ground its actual experience and its analysis in the everyday realities of this social group, also because the groups' own agendas and social meanings have been perceived by the group members themselves as being underrepresented in theoretical, practical and policy debates (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Erlandson et al., 1993).

#### **4.5.2 Methodological Persuasion 2: Life Story Narratives**

As a methodological persuasion, life story narratives are based on the belief system of an ecological metaphor and a just society and its underpinning values, as summarized in Table 4.5.2. At this stage, knowledge was profiled through the **identification, negotiation and articulation** of the research question.

A continuous dialogue allowed for the negotiation around various meanings

of self in relation to the others and community (Witherell and Noddings, 1991). The narratives told by the participants at first hand level and later revisited by the researcher when the whole array of data was analysed, involved not only the narration of a story being told but also an active engagement with the audience. It enabled the process of investigating diversity in the young participants' personal and cultural experience, and demonstrated their potential for creative engagement in mediating and expressing identity through a visualized (Bianchi, 2008) narrative form. Negotiation of the research question facilitated opportunities for community members who may not ordinarily have access to the arts to become partners in a collaborative arts production.

Life story narratives combine commitment to the participants, generate new theory and explore ways to present the various nuances 'collected.' This includes the plot, the characterization and its readability. Their focus is on the discovery, interpretation, and application of local knowledge to practice, rather than on testing hypotheses or outcomes (Averill, 2006). This approach arises from a critical ethnographic inquiry, critical social theory (Agar, 1996; Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000), and community-based action research (e.g. LeCompte et al., 1999; Minkler and Wallerstein, 2003).

**Table 4.5.2: Methodological Persuasion 2: Life Story Narratives**

<b>Methodological Persuasions 2</b>	Life Story Narratives
<b>Elements/Belief System</b>	*Ecological Metaphor *A just society and its underpinning values
<b>Knowledge was profiled through</b>	Identifying the research question Negotiation and articulation
<b>Methods used</b>	Participatory/Emancipatory Action research initiatives including: *Narrative meal based community workshops *Pre- narrative focus groups *Story telling intergenerational Saturday lunch *Post narrative focus groups *Ethnographic semi structured interviews

To develop new understandings of how young Muslim men reconcile conflicts of social identities with contemporary life of migrants in Britain (in line with Research Aim 4 outlined in Section 1.5), life story narratives were chosen with the aim to bring to life the struggles, resources and richness that each participant has contributed in the process of construing their world, their experiences and their centrality.

Taking up life story narratives brings about a distinctly different agenda. To work within an emancipatory paradigm means challenging one's own current practises, transforming priorities and discourses of people and oppressed communities, rather than speaking to our 'selves' and other psychologists (Rapaport, 1977). All this has an impact on the implications of the research.

### **4.5.3 Methodological Persuasion 3: Visual and Dramatic representations of social identities**

Visual and dramatic representations are based on a whole systems perspective and on the uniqueness of people's consciousness as Table 4.5.3 summarizes. Knowledge was profiled through the creation of a resource inventory. Exploring visual images can be a form of rich discursive space, constructed as a means to denote both individual identity and group affiliations (Bianchi, 2008), where identity is made up of the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results (Butler, 1990). Applying this model, visual identity was regarded as an actively evolving construct, which sought to answer this research's key ethnographic research question. Moreover, because stories around social identity were being narrated continuously by the participants in the various spaces groups were meeting up in, the idea of the participants taking up a visual approach to narratives was taken up enthusiastically by the researcher.

Creating a resource inventory creatively meant reaching out to local communities over meal-based initiatives. Bringing in the concept of food as a methodological tool is a new concept, a way to identify, in a community-friendly way, significant typologies which inform the construction of social identities. This is being experimented in a variety of community interventions, as Averill (2006) highlights, including psycho-educational settings as in nutrition and healthy eating in children and older adults, occupational therapy and CBT approaches with patients suffering from anorexia and bulimia:

Very often, the PI [principle investigator] invited informants to coffee, tea, or a meal. If that was not possible, such as when visiting isolated elders in more remote locations, she brought along healthy snacks, juices, or bottled water. People appeared to appreciate such gestures and were usually more likely to offer their time for interviews and discussions (p.6).

Methodologically meal-based initiatives are not merely utilised to encourage people to talk or offer their time, but as an active context where people feel participative and part of the transformation process of sharing and discovering.

**Table 4.5.3: Visual and Dramatic representations of social identities**

<b>Methodological Persuasion 3</b>	Visual and Dramatic representations of social identities
<b>Elements/Belief System</b>	Whole systems perspective People's consciousness
<b>Knowledge was profiled through</b>	The creation of a resource inventory
<b>Methods used</b>	*Production of magine by Somali boys  *Yemeni young boys DVD  *Role play group work (with local actors & film making company)

Visual and dramatic representations have enabled a connection to the other two methodological positions, i.e. ethnography and participatory action research (PAR). These methodological interconnections have enabled me to take up the concept of personalismo (Marin and Marin, 1991), where through a close, 'interpersonal and intimate' (Coffey, 1999:56) interaction with participants in their daily lives, personal energy was invested in the establishment and maintenance of caring relationships that enabled the understanding of beliefs, motivations, and behaviours (Averill, 2006). These types of methodologies usually lead to additional 'layers of evidence' (Morse, 2001: 204).

#### 4.5.4 Methodological Persuasion 4: Partially Non- participatory action Research

Non-participatory ethnography is based on an interdisciplinary concept as Table 4.5.4 summarizes:

**Table 4.5.4: Methodological Persuasion 5: Partially Non- participatory Ethnographic Research**

<b>Methodological Persuasion 4</b>	Non- participatory ethnography
<b>Elements/Belief System 4</b>	Interdisciplinary
<b>Knowledge profiled through</b>	The creation of new knowledge
<b>Methods used</b>	Collating data from various sources to produce literary narratives and analysing a hip hop song, chosen by participants from a literary perspective.

Although the main baseline of this research remains participatory, some elements of non- participatory knowledge production and analysis were taken up. When the data collected was revisited, the idea of analyzing some of it from a literary, non-participatory perspective came up. This type of analysis was possible with a hiphop song extract that the Somali boys had strongly identified with and enthusiastically included in their magazine. This idea came about at a time when all data needed to be coded and analysed in a way that made sense to the research question being asked. Moreover, creating narratives based on the direct real-life experience of participants had already been done in other phases of the research. Methodologically, I felt this kind of analysis could take place as real events happen (Scholes, 1974),

and ‘...they happen elsewhere- apart from the narrative (Goodley et al., 2004:107). Consequently, I was curious to analyse this hip-hop narrative in a non-participatory way and elicit degrees of symbolized meanings. Literary interpretations of narratives are selections of the process of telling. The most essential thing perhaps is that these selections need to connect with the subject matter so that what they occupy in terms of ‘space’ is significant, as it ‘...encourages the projection of human values upon this material’ (Scholes, 1974:206).

A methodological persuasion such as a literary theoretical perspective used in part of the analysis (Chapter Eight), allows for further insight into what Goodley et al. (2004) call ‘specific and localized life worlds...discursive spaces and material conditions’ (p. 59) belonging to some of the participants. In this piece of non-participatory analysis of text, I as researcher, have worked from my position of final and probably constant ownership of the raw material generated, through the use of a variety of meaningful and accountable life experiences collected together with the help of anecdotes, conversations and events that gradually became product of my involvement with so many different people throughout my research field base. This ‘non-’ or ‘semi-’ participatory analysis of this particular extract aimed to explore and reflect on what other male BME’s in Liverpool might be experiencing in their constructions of social identity and who might have had valid contributions to make but who did not participate in this project.

To understand any narrative and to be able to create new knowledge through analysis (McCormick, 2005), it is necessary to know ‘how it was elicited’ (Martin and Plum 1997: 307) as both content and narrative structures are influenced by the immediate context of elicitation (Schegloff, 1997; De Fina 2003). Different modes of elicitation were used in this project. Tellers are usually influenced in their ‘recreation of memories by the present context’ (Norrick, 2000:2) and by their sense of the future (Brockmeier, 2000). This was taken into consideration when different stories were generated in different contexts. This takes us back to the three elements of life story research. There is a **telling** of events, moments of **creation** of texts and the

**interpretation** of these events. When there is fictional narrative, in life story research, events are not only told but also created. For Goodley et al., (2004), this calls for the pre- existence of events. For a story to be written, something must have triggered it off. This reminds us of Scholes' (1974) analytical framework where events or actions come first, followed by the process of recounting, later captured through texts or and finally there is interpretation or analysis of the narrative. In this way, for Scholes, a semiotic circle is completed.

Consequently, some of these narratives are autobiographic but not necessarily life stories in the strict sense that Linde (1993) would define it in, since they do not have 'as their primary evaluation a point about the speaker, not a general point about the way the world is...' (ibid, p.21) but rather, as characters, they are elicited through situations or metaphors that contain human possibilities (Kundera, 1984), which create moral spaces that hopefully triggers thinking about something essential in the audience. This approach highlights the use of language. Language is used to create events through texts that are then open to the multiple interpretations of the audience.

#### **4.6 Positioning of myself as a researcher**

Being present within the participants' world created a process of mirroring. As a researcher I felt a constant need to reflect on my own feelings and how these were resonating on the project and its processes. This reflexivity became an important methodological tool. As a social science researcher, I needed to acknowledge my different subjective positions and varying forms of expression of identities elicited as this was important to understand how these political processes form human experiences and influence the expression of social reality (Dei, 1999).

#### **4.6.1 My Reflexivity as a researcher**

Locating oneself became crucial to the production of knowledge and its validation. Personal location contributes to the construction and production of meaning and also serves as a firm ground for affirming the participants' desires and places the project in a wider political dimension. Making meaning of social experiences meant that my positioning as researcher throughout the process was not a neutral entity. It became a personal journey, a process of reflection and growth. In any effective research process, at some point, the personal journey of the researcher meets that of the participants. In significant moments, there is a merging of journeys enriching both parts in the process. Boundaries are negotiated but are never quite clear-cut. Both researcher and participants find ways to affirm their place in this learning process, where 'their life experiences act as a filter through which the world is viewed' (Reviere, no date: online), and where subjective identifications, personal and community histories, desires and locations (Salifu, 2007), become factors which leave an impact on this co-learning experience.

#### **4.6.2 A participant-observer positioning**

Becoming a participant-observer contributed to my reflexive positioning. As a qualitative researcher in the participatory, emancipatory research field, participant observation starts from the self and its subjective experiences (Dei, 1999). Participant observation enabled me to sustain my immersion among people whom I was trying to understand so as to generate a rounded, in-depth account of this particular group and the organizations they belong to (Byrman, 1988). In being a participant-observer, my primary aim was to build a genuine rapport with the participants and the community-based team in the initial acclimatization phase. My observations were reinforced with informal conversations and semi-structured interviews (Lofland and Lofland, 1984). The absence of involvement with the participants would have limited the access to the world-views of those encountered. Reflecting on T.S. Kuln's work, Bryman (1988) points out that the position of a participant-observer

is shaped by the observers' own inner world, together with the cognitive and motivational characteristics of the other actors involved. As researcher, I found myself taking up different roles in different research phases. This created a continuum between different research role types (Gans, 1967) varying from total researcher, to researcher participant to total participant. At times, my role as researcher was not only of a “participant-turned researcher” but also that of a ‘critical enquirer’ (Goodley, et al., 2004). Different initiatives meant implementing different methods, leading to different levels of both participant and researcher participation.

Initially, my positioning within the participant observant role was more of an assimilating nature, where my active participation was minimal, for example, as a silent group member during a community advisory meeting. Immersing oneself into the participants' world meant that my research objectives changed. As a researcher-participant, I actively participated in organizing and facilitating focus groups. Level of involvement during focus groups depended on the extent to which structured questions were asked and how group dynamics were actively managed. Structured questions served as base line and at times open discussions took place. The Somali group was smaller, the participants were older and I could also be a total participant at times, where ‘I acted spontaneously *in conversations* and subsequently analysed the activities in which I had so participated” (Gans, 1967:440 emphasis added).

With the Yemeni group, the dynamics were different. The group itself was larger and the participants were younger so a higher level of moderator facilitation was at times necessary for effective group management and task maintenance. There was a difference for instance between working directly with the boys on the magazine vis –a- vis working with the Yemeni boys on the DVD. Time constraints and the very nature of producing a DVD meant that collaborative working was essential for effective outputs. The DVD production was done in collaboration with other specialists in the field, actors from a drama school and a film production company. Collaborative working at

this particular point in the research process meant that there was less direct contact with the participants which led me to consider elements of non-participatory action research as explored earlier on.

With the Yemeni group, facilitation was often left to the film-maker and the actors, who had more direct role in organizing and preparing the children for their tasks and roles. As researcher I was not present for the filming that took place. This was due both to time constraints and because of practical reasons. In some of the 'inside' recording sessions for instance, there was not enough physical space for many people to be present in the room as any noise would have disrupted the filming process. As Jenkins (1984:160) points out, 'my presence in these situations would have been inappropriate.' Prompt assessment of the different situations that arose was needed and adjusted accordingly. During the filming, one role I took up was gauging and capturing the sensations and feelings of the participants who were waiting in the living room in their friends' house, as they waited to be called in for the filming of 'guided conversations' where some of the Yemeni boys and fathers had decided to narrate about their lives in the UK.

#### **4.6.3 Discovering a common language**

The similarities between Maltese (my mother tongue) and Arabic enabled the sharing of common ground with the Yemeni community members. The fact that I could understand and speak basic Arabic was a bonus and this communality of language enabled me to insert myself more comfortably in this local community. It enabled us to discover some common aspects in dialects and overcome the initial diffidence that in turn enabled us to explore narratives using a mixture of the mother tongue and English.

#### **4.7 Summary of Chapter**

In its aim to try and achieve a sense of research coherence, this chapter has first distinguished between methods and methodologies, the former described as a tool for the doings of research, whilst the latter described as the persuasions from which the stories emerge, persuasions that reflect on the understanding of the knowledge generated. This chapter also explores

two of the three major frameworks underlined in Hoffmann's methodological protocol - the rationale of why a qualitative approach was chosen for this design and the four methodological strategies chosen: ethnography, life story narratives, visual and dramatic representations of social identities and partially non-participatory action research. Their common denominator was their unique contribution to qualitative research that was put into place in order to understand the world from the unique positioning and lived perspective of the participants and to capture what was expressed as multiple and complex contextualized realities. The way knowledge was profiled from different sources became a useful mechanism, integrated with each outlined methodological persuasion. The positioning of my self as researcher in a process of mirroring was also explored as an inevitable qualitative methodological tool.

# Chapter 5

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## Methods Used

*“The research process ...is not a clear cut sequence of procedures following a neat pattern, but a messy interaction between the conceptual and empirical world, deduction and induction occurring at the same time” (Bechhofer, 1974 cited in Brymann and Burgess, 1994:2)*

### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the different stages of this research design in a sequential timeframe and in doing so, tries to highlight a step- by step- procedure that would enable reliable replicability and an ecological validity. It also goes through the different levels through which various data were extracted, (e.g. the Somali magazine and Yemeni DVD), analysed, (e.g. through thematic analysis), interpreted (e.g. through a literary approach) and assigned meaning to. Some of the challenges faced throughout the implementation are explored. Ethical considerations and aspects related to data protection are also highlighted.

### 5.1 Working with the data- Experiencing, Enquiring, Examining

In qualitative research, when researchers become part of the cultures that they describe, they interact together with the participants to produce the data (Charmaz, 1995). Whilst action research is typically embedded within a broad social constructivist approach, it does not necessarily take up any one specific type of data collection (Burton and Kagan, 1998). In fact, this research design has also combined action research with the life story approach. In trying to find the best possible ways to gather information, Creswell (2002) has coined the idea of the three E's as a way to manage data collection: In **Experiencing**, all participants including the researcher draw on their own involvement. An example of this would be their participation using visual and dramatic representation of their social identities by utilizing the creative arts. In **Enquiring**, research participants collect new

information in different ways. An example of this would be the focus and local visual groups. In **Examining**, the researcher and participants use and make records like for example in writing poems, stories or reflective entries. The more the action research process moves towards emancipatory action research, the more involved all participants are, as co-researchers in the collection and analysis of data as well as in the development of theory and strategies for dissemination (Kagan, Burton and Siddiquee, 2008). Table 5.1 is a list of more examples for each category described above:

**Table 5.1: Examples of Experiencing, Enquiring and Examining (adapted from Creswell, 2002)**

Experiencing	Enquiring	Examining
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Participation using the creative arts</li> <li>-Writing stories for the magazine</li> <li>-Taking photos and choosing some of them for the magazine</li> <li>-Rehearsing for the drama performance</li> <li>-Working on a DVD</li> <li>-Eating together</li> <li>-Participants interviewing other elders in the community members</li> <li>-Exploring traditional folk stories</li> <li>-Reading narratives and story telling</li> <li>-Ramblings, conversations &amp; explorations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Focus groups</li> <li>-Semi-structured/ informal interviews</li> <li>-Guided conversations</li> <li>-Advisory Group Meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Archives</li> <li>-Texts (narratives written by participants and researcher)</li> <li>-Poems, photos, DVD, magazine, Artefacts,</li> <li>-Field notes including observations, feelings, reflections</li> </ul>

## **5.2 This Research's Time- line: Using Multiple Methods in a step- by -step approach**

This research design has used multiple methods to generate data around social identities. Multiple methods are used when research studies following clear analytical or methodological strategies (as discussed in the last chapter) utilise two or more research methods. These are not to be confused with mixed methods, a term used for a methodological approach that articulates the implications and actual practices of combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis within the same study (Creswell, 2002; Punch, 2000; Yin, 2003). These multiple methods were implemented in a specific time frame and have followed a procedural, step-by –step approach. Table 5.2 is a summary of this research's time line.

## **5.3 PAR cycles of Observing, Planning, Acting, and Reflecting**

The whole research time frame took place between April 2007 and December 2011. Maclsaac (1995)'s participatory action research cycle of Planning, Acting, Observing and Reflecting was used as an overall process of enquiry, in particular to elicit life story narratives which enabled the process of negotiating, articulating and examining the construction of social identity of these young Somali and Yemeni Muslim men through intergenerational dialogue (Aim 1, Section 1.5). Figure 5.3 is a simple model illustrating the cyclical nature of a typical action research process (Maclsaac, 1995).

**Table 5.2: Research Time-line**

**PAR cycles were used as overall enquiry** including: **Observing, Planning, Acting, Reflecting and Re-visiting**. Researcher Participant Observation used throughout. Entries on research diary and regular field notes.

**PAR cycle 1: Creating a research space through planning, acting, observing and re-acting:**

**Action 1: Getting to know different people**

**Action 2: Forming part of an advisory group**

**PAR cycle 2: Negotiating, Articulating and Identifying the research question through reflecting, planning and acting:**

**Action 3:** Pre-Narrative Workshop Networking

**Action 4:** Pre-Narrative Workshop Training

**Action 5:** Pre- Narrative Focus Groups

**Action 6:** Writing the Somali and Yemeni Narratives for the Narrative Workshops

**Action 7:** The Meal- based, Community Narrative Workshops

**Action 8:** Post- Narrative Workshops Focus Groups- Reflecting, Re-Visiting and Re-planning

**PAR cycle 3: Creating the Resource Inventory**

**Action 9:** Somali Local Visual groups (LVGs) for visual and dramatic representations of social identities

**Action 10:** A Somali story- telling intergenerational Saturday lunch

**Action 11:** Yemeni Local Visual groups (LVGs) for visual and dramatic representations of social identities.

**Action 12:** Liaising with local actors and film- making company to write the DVD script

**Action 13:** Role plays through group work

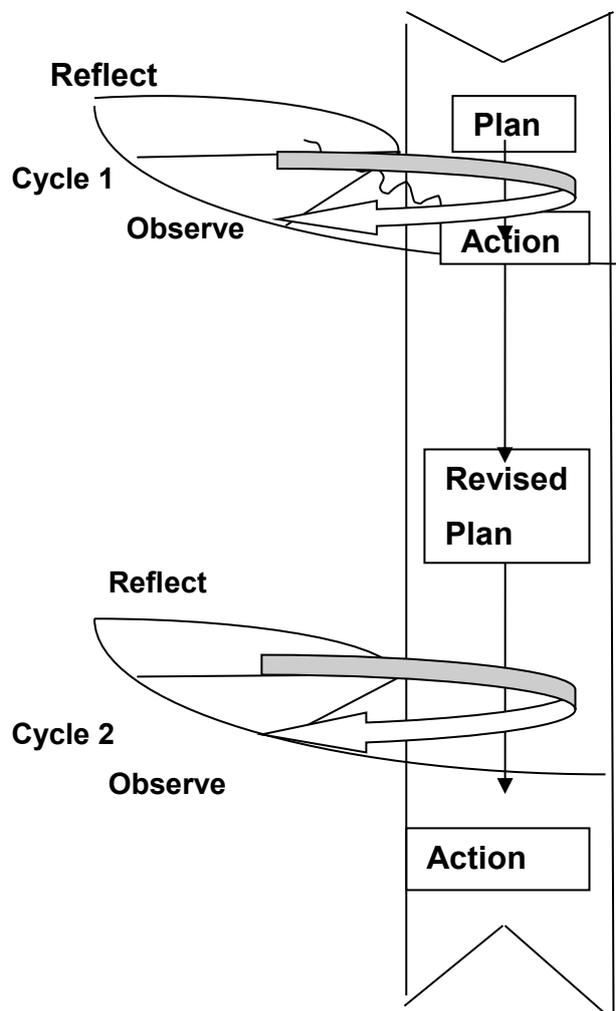
**Action 14:** Acting and filming shots with Yemeni children in collaboration with local actors and film- making company

**Action 15:** Filmed conversations as 'semi-structured interviews' with some Yemeni DVD participants

**Action 16:** Collating data from other sources

**Reflecting on whole process**

**Figure 5.3 Simple Model of cyclical nature of typical Action Research Process, including the circular steps of Observing, Planning, Reflecting and Revisiting (Maclsaac, 1995)**



### **5.3.1 PAR Cycle 1: Creating a research space through Planning, Acting, Observing and Re-acting**

Participant Observation was used throughout the PAR overall process of enquiry and entries on a research diary and regular field notes were kept. One of the major strengths of participant observation is that it is not really a single method, but embraces different ways of gathering data and observation styles. Primarily, this meant **planning** all research work within the local Somali and Yemeni residential areas.

**a) Action 1: Getting to know different people**

In the initial phases, acclimatizing to the local context meant catalysing **action**, by getting to know different people including staff and community members who popped by at the office and in general getting a feel of how the system worked by attending all types of meetings from advisory groups to meeting the community organisers. To define a common area of concern, **observation** and active listening took place. Being psychologically present to new people meant informally interacting with the locals mostly through conversations. Table 5.3.1a is a summary description of initiative (Action 1) carried out and the multiple methods used.

**Table 5.3.1a: Summary description of initiative (Action 1) carried out and the multiple methods used:**

<b>Action No:</b>	<b>Description of Initiative</b>	<b>Methods used to generate data:</b>
<b>1</b>	Getting to know different people	-Attending meetings- keeping a participant observational approach -Keeping a reflexive diary -Field notes on ramblings & informal conversations

**b) Action 2: Forming part of an advisory group**

**Acting** in liaison with the Liverpool Arabic Centre, the Somali Merseyside Mental Health Association (MAAN) and Somali Umbrella Group was essential. These organizations provided community leaders who were genuinely interested in the project and who formed part of an advisory group that met once a month to share expertise about their work in the community through these organizations. Conversations before, during and after the advisory group meetings facilitated the building of strong working relationships with

these local organization group members whose work in the community addressed the needs of children, young people and their families. This not only proved to be fundamental for effective collaborative working throughout the field- work year, but also enabled me, as researcher to generate various possible hypotheses about underlying causes of community strains present, to identify the challenges around working constructs of social identities in these contexts and to enhance my understanding of the individual uniqueness of each social group. Table 5.3.1b is a summary description of initiative (Action 2) carried out, together with the multiple methods used:

**Table 5.3.1b: Summary description of initiative (Action 2) carried out with the multiple methods used:**

<b>Action No:</b>	<b>Description of Initiative</b>	<b>Method used to generate data:</b>
<b>2</b>	Forming part of an Advisory Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Attending meetings-</li> <li>participant observation</li> <li>-Keeping a reflexive diary</li> <li>-Field notes on ramblings &amp; informal conversations</li> <li>-Minute- taking</li> </ul>

### **5.3.2 PAR Cycle 2: Negotiating, Articulating and Identifying the Research Question- Reflecting, Planning and Acting**

As a primary process, articulating the research question involved my **reflection** and familiarization with various strands of literature from parenting styles in different cultures to the Needs Analysis Outcome Evaluation Report that had been compiled by the clinical, community- based hospital team, to articles on these local communities' historical legacies. After the narrative workshops, reflection later moved towards literature around social identities and masculinities in young Muslim males in BME communities.

**Planning** provided a tangible space where a potential focus was identified, in terms of a practical and political issue (Reason and Bradbury, 2001). This led to a series of further actions to take place:

#### **a) Action 3: Pre- Narrative workshop Networking**

Informal consultation meetings with Somali and Yemeni mothers in the community centres facilitated a process of reflection on their own practises (Reason and Bradbury, 2001). This triggered mutual understanding which enabled the co-construction of a collaborative environment, where mothers felt safe to converse about their concerns regarding relationship strains they were daily encountering in their family dynamics, in particular between their husbands and sons. The mothers perceived that living between two cultures and different perceptions of social identities were major determining factors contributing to these strains. From the beginning, it was planned with community leaders that it would be better if there would be two separate meal-based narrative workshops organized with the Somali and Yemeni communities. Table 5.3.2a is a summary description of this initiative (Action 3) carried out, together with the multiple methods used:

**Table 5.3.2a: Summary description of initiative (Action 3) carried out with the multiple methods used:**

<b>Action No:</b>	<b>Description of Initiative</b>	<b>Method used to generate data:</b>
<b>3</b>	Pre-Narrative Workshop Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Attending informal consultation meetings with Yemeni and Somali Mothers &amp; community organizers</li> <li>-Reflexive diary</li> <li>-Field note taking on ramblings, guided conversations, feelings elicited, behaviour observed etc</li> </ul>

**b) Action 4: Pre-narrative workshop Training:**

Prior to the narrative day, staff at Building Bridges attended a half-day training seminar on narrative processes. This was organized by the Royal Liverpool Children's Trust. Table 5.3.2b is a summary description of this initiative (Action 4) carried out together with the multiple methods used:

**Table 5.3.2b Summary description of initiative (Action 4) carried out with the multiple methods used:**

<b>Action No:</b>	<b>Description of Initiative</b>	<b>Method used to generated data:</b>
<b>4</b>	Pre-Narrative Workshop Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Attending training session for Building Bridges staff organized by Royal Liverpool Children's Trust</li> <li>-Reading up on Narrative Processes</li> <li>-Keeping reflexive diary &amp; note taking</li> </ul>

### **c) Action 5: Pre-narrative workshop focus groups**

Two pre-narrative workshop focus groups were organized with four to five participants before the workshop, where life stories about the challenges and hopes of Somali and Yemeni fathers and sons living in the Liverpool community were generated. Focus groups were chosen as a physical and psycho-social constructed space to share and construct participants' life story narratives. By definition, focus groups collect data through a semi-structured group interview process (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008). Utilising focus groups in versatile ways with these research participants was a pragmatic, time effective and popular method for data collection. It produced a large amount of data on the research question in a short time; gave access to the theme of social identity that might be otherwise remained unobservable and insured that data collected directly targeted the research topic. It also provided access to comparisons that focus group participants made between their experiences, which proved to be a very valuable insight on the degree of consensus and degree of diversity of experiences in the groups.

The discussions that emerged served as an area for open explorations around on the participants' lives and difficulties they face in relationships. Themes around the challenges in constructing a functioning social identity began to emerge. Sessions were audio-recorded (with aid of voice activated micro-cassette recorder) to know who is speaking at any particular time, since often multiple people spoke in overlap. Transcripts of group discussions followed.

#### **i) Moderating these focus groups**

The male assistant psychologist initially moderated these groups. This male figure present resonated with the group's culture where women often occupy a less 'prominent' role. Initially, my role was that of participant observer and note-taker. It also enabled me to come across as respectful of the group's culture and also to be accepted as a female in the group. As a white, Western, non-Muslim, young female, time was an essential factor in the

building and gaining of trust and reciprocity within the focus groups. The boys positively identified with the male psychologist in that he was male and Muslim. His leading the groups in the initial 'norming' phase was a very essential element as it contributed to active engagement and enabled participants to familiarize themselves with my presence as female component and researcher within the group.

The adjustment phase proved to be effective, as when a few months later, the assistant psychologist had to move to another town and left the team, as researcher I found relatively no difficulties in taking up a more active role as facilitator. By then a good, working relationship had been established, the group had already taken its form and structure and my active role within the boys' group was accepted. Table 5.3.2c is a summary description of this initiative (Action 5) carried out, together with the multiple methods used:

**Table 5.3.2c: Summary description of initiative (Action 5) carried out with the multiple methods used:**

Action No:	Description of Initiative	Method used to generate data:
5	Pre- Narrative Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Facilitating Focus Groups</li> <li>-Audio recording of focus groups</li> <li>-Participant observation</li> <li>-Keeping reflexive diary &amp; note taking</li> <li>-Transcribing audio recording of focus groups for easier access of data during analysis</li> </ul>

**d) Action 6: Writing the Somali and Yemeni narratives for the Narrative Workshops**

After **reflecting** on these explorations with the young men during the focus groups and collating data from prior consultation groups carried out by Building Bridges with women and different BME communities in Liverpool (The Building Bridges Project, 2003), short stories were drafted by the researcher, the assistant psychologist and the counselling psychologist. The stories were taken back to the local boys' pre-narrative focus groups, re-discussed and modified accordingly. (For a full copy of these stories, refer to Appendix 5.3.2d). In this way, the stories' **ecological validity** was tested out. Yemeni participants translated their stories into Arabic whilst the Somali participants translated theirs into Somali. Some of the boys worked with the assistant psychologist on a backdrop for the day. This consisted of different collage of photos depicting different aspects of the boys' expressions of their social identities including their British **and** Somali and/or Yemeni aspects. Table 5.3.2d shows the number of participants who have attended the narrative workshops and Table 5.3.2d (i) is a summary description of this initiative (Action 6) carried out together with the multiple methods used:

**Table 5.3.2d (i): Number of participants who attended the narrative workshops:**

<b>Number of participants at Narrative workshops</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>Somali Narrative Workshop Group</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Yemeni Narrative Workshop Group</b>	<b>58</b>

**Table 5.3.2d (ii): Summary description of initiative (Action 6) carried out with the multiple methods used:**

<b>Action No:</b>	<b>Description of Initiative</b>	<b>Method used to generate Data:</b>
<b>6</b>	Writing the Somali & Yemeni narratives for the Narrative Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Participant Observation</li> <li>-Reference to focus group note taking &amp; listening to audio recording to write narrative stories on basis of participants recounted experiences to try and keep to verbatim examples participants have given</li> <li>-Taking narratives back to participants to re explore and modify accordingly (Ecological validity)</li> <li>-Translation of stories into Yemeni and Arabic. Translation carried out by community organizers who were also participants.</li> <li>-Preparing back- drop for Narrative Workshop Day through collage of photos.</li> </ul>

**e) Action 7: The Meal Based Community Narrative Workshops**

The Liverpool community-based team organised two meal-based, narrative workshops in collaboration with Manchester Metropolitan University and the three main community organizations mentioned earlier on. For Myers (2009) the main characteristics of workshops include small group interaction, active involvement, short-term intensive learning and application of the new learning. Knowles (1980) defines workshops as educational and work sessions where people meet over a short period of time to explore well-defined themes.

One primary aim of these workshops organized within a participatory action research framework was to initiate contact with the participants within their common spaces in the community. These workshops aimed at creating a physical, social and psychological point of encounter between the two generations of male participants where the narration of stories aimed to explore different aspects of social identities as experienced by the older and the younger males. Before implementing the narrative workshop with Yemeni community, data from the Somali narrative workshop, which had taken place before the Yemeni one, was **re-visited** to evaluate what worked and what did not and **re-planned** accordingly. Challenges encountered are explored later in Section 5.4.

#### **i) Choice of location**

Both the Somali and Yemeni workshops took place in the heart of the local community, in a conference hall chosen by the boys and some of the community workers who were also participants on this project. Participants chose to bring a mixture of typical English and vegetarian plates with 'halal' cooked meat as culturally typical of Somali and Yemeni Muslim communities.

#### **ii) The Narrative Workshop day**

Co-constructed stories were read both in the mother tongue (Somali and Arabic) and in English. A Somali boy also chose to read a poem he had written. After these community readings, the participants were asked to divide in smaller groups, facilitated by a moderator and a reflective listener. Either the moderator or the reflective listener was a community member. The reflective listener's role was to reflect on the dynamics and processes taking place in each group. The focus of each reflective listener's note-taking efforts was more focused on non-verbal behaviour, group dynamics and emerging themes. Participants reflected on what had struck them most from the stories and wrote their thoughts (in English) on flip- charts provided. In some groups, spontaneous translations were taking place when participants felt it better to express themselves in their mother tongue. The flipcharts were then

hung on large presentation boards before lunch so that participants could have a look at the comments generated in the different groups. Flip charts comments were later typed and stored as part of the data collected.

During coffee break, some of the younger Somali participants listened to some pop music as they had spontaneously brought along a recorder. Moreover, throughout the day, the boys and one of the Building Bridges staff, captured through photography, particular moments that had struck them throughout the day.

After lunch, the community members gathered around an inner circle of reflective listeners (fish-bowl group activity) who shared their thoughts on the day. Community members spontaneously intervened to share their own thoughts.

### **iii) Working with interpreters**

Interpreters were needed both on the day and during various times throughout the project when participants, in particular the older males found it difficult to follow discussions or other verbal explorations in English. In the process of the creation of the Somali magazine and during the process of filming of the Yemeni DVD, interpreters also acted as cultural 'guides'. Strictly speaking however, the role of the interpreter is to simply repeat in the mother tongue what a person had just said. However, there are situations that arise where interpreters find themselves giving cultural or religious information. In this research design, the two main interpreters involved throughout the whole project were male community co-ordinators- a Somali and a Yemeni. Both worked with alongside the team, were both part of the advisory group and knew the aims of the project very well. In this way, they continuously ensured a shared understanding of discourse that was meaningful and culturally relevant to the participants. Literal translation was not always appropriate, as concepts taken for granted in one culture such as 'depression' may not be used in others. It was often the concept, not the word that needed interpretation. Ethnicity and dialect of the interpreters were also considered as some participants might have felt uncomfortable with particular interpreters even if they came from their home country, either

due to local community relationships which may at times be strained or due to different political affiliations in their home country (Raval, 1996). It was also deemed necessary to have interpreters of the same gender (male) as the participants.

#### **iv) Meal based initiatives**

Lunch and coffee breaks were an integral part of narrative day as they provided an informal context where participants could maintain a sense of a community identity of a social gathering rather than a clinical or formal psycho- educational intervention. It also enabled staff to get to know the participants on an informal social level.

#### **v) Providing space and time for prayer**

Following feedback from the Somali participants during the first community gathering, a physical space for prayer time was included later in the Yemeni community narrative gathering. Table 5.3.2e is a summary description of initiative (Action 7) carried out together with the multiple methods used:

**Table 5.3.2e: Summary description of initiative (Action 7) carried out with multiple methods used:**

Action No:	Description of Initiative	Method used to generate data:
7	Narrative meal based community workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Organizing a meal based narrative workshop- lunch and coffee breaks provided.</li> <li>-Prepare a secluded, quiet place for prayer time.</li> <li>-Participants asked to read out community stories.</li> <li>-Printing copies of stories</li> <li>-Poem written by a participant to be read during the day</li> <li>-Small reflective groups consisting of facilitators, reflective listeners and participants. Reflective listeners to take notes on emerging themes, group dynamics and non verbal/ verbal comments on Flip charts which were later hung on Presentation Boards for people to read.</li> <li>-Fish Bowl group activity</li> <li>-Photos taken throughout the day</li> <li>-Note taking of informal conversations</li> <li>-Writing on reflective diary after the day</li> <li>-Music for break time</li> </ul>

**f) Action 8: Post-narrative workshop focus groups- Reflecting, Revisiting and Re-Planning**

Through post- narrative focus groups, participants were involved in the ongoing reflections, explorations and generation of knowledge with regards of finding ways forward to implement some of the initiatives they had suggested during the narrative workshops. Emerging themes around the process of their construction of social identities informed and transformed the research design and ways were discussed in terms of how was this going to be represented through life story narratives. Table 5.3.2f is a summary description of this initiative (Action 8) carried out, together with the multiple methods used:

**Table 5.3.2f: Summary description of initiative (Action 8) carried out with the multiple methods used:**

Action No:	Description of Initiative	Method used to generate data:
8	Post Narrative Workshops Focus Groups	-Focus Groups -Reflective Diary -Note taking of themes generated

**5.3.3 PAR cycle 3: Creating the Resource Inventory-Reflecting, Planning, Acting**

At this stage, **reflection** on data gathered through the narrative workshops provided a clear picture of the research question-data was pointing at themes related to challenges in the construction and maintenance of social identities. Moreover, participants in the narrative workshops had come up with practical ideas to implement and this led to further **planning**, leading to further **action**:

**a) Action 9: Somali Local Visual Groups (LVGs) for visual and dramatic representations of social identities**

Whilst focus groups are generally used to collect data on a specific topic, LVGs go one step further. The aim of these local visual groups, formed as a result of the narrative workshops, was that of exploring the construction of social identity expressed through the performing arts, i.e. through the magazine with the Somali youths and the DVD production with the Yemeni boys. The Somali local visual group decided to use visual representations as a way to depict aspects of their social identities by presenting some aspects of traditional Somali life, of which they had relatively little direct experience as most of them were born in the UK. These 6 boys were particularly interested in adding to the magazine aspects around Somali traditions like marriage, courtship and folk tales.

They took up a weekly commitment from October 2007 to June 2008, in order to meet up with me to work on producing this magazine, stopping for about 5 weeks in February 2008 due to a killing incident of their friend. Different related themes (Table 5.3.3a below) were brainstormed for the first four sessions where the boys worked on gathering material. Towards the last two months, we liaised with a community artist who participated in the sessions and who worked together with us to enable the group to artistically produce and present their work in a magazine format. (For the full copy of this magazine, please refer to Appendix 5.3.3a). We also liaised with a local printing company who proved very versatile in working on the final versions of the magazine. Table 5.3.3a portrays different related themes brainstormed for the visual representations of social identities in the Somali Boys Magazine, Table 5.3.3a(i) is a summary description of this initiative (Action 9) carried out together with the multiple methods used and Table 5.3.3a (ii) is a description of the number of participants on each local visual group:

**Table 5.3.3a Different related themes brainstormed for visual representations of social identities in the Somali Boys Magazine:**

<p><b>~Using stories to write about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Our roots- our identity began in Somalia</li> <li>● The Somalia story- a historical perspective</li> <li>● Somali culture traditional stories and tales</li> </ul> <p>Saturday lunch story telling time with elders and boys in the community-</p> <p>A discovery of continuity as an aspect of our identity</p> <p><b>~ Using poetry to depict our lives as Somali young men in Liverpool</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dealing with emotions, challenges and hopes</li> </ul> <p><b>~ Using photos to capture significant moments during the project</b></p>
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**Table 5.3.3a (i): Summary description of initiative (Action 9) carried out with the multiple methods used:**

<b>Action No:</b>	<b>Description of Initiative</b>	<b>Method used to generate data:</b>
<b>9</b>	Somali Local Visual groups (LVGs) for visual& dramatic representations of social identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Local Visual Groups</li> <li>-Note taking of themes generated</li> <li>-Reflective Diary</li> <li>-Flipcharts</li> <li>-Related Photos/pictures brought in</li> <li>-Working on magazine format</li> <li>-Liaison with local printing company &amp; community artist</li> </ul>

**Table 5.3.3a (ii) is a description of the number of participants on each local visual group:**

**Number of participants per Local Visual Group**

Rule of thumb for smaller groups is around 6-10 members, but there are reasons for smaller or slightly larger groups (Morgan, 1996). The initial Somali Local Visual Group had an average of about 9 members, with numbers slightly decreasing to 5-6, which remained constant for the whole year in that the same boys committed themselves to attending the whole cycle of sessions. The average number for Yemeni boys' group was 9. The Yemeni boys met for about three to four months, as there was less time available to produce the DVD.

**b) Action 10: A Somali Story telling intergenerational Saturday lunch**

The Somali boys met some of the male elders in their local community on a Saturday over a traditional Somali lunch and prepared some questions about Somali traditional life and Somali tales (See Appendix 5.3.3b) that they felt they wanted the elders to explore with them. In these ethnographic 'semi-structured interviews,' the elders were interviewed in Somali at the Somali community centre. Interviews were recorded, translated in English by the boys at a later stage, and added to their Somali magazine. They also took photos of this event as a way to visually capture this process. Table 5.3.3b is a summary description of initiative (Action 10) carried out with the multiple methods used:

**Table 5.3.3b Summary description of initiative (Action 10) carried out with the multiple methods used:**

Action No:	Description of Initiative	Method used to generate data:
10	A Somali Story telling intergenerational Saturday lunch	-Co-ordinating Lunch arrangements -Recorded Conversations between boys and men through ethnographic semi structured interviews

**c) Action 11: Yemeni Local Visual Groups (LVGs) for dramatic representations of social identities through a DVD production**

At their narrative community gathering, the young Yemeni boys came up with the idea of taking up a dramatic approach to represent their social identities. This seemed a very 'hands on' way for the boys to be actively involved in expressing different aspects of their social selves. Since these boys were younger, the 'doing' format was slightly different than that of the Somali boys group and together with the Yemeni community workers and the assistant psychologist, ways of doing this was brainstormed. Liverpool Arabic Centre hosted the boys and a local visual group was held. During this meeting, themes that could be taken up for a possible DVD production were generated. The boys were asked about their life at school, at home and in their neighbourhood and what they found to be most challenging in trying to be 'Yemeni' and 'British' at the same time. One of the boys got his English friend and asked if he was 'allowed' to join. The boys expressed significant

themes related to school difficulties in particular racial bullying. They also expressed difficulties in relating to their parents with a struggle to find coherence at times between their family identity and their own bi-cultural identity assimilated in their everyday contexts. Table 5.3.3c is a summary description of initiative (Action 11) carried out with the multiple methods used:

**Table 5.3.3c: Summary description of initiative (Action 11) carried out with the multiple methods used:**

Action No:	Description of Initiative	Method used to generate data:
11	Yemeni Local Visual groups (LVGs) for visual& dramatic representations of social identities.	-Local Visual Groups -Discussions elicited -Note taking of themes generated -Reflective Diary

**d) Action 12: Liaising with local actors and film making company to write the DVD script**

Funding for this part of the project came through the Parenting Fund, through the Royal Liverpool Children's Fund. Quotations from different local film- making companies and different acting local schools were evaluated to see which was the most viable. A preparatory meeting was held with the film-maker (ClarieMakesFilms) and the local acting school (Splintertraining) that resulted to be most cost-effective. During this meeting, the themes generated by the Yemeni boys during the local visual group were explored with a male and female actor and the female film- maker. These in turn took up the boys' themes and wrote out with a script based on these themes. An

unedited copy of this DVD script is found in Appendix 5.3.3d and a description of the multiple methods used in initiative (Action 12) is summarized on Table 5.3.3d:

**Table 5.3.3d: Summary description of initiative (Action 12) carried out with the multiple methods used:**

Action No:	Description of Initiative	Method used to generate data:
12	Liaising with local actors and film-making company to write the DVD script	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Securing funding through Parenting Fund</li> <li>-Preparatory meeting with film maker &amp; local acting school</li> <li>-Exploring themes generated by Yemeni boys during their Local Visual Groups</li> <li>-Local Acting School &amp; film maker turn boys' themes into a DVD script</li> </ul>

**e) Action 13: Role plays through group work**

The two actors, the filmmaker and I met the boys to discuss the script that was read and validated with them. The boys liked it because they felt it reflected what was discussed in the local visual group. They clarified some lines to make it simpler and the next step was role-playing. The boys were very active and drama proved to be a way to get them very interested and involved. The actors helped the boys to learn the lines, work on their body-work and different facial expressions, and impersonating different roles for the DVD play. This aspect was the actors' line of expertise and my role here was to experience this with the boys. Once the boys felt confident with their

lines, film- making in their local context commenced. Table 5.3.3e is a summary description of initiative (Action 13) carried out with the multiple methods used:

**Table 5.3.3e: Summary description of initiative (Action 13) carried out with the multiple methods used:**

Action No:	Description of Initiative	Method used to generate data:
13	Role plays through group work	Learning script lines  Working on body work, different facial expressions and impersonating roles taken up through role play

**f) Action 14: Acting and filming shots with Yemeni children in collaboration with local actors and film-making company**

The filmmaker liaised with the boys' parents and some of the teachers at the Saturday Arabic School and filming took place in some of the participants' houses, their bedrooms, their streets and shops and their school on Saturday. I liaised with the film maker and the school teachers to explain the nature of the project, thus enhancing collaboration through understanding and experiencing the boys' different socio-educational contexts: their schools during the week in a British context and their Saturday school where their Muslim culture, language and religious education are promoted. This experiential aspect enabled me to live their world through their eyes. A bi-lingual DVD was finally produced. Table 5.3.3f is a summary description of initiative (Action 14) carried out with the multiple methods used:

**Table 5.3.3f: Summary description of initiative (Action 14) carried out with the multiple methods used:**

Action No:	Description of Initiative	Method used to generate data:
<b>14</b>	Acting and Filming shots with Yemeni children in collaboration with local actors & film- making company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Filming DVD shots in community contexts e.g. boys homes, streets and Saturday Arabic school</li> <li>-Visiting Saturday Arabic schools to liaise with teachers explaining nature of project</li> <li>-Community organizers liaise with children’s parents</li> <li>-Filming by filming company</li> </ul>

**g) Action 15: Conversations as “semi- structured Interviews” with some Somali and Yemeni participants**

Interviews can also be one of the many ways through which two people can converse and talk to one another (Hughes 1976). Denzin (1997) notes that:

The . . . narrative text is reflexive, not only in its use of language but also how it positions the writer in the text and uses the writer’s experiences as both the topic of inquiry and a resource for uncovering problematic experience (p.217).

Conversations between the filmmaker, some of the participants and me were recorded and the original unedited clip recordings were also collected with permission. These were then utilized for the analysis of data. An example of these semi- structured conversations in found in Appendix 5.3.3g. In this way, the participants were involved in the very life stories that they had generated. It also promoted critical self-reflexivity about their lived experiences (Lee and Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2009), and enabled both participants and myself to reflect and interpret the life stories generated. According to Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000), this enables stakeholders to look at one’s own perspectives from other perspectives, generating a self-critical eye onto one’s own authority and entailing a partial reconstruction of some important aspects of the lives of one or more individuals.

Videorecordings were utilized to record some of the participants’ conversations for the DVD. Recordings also provided access to nuances of the discussions and the ability to replay sessions during the analysis phase. Table 5.3.3g is a summary description of initiative (Action 15) carried out with the multiple methods used, Table 5.3.3g (i) is a summary of the various steps taken in the dramatic representation of the Yemeni boys' DVD and Table 5.3.3g (ii) is a summary description of the major methods utilized for data collection:

**Table 5.3.3g: Summary description of initiative (Action 15) carried out with the multiple methods used:**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Description of Initiative</b>	<b>Method used to generate data:</b>
<b>15</b>	Filmed Conversations as ‘semi-structured interviews’ with some Yemeni DVD participants	Interviewing as conversational through semi structured interviews collected on unedited film recordings

**Table 5.3.3 g (i): Summary of the various steps taken in the dramatic representation of the Yemeni boys' DVD:**

***~Pre-Narrative Community Workshop focus group***

Yemeni boys came up with themes to write their story, which were different from those presented by the Somali boys

***~Post Narrative Community Workshop Visual Local Group***

Exploring ways forward to take up proposals from Narrative workshop through Participatory action research:

***Outcomes:***

- Yemeni boys decide to 'do' a play.
- Yemeni coordinators and researcher evaluate possibility to bring in professional local actors and a local film maker
- Funding for payment of professional costs requested and granted by Parenting Fund through Liverpool Royal Children's Trust
- Liaison with film maker and actors to explore boys' themes with them
- Actors and film maker reflected on themes and produced a script
- Script validated with the boys

***~Drama representation work commences with boys***

- Actors help boys on body work-facial expressions, impersonating roles taken up, learning lines
- Film making in context: Filmmaker liaises with parents and boys and films in some of the participants' houses, rooms and local streets.
- Filming of 'guided conversations' with parents and boys re their lives in the UK.

***Outcomes:***

- Bi-lingual DVD is produced
- DVD presented at Community Dissemination Event at end of field base experience

**Table 5.3.3g (ii): Description of Major Methods utilized for data collection**

<p><b>Interviews</b></p>	<p>Ethnographic face- to- face interviews, semi structured, or informal conversations organized around relevant research themes. Interviews were not always recorded, but transcribed and available for analysis in text form.</p>
<p><b>Reflexive Diary and extensive field notes</b></p>	<p>An ongoing useful daily tool that gauged reflections on events that happened during day, recording relevant thoughts, feelings, ideas and behavior; observations of resonance of my experience as researcher and an insider to the project</p>
<p><b>Pre- Narrative focus Groups</b></p>	<p>Very valid way of collecting participants' thoughts and ideas. Helped tremendously in the planning stage as initiatives and methods could be tailored according to the participants' input at these meetings. Helped in building trust and generate motivation.</p>
<p><b>Post-Narrative focus Groups</b></p>	<p>At this stage, the participants and staff members had built enough rapport that encouraged participants to be open in their exploration of relevant themes.</p>
<p><b>Local Visual Groups</b></p>	<p>Most of participants who had attended the pre- and post- narrative focus groups have also participated in the local visual groups. This generated strategic planning about ways to go forward in delivering initiatives. Minutes of these meetings were taken as part of data collection</p>

**Table 5.3.3g (ii): Description of Major Methods utilized for data collection (continued)**

<b>Participant observations</b>	Very useful note- taking of processes of relevant community meetings and other meetings, taken by researcher during the project.
<b>Ramblings and unstructured interviewing</b>	Provide useful information as they reveal something about the interviewee's concerns and capture the perspective of those being investigated.
<b>Flip charts Contents</b>	Taken by facilitators in narrative workshops as well as in all focus and visual groups where discussions were elicited. These were later transcribed,, coded, and available in text form for analysis in.
<b>Attendance Sheets</b>	Taken during all initiatives for statistical purposes. Data on age, gender, area of residence and biological connection of participants was collected
<b>Photos</b>	Taken by members of staff & participant during Narrative Workshops & Saturday traditional Somali lunch. Captured spontaneous significant interactions during the day.

**h) Action 16: Collating data from other sources**

Due to the amount of qualitative data material accumulated throughout the field- based year, the array of different data collected both through indirect as well as direct contact with the main participants were all included in the data collection, interpretation and data analysis. An example of this is information collated from my note-taking, reflexive diary, community meetings, the monthly advisory meetings or parental meetings when issues related to changing social identity were explored. A final dissemination event was organized at the end of the field-based experience where participants came over and shared their experiences with other community social actors who had not participated in the PAR project. Consequently, different community members were looped back in terms of what was being weaved in as

findings at that point in time. A copy of the final evaluation report was given out to the community organizers and after the field base experience terminated, e-mail contacts with community workers were maintained. Table 5.3.3h is a summary description of this initiative (Action 16) carried out with the multiple methods used whilst Table 5.3.3h (i) summarizes different sources utilized in the writing and analysis phase of the participants' narratives:

**Table 5.3.3h: Summary description of initiative (Action 16) carried out with the multiple methods used:**

Action	Description of Initiative	Method used to generate data:
16	Collating data from other sources for analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Organizing Final Dissemination Event</li> <li>-Bringing together all data from all above sources to sort out, code and highlight relevant themes through discourse analysis.</li> </ul>

**Table 5.3.3h (i): Different Sources utilized by researcher in the writing and analysis phase of the participants' narratives (Based on Goodley et al, 2004:80)**

Source/s	Examples
Research field notes from the funded Mother Project	Boys and men's ideas about marriage and traditional Somali and Yemeni life and folktales
Direct quotes from secondary sources	e.g. RIHSC conferences; Evaluation Reports handed to Building Bridges in July 08;
Formal individual & group interviews	One father recounted his experience about his son during an advisory group; interviews with reflective listeners & community facilitators;
Anecdotes recalled by researcher	Conversations held with fathers and boys on different occasions that struck a chord
Extracts from researcher's own life story	My own cultural and personal experience vis a vis Malta's experience of illegal immigrants; research field notes
Documents produced by people (young men and women) in the Somali and Yemeni communities	Article on Somali boy murder in Sefton Park (anonymous); Somali magazine; London eye; Internet sites e.g. Somali Umbrella
Narratives from author's conference presentations	RIHSC Annual Conference presentations
Vignettes shared by young Muslim men in groups we had	Saturday Lunch: father & sons conversations
Academic, policy and practitioner literature in the field of social identity, crime and UK crime prevention policies	Search through these policies e.g. home office document discussed in inter university meeting in Preston (paraphrasing as method)
Fiction to enhance characterization	To embellish boys accounts /narratives

#### **5.4 Challenges encountered in implementing this Research design**

Various challenges were encountered in these community- based initiatives as the following sections describe:

##### **a) Sustainability of interest and commitment**

The main factors were related to the sustainability of interest and commitment of participants over a relatively long period of time. Participants had other commitments mostly school for the younger boys and work for the older ones. Moreover, participants' perceptions and attitudes towards the research milestones were at times in contrast with me as researcher who was trying to juggle with time constraints, deadlines and valid data collection. Sometimes participants turned up late or not at all and meetings had to be rescheduled. Other events in the community often took precedence and a significant negative event that had happened in the local area, that of a group attack and murder of a young Somali who was a friend of the participants, demoralized them to an extent that, for some time they were very reluctant to continue with their working group on the magazine. Immediacy was very important and so this event was explored when the boys were ready to talk about it and its impact was then recorded in their magazine writings.

##### **b) Flexibility and Negotiation**

A great deal of flexibility in terms of time management and long hours were a pre-requisite for these community-based interventions to be effective. This required investing so much time, energy, concern and genuine interest in the people I was working with. Different team members who came from different cultural and academic backgrounds often had different objectives and approaches to work and this meant a great deal of listening to others' perspectives, an openness to negotiation, experimenting diverse approaches to communication and conflict management. An open and continuous system of dialogue was deemed vital throughout the different project phases.

### **c) Concept of time**

The concept of time in communities is very different to statutory work in formal organizations such as NHS settings and boundaries are also need to be negotiated as the reciprocal relationships are constructed between participants and researcher. On a practical level, for instance, participants felt comfortable to phone to re- negotiate time for meetings. On the other hand as researcher, it became practical to contact the boys at the last minute to remind them to attend to their meetings and which became part of the daily research context.

### **5.5 Ethical considerations involved**

Even when overt approaches to data collection are taken up in research and even when understandings emerge from a shared dialogue, there is still a whole cycle of ethical concerns to be dealt with. Apart from the more generalized debate on other aspects connected with research such as the nature of 'truth,' (Goodley et al., 2004), in a research context where participants have a clear and stated intent for the researcher's interactions, involvement and overt observations, (as was continuously attempted throughout the field-based year of this research design), participants might still be naturally alerted to the possibilities that their behaviours are being observed. This concern leads to a consideration of some essential ethical dimensions:

#### **5.5.1 Approval from MMU Research Ethics Committee**

In the beginning of this PHD research, the title and a detailed outline of the proposal were submitted for approval to the Faculty Academic Ethics Committee, Manchester Metropolitan University, at the Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care. No research work with participants was taken up, before official permission was granted.

### **5.5.2 Standards of Protection of Research Participants**

The British Psychological Society's Codes of Human Research Ethics (The British Psychological Society, 2010: online) were referred to when dealing with the Standards of Protection required vis-a-vis Research Participants. More details regarding psychologists conducting research can be found in Appendix 5.5.2

### **5.5.3 Standards of Debriefing of Research Participants**

The following standards of debriefing of research participants from The British Psychological Society's Codes of Human Research Ethics (The British Psychological Society, 2010: online) were considered:

There was no deception from the start in the working relationship with the participants involved. In order to identify any unforeseen harm, discomfort, or misconceptions, and in order to arrange for assistance as needed, participants were informed about the nature of the research, the project's aims and objectives and any gradual modifications, based on what was being elicited throughout the project through the participants' active involvement. At the end of their participation, in particular in the final dissemination event, research participants were debriefed of the research outcomes at that point in time. Particular care was taken when discussing outcomes with research participants, as seemingly evaluative statements may have carried unintended weight. When completed, a copy of the dissertation will be given to the Somali Merseyside Mental Health Association (MAAN) and the Liverpool Arabic Centre.

### **5.5.4 Research Consent Forms**

Consent on what was eventually to be used as research data was discussed with the participants along the way as a continuous process. Culturally appropriate, community appropriate, non-invasive data gathering processes were agreed with the participants before, during and after each step. An informed consent form consisting of a description of the project, together

with details on its aims, the importance of confidentiality, risks and what happens to data after the study (Refer to Appendix 5.5.4 for details) was given out to participants in the beginning of the project and before each main action initiatives. This consent form was verbally translated in situ by the community coordinators from English to Somali and Arabic, explored with the participants and later signed by those who were participating in the PAR initiatives. Each participant also knew that the final products, that is, the Somali magazine and the Yemeni DVD were to be used for dissemination and community discussions and that their participation meant that they would have been identified as project participants. The same argument applied for photos taken. Participants' permission for the use of photos as research data was asked before and during each relevant event.

#### **5.5.5 Confidentiality**

Research participants were ensured of confidentiality as regards to private information revealed and personal experiences explored. It was always ensured that all details used for data collection were later re-viewed by the participants. Names in the community narratives were fictitious to ensure anonymity. Other names were evident on the DVD film or in the magazine, but in these cases, the participants had consented prior to publication of products.

#### **5.5.6 An 'ethic' of trust and reciprocity**

The notion of reciprocity (Maiter et al., 2008) can provide a guide to the ethical practice of Community Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR). Conceiving and conducting CBPAR projects according to these authors, need to be embedded in research relationships based on an ethic of trust and reciprocity. Recognizing that building respectful relationships is a primary goal, it is also essential to agree with different team members to devote project resources (especially time) to maintain this. The project was considered as a cross-section in time of a longer relationship and a longer cycle of exchange. Some of the tensions regarding reciprocity are further explored in the Discussion Part (Chapter Nine).

### **5.5.7 Issues of Data Protection and Data Storage**

All personal data was stored on laptop hardware owned by myself, with personal access and required password. Copies were saved on my personal pen-drives. Information describing the initiatives and subsequent modifications to programmes was shared by team members and stored on the community-based office computers. Team members who were still working with the Trust on some aspects of the project after the community-based team work finished in July 2008 were bound by confidentiality. Paper data was filed in relevant folders and kept in a locked cupboard.

### **5.6 Sampling procedures -Snowball Sampling**

In social sciences qualitative research, snowball sampling (Bryman, 1999: online) enables researchers to identify participants who meet the criteria for inclusion in the study. Purposive sampling is carried out with a *purpose* in mind and there are usually one or more specific pre-defined groups that are sought out. These participants are then asked to recommend others who they may know who also meet the criteria (Trochim, 2006: online). Although this method could be criticized for lack of representative samples, there are times when it may be the best method available. Snowball sampling is especially useful when trying to reach populations that are inaccessible or hard to find. Throughout the years, Building Bridges had established significant working relationships with many of the local statutory and non-statutory organizations. As a result, snowball sampling came as an almost natural way to create a sample of research participants. In community-based interventions, word of mouth is a very common way of promoting research initiatives. Participants attended the narrative workshops or later joined focus groups as they had heard from their friends or other community members about the events and were curious to see what it was about. Table 5.6 provides a summary description on the nature of the identity of the participants:

**Table 5.6: Summary description on the nature of the identity of the participants:**

<b>Identity of participants</b>
Participation in the project was voluntary although at a later stage, participants were re-numerated for activities such as translations and for the weekly attendance of the magazine production as the boys were either looking for a job or studying. Usually, group number or sampling depends on the 'segmentation' or different stratifications (e.g. age, sex, socio-economic status, health status) that the researcher identifies as important to the research question.

### **5.7 Analysis of Data collected**

Analysing data collected from ethnography and life story narratives can bring about a way forward, a critical realist position (Parker, 1998). Deconstructing social phenomena needs to end with returning to society, where understanding and reflecting on collaborative processes brings about not only the ideological baggage that analysis provides, but also contributes to a framework of rebirth of the social phenomenon under investigation. For this to take place, data was collected in a way that would enable me as researcher to reach the research's aims and objectives (Refer to Section 1.5, Chapter One).

The idea of research as a social process that requires careful scrutiny holds implications for the way in which the analysis of qualitative data is conducted and discussed. Analysing data needs to be carried out in a way that reflects a commitment to the participants' subjectivity, interpreted in a way that locates them in wider theoretical considerations and demonstrates how the analysis that has appeared in the texts has followed a particular approach. This is not a simple task. Moreover, utilizing a vast array of methods meant that there were many sources of data collected, which needed a comprehensive and systemic analytical framework that made sense of the range of findings.

### **5.7.1 Categorization, coding and enumeration of data**

All relevant data gathered were coded, enumerated and categorized. All data were saved under the appropriate file name for easier access, e.g. all data collected for the Somali magazine production was saved in a folder with title “Somali Magazine Production”. The same format was applied for every different initiative. Each initiative was given a code and a number to facilitate access.

### **5.7.2 Transcriptions of audio and DVD recordings**

All audio and video recordings were listened to and transcribed as text. Each text was read over and over again and major themes, described in short phrases were written in columns at the side of the page (Refer to Appendix 5.3.3g as an example of a coded Interview transcript) The same procedure was applied to all other sources of data presented in this chapter. Common themes were identified-for example: ‘multiplicity of selves’, ‘narratives as transitional objects’, ‘masculinity as performativity’. Identification and coding of themes mapped out a connection with the literature review and were used to develop a conceptual framework, elaborated upon in the analysis chapter. Table 5.7.2 summarizes all the major themes elicited from the data collected and analysed in each analysis chapter (Chapter 6-Chapter 8)

**Table 5.7.2 Summary of all the major themes elicited from the data collected:**

Data analysed in:	Major themes elicited through Thematic Analysis
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>Multiplicity of selves</b>
	Narratives as ideological mirror
	Narratives as ‘transitional objects’
	Transformations
	Positioning of the older ‘other’ (the elder African man)
	Social categorizations of the self
	Processes of detachment and separation
	Logic of Appropriateness
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>Role of language and attachment to place</b>
	Negotiations of place
	The self immersed in the past
	Approach, Ambivalence and Avoidance in language discourse of place
	‘Deictic centers’
	Conventional altero-centering and mutually re-negotiated centers
	Socio-centric perspectives
	Language negotiations of time, place, others and self
	Re-writing narrative life scripts
	Placing people within cultural contexts and social structures
<b>Chapter 8</b>	<b>Identity perspectives through hip hop</b>
	Exhorting the sense of otherness
	A social account of subjectivity
	Localization
	“Racialized” narratives of social justice
	Racial politics surrounding hip hop
	Hip hop and social change

### 5.7.3 a) Consideration of Three Analytical Concepts

In discursive psychology, there are different ways of talking about or constructing the scientific activity of analysis. For Wetherell and Potter (1988):

Analysis is not a matter of following rules or recipes; it often involves following hunches and the development of tentative interpretative schemes, which may need to be abandoned or modified (p.177).

Three basic concepts were kept in mind during analysis. These included **interpretative repertoires, ideological dilemmas** and **subject positions**.

#### i) Interpretative Repertoires

For Wetherell et al., (2001), interpretative repertoires are very closely linked to the idea of discourses and both consider:

the idea of repositories of meaning, that is distinctive ways of talking about objects and events in the world..... in becoming native speakers, people are enticed or encultured into particular or even partial, ways of understanding the world (p. 202).

The concept of discourse perhaps elicits the Foucauldian conceptualizations of power inequalities and the 'subjectified' view of people, like the Afro-centric method does (Refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.6.3 and Appendix 3.6.3), whilst interpretative repertoires use language in a flexible way to highlight human agency. In this research design, discourse analysis was understood as the qualitative contextualization of texts and practises to describe social meanings. Thematic discourse analysis has aimed at understanding the social phenomena of constructing social identity through an interpretative recovery of meaning from the language that actors have themselves inter-subjectively used.

## **ii) Ideological Dilemmas**

This is linked with the consideration of **lived ideologies**, which underlines the beliefs, values and practises of a given society or culture. The ways of life, the common sense (Williams, 1965) was looked out for in the texts. In the readings at this level, it was often noted that these lived ideologies are not coherent or integrated, but often come across as inconsistent, fragmented and contradictory. Thematic discourse analysis brought out the dilemmatic, often indeterminate, but rich and flexible nature of lived ideologies.

## **iii) Subject Positions**

Althusser (1971) describes how ideology constructs 'subjects' by drawing people into specific positions or identities. Subjectivity is seen as an ideological effect, as the way people experience the world and how they feel about themselves is, for Wetherell et al. (2001:209) 'partially a by-product of particular ideological or discursive regimes.'

Interpellation for Althusser is the process through which one is called by a particular discourse. In this analysis, considering subject positions meant that participants were re-constituted as subjects in the moment of their discourse. Discourse is not pre- formed or pre- figured. For Hall (1988), who we are always stands in relation to the available text or narratives. Identity is formed '...at the unstable point where the 'unspeakable' stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of a culture' (p.44).

### **5.7.3 b) 'Thematic' analysis of discourse data**

Analysis has aimed at the interpretations of the 'locations' within the conversations, thus linking the wider ideas of discourses and interpretative repertoires to the social constructions of particular selves as they were constructed in the texts. Discourse was understood as a collection of these related texts, uttered as speech, written documents and social practises that

produced meaning and organized social knowledge. This is similar to the Afro-centric analytical method where 'phenoms' are first located, then studied and analyzed in relationship to psychological time and space.

Discourse data has been analysed in the following ways: Dimensions of social identity have been picked out thematically from all data texts and were analysed in three separate chapters: Chapter Six analyses generated themes around perception of the self in transition and multiplicity of selves. Chapter Seven analyzes generated themes related to language and attachment to place whilst Chapter Eight has analysed, through a literary approach, a hip hop extract the Somali boys had included in their magazine. Here, themes generated on localization and appropriation of contexts as well as attachment to place have been consequently analysed through hip hop language (Refer to Table 5.7.2 above).

To capture meaning from discourse, this kind of analysis required a good working social knowledge, interpretative skills and a deep familiarity with the body of data gathered. Through thorough familiarity with my own data, patterns were recognised across the different participants' talk and the particular images, metaphors or figures of speech they have used. In this way, the critical task of reconstructing the inter-subjectivity context of social identities was performed. It became particularly useful in studying the relational content of identity because in-groups, quite universally, have shared linguistic practises, or shared modes of communication. These not only allow communication, that is polarization in the self-categorization theory sense, but they are also markers themselves of group membership.

## **1.6 Summary of Chapter**

This chapter has presented a sequential time-line of how multiple methods have been implemented in this research design. First, it highlights how 'data' has been experienced, enquired and examined. Secondly, it reveals how PAR cycles have been used as an overall process of enquiry. Three PAR cycles have been incorporated, with each cycle combining an observational,

planning, reflexive and revisiting phase, although not necessary always following the same order. This reflects the flexible and dynamic nature of PAR. These three cycles have created a research space, negotiated, articulated and identified the research question and have created a resource inventory. Different actions or initiatives (16) have arisen during these cycles, where each action was carried out using different methods. These methods were described in detail. Challenges encountered on the way including sustainability of interest and commitment, flexibility and negotiation and differences in the concept of time were explored together with ethical perspectives. Sampling procedures and a general description of the number and identity of participants were also highlighted. The method through which data was categorised, coded and enumerated was also explored as well as the three basic analytical concepts used in the analysis of discursive psychology data. These concepts include interpretative repertoires, ideological dilemmas and subject positions and have been used to carry out thematic analysis of dimensions of social identity explored separately in the next three chapters (Part Three). Chapter Six analyses themes around the perception of the self in transition and multiplicity of selves, Chapter Seven looks at generated themes related to language and attachment to place, whilst Chapter Eight analyses, through a non-participatory, literary theory approach, themes generated through a chosen hip hop repertoire, in particular localization and appropriation of contexts and attachment to place.

## **PART III**

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# **Analysis of Data and Discussion**

# Introduction to Analysis

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Thematic analysis of discourse data generated through all the PAR initiatives will be attempting to identify what stories are telling us about the social and cultural worlds inhabited by these Muslim males and what are they narrating about their identities (Goodley et al., 2004). Relational psychoanalysis will be at the basis of interpretation, a basis that highlights the idea that social context and relationships are not merely attached on to the self but are actually an integral part of personal identity. Social relations are at the heart of self- identity and daily life, and a psychosocial perspective provides a mutual link between internal and external worlds.

The data generated will be seen as psychosocial accounts through which identity transitions are captured through narratives. They highlight how practices of different kinds are vehicles for identifications, investments in identity constructions and identity change. **Chapter Six** looks at how the narratives talk about multiple selves and shows how the self is connected to the 'other'. As they grow older, these Muslim males face challenges associated with multi-cultural influences that act as contingency factors that contribute to their personal development. Identity construction is done in a context heavy with historical and cultural meanings. At times, the narrator comes out through 'diegesis', where the narrator acts as speaker through a process of a 'telling' action. This action is a presentation mediated by the narrator, who instead of dramatically exhibiting events and conversations, talks about them instead and sums them up, as in the narrative workshops and the poem. At other times, there is a 'mimesis', a showing action, where 'the other' is the speaker. The Yemeni DVD and the hip hop extract, 'Until the lion learns to speak' are more of a dramatic representation of events and conversations. Both diegesis and mimesis are pieces of participatory action research where participants are in one way or other, social actors (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000), and where identity is expressed at its

operative/functional level pertaining to the practices and conceptions of the social actors. **Chapter Seven** analyses data related to language, time and place. **Chapter Eight** takes a hip hop perspective of identity. The boys have chosen a hip hop extract to represent their positioning in their visual representations of social identity, they have all identified with it but have not elaborated upon it so as data it is analysed as a piece of literary criticism, as a non-participatory ethnographic life story, a modern way to make sense of their experiences. Here, the narrators seem to disappear and the readers are left to draw their own conclusions from what they read. From this perspective, identities however can never be perceived as pre-given and externally produced (Wetherell, 2010) but are co-developed and co-constructed over time.

# Chapter 6

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## Analyzing Data: Multiplicity of Selves captured through the narratives

### 6.0 Introduction

In the following chapter discourse data is generated through: the Somali and Yemeni meal-based narrative workshops, the Somali and Yemeni post-narrative focus groups, the Somali story-telling intergenerational Saturday lunch, the visual (Somali magazine) and dramatic (Yemeni DVD) representations, the conversations as semi-structured interviews with Yemeni participants, as well as observational data. The above will be drawn upon to identify themes around multiplicity of selves as part of the process of construction of social identities of young Somalis and Yemenis living in Liverpool.

### 6.1 The narrative as an ideological mirror

The use of language has played a fundamental role in the narrative discourse generated by the participants. Although according to Elliot (2002), Lacanian schools face a problem in linking self and self-identity and therefore human agency, to an 'abstract theory of language', language has certain productivity in the construction of individuals as subjects. Althrusser (1971) takes this as 'ideology' which provides an imaginary centering on everyday life and where the identity it provides makes the subject feels valued within their interpersonal world:

Son: 'I've learnt a lot from my father and I know he's got a lot more to teach me. He can learn from me as well'.

Father: 'For the first time in a long time, I feel hopeful that my son and I can feel closer again.'

(Discourse Extract from the Yemeni boys' DVD-lines 93-96)

These examples from the co-constructed role plays captured on DVD are a means through which individuals have recognized themselves as subjects, which motivated by an underlying need for self-esteem (Turner, 1975), can establish an imaginary relation to their social networks. Althusser tries to deconstruct ideology by referring to Lacan's mirror stage, where an ideological mirror enables social actors to recognize both their 'selves' and the 'other':

Hello. I am a scientist. Today I am conducting a highly scientific experiment in the name of science. We are asking the question, 'What makes a perfect British boy, what makes a perfect Yemeni boy and how do we fuse the two together?' Look, here is a British boy...and look! here is a Yemeni boy.....

(Discourse Extract from the Yemeni boys' DVD-lines 97-103)

This mirror of ideology, according to Elliot (2002), puts received social meanings at the centre of the imaginary relationships of individuals to their real conditions of existence:

I feel I have lost control of Osama. He doesn't want to listen to me. I left Yemen over twenty years ago but the values of my country are still very much with me. I want my son to have this too. He doesn't want to spend any time with me; he doesn't want to come to the Mosque with me anymore. I just take the younger three. We try to go to Yemen every couple of years for a holiday. When we are there, we are together as a family and Osama behaves like the other boys there. He eats with us, spends time with us. When we get back, to Liverpool he reverts to British behaviour, wants too much freedom. He wants me to tell him why I ask things of him.

(Discourse Extract from the Yemeni boys' DVD- lines 46-58)

When the self is constituted in relation to discourses of class, race, sexuality or nationalism, the individual thinks of itself as autonomous, and therefore 'legally free and self-legislating (Elliot, 2002:113). This 'misrecognition' is found at the basis of institutions such as schools, mass media etc and leads

subjects to various social positions in the realm of class struggle. Altrusser's ideas are criticized because he postulates that through ideology, subjects tend to forget or overlook their own subjectivity. If subjects manage to recognize themselves in ideology, they must intrinsically possess affective capacities for their subjective responses. Consequently, social actors are not as passively centred with their received social meanings, although there still remains is a fundamental instability within selfhood. Subjects have possibilities to be individually and politically 'agentic':

But he knew he had to get away from the darkness and go towards the light....Nasir understood he had to escape, he weren't no dumbbo.....he was bright...got away from those who were pulling him back.....from that moment Nasir fixed up and changed his ways, Nasir tried his best to redeem himself for them past days....

(Extract from the poem: 'A boy called Nasir')

The ideological framings captured through this poem and in the Yemeni DVD extracts can also be understood from Altrusser's critique of his notion of film as a process of ideological production. Here, the framing is imaginary and 'it involves us in the imaginary':

**Yemeni boy:** Hello

**Scientist:** Let us begin.

**British boy:** The perfect British boy should always show respect for those around him.

**Yemeni boy:** The perfect Yemeni boy should always show respect for those around him

**Scientist:** And moving on.

**British boy:** When the perfect British boy is watching Match of the Day and his father comes in and put BBC News Channel on instead, the boy should politely complain and make the point that he was there first.

**Yemeni boy:** When the perfect Yemeni boy is watching Match of the day and his father comes in and put the Al Jazeera News Channel on, he should thank his father for helping him in his education

**Scientist:** I see. Next.

**British boy:** The perfect Yemeni boy should look after his parents and extended family for life

**Yemeni boy:** The perfect British boy should get out of the house at sixteen, get a job and stand on his own two feet.

(Discourse Extract from the Yemeni boys' DVD- lines 82-98)

According to Metz (1982), a film passes itself as natural; as a captured everyday reality, but which is in fact, presented as complex image constructions. In the psychoanalysis of 'cinema' or film, ideological images produced by filmmakers are attempts to decode meanings. The viewer is inevitably caught in a process of ideological framing, whose images also construct the spectator-subject. For instance, the way the DVD ends, edited by white British editors, takes the audience back to white British traditional cinema images. This image might have been very different if it been edited by the participants themselves. The whole idea of choice of extracts to be decoded and interpreted, whether it was the participants, the film-maker or even the researcher, is a remnant of Wittgenstein's idea of choice. Every choice is attached to a series of implicit assumptions and to how 'reality is being shaped before our eyes'. (Elliot, 2002:115):

Scientist: "Very interesting. But how do we bring the two together to make the perfect Yemeni British boy? The answer is...

Oh dear! That's all we have time for, tune in next week when we will asking: why noses do run and feet smell. Goodbye".

(Discourse Extract from the Yemeni role play captured on DVD- lines 101-104)

## **6.2 Narratives as 'transitional objects'**

The narratives in this PAR research have been weaved in such a way as to provide an emotional orientation that searches for certain boundaries between the participants' inner and outer experiences which takes place, using Winnicott's terminology, though 'transitional objects'. The self today is constructed in a "fantastic space of mirrors" (Lasch, 1984:82), divided between inner and outer boundaries. However, this mirror-centeredness of

the self is problematic and it starts to resemble the social world with its changeability and unrest and it too becomes overwhelmed by a deep sense of emptiness. The narratives then strive to act as bridge between the inner world of fantasy and the outer world of objects and persons. Just like the child who creates and discovers such objects, so is the participant using this 'potential space', which links, in Winnicott's terms, fantasy with reality, self with other. Remotti's (2010)'s concept that the self cannot 'be' without the 'other' brings us to this inextricable link, captured in the boys' reflections on their focus groups:

Being involved in the groups meant that we were doing something for the community. We cared and we wanted to do it. It actually started as a joke but then we read stories and it changed our feelings. We got our feelings told and it gave us an activity after school.

(Extract from the Somali post- narrative workshop focus group)

### **6.2.1 Capturing Transformations through Narratives**

This bridging with the outside 'other' brings about a series of transformations. For instance, through the narratives, participants have continued to foster more caring and empathic social relations. For Rustin (1991), it is through this fostering of this emotional relatedness that humanity can realize alternative social features, as this extract from the Yemeni semi-structured interviews conveys:

Em... lately I started sending them (the children) back home... so I kept them between Yemeni and the UK... when we went... they were amazed to see how many families and relatives they do have... people were talking to him (my son) about me and that's what, you know I felt quite sad because I wasn't...you know telling my son about my history back home...it's just it never came to my attention...you know my friends.....were telling him... "Oh! ...your dad... he was a hero; he was going to get the goods from remote areas..... he was em ...a brave man... exposing himself to animals... he was really brave...and he came (my son) he said: "Dad, you never told me you were a hero! You know

you should have told me your stories!” and he was so delighted! ...

(Extract from ‘conversations as semi-structured interviews’ with a Yemeni older male DVD participant)

Transformations in the alternative narratives generated are also captured in what the participants’ accounts of what can be defined as examples of normative and collective behavior, their shared norms and ethnocentrism:

Looking after our family in Somalia is not only a responsibility but also part of our lives

(Extract from participants’ flip chart contents at the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

Narratives have also generated positive in-group attitudes and cohesion, cooperation and altruism, emotional contagion, empathy and mutual influence:

It was sad to hear the story... I am upset because they (elders) are so worried about their sons... I know that they have big expectations of us...there is a language barrier and it must be hard to be a father in Liverpool...economic well being would help ease some of these problems...We need to understand each other and communicate better.

(Extract from participants’ flip chart contents at the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

By identifying with characters in the stories, participants have experienced a sense of resonance with their inner worlds and were thus able to rehearse strategies to deal with important emotional themes, including rivalries with peers, failure in meeting parents’ expectations and separation from some of their parents’ valued norms:

it seemed as though that after one tragedy another came along, cause after a few years in his father has passed away and was gone so his mother had to care for the family on her own....and it seemed from then Nasir to a life of madness was thrown

(Extract from the poem: ‘A boy called Nasir’)

The poem comes across as a powerful telling of a transformation story, a

self-repeated elaboration of a young man's struggle to get his story told. It manages to capture the dynamics that young people often endeavour into, to affirm and reconcile their identities in their search for individual and collective autonomy. It is the story of a boy who has gone through hell and back:

but away from all this inside he was a shambles....not knowing where he was going in his life, or the path he was taking Nasir's mental state was thin and not that far from breaking.

(Extract from the poem: 'A boy called Nasir')

Through a process of reflexivity, Nasir manages to highlight the emotional, social, physical, and political aspects of the intricate human effort that writing a text usually brings about (Richardson, 1995). Nasir helps the reader to think with a story and to experience it, and how it affects one's own life by finding a certain degree of resonance and a certain sense of truth (Frank, 1995). For Mitroff and Kilman (1978) it: 'stir(s) people's minds, hearts and souls and by doing so give them new insights into themselves, their problems and their human conditions' (p.83).

The poem then becomes a story of a boy who grapples to find meaning in his life, who manages to capture a variety of essential themes: the incongruence of ambivalent contexts: civil war, disempowerment, dislocation but also a hope of a new beginning, a definition of a particular time- framed historical context that spells out familiar family practices- the joy- filled event of a birth in the family which his audience, including westerners, can identify with. It captures a common world view- of new life experienced as a gift and a blessing. It turns this personalized event into a social and historical practice, which becomes a performance of his ethnic identity:

...born on the year 1987 and to his parents his birth was a blessing.

(Extract from the poem: 'A boy called Nasir')

Nonetheless, the success in sustaining a coherent narrative of the self is not guaranteed. As with the other stories, these generated narratives ask the

participants themselves and perhaps the audience too, to co-exist with uncertainty where the plots are often unfinished, where endings are multiple and where selves are often experienced as fractured and incongruous (Ellis, 1995). The participants' narratives struggle to establish of a 'united' self, which is seen following Shilling and Mellor's (1994) argument, as requiring consistent work and reflectivity, through which identities are circulated. Sporton et al., (2006) remind us that narratives enable participants to obtain a sense of security of belonging to the community, to the nation and to themselves. Sometimes, in certain aspects, as Shaw (1994) highlights, young people may even exceed the elders in terms of eagerness expressed to their ethnic cultural attachment:

We are interested in our culture, in our religion. I'm dead proud of who I am, where my family comes from. I was even able to tell my dad about Arabic school. I know it's important and I want to learn about my faith but the school is boring but it doesn't need to be. We talked about ways of making it more interesting and fun. Dad listened. No criticism, big drama, just listened.

(Discourse Extract from the Yemeni boys' DVD- lines 79-85)

The narrative highlights a masculinity constructed through various positioning of self and others. The transformation of the above extract is in stark difference with the initial tone of indignation and feeling of insecurity and isolation that comes out in the opening of the DVD with the phrase:

He's just accused me of taking drugs! My own dad!

(Discourse Extract from the Yemeni boys' DVD- line 1)

### **6.3 Positioning of the older 'other' (the elder African man)**

Immediately, the positioning of the older African man who tends to hold power over younger men is captured:

...the son would ask the father about marriage, when the son wanted a wife, he would consult his own father first out of mutual respect.

(Extract from the Somali story-telling intergenerational Saturday lunch)

This widespread and defining aspect of manhood in Africa, as Barker and Ricardo (2005) have highlighted, not only manifests itself in numerous contexts in contemporary Africa, but is clearly a way through which older men tend to assert themselves in these local communities especially when their new lives in the UK has disempowered them:

..in the first story, the father has lost control because they (the children) do what they want. The father is struggling to keep control. Each is going in the opposite direction. Children don't give respect...they don't say happy New Year any more.

(Extract from participants' flip chart contents at the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

He (my dad) said his friend told him. He said his mate told him he saw me and my mates....all smoking weed at Princes Park Gates.

(Discourse Extract from the Yemeni boys' DVD- line 1-3)

The role-plays in the DVD highlight the boys' positioning as one where they appear to have more difficulty in assuming bi- cultural competencies and making successful bi- cultural adjustments. As Waters (1996) and Portes and Rumbaut (2001) affirm, the boundaries between 'identities' appear to be less fluid and less permeable for boys. This is partly because they have to juggle with the various degrees of plurality of masculinities that their own community's social practices and constitutive norms have internalized as a culture of socialization of boys and men, which are according to Barker and Ricardo (2005) are socially constructed, plural, fluid over time and in different settings.

The older men's identities have undergone a tremendous shift in voice and power. They are no longer actively involved in the rites of passage and initiation practices that have long been important in their lives. This sense of loss is captured in some of the elders' stories:

Without even his father telling his son or his desired wife, he would meet her

family and ask them on his behalf for their daughter to marry his son, this displayed total respect the father and son had established. Instead of money the father and his son would give their livestock to the other family in order to create a relationship between the two families. This was known as 'yaarad'. When the son got married, he established his manhood and created his family next to his own father's family, to display to his father his matured status

(Extract from the Somali story-telling intergenerational Saturday lunch, older participant)

Manhood without a job is a vulnerable, fragile manhood and this is captured with great intensity and wistfulness in the older males' stories.

#### **6.4 Social categorization of self**

In terms of group processes, the younger males were going through a process of socially categorizing their 'self' and 'others' and were positioning themselves into "in-group" and "out-group" prototypes. In the life story narratives, categorizations were no longer represented as belonging to unique individuals but, rather, as 'objectifications' of the relevant prototype as Turner (1985) would have described, in order to reduce their sense of uncertainty, in Abrams and Hogg's (2004) terms.

These prototypes reflected in these narratives are stored not only in the participants' memories but are also maintained, constructed, and modified as Fiske and Taylor (1991) describe, by features of the immediate or the longer term social inter-active context. One of the participants expresses it in this way:

We need more resources, more experienced Somali youth workers and coordinators...We need the elders to help the younger generation to understand Somali culture and here there's lots of work that could be done!

(Extract from participants' flip chart contents at the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

As Hogg and Terry (2000) argue, the boys' narratives show that they were acting in terms of a group, rather than in terms of their self. In claiming their own self categorization and self- differentiation, first and second generations highlight their own psychological group membership and were able to act psychologically in a collective way, through intra- group differentiation, defining, as Hogg (2000), Abrams and Hogg (2004) and Richards (2010) argue, who is with 'us', who is with 'them.' This process of "depersonalization" as described by Reicher et al.' (1995), is also expressed by the participants:

Before we did not fully understand them, now we do... we're happy to hear them out and move on to discuss and not call the police and social services...as social services they need to understand that disciplining a child is not abuse as it is part of the Somali culture...they do not have 'abuse' as it is understood here.. it would be good for the Somali community to actually train social services in what is Somali discipline  
(Extract from participants' flip chart contents at the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

On the other hand, the narratives highlight the participants' ethnocentricity, where they strive for self- improvement of their own group when compared to others and try to evaluate their social identity in positive terms. This led to the narration of mental representations of exemplary members or Hogg and Terry (2000)'s 'ideal types', captured in the prototypical abstraction of group features:

....dads telling us about their culture and heritage is good. In this country people get lost if they are not tough about their cultures and backgrounds  
(Extract from the Somali post -narrative workshop focus group)

## **6.5 A process of detachment and separation**

According to Racamier (1993), life story narratives also reflect a gradual process of detachment and separation from some of the formally established

and informal rules that define group membership. New challenges presuppose a re-adjustment of a previous equilibrium, often accompanied by the experience of a crisis. Marcoli (2003) describes this crisis as an essential symbolic hinge that allows the opening of other successive symbolic 'doors of life'. This crisis demarks a territorial boundary between two states of being that brings about a simultaneous sense of continuity and detachment. This is captured in part of a discourse extract generated in the Yemeni DVD:

There's always more responsibility on the oldest. I'm not asking for the world, I'd just like a bit more freedom. I'm spending half my life working for my dad in the shop and the other half is either at school doing homework or going to Arabic school. Weirdest thing is even though he wants me in the shop all the time; he never shuts up about me not ending up a shop- keeper like him.

(Discourse Extract from the Yemeni boys' DVD- lines 21-28).

The narratives then served as a passageway, a symbolic rupture from the local community's umbilical cord, from the often rather distinct, clear-cut and polarized selves that the elders often take up and where often identity is not open to negotiation or debate, but is defended, affirmed in its integrity and does not deal with defeat. All that comes from the outside is seen as a threat to change, a threat to continuity and purity that is a reminder of idea of sameness in identity found in Remotti (2010). When the narrative is a catalyst for identity identification, participants were able to explore issues related to their essence. In other instances of identifications not directly related to their identity (Remotti, 2010), subjects have used the narratives to ask for recognition of their existence, their characteristics, rights, objectives and their projects:

Fathers need to find time for their sons...not working all day and them coming home tired...that when son makes a little mistake he moans at them...then the son will learn to keep away.

(Extract from the Somali post-narrative workshop focus group)

In the younger males, selves are hybridized and categories are less fixed:

It seems to me that...fathers don't know whether to raise their sons in British or Yemeni culture

(Extract from participants' flip chart contents at the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

For the younger generation, rights and objectives can be explored, discussed, and contradicted, whilst essence still requires total recognition and nothing else. However, older and younger individuals face existential and developmental crisis in different ways. First generations often approach the narrative from a position of submission and acceptance, a gradual 'coming to terms with' the knowledge that their ideals, their objectives, their childhood and adolescent aspirations were not all achieved, where the maturity crisis is seen as permanently leaving behind adolescence. For Racamier and Taccani (2003), the adolescent's self-representation of omnipotence and heroism, passes away at the age of forty, forty-five or at fifty (Marcoli, 2003). For Racamier (1993), this involves a re-focusing of people's self-image, which, rather than being an acknowledgement of one's present identity, is more of an acknowledgement of who one is not, a coming to terms with one's imagined identity. However, even some elders have questioned their positioning of power, their 'habitus' and expressed a desire to try out new relational roles within their family:

Is it the right way? Maybe from one way...but I am taking care of them and protecting them but it is not the end of the story..... I also (need) to give them some freedom.....OK, if they go with good friends, I prefer Yemeni/Arabic/Muslim friends. I don't mind non Arab/non Muslim friends..... if it.....doesn't lead (to) somewhere bad.....e.g. going out with girls and non Islamic activities.

(Extract from participants' flip chart contents at the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

During adolescence...it is most difficult...father needs to be patient and wait for adolescent to get through difficult period.....it was important to hear from our sons and learn from them..... about how much

studying...they have to do at school and how important it is to them. That means they can't work so much in the family business.

(Extract from older participants' flip chart contents at the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

The young adolescent males are also negotiating their position by locating themselves not only within their own communities of belonging, but also as Blommaert (2004) describes, in relation to other potential spaces in the society they are living in, as this extract shows:

I: Do you feel like in between people, in between Yemen and Britain 'cos of what Yemeni fathers described about their children....?

A: Not really...

I: Can you explain that?

A: I don't know because (A. struggles to find words). I wouldn't know how it is to be brought up in a British family in Britain..... I'm not really sure if I'm struck between two cultures 'cos I'm not brought up in a British family in Britain.

I: Would you feel any conflict...as you live in Britain and living in that culture but then at home you live in a Yemeni culture and that?...Do you feel you live in a Yemeni culture or a British one?

A: I don't know...no, I see myself as a Yemeni...well, I see myself as a Yemeni boy and not...a... British boy (smiles)

I: That's fine, that's fine...

A: Oh, was this for that one? (Refers to previous question)...em because eh... I'm from Yemen... I see myself as a Yemeni boy because I...my roots are from Yemen so...

(Extract from 'conversations as semi-structured interviews' with a Yemeni older male DVD participant)

This is in contrast with how he had introduced himself in the beginning of the conversation:

A: Hello, my name is A. Shall I say the area, the street or the road? And I'm 16 and I'm from Liverpool.....

I: So were you brought up, born and bred in the UK?

A: I was born and brought up in the UK

(Extract from 'conversations as semi-structured interviews' with a Yemeni younger male DVD participant)

In his interview, H., another young Yemeni male, helps the reader to define social meaning by referring to some collective expectations and individual obligations of his shared identity:

Maybe with Yemeni parents they expect their sons to... you know... take care of their family more... they seem as if the men play a larger role you know.. so it's like it's important to be disciplined and be able to almost work and take care of your family so for that reason it's like they expect the children to become almost an adult at a younger age than you would expect for a normal family in England. It's just the maybe... the culture is the fact that maybe also because they get married at a younger age so it almost seems that you reach a more mature age at a younger age.

(Extract from 'conversations as semi-structured interviews' with a Yemeni younger male DVD participant)

In defining boundaries and distinctive practices of his group, this adolescent male actively tries to decipher whether these practices, taken for granted in childhood, become more of a conscious content and contemplates a shift from the 'habituated' to the 'internalized'.

### **6.5.1 Logic of appropriateness**

Some of the narratives have served to unconsciously rule out certain behaviours that the boys felt inappropriate to their identities. This emphasizes logic of appropriateness as coined by Abdellal et al., (2004). Whereas in childhood the most significant relationships and transmission of cultural values are assimilated unquestionably within the family, the perennial struggle of adolescents lies in their challenging of their community's distinctive practices and norms that define their identity boundaries. These very norms may be influencing them unconsciously in term of what they choose. Some every day options (e.g. going to the pub) are not even

considered by the boys as they feel they do not form part of their cultural identity:

People, English people go out drinking or misbehave... no misbehaving (smiles) no misbehaving they'll be acting in ways in which Yemen or Muslims in general would see inappropriate or not correct. So there's certain things which I can't be seen doing or...or I can't maybe in English culture it's all right for boys and girls to go out and mix and everything but in Yemeni culture it's like almost seen as a bad thing to do so I can't really I can't been seen with a girl or I can't be seen doing things which some people consider as normal. There is a lot of... not... almost temptation you know because you're born here you mix with them it seems like a normal thing to do.

(Extract from 'conversations as semi-structured interviews' with a Yemeni younger male DVD participant)

H. refers to practices that define his shared identity within his Yemeni cultural group of belonging. He refers to prototypes that are simple, clear, highly focused and pronounced as various authors such as Sherman et al., (1999) and Brewer and Harasty (1996) have explored. Prototypes in the narratives have acted as moral support, as consensual validation for participants' self-concept, which enable them to deal with uncertainty, as Hogg and Terry (2000) argue. As an adolescent, H. struggles with some of the English practices which deep down he feels as part of his identity too:

.....so really sometimes it feels like you also want to part of that you're born here so you see it all the time but... em, I can understand why I shouldn't be doing them kind of things because my parents come from Yemen and I've got to respect them I've got to respect who I am and where I come from so for that reason I can almost control myself almost, I can understand why I shouldn't be doing those kind of things.

(Extract from 'conversations as semi-structured interviews' with a Yemeni younger male DVD participant)

As a social actor he leads other actors, in this case the filmmaker and his public audience, to recognize his struggle. He also identifies unwritten or codified rules as well as fixed meanings and expectations arising both from individual and common role identities:

Being a Yemen in Liverpool it's like there are many expectations almost.... We've got our own cultural values so living in England, sometimes it can conflict almost, so whenever it's like I've got always... me to represent Yemen if you know what I mean.

(Extract from 'conversations as semi-structured interviews' with a Yemeni younger male DVD participant)

He also speaks about other voices emancipating from the wider community, for instance the social norms that emancipate from multiple centres of authority:

It's like things, English people, people born in England do things differently to what I would do due to my Yemeni background. And also in Liverpool especially there is a large Yemeni community so it's as if almost every Yemeni knows each other.

(Extract from 'conversations as semi-structured interviews' with a Yemeni younger male DVD participant)

The reader can also listen to recurrent images, words and metaphors that this young male uses. The phrase 'I can't be seen doing things...' comes almost in a whisper, a tone of secrecy that of a fear of not being 'approved of' within his community and scores high on the social desirability scale. There is almost a sense of a sense of isolation in using the term 'a normal family in Britain', yet he comes forward almost as if he desires a proof of documentation and an unconscious sense of consent from the audience and the filmmaker.

## **6.6 Summary of Chapter**

As the first part of the analysis, thematic discourse has generated a number of themes related to the myriad of selves that these males have to juggle with, in their journey to construct meaningful narratives of selfhood. Their life story narratives have come across and interpreted through Althusser's idea of ideological mirroring, Winnicott's transitional objects and Rustin's transformational processes through the fostering of emotional relatedness. Narratives have also managed to capture the positioning of the older 'other' in these communities and have highlighted the social categorization of the self. Themes of detachment and separation and dealing with crisis in different ways have also been explored.

# Chapter 7

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## Analyzing Data: The role of language and attachment to place in the generated narratives

### 7.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the role of language and attachment to place in the social identity narratives of young Somali and Yemenis in Liverpool. Like the previous chapter, it draws from discourse data generated throughout the various action initiatives such as the Somali and Yemeni Meal based narrative workshops, the Somali and Yemeni Post-narrative focus and local visual groups, the Somali story-telling intergenerational Saturday lunch, the visual (Somali magazine) and dramatic (Yemeni DVD) representations, the conversations as semi-structured interviews with Yemeni participants as well as from the discussion groups during the dissemination events.

### 7.1 Language discourse expressing negotiations of place

The choice that first generation males had initially made in their dislocation from their country of origin was not only one that perhaps stemmed from a necessity, but was also one that inevitably involved an intense emotional detachment:

I left Yemen because it was unsafe.....coming to this country was not easy, leaving our family and home behind.

(Extract from 'conversations as semi-structured interviews' with a Yemeni younger male DVD participant)

We left Somalia during the war. It was a very difficult time. There were soldiers everywhere and many families' houses were burnt. I had to stop going to school and it was very frightening. I don't know what happened to many of my friends and we had to leave my grandmother and my cousins behind. I miss them all and I wish I could see them again.

(Extract from a younger participant talking in the Somali story-telling intergenerational Saturday lunch)

Leaving is not only a physical journey or a physical move, but involves a real laceration, an emotional 'tearing away', a definite detachment from familiar places, sounds, streets and relatives. Even though many of the participants' families choose to 'return' every year in summer for a number of months, this is not lived as an experience analogous as living 'there' all their lives. In their day- to- day living 'here', in Liverpool, limitations and shortcomings are felt strongly:

We know it is frustrating not being able to find a job especially when there are expectations from relatives in Somalia.

(Extract from a narrative read out by a participant for the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

Relatives back home also seem to have the idea that participants have settled in well in the UK and that they are able to financially contribute to the original family's poorer economy. This common expectation often creates tension and personal disappointment when participants have realized that they are unable to help the family out even though they are supposedly living in a 'better' place:

I tried to bring my mother and my only sister with me too, but I had problems trying to get them a visa. I used to be a skilled carpenter in my village back home which enabled me to support my immediate family- my mother, my sister and her children. One of my sisters' daughters got married last month and I have to support my sister by sending her large amounts of money for the wedding and for clothes and presents- I am expected to do this because I live in England. This causes problems with my wife because we don't really have much money to spare.

(Extract from a narrative read out by a participant for the Yemeni meal-based community narrative workshop)

On the other hand, in going back 'home' on holiday, participants recount a process of nostalgia, an experiencing of loss in terms of what could have been if they had decided to stay on:

I am a qualified accountant, however in this country my qualifications were not recognized and I had to choose between going back to study for my qualifications again or support my family. I had to choose a different career in order to provide for my family. I don't mind being a shopkeeper. Al-hamdulillah, my business has been running well, but sometimes I become frustrated that I am not working in my field. Occasionally I feel disappointed and isolated, as there is no sense of community spirit and support like back home.

(Extract from a narrative read out by a participant for the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

In any case, participants feel 'different' from both ends and realize that family and contextual relationships change, when they manage to survive:

Some nights I can't sleep worrying about my mother and sister back home and I feel bad because they keep asking to come over here to join us but I can't do it

(Extract from a narrative read out by a participant for the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

In these transnational contexts where re-workings of notions of place are being considered, second generation narratives consider some of the expectations that first generation males might have of them, in terms of what their lives as second generation males living in their Liverpool community should be like. This is often based on what the first generation males thought it would be like before they actually arrived here:

Before I came here, I had thought that it would be easy to settle in and that would be easy to find work for skilled people like myself....also I thought we would be safe from war and that we wouldn't starve. Since we have been here I have become frustrated because I can't find work-

any kind of work at all! I have applied for jobs in many places such as construction companies and housing associations etc. but I have had no luck at all. They say this is because I have had no experience of working in this country.

(Extract from a narrative read out by a participant for the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

All these uncertainties surface once more as they come together in the same place to read out the narratives in each other's presence:

It was rather scary to read the stories on stage and our hearts were banging as we read the stories loud on the mike and our palms were actually swearing! For most of us it was the first time and we felt we had to impress...I think we were all afraid of what the fathers who were present might think of the stories...

(Extract from the Somali post- narrative workshop focus group)

### **7.1.1 The 'self' immersed in the past**

In the attempt of reconstructing their own identity, second generations may feel that their elders are caught in the past (Charmaz, 1994). They also differentiate clearly between what they think and believe and what their elders believe:

....there were things we did not agree to like when one of the fathers said that boys should follow the law and obey it, we felt that it was off task-we didn't like it so we ignored that

(Extract from the Somali post- narrative workshop focus group)

The narratives also capture an almost a sense of embarrassment on how this difference in mental schemata might impact on inter- generational relationships:

At times we were afraid fathers would get upset and thought that the parents would criticize the stories especially we were worried about the part when we said what we thought about chewing khat....this came from the assumptions and perceptions we had of the elders before we spent the day with them.....

(Extract from the Somali post- narrative workshop focus group)

The narrative stories in the narrative workshops have highlighted a heightened sense of tension between first generation males who are forever attempting to recapture elements of their past self, that is forever linked to that past 'place', referring to Somalia and Yemen, and the second generation males who are in Liverpool and therefore are in 'this' place and where the 'idealized' motherland is perhaps not as persistent in their mental representations of belonging as it is to their elders:

We understand our father's worries but we need to go out and meet our friends. Liverpool is our home now

(Extract from a narrative read out by a younger participant for the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

Intergenerational conflict perhaps is generated by these two polarized and contrasting positions. First and second generation males often seem to experience and consequently express, their identities from different 'places', which act as different points of reference and which seem to maintain conflictual positions. For the older men, many of the elements pertaining to their much valued social and personal identities have remained in their past, in another place, which cannot be physically retrieved, unless through nostalgia. The elders recall the stories they were told when they were young and back in Somalia:

I liked the stories being told to me...the stories of my forefathers' past and how they lived their life at that time. Also I liked to know how my country's wellbeing was. I wanted to tell the stories to other people and I liked to ask anyone about Somalia's culture and past.

(Extract from a younger participant talking in the Somali story- telling intergenerational Saturday lunch)

Detachment from place and from objects of affection seem to elicit this sense of constant nostalgia, which almost arises on every occasion and which brings about great suffering that often leads to that feeling 'out of place' in every place, because roots have been lost on the way and there is no one with whom to share memories with (Baynham and de Fina, 2005). Older males are also seemingly unable or unwilling to measure up to this past self which then results in their further worry with it, which in turn increases their own identity dilemmas and perhaps it impacts on their coping strategies in particular when it comes to deal with stressful situations, like being unemployed:

I am 45 years old. I came to Britain in 1993 after the civil war broke out in Somalia...before coming here I had thought it would be easy to settle in and that it would be easy to find work...we've been living on benefits and I have only been able to really afford basic necessities such as food and clothes for the children and paying the bills...

(Extract from a narrative read out by an older participant for the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

For many of the older men, their narratives capture a noticeable distance between their past self, now reconstructed as an idealized form in their memory, and their present sense of historical identities which often result as humiliated and broken:

My wife and children want more than that...some men feel that they are losing their status as fathers and as bread winners because their family depends on government benefits and not on them.

(Extract from a narrative read out by an older participant at the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

The older males' narratives also speak of a certain sense of wistfulness and a void left by the collapsing of their former valued identities and a present sense of identity that is somewhat rejected and viewed as negative because it is fragile and considered as unmasculine:

This can cause fighting and the family ends up spitting up...or the husband wants to avoid the arguing and ends up staying out and chewing khat all night

(Extract from a narrative read out by an older participant for the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

This disempowering position increases their worry on their children's future and disables them from the possibility of immersing themselves in the younger generation's present positioning, which may be different from their own in that it is more ingrained in the place they are living in, in 'mainstream' Liverpool. First generations tend to look at things from an external locus of control, perhaps overlooking their children's internal resources, resilience and different life experiences:

I also worry about my children and how they are going to grow up here...whether they will get a good education and find jobs or whether they follow the ways of the other children in this country. Will they be good Muslims and respect their elders?

(Extract from a narrative read out by an older participant at the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

In their positioning as worried parents, they refer to another essential aspect of their identity. Apart from wanting their children to live a better quality of life than the one they are experiencing now, they sincerely hope that another aspect of their children's identity- that of being Muslim- is protected and maintained.

### 7.1.2 Approach, Ambivalence and Avoidance in language discourse of 'place'

The complex dance of approach and avoidance- between the constructed realities of 'here' and 'there'- are captured in the reminiscences of the first generation males as they share memories with the younger Somali males, in the drama reconstructions of the Yemeni children and in some of the unedited interview clips with the Yemeni youths. In discourse analysis, these 'end points' or 'end places' highlight a common thread recurrent in many of these narratives. Haviland (2005) explains this as the sense of ambivalence to which migrants are perhaps all sensitive to. This ambivalence, this contradictory mixture of 'closeness' and 'distance' to what is considered home, captures an intricate and complex dance between one place or 'one home' and another 'place'. For instance, some of the young people affirm themselves as Yemeni but then later on in the interview they maintain their own deictic centre by representing their location 'here' and locating themselves at times ambivalently, at times bleakly, but firmly in the Liverpool context. The following is an extract from an interview the filmmaker had with one of our 13- year old Yemeni youths after the filming of the DVD. They are talking informally about different influences Yemeni children might experience from differences in cultures they are surrounded by and how first generation Yemeni families might perceive this in terms of where the children happen to be living:

- 115 I: ....em 'cos we've got one side saying **over here** it's like they've got  
116 outside, bad influences from other cultures so they send the  
117 children away (**from here**).
- 118 A: I don't think so
- 119 I: Can you explain that?
- 120 A: No, I was going to say, 'I've got a thought' but I don't know how to  
121 explain it!
- 122 I: Tell me what it is...
- 123 A: shall I say...
- 124 I: just say...
- 125 A: I think it's nothing to do with the culture 'cos there are some  
126 British people (**here**) that are the same as some Yemeni parents  
127 like some of them do....are not as strict and some of them  
128 are...was that all right? (he asks interviewer)

129 I: Yeah, that's brilliant, that's brilliant... it's almost that...does that  
130 mean that **over in Yemen** if that child was there, then they  
131 wouldn't get into trouble or..? Do you get what I mean?  
'cos like...

132 A: yeah

133 I: Do you know what I'm saying?

134 A: I think so yeah, so it's like if the child was there he wouldn't get  
135 into trouble...

136 I: Yeah, that's what I mean...

137 A: Like so...well I think that even if the child lives in Yemen, (there)  
he can still get in trouble or not as some of the trouble that there  
is **here**...as it's harder to do since it's an Islamic country.

141 I: Would there still be problems?

142 A: Yeah

143 I: Like what?

144 A: (thinks a bit)

145 I: what sort of....?

146 A: eh... (Seems stuck...)

147 I: you're doing well, really well

A: they could smoke...but you know there are things in the Islamic  
world...

149 I: Is Yemen free from those problems?

150 A: You want an answer to that?

151 I: Yeah

152 A: I don't think so...yeah...but there...it's different...kind of... I don't  
know.

I: yeah, can you tell this difference?

154 A: I haven't started yet...I'm still thinking...

I: (waits, pause)

155 A: so what's the question then? (laughs)

158 I: the question is almost...you know how we mean for outside  
influences on how young Yemeni boys might go like a bit astray in  
the UK?

160 A: Em...some Yemeni people may blame Britain for their sons going  
bad or...or...(I'm stuck again)...some people may blame their sons  
for going bad...(I'm missing bits out)

163 I: (laughs) Go on...

164 A: .....some people may blame Britain for their sons went bad and  
that.... and that...

166 I: It's OK; you're not reading a script now.

167 A: but then it looks stupid.....'and that' and then I went blank!

168 I: (laughs almost exasperated)

169 A: I went blank though

170 I: (laughs again)

- 171 **A:** (rehearses, whispering to himself what he would like to say and tries again)...some people may blame their sons...some people may blame Britain for their sons going bad... (but)... because it's less as strict as in Yemen... but there's still some other bad stuff, they can still do in Yemen (**there**)...and it doesn't mean that if they're **here** they're going to do bad and if they're in Yemen they're going to do good. (A looks happy at how he put his words this time).
- 180 **I:** Thank you very much.  
(Extract from 'conversations as semi-structured interviews' with a Yemeni younger male DVD participant)

### 7.1.3 Language discourse as expressions of 'deictic' centres

In this particularly intense extract, the reader can actually feel the continuous struggle of the speaker to find the right words to describe his thoughts about 'here' (Liverpool) and 'there' (Yemen). By taking a closer look at the speaker's use of 'deictically anchored verbs,' Baynham and De Fina, 2005:100) examine attitudes and perspectives and the way through which he is constructing his position can be followed and understood. Although this extract is not analyzed through conversational analysis, an ethnographic use can still be somewhat appreciated as it supports the value of the extract as a piece of situated discourse. Deixis is the most transparent connection between language and the full context of speaking and includes interlocutors, physical, verbal and non- verbal bodies and socio- historical scenery. These deictic categories are part and parcel of both linguistic and contextual structures. They are essential in speech and this makes them strong conceptual and socio-cultural mechanisms.

From time to time, the youngster uses the directional verbs 'here' and 'there' and moves towards his deictic centre (which is his central position as being and living 'here' in Liverpool), but also refers to 'there' (when referring to Yemen) that indicates the direction away from his deictic centre. The struggling with words may suggest the sense of ambivalence which he feels whilst he is speaking to an English interviewer, the filmmaker, who happens to be white and female. He feels the need to find the right words to maintain a balance between his own deictic centre and that of the film- maker. He also

would like to maintain the working relationship that had been established with the filmmaker in the months preceding this interview. At times A. feels that he is sharing the same deictic centre with her -a common 'here' belonging to both, as the interviewer is also a local young woman from Liverpool. When the centres coincide like in lines 125- 136 in the above extract, 'paradigmatic alternates' are straightforward and repetitive. Paradigmatic alternates may be seen as examples of an unmarked situation where the speaker and the hearer are referring to the same place, 'there' as in 'Yemen' and 'here' as in 'Liverpool,' although there can still be characteristic alterations or rearrangements (Haviland, 2005).

On the other hand, where the interviewer was not sure that they were referring to the same deictic centre, A. felt it important to clarify, as he does in lines 129-132. The young man falters in some instances as he might be also aware that he is being filmed and that his positioning will be captured and be open to comments by the wider community, which may most probably have more conventional Yemeni attitudes and perspectives on the theme being discussed. He finds himself in a process of self- discovery: as he verbalizes his own thoughts about all this, he is caught in a process of exploring his own centrality and discovering where it is leading. In certain parts of the interview A. seems to have highlighted his struggle he feels at times, to maintain a certain flow of fluidity and permeability between the boundaries of his different aspects of his identity.

Balancing between different deictic centres is also evident in another interviewee, where another young man initially seems to try defining himself from the beginning and finds the right words to describe who he is, who his parents are and differentiates himself accordingly:

My name is H. My parents came from the Yemen and I lived here all my life in Liverpool.

(Extract from 'conversations as semi-structured interviews' with a Yemeni younger male DVD participant)

The very action, in this case, of participating in a DVD life story, has led others to recognize this 'actor' as having a particular identity: "I have lived here all my life", positions and localizes him clearly in Liverpool.

#### **7.1.4 Conventional 'altero- centering' and mutually re-negotiated 'centres'**

It seems then that these narratives bring to mind the realization of an important factor: speakers and listeners do not always share the same deictic perspective. Simply put, they sometimes speak from different centres. This perspective can be somewhat extrapolated with a certain ease, to the relationship between the first and second generational males in our project. Differences in deictic centres can be seen as different 'positionings' through which these males are expressing their social identities. Consequently, through the use of 'deictically anchored verbs' in their dialogue, narratives could have presented a conceptual and interactive difficulty that might have led to further conflict and therefore different types of alternatives were required and generated. Fillimore (1966, 1975), perceives this as a difference in perspective, where conversations can and do lead to complicated trajectories coming from what is described as 'home base', where one's expression of self is a result of where one belongs to or can be expected to be, rather than where one is now.

Whilst remaining physically distant from their villages, first generation males transpose their perspectives back to their origins in their home villages. By this argument, the opposite also applies, in that being daily physically distant from Somalia or Yemen, the younger males set their perspectives 'away' from the elders' home base and talk from their 'here', that is from Liverpool, their 'spatial' and 'temporal' reality. Interpreting intergenerational strains from a social identity perspective, it would seem that before the narrative community workshops, first generation males and second generation males would have tended to 'expect mutual understanding' occurring from different deictic centres. If both ends are physically and conceptually away from what each consider as home base, then mutual understanding is frugal or at the most, superficial.

The context of community narratives could then be interpreted as generating what is described by Haviland (2005) as a type of conventional 'altero-centering' where a dialogue in a particular co-constructed space, time and context, presents the opportunity to negotiate centres in a way that an encounter, is reached after a deictic contestation and whereby an enriched communion is established, resulting in a mutual re-negotiated 'centre'.

This mutually re-negotiated 'centre' provided by the alternative narratives read out by the community participants during the workshops were later explored. This exploration implied a specific bi-directionality inherent in the motions of communication. Shifts of perspectives are created, and the narratives provided the possibility of change. Each end point or 'destination' of the message 'within the story' lies within the recipient. In the reading of the community narrative, both sets of generations have adopted the 'other's' perspective as the recipient of the message. Stories were bi-directional, in that when first generation elder males have read out an alternative story, the youths acted as listeners and vice versa. Each listener, whether first or second generation, had the possibility to generate transposed perspectives, where each appropriate perspective on the action (of listening) was theirs to consider and re-evaluate in the light of what they understood of each other's deictic centres.

#### **7.1.5 Socio-centric perspectives**

For Haviland (2005), negotiations of place through the narratives also generated shifts from a socio-centric perspective. These socio-centric perspectives are optional, expressive and asymmetric. The narratives have provided a choice in perspectives, and a movement is created. The shift between perspectives at this point is the 'here' choice that both sets of listeners have between the physical 'here' or actuality of Liverpool and the socio-centric 'here' of another 'home'. This choice enables considerable expressivity. It also enables the first generation listeners to come to terms with what sometimes happens 'here':

There have been cases of young men taking their own life within the community and this has left (us) very shaken.

(A Somali mother during a dissemination event)

It is the emigrant that moves whereas his home remains fixed. First generation elders who have physically moved many years ago, some of them as far as forty years ago, cherish in their minds a cognitive model that has remained conceptually at 'home' in Somalia or Yemen. They still talk from the other 'place'. Somalia or Yemen is their rhetorical deictic centre when they invoke images, the people still living 'there' and activities which are linked with what is home ("there"):

In Somalia, there are two different lives, life in urban areas and life in the bush. Life in the urban area is pretty much similar or follows the same process as here e.g. get up, have a shower, breakfast, go to work and come back home. However, life in the countryside is different and there are traditions. Men have their own roles and women have their own roles. Usually the men look after the livestock during the daytime and usually they visit each other after they bring the livestock back in the house at sunset.

(Extract from a younger participant sharing during the Somali storytelling intergenerational Saturday lunch)

The difficulty one finds in detachment and dislocation is passed on from one generation to the next- the second generation feel this and struggle with it as their hopes are different:

.....I tried getting a job working in a shop in the city centre but I was not successful. My father expects a lot from me. He is always telling me to do something good with my time. I want that too...but he does not understand how hard it is for me.

(Extract from a narrative read out by a younger participant for the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop DVD)

There is also a subtle fear that aligning themselves with being 'British,' would be received negatively by their family and/or community and 'read' as a rejection of their Somali or Yemeni heritage-in the first generation, being British is still implicitly imagined as a white identity:

...all my brother's friends are checked out by my father and this is embarrassing. My father worries a lot about my brother getting attacked by racist people and that is why my brother feels safer in Liverpool 8, there are more Arab and black people here. ...my brother sometimes feels he is caught between two cultures and he belongs to both. He would love to find a way to be a good Yemeni and a good British boy and still have a good relationship with my father.

(Extract from a narrative read out by an older participant for the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

This is also linked to the use of English language in the boys' daily lives. For instance, in the dissemination event, the older males criticized the fact that the boys chose English rather than Somali as a language to write their magazine in. The boys' lives are a merge of British and Somali or British and Yemeni, their place is 'here' and not 'there' and often their memories are of a different kind. Most of the childrens' and youths' deictic centres are in Liverpool. They have resolved conflicts and have often won the battle, conquered friends and constructed new, rewarding emotional ties. M. shares an incident he says he will never forget:

I was about 7 or 8 and had just arrived in Liverpool from back home with my family. There was this guy from school who used to bully me and one day I picked up a brick, (shows motion with his hand), and threw it over his back. S...his name was and he was just a kid. And there was this man, Mr. S. who came up to me later and said: 'what did you do there kid?!' as this boy was quite well known in the neighbourhood! I remember keeping myself at a distance after this incident out of respect for the man and kept myself at a distance at school....

M then starts laughing: Now this guy (the one I threw the brick at) is in my same Uni clan! We actually recognized each other and one day he came up to me and apologized for what had happened when we were very young at school! I thought of a Somali proverb that day: 'after a fight, there is true friendship!'

(Extract from the Somali post-narrative workshop focus group)

What the narratives does is to create a conceptual, at times emotional, link that serves as a bridge to understand where the youngsters are and where the elders are coming from. They meet, figuratively speaking, somewhere in between, in the co-constructed mutually negotiated deictic centre and it is here that the transformation is, for a moment captured, and the deictic centres are exchanged, perhaps superimposed. Hope is brought forward:

This story is for a man who has been in the UK for twenty years but even people who have been here longer ...say fifty years can identify with it. The stories are very important to us as they highlight the values and challenges, which fathers and sons face. We hope that this is not the first or the last meeting.....there is a lot to do...to build on today...it was very useful to learn and to take this forward.

(Extract from comments collected from an older participant during the fish bowl discussion at the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

Mutually negotiated centres place the sons back to the elders' home in the Somali and Yemeni villages whilst it brings back the elder males to Liverpool:

I felt sad...it is hard for fathers....it would be good if we have conversations with each other, spend time with each other to build trust and have better communication..... Storytelling is the recognition from our sons for our hard work... this makes us feel appreciated.

(Extract from older participants' flip chart contents at the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

We don't treat children as being old enough to develop their own understanding.....we underestimate and undervalue their capacity to understand...We've got this migrant mentality, this lack of confidence, and a parental attitude and a strong handling of issues without (really) understanding...if the father holds Yemeni values and the son has Liverpool values, there will be no communication.....if the father is close minded, the son will do his own thing.

(Extract from older participants' flip chart contents at the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

## **7.2 Community narratives expressed as language negotiations of time, place, others and self**

In the endeavour to map out shades of how identities are subsequently constructed over time, one would need to go back to Freeman's (1998) description of the intersection between personal and social lives and the ways these are captured through stories. Our lives are not linear or unending actions that move from one event to another, but are '...spirals of remembrance and return, repetition and reconfiguration, under the spell of...mytho-poetic desire'. (p. 47)

The first generation have captured their own lines and spirals that enabled them to make sense of their experiences of dislocating from their own home land, where leaving behind their homelands meant a drastic change in their social fabrics as persons and families. They were not only torn apart their homes and physical neighbourhoods, but also from their social networks of their familiar communities:

The last traditional wedding that I have been to was either in 2001 or 2002. In this wedding, people were wearing traditional cloths and shoes. There was a camel which was sent from the countryside carrying milk which people drink at the wedding; this was some...thing people used to do back in the days and everyone who comes to the wedding have to drink from the milk. In this wedding the ladies were wearing 'dhacle iyo adexqayd' (which is the ladies' traditional clothing) and the men were wearing 'Faygamuur' shoes and two plain sheets.

(Extract from an older participant sharing in the Somali story-telling intergenerational Saturday lunch)

First generations arrived in Liverpool and found that, although some of them were able to establish themselves around the ports of Liverpool as seafarers, others who were farmers and land- workers found themselves in a place that not only was lacking from their familiar social networks, but which was also unable to offer continuity in terms of living the same rural lifestyle of working on their lands to produce food for themselves and their families:

The culture of the people who live in the rural areas is based around their livestock and their main mission is to preserve their livestock in terms of taking them to somewhere where there is enough food for the animals because their lives are dependent on their livestock, whether they produce milk or meat for them

(Extract from an older participant sharing at the Somali story-telling intergenerational Saturday lunch)

Others left their family behind and had to re-establish new emotional ties here. There was a big difference between their old and their new way of life. Their stories often portray a certain ingrained ambivalence as narrators often profess the desire to return to their homelands by placing themselves deictically 'there', even though they know they cannot, for various reasons, make this trip or return there permanently. The structures and content of the stories are web-like, in that they construct the kind of life that the narrators value, a life that takes us, the readers, back there and which is supported in a web of familiar and complex interrelated social, temporal and spatial practices (McCormick, 2005).

What I remember about life in Somalia is the people, the people used to be village people; they used to have livestock like camels and sheep. They protected their livestock from predators; they created their houses from the grass and earth

(Extract from an older participant sharing at the Somali story-telling intergenerational Saturday lunch)

The ambivalent two- step dance and deictic switches works almost as if the narrator does not dare anchor himself too firmly in one place or the other. Metaphorically, in memory he is flying back and forth from Liverpool to 'home'. Some of the language markers used in the narrative almost takes-for- granted certain previous aspects of the social context of their home base and this marks pre-existing relationships and attitudes. They also enable the creative re-production of those familiar relationships by the repetition of these reproduced contexts:

...when I was young, people were mostly nomadic and my earliest memory which I never forgot is a night when I was a young boy and I was sleeping close to the family camels and a lion came hunting for something to eat and took the baby camel out of the herd. The lion brought it inches away from me while I was still asleep...a family member which I think was my uncle saw me and quietly dragged me by pulling my leg from the spot where the lions were eating the prey! That is a memory I will never forget

(Extract from older participant sharing at the Somali story-telling intergenerational Saturday lunch)

This intense testimony arising from informal conversations of the boys with their elders, takes on more of a quality of a conversation where spatial proximity takes on a prominent role, with discursive shifts in virtual location and alliance. It also recalls examples of communicative circumstances of remoteness and separation where even the particular uses of grammar succeeds in capturing the experience of dislocation of these narrators. It also highlights the presence of temporal cycles and how this was important to them as it enabled them to structure their accounts of their lives back in Somalia. Their narration of how they experienced and lived time back home was tied to the practices and traditions that belonged to that particular time and that particular community. It highlighted how their constructions of their identities in that context was linked to the social practices they were familiar with. Drawing from Ricour's theory of time which is in turn based on

Heidegger, our sense of time is influenced by our 'preoccupation' with 'things that concern us'- *das vorhandene* and *das Zuhandene*- 'utensils offered to our manipulation' (Ricour, 1980:172). I try to link this with action and identity, in that although engaging with these practices is individual, these actions are also firmly situated in the public sphere:

This is the first step that other fathers can make. Maybe in this way some of the British people can get to know more about the Somali culture....as it is written (referring to the magazine) it will be something they can see...it is of great benefit, a public way of being familiar with Somali culture, and also the wider community in Liverpool and in the UK can become familiar with Somali culture...it is a very good outcome benefitting the young generations..I read the magazine and am proud to say we (referring to older generations) left something for them.

(Somali father, discussion group during dissemination event)

McCormick (2005) takes this to mean a communally established 'sense of appropriateness' (p.151) that is 'linked to heritage' (p.188). Ricour also talks about the function of repetition in narratives, which invites both the narrators and the audience both into the past and extends them into the future. This repetitive process perceives time as that 'stretching between birth and death' (Ricour, 1980: 182) and seems to recall Heidegger's concept of a 'plural unity of future, past and present' (Ricour, 1980:171). According to Ricour, this leads the individual's experience into the communal, the community experience as the elders describe in their conversations with the younger generations during the Somali story telling intergenerational Saturday lunch:

There were many games and they differed...we played with the girls...however we never touched them out of respect and honour for the female. Our culture is not one that allows males and females to touch each other however, we were allowed to have fun, dance and sing with one another. We used to go at night and take the camels for walks. In this period there were many stories to be told communication was at its most, in all a pleasant time.

(Extract from an older participant sharing at the Somali story-telling intergenerational Saturday lunch)

Narrating about activities that were always happening in various times of the days and are repeated throughout the years served to enhance the narrators' sense of lasting stability, which also represented a life-cycle process that went beyond the individual's life time, in Ricour's (1980) words: 'there is a time to do this, a right time and a wrong time...we can reckon with time' (p.173).

### **7.3 Re-writing narrative life scripts**

It is here that the community's social practices and constitutional norms are consolidated, and amalgamated into the community's social identities. McKormick (2005) tries to explain this through Mayol's account of the individual's relation to neighbourhood (Mayol, 1998). Repetition of practices is essential to people's sense of identity in that it expresses continuity and stability in community relationships. Consequently, the sense of loss seems to be much greater for the first generation migrants who had to leave this stability and venture into an unknown world where old practices were ruptured and new practices took over. Social identities shaped before this 'schism' took place will be stronger and will stand through time, even years later when these stories are re-told to the younger generations, there is still a strong sense of nostalgia and loss. It is the narrative's role to use imagery strong enough to touch the listeners to an extent that as 'others' they identify in the emotion that takes them back to time and place and leads them to experience what it might have meant to be 'there' instead of 'here':

**A:** So shall I say that if I were brought up in Yemen it would have been different?

**I:** Would it have been different?

**A:** probably

**I:** would you like to follow that then?

**A:** If I would have been born in Yemen I think there would have been a large difference between who I am now to what I would have been. I think I would have been...if I were in Yemen I'd probably would have been working or...mostly helping my father or stuff like that so and

school as in that ...our school is the main thing now but if I was in Yemen it might have been different and school would not have been as important as working.

**I:** and what do you think about that then?

**A:** as in what?

**I:** is that what you would have preferred or as you are now?

**A:** I 'dunno'

(A. = the youngster, I. = the interviewer)

(Extract from 'conversations as semi-structured interviews' with a Yemeni younger male DVD participant)

A sense of 'ambivalence' is also captured in the narrative of this youngster too, where the narrative has allowed the expressions of multiplicity, complexity and contradictions. The interviews co-constructed with the interviewer and shaped in part by the very questions and comments that the interviewer makes, have allowed access to experiences that are not only spoken, but are as Frosh (2002) describes, also either left unsaid and/or are even 'unsayable'. For de Marneffe (2006) and Baraitser (2006a; 2006b), it seems that identity practices are always in process, rather than being achieved.

The youth manages to identify with his elders' 'home base', where the boys' strong sense of Yemeni identification as their primary identity is passed through the generation through culture, norms and traditional practices to the extent that although second generation youth are immersed inside the Liverpool culture, they still use language markers that affirm their primary identity category as Yemeni or Somali and not British:

We have a rich Somali culture and a culture we want to learn more about, as we are very proud of it.

(Extract from a narrative read out by a younger participant at the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

The narrative here captures the passing on of culture and tradition. It speaks of an inheritance, of a family who has managed to handle down to the next generation, love for the archaic, a basic sense of who one is. It recalls that

physical, emotional and social homeland that has left an intrinsic impact on this youth's sense of belonging and his sense of being.

On the other hand, he also speaks from 'here', from his base in Liverpool and he is not in a position to affirm which would have been the best possible place to be in. It seems that family dynamics is the stage that provides a structured framework where primary identity is reproduced and maintained through repeated personified routines and instinctive practices (Bourdieu 1977, 1990). It is the place where gendered and cultural norms are born, practiced on a daily basis and reconfigured through performances, as Butler (1990) describes, that are routinized and discursive. Participatory social actions seem to have led the boys to a gradual and perhaps unexpected discovery that some of the practices they might have at first thought to be external and somewhat alien to their way of life, were in fact part of their own sense of identity.

The narrative extracts become symbols, affirmations of the fact that as second generation males, they yearn to know more about how their ancestors were, how their life was, what their personal daily anecdotes were, whether some of their own behavioural traits and temperament struck a chord with what the Somali elders used to do before their dislocation and whether as youths, they had passed through similar experiences the boys were passing through in growing up in Liverpool:

We wanted to think more about our Somali roots...our life in Liverpool our relationships with the rest of the community...We wanted to find a way to bridge the gap...We decided to bring our thoughts and ideas together into a magazine... We really wanted to get to know some of the older men particularly the fathers in our community. Creating a magazine has started a journey in getting to understand more about where we are all coming from a culture we want to learn more about... their experiences as fathers, about their experiences as sons when they were young and for any advice that may help us with our lives. We hope that creating this magazine may also help our community to learn some more about us too...

(Somali young participant, discussion group during dissemination event)

It seems that the younger boys demonstrate a high degree of curiosity and are in search of cognitive models, in terms of cultural memory where personal and informal conversations with the older males allowed them to go back to a common root, a common base:

After consultation groups with various community members, we decided to organize a day out for fathers and sons to have the opportunity to talk together...with the idea of the magazine following our involvement in the 'fathers and sons project'. We decided we would like our fathers to tell us stories about their childhood and upbringing in Somalia  
(Extract from the Somali post-narrative workshop focus group)

At times they discovered instances of resonances with what they, as younger males, were passing through in Liverpool. This enabled the boys to maintain that part of social identity attribute which they had internally assimilated as their own Somali characteristic, an internal locus of control, rather than an external one. What was perhaps previously perceived (before the participatory narrative action) as an external 'constitutive norm' or an external 'social purpose', was now incorporated internally as part of self, rather than a mere mechanical execution of a sign of respect:

.... Poetry plays a big part in Somali culture and tradition. It is the first way in which history and traditions have been recorded. This is linked with the development of the Somali written language and also linked with the custom of passing traditions through generations via narration...We loved the idea of poetry battles. What a way to come together! To solve things, to learn about each other and to be so spontaneously creative! Bring on the first Liverpool Somali poetry festival!  
(Extract from a younger participant in the Somali local visual groups)

From an evolutionary psychology perspective, this assimilation of certain cultural norms and social purposes is part of the need of the collective unconscious to contribute to the continuity of race, a perpetuating arousal of a primary survival mechanism. Relocated in a different place as a result of dislocation, certain community attributes were mutually re- discovered

through story- telling, the process of which led to an intensity in identification that partially depended on the personal relevance of the 'other' derived from the relationship constructed with the older males in the story- telling context:

What we really liked to hear about was the games and tricks our fathers played, what they did for fun and what their parents, grandparents and other relatives were like

(Extract from the Somali story telling intergenerational Saturday lunch, older participant)

In relation to narrative therapy, Spence (1982) argues that the validity of a new narrative over an older one depends on whether the author feels a sense of immediate satisfaction with the story that emerges. In order to experience a coherent and satisfying existence, parts of the life-stories are re-authorized (McLeod, 1997). The following extract is taken from an informal conversation between the local Somali community development worker (CDW), a young 21 year- old participant (M) and me (R). We were discussing success stories of youths in this community and how young Somali males would bring up their own children. Initially we had decided to tape this conversation but at one point, M. laughs and says:

**M:** nah, this is going to sound horrible, (laughs), me on tape! (M. stands up and switches off tape recorder).

**R:** Ok! Ok! I get it! No tape then! (Laughs) Is it ok though if I jot down some notes?

**M:** Yeah! Sure so long as I don't get listened to on tape!

The community development worker who had a very good working relationship asks him:

**CDW:** If say you get married to an English girl, how would you bring up your kids?

**M:** If she's a Somali Brit, like me if she was born here...I would first thing I would do is to take him (my kid) to Somalia and tell him "this

is your culture'...but then he would be living here so I will advise him to take up this culture too, not to put it aside, to strike and find a balance

**R:** What would you do? How would you help him... to understand him better?

**M:** I know stories of Somali males who go with white women and then leave them with the baby, as they don't know what to do or how to cope and then go back to his own (kin). The baby then grows up and hears he's a bastard.....that his father had left him...this is not fair!

**M:** When I was a young kid, I was more of this culture (UK). Now that I'm a man, I feel Somali....it took time. There is fear and hatred when people don't understand...they will say they take our women, our jobs, and our culture. It's natural, then, if you get to know each other, eat rice (together) and start liking it. You know, I went to eat rice with my friend (English) the other day.

(Extract from 'conversations as semi-structured interviews' with a Somali younger male participant)

There is a movement from a historical truth to a narrative truth, where self-narrative contains elements of actual personal history, where one understands the post-modern self in a narrative way that includes the developmental realities of the life-course of that individual (Meador, 1998). This is what is captured above, where the young man refers to different aspects of his self as he identifies his progressions, 'performativities' and indications of self as layered and multiple.

### **7.3.1 Placing people within cultural contexts and social structures**

These narratives of self are embedded and framed within larger, dominant scripts that western culture produces in relation to gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age, social class and race. Consequently, no self or personal experience story is ever an individual production but derives from larger cultural,

ideological and historical contexts. These influence the way that young adult males perceive cultural and gender imbalances, their sense of continuity versus change, and the voices of culture around them which are continuously changing and shifting. For Denzin (1989), these types of autobiographies are also gendered. The stories blend in numerous kinds of African masculinities, a mixture of the urban and rural where versions of manhood associated with being warriors and farmers or cattle herding are recalled. These are associated with the older men's reminiscences of what it was like back home but are not incorporated into the young men's version of their identity. However, the alternative stories elicit a certain degree of indigenous definitions and versions associated by tribal and ethnic group practices and newer versions of manhood that are still importantly shaped by Islam:

Sons do not have full knowledge of their cultural history...this is important in order for the son to be responsible of his background....his religion and his life

(Extract from comments collected from an older participant during the fish bowl discussion at the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

Nonetheless, western influences including the global media are included:

We need combined activities between the immigrant community and the wider community, we need family activities, visits to local regional and national landmarks, we need to open up and organize more events like this...competitions where fathers and sons can be in a team together, .....a fun quiz, some light-hearted fun.....how?.....advertise probably!! .....fathers are usually busy working!.....children need skills and support from parents.....sons educated in the UK are a valuable source to Yemen....there is much potential in the blends between the two cultures.....one solution is to educate and train parents because trying to use old parental skills doesn't work. We need more modern skills to bring up children in this country.

(Extract from comments collected from an older participant during the fish bowl discussion at the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative

workshop)

In the complex social structures they live in, these immigrant youth are challenged to navigate between achieved identities and assigned or imposed identities. At times, the narratives capture these assigned male identities in the form of stereotypes and negative social mirroring (Suárez-Orozco, 2000) that is also deeply gendered. As the literature review has previously highlighted, immigrant youth often face more negative interactions with police due to racial profiling (López, 2003) or are stereotyped as violent and gang-involved (Mayeda et al., 2001) by the media, in their school context (Okamura, 1982) and by general public. The following extract highlights factors that adversely affect their wellbeing and consequently their identity formation, which brings damage to their sense of self-efficacy:

Little did he know about his country's past and culture  
Never really knew about the life he was living or even  
About the dream he was missing  
Years had passed and Nasir mixed with the wrong  
Crowd  
And from a sweet loving boy he had become a thug that  
Was loud  
Instead of looking up to his elders, Nasir took gangster  
Rappers as his role models  
(Extract from the poem: 'A boy called Nasir,' lines 11-16)

In some of their stories, older men too have highlighted their own experiences of racism and subordinate social placement:

Communication is OK.....but not that good.....reminds me of a family member being treated like a terrorist...he can't go back to Yemen....but he has children in Yemen  
(Extract from comments collected from an older participant during the fish bowl discussion at the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

.....Racism? ....to some extent but sometimes (it is) exaggerated. Fathers face more than their sons because kids speak English fluently and children are more educated and mix more...they are more integrated. Boys are more integrated. I don't believe there is racism in the school systems and if there is, there is no real effect on these boys. Fathers struggle more than boys ...racism due to reaction to broken English

(Extract from comments collected from an older participant during the fish bowl discussion at the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

However, even in instances where they talk on racism, these events seem to be countered by a broader perception of safety and trust that comes from belonging to a strong and stable local Somali Muslim community.

#### **7.4 Summary of Chapter**

Dislocation is perhaps represented as a literal, vibrant performance of identity (Puwar, 2004) that highlights the positioning of males as the decision-making motor in a typical family unit. This is not only a cultural constitutive norm but also a stereotyped cognitive model. Dislocation affects the process of identifications by affecting the subsequent collective social actions that many of the older generations had to undergo, that of fleeing the country, and this influences their subsequent construction and maintenance of a more traditional social identity. Dislocation influences the degree of intensity of attachment to place, the perennial struggle between the 'here' in Liverpool and 'there' in the motherland, captured through the functional use of deitic centers. The self is often immersed in the past for older generations but effectively re-negotiated by the younger males although ambivalence, approach and avoidance, all utilized as effective coping mechanisms. The narratives have provided an opportunity to re- write some aspects of narrative life scripts through conventional altero-centering, mutually re-negotiated centers and socio- centric processes. The community narratives place people within complex cultural contexts and social structures as they negotiate time, place, others and self. It seems that identifications are then

influenced by the demands of transient social settings rather than being exclusively consistent over time. This in turn highlights the temporality and multiplicity of some performed practices and at the same time challenges society's discourse of why immigrants come over to host countries as it offers grounded reasons of why families cross over to Europe.

# Chapter 8

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## Analyzing Data

### **‘Until the lion learns to speak’- A hiphop perspective of identity**

#### **8.0 Introduction**

This chapter provides an analysis of the hiphop extract the Somali boys had included in their magazine. The boys had all identified with it but have not elaborated upon it in terms of how it represented their positioning as regards social identity. They had added it on towards the end of the project and as researcher, I did not engage with them for the writing of its analysis. Consequently, this data is analysed as a piece of literary criticism that takes a hiphop perspective of identity. It is regarded as a partially non-participatory ethnographic life story in that participants were not personally involved in the elaborations of why they found this extract significant to them. Consequently, the analysis focuses on the possible meanings behind the lyrics of this extract. This idea came about when I was speaking to one of the participants on the phone right after the Sefton Park incident where one of the participants' friends, who had never attended the project initiatives, had been murdered by a number of other Somali young men. This incident had inevitably caused quite a stir in the local community and the boys had stopped attending the local visual group for a good number of weeks. The participant on the phone had just casually told me that there were so many people in the community, like this victim, who will never have a voice. The nature of voice in narrative research is highlighted by Booth and Booth (1994, 1998) and the main idea behind this argument is to elicit voice of those in society who may never had the opportunity to voice themselves. Through a

literary approach, I have tried to create my own meanings of what this extract might be trying to convey in terms of social identities of these young Somali males. Themes generated on localization and appropriation of local contexts, have been particularly highlighted.

### **8.1 “Until the lion learns to speak”- Exhorting the sense of otherness**

In choosing this piece of hip hop extract as their active ‘voice’, participants might have identified and attached to its discourse a particular significance of words. This is a reminiscence of Wittgenstein’s (1974) idea that the meaning of words depends on the significance attached to them and has the power to generate certain semantic conditions. For Wittgenstein every choice is an alternative with respect to other alternatives possible. The choice, albeit unconscious of this ‘identificatory’ action, also highlights Remotti’s (2010) argument of the inescapability of ‘otherness’, when he talks about the self as ‘I’ and as subject, and underscores the inherent human position to incorporate and cultivate an ‘alternative’, which generates an awareness of reciprocity. Otherness lies at the very basis of our choices:

Until the lion leans to speak, the tales of hunting will be weak.

(Hip hop extract from ‘Until the lion learns to speak’ by MC K’Naan, line 1)

MC K’ Naan, the Somali Canadian artist singer, starts by evoking the acknowledgment of the ‘other’, referring to poet singers who, according to him might have something important to say, but which can remain meaningless unless it is formulated in a way that is truly understood by other social actors. In the beginning of this ‘journey’, he exhorts and reminds his audience that this poem song:

...goes out to the struggle, in the tradition of Arays Isse Karshe, God bless his soul, I want to say something to you, my friends with the mike  
(K’Naan, 2005)

MC K' Naan immediately draws on the old tradition of oral poetry that Somalis refer to for inspiration, especially Arays Isse Karshe, who is believed to be one of Somalia's greatest poets. On a metaphorical level then, as Remotti (2010) would argue, K' Naan seems to be substituting the word 'identity' with the notion of the words: 'we-us', referring to the other poet singers and the hiphop generation. There is a reproduction of a 'we' that is interested in conserving itself over time. The sense of 'we' in the self is neither totally completed nor entirely compact. The need for otherness emerges in a strong way in circumstances where there is a strong pressing urge for identity and a strong 'identification' with a 'we,' in particular in those decisions that chose, affirm, renovate and transform personhood. For Remotti, (2010), there remains the analytical exercise of establishing which 'we' is being referred to, what are its boundaries and contents.

K'Naan too, does not seem to perceive 'otherness' and 'identity' as separated and removed from each other, but as a means of nearness and co-penetration, an affirmation of a co- existing relationship. This reminds us of Remotti's (1993:31) idea of the 'bond of particularity' where systems, institutions, costumes and cultures are always considered as local and particular. This seems to be K'naan's own positioning through hiphop.

## **8.2 A social account of subjectivity**

Pennycook and Mitchell (2009) highlight a social account of subjectivity in their exploration of K'Naan artistic works. His CD, the 'Dusty foot philosopher,' received a 2006 Juno Award for Rap Recording of the Year and was nominated for the inaugural Polaris Music Prize. In an interview about his music, K' Naan describes the process through which subjectivities are constructed through practices and narratives of given social and cultural locations. In his interview, K'Naan explains that in the term 'dusty foot philosopher', he is actually referring both his self- perception, the way he sees himself (the 'I') and to a discourse that captures the almost stereotypical way, 'others' mentally perceive Africa and its people. K' Naan draws on the different perceptions between the 'we' as experienced by 'us' ('we' as in

within 'our' in-group) and 'we' as experienced by the other ('we' as experienced by the other, we-them). For K' Naan, African's children's 'dusty feet', often portrayed on camera footage are not those of

A beggar... he's not an undignified struggler, but he's the dusty foot philosopher. He articulates more than the cameraman can imagine, at that point in his life. But he has nothing; he has no way to dream, even. He just is who he is (Canaan, 2004 in Pennycook and Mitchell, 2009)

In choosing K'Naan's extract to represent them, the participants may have found an identification, a way through which they come to deal with 'conflicting, often subjugated and institutionally found discourses' (Goodley, et. al 2004:114) which often offer particular versions of their selves in the society or community they living in.

#### **a) 'Localizing' hiphop**

Participants' own identification with hiphop is grounded in the local and the real. K'naan's discourse is almost acting as the "auxiliary self", where hip hop becomes an act of enactment and symbol, where symbolization becomes a creative process of the mind that gives rise to a free expression of being (Wright, 2009), one which can result in a renewed pattern of being. This resonates in lines 3-4 of MC K'Naan's the hiphop extract, 'Until the lion learns to speak': 'My poetry hails within the streets, my poetry fails to be discrete'.

The self is inescapably and intrinsically linked to 'the grand other' in Lacanian terms. The poet positions himself into the struggle, taking the listeners to a specific political and local groundedness. Hiphop then becomes a vehicle through which a local 'voice' is articulated. The participants become immersed in a taste of a 'local' context in terms of what is happening now and what has happened in their fathers' homeland. Hiphop becomes localized, (Pennycook and Mitchell, 2009), enabling the participants to narrate themselves in new ways, to tell stories about their life in the community. It brings people in new ways, to sing and dance. For another rapper, Wire MC (2006 in Pennycook and Mitchell, 2009:35):

The culture I come from...we always expressed our stories, our beliefs, our fears, our superstitions through song and dance. So being an Abodigital in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it was a natural evolution for me to move into hip-hop and continue the corroboree, but with the modern day aspect.

For Mignolo (2000), the fact that these different artists share similar origins, encourages both the social actors and the readers to think differently about what is already local:

It travels across the earth and seas; from Eritrea to the West Indies...it knows no boundaries no trees it's studied in parts of the Greece"  
(Hip hop extract from 'Until the lion learns to speak' by MC K'Naan, lines 5-8)

Participants seem to be narrating through hip-hop and in doing so they are locally 'appropriating' this practice. This is not a mere mimicry or enactment, or the burden of acting white as some authors (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986) might argue, although at that time, they never specifically referred to hip-hop. Rather for Fordham (1996 in Akom, 2008:253) referred to the dialectical relationship between:

'...black citizenship' and 'white citizenship', 'gender sufficiency' and 'gender insufficiency', 'stigma and privilege' and 'between being simultaneously erased and embraced'.

Others might recognize in it a form of 'racial traitoring' (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; Ignatiev 1996), where black people are seen as acting white, as they assimilate or participate in what might be seen as activities or self-representations underlying white cultural norms. The failure of not taking popular culture seriously could backfire in terms of community engagement and practice. The voice of youth culture, not only the voice, but nearly the whole body, is thus taken up by hip-hop discourse.

## **b) Racialized narratives of social justice**

As a new form of multi-culturalism, hip hop and its discourse are impacting on young people as a form of 'racialized' performance. On the other end of the line, (Frodham, 1996), there are white appropriations of socio-political conscious hip hop, the so called 'white racial dualism' or 'identity migrations' (Winant, 1997:40), where white youth are renouncing white power by taking a position against white supremacist practices yet simultaneously benefiting from their "white privilege" (Lipsitz, 1998). For Akom 2008, this is one of the ways through which the multicultural space of hip hop has transformed itself and has helped hip hop to become widely represented and to account for narratives of social justice as well as narratives of consumerism and commodification. However, for Akom, (2008:256):

Thugged-out white boyz or white girlz become bank managers and senators whereas thugged-out black youth/ youth of colour are targeted by police, schools teachers and counsellors for the fast track to the prison industrial complex.

In the meantime, hip hop too becomes for youngsters, a repeated everyday embodied routine and almost unconscious practice (Bourdieu 1977, 1990), where the boys' identification and a sense of 'I am,' or rather 'we are,' is daily claimed and co-produced. This is also captured in the repeated chorus of MC K'Naan's hip hop's extract: 'runtaa hadii kale waxaan lahaa hahee' (lines 9-11, 20-22, 32-34,43-45,54-56,65-67), reminding the listeners of the Somali oral heritage and indigenous language, and enabling them to identify with the resonated message- 'we know what he is talking about' (Wire MC, 2006 in Pennycook and Mitchell, 2009:38).

These indigenous Somali words almost sound like a mantra, a chant that affirms its Somali identity rather than a mere isomer of its US counterparts. Consequently, the participants are embedding themselves in an everyday practice identity that is always in process rather than achieved (De marneffe, 2006; Baraitser 2006a, 2006b). Hip hop does not remain embedded within its apparent US media dominance where critics (Bozza, 2003: 130) often

accuse it of cultural imperialism. It does not either sound or recreate a sense of English dominance, in terms of a 'language' imperialism. The choice of these young Muslim males to include it as a main feature in their visual representations of what it means to be Somalis in Liverpool, gives it a sense of localized diversity in that it has become situated in their own personal and social dynamics of change, struggle and appropriation:

I'm sick as far as lyrics, I with it as far as gimmicks, I spit barraging limit,  
the shit they talking rip it

(Hip hop extract from 'Until the lion learns to speak' by MC K'Naan, line 12)

K' Naan also struggles to capture localization. According to Robbins (2001), this has to deal with the content of what is being localized. Within hip hop itself, K'Naan revises the dominant narrative of the common perception that black Americans are the exclusive owners of hip hop. In identifying with hip hop, there is an almost automatic dismissal of certain American hip hop styles whose underlying philosophy often tends to glorify violence, consumerism and misogyny. As a Canadian Somali, K' Naan identifies with contrasting different local conditions. These hip hop narratives reveal another world-view, another story. On one hand, they identify with the music, the style and the anti-racist struggles, whilst simultaneously they resist dominant discourse often depicted in particular worldviews held in certain forms of American rap:

I am hip, the hop is living, I skip the obvious women don't get what I'm  
presenting, no rims my mind is spinning

(Hip hop extract from 'Until the lion learns to speak' by MC K'Naan, lines 16-19)

The reference here is what Wire MC another rapper calls 'a deep innate sense of community obligation' (Wire MC, 2006 in Pennycook and Mitchell, 2009:32) K' Naan is using hip hop to make listeners aware of the war torn parts of his origin mother land and therefore he compares the violent struggles against oppression in the North American ghettos with the everyday poor realities of Somalia:

In my country everyone is in that condition. So it's not special. So therefore we don't have an element that makes it a thing that is possibly glorifiable. And that's why for me, what I was talking about was these are the people who don't speak about it, they live it  
(MC K' Naan, 2006 in Pennycook and Mitchell, 2009:31)

In fact in the local visual groups, the boys did not want to focus on the everyday reality of Somalia. They wanted to depict other aspects of being Somali. However, it seems that their identification with this rap song resonating within them was too strong to leave this other reality out completely.

I was born and raised in the place, where the thorn of flame would blaze,  
where the foreigners are not embraced, where they warn you in jogging  
pace.  
(Hip hop extract from 'Until the lion learns to speak' by MC K'Naan, lines  
23-27)

### **c) The racial politics that surrounds hiphop**

For Perry (2004:29), American hiphop is 'situationally black', that is to say that the role it occupies in our society is black both:

...in terms of its relationship to other segments of the black community  
and of its relationship to the large white segment of the country and of  
the global village.

K' Naan localizes his identity with local relations of race and local history. It is here that he draws strong and intense parallels with dislocation, dispossession, death and denigration and all that colonialism and later civil war brings about as a social and civil consequence:

..where loners lower their glaze, where the corners slower the chase  
where they twist and turn in a maze, with a pistol upon your face  
(Hip hop extract from 'Until the lion learns to speak' by MC K'Naan, lines  
28-31)

This includes linguistic and cultural disruptions and the daily terror that is captured in a rhythm that almost intensifies the pain that all this reality brings about.

By drawing on the 'hand- me- down' poetry of his Somali's strong oral traditions, the poet is immersing himself in his past that is well and truly entrenched in oral traditions of story- telling and poetry that have existed for thousands of years. It seems then that hiphop has been incorporated in the boys' cultures rather than their cultures incorporating 'hip hop' as something external or alien to their local context. For the participants, this served to personalize their participative community experiences and to explore and understand shared world-views or shared mental models (Denzau and North, 1994) that seem to maintain another core aspect of their social identity.

### **8.3 Hiphop and social change**

After making sure that his positioning in his local context has been recognized, K' Naan goes on to invite the 'other' once more to join him in his quest for knowledge which brings about freedom of thought, from oppression and gives a sense of liberty, an agency that is both personal but mostly cultural. The ambivalence that hiphop struggles with drives the sense of 'self' forward. This adds to the complexity of social life but also, referring to Marcusean thought, it enables the imagination to re-conciliate the individual to the whole, to link a sense of desire with that of realization and to merge happiness with reason.

Participants perhaps feel they can take hiphop up as part of their self-fashioning as young Muslim males in the UK today. They are not merely listening passively to a rap song, they are actively doing philosophy, by embracing politicalized statements about their own locations, inequality, long-standing traditions and histories, knowledge about their own local communities represented all over the world (Diaspora) and accumulating respect for the dignity of the helpless, the disempowered. This also takes us to Shusterman's (2005:61) perspective of hiphop as:

a whole philosophy of life, an ethos that involve clothes, a style of talk and walk, a political attitude and often a philosophical posture of asking hard questions and critically challenging established views and values...

#### **8.4 Conclusions**

Hiphop here is what Lacan would see as at a symbolic level. The boys' choice of hiphop is in itself a discourse activity that acts as a grand other, operating at a symbolic level. For Castoriadis (1989), to understand how the individual subject responds and recognizes its 'self' and others, there is a need to figure out the emergent capacities one has for representation and identification. This means that one is able to derive meaning and personalize it. Hip hop seems to help in the identification with a primary, scenic field of representational forms, drives and affects (Elliot, 2002) a field that includes language but also goes beyond it.

There is a sense of common belonging to a way of life underlying hiphop that allows the youngsters to understand each other. For me, an outsider to hip hop, it was a process in which I began to decipher a hidden code, in order to understand the process through which this practice is contributing to the younger males' identifications and transformations.

# Chapter 9

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## Discussion, Final Considerations and Recommendations

*'...we are learning gradually to undo decades of assumptions about how and where knowledge is created and by whom' (Worton, 2011)*

### 9.0 Introduction

This last chapter re-visits and discusses data through the theoretical lenses of post- modern, post-colonial and feminist psychoanalytic dimensions of migrant experience of identity constructions. The idea is to present knowledge accumulated from these PAR narratives as situated interpretations. Rather than following the modern presentation of “facts,” research data is interpreted as ‘conversations,’ offered as metaphors and context through which this knowledge is understood (Josselson, 2006). In this light, two major emergent situated themes- ‘performativity’ and ‘modernity’ are explored in depth. Participatory Action Research is also re-visited in terms of what was deemed to be useful and effective, as well as the role of inter-subjectivity and power sharing within it. In general, the advantages and merits of these community-based interventions are explored. Moreover, my positionality as researcher is discussed in terms of how this contributed to the whole process and how this process affected and influenced my reflectivity and therefore its impact on the whole research project. Implications for similar research programmes that foster community cohesion, as well as the importance of building effective therapeutic intervention practices are considered in terms of policies. Finally the research’s aims and objectives are revisited in terms of what was achieved and what can be taken up as future recommendations in this combined field of community-based, participatory action, narrative- eliciting identity study.

## 9.1 Premise- Situated Interpretations of Narratives

Perhaps in the beginning of this final discussion, it is essential to posit how the knowledge accumulated throughout this research project is subsequently presented in this final chapter. Narratives elicited through this community-based participatory action research have produced a vast array of detailed and rich extracts of lived life experiences which are, according to Josselson (2006), ‘...well- interpreted studies full of nuance and insight’ (p. 3)

According to this author, this is a reflection of the complexity of human lives and highlights how research that uses narratives is ‘rooted in interpretative hermeneutics and phenomenology’ (p.3). Different researchers using narratives are situated in different contexts, study different people and therefore come up with highly contextualized interpretations of their generated knowledge. This leads to different theorizations of their understandings. In relation to this, there is currently a felt need to have a knowledge base that is based on the ever increasingly mass of studies that is constantly being produced, one that tries to understand both the common patterns present among scholars as well as understand aspects of lived life narratives that differ. This knowledge base needs to be able to resonate with other thematic structures that other researchers have discovered in their work so that larger frameworks of understandings are generated. Like anthropology, we might need to find commonalities without sacrificing the unique contexts out of which different narratives emerge from. This is not an attempt to affirm that all this will be covered in this final discussion. Rather, it is more of an attempt to highlight that there are challenges to amalgamate knowledge generated in research where narratives have been elicited and that knowledge generated is similar to that produced in an interview which for Kvale (1996) ‘...comes close to post- modern conceptualizations of knowledge as conversational, narrative, linguistic, contextual and inter-relational’ (p.51).

For Josselson (2006), effective collaboration comes about if we imagine and present ourselves in elaborate, extended conversation with others, where conversations become the context in which knowledge is understood. This final discussion considers context, reflexivity, co-construction and multiple truths not to be presented as yet another individual painting to be hung in the vast narrative gallery, but to be valued as one of the pieces that can contribute to the 'joint, multi-layered jigsaw puzzle' Josselson (2006:4) that research eliciting narratives brings about. Its aim is to offer and summarize a situated interpretation of these young males' constructions of their social identities.

## **9.2 Revisiting social identity narratives through post-structuralist and post-modern thought**

Within a post-structuralist stance, the generated social identity narratives manage to question the workings of knowledge and grand narratives in many ways. Words and actions generated specific societal and institutional discourse that seems to radically review human subjects and in turn questions the view we have of our selves and others. In this perspective, the individual human being does not come across as merely biological, but one whose sense of self is created through power and knowledge. This type of story-telling has been used to construct versions of humanity and is a product of the discourses of a culture in which they are created. Within these social constructionist critiques (Burman and Parker, 1993; Burr 1995), life stories seem to have captured experiences from a socially constructed perspective. For Weedon (1987), this perspective describes the language of the wider culture and its accompanying subjectivities and, 'language becomes the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed' (p.21).

The participants' life stories seem to capture a sense of struggle over power, subjectivity and knowledge. In the therapeutic and enriching exchange of tales of the human condition, participants seemed to have emerged from their 'backstage self', where people often strive to keep to themselves and

have used self- presentation strategies to present a social self, 'a front to the world' (Goffman, 1959 cited in Brennan, 2009:26). This constructed front can be interpreted within Derrida's method of reconstruction (e.g. Eagleton, 1983) that aims to show how something as completely different from something else exists only because it manages to define itself against that something else (Goodley et al., 2004). Narratives seem to have empowered the participants and this process has almost ironically highlighted their position of isolation and disempowerment.

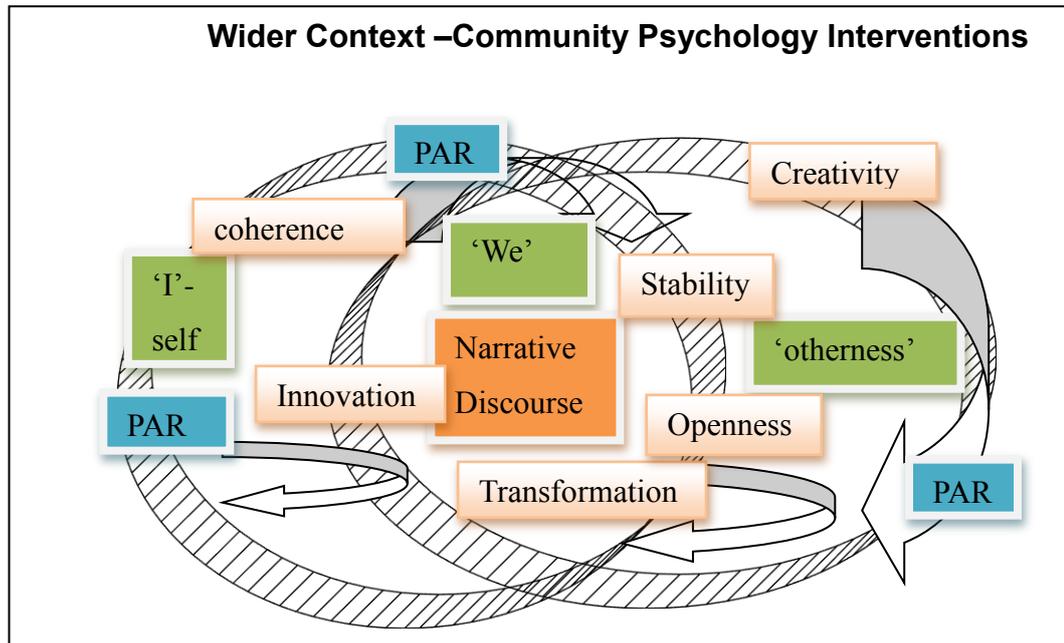
### **9.2.1 'Problemitizing' the concept of Identity through the narrative process**

Narratives have 'problemitized' the concept of identity, as in line with modern relational psychoanalytical literature (Rossi, 2007:103; Pizzorno, 2007:18). From this perspective, social identity is portrayed as continuous through time, but is also one that includes a process of change. Identity cannot be conceived "as a permanent and invariant nucleus" (Rossi 2007:103), as this definition is more of a 'myth,' a promise of a non- existing reality because it creates an illusion on who people are not and because it substitutes subjective reality with a false pretence or at best, a mere aspiration. The idea of 'sameness' in substantial identity (Ricoeur, 1993), enables themes of recognition, acknowledgement and identification to be elicited. Fabietti (2000) argues for instance, that in ethnic identity, subjects aspire to their self- recognition so that they are successful in partaking of resources. In this regard, the narrative becomes a particularly efficient tool to help in the reconstruction of social subjects and enables them to take form and consistency, in order to put forward their legitimate claims. In this sense, narratives enable subjects to succeed in obtaining recognition of their own identity and their own rights to exist.

On the other hand, people make real efforts to maintain stability through an 'approximate' identity, because they need to experience coherence. However, at an individual and collective level, subjects also need external resources that come from the outside. This experiencing of 'otherness' offers processes of change that are as fundamental as coherence and stability.



**Fig. 9.3 Identity and otherness within a new contextual framework**



The narratives provide a framework where people choose to organize their existence, and move within this cultural context according to the situations they are in. In concordance with Remotti (2010), people are in search of satisfying experiences or solutions and in their relationship with the other, stability is sometimes chosen instead of innovation, or change is sometimes chosen instead of continuity. The combinations of values are varied and depend on the subjects, their experiences, their developmental phases and the historical period they are living in. Positioning oneself too closely to identity may lead to a sort of mummification, an exclusion of time and becoming, whilst embracing 'otherness' totally may lead to becoming too dispersive, with no sense of individual substance. In particular, this framework sees otherness and identity as co-penetrating and co-existing, where permeability is allowed and openness is readily available. This becomes one of the narratives' main functions.

### **9.3.1 Factors influencing the conceptualizations of the sense of 'I' and 'we'- multiplicity, relationality, complexity and otherness**

As Fig. 9.3 shows, the narrative intrinsically links the world of the self with the world of otherness. Because the 'I' is an individual subject, it is often thought that it coincides with a bio-psychological reality, independent to the social context in which it operates, 'is sovereign and which completes by itself, acts of governance' (Musil, 1957:551). But apart from its mental and biological dimensions, the 'I' is also an acquired outcome, a social and cultural product. It is not a natural reality, but a human artefact. Societies vary even in the ways they model and conceive individual subjects.

With respect to the 'I', the sense of 'we' conveys a much more social reality. The sense of 'we' that make up an individual is multiple. It is a 'we' that belongs to the family, the neighbourhood, a political party, a football team, a religious organization, school and friendship.

### **9.3.2 A context of reciprocal relationships and recognitions**

For Sparti (1996:20), it is only in a context of reciprocal relationships and reciprocal recognitions that identity takes shape. If this is true, then identity is in continuous dependence on the practices of social recognitions and identifications, and is therefore always in a state of formation and construction, and is more metaphorical rather than physical or social (ibid, p.103). The relative stability of identity results only through identification with repetitive actions or practices. This approximate identity is a process of a drawing near to identity rather than an acquisition of it (ibid, p.178). It is also an effective coping strategy in the face of rapid change and provides a reassurance to the "I" and the "we" that a certain degree of uniqueness and a certain sense of stability is being attained (ibid, p.180).

This sense of 'we' captured in narratives indicates something more concrete- it refers to subjects who 'do things', who 'behave' 'act', and 'think' a certain way. It is also strongly situational; it grows and develops, appears in certain

situations, and disappears in others. The sense of 'we' is arbitrary and revocable. Boundaries can be contested and reformulated. In talking about identity one tends to separate identity of 'self' and identity of the 'other', whereas in talking about the sense of 'we', this is understood in relation to others. There is a more intrinsic involvement between our selves ('we') and 'others'. This porous boundary recounts of an 'otherness' that is also inside us. A sense of completeness shuts off the 'other', whilst incompleteness calls for communication and togetherness (Remotti, 2006).

The narrative resonates with this sense of 'we' and through it the individual subject is constantly being constructed. In this sense, for the community narrative, there is first a public thought and then a private one, first there are relationships and then entities in which they relate in, first the exchange, then the exchanger. The very 'I' or individual subject, is consequently seen as a plurality. Both psychoanalysis and human sciences seek to discover 'plurality' in the singular (Auge' 1989:23): the 'I', is no longer an atom, but a 'we' in itself.

### **9.3.3 Pluralities captured in the narratives**

The narratives appeal to the plurality within the self and as this multiplicity within the self increases, so does fluidity and transformation. For individual and collective groups, constructing a unified sense of social identity arises from the internal struggle that comes from an inescapable multiplicity. Affirming one's proper identity through life stories means that one is trying to cope not only with the plurality inside the self, but also with the risks of dispersal that might result. It means that through narratives, individuals and collective subjects strive to construct with themselves an image of wholeness.

This image is however illusory and has a double role: it is both an action of construction- (the Latin word for 'illusory' means moulding, forming, shaping) and also a deceitful one, in that it comes across as a whole but is intimately marked with multiplicity which at an analytical level, subjects try to overcome

and 'hide.' This is not merely a coping strategy but a tendency to see things in 'Gestalt,' as a whole. Individual and collective social selves often sense multiplicity as a constant threat of dissolution. There is an ongoing sense of tension between the underlying internal multiplicity and the need to fight such a threat with the illusion of wholeness, of a coherent and permanent image of self.

Consequently, narratives bring together multiplicity and homogeneity. The 'I' is constructed in a context of multiple relationships and the re-definition of the mind is based on structures that emerge from interaction and transaction, rather than on structures emerging from an individual's internal organism (Mitchell, 1993:17). Figure 9.3 above provides a visual mapping of this complex system with its varying possibilities and possible intermediate positions. The narrative acts as an 'intercultural fabric' through which every 'we' is formed (Amselle, 1999:85). 'Otherness' becomes the underlying fabric, through which the connecting narrative designs elements for the construction and continuity of the 'I' and the 'we'. These are then considered as complex, open and dynamic systems, (Gandolfi, 1999:98) which can never be totally open or totally closed. For Polkinghorne (1988), the conclusions of narratives remain open-ended where:

....new information or argument may convince scholars that the conclusion is in error or that another conclusion is more likely (p.176).

#### **9.3.4 'Choices' in life stories**

It is only when one senses the opportunity of varying possibilities that the notion of choice becomes appropriately anchored. Discourses generated by grand narratives are situated in cultural and economical inequalities found in society's social structures. The choice of being or becoming a particular way is a tricky venture and brings about a degree of an inherent arbitrariness. Although 'otherness' is at the very basis of our choices, choices are still precarious in nature and often result in a sense of ambivalent identity. Each choice, although not necessary on a conscious level, like language is, is considered as an equally valid alternative to other possibilities (Wittgenstein, 1974: 167). For Sapir (1969), each choice leads to particular forms or

outcomes. Some participants have tended to devalue possibilities that have been previously discarded by their surrounding cultural context. In this way, they have transformed their particular choice in some sort of 'principle pathway,' so that adopted alternatives are not ideologically considered as choices based on particularity, but are attributed to a universal characteristic or a necessity. For Remotti (2010:26), this produces a shift in statements, where: 'This is the way we are because that's the way it should be' becomes 'that's the way we are.' (p.26). Rephrased in identity terms, the statement becomes: 'this is our identity, but we could have been different!' (p. 26)

The idea of exploring alternatives is now being revisited by anthropologists. There is a move towards otherness in moments when this sense of "we" in the self needs that taste of diversity, which emerges strongly in circumstances where a pressing urge for identification is felt, when people decide, choose, affirm, renovate and transform themselves. The narratives embrace the Hegelian idea of 'otherness' as they penetrate identity and become part of its fundamental dimension, a process that considers multiplicity on one hand and alternatives on the other. In their process of becoming, they succeed to transform the 'I' to a 'we', and boundaries are fixed, only to the extent that are removed and overcome. This resonates with Montero's (2000) 'epistemology of relation' where knowledge is constructed through the relations in which people 'are', where subjects are constructed and the multiple 'we' is created through intertwining historical processes, embracing an unstoppable 'transformatory' movement.

#### **9.4 The narrative as constructing a social reality**

Through social identity narratives, social actors have linked the representation of self in a social context, a social scene. The readings of the others' stories for instance in the community narrative workshops, have led participants to come to terms with their own original incompleteness. At the basis of a social science perspective, social contexts determine the type of representation and its constructions (Remotti, 2010). Representations of self and constructions of psychological and social realities are played out in

contexts, through interactions, discourses and social matrixes. Subjects are historical, and social identity is understood as psychosocial both in the individual sense, the “I”, and in the collective sense, the “we-us,” rather than within the notion of substance in the metaphysical sense. This perspective recognizes expectations of self, of being, of actions and rights.

The narrative not only deals with individual subjectivity but also with groups of belonging. The very existence of the life cycle of a narrative is profoundly social and depends on the recognition that it is capable of achieving. Its own identity is described by the recognition it is asking for and that which it has managed to attain. This is not recognized by itself but by other social actors. In social and political scenes, some individual and collective subjects are strongly recognized by society and have an ontological weight: their realities are autonomous. Other subjects are more fragile, have a less degree of recognition and consistency in the social field. Identity construction through narratives is an expression of a ‘moulding’, not of an ‘it is’ but of an ‘it’s like’. It is not a permanent or guaranteed construct, but needs to be re-proposed and reconstructed every time it comes to play. Through the narrative, subjects are gradually re-invented, re-constructed, or re-imagined.

#### **9.4.1 Analytical and functional levels of identity**

To understand the role of the narrative in re-constructing and re-formulating the social identities of these Muslim males, one also needs to differentiate between analytical and functional levels of identity. Kant’s regulatory and constitutive uses of identity become somewhat handy. Social scientists tend to analyze identities and subjects’ affirmations, representations and constructions in the light of social contexts and through areas of struggle and competition where they function and form. This **regulatory** use considers identity as a function used by social actors and is negotiated, finite, changeable and hybrid. Subjects that struggle in this area affirm their own identity with the objective of reducing any possible form of contestation from their sense of being and their rights. In the **constitutive** use of identity, identity is treated as substance where time, change, negotiation, choices and

contestations are removed from its definition. It affirms the reality of ideas that recognize its functions and operate in Kantian terms, 'as if' these functions correspond to real entities.

For Remotti (1993:113-114), on a practical level, this means that social actors turn to a constitutive use of identity when they transform the mere 'as if' into it 'is' The difference between what happens in identity on the analytical plane and how this is treated on the practical plane is important as it coincides with a central part of our discourse. Although the identities of subjects' are not that homogeneous and very often come up with a mixture of compromises, people still believe in their own constructions of identity.

## **9.5 Two main emerging themes: Modernity and Performativity**

Both the analytical and functional levels of identity lead to the consideration of two emerging main themes in the generated data, the theme related to the self in the modern world and the narrative as a performative act.

### **9.5.1 Modernity- Analyzing the self in the modern world**

To analyze the self in the modern world, one can use psychoanalytic theory to explore the relation between narcissism and contemporary culture (Lasch, 1979; 1984). In relational psychoanalysis, social context and relationships are not merely random and contingent. In a world of mass production and mass consumption, the self as a consumer measures everything in terms of market attractiveness and approval of others. Modern identity- formation is unstable and threadlike and is dethroned by dislocations and terrors of modernity. In the face of an impenetrable social environment, people shut off and try to survive by turning inward towards their own preoccupations.

#### **a) A 'surviving minimal self'**

This 'surviving minimal self' in a 'culture of survivalism', does not only mean a loss of selfhood, but a desperate attempt at managing oneself in a chaotic world. For Winter (1996:17), we ourselves construct our experience,

especially our sense of self, from messages in a quickly changing culture that recommends explicitly and implicitly, about what to be, how to look, speak and think. Modern life comes about as a complex condition with many folded layers. The troubled relationship between the self and the world leads to a lack of wellbeing where selfhood is constructed with what the surrounding culture proposes and provides.

This leads to disappointment and idealization, followed by devaluation where feelings of infantile grandiosity alternate with feelings of complete emptiness and inferiority. In the modern world, the subject is narcissistically dependent on others in the construction of self-identity, yet others remain cut off from this narcissistic self and do not provide a sense of meaningful identity. For Lasch, it is social conditions that generate this narcissistic pathology. Human beings become increasingly disconnected from each other since social life is itself fragile. This creates a breakdown in local and historical meanings and lack of continuity in the public area. The emergence of mass-produced commodity generates fleeting and temporary images that blur inner and outer boundaries and negatively impacts the construction of positive selfhood. This modern stunting of human relations involves the perversion of that intermediate sphere between the inner world and the outer world, i.e. Winnicott's transitional space. The commodity world has no transitional character, so it stands as something completely separate from the self. Instead of acting as a creative bridge between self and context, transitional space is lost completely and simultaneously mirrors and strengthens a disturbed subjective world (Lasch, 1984).

#### **b) Understanding ambivalence and uncertainty in the narratives**

In the light of the above, a particularity emerging from the discourse data is the high degree of ambivalence and uncertainty participants have voiced regarding their identity as a whole. For Fromm, this fundamental ambivalence in self and society results from society itself in that modern culture offers false solutions to human needs. Fromm tries to connect Freudian theory to Marxist social theory to understand how social structures influence and shape selfhood. According to Fromm's reinterpretation of Freud, the social

system constitutes the identity of human subjects to fit the economic, cultural and historical context. Elliot (2002) argues that this subjectivity produces 'socially necessary character types' (p.47) and 'highly modifiable' aspects of desire that moulds social individuals. Society influences psychic economy and projects social values into the self, so that individuals feel the need to 'act' as they have to act.

For Fromm as for Freud, the family is the psychological agency of society. As a nuclear unit, it is an ideological institution that influences individual subjectivity, with a self-perception that might come across as submissive and powerless. For Ulrich Beck, modern society became individualized and the movement from an industrial to a post-industrial society prompts individuals to choose their own life-worlds outside the boundaries of any particular community or group and thus people no longer belong to social communities with distinctive life worlds. The communal provision that was once provided by family and the neighbourhood is now replaced by the modern labour market and the modern welfare state. For Beck (1992), 'community is dissolved in the acid bath of competition' (p.94) and the social foundations of class society and the nuclear family are liquefied. However, as the analysis chapters highlight, this negative aspect of modernity is not particularly captured in the participants' lived experience of family, as many of them reflect on the essentiality that family life contributes in their daily experience. Community experience within their community centres has become an embedded routine practice of stability and adjustment. It is more in their relationships with the rest of the local community that there is a sense of detachment, especially in the elders' recounts. For Fromm, late capitalism not only adversely affects economic mechanisms and institutions, but contributes to the increase of psychodynamic struggles of each individual.

### **c) The 'juggernaut of modernity'**

These scenarios added with what Giddens (1990) frames as the juggernaut of modernity, interact to produce a high degree of contingency and uncertainty. This sense of uncertainty is augmented when reciprocity in

interpersonal relationships is absent and when social interactions are marked with mistrust and ambivalence. The sharing of the narratives has led the young men to an internal process where they were able to contest their own community's social practices, constitutive norms and cognitive models. A cognitive and cultural dissonance was created between their own beliefs and what other men in the community think or expect them to do, behave, think or act:

Yemeni people, like fathers who are born in Yemen, they em live almost a different life to the children who are born in Britain so sometimes it's hard for them to understand why they act differently..they want them to live a life in which they were expecting them to live if they lived in Yemen. So for a British son to be born in England, it's like I said, it's obvious that they're going to live a different life as they're... as opposed if they are born in Yemen. So sometimes they can grow up doing things that the fathers would see him as not correct or he could be doing things his lifestyle he might not approve of (it). So for that reason there could be some conflicts there.

(Extract from 'conversations as semi-structured interviews' with a Yemeni older male DVD participant)

Giddens's (1990) concept of trust requires the necessary confidence in the continuity of self and the constancy of the surrounding social world. When the other is perceived as threatening, as judgmental, as non-accepting, there is an inner climate of tension:

He was going mad. Shouting at me, saying I was shaming the family. He should trust me. I can be trusted. I've never given him a reason not to. I think he's just scared. I don't smoke weed. I don't smoke anything.

(Extract from the Yemeni boys' roleplay, captured on DVD-lines 3-6).

It means that the young men need to face new dangers in a realm of mixed possibilities; one of the dangers is the reduced sense of acceptance within their own community, which in turn leaves them isolated and bereft of social meaning. It is here that the narrative comes in as a sort of mid- way

intervention, a transitional realm that bridges the space between younger and older generation. Both generations feel that they have to re-negotiate their identities. If they, as young men somewhat manage to re-establish a sense of reciprocity, to regain their elders' sense of trust, then there is a higher possibility to regain trust in themselves and in others, in the surrounding cultural context. The same applies to the older generation. This is a basis for Giddens for 'going-on-being' in the world, where the narrative as a transitional object seeks to bridge the space between the young man and the others:

....there is the need of common ground between fathers and sons... They need to work together and be friendly.... (There is) need for education, education and education.... it brings hope because children understand us and respect and value what we are trying to do.

(Extract from older participants' flip chart contents at the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

The narrative also acts as a 'transitional realm of routinization' (Elliot, 2002:77), where a gradual construction of the self is established through a series of routines and habits. It is this routinization that protects individuals against future threats and dangers, contains their existential anxiety and allows them to maintain hope and courage when they are faced with difficult circumstances:

I got accused of drinking the other day. I'm not saying I've never been tempted, loads of my mates drink, smoke, they have loads of girlfriends they treat like shit. I'm not like that. I'm not judging them, each to their own.

(Extract from the Yemeni boys' roleplay captured on DVD- lines 7-10).

The narratives elicited reciprocal listening. The older men needed to be in tuned with the younger males. And the young men needed to listen to what was happening inside the elders, as they recounted their own worries about what their children are up to:

I worry so much about my boy, it's making me ill. He doesn't understand. He thinks I'm an old fool who doesn't know what's happening. I know. I know what goes on round here. There are bad kids. Kids whose parents let them run around and do exactly what they want, taking drugs, joining gangs, drinking alcohol. Good parents know what their children are doing and make sure it is always the right thing and that it's good for them and their family.

(Extract from the Yemeni boys' roleplay captured on DVD- lines 25-31).

#### **d) Modern selfhood through the eyes of Fromm and Marcuse**

From Fromm's perspective, the narratives can be seen to highlight a selfhood made up of interpersonal processes, where psychic life consists of emotional arrangements coming from the relations between self and others. Modern societies have an important role in structuring socio-economic possibilities for self-organization, which if repressed, can give rise to regressive ideologies such as racism or fascism. Self-organization is not only influenced by unconscious drives and passion, but through awareness, reason and imagination. In this light, the narratives have also provided a structure for self-organization, highlighting in the process aspects of the five stage theory of selfhood depicted by Fromm (Elliot, 2002) which include: the need for relatedness, the need for creative social relations, the need for an interconnectedness of masculine and feminine values, the search for self-identity and individuality and a sense of orientation and connection with the world. These are all fundamental to the human condition as they contribute to the thriving of the self.

The patterns embraced in social relationships can be either progressive or regressive. States of being such as helplessness, isolation and aloneness are key regressive blocks in relations between the self and others. Progressive relations with others involve a reflexive, rational understanding of the human condition and of pain, which when confronted or accepted helps healthy inter-subjective relationships to develop. Human autonomy primarily needs a sense of orientation and connection with the world. The lack of this

leads to symbolic forms becoming diffused and the subject is deprived of ego-strength. Denial of individual separateness leads to a regressive involvement with others. Inner pain and emptiness are avoided and infantile illusions are neurotically fostered. Other people are used instrumentally to boost self-identity as a way to avoid inner emptiness and isolation. There is an essential object- relational distinction between self-development and self-distortion, in line with Fairbairn's conceptualization of good and bad object relations and Winnicott's true and false self.

However, Fromm's theorizing is a psychoanalytic stance that is more socially oriented as it directly connects interpersonal relations with social context. Problems of self are linked with social relationship pathologies are based on existing patterns of cultural supremacy. Power and control seep through different economic, political and cultural strata and this reproduces regressive self- solutions within the individual. To be able to face painful realities of life in a mature and rational way, the self needs to disengage from the distorted influences of mass culture in this media age. Fromm argues against Freud's 'patriarchistic-acquisitive logic as creative social life depends on the interconnectedness of masculine and feminine values. Feminine qualities such as care and nurturing are integrated into the masculine's reason and reflexivity. This is frequently captured in many of the life stories narrated.

From an internal psychoanalytic perspective, narratives seem to be trying to come to terms with contemporary emptiness, and highlight the need to have a more reflexive involvement with emotion and the self. This propagation of authentic living enhances a creative and responsive self hood and results in psychological and social transformation. This Marcusean view creates an energizing vision for emancipation, in that whenever human subjects use narratives to regenerate their own discourse, the possibility of authentic experience and social order through mutual respect, introspection, self-reflection and self- organization is increased.

A Marcusean interpretation of Freud has themes in common with Lacanian and postmodern psychoanalysis and cultural criticism, where the modern world is experienced as dislocating. When stable psychological features of

self-identity break down, people experience the world as fragmented. For Marcuse, access to the repressed unconscious will start a personal and social emancipation. This is in line to post modern, deconstructive orientations. On these lines, the narratives can bring about social change through a reunion of culture with the unconscious, leading to a “libidinal rationality”, a new sensuous reality.

Narratives are able to generate hope about alternative social conditions encouraging emotional communication and intimacy, through the use of the imagination. For Elliot (2002:54), this fantasy is itself a longing for ‘reconciliation of the individual with the whole, of desire with realization, of happiness with reason.’

Rather than being a “private space” internal to the self, this ‘transformation of libido’ in practical terms refers to the peak of emotional communication in social institutions. This concept can be extrapolated to the narrative as many object relational and related psychoanalytic theories evaluate repression by centralizing their thoughts around the quality of relatedness, interpersonal bonds, community and self-continuity.

#### **e) The Self and Narcissism**

In its reciprocity, the narrative contributes to the basis of psychic functioning and self- esteem and includes a fixing of desire in the self (Kovel, 1980). This regulates all self and other relations by supplying libidinal mechanisms for self- ideals, values and so on. Following Marcuse, healthy narcissism can also be an essential condition for a creative and autonomous engagement that the self has with others and the outside world. Nonetheless, in an exaggerated form, narcissism produces a general estrangement from the self and other people. From this perspective, the narrative enhances socialization by internalizing the other and connects people with the wider context of social and cultural relations. Lack of emotional connection leads to a non-integrated world, where persons and objects are split off, powerfully idealized or unpleasantly defamed. Primary omnipotence is maintained and this results in a troubled relationship to the self and others.

Drawing from post Kleinian research of Otto Kernberg, Kovel states that narcissistic states are the result of deeper feelings of worthlessness, inadequacy and rage, which are defences against a painfully weak and fragile sense of self. In the Kleinian paranoid schizoid processes, these personalities cannot tolerate depressive feelings and other persons are experienced as ambivalent. Kovel terms this as 'de-socialisation', where the narcissistic self is cut off from realistic social engagement, and copes with reality through manipulation, control and self-exaggeration. Late capitalism with commodity as a 'non-human other,' creates a loss of social texture, which is deeply assimilated within self-organization.

**f) 'Radicalized' Modernity**

Consequently, the narrative can be perceived as an empowerment tool in an era that Giddens (1990) defines as high modernity where modernity is trying to come to terms with its self as it has become "radicalized" as highlighted in the following discourse extract:

Let me tell you a little story about a boy called Nasir  
(Extract from the poem: 'A boy called Nasir')

In choosing poetry to share his story, the participant identifies with an expressive oral form of community narrative that plays a big part in Somali culture, as it was the first way in which Somali history and traditions have been recorded. Nasir, like the post-modern man is trying to seek wellbeing, wholeness and security in his search for a stable identity. Identity discourse through poetry is not a 'job' being done 'with yesterday's tools', and 'yesterday's concepts' (McLuhan and Fiore, 1968:8) but it is linked with the development of the Somali language and with the custom of passing different traditions to the next generations. This continuation of a strong oral tradition is a choice to maintain cultural roots and strikes an immediate chord with his audience:

..In the past the best stories I heard was the way the elders would do poetry and have in sense poetry battles, I loved listening to it because it was something new that I had never heard of. Youths never got 'angered' by having poetry battles.

(Extract from the Somali magazine)

From a post-structural perspective, discourse captured through this text is socially determined and leaves social impacts (Fairclough, 1989:23). For Burr (1995) and Burman and Parker (1993), the story captures the almost multiple, fragmented and socially constructed nature of the self and the individual and provides a social account of subjectivity. It also reminds us of Montero's (2000) power of subjective experiences that influences the interpretation of life events, the struggle between internal and external locus of control, the disequilibrium created in family dynamics when passing from the patriarchal to the matriarchal and the transition from mental ill-health to mental well-being. It also offers an insight into the political conditions that are represented time and time again in assemblages of social knowledge as presented in the media, about how identities are shaped, organized and communicated socially in war-torn societies. In this there is resonance of Frank's (2000) idea of the recuperative role of the narrative, described in the tale of the wounded storyteller.

One possible interpretation of community narratives is that their reading enables the presentation of alternatives, or in Foucault's terms (1977), counter-narratives. These interrupt the common sense or taken-for-granted understandings of situated knowledges and remind us of Bourdieu's (1990) concept of *habitus*, which generates and organizes practices in an unconscious and automated manner as this discourse extract highlights:

Being a young Somali man in Liverpool has positives and negatives. As a group we have thought lots about what it means to us, our Somali roots, our Liverpool lives, how the past influences us and our hopes for the future.

(Extract from the Somali magazine)

In identifying who they are now, participants are unconsciously recalling their cultural past and traditions and reclaiming internally it in their own way (Maestes, 2000). Whether or not one feels affiliation to and accepted by various groups may be related to the ability, desire and perhaps compatibility to incorporate different elements of that proposed culture into one's sense of self. This fusion of culture is a process of gradual internalization by the individual (Maestes, 2000).

According to Bourdieu (1990), by referring to their habitus, their "principles, dispositions, schemes and embodied history" (p.53), participants take up their narrative 'world as an incorporated structure' (p.53). Puwar's (2004) interpretation of Bourdieu is that boys 'activate themselves through' (p.110) their practices however unconscious and automatic this social action may be at first. This is captured in the Somali local visual groups:

.....as a teenager you go to the centre, 'out there' and you start thinking...'I'm not British...'I'm not Somali...'so who am I? It's all very confusing at first until you get to know...you discover...like me...when I was a young kid...I took much from the British culture...now that I am 22...I feel Somali.....it took time.

(Extract from a younger participant in the Somali local visual groups)

Segal (2007) argues that in exploring the making and breaking of individual identities and collective belongings, personal narratives can provide critical resources of keeping a sense of cultural memory alive as they are critically located within one's own temporalities. Counter-narratives are neither totally unconscious nor automatic and in this regard, Jencks (1996) understands post-modern identity as not only open to indefinite redefinition but as one that tries to choose what to be. Scharff (1992) describes this as a construction of

'dynamic, internalized relationships between self and object' (*where*) 'we externalize our inner worlds onto our outside relationships' (p.xviii) which also influences the way we organize ourselves internally throughout our life span development.

In distancing themselves from some of their community's long established particular constitutive norms and social purposes that are usually practices that define Somali and Yemeni identities, participants have become ambassadors for their own cultural values and have recognized the responsibility of a form of self-authority in their own actions. Discursive practice that draws insights from ethno-methodology sees selfhood as a work in progress in the immediate present. It is ongoing, situated, and reflexive. Discourses-in-practice on the other hand, reflect on pre-existing domains present in society that shape personal identities by supplying the raw material from which they are made. Stories of the self arise from a prefiguring influence of socio-historical context, and elements of actual personal history usually form the basis of self-narrative. Holstein and Gubrium (2000) and Biggs (2004) propose a "new ending" for the problem of self-identity by suggesting that narratives of self exist in the space between two forms of practice. One data example is the boys' resistance to the khat smoking practice, where the boys have used in Collins's (2005) terms, "facial expressions, body postures, prosodic features and lexical and syntactic forms,' (p.248) that have enabled them to report, reflect upon and resist this practice which they perceive to be a form of social subordination that leaves a negative impact in the families of the smokers:

They should ban playing cards in the community and they need to stop chewing khat, and should give more time to their family... the money could be spent on family instead of khat.....they need to be role models to their children.

(Extract from younger participants' flip chart contents at the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

Other actors in the wider community usually recognize these practices as part of their identity and in the process highlight some unspoken expectations within their community practices.

### **9.5.2 Performativity- Narratives as a performing act**

The creative making and re- making of narratives comes not only through a transitional realm of tradition but also through learning, expression of ideas and innovation. The narrative in fact, comes across as a creative piece of work, as a performing act, a potential space that is fundamental for creative and imaginative involvement with interpersonal relations and cultural life.

#### **a) Masculinity as ‘Performativity’**

Through their narratives, Muslim boys perform and enact new forms of identities, rather than having fixed, immutable, identities (Hall, 1992):

We came up with the idea of the magazine following our involvement in the fathers and sons project. We decided we would like our fathers to tell us stories about their childhood and upbringing in Somalia (Extract from the Somali magazine)

They also challenge and resist a range of identities (Archer, 2001), as well as the status, stability, permeability and legitimacy of some of their community’s belief systems. To draw on Simmel’s (1997) theorizing around the symbolic connotations of doors and bridges, the boys refer to concrete, physical markers of unity and distinction. For instance, the pictures chosen for the Somali magazine elicit imagery that serves as ‘symbolic hinges’ which re-construct aspects of their culture. The name the boys have chosen for their magazine, ‘geedka shirka’ literally means ‘under the tree’ and takes us back to traditional ‘griots’ who travelled a great deal before becoming ‘belen tighi’, meaning ‘master of the word’ in Mandingo. This expression derives from the word ‘belen’, the name given to the tree trunk planted in the centre of the public square where the orator positions himself to address the crowd (Traversi and Ognisanti, 2008:122). The word ‘tighi’ means ‘master of’. The somewhat significant name for a magazine becomes a remnant of an ancient Somali tradition where elders met under the trees to seek shade in the hot

weather and converse about daily happenings, similar to what happens in the Mediterranean village piazza or inside an English pub.

## **b) Rejecting hegemonic masculinity**

For Sparkes (1996), in their alternative or restitution narratives, the men, both young and old, are able to come up with discourse through which they proceed to struggle with rejecting hegemonic masculinity and develop new standards of masculinity in its place. Perhaps they are able to reformulate an idealized masculinity in terms of their own abilities, perceptions, and strengths. Going through stored and storied memories together with the younger males enables the elders to capture how their masculinities were once strongly manifested, enkindling a hope to leave some form of emotional impact on the younger males present in the community narrative sharing:

....there was not even a candle in the early days in Yemen...we had to wait for the moonlight.... for some light.....I know it is very hard for young people to understand this.....but by sitting down... and tell ....how it was (in the past)... (But) from their own fathers' perspective.....sharing how they actually lived at that time...in the older days, this (sharing).... brought them together

(Extract from comments collected from an older participant during the fish-bowl group discussion at the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

The narratives have made shared memories possible and seem to act as a kind of 'wake- up call' for younger participants to be cognitively and emotionally 'present' to what has been. In the analysis this was argued on the basis of the distance and proximity of different deistic centres and how they approach each other. For the elders, the experience serves as an encouragement, a historical reference to when masculinities were well defined and functioning. The emotional context of the 'other place'-Yemen or Somalia- that often serves as a collective unconscious for most elders and is often 'lost' in distant memoirs of what has been, is thus re-personalized and

made 'real'. Cognitive and emotional dissonance is for a moment bridged and distances are shortened. The narrative offers both sets of participants an opportunity to judge their manhood along new lines:

I believe every person can be whatever their ambitions are no matter how long it take them, and to be honest when I was young my dream was to get a better life and to avoid getting involved in illegal activities such as selling drugs and it was my ambition to never misuse my time. I used to think about my future and it was my dream to have a high status in society and to become an engineer.

(Extract from an older participant at the Somali story- telling intergenerational Saturday lunch)

This extract seems to resonate with Gerschick and Miller's (1995) description of the struggle to juggle manhood: '...I have and I haven't. I'd like to, I'm trying but I'm unsure...' (p.267). The stories also capture the inevitable fragility of manhood in contemporary society (Shilling and Mellor, 1994). Perhaps, the particular biography individuals hold on to is only one among many that could be constructed about their embodied lives. The integrity of any (social) identity has to be maintained not only for the individual self but also for other 'selves' around them in the larger community. It is here that contrasts are construed and that on occasions, gaps can occur between how individuals see ourselves and how others see them so that some identities are spoiled or stigmatized. This is captured in the narrative story- telling and in the experiencing of community narratives. There is a particular difference between the youths' concept of identity of themselves:

We know there is a big difference between the culture our fathers were raised in and this culture we are growing up in....but we value our fathers...we see them as our only link to our history and identity....

(Extract from younger participants' flip chart contents at the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

and the ways the elders perceive them:

...the culture before arriving and the culture in school is different...respect is lost and (they) mix with different cultures...there is a lack of role models... (they) ....are jobless, criminalized and role models are disappearing.

(Extract from younger participants' flip chart contents at the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

In their coping with a fragile sense of self, elders often try to maintain their sense of male identities as they were used to experience it in their past. For instance, the community narrative that recounts how elders called in the police when they felt the youngsters were not respecting them, may be seen as one possible way first generation males still felt they could exert their manhood as elders in the community. However, this seemed to backfire on the youths themselves and the narrative served to highlight how these incidents may have impinged on the host society's perceptions of these local communities. This is how the youngsters experience this incident:

I spend a lot of time with my friends. We meet outside the Somali community centre because there is nowhere else to go. We feel safe standing there and we feel this is where we belong because when we move to another street we face racial abuse. Sometimes the elders call the police on us. We think they must do it for discipline but what really happens to us is that we get questioned, have our fingerprints taken and some of us have even got criminal records. Sometimes we feel that the elders do not fully understand the seriousness and the consequences of involving the police.

(Extract from a narrative read out by a participant for the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

### **c) Negotiating blackness through social discourse**

Young Muslim BME males use a social discourse where blackness is negotiated, navigated, policed and resisted, (Akom, 2008) a discourse where a positive black identity is being preserved in a white dominated society. This was a central theme in Du Bois's work. For Akom (2008), his idea of double

consciousness suggests a tension between 'multiple selves and multiple communities, between bodily and spiritual selves between rationality and emotions, between sanity and insanity' (p.250).

This is a reminder of the South African post- apartheid's active processes of re-constituting racial identities through renegotiations, re-constructions, re-writings, re-thinking and re-making of the self and identity, in terms of both black and white and where the experience of being black remains significant despite changes in political structures, the drive for economic equality and the adoption of the new democratic order based on non-racist principles. The late Siyanda Ndluvo's PhD title, 'Narratives of Blackness: Questioning Boundaries of Time and Space' showed that although the experience of being black remains central, its significance does not remain the same across time and place. Ndluvo cites du Bois (1970:269) to describe the focus of his research on 'black identity' as being:

....prompted by my own biography as a young, black, Zulu-speaking, African man living South Africa, attempting to make sense of my racial identity/blackness and social location.

For Ndluvo, blackness as an identity project is an attempt to go beneath and beyond the 'black skin' and its obvious connections with a historically marginal, oppressed socio-political group and with the different ways of being black that are created by different historical, political and cultural conditions (CNR Centre for Narrative Research, UEL 2007: online). Ndluvo, like du Bois (1970) is challenged by discourse of race that contains particular assumptions to his natural abilities, his political intellectual and moral status as a black African. At times, he feels socially and culturally integrated, whilst at other times like du Bois (1970) he feels the needs to 'constantly assert and affirm my racial and ethnic identities as irrefutably marked on and by my (black) body' (p.269). This is also captured in the participants' experiences:

We often hear about people being attacked in the community.....my father worries a lot about my brother getting attacked by racist people and that is why my brother feels safer in Liverpool 8, there are more

Arab and black people here.

(Extract from a narrative read out by a participant for the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

This resonates with Sen's (2006) concept of plural mono-culturalism where BME public engagement is often seriously confined to cultural 'exclusion zones' due to racist attitudes in the wider community. This exclusion comes at a time when as second generation black boys, participants might be already perceiving themselves as unwelcome by mainstream society, where they are facing more peer and family pressure to take on a racial identity, especially when being 'British' is somehow still implicitly 'imagined' as a white identity (Sporton et al; 2006). Therefore boys prefer to define themselves as 'Somali' or 'Yemeni'. This is interesting in terms of how participants perceive themselves. Although at this age, ethnic constancy has been achieved and participants are well aware that ethnic group membership is stable and does not depend on superficial transformations like clothing or context (Rutland et al; 2005), for many participants in this study, the term 'black' refers to the British Afro- Caribbean population, although it was apparent that their identity was read as such by others even by other minority ethnic groups. For instance, this is consonant to how the Yemeni participants perceived the Somali boys in our study.

Fanon explains that 'colonized' communities suffer from significant physical and emotional oppression that can be the start of feelings of inferiority. In any case, participants do describe social situations that highlight a sense of hostility that the dominant culture has towards them as researched by different authors (e.g. Suarez Orozo, 2000 and Talbani and Hasanali, 2000). As one participant recounts:

I love my English School but sometimes there are nasty children and they say racist things to me like "Are you Saddam Hussein's son? or Bin Laden's son?"- they come near my school bag and say 'tick tock' as if I am carrying a bomb in my bag.. This makes me feel upset and angry and it is unfair to say all of us Muslims are terrorists.

(Extract from a narrative read out by a participant for the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

According to Du Bois, there are at least 'two, perhaps more selves- the subjective, self-determined, agential self and the objectified, exoticized, excluded other' (Blau and Brown, 2003). For Williams et al., (2002), young men experience a sense of bifurcation in their selves. This is reflected in the community narrative workshops:

One of my brothers...is doing well at school...but he has problems because he is always quarrelling with my father. He wants to go to the youth club with his English friends but my father is worried about what they will be doing there. My father thinks that my brother does not want to be Somali or Muslim any more but my brother does not want to lose his friends. My brother thinks that just because he's Somali it doesn't mean that he cannot have friends who are not Somali.

(Extract from a narrative read out by a participant for the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

According to Mills (1997), complex psychological and performative practices have been developed by black culture in order to facilitate the negotiation of public and private space in the context of global white supremacy. Cultural survival strategies such as 'code switching' and 'acting white' are used in social psychology and cultural practices to manipulate social identity, where according to Jackson (2003), racial 'performativity' is linked to class (ed) behaviours and a complex understanding of social roles. Some authors like Bhabha see this as the repressed unconscious trying to disrupt the colonial language of power and this is seen in the colonial strategies of 'hybridization' and 'mimicry'. For instance, Muslim boys perform and enact different roles in the ways they live out their mixed gender social interactions. The following is an extract of a young Somali male describing his work with the Liverpool city council:

**M:** we're (both girls and boys) doing this work around culture, learning.... we're doing this DVD.....all about Somali culture.....family life...what's the food like, what's the dresses like.... we got all the boys dressed as women and old men..

- I:** Did you know these young people before you started off?
- M:** Yeah...I knew them... but I didn't know they were capable of acting and all that...we discovered things about each other.
- I:** I'll tell you more...about the boys dressed as women...this might be quite offensive and rude in Somali culture...but these kids are born in Liverpool, they don't see it as that (rude) they see it as drama... they imitate to get the message across.....so they enjoyed it!
- (Extract from a younger participant in the Somali local visual groups)

Muslim male identities are intimately tied up with issues of masculinity that could easily be linked to essential issues of (mis) trust and (lack of) reciprocity with the other. This general crisis of masculinity or rather this sense of fragile, vulnerable self often figures out in the boys' DVD discourse, perhaps precisely because, as Watters et al., (2009) and Watson (1997) describe, they get caught between two cultures, as the following two extracts reveal:

It's like you get it from all sides. I've got pressure from my parents thinking I'm not good enough, then pressure from my mates, thinking I'm too good. I could have gone to a Liverpool reserves match tonight; my mate Goshi had a spare ticket. Can't go. Wonder why? Oh yeah, I'm working in the shop, again. This gives me two hours to get this (homework) finished.

(Extract from the Yemeni boys' roleplay captured on DVD-lines 10-15).

Sometimes I feel my parents are putting pressure on me to go to the Arabic school and I see that this is good thing to do.... My parents often compare me to other Yemeni boys who speak good Arabic and who behave well. This puts a lot of pressure on me and makes me feel that I am not good enough.

(Extract from a narrative read out by a participant for the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop).

This pressure needs to be understood in a wider context of emotional pain, cognitive dissonance and social exclusion that according to authors like Tatum (1997), racism still brings about. Another participant explains:

I like school. My school is good. But I get sick of idiots. I've lost count the number of times I've been called Bin Laden and asked if I've got a bomb in my bag. I'm a Muslim. I'm proud of being a Muslim.

(Extract from the Yemeni boys' roleplay captured on DVD-lines 21-24).

For Bhabha (1994), colonized identities are always constructed upon the marginalized, excluded other, a psychological exclusion that is never unfortunately totally defeated, in particular if seen in the light of ascribed identities of the recent reinforcement of Muslim identities in response to world changing events such as 9/11 (Watters et al; 2009; Brown et al; no date: online). Although this 'problemitized' space can create a sense of common identity in children from minority groups that can elicit social support from the wider community, repetition of racial insults portrays a highly ambivalent relationship between colonizer and colonized, so that 'meanings are continuously in danger of becoming unstuck' (Elliot, 2002:59), and where social actors have to work in order to 'make and remake relations of dominion and submission' (ibid).

#### **d) Groups as repositories of racial discourse**

Academics like Sherwood (1980) have drawn from Melanie Klein's ideas to reflect on the paranoid nature of racism and how unresolved identity conflicts become linked to the misuse of racial groups. It seems that social groups are 'repositories for our projections' and provides 'a way out for the individual from experiencing inner conflicts that are otherwise too disturbing or painful to face' (p.492-3). For Sherwood, (1980), groups, enables individuals to store, contain and limit anxiety. This is also captured in the Yemeni boy's DVD:

Look at this (holding up his newspaper). Every day there are stories of racist attacks, children running round with guns and knives, killing each other. Children, killing each other. No wonder I don't sleep at night.

(Extract from the Yemeni boys' roleplay captured on DVD-lines 32-34).

Rustin (1991) like Sherwood, shows that racial antagonisms are destructive examples of cultural expressions that are not only part of our social world but are also an integral part of human 'self' experience. Understanding the narrative through Kleinian thought helps us to understand some unconscious structures where for this author, emotions like hatred, envy and paranoia are expressed in human relationships. The key psychic mechanism that lies behind racism is splitting. Racism is seen as a displaced expression of 'persecutory anxiety' where the racist splits the world into rigid categories of 'good' and 'bad', 'white' and 'black', 'in-group' and 'out-group'. In the narratives, unwanted feelings are projected on to others who are then seen in 'objectified' form:

One night when it was dark, Igaal was walking alone in a road. Something that had the shape of a person appeared in front of him. Igaal thought that this was a monster waiting for him and stopped. He stood there all night and at dawn he saw that the thing was a tree trunk. Igaal couldn't believe his eyes and talked to the tree trunk and said: "what I thought you were or what you turned out to be, I thought you were a person waiting for me but you turn out to be a tree trunk....

(Extract from an older participant recounting a Somali tale at the Somali story- telling intergenerational Saturday lunch)

Fanon's work brings about a high degree of self-questioning about black people's own sense of identity and looks into post-modern concerns of the breakdown of identity and the fragmentation of selves. According to Elliot (2002), victims of antagonism regularly absorb the fear, anxiety and guilt of the persecuting group. This induces a self- reinforcing cycle, which has been expressed through the narrative. Through the cycle of emotional damage caused by projections of persecutory anxiety and hatred, victims have managed to neatly express and 'fit the delusional worlds of their oppressors and serves to bind unconscious fantasy' and to 'intensify the fear of racial retaliation' (Rustin, 1991:20). This is seen in the community workshop narratives:

It must be very hard for these boys trying to be British and Yemeni at the same time. My son and I live in a different world to the one my parents and I lived in. Maybe their job was simpler than mine.

(Extract from younger participants' flip chart contents at the Somali meal-based, Community narrative workshop)

Rustin's work enables us to understand the spilling of hatred and destructiveness in the social and political worlds. Consequently, the narratives also manage to serve as a funnel to express emotional pain:

Little did he know about his country's past and culture never really knew about the life he was living or even about the dream he was missing... years had passed and Nasir mixed with the wrong crowd and from a sweet loving boy he had become a thug that was loud...instead of looking up to his leaders Nasir took gangster rappers as his role models....

(Extract from the poem: 'A boy called Nasir')

#### **e) Reinforcing family ties and language transmission**

Nasir's reported new preference of a new place can also be interpreted as the mark of a new set of identification preferences. The Kleinian framework would interpret this as providing a 'moral energizing vision for the radical transformation of society' (Elliot, 2002:90). In recovering the 'other', even participants' families were crucial in the development of bonding social capital and trans-national links (Watters et al., 2009). It helped them in appreciating the minds of 'others' and fostered empathic skills (Killick and Frude, 2009), to enter other person's worlds, and increase their understanding of the feelings and intentions of others (Oatley, 2008). Traversi and Ognisanti (2008) compare this rich source of knowledge and emotional point of reference to a well, where growing children can go back and draw up water from the social fabric that has been constructed through functioning family systems over their childhood years:

It seems that community interventions have taken up a stimulating role in terms of the re-assessment of the role of the family, where after contestation, youths have reformulated parts of their identity and where parents continue to be a point of reference, an interwoven source of knowledge and a rich source of resources. (Traversi and Ognisanti, 2008, translation mine)

For Favero (2008), the transmission of this social fabric through language contributes to this 'transformation' effect. Nasir's language discourse in his poem 'A story about a boy called Nasir' has for instance, a typical British reference to light comedy, 'ladies and gents' (line 27), which indicates a comfortable assimilation of English expressions as part of his own emotional expression. In a similar context, Favero (2008) also refers to the daily Italian dialects used by immigrants living in Italy, where language becomes a daily sound track that permeates daily experience, as a form of privileged vehicle of discourse and thought that evokes story-telling, artistic expression and creative inventions.

In this context, Celli (no date: online) borrows architectural discourse to reflect on the use of second language that he calls adoptive language. First generation immigrants may use that new linguistic space as a way to adapt, but in second generations, spontaneous expression is an indication of a spontaneous hybrid culture that these children and young people are used to, born to and growing up in. Celli compares this assimilation to the construction of a house in continuous progress that can take up different forms. A tent, for Celli, is easily arranged and folded away, useful only to guarantee a transient dwelling, a hut is less transient but always has that sense of minimalism...whilst others choose to make language a stable dwelling place, comfortable and decorative and end up constructing a strong castle or a palace. It seems that through their spontaneous use of English, participants have narrated on their social identities in a way that allowed them to 'enter' persons, relationships, and communities:

The line about the father going to the Mosque alone upset (me)..... It felt sad....The father has done everything for his son...the son gas not returned this..... so the father's heart is broken.

(Extract from the Somali post-narrative workshop focus group)

Within Buunk and Gibbons (2000)'s social comparison theory, hearing about people's behaviour can have a therapeutic function (Ben-Ze'ev, 1994): it helps to validate and perhaps adjust or 'model' one's own behaviour. For Medini and Rosenberg (1976), this elicits the 'same boat' phenomenon' experienced in psychotherapy and gossip, as it confirms membership in the human club. No matter how distressful or shameful a problematic situation is, it is always a human experience. Social identity processes can consequently be applied to relevant real life situations to arrive at formulations from social meanings, enabling 'mentalizing' and according to Casement (2009), bringing people in for mutual support. Here shared futures are projected and parts of the stories might be re-enacted, even at an unconscious level, and act as 'transformation' moments in real relationships. For Rustin, Klein's exploration of unconscious pain, guilt and anxiety lies at the root of one's moral concern for other people:

This came from the assumptions and perceptions we had of the elders before we spent the day with them but none of the fears materialized

(Extract from the Somali post- narrative workshop focus group)

This reminds us of what Levine (2008, cited in Sutton, 2009d), calls 'the kitty Genovese myth'- that populates the psychological imagination- most people spend time worrying about dangers of belonging to groups and fail to consider how these can be used to promote helping. Stories overcome this as they reaffirm what people mean to each other and who they are with respect to each other:

I feel rejected by my own son...but the story brings hope because children understand us and respects and value what we are trying to do,.....recognition from our sons for our hard work makes us feel appreciated.....there are problems of getting a community together...but the community is made up of families and individuals.

(Extract from younger participants' flip chart contents at the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

This provides an ethical norm for the assessment of political life and cultural organization. Kleinian psychoanalysis is remarkably rich in psychological understanding of individuals and group processes, stressing that individuals are social beings capable of intense moral relatedness:

I feel I have gone through their experience I got a taste of life and through the eyes of a parent.

(Extract from younger participants' flip chart contents at the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

This highlights the need for the boys to establish what Giddens (1990) calls ontological security, where they learn that a sense of trust and feelings of inner trustworthiness in the 'other' start to prevail over anxiety:

Dad and I talked today; for the same time, really talked about our problems with each other. We were at this group. It was good. He listened."

(Extract from the Yemeni boys' roleplay captured on DVD-lines 55-57).

#### **f) Being and becoming Muslim-the significant 'other'**

The post-modern narrative then within a community-based framework highlights the importance of a practical engagement with a very significant 'other' for these males that also allows difficult issues to be examined in fantasy as Bettelhiem (1976) describes, without provoking too much anxiety. This is captured in the poem written by one of the young men:

But by the age of four his whole world turned upside down... 'cause civil war had struck his home town....

(Extract from the poem: 'A story about a boy called Nasir')

According to Pollak (1997) and Bettelheim (1976), community workshop stories have facilitated the resolution of internal conflicts and provided a space for wish fulfilment:

.....what tools fathers use (are) important...but maybe there is not enough education: ....a father may be pushing his son using the wrong tools..... (but).....if we trust fathers, they will trust us.

(Extract from younger participants' flip chart contents at the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

Encounter with the 'other' is not only a space where the act of narrating becomes an actualized relationship. In telling 'stories', not 'narratives', Frank (2000) and Sparkles (1996) explain that there is a re-telling together 'with' the listeners, thus eliciting a recursive relationship between the levels of the 'I-we-others'. In defining their own identities, Yemeni and Somali participants found ways of making sense of their unique experiences of being young, males, sons (or fathers) and perhaps most of all of being Muslims, all experienced as part of their active 'I' and also as the sense of 'otherness' within themselves.

From an object relations perspective, 'objects' include both others and parts of others. The process of introjections (involving the internalization of other people's characteristics or words and making them a part of the self) and projection (in which thoughts and often threatening or unwanted emotions are attributed to others) are for Hinshelwood (1995), fundamental forms of transaction between bodies and objects in their environments. This sense can be seen in the discourse extract below:

Nasir heard a few lectures on Islam. Nasir's mind was like damn 'cause he had forgotten...his true purpose in life

(Extract from the poem: 'A boy called Nasir')

Hinshelwood uses the word 'bodies' to indicate that these dynamics are not accessible to conscious awareness and are usually experienced in sensually emotional ways.

Some identification processes belong to a process of 'conscientization'. Simultaneous identifications are in fact taking place, with boys experiencing 'self- as- son', self-as-father, self-as-child, and also 'self- as- British' and 'self- as- Muslim'. For Faimberg (2005), their identifications are multiply inter-subjective in character and access to simultaneous identifications affords a powerful transmission of their Muslim male identity practices from one generation to the next which does not need to be consciously 'learned' to have effects.

This confirms literature reviews on the practice of drawing near to Islam and to family values and draws intricate links between ethnic identity, religion and wellbeing. Being Muslim becomes the most powerful determinant of youngsters whose forced history of migration has often left them with a rootless identity, and for authors like Sporton et al., (2006), it is the most important and consistent way that they have of identifying who they are. Islam as a strong identity, as sense of belonging, offers as Yuval- Davis and Kaptani, 2009 argue, a context of social support that plays an important buffering function (Short 1996; Home Office Research Study 270, 2001). It becomes, as Denzau and North (1994) describe, a shared cognitive model that is strongly re-assimilated in newer versions of adolescent identities.

If compared to other developmental psychosocial stages, identity 'practices' in the adolescent phase are often noticed in a more overt way. This means that whereas adults' sense of permanence often leads them to take habituated gendered, religious and cultural practices for granted, youngsters are in a flux that propels them to uncover or experiment new ways through which such norms are challenged, initiated or remodelled (Butler 1990). Performativity practices like re-discovering the importance of Islam in their life, or simply listening to hip hop, becomes as Wetherell (2010) describes, a practice that becomes a real, actual part of daily discursive routine.

## **9.6 Effective theoretical lenses utilized in this research**

Exploring different methodological strategies in this research revealed diverse clusters of epistemological assumptions, of what as Bryman (1988) describes should pass as justifiable knowledge about the social world being researched.

### **9.6.1 Use of ethnography and grounded theory**

Some methodological strategies were deemed to be more effective than others, in particular ethnography and grounded theory. Both ensured that emerging data was firmly grounded in the participants' contributions, in their own worlds and subjective experiences. A degree of flexibility in the ways data was collected was important when trying to understand sensitive circumstances that participants were passing through. It was for example not compulsory to take detailed notes in every situation I found myself in the research progress, as there were times where extensive note-taking or transcription for verbatim recordings could have been seen as distracting or intrusive. These theoretical lenses were considered as 'emergent processes' where theory 'surfaced through assembled data' (Goodley et al; 2004:119), from observation and from logical assumptions (Glaser and Strauss, 1969). In the beginning this enabled me to move in the direction of an emerging epistemological shift and I could modify my approach according to the type of data was emerging. For Ewert (1987), this is also an ontological shift, a different way to understand reality, so that human interaction in terms of social identities could be better understood.

On another level, as a practitioner-researcher, the use of ethnography in these community practices and policy-making contexts gave rise to an almost contrasting aspect of ethnography- that of making the familiar strange. This could be observed as way of example, in the educational, health and social care settings that this project has touched. In a multi- cultural Britain where national policy-making and policies strive to excel in continuing to embrace an inclusive context on all fronts, practitioners-researchers may often feel

that classic ethnographic texts fail to resonate with their aims to further understand and enable a further process of transformation in the cultures they might be immersed in. Consequently, this design has tried to use ethnographic methodology as a way to revisit cultures that are familiar but which are also taken for granted. In relation to this, this design has also tried to critically appraise the practices, dynamics, policies and meaning-making within BME's familiar and cultural practices in ways that try and transform social contexts to research contexts.

Somali and Yemeni communities perhaps like other ethnic groups in the UK, are influenced by demographic factors such as gender, socio-economic status, circumstantial and/or political factors that account not only for variations in subjective well-being (Seligman, 2002) but are indicators associated with higher levels of discrimination, oppression, morbidity and mortality (Marmot, 2004; Nussbaum 1999, Wilkinson, 2005). For Hall (1999), marginalization can be seen as a process rather than a condition and according to Eisenstadt (2010); exclusion can be directly linked with being at the periphery of society's function systems. The use of critical social science in this project did not only attempt to explain social behaviour in terms of power dynamics, but also tried, as authors such as Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) and Morrow (1994) point out, to balance the decision-making power among individuals involved. In this, it provided an apt theoretical basis for researching the marginalized, in that it reframed existing, taken-for-granted norms and reviewed possibilities of cultural exchange and collective social action leading to examples of social transformation (Hall, 1999).

### **9.6.2 Understanding the narratives through critical and feminist theories**

In order to avoid critical theory becoming oppressive or too inclusive and therefore still disempowering to marginalized groups (Davis and Glass, 1999), in this dissertation, it was integrated with post-modern schools of thought which value diversity and consider individual uniqueness as central. In this way, critical theory was easily linked with discourse analysis where discourses were connected to socio-cultural, political dominance and

regulation (Burman and Parker, 1993). The relationship between discourse, power and regulation is a reminder of Foucault's (1973a, 1973b, 1977, 1980, 1983) work that highlights how social and cultural locations are often based on discourses that often pass for 'truths' and acted upon as such. For Rose (1999), discourses in communities often become a *psy-complex*, i.e. practices that fit in the particular societal needs. This involves all systems within our societies associated with 'the abnormal', including health, education, welfare, rehabilitation, and knowledge systems. Just as Foucault tackled discourses such as insanity, prisons, discipline and power as ways to represent knowledge and power relationships between knowledge and social practices forms of subjectivity, these social identity stories ultimately highlighted some of these discursive practices in the given cultural places (Goodley et al., 2004) they took place in. Discourse here was viewed as providing 'the basis for conscious knowledge' (Cheek and Porter, 1997:119) that shaped understanding of social identities through bodies of knowledge and current discursive assumptions, where the understanding of social and cultural worlds was enabled through the individual participants' stories from local communities. In many ways, critical theory continues with current feminist theory, which critically assesses patriarchal domination and places an emphasis on local knowledge and context (Bowden, 1997).

Looking at the data from a feminist viewpoint has underscored how the realm of individual experiences and relationships function to reproduce or challenge patterns of power (Rowbotham et al., 1979). In the feminist standpoint theory (Hartsock, 1987), knowledge for the powerful is different from knowledge as seen by the oppressed. Those with power are unable to see the mechanisms that favour their own viewpoint over others. Consequently, within an emancipatory framework that has focused on participants' participation and ownership, these men's struggle to construct or maintain their social identities has been highlighted. They can be interpreted as having a collective identity whose needs can be taken in together to transform dominant power relations in society. General concepts regarding inequality need to be understood in specific contexts, where factors affecting power dynamics and their subjective interpretations vary. However, this group of

participants have, to a degree, experienced positions of oppression in society and their stories can be used to explain the local and unique conditions that spread oppression as well as increase awareness of how dynamic, complex and specific these social phenomena are, as are the 'particular needs, desires, intellectual and emotional habits of the persons participating in them' (Bowden, 1997: 3).

Utilizing Bowden's feminist orientation has combined the insights of grounded methodology and critical theory and enabled the understanding of how stories can create particular contexts of caring to nurture interpersonal and social relations based on mutual recognition and emancipation. Feminist epistemologies tend to emphasize the perspectives of those whose lives are shaped and constrained by the dominant social order. In trying to explore and theorize the ways these men's experiences are gendered, both through material conditions e.g. lack of employability and also through symbolic discursive processes of social life, these men's stories could be understood as stories of recovery, where their sense of agency is narrated as their struggle to deal with different facets of modern life in a bi-cultural dimension. These texts could be understood in Lapsley et al., (2000)'s terms as social, gendered and raced, where men have highlighted 'empowering cultural resources (that were) available to them...as men', (as opposed to) 'the disempowering stereotypes which had once defined them more fully' (p.422).

These men's narratives can be taken from a feminist viewpoint in three ways: primarily **in form**, as they give voice to them as men and as storied experiences, secondly, **in process** because the research was carried out in an emancipatory framework and thirdly, **in context** because the men explored the ways through which the level of patriarchy present both at a macro and at a personal level is contributing to significant inequalities in power dynamics. Whilst their stories may not fall under the category of a unitary idea of feminism, according to McNay (1992), a theory of identity as relational comes out. This helps us to:

...think of difference in terms of their construction through the social realm... (It is) open- ended and provides the basis for a theory of resistance based on a politics of difference (p.110).

### **9.6.3 Understanding the narratives through psychoanalysis and Marxism**

For Parker (2005), Marxism distinctively views reality as emerging historically through contradiction. This reality changes through a process of tension and conflict between different social classes and Marxism is still referred to in contexts where class struggles are still seen as major oppressive forms. Marxism was deemed relevant to this research project as it is connected it to other visions and forms of psychology, in particular emancipation, the studies of language and social construction of reality. Although some current scholars such as hook (2001), interpret language as above reality and therefore cannot be analyzed separately from it, Marxism was deemed as methodologically useful when language captured through discourse was perceived as woven into a historically constructed reality that could be transformed into something better.

### **9.6.4 The Afro-centric perspective- narrative as 'marker'**

The narrative in these communities has located cultural or psychological consciousness, as a functional aspect of 'otherness'. Within Afro-centricity, the ideas, values, concepts, events, political and economic processes hailing from this narrative process have worked with black people as subjects, not as objects. Community interventions have emphasized the central role of the African subject within the context of African history. Euro-centricity, perhaps for a moment, was removed from the centre of the African reality. The community- based narratives have linked 'knowing' in the Afro-centric sense, with 'doing'. Afro-centric narratives are autobiographical but have other underlying political and social issues such as the control of the hegemonic global economy, marginalization and power positions.

Afro-centrists assume that all relationships are based on centres, margins and the distances from either the centre or the margin. The narratives enabled participants to perceive themselves as centered and central in their own history, a way to see themselves as agents, actors, and participants rather than at the periphery of political or economic experience. The narrative, as with all other human phenomena, was expressed through the essential categories of space and time. Relationships were fostered and knowledge increased whenever these issues were appreciated in stories generated. Whenever a sense of space is conquered as an agent of progressive change, then oppressive conditions can be transformed. In the dynamic process of mobilizing collective consciousness, the narrative expressed afro-centricity through **marking**. This means that narratives have delineated cultural boundaries around particular cultural spaces in human time. They have succeeded in creating particular intergenerational bonds, eliciting symbols of reciprocity and trust. Narrative marking has enabled black people to interpret their best interests as a historically oppressed population. From an Afro-centrist perspective, this becomes fundamental in political change.

#### **9.6.5 The Social Identity narrative from a post-colonial perspective**

Within post colonial theory, the narrative can be understood through a deeper historical perspective utilizing Fanon's holistic work, influenced in turn by the works of Lacan, Adler, Hegel and Sartre, to understand remnants of various forms of oppression under which colonized communities suffered in their historical past. The narratives from this perspective can be seen to capture an internalization of projected images of inferiority, with both economic and psychodynamic reasons, in relation to their 'colonizers' (Mannoni, 1964). Seen in this light, some narratives explain certain patterns of dependence and resentment in colonial societies. These feelings of inferiority have also moved in the direction of the colonizers where the 'other' (blacks) became a depot of vice and desire for whites. Some of the narrative workshop stories and extracts from the Yemeni DVD discourse are a reminder, in Elliot's

(2002) terms of how white people throughout the centuries have persistently examined, felt repulsed by and attracted to the imago of blackness and the black body. For Fanon (1968), through the destructive use of the imagination of their own racial fantasies, whites have projected their own desires 'on the bodies of blacks' (p. 165) and behaving 'as if' black people really had these projected characteristics.

Bhabha, a post- colonial theorist, sees Fanon's work as uncovering the complex ways in which white Western psychological supremacy impacted on the oppressed and the marginalized. Fanon's context of uncertain historical change, ambivalence between race and sexuality, and unsettled contradictions between culture and class is still a reality in today's post-modern society and this enables us to understand why the generated narratives have a high degree of self- questioning. The narratives elicited varying degrees of reflection on participants' sense of identity and almost leave behind the traditional psychoanalytic idea of the family generating neurosis. Instead, they too seem to indicate that culture can easily be considered as an essential starting place of social phenomena such as racism. Fanon's work has also anticipated post-modern concerns with the breakdown of identity and the fragmentation of selves. However, Fanon strived to create a social space where whites and blacks would truly recognize each other in their authentic humanity and where transformations in race relations would result. Hopefully, this is also evident in some of the generated narratives.

Post-colonial psychoanalysis also enables the understanding of the complexity of identity in the post-modern world. In trying to reformulate the relationship between colonizers and colonized, in a European post-structuralist context, Bhabha recontextualizes Lacan's mirroring identity formation. Racism is understood as an institutionalized phenomenon, a visual activation of racialized, interpersonal relations, that influences its shifting and transformational process. This shifting process is also captured in the ambivalence that the narratives recount about psychic identifications that affect colonial relations. According to Christian (2005), the colonial tendency

is to reduce third world cultures to homogeneous and continuous traditions whilst Bhabha suggests that relations between first world metropolitan cultures and third world ones, are in fact constantly changing and progressing and involve creative, hybrid interactions of various cultural identities. This is clearly depicted in the generated narratives, where through psychoanalysis one can understand the rapidly changing social and demographic movements resulting from the forces of globalization. Concepts of hybridity and mimicry challenge neo-colonial forms of political power over the colonized third world cultures and help in the deconstruction of the traditional imaginary constructions of national and cultural identities.

Moreover, the adverse effects of colonialism are also left on the 'colonizer'. Nandy mentions British colonizers' emphasis on a concrete masculinity where feminized softness was considered irrelevant to the public sphere as it de-emphasized reflection, cognition and speculation. Social Darwinism highlighted by British Imperialism contributed to a false sense of cultural homogeneity, which kept cultural dynamism in check and limited the capacity to promote social change by undermining social differences and colonies. By keeping cognition separate from affect, colonizers inherited a sense of self-omnipotence and self-permanence, characteristics that have also become part of the British selfhood through the centuries.

#### **9.7.1 Embedding PAR within a community psychology framework: Revisiting advantages and merits**

Participatory action research has merged in perfectly within a community psychology framework. On a basic and fundamental level, PAR has succeeded in eliciting the necessity of 'otherness' (Remotti, 2006). This challenges the idea of identity as a subject that acts and operates independently, often referred to in the plural and seen in terms of its behaviour, thoughts and conflicts. Participatory action research about social identity has shown that this sense of identity does not really exist apart from participants' own actions and strategies that they use to construct themselves. There is no separate 'I' or a 'we' and then their actions, designs

and strategies to claim identity. There is no being of 'I' or of 'we' and a separate 'doing', 'knowing,' 'representation' or 'claiming'.

In highlighting the importance of 'otherness,' participatory action within a community psychology framework has necessitated the idea of a socially constructed sense of 'we,' where social identity belonged to the participants, the social subjects, as an attribute, the sole means through which they sought to obtain determinate kinds of recognition and through this process experience a journey of reciprocity with others. At an analytical level, the narratives have highlighted how subjects behaved and put forward their expectations. Referring to subjects becomes therefore inescapable in PAR. In analysis, identity appears as a product of which the processes of production and the producers, that is, the subjects, interested in this production are gradually known. Participatory action research has enabled this very process of discovery. Subjects that are interested in the construction and reclaiming of their own identity are seen to fall under two categories: the 'I' and the 'we-us' where 'I' refers to individual subjects and 'we' refers to collective subjects. Both the 'I' and the 'we' are shown to be part and parcel of their doing, which consists of both actions as well as representations. This leads us to consider to what extent has there been an achievement of the research aims outlined in our introductory chapter.

### **9.7.1 Achievement of Research Aim 1:**

**Statement:** *PAR was effective in developing a more thorough understanding of the meaning and significance of social identity practices of these participants*

#### **a) Transformational actions and transformational validity**

The literature review reports attempts of attaining psycho-political validity for these interventions. This focuses on the central role of power in explaining and altering conditions of oppression, in understanding processes of liberation and in fostering wellness for individuals, groups and communities at

large. Transformational validity considers the extent that actual change takes place in these domains as a result of these particular interventions. In line with Morsillo and Prillenensky (2007), it seems that certain levels of psychological changes from the discourse data have been somewhat easier to achieve than political transformations and that certain goals such as personal and group wellness are more meaningfully captured than wellness at a community level, although the former might be considered as somewhat less impressive.

The narrative discourse generated through PAR has then perhaps moved from the daily illusions of 'being' which evoke a state of sameness, towards that of 'becoming', through the other, towards actions that encourage a state of change, a 'performativity', a doing, constructing, communicating, and also exchanging and interacting. This circular process triggered and maintained through participatory action research has generated opportunities where participants got involved in 'transformational' actions that have highlighted a more developed understanding of the meaning of social identity processes for these participants:

And in the past, can we overcome I'm asking we be the ones to actually  
be the ones to free our people from guns...runtaa hadii kale waxaan  
lahaa hahee

(Hip hop extract from 'Until the lion learns to speak' by MC K'Naan, lines  
32-38)

Participants' discourse has indeed underscored the often forgotten fact that community members 'hold deep knowledge about their lives and experiences' (Torre and Fine, 2006:458) and that this rich realm of knowledge has enabled the shaping of questions and has framed the interpretations of this research design (ibid).

This approach contests traditional quantitative research and through a process of 'theorizing back,' (Tuck and Fine, 2007), it comes across as a project that 'decolonizes' processes of recovery, knowing, analysis, and struggle.

Through PAR, the significance that social identities has in the lives of these young Somali and Yemeni British Muslim males has been developed through a negotiated process developed between people, who got to know each other and became collaborators and have shared a common aim to work around particular issues by working together. Participants have chosen to participate in our project, not because of 'institutional documents guaranteeing anonymity' (Cahill, 2007:366), but because of collaborative working (Kagan and Duggan, 2009), that deepened through the establishment and maintenance of trusting alliances between the participants and research team members.

Through creative and innovative participatory models of wider participation, through visual art and interdisciplinary practice (Sixsmith and Kagan, 2005; Bianchi, 2008), social identity processes have developed from the safe platform spaces provided that enabled the expression of meaningful ideas about the participants' own identity in relation to personal and socio-cultural influences. For Bianchi (2008), this active participation in creative arts engendered a sense of respect for participants' verbal, visual and written contributions about their own social selves and through the creative arts of story-telling and drama, participants have managed to create visions of a better future, some of which were 'more real' for them than others. These visions were the first steps of their own abilities in realizing their own capacities in promoting some form of social change. This change could be temporary, challenging, incomplete, disturbing, or even ideological, but was always ready to propose a plan for inclusion. The project was 'informed' by those who lived within the reality of exclusion (IArmstrong and Moore, 2004).

#### **9.7.2 Achievement of Research Aims 2 and 4:**

**Statement:** *PAR was effective in exploring the relevance of community stories in narrating about participants' social and cultural worlds and has enabled the development of a new understanding of how these males reconcile conflicts of social identities with their contemporary life in Britain.*

**a) A process of reformulation through PAR- epistemic validity**

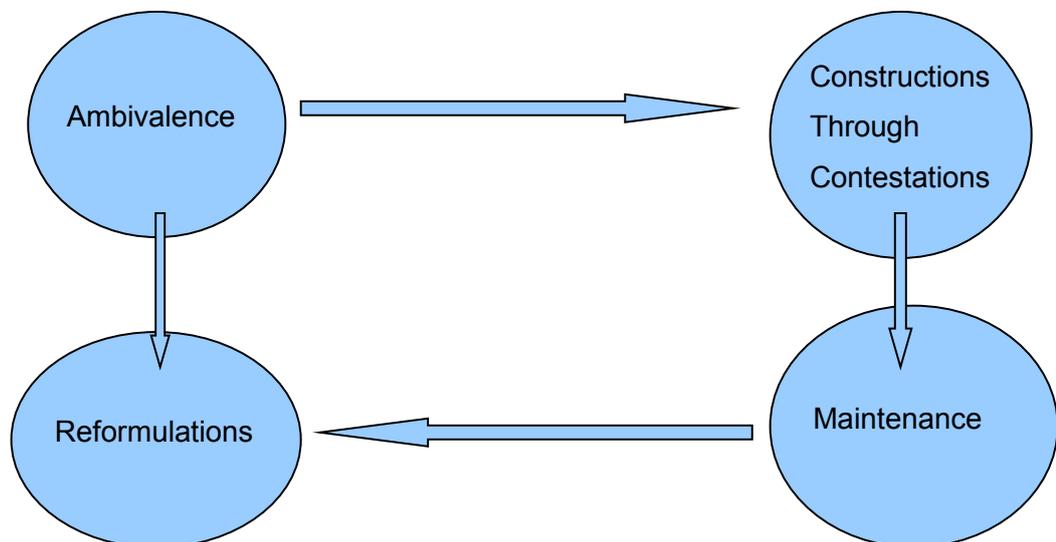
The degree of epistemic validity considers the extent to which power is considered in political and psychological domains affecting oppression, liberation and wellness. For Morello and Prillenensky (2007), epistemic validity is easier to accomplish than transformational validity. The contextual cycle of observing, planning, acting, and reflecting in each stage of this PAR enquiry led to the generation of different aspects of life story discourse about the participants' social and cultural worlds. Generation of life story narratives was in itself a circular process of ambivalence, action, construction, preservation and re- formulation as Table 9.7.2 portrays. This new understanding gives light on how these males reconcile conflicts regarding their social identities. Each phase enabled the listeners to engage in and elaborate on a reflexive project of the self where they tried to sustain a coherent yet continuously revised biographical narrative. This post-modern cycle assumes that knowledge about 'bodies' is always open to uncertainties that take the form of hypothesis which are in turn open to revision and may at times be abandoned in favour of more adaptable ones. Moreover, power differentials are negotiated and involve a process of re-formulation:

Life is very different for us now to how it was for them in Somalia or when they first came to Liverpool ....We hope that creating this magazine may also help our community to learn some more about us too....and something of what it is like for us being young Somali men in Liverpool today.

(Extract from Somali magazine)

Through reformulation, participants were also able to negotiate cognitive models that perhaps could influence their consequent lifestyle choices among a variety of options. Stories themselves offered alternatives or affirmations of their previous versions of self hood. In this, the body through practiced actions, and the self, become increasingly coordinated within the reflective project of the self and consequently in its social identity. In this way, the body becomes increasingly related to the kind of identity the individual promotes.

**Table 9.7.2: Story-telling as a circular process: ambivalence, construction through contestation, maintenance and reformulations:**



## **b) Reconsidering ‘positioning’- a dialogical process**

Narrations on participants’ social and cultural worlds enabled a continuous process of listening, which eventually enabled the listeners to re-consider some of their previous positionings in their relationships. For instance, the community narrative about the calling of police authority to bring the youngsters to their senses enabled the interpretation of this example of storytelling in the Liverpool context as opposed to the Somali one. Back home, in the other place, no one would be harmed by this action. At least in the elders’ past, this was a mere and rather informal process where the policeman was called in as an extended part of the local community, almost just like an uncle would be called in to settle family disputes. Some of the younger fathers have understood this elders’ positioning:

We understand that some of the elders may phone the police about our sons. They do this out of concern. They think the police will help them to discipline the youngsters like back in Somalia.

(Extract from younger participants’ flip chart contents at the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

It seems then that the use of narrative and this performance of identity have provided examples of how metaphors interpreted at different levels have enabled the resolution of conflicts related to differences in social identity formulations. Mutual listening has included variations in the perceptions of social structures in different contexts and thus one can appreciate the variegated discourses that arise from it, as seen through the humanizing lens of shared personal experience. It also highlights how power relationships are acted out in communities where different variables like age and gender are constantly interplaying and influencing subsequent relational experiences.

### **c) Identity management- Variables of age and perception of social structures**

First generation males experience ageing as a legitimization of common negative effects in the prevailing social structures, in particular social and economic inequity (Phillipson, 1982, 1998; Townsend, 1981; Walker, 1996). Some of the narratives have questioned this social construction of old age and its embeddedness in social structure, in that they have managed to challenge the fixed, at times, ungrounded psychic positions that aged first generations tended to manifest. Consequently, adult ageing is hereby seen as holding potential for a positive reappraisal of the self, suggesting that old-age identity forms a complex relationship with other parts of the adult life-course.

Community narrative sharing has highlighted different subjective experiences of masculinities even within the elders' population. The use of narratives between the first and second generational males has somewhat contributed to a process of identity management. In our ageing male participants, this involves the use of a masquerade, which is based on the idea that identity is performative, that is put on in a particular context and for a specific audience, even if that audience exists in the inner world of the self as the following extract depicts:

I had heard that there was a large Yemeni community in Liverpool and thought that it would be a safe and supportive environment to raise my children in. I was worried about bringing up my children in a non- Islamic environment. I was hopeful that I would be able to rely on my Yemeni community to support me.

(Extract from a narrative read out by a participant for the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

In this extract, the participant performs the decision of leaving his homeland with a mental imagery of this hypothetical community in another place, far away, an idea that comforted him internally when he was discouraged about his choice. It seems that this Liverpool community far away acted as an internal audience to the processes that were interacting inside him. The

extract also reflects Biggs's (2004) psychodynamic understanding of identity as something that is inevitably layered, having depth as well as appearance.

#### **d) Identity fixedness and Identity flux**

Sometimes there is a risk that both narrative and masquerade become more inward looking. However reciprocity transforms this into an experience that assimilates a more interactive, dialogical process:

Today, we have heard our father's worries and concerns and we appreciate these we understand there is a big gap between our fathers and us, especially as we are growing older. We are not blaming our fathers.. (for it), we feel it too. We know coming to this country was not easy, leaving family and home behind. We know there is a big difference between the cultures our fathers were raised in and this culture we are growing up in. Therefore we understand our father's stresses and worries.

(Extract from a narrative read out by a participant for the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

One of the most evident immediate impacts of intergenerational story-telling was an opportunity for listeners to become more active in constructing the meaning found in the stories themselves. The narratives acted as eye-openers and generated different ways of perceiving people and relationships. To keep the same example illustrated earlier on, this dialogical process resulted in some of the elders condemning one of the actions recounted by some of the youngsters in their story- that of some other elders having resorted to calling the local Liverpool police on the young people when they hung around in front of the community centres. Participants who condemned this action felt that whoever had rushed in and done so, had no idea what this meant for the second generational males, in terms of action and consequence. The aged actors who understood this and who have found this action as rather excessive have then managed their identity in a different manner, in that they sought to strike a balance between the two more common threats to identity- excessive fixedness in social structures and

excessive uncertainty and flux in personal identity (Biggs, 2004). On one hand, for Frosh (1991), the gendered and ageing self needs to be protected from relatively fixed social and cultural stereotyping that may deny or restrict possibilities for personal growth and meaningful social inclusion, yet on the other hand it does not need to be overwhelmed by giddy social change as the following discourse extract recounts:

I worry a lot about my sons, I hardly know anything about their lives and this makes me worry more. I am aware of what happens on the streets in Liverpool, there are many stories about drugs, gangs and racism on the news and I worry that my children will be influenced and caught up in all this. I worry so much that it affecting my health, having a lot of anxiety and high blood pressure.

(Extract from a narrative read out by a participant for the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

Narratives has helped participants to choose between the unsettling forms of identities available under contemporary conditions, but naturally it was less able to deal with factors that cannot easily be re-authored such as age and gender. Masquerade solves this problem by protecting a relatively fixed core self thus removing it from threats present in the immediate environment. This allows the self to come to terms with the contradictions and the struggles to maintain personal integration in an ever-uncertain world. These struggles are more difficult if they happen at the same narrative level.

The idea of fixity has also come out in the narratives, where a sequence of established roles and identities are worked through:

Back in Yemen in our village, and in our tribes, each and every adult feels the responsibility for each other's children and that made us more tolerant and understanding for our youngsters.

(Extract from a narrative read out by a participant for the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

These can be also understood to reflect natural processes that were part of some of the participants' homeland culture. On one hand, this perception can narrow down gendered and maturational potential to certain pre-existing categories, but on the other hand, it also provided a salient opportunity for participants to explore subjective meanings these stories left on them. In fact younger participants later view the fathers as their only link to their history and identities, whilst other participants were able to organize their own experiences and communicate it to others:

We feel that we lost our togetherness as a community and we think it's important to act as one community so that we can be less critical of each other. However, the fear of criticism and the lack of empathy you feel from other community members make us put a lot of pressure on the children not to overstep the line".

(Extract from a narrative read out by a participant for the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

These reflections brought about the participants' own considerations on identity flux, which refers to the degree to which identity can be considered fluid, a subject of choice and desire, and may be initially be, according to Bauman (1995), an attractive alternative to fixed roles and attributes as the following extract explores:

One of the greatest values we have learned from our fathers is pride in our hard work. We realize that our fathers are hardworking and they have passed this onto us. Thanks to them, very few Yemeni boys are involved in crime and antisocial behaviour as they are busy supporting their family businesses and earning money themselves.

(Extract from a narrative read out by a participant for the Yemeni meal-based, community narrative workshop)

However, participants have come to understand that flux can also negatively influence the formation of their identities. The presence of fragmentation of standpoints that try to resist dominant identity constructions can increase uncertainty and makes personal coherence difficult to maintain:

.....in the context of racism, I feel that Black British can be more racist to Somali guys and other BME's.....a few years ago, (their) idea was "we've taken over Granby... that's kind of our 'territory'...", not only me and other guys....but many others who go to the centre 'out there' (referring to Liverpool city centre, underlying mine), .....and they feel they are not British, they are not Somali ....so who am I? It's all very confusing, until you get to know, you discover, like me....

(Extract from a younger participant in the Somali local visual groups)

In an uncertain post-modern world, feelings of inner emptiness can be easily and instantly filled with so many possible alternatives that a sense of distinct identity may be lost altogether. This is captured in the continuous ambivalence through which the younger males try and define themselves in terms of language and place. According to Gergen (1991), post-modernity is so full of multiple meanings and interpretations that the self is in danger of becoming overwhelmed. It seems that the self is functioning on images which are vague and rather disconnected and which do not necessarily hold any intrinsic or authentic meaning and so are essentially hollow.

However, narratives have enabled the participants, young and old, to include a relationship to the past without necessarily becoming completely submerged in an overwhelming present. The past, especially in the alternative narratives, has been utilized as a source material that constructs a serviceable identity built in the present.

#### **e) The 'recuperative role' of stories**

When life events have been experienced as hard, stories have provided those in the storytelling relationship, with some distance from whatever they felt was threatening them. This resonates with Atkinson's 'recuperative role' (1997: 327) of narratives and can be re-interpreted through Sparkles' literature (1996) on the body and the fragile self where people can use stories as part of their re-moralization, as this extract conveys:

...we would like them to tell us about being a Muslim in Somalia. We are interested in our religion and we know that it is important for us.

(Extract from a narrative read out by an older participant for the Somali meal-based, community narrative workshop)

Atkinson (1997) confirms Kleinman's (1988) clinical observations on how physical illness demoralizes the body and contributes to the 'maintenance of the fragile self' (p.53-54). Although here we are not referring to physical illnesses, some of our older participants narrate stories that somewhat speak of a different type of illness, one that does not stem from a physical cause but has its roots in disempowered practices and performatory acts that may lead to psycho- social maladjustment and mental ill health:

So his mother had to care for the family on her own, and it seemed from then, Nasir to a life of madness was thrown

(Extract from a Somali poem: 'A boy called Nasir,' lines 9-10)

#### **f) Participants' attempt in reconciling incongruent social identity actions -incompatibility of violence**

This sense of psycho-social maladjustment and ill- health is somewhat aptly captured during the time when a young seventeen- year old Somali local was murdered in a Liverpool park by a group of other Somali youngsters. The whole Somali and BME community around the Liverpool area we were working in was shocked. For over a month, the boys stopped attending the magazine group and when they returned they did not find the words to talk about what happened. This performatory act of violence committed shook their sense of identity, their sense of safety, in particular their idea that 'war' was far away and not in this place, that their quarters were safe, that they were one community and could trust each other. However, the way the media and some of the wider community interpreted this event, somewhat confirmed their fears that their present community was still somehow a reflection of what was going on back home where people were still divided because of their belonging to different tribes and different political affiliations: Therefore, their sense of citizenship was threatened once again and this time

war-like elements were catapulted in the here-and-now of Liverpool. It seemed that the violence they usually associated with the daily media discourse that defines their far-away motherland, was now that same violence that had crept behind their backs and vigorously knocked on their doors in the UK. This is how one participant describes feelings elicited by this event:

I cried and cried. I could not sleep for a whole week when I heard what happened. I got flashbacks of war scenes back in Somalia when I was a kid before I left...my friends who were killed in the war...and the terrible scenes I had seen around in the streets.

(Extract from semi -structured interview with Somali community worker)

This violent action became all the more difficult to elaborate in that in the Liverpool context, the local communities do not live war as a possibility. The cry of the poet in Nasir's poem: 'civil war had struck his home town' (line 4) belongs almost exclusively to a detached, distant 'other' and is generally a fixed mental but rather detached representation in these boys' minds. This may account for the tangible difficulty the boys found in elaborating the Sefton Park killing incident.

The discursive research utilized showed in detail how particular social categorizations of one's self and others impact on what can happen next in daily interactions with consequences for the identities that people carry forward. Rather than understanding this as a case of a collective contestation or collective community defence mechanism, it perhaps reflects a community value, that of a civilized state (Abdellal et al., 2004), which directly contrasts the more fragmented social identities organized back home resulting from the daily war-torn realities and the conflicting and tribal sense of belonging, where there is less of a shared sense of community notion. One could even focus on affect and the ways in which these group- based emotions have elicited this kind of community response and indeed how a whole community has maintained an affective environment for their members with implications for coping with this form of collective trauma. For Levine (2008 cited in Sutton

2009d: 17), groups are an untapped resource for dealing with violence, they can act to de-escalate rather than escalate. In this sense, Liverpool presents a dramatic shift as people hailing from different geographic localities back 'there' in Somalia find themselves 'here' living in close proximity to other Somalis coming from different tribes. Their children most probably attend the same schools. One safety behaviour implemented in Liverpool is the presence of different community centres where first generation elders meet in terms of their origin tribal affiliation. Second generation youths who were born or who have lived in another culture most of their life have inevitably developed shared notions of in- group identification, where shared interaction has literally eliminated war or tribal conflict as a possibility. For Wetherell (2010), more complex and multi- layered senses of identity moderate group conflict. This might be one of the reasons why such an event like Sefton park killing came as a shock to many of the participants because it seemed to be a reminiscence of the repetition of a previous regulatory effect that is no longer part of the current community of practice in which this present community is living in and has adjusted to.

Moreover, as the literature review points out, young Somalis and Yemenis must position themselves in relation to public narratives about what it means to be who they are through narratives which are not of their own making and which are sometimes based on differing and contradictory accounts of the country. In fact, in immersing their work on the magazine production as a social action, the Somali boys did not choose to elaborate on the Somali civil war. They chose other sources of knowledge on being Somali that for them was a source of pride:

....his father had no choice but to move his family away.....so they embarked on a new life in the UK

(Extract from the Somali poem: 'A boy called Nasir')

In Nasir's case, a recognition of practice as performativity, shows how his configurations of identity scripts in his life- culture, gender, faith, generation and class, blend together and shows how at times his unique biography is

affected by choices made by others, as when he contests that there was no real choice for his father but to move away from a particularly sensitive cultural context, whilst in other instances, there are choices he later decides to enact himself.

### **9.7.3 Achievement of Research Aim 3:**

**Statement:** *The role that PAR had in the social construction of identity transitions through narratives and in the implementation of methodological innovation in identity studies.*

Within a community-based psychological framework, Participatory Action Research became

....a potential means to reclaim languages, histories and knowledge, to find solutions to the negative impacts of colonialism and to give voice to an alternative way of knowing and of being (Smith, 2007:120).

PAR has shown its capacity to be, as Cahill (2007) aptly reports, a relational engagement of social change that has been utilized by these communities for their own purposes. This description is echoed in other authors' works such as that of Fals-Borda (1979), Freire (1982) and Martín-Baró (1994). For Fine (2006), its effectiveness lies primarily in its catalytic role in interrupting the dominance of grand narratives that usually take over when these communities are described by other community members. In this generated network, marginalized voices have been cocooned out of their history of silence and exclusion. In Sandercock (1998)'s words, the invisible was made visible. PAR comes in as an effective response to some exploitative research practices where communities have been treated as laboratories. Communities, particularly communities of colour, have rarely benefited from the results of some of these type of studies conducted (Breitbart, 2003). Local communities have become increasingly disillusioned at frequently being asked to be involved in consultation and research, as they feel they are rarely informed about the outcomes and from their involvement in the process, they see very little change to their lives. Black and Minority

Ethnicities have little confidence in the ability of services to understand and meet their needs and often lack appropriate and accessible information about existing services. However, enough is now known about the barriers to the use of preventative and early intervention services to suggest that mental health and psychological services need to be delivered differently (Littlewood and Lipsedges, 1997). PAR can in fact widen community participation with young males in general and young black males in particular as these populations are the least likely to make contact with mental health services. Whilst future research could focus on the barriers that prevent young males from seeking help, this research has shown that community-based interventions have succeeded in engaging them (Windfuhr et al., 2008).

Making the invisible visible has an inevitable degree of political ramifications and political implications. For McCarthy (2007), PAR is inevitably linked to political commitment as some of its underlying epistemological and methodological assumptions such as the need for justice, beneficence, and respect for persons are practically translated in a real, contextual framework that becomes meaningful to the community through pragmatic actions. This means that the needs of this project were adapted and prioritized according to the real needs of each community involved which in this case evolved around the need for a sustaining framework in the social construction of identity transitions.

In asking how this research can be of use to real communities, Fine and Barreras (2001) re-define PAR as an ethical strong position that addresses some of the asymmetries of our unjust world. One needs to think about how to strategically represent different strands such as the concerns of these participants through life stories, the different entanglements of representation, the multiple audiences with perhaps varying political orientations, and the fact that some life stories reported, what has been identified by Fine et al., (2000), as 'bad' stories. All these intertwining factors in a PAR project might actually increment some of the stereotypes about black participants. This may lead us to consider the concept of belonging and well-being from the so called situationist- dispositionist debate in political science discourse as this affects the making of particular policies, such as

anti- terrorism strategies. Is it always individual beliefs, values and attitudes that lead to delinquency, gang and group think (bad apples) or does it depend on the situations individuals find themselves in (bad barrels)? For Houghton (2009), it seems that legal and political systems generally consider individual culpability at the basis of anti-social behaviour and this needs to be taken into consideration as one reflects on the real use of PAR in communities of practice.

In the light of this, methodological innovation through the different participant-oriented methods, seems to seriously consider that generating space for performatory actions to take place, allows for a coherent sense of sharing personal experiences, where participants were constantly motivated by a desire to participate as citizens. Despite their strong experiences of marginalization (Quijada, 2008), these members of society chose to actively contribute to care and think about the world they live in, and in narrating their stories through different methods, they chose to take emotional, personal and political risks to participate in a wider inclusive national dialogue on migrants rights and experiences that become often silenced by the very stories of those 'who have the most to gain - and lose' (Cahill, 2007:369). In this way, participatory research has also managed to connect everyday struggles within a broader social and political context.

This enables the appreciation of how ethical questions regarding the place that methods were taking up needed to be consistently negotiated, reframed and extended. These questions were at the nucleus of this collective process, where relationships were emphasized at the core and where political commitments pointed to some form of social change. For authors like Freire (2001), this context then challenged 'the scourge of neo-liberalism, with its cynical fatalism and its inflexible negation of the right to dream differently, to dream of utopia' (p.22).

For Freire, there is nothing inevitable about the social-historical reality that people find themselves in. In Baldwin's (1961) words: 'the world is before you and you need not take it or leave it as it was when you came in'. (p.137)

Participatory action research with its multi-method combination has managed

to intervene in the dominant discourses on participants' life experiences and hopefully has highlighted aspects that can foster and encourage a broader public's critical consciousness in its strive to 'act ethically and with humanity' (Cahill, 2007:369).

## **9.8 Revisiting my positionality as researcher**

According to Cahill (2007), placing research experience 'in a larger historical context of social injustice' (p.368) means that one has to 'come to terms with it in a different, more personal way' (ibid, p.368). My positionality comes in centrally in this regard, as in a continuous process of reciprocity, as researcher, I often asked myself to what extent was I called in to 'soften the edges,' (ibid, p.368) in that as Absolon and Willett (2005) argue, 'you cannot speak about or represent something that is not yours' (p.110).

### **9.8.1 How my role and responsibility have contributed to this process**

This resonates with Martin Barò's concept of community where as Bell (2009) reports, professionals need to consider themselves part of the same community they are working with. First and foremost, participatory research has primarily involved me, as Cahill (2007) describes, in an 'ethic of care,' (p.360), in an epistemological orientation that re-positions the understanding of ethics within 'the broader socio-political, global context of our everyday lives' (ibid, p.360).

As a researcher, the need to address ethical questions of representation, political strategies and emotional engagement inevitably arises and becomes a collective responsibility. Moreover, as Josselson (2006) argues, any research eliciting narratives is always interpretative at every stage and much depends on the orientation and positioning of the researcher. Every step of this laborious process is highly interpretative- as a researcher one has to frame the conceptual research questions, decide what activities to attend to, decide how re-frame some questions, transcribe spoken language to text discourse, understand the different conversational styles of participants, make sense of the meanings generated and consequently encode and

decode knowledge, and what information to highlight in analysis. According to Josselson (2006) from a hermeneutic perspective, this rather complex positioning is a reminder of Paul Ricoeur's distinction between a hermeneutics of faith and that of suspicion (Ricoeur, 1970; Josselson, 2004). In fact as I was gathering all data and analyzing it in terms of themes, I was aware that I might in the process, be privileging one particular aspect of the participants' voices. In many instances, I tried to stick to the discourse as presented in the action initiatives, for instance in the semi-structured interviews or in the local visual groups. At other times, I chose to read beneath, to read, as Ricoeur's metaphor would describe it, in front of the text, to search and interpret meanings that may be '...hidden, either unconscious or embedded in cultural context as to make them seem invisible?' (Josselson, 2006:4). This is particularly reflected in the decision I took as to how to interpret the hiphop extract (in Chapter Eight), that the participants had chosen to include in their visual representation of their social selves.

To be able to generate genuine data that reflects particular life worlds, PAR has managed to elicit collaborative working with others whom I got to know almost intimately, as Ellis (2007) describes, rather than living the research as a mere piece of collaborative work with strangers. Both partnerships have engaged in the emotions triggered by the research (Torre and Fine, 2007 cited in Cahill, 2007:367). Human experience was captured in a form of text construction where people attempted to create their lives through an autobiographical process similar to that happening when a story is produced. The meaningful shape of these narratives emerged from the selected outer and inner experience. Both parties have travelled an intense emotional road together and this enabled the consideration of the whole collective process as an ethical and integrative commitment. Apfelbaum (2001) describes this process very aptly. The context became social and shared, and private experiences of discrimination and insecurity were at times mutually witnessed and re-lived. It enabled one to reflect primarily perhaps, on the art of listening, which goes beyond the biological ability but becomes more of an emotional relationship between people, where the most important factor is not even the consensus to participate in a research project, but the

'willingness to become part of the transmission' (p.29). This simply required trust that was built over time. For Apfelbaum (2001), this 'narration is tragically bound to the interlocutor's capacity for hearing what is said' (ibid).

Working together collaboratively does not leave one unmarked. It inevitably led to a gradual process of transformation of my own position. One cannot enter another person's subjective world without influencing and being influenced by its surroundings, processes and dynamics. As researchers of social practices we ourselves give shape, weight and identity to constructed meanings, as Goodley, et al; (2004) explain, we are never theoretically neutral and this together with our own personal baggage inevitably plays a pivotal role in the interpretation of others' life stories. Moreover, for the participants too, there was a 'transformational' process in the concept and experience of power, authority and empowerment (Montero, 2000).

As a researcher, PAR was experienced as a collective intimate process that facilitated sharing with others, and I felt privileged to be allowed by the research participants to share their individual experiences. Sharing immediately becomes social in nature and therefore also political (Cahill, 2007; hooks, 1995). Research participants have trusted me to release some of their pain. This pain for Freire (1997) becomes essential as part of the process of conscientization, where critical consciousness is elicited and leads to experiencing what it means to become more fully human (Freire, 1997).

Moreover, thinking about what happened outside the PAR cycle becomes possible after the analysis of the narrative discourse. Analyzing narratives of hope articulated together with instances of pain and at times despair, highlighted the varying polarities of discourse generated and enabled me to reflect on my own position of ethical responsibility within my role of participatory researcher, to create as I went along, safe and supportive spaces where the participants could feel comfortable to speak out and grapple with their aspirations, fears, dreams and at times their sense of futility in what often came across as a hostile anti- migrant context.

As a researcher that formed part of the research field, I also came to realize that PAR never comes across as a uniform practice. Applying wide definitions of the term 'participation' may actually mask tokenism and provide false impressions of co-consultation (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Mohan, 2001). As regards genuine consent to the potential use of participants' discourse data, research is never a mere matter of signing a single, consent form that protects academia itself from liabilities and risks, but it always needs to consider the ongoing emotional engagements and responsibilities of doing research. Within the context of these real participants' real lives and their daily struggles to find stability within an often extremely insecure situation captured by mobility, displacement, rupture and disorientation, institutional assurances of data protection often felt as a cognitive dissonance.

### **9.8.2 Inter- subjectivity and power sharing within PAR**

Rather than merely not doing harm (Gilligan, 1982), the success of PAR lies in its ability to give prominence to relationships and the responsibilities involved in working *with* communities through an ethic of inclusion. For authors like Kesby (2005) and Kothari (2001), when participation is presented as a mere set of techniques rather than a commitment to working *with* communities, it may actually result in the reproduction of unequal power relations, rather than challenging them.

One question that I often posed was to what extent I was as researcher really part of these local communities. The participants' primary experience of myself as the researcher was that of a non- British, non- Muslim, white (Caucasian), single Western female with no children, studying at Manchester Metropolitan University who lived in Chester, not even in Liverpool. The project also took place at a time where, in my own personal journey, I was to some extent, experiencing a degree of professional disempowerment having had to renounce my previous role as Clinical child psychologist, which I had occupied for the past four years in my own country of origin, Malta, and to which I had strongly come to identify with. In this regard perhaps, my own sense of disempowerment provided a strong mirroring effect with some of the

participants' stories and their own experiences of disempowerment and deprived individual, social and political strengths.

As a researcher reading the texts, I felt that it was important for me to locate myself into and not out of the text. I too was involved in the process of self-representation and identity construction (Coffey, 1999). I could identify with how the boys felt in some aspects but not in others. Their childhood was not like mine in certain ways- I did not have to leave my country because of war as some of them had. However, my country did have a difficult socio-political context in the eighties when church schools were closed for some time and there was a high degree of civil unrest in the streets. It was a difficult time where my parents decided I would need to sit for state school entrance exams so that I could change school and I remember hating this decision and hating my new school and hating the fact that I had managed to pass. I remember feeling different at school and feeling out of it until I made new friends with children who also had to leave their old schools and attend my same school. I also could identify with the boys when they talked about racism. Current discourses in my country of origin (Malta) denote a small island's challenge to be open to immigrants who reach the island by sea. In trying to adjust or deal with this socio-political reality, the locals, a small and often with a tightly-knit mentality, generate often negative and 'racialized' discourse which is resonant with their own fears and diffidence of 'strangers', discourse that is remnant of the island's colonalized past, a recall of the island's history of being 'owned' by different cultures and therefore a post-colonial, almost fierce discourse that cries of pride in achieving independence. It is also influenced by a stoic, provincial and often rigid, Catholic outlook on cultural attitudes and values. All this allowed me to identify with the boys' sense of exclusion in their struggles to maintain relationships with their wider community.

One of the stories in particular resonated with me in the way the participant was struggling for an individualized identity. I could identify with his struggle to narrate change, his hinting at Liverpool as almost becoming too small for him at times. This resonated with me personally, as feelings of 'entrapment' are quite common on an island with a relatively homogeneous local

community. I could also identify with growing up in a context where expectation of good behaviour was expected and implicitly linked to religion. The participant's sense of rebellion was understood in his desire to leave the 'old' to explore the 'new' and in his hope and curiosity to experience metamorphosis.

Like the young Muslim men who participated in this research, I am also classed, racialized and gendered. My positionality as a white, middle-class, non-Muslim female have excluded me from the worlds which these young Muslim men occupy, while my age and my 'Maltese-ness' with commonalities between the Maltese and Arabic languages were probably points of similarity and therefore points of encounter.

At other times, power relationships may also been reinforced and may have worked to further marginalize the opinions and attitudes of the young men participating in this research (Hopkins, 2004). However, participatory methods such as the choice of focus groups and local visual groups were some of the ways aimed at redistributing power relationships (Longhurst, 1996). Where possible, I have also consulted with the young men to review and confirm parts of their transcripts, their stories captured in the Yemeni play and in the Somali magazine. Group participants, as well as some of the individual men have also been present for the dissemination event of the preliminary outcomes of the research, where co-discussion and co-evaluation took place.

As a white researcher in a BME group setting, PAR also involved a conscious and a well-defined positionality that tried to advocate the perspectives of historically excluded groups. This was also meant to present a challenge to dominant white privileges and investments in maintaining and producing racial hierarchies in the normative production of knowledge:

We cannot just position ourselves as we please; we face differential invitations and barriers to all the 'movements' (actions and utterances) we might try to make (Shotter, 1993:6-7)

Throughout the implementation of the PAR cycles, my ethical responsibility was not only to raise critical questions, but to eventually present narratives in a balanced way, where instances of ambivalence are balanced by the participants' sense of agency. As a researcher, subjective positioning meant occupying ' multiple positions of privilege, power, subordination, oppression and resistance' (Sefa Dei, 1999:397), which are weaved in the process of a co-discovery of new knowledge and understandings, together with the participants' own subjective worlds and their own positioning. However, this inevitably led to the my realization that at the end, the choice to represent and to choose which narrative extracts were analyzed and how, were left in my hands as researcher and that therefore the ultimate ownership of how this data was presented and interpreted lied within my own positionality in this research process.

In relation to this tricky question of ownership, post-modernism problematizes the ideal objective ethnographer's account. As a researcher, I needed to include my self and my theoretical baggage openly and critically into the narratives I encountered in the social world. This helps me to challenge normative assumptions and to use different methods to make the familiar strange. Perhaps, one may argue that this approach has led to the death of the subject. Here the reflexive, embodied agentic human gives way to how subjects and their social cultural objects are constructed through discourse, through different interrelating stories and practices. Nonetheless, this approach has enabled the participants and myself to work together to allow for and/or exclude possibilities for further action in a continuous 'storied vision of the world.' (Goodley et al, 2004:152)

As a researcher, I also needed to think about who might have been made vulnerable by the research outcomes and finally how to publically present data in a way that the whole work is received and acted upon in a larger context that includes reflections on structural racism, economic injustice, the damaging consequences of globalization and exploitation (Fine et al., 2000).

Effective community engagement projects need to manage to reach out to and engage decision-makers that invest in community engagement at different levels. To ensure this, the discourse data gathered was first overviewed and discussed in safe venues, with the community members themselves, with other locals, with colleagues who were already involved or interested in this work, during different supervision practices (inter- university, intra-university, intra- community-based practitioner team), with friends and family members of participants, with the spiritual leader (Imam) of the local community, so that events were thought through and questions of political strategies and representations were re-formulated, when necessary, before going public. The risk and possibility of certain consequences of telling particular stories and how they could be used or potentially misinterpreted (Fine et al., 2000) was considered as one of most basic ethical commitments of PAR.

## 9.9 Achievement of Research Aim 5:

**Statement:** *Community psychological interventions and community engagement projects- articulating implications for policy practice*

Within a community psychology framework, sharing information, collaborating with people who are experts about their lives and working with people who are often marginalized by the social system meant working towards empowerment. Presenting narratives of 'difference' that have been co-collected and co-authored, meant that professionals, citizens and academics have been brought together in new collaborative patterns that have given rise to new ways of thinking and of doing (Kagan and Duggan, 2009). Through the establishment of inter-agency working and continuous cross-boundary tentative ways of working within the public and third sectors, innovations in community engagement and community development have been set, tried and tested through an array of possibilities and opportunities. Recognition of experience, celebration of minority, personal change and social action has offered alternatives to what were usually routine courses of action (Goodley et al., 2004). This ambience has encouraged recommendations about policy making, based on evidence-based practice and has:

.....co-created new understandings of policy working.... work has generated accounts of new community practices and HEI-community engagement possibilities. [There was].....a shift from knowledge exchange and engaged scholarship to co-created scholarship and practice - co-created praxis (Kagan and Duggan, 2009:108).

Working from the inside out, PAR has created an opportunity for the production of new and shared vision of knowledge production and the development of new theory that informs understanding of how participants manage to construct their social identities that takes into account the economical, political, psychological and spiritual. Hopefully, its commitment to produce scholarship was one that was accountable to the communities involved and that has contributed towards social change (Cahill, 2007).

### **9.9.1 Public engagement, wellbeing and community cohesion**

When situated within a broader social, economic, political, and global context (Cahill, 2006; Dowler and Sharpe, 2001), this research manages, within a psychoanalytical relational framework, to unfold some of the layers of vulnerability posited by the participants' social identity narratives and to come to terms with some of the grim realities of globalization's geography of inequality, the reproduction of an economically polarized labour force and racial oppression as some of the challenges encountered by these Muslim males. In this context, it is important to discuss how this research has provided insights on some of the practical and evidence-based policy strategies relevant to core social issues and how it has contributed to new knowledge.

Challenges confronting policy makers are growing in complexity and according to the British Academy (2008), humanities and social science disciplines are 'not punching their weight' (Sutton, 2009e: 14). Trends in interdisciplinary research involving culture, economics and psychology are unearthing a more subtle and complex reality of individual motivation behind driving forces such as sustainability and wellbeing. In their twenty practical recommendations, the British Academy report encourages the fostering of improved dialogue, innovation and knowledge transfer between the academic world and policy-makers, which can lead not only to the setting of default options by government policies but by knowing when to step back and delegate power to significant figures and institutions able to influence individual and group behavior. This is where community psychology interventions can be of tremendous pragmatic importance.

It is a well-known fact that Universities are moving towards public involvement, for example, through the Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFCE), the Research Councils UK and the National co-coordinating centre for public engagement, of which the Wellcome Trust funded 'Beacons for

Public Engagement' programme is part of (NCCPE, 2011). The Home Office (2005) describes the importance of the role that public services have in their collaboration with higher education institutions and other partners in the community:

Public services play a vital part in creating opportunities. Collaborative work between HE and civic and community- based partners will focus on addressing the cross-government (targets) aimed at reducing race inequality and building community cohesion (Home Office, 2005 cited in Duggan and Kagan, 2007:6).

Public engagement in fact takes into consideration the many ways through which activities and benefits of higher education and research are shared with and informed by the public. At its onset in 2008, the Beacons for Public Engagement initiative simply aimed at inspiring a culture change in how universities engage with the public. Benyon and David (2008) define public engagement as:

the involvement of specialists in listening to, developing their understanding of, and interacting with, non-specialists. It is a participatory model of consultation to inform policy development and entails promoting the flow of authoritative information and exchange of views between social scientists, members of the public and policy-makers (Benyon and David 2008:1)

This is very much in line with participatory research within a community psychology framework, where through active engagement with different stakeholders, it has empowered people and broadened attitudes as the data highlights, thus ensuring that the work of the universities concerned becomes gradually more relevant to wider social concerns as emphasized by the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (2011).

#### **a) Challenges to public engagement**

Experiencing the participants' lived worlds and local cultures and being embedded within local contexts, inevitably enables a major contribution to our understanding of how higher education institutions can become more

engaged and open, both with each other through inter-HEI partnerships, as well as with the wider community (HEI-community partnerships). Although this brings about a wider range of benefits as discussed below, is not always a straightforward process as: 'it involves challenging some entrenched attitudes and ways of working, and learning new skills and approaches' (Beacons for Public Engagement, 2008).

Born within the wider Urban Regeneration- Making a Difference (URMAD) project, this research has addressed community needs in the areas of community cohesion, one of the essential elements in the policy agendas of national and regional government (Kagan and Duggan, 2009). There has been inter-disciplinary collaboration between the partner universities and the practitioner organizations involved. There has also been a development of a distinctive form of knowledge transfer (KT), at a teaching and research level so that the needs of the organizations and the professionals that collaborated from the public and voluntary services and the community, were partially met as described earlier on. These two objectives were both part of the 2006 Urban Regeneration project business plan (Kagan and Duggan, 2009). This research project then and its outcomes have tackled some of the real, complex problems that some of the local communities in the Northern region of England have to deal with and where social, economic and physical infrastructure issues are intrinsically related to each other. Cross- institutional and inter-institutional collaboration have highlighted the importance of including these types of interventions to bring about some form of economic and social change in society. For these authors, the discourse data generated through these action initiatives seemed to have 'encouraged a sense of identity and belonging through participation.... and through mutual understanding of cultural difference' (p.6).

This resonates with the community cohesion theme in the delivery plan of the Urban Regeneration project. Similar policies to increase social inclusion and encourage a sense of different and various forms of British identities may be required. These should perhaps focus on lifelong learning like in the Danish model as well as on improvements in the provisions for younger people. For

Lord Goldsmith in his recent Citizenship Review, (2008, cited in Heath et al., no date: online) there is no crisis of British identity. However, from a broader perspective, the rise of newer social groupings might effect and give rise to alternative forms of political participation, which resonates with the increase of critical citizens. The effects of declining traditional social identities in particular British identity can leave an impact on social cohesion, yet this does not mean that critical citizens necessarily lack that sense of social responsibility.

This project has actively engaged with the public sphere in that it essentially connected the participant community members with the research community-based team and with the wider community. Together, they have shared their passions and expertise and learnt to problem solve on issues explored through the narratives. This occurred regardless of the almost inevitable preconceptions of expertise that exist across the different borders. As Kagan and Duggan (2009) write in their community cohesion thematic evaluation report, projects of this kind highlight the need for further resources to be found for developing alliances and I would add, maintaining alliances within HEI - community partnerships, if collaboration across the different HEIs is to be effective over time. This enables trusting and reciprocal relationships to form that will contribute to the melting of these preconceptions of expertise or at least seriously challenge their validity. It will also help those involved to deal more effectively with some of the pre-set outcomes that any community research entails. Detailed pre-designed proposals can often be causes of tensions in collaborative project development with community partners, who have different time frames and different agendas to deal with. Therefore, more effective apertures of communication need to be found to ensure that similar projects are kept up over time to make part of a larger reality embedded in an institutional and academic dimension.

Despite its limitations, mutual benefit was generated though this project. As examples of public engagement, the project was involved in: engaging with young and older people, participating and presenting in conferences, public lectures, talks and seminars organized by different universities, working

within community cultural venues and involving the public during the dissemination event, which created opportunities that informed and re-framed the research questions evolving over time, influenced the ways meanings were interpreted and facilitated working together to inform policies.

**b) Promoting participation policies that favor civic (political) identities within the UK**

Social identities in the UK are being constructed within a wider social and hourglass shaped economical structure, where according to Heath and Roberts, (2008), the number of poorly qualified people positioned on the edge of the economy is increasing whilst the well-qualified are prospering in secure employment. This 'underclass', as defined by US economic conceptualizations, may actually be negatively affecting British's sense of community cohesion. In terms of policy-making then, this highlights the importance of enhancing the skills and opportunities of people who find themselves marginalized. This brings us to consider elements of a cohesive society where there is a more positive correlation between sense of belonging and social trust and where greater attachment to Britain may result to a greater support to the existing political system.

New ways of working between universities and community stakeholders not only need to promote different forms of national identities which enhance social cohesion, but also need to promote participation that favours civic (political) rather than ethnic (cultural) forms of national identities. Both involve different sets of criteria for defining 'membership' in a nation. Ethnic conceptions of the nation tend to place greater emphasis on ancestry and assigned characteristics that are more or less fixed at birth whilst civic conceptions emphasize achieved or acquired characteristics, such as respect for political institutions, owning national citizenship and speaking the national language. Ethnic conceptions of national identities may have a 'thicker' but a more exclusive sense of what constitutes British identity, whereas civic conceptions may have a 'thinner' but also perhaps a more inclusive and

forward-looking sense of British identities. Heath and Roberts (2008) have found that the measure of attachment to Britain does appear to be connected with a particular view of the nature of Britain as a nation. This is linked to a sense of where the boundary lies. The current situation in Britain is more complex. A strong attachment to a British identity is usually associated with support for maintaining cohesion and opposition to a closer integration in Europe. This is not an inevitable feature of national identity per sé but is likely to be mirroring the way in which British identity has been constructed and developed over time.

At present, it seems that the prevailing form in Britain is a somewhat backward-looking conception with strong ethnic and exclusive aspects. This is also at times captured in some of the marginalizing experiences participants recounted in their life stories, may not be the best basis for a truly modern diverse society. The adoption of inclusive political theories experience in the Scandinavian countries suggests that the development of a more civic conception of a nation can enhance social trust and sense of civic duty. Whilst Britain may not rank especially highly on measures of social trust, 'good citizenship' or on measures of a civic conception of the nation, authors such as Delhey and Newton (2005) and Whiteley (2008) argue that policies could include both direct ones aimed at strengthening national identity as well as indirect ones, aimed at tackling some of the root social and economic causes of low attachment and belonging. There are different interpretations of why this is so. In life cycle interpretations, any problem will tend to correct itself of its own accord and policy interventions may not be necessary needed. In this regard, authors such as Heath and Roberts (2008) and Heath et al., (no date: online) argue that all in all, younger generations generally feel a lower sense of attachment than the older ones, and people develop a stronger sense of belonging as they get older. On the other hand, authors like Tilley and Heath (2007), who prefer generational interpretations, find that young people feel a lack of belonging because they feel socially excluded. It seems that people who socialized in earlier periods, around the time of the second world war, may feel a stronger sense of identification with Britain than those socialized in more recent periods, for example after

Britain's entry within the European Union, may feel a weaker sense of attachment. If the correct interpretation of the age differences found above is a generational one, then lack of attachment among young people may have lasting implications for British society.

Life stories of these Muslim males living in Liverpool indicate a strong sense of ethnic identity. The narratives also highlight a struggle to be more flexible in striking a balance between choosing some aspects from their traditionally 'passed on' ethnic identity which they feel are still personally relevant to them and at the same time, assimilating other aspects of mainstream culture. In both choices, they are aware that they are living within a surrounding wider society that reflects a more 'exclusive' or 'ethnic' sense of British identity, where British ancestry is still felt deemed by many, to be a characteristic necessary for being truly British. In this regard, Yemeni young men seem to feel more likely to venture out to explore hyphenated identities that include elements of their host communities, than their Somali male counterparts. Perhaps Somali boys seem to face more pressures to take on 'racialized' identities, allowing them less leeway in identity formation when compared to the Yemeni boys. It seems that in some aspects, Yemeni boys seemed more likely than Somali boys to choose 'additive' or 'hyphenated identities', indicating attempts to bridge the two cultures.

### **9.9.2 Narratives and Social Change**

#### **A) Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT)**

Discourse around programmes aimed to improve access to psychological therapies (IAPT) remains socially constructed and inevitably 'quite polarized' (Sutton and Jarett, 2010). The shift in culture in services towards choice, person-centeredness and mental health promotion is a key imperative. Although these community narratives were not strictly therapeutic in nature, participants and their families have elaborated on personal stories of not being listened to, being marginal to assessment and care planning and being rendered helpless rather than helped by service use in general (Department of Health, 2004).

Moving psychological therapy up the government agenda is not an easy task as many social, economical and political factors are involved. Moreover, within a cohesive professional community, effective lobbying with policymakers can take place. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) emphasizes the need of having more research on all therapies yet this does not necessarily mean over- depending on randomly controlled trials (RCTs). There could be a more pluralistic approach (Sutton and Jarett, 2010) where multiple forms of evidence- based research could be used. Qualitative research outcomes could be of more benefit to service users and systemic studies could better inform practitioners. This is also highlighted in the new ways of working model (New Ways of Working, no date: online) and within the National Institute for Mental Health England Framework of Values (NIMHE)'s National Workforce Programme, NWP (NHS, National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, 2011). After finishing its work in March 2009, the NWP has moved on from 'new ways of working' to a 'creative, capable workforce' both underpinned by the values articulated in the Ten Essential Shared Capabilities document (Department of Health, 2004). These capacities, which guarantee appropriate training of staff working in mental health, can easily be incorporated by systemic participatory action within a community psychology approach as they contribute to a gradual cultural change where there is a move from an often dispersed responsibility in multi-disciplinary teams to a person- centered and recovery focus.

### **B) Putting community- based participatory action research into practice- applying the Ten Essential Shared Capabilities for Mental Health Practice**

Community-based participatory action research can be put into practice. The following are the ten essential shared capabilities currently used as a framework in Mental Health Practice (Department of Health, 2004) that can be applied to participatory research within communities:

### **1) Working in Partnership**

PAR has developed and maintained constructive partnership working with participants, families, colleagues, lay people and wider community networks, where people who participated were viewed as partners in care rather than passive recipients of services. Consequently, through multidisciplinary teamwork and cross boundary work, PAR can work positively to deal with tensions created by conflicts of interest or aspirations that may arise between different stakeholders involved.

### **2) Respecting Diversity**

PAR has worked in partnership with participants, families and colleagues to provide care and interventions that not only made a positive difference but have sought to do so in ways that respected and valued diversity including age, race, culture, disability, gender, spirituality and sexuality. PAR can provide a learning environment where existing beliefs about age, race, culture, disability, gender, spirituality and sexuality can be examined and challenged.

### **3) Practicing Ethically**

PAR has strived to recognize the rights and aspirations of participants and their families, acknowledged power differentials and minimized them whenever possible. It has sought to provide care that was accountable to participants within the boundaries set by national, professional, legal and local codes of ethical practice.

### **4) Challenging Inequality**

PAR has addressed some of the causes and consequences of stigma, discrimination, social inequality and exclusion on participants, families and community mental health services. It has created, developed and maintained valued social roles for people within the communities they came from.

### **5) Promoting Recovery**

PAR's work in partnership could be sustained to provide participants to tackle some aspects of their mental health problems in a community context that

promoted hope and optimism and enabled them to work towards a pro-active valued lifestyle within and beyond the limits of mental health problems. Promoting recovery is the capability that defines the process that both participants and providers engage in, to enable self-empowerment and self-determination. Recovery is about regaining what was lost: rights, roles, responsibilities, decision-making capacities, potential and mental wellbeing. Recovery is what people experience themselves as they become empowered to achieve a meaningful life and a positive sense of belonging in the community.

#### **6) Identifying People's Needs and Strengths**

PAR's work in partnership has gathered information in a systemic way to agree to health and social care needs and to carry out whole systems evaluation in the context of the preferred lifestyle and aspirations of participants, their families and friends.

#### **7) Providing Service User Centered Care**

PAR has shown to negotiate achievable and meaningful goals; primarily from the perspective of participants and their families. Through its process, it has tried to influence and seek the means to achieve these goals and clarify the responsibilities of the people who provided any help that was needed, including systematically evaluating outcomes and achievements. This capability is concerned with helping participants to set goals that are realistic, achievable and meaningful, so that all involved will be able to recognize when a particular goal has been achieved.

#### **8) Making a Difference**

PAR has facilitated access to community interventions and in its process has aimed at delivering the best quality evidence-based, values-based health and social care interventions to meet the needs and aspirations of participants and their families. It has ensured that people had access to these interventions that have sought to address specific needs. It is essential that people are able to utilize services that value them, support them and that will

help to make a positive difference. PAR incorporates the concepts of evidence-based and values-based best practice as outlined in documents such as NICE guidance.

### **9) Promoting Safety and Positive Risk Taking**

PAR has empowered participants to decide the level of risk they are prepared to take with their psychological health and safety, in particular in terms of disclosure and confidentiality. PAR included working with the tension between promoting psychological safety and positive risk-taking, including risk management strategies and assessing and dealing with possible risks for participants, family members, and the wider public.

### **10) Personal Development and Learning**

In integrating the above points, PAR can keep up-to-date with changes in practice and enable its participants to participate in life-long learning, personal and professional development, supervision, appraisal and reflective practice. In this way, it can be part of clinical governance, the system through which NHS organizations are accountable for 'continuously improving the quality of their services and safeguarding high standards of care by creating an environment in which excellence in clinical care will flourish' (Sally and Donaldson, 1998: 61). Practitioners should be active participants in their own development.

## **C) Similarities between community- based participatory action research and the National Framework of Values for Mental Health**

The National Institute for Mental Health England Framework of Values (NIMHE) (Woodbridge and Fulford, 2004) embraces the National Framework of Values for Mental Health and shares similarities with community-based participatory action research praxis in its three principles of values-based practice:

- 1) Community-based participatory action research can **recognize** the role of values together with evidence in all areas of mental health policy and practice,
- 2) It can **raise awareness** of the values involved in different contexts, the roles they play and their impact on practice in mental health
- 3) It **respects the diversity of values** and supports ways of working with diversity in a way that makes the idea of participant centrality a unifying focus for practice.

Here the values of each individual participant and their communities are the starting point and key for all subsequent actions by professionals. The following specific policies and principles are concerned with equality of citizenship and can be embraced within community-based PAR interventions:

- 1) **Recovery-oriented** policies recognize that there are many different ways to recovery such as building on the personal strengths and resiliencies and on the cultural and racial characteristics of individual users;
- 2) **Multi-disciplinary** policies require reciprocal respect at different levels: on a personal level between participants, their family members, friends, communities and providers; between different provider disciplines such as nursing, psychology, psychiatry, occupational therapy, medicine, social work; and between different organizations including health, social care, local authority housing, voluntary organizations, community groups, faith communities and other social support services;
- 3) **Dynamic** policies are open and responsive to change;
- 4) **Reflective** policies combine self- monitoring and self- management with positive self- regard;
- 5) **Balanced policies** emphasize positive as well as negative values;
- 6) **Relational** policies put positive working relationships supported by good communication skills at the core of practice.

## **10.0 Community narratives as ‘therapeutic tools’ for social change**

Many primary care Trusts across the United Kingdom have been developing services that aim at providing improved access to psychological

interventions. Community narratives could be effectively used in community-based primary care interventions as their aims are in line with the purposes of psychological services in primary care. Within the social sciences, narrative research looks out for, works with and analyses stories that significantly resonate with people's lives (CNR Centre for Narrative Research, UEL, 2008). The narratives generated can themselves elicit social change by enabling people to develop fulfilled lives in different areas including occupation, family, work, education, social and mental functioning. They can enhance the building of communities and enable the resolutions of conflict. These objectives are also reflected in the national social inclusion programme (Cullen, 2007) and in guidelines such as those provided by the Health and Clinical Excellence, NICE (National Institute for Mental Health in England-Care Services Improvement Programme, CSIP (2006). Community narratives in different forms and in different social contexts can also be used together with other high quality psychological therapies as they are multi-levelled in nature, they can reach more people collectively in terms of time management and can therefore provide a faster access to services and work effectively across other services for instance through the Building Community Capacity Project (Think local, Act personal, 2011).

Finally, when utilized as part of co-joint work within inter-university partnerships, processes and outcomes can be presented in terms of research findings, with each higher education institution collaborating within its own areas of expertise, bringing together 'established and early career researchers' (CNR Centre for Narrative Research, UEL, 2008) and promoting meaningful exchanges and networking between various disciplines, not only between the often commonly related psychology, sociology or anthropology but also within literature, arts and humanities. As regards to the propagation of community narratives, inter-university, collaborative work aims to '...develop innovative and effective theories, methods and practices in the growing field of narrative and social change research.' (CNR Centre for Narrative Research, UEL, 2008)

Innovative PAR and narrative research within the social sciences need to be continuously tried and tested with real people to be able to produce effective

evidence-based and community- based research. These can be regarded as truly distinctive when it comes to publication and to the implementation and recommendations of certain transformatory practices when they are able to influence and inform public policies as well as enrich conferences, seminars and other forms of knowledge dissemination.

## **10.1 The impact of participatory action narrative- eliciting research-revalorizing social inclusion and social capital**

At a local and national level, there are different policies that are seeking ways to promote involvement as a duty in local authorities. The Local Government Act (2000) gave local authorities a general power and significant freedom to act so as to promote and improve the economic, environmental or social well being of their areas (e.g. Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008). This opportunity can be linked to discourse from philosophy, sociology and religion that offer some stimulating alternatives about the relationship between experience and behaviour. For Pilgrim (2009), psychology now seems to have a superior understanding of wellbeing, where the 'bank account of the mind' (p.3) is replacing social capital with mental capital. Public engagement in health services is being facilitated and citizens are encouraged to take control of local services (Communities and Local Government, 2008), whilst the police modernisation agenda is also aiming to engage effectively with local communities and to have community involvement practices even in their emergency services (HMIC, 2004)

All these intervention models can be seen as ways to connect communities, what the British Psychological Society's Professional Practice board in its 2009 Annual Review calls 'a new horizons strategy for local well-being service network' (p.5). Bouncing back as active citizens can become a reality for socially excluded people if society knows what to do and how to do it, to 'sustain the magic' as Davis (2010:32) proposes, and to bring back that sense of ownership, passion for action-oriented tasks, collaborative enquiry and genuine discovery in community engagement and responsibility (Hayward et al., 2010; Eisenstadt, 2010).

Based on Friere's work, community-based participatory research has tried to understand the wider causes of exclusion that in turn can give excluded people the strength to address it. For Holland (1988), 'consciousness raising' can harness hidden resources in individuals and communities to achieve inclusion. The catalyst behind tapping into people's resources, allowing them to bounce back, is the ability to be involved in real collaborative relationships,

where people are respected for who they are, where they have been, where they are now and where they could be in the future. The real task is the re-valorisation of people through the creation of inclusive contexts that give weight to these practice values and service principles that are core to Freire's and Holland's work and which are often difficult to replicate in government sponsored programmes.

## **10.2 Re-valorising reciprocity**

Reciprocal research relationships have provided the context for providing clear information about the outcomes of the study and the benefits it generated to the participating communities. However, collaborating in a CBPAR project may raise expectations about the immediate benefits to participating communities, such as the need to increase funding for the issues being investigated. Some expected outcomes may not be possible from the research, and others may not occur immediately. This was often brought up by participants at different phases during the action research and life story initiatives and it always provided an ethical backdrop for the researcher to explore with the participants the nature of the research as an ongoing process, with long-term strategies to be challenged rather than quick fixes.

Beiser (2003) suggests that researchers are rarely in a position to affect policy or to allocate resources, although throughout the research process, researchers can, however, provide knowledge that can then be used by participants and the local communities to maximize their potential to obtain resources. Sharing knowledge gained throughout the project is a key component so that policy-makers, government, and funders are receptive to recommendations for change at the end of the project. Wallerstein and Duran (2003) remind us that:

CBPR researchers who hope to act on the most important problems in society, such as disparities based on race, class, gender, and other socially constructed domains, need to produce knowledge that clarifies and seeks to change the mal-distribution of power and resources (p.37).

The process of reciprocal dialogue usually aims to create and maintain research relationships where the individual researcher and study participant communicate as equals and may even have the potential to help resolve ethical problems in research (Trimble and Fisher, 2006; Yassour-Borochowitz, 2004). This project tried to exchange knowledge and sustain community capacity- building through satellite meetings with some the local social services managers and project participants, the dissemination event at the end of the project, frequent liaison meetings with different local community coordinators who although not always directly involved, knew about the project and sustained our work through advertisement in their own communities. However, the practice of reciprocity also brought up serious considerations on the ongoing issues of power and gain in research relationships.

These disparities are inevitably present in research relationships between researchers and communities. Despite the good intentions of CBPAR researchers, hidden dimensions of power can result in biases that continue to favour dominant knowledge while discrediting other bases of knowledge. For Chavez et al., (2003), some knowledges and interests are unconsciously favoured over others resulting in minority voices being silenced:

....people of colour involved in CBPAR may not be able to identify their community's assets due to feelings of internalized oppression that make them undervalue community resources (p.85).

To generate knowledge that is emancipatory, it was felt that the CBPAR research process itself must challenge such inequalities. Committing time to develop reciprocal relationships meant addressing power differentials and creating environments where meaningful exchanges can occur. This can be particularly important when personal, social and financial resources that might be required for formal participation in initiatives are lacking. Consequently, getting together informally can generate ideas for action and joint ventures involvement that can lead to further social and community change and the development of both personal and social empowerment

(Sixsmith and Boneham, 2002). Social capital through participation needs to be further reconsidered in more marginalized groups in our local communities.

All in all, a sense of community is enhanced through a life- span availability of support, rather than merely in crisis situations. For Putnam and Feldstein (2003), promoting social capital involves public institutions to become promoters, rather than restorers of wellbeing. In community initiatives where people have engaged in ways that affected their core identity, dialogue seemed to have fostered both a sense of **thick trust** in Putnam's (2000) terms, within a shorter radius span as in families and close friendships as well as **thin trust** which although less defined, is present in the context of acquaintances or the relatively unknown generalized other, with people at a greater social distance. These relational aspects generate stories that people tell each other and these shared narratives build a sense of community. This is the heart of social transformation, where people act and participate together in their local community, possibly in small groups to foster significant action based on vision and mission. It is here that voices are heard and new possibilities surface (Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2007). Consequently, policies around social capital need to identify and work around concrete features of social organization such as networks, norms and trust, that facilitate co- coordination and co-operation for mutual benefit' (Putnam 1995: 67).

These local communities in Liverpool have demonstrated a well- functioning degree of social capital where participants have utilized community narratives to increase social cohesiveness within the neighbourhood, becoming more cooperative and caring as they worked together for mutual benefit. This can take place both at an interpersonal level as well as between groups and organizations. For Smith (1997), this works as a '...glue that bonds society together and a lubricant that permits the smooth running of society's interactions' (p.170).

For Cooper et al; (1999), this enhances the social fabric that binds people together in their communities. Psychosocial variables then become effective indicators of social capital at an individual level. For Brehm and Rahn (1997), there is a tight reciprocal relationship between civic engagement and interpersonal trust, whilst Putnam (2000) includes participation, shared norms of reciprocity and social networking as areas which are at the edge between individual and community social capital.

Economical and political tools are only part of the solution. Social transformations need a holistic approach, with a culturally appropriate dialogue that is capable of bringing in social transformation and exchange benefits from a variety of perspectives. Creating spaces for these exchanges brought together the formal and informal spaces of continuous learning. For Bianchi (2008), recovering and re-telling people's subjectivities, lives and experiences is central to attempt to better understand our social worlds with a view of transforming them. Danquah (2009) points out that situated location is essential as it affects how one conducts clinical and community-based work in very different local communities. He argues the importance of reframing psychological interventions according to the specific local community one is working with, through ways that are more culturally appropriate as it underscores people's positioning within a system where there are different values from that of Western society and therefore orientation to work has to be different. For instance the role of health or social care is often taken up by the extended family in many BME communities and therefore clinical and community work has to be relational and systemic in nature. Persons have expectations of interventions that are top down and paternalistic, expectations that have been shaped by culture and this needs to be addressed.

### **11.0 Transferring PAR narratives in other situated contexts**

Different situated contexts can benefit from community narratives to nurture young people's social and emotional wellbeing. This last section glances at how similar interventions can be utilized in educational and organizational

settings:

### **11.1 PAR Narratives in Educational Settings**

Youngsters often experience many physical and emotional changes that eventually shape their adult life. One in ten young people are unhappy at school (Morgan et al; 2006) and over a third are worried about being bullied (Mori, 2004). NICE's guidance on 'Social and emotional wellbeing in secondary education' outlines how secondary education providers and service commissioners can help protect and nurture young people by providing a friendly, supportive environment to enhance their happiness, confidence and their sense of control, and the ability to cope with problems and foster effective interpersonal relationships (NHS, National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, 2009). Community narratives can complement existing initiatives such as the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) and Healthy Schools programmes where implementing an organization-wide approach can bring together specialist skills, advice and support from head teachers and others working in children and youth services and working in partnership with the knowledge and expertise of parents, carers and other family members to promote learning and well-being in students.

Community narratives can be run also on a national level. One example is The London Centre for International Storytelling (LCIS, no date: online), the UK's premier performance story-telling promoter and programmer, which through its Crick Crack Club, aims at promoting art and practice of oral story-telling by providing opportunities for the sharing and perpetuation of oral traditions from all cultures and to establish a permanent, dedicated venue for performance story-telling. Local communities can liaise, as this research has done, with community artists who have narratives at heart and who can present modern audiences with the 'rich metaphorical content of international fairytales, epics and myths' (LCIS, no date: online). Liaison with theatres, art centers and schools can lead to the organization of literature festivals, story-telling clubs and festivals to promote regular performance story-telling

programmes.

From pre-school to lifelong learning, story-telling has in fact become an essential part of modern education and can be used to support teaching and learning in both formal and informal contexts. It supports family learning and community education projects and can be applied across the National Curriculum at all key stages in different subjects. Oral stories enhance the imagination of the listener where students re-tell stories that go beyond boundaries of paper, pens and print. It can also give a twist to out-of-school visits and can be weaved in with other art forms. Language and speaking skills are enhanced through the sequencing of events and the development of settings and characters. Older children can develop performance skills through the improvisation of language and narrative lines and structures.

Different services such as one-day performances, workshop visits, 'arts weeks', 'book weeks', calendar festivals and other projects or celebrations of narrative, history, myth and culture can be provided as well as training workshops for teaching staff. In many schools, the teachers or classroom assistants are the storytellers, whilst other schools have story-telling clubs where older children regularly tell stories to younger classes. Other schools are involved in inter-generational projects collecting personal or traditional stories from their elders in their local communities.

### **11.1.1 Links with the National Curriculum**

In schools there are so many ways which link work with stories to the curriculum. Apart from literacy, speaking and listening, there is increasing awareness of the need to re-focus on the teaching of citizenship in schools. This important task places social education at the centre of the curriculum and many social stories provide a good framework for the teaching of PHSE and citizenship. Other subjects like history, RE and science can also be supported.

Storytelling is our most powerful tool for effective communication and in life-story-telling, 'people crave, remember, and honour stories' (International

Storytelling Centre, 2011). For instance, the Jonesborough Community Storytelling US Programme is community-based and is one-of-a-kind, as it uses storytelling to celebrate what's special about Jonesborough and its citizens. Anyone in the community can share their stories through several methods including the web, one-on-one interviews, group interaction, and simple conversation. These stories are being shared through many outlets including video and audio recordings, publications, theatre and musical productions, walking tours, film, as well as museum and art exhibits. Similar programmes can be implemented within our own local communities through partnerships with different Higher Educational Institutions and local stakeholders. This means that generating narratives could become an approach that could be extrapolated in a variety of settings, highlighting the uniqueness of the different subjective worlds that surround multi-cultural identities in Britain.

## **11.2 Narratives influencing organizational settings**

The creation of inclusive contexts highlights the need to understand the psychological consequences of ethnic hierarchies especially reflected in the realm of personnel recruitment in multi-cultural settings. van de Vijver's work (Jarrett, 2009b) on inter-ethnic relations at work tends to reflect intergroup relations in society at large. When companies recruit in foreign lands, there is often a lack of understanding of the local economy, cultural and social matters for e.g. local dress code is seen as inappropriate or level of English language skills are frowned upon. In the Netherlands, as way of example, the white indigenous majority are at the top, whilst Somalis and Moroccans tend to be at the bottom with the consequence that those lower the ethnic hierarchy tend to feel less at home and tend to maintain their cultural background. Spoken discourse about these issues is often ethnocentric and categorization of people is often stereotyped. Consequently, community-based interventions in an organizational context would enable stakeholders who are in a position to decide on policy and therefore have the power to exclude, to understand and value the identity and experience of those excluded and therefore 'to work with them to share hope, promote choice and create opportunity' (Davis, 2010:33).

This freedom to engage in the psychological work necessary to establish creative relationships is not easy to survive when it comes to the re-designing of services and policy development, yet to use Hunter and Richie's (2008) terms, this co-production as a collaborative process is needed at higher levels to be able to achieve inclusion at different levels of intervention.

## **12.0 Conclusions**

Through the creative generation of different story lines, participatory action research initiatives have contributed to the creation, re-creation, and the sustaining of stories that have enabled both the individual and the community to go through flexible narratives of the self (Frank, 1995), with a discovery of their own different versions of their selves. Stories have highlighted intense feelings and elicited a realization that there are others who through narratives are coming to terms with challenging and distressful situations. Through words and at times beyond, stories have facilitated other stories to be elicited. Many young people do not usually talk about their identities as they might find it difficult to express particularly important aspects of their lives. For Casement (2009), it is the story-telling action that provides this access to their versions of selves in places they have frequented and felt safe in.

In line with authors like Fox-Eades, (2006), Thomas and Killick, (2007), and Killick and Frude, (2009), oral storytelling seemed to have fostered emotional literacy and social development. Evidence of these processes has been outlined throughout these last chapters. The act of listening became a form of emotional work-out for the mind which enabled listeners of different ages to get in touch with their own inner feelings (Oatley, 1998), elicit feelings as a natural language for the younger participants (Sunderland 2000), and most importantly perhaps, it became an act of insight on one's own and others' emotional responses. A vast repertoire of vocabulary has been elicited by the stories themselves, vocabulary that has managed to identify, incorporate and cope with primordial emotions that have served their purpose as an

emotional laboratory, (hence the coined term 'narrative workshop') and where alternatives were explored in such a way that permitted a closure, facilitating a sense of relief and a return to a safe ground. The journey in between was indeed a thoroughly enriching experience.

This journey was also a flexible one, a flexibility that also depended in Gergen's terms (1994), upon the cultural repertoire of stories that were available for synthesis into personal stories and the access people have had to this repertoire. It seems that over the life course, people could develop greater sophistication in their potential for telling a variety of life-stories and may develop the capacity to re-construe their lives in ways that enhance their present situations, relationships, and needs.

In terms of policy-making and within the shifting ground of the post-modern world, narrative resources available to people to make sense of their lives, seems to have increased. This means as we have seen in this analysis, that there are more genres available for expansion (Shotter, 1993). These increased narrative resources have in fact provided greater space and opportunities for participants to craft who they wanted to be and who they could be. Within a political economy of developmental opportunities, some people have easier access to particular life scripts than others, which limits who or what people can become. The idea of community narratives is also precisely to increase the number of opportunities where participants can explore alternative life scripts.

In conclusion it seems that social identifications also vary according to the degree of agreement and disagreement about norms, boundaries, worldviews, analysis and meanings. This community-based, participatory action research framework can be seen to have accounted for the variation of social identity expressions captured through the different narratives. For Brady and Kaplan (2000), any definition of identity needs to offer both the traditional and the more innovative methodologies to highlight the possibility of various ways of working in this field. These methods have also allowed research to open-mindedly adapt to the specific demands of the particular

research question set in the beginning.

This project has also enabled the understanding of how identities affect the behaviour of social actors through the inevitable relationship between identity and action. The definition of identity in terms of content and contestation has also affected predictions about action in a way that addressed social identity theory as well as models of cognition and the purposive goals of these social groups. Although much work remains to be done to show the variety of insights into the identity continuum of content and contestation captured by these different methods, this will hopefully enable mainstream social science to include different identity factors into new explanatory models with the aim to generate new theories about social identities.

The recognition of multiplicity in identifications implies conflict as it raises questions of, if and how a person achieves coherence or integration (Hollway, 2010). The presence of unconscious dynamic forces as the psychic motor for action is common to all psychoanalytic theories (Erikson, 1963) and theorizes identity transition through the life courses not as smooth, but as one achieved through conflicts among the multiplicity of elements that move together to make up an identity at any given time. Identity can be seen as both authentic and instrumental. Contestations of the meaning of a collective identity, at any given moment, could be more of an access to a process rather than a mere, one- time outcome. This access of simultaneous identifications affords a powerful transmission of ethnic identity practices which although hybrids, are passed from one generation to the next.

### **12.1 Final Reflections**

It is never an easy task to bring a dissertation to a final close. As I conclude, my Italian streak would define my state of mind as embracing an underlying anxiety provoked and maintained by a sense of abandonment. Throughout these research years I have become wholly attached to my research theme, to the angle of the room I have cocooned myself in those hours of reading, sitting, typing and writing, to the stifling feelings of a seemingly never-ending

venture. And as I sit and write my final reflections, I realize that these feelings are similar to the ones I felt two years ago when my eighteen month field-based practice terminated and I was left bereft of the encounters I had cherished, the young and old men whom I sat with in the community centres as they willingly and honestly offered their stories to a stranger not of their tribe, not of their family, not of their community, not of their colour.

And as I search my mind for an appropriate piece of extract from the readings I accumulated throughout the years, the words of one of my favourite Italian neuro-psychiatrist, Vittorino Andreoli, an elderly wise man now in his seventies, come vividly to my pen, or rather to my key board:

....cherish your fragility. With much fatigue I have found the strength to carry on living. And now I find a lack of complete strength to die. ....I feel strongly the need to unveil my own fragility, the need to share it with those whom I encounter, with those who see me as if it were my primary identification of being a man, a man in this world. In my early days I was told I needed to hide my weaknesses, to stifle my defects, as they would have impeded me from showing my strengths, impeded me from being respected. But today I need to share my fragility, to unmask it as I am convinced that it is the strength that enables me to live... (Translation mine, Andreoli 2008 cited in De Ritis, 2007: online)

These men have taught me that acknowledging one's limitations is not necessarily a demonstration of disempowerment. Acknowledging limits is acknowledging the need of the 'other'; fragility is finding strength in every day actions, wisdom is having that good sense of experiencing patience in waiting for the other, in knowing the right time to respect the 'elder'. Encountering the other, is always and inevitably journeyed through a search with narratives, where there is an 'I' that struggles with the 'we', where both struggle to learn to share the same place, where significant identity markers like the family come across as a little orchestra that produces more than mere synchronized sounds. In this light, the PAR narratives have elaborated on a preparation of a long venture to do things together without feeling the

need to dominate, to overcome. The role of autobiographic thought often elicited in these stories is aptly described by Oliver Sacks. A life story without memory is life without life itself. In it lies the very essence of life, eliciting a sense of coherence, a sense of reason, sentiment and meanings behind actions. Sacks' vision can be linked to James Hilman's perception of what constitutes therapeutic activity, a sort of imaginative exercise that recuperates the oral tradition of narrating stories, a therapeutic process that brings a story back to life. This research has hopefully reached this primary aim of storytelling that brings Martin Luther King's 'voice of the voiceless' (melyoung's posterous, 2011) through active community participation. For Heidegger (1988), the essence of man lies in his language (sprache); but this takes place solely and uniquely in the Gespräch, 'the conversation,' that talking together about something. It is in this way that talking makes an encounter possible. For Hölderlin, knowing how to listen is not a consequence of the process of talking together but it is rather a necessary pre-requisite (Heidegger, 1988). Conversation is the content through which knowledge is to be understood (Heidegger, 1988). Human beings have become a conversation from the time there was time and since the beginning of time, they have also established their "historicalness". Being a conversation and being historical belong to each other. They share the same rhythm and share the same essence (Borgna, 1999: 120-122; translation mine). The hope is that this research has managed to significantly bring across some of the very essence of these situated conversations.

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# Appendices

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## **Appendix 1.3.1**

### **List of Organizations involved throughout this Project**

Manchester Metropolitan University

Northumbria University

UCLAN (University of Central Lancashire)

Salford University

Liverpool Arabic Centre

PPS Gateway Project

Merseyside Somali Association

Sudanese Women's group

MAAN Project (Somali Health Mental Health Project)

Somali Umbrella group

Mersey side Youth Association

BRM Carers Project Haven Project

Liverpool City council

South Central Neighbourhood management Services

Parental and Proud

Pakistani Community Centre

Haven Project

Refugee Action

### **Appendix 3.3**

#### **Historical Background of Black Experience in Liverpool**

The distinctive black experience in Liverpool needs to be understood within the different experiences of historical processes such as migration, shipping, slavery, freedom, economics, employment, competition, conflict and demography (Small, 1991). Broader structural developments, changing balances of world trades, the growth of the European Union and the challenges of regional policy (Meegan, 1989), have also impacted on Liverpool's history. Shipping with Africa and the slave trade brought many black sailors to Liverpool, children of traders sent to be educated and freed slaves, since slaves entering the country after 1722 were considered free men. Because black men outnumbered black women, this led to mixed relationships, inter marriage and children of mixed origin (e.g. Rich, 1986).

The black experience in Liverpool together with the mapping of 'racialised' relations is an anomaly (Small, 1991) when its structural, cultural and ideological characteristics are compared to the rest of the country. Liverpool is a particular case study because Black community settlement dates back into the 18th century (Costello, 2001). Researchers like Ben-Tovim et al; (e.g. 1986a), Rooney and Mckain (1990) and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) update for 2009/2010 and have linked patterns in Liverpool to other cities.

Whereas in the rest of England, most of the black population are mostly of Caribbean in origin, and have arrived in the UK because of a demand for labour (Hiro, 1971), Liverpool's black families are indigenous and did not settle there as a result of a growing economy. It is a city of symbolic significance as the black community have been living there for many generations (e.g. Liverpool Black Caucus, 1986). Frequent inter-dating with white population and a high proportion of mixed couples and marriages are city patterns that are suggestive of future developments elsewhere in the country (Commission for Racial Equality, 1989). What Liverpool shares with other regions, is the extreme residential segregation of black people, conflict

with the police, a colour blind approach by whites in power positions and a highly powerful 'racialised' hostility with a high degree of indifference of the majority population to fight this discrimination (e.g. Rooney and Mckain, 1990). This leaves a perennial impact of the city which Gifford et al., (1989: 82) calls 'uniquely horrific racism'.

Small (1991, 1990c) contributes to the theorization about racisms, class relations and race, by 'problematizing' the concept of 'racialisation' and re-assesses 'racial harmony' and 'racial parity'. African people came to accept the 'racialised' categories (ethnic, linguistic, religious, tribal identifications), to organize themselves for resistance and liberation. At the same time, the resulting negative connotations and inferiority are resisted. This analysis generates new theories, implements policy within the limits of current legislation and recognizes the interplay of local, regional, national and international contexts as specific contexts.

### **Appendix 3.3.1**

#### **The 1981 riots in Liverpool**

The desperate socioeconomic conditions of Britain's working-class and Black communities, the very severe policing methods of Black communities and a noticeable lack of economic opportunity for youths led to the worst urban disturbances ever in 1981, Toxteth in Liverpool in particular, had an intense week of battles between the police and Black youths after years of overt discrimination. Although this introduced measures to improve trust and understanding between the police and ethnic minority communities, the Scarman Report (1981) that looked into the Toxteth, Brixton and Handsworth rioting, concluded that many complex political, social and economic factors were at play.

These instances of 'racialized oppression' in Liverpool, have followed a history of complaints about the situation of Black people in Liverpool and should have been a sign to local and national authority, that Black people's long-standing in equality had to be "confronted and positively remedied" (Gifford, et al.1989:50). The disturbances affected all social areas including policing, education, employment, and housing. Discrimination faced by Black people in Liverpool is more severe than the other communities also because of the city's socioeconomic decline since the 1960s. Politics of Black presence, insist however that the problem was with Black communities and not with mainstream policies that have either unintentionally or directly institutionalized racial exclusion (Christian, 2005).

Whether the focus is on Liverpool or elsewhere in Britain, Black communities have a collective history of struggle against racialized oppression and manifold institutionalized discrimination (Small, 1983, 1994; Gifford et al., 1989; Macpherson, 1999). Black presence in Britain has in fact been shaped by anti-Black sentiment (Christian, 2005), principle institutions have negatively perceived and reacted to the presence of people of colour, especially during the 1980s and 1990s through subtle and brutal 'racialised' discrimination: 'It is not the unemployment people resent- Liverpool's has

always been higher. It's that if you happen also to have a black face, there is no escape from the poverty.' (BBC News, 2001: online)

Black male youth were targeted by the police and scapegoated by British media as "muggers." Analyses by social theorists suggest that this diverted attention from a failing economy (Hall et al., 1978).

## **Appendix 3.4**

### **Elements of a radical community psychological praxis (Kagan and Burton, 2001)**

#### **a) Belief System 1: A just society and its underpinning values**

In Kagan and Burton's (2001) model of community psychological praxis, the importance of a vision is fundamental. A vision enables us to establish the type of society we are working towards, one which cannot be quite achieved but can be hoped for and which guides actions and acts as framework for reflection. These authors draw on Habermas' (1979) areas of knowledge interests and core values of a just society that include justice, stewardship and community (Tyne, 2000, cited in Kagan and Burton, 2001:6). Justice as a value evokes a series of rights including: a more equitable distribution of resources, peaceful living and freedom from constraints, equality, fair treatment and self-determination. Stewardship evokes responsibilities that include duties to take care of the world and its inhabitants, to enable people to make a contribution and gain a sense of belonging, to make useful use of time, persons and things, and to generate long-term objectives and righteous action. Community as a value elicits a certain sense of hope for companionship, love, acceptance and tolerance, inclusion, celebration of diversity, acceptance of personhood and belief in potential. These values should form the basis of community psychology practice. This can lead to a reconsideration of how issues in social sciences are conceptualized, an 'epistemological break' (Hesse, 1980).

#### **b) Belief System 2: Ecological Metaphor**

Community Psychological Practice aims to take an ecological perspective, where persons are understood in a multi-level context (person-in-context). This unit of analysis and change is a guiding principle. Whilst people are viewed as 'agentic', purposeful beings with a potential to influence and change their situations, there is an essential effort in looking beyond the individual for explanations of social experience and also for solutions. This ecological metaphor contributes to the development of "edge effects," i.e.

new progressive insights (Burton and Kagan, 2000), but can also introduce evolutionary psychology concepts such as 'survival of the fittest' and maintenance of a 'homeostatic equilibrium,' that can have detrimental effects.

### **c) Belief System 3: Whole systems perspective**

Social systems such as hospitals, health and welfare agencies, schools and other institutions are social environments that can be both oppressive and supportive at the same time. They provide support that maintains identity, secures material resources and resist oppressive practices but also have bureaucratic and dehumanizing effects that are markers of the "cultural hegemony of the ruling class" or "economical exploitation" (Leonard, 1975:56). Systems are analysed to guide our understanding and our actions. Aware of the contradictions that exist in systems perspectives, community psychology can contribute to enhance the system's supportive features for the benefit of the local community (Ulrich, 1994).

### **d) Belief System 4: Interdisciplinary**

Community psychology practises systems perspectives. Analyzing systems means working with different interconnections of the system. Community psychology needs to go beyond working at an individual level or a collection of individual levels and cater for areas such as environment management, operational research and social development fields (e.g. Taket and Whyte, 2000; Midgley, 2000; Wilby, 1996). Many systems approaches utilised today tend to preserve 'the status quo' (e.g. Parsons, 1951) of the interdependence of parts of the system and are based on ideologies that seek consent of more conservative ideas. One negative aspect is that this perspective influences evolutionary psychology and can introduce value- freethinking. A Community Psychology praxis becomes truly open and interdisciplinary when different disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, economics, sociology, history and cultural studies interact effectively in synergy. The interconnectedness of social systems is captured in a radical approach to systems, often resonating

with Marxist philosophy (Burton and Kagan, 1996) and uses “a multi- level analysis” so that essential power relations are recognised and decisions are made as regards to interventions.

**e) Belief System 5: Dialectical relationship between people and systems, empowerment**

Community Psychology’s unique position lies in the reciprocity in dialectical relationships, which through creativity, aims to foster interdependence between individuals and social systems. Bhaskar's work (1989:36) resonates with Freire’s ideas (1972) on the transformation that this relationship with reality brings about, a transformation that leads to the production not only of mere tangible objects but of ‘...social institutions, ideas and concepts. Through their continuing praxis, men simultaneously create history, and become historical-social beings’ (Freire, 1972:73).

This praxis enables the development of opportunities that foster a sense of empowerment and self-determination through active collaboration. It involves stakeholders responsible for these practises in each of the moments of these creative activities. This widens participation and constantly includes other stakeholders affected by the practise, whilst maintaining collaborative control (Carr and Kemmis, 1986) through careful and planned sharing of findings for instance through community dissemination events (Reason and Bradbury, 2001).

**f) Belief System 6: People’s consciousness and inter-subjectivity**

Through listening to people’s lived experience, their past, their present circumstances and future hopes and aspirations, knowledge about the ways in which people make sense of their social worlds, is accumulated. This links with life story research (see below), but from a community psychology perspective, it highlights the essential aspect of working with people to promote change and to understand consciousness, intentions and people’s behaviours. Another essential aspect is the understanding our own positioning in relation to those we are working with, people who are often marginalised, oppressed and dispossessed. Community psychology needs to

be immersed in these people's lives otherwise knowledge becomes inevitably partial, and not grounded in real subjective experiences. The academic world has a moral, political and scientific responsibility of "engaging in a dialogue" and "learn" (Wresinski, 1980, cited in ATD Fourth World, 1999: 3) from these communities of practise.

Participation in the socialization of knowledge becomes two- way, one that moves externally to the people and vice versa. Exchange of knowledge between two types of social actors transforms knowledge into a mobilizing force that leads to action. This process does not only lead researchers to become 'experience near' (Geertz, 1983) but also constructs praxis, allowing the definition of problems, seeking of solutions and implementation of particular methods. When compared to other forms of psychological practice, community psychology advocates participatory approaches which combine and exchanges two different types of knowledge: the knowledge and know-how of the people (Montero, 2000), or 'popular knowledge', and the knowledge and know- how of the researcher or 'expert knowledge.' As in Participatory Action Research, there is a systemic return of knowledge produced during the research to those who have contributed to their co-production. This view, shared by feminists (e.g. Gatenby and Humphries, 2000) and disability researchers (Moore et al., 1998), produces new scientific knowledge as well as a kind of ordinary knowledge that can be applied in every day action. This emancipatory character of community psychology gives people introducing social change, control of research as a tool to obtain their goals.

### **Appendix 3.6.3**

#### **The Afro-Centric Method and Analytical Afro-centricity (based on Molefi, (1998) and Mazama, (2003))**

- The Afro-centric method considers that no phenomena can be apprehended adequately without locating it first. This is the only way to investigate the complex inter-relationships in social phenomena. Chronology is as important in some situations as location. The two aspects of analysis are central to any proper understanding of society, history, or personality.
- Since phenoms are active, dynamic, and diverse in our society, the Afro-centric method requires scientists to focus on accurate notations and recording of space and time. The best way to apprehend location of a text is to determine where the researcher is located in time and space first.
- The Afro-centric method considers phenomena to be diverse, dynamic, and in motion. Researchers need to accurately note and record the location of phenomena even in the midst of fluctuations. This means that the investigator must know where he or she is standing in the process.
- The Afro-centric method is a form of cultural criticism that examines etymological uses of words and terms in order to know the proper identification, location of concepts. And source of author's location. This allows us to intersect ideas with actions and actions with ideas on what is creative and transformative at the political and economic levels.
- The Afro-centric method seeks to uncover the masks behind the rhetoric of power, privilege, and position in order to establish how principal myths create place. The method enthrones critical reflection that reveals perceptions of monolithic power.

- The Afro-centric method locates the imaginative structure of a system of economics, bureau of politics, policy of government, expression of cultural form in the attitude, direction, and language of the *phenom*, be it text, institution, personality, interaction, or event.

### **Analytic Afro-centricity**

Analytic Afro-centricity is the application of the principles of the Afro-centric method to textual analysis. An Afro-centrist seeks to understand the principles of the Afro-centric method in order to use them as a guide in analysis and discourse. The Afro-centrist seeks to demonstrate clarity by exposing dislocations, disorientations and de-centeredness. Myths tie all relationships together, whether personal or conceptual. It is the Afro-centrist's task to determine to what extent the myths of society are represented as being central to or marginal to society. This means that any textual analysis must involve the concrete realities of lived experiences, thus making historical experiences a key element in analytical Afro-centricity. In examining attitude, direction, and language the Afro-centrist is trying to uncover the author's imagination. Where does the writer stand in relationship to the subject? Is the writer centred or is the writer marginalized within his own story?

### **Appendix 5.3.2d**

#### **Examples of stories narrated during the Somali and Yemeni Narrative Workshops**

##### **Example 1: A story read out by a young Yemeni boy**

Asalaamu Aliakum,

My name is Ali and I am twelve years old. I was born in Liverpool and I am the youngest in my family. I have three older brothers and three older sisters. We all live together and help my father and mother to run our shop. I have no problems at home and I am close to my father.

Sometimes I have some communication problems with my mother because she does not speak English. It is sometimes difficult when I have school work and my parents cannot help me- I would like more involvement from them in my school-sometimes they can't read the letters I bring home from school.

Sometimes I feel my parents are putting pressure on me to go to the Arabic school and I see that this is a good thing to do. But it is long and I do not have a lot of fun when I go there. My parents often compare me to other Yemeni boys who speak good Arabic and who behave well. This puts a lot of pressure on me and makes me feel that I am not good enough.

I love my English school but sometimes there are nasty children and they racist things to me like: "Are you Saddam Hussain's son?" or "Bin Laden's son?"- They come near my school bag and say 'tick-tock' as if I am carrying a bomb in my bag. This makes me feel upset and angry and it is unfair to say all of us Muslims are terrorists.

I love my father and have respect for him but I worry that as we get older we might have more difficulties. I see my older brother's relationship with my father is difficult. My older brother does not talk to my father and tries to avoid him. He does not even sit and eat a meal with him.

My brother said that my father does not give him enough freedom and he would like to go out more with his friends. My father thinks that my brother will do bad things with his friends like taking drugs or getting drunk. My brother feels that my father worries too much and he does not do bad things. All my brother's friends are 'checked out' by my father and this is embarrassing. My father worries a lot about my brother getting attacked by racist people and that is why my brother feels safer in Liverpool 8, there are more Arab and Black people here. He even told me that he feels safer and relaxed in Yemen when we go on holiday, because this is his country- but he cannot go back and live there because his Arabic is not good, and there would be no chance of him getting a job or education.

My brother once said to me that he doesn't talk to my father and avoids him because he knows my father wouldn't understand his life and the difficulties he faces being a young Yemeni man in Liverpool. This is why he avoids my father.

My brother sometimes feels he is caught between two cultures and he belongs to both. He would love to find a way to be a good Yemeni and a good British boy and still have a good relationship with my father.

## **Example 2: A story read out by a Somali father**

As Salaamu Alaikum

Today we have heard our sons' worries and concerns, and we appreciate these. We understand that there is a big gap between our sons and us, and we are not blaming our sons, we feel it too. We understand living between two cultures is very difficult, and we appreciate our sons are under a lot of pressure trying to balance being British and Somali. We know we have to be patient and accommodating but sometimes our anxieties take over us. They are anxieties about being unemployed and not knowing the British culture and language.

We love our sons, and we want to see them being successful, educated and happy living in this country. They are our future, and we want what is best for them without losing any of their heritage and culture. We would like the opportunity to talk with our sons, and listen to what they have to say too. This way we can both gain mutual respect for each other. We also understand that we need to look at the way we are at home, with our wives, and look at how this may affect our children.

We feel that Social Services sometimes come between us and our children, because of their lack of knowledge about our traditions and culture. It would be helpful to us if Social Services knew more about our culture. This could be done by organizing awareness days run by us and our sons. This will help us to understand their role and help them to work with us to support us.

We understand that some of the elders may phone the Police about our sons. They do this out of concern. They think the police will help them to discipline the youngsters like back in Somalia.

We feel that we lost our togetherness as a community and we think it's important to act as one community so we can be less critical of each other. Back in Somalia in our village and in our tribes, each and every adult feels the responsibility for each other's children and that made us more tolerant and understanding for our youngsters. However, here the fear of criticism and the lack of empathy you feel from other community members make us put a

lot of pressure on the children not to overstep the line.

We think having parenting gatherings or groups will make us realise that we are all dealing with similar issues and hence unite the community and bridge the gap between fathers and sons. It may also improve communication between us and our children and make both parties realise the importance of mutual respect.

We think having a community centre where families can come together as one unit so it will promote closeness and family togetherness, rather than having only women or men centres.

We are hoping today will be the first step towards regaining our togetherness and towards reclaiming our parenting skills that help us to get closer to our children.

### **Appendix 5.3.3b**

#### **Questions young Somali boys prepared and explored with the elders in their communities during the Somali story- telling intergenerational Saturday lunch**

1. What are your earliest childhood memories?
2. Can you describe the games you used to play when you were young?
3. When you were young, who did you get advice from?
4. Who were your role models (who did you look up to) when you were young?
5. What were your dreams and ambitions when you were young?
6. Do you remember some of the Somali traditional tales, poems and stories you used to hear when you were young?
7. What about traditional Somali games you played when you were young?
8. Can you describe traditional Somali celebrations such as weddings? What used to happen and are things different now?
9. What were your expectations for this story telling intergenerational lunch experience we had today?
10. How did you feel today and what are you taking with you?

### **Appendix 5.3.3d**

**Unedited copy of the Yemeni DVD script (Written by Splintertraining Group, Liverpool, UK)**

#### **INTERNAL. OSAMA'S BEDROOM. DAY**

Osama Mohammed 15. He's surrounded by books etc, doing homework. He's wearing a Liverpool football shirt.

Osama Mohammed, 15 years old. Liverpool.

#### **Osama 1**

- 1 He's just accused me of taking drugs. My own dad. He said his friends told
- 2 him. He says his mate told him he saw me and my mates all smoking a weed
- 3 by Princes Park Gates. He was going mad. Shouting at me saying I was
- 4 shaming the family. I understand how he must worry. He should trust me I
- 5 can be trusted, I've never given him a reason not to. I think he's just scared.
- 6 I don't smoke weed. I don't smoke anything.

Osama 1 fades into Osama 2; the same character played by a different actor.

#### **Osama 2**

- 7 His mate can't have seen me. I got accused of drinking the other day. I'm not
- 8 saying I've never been tempted, loads of my mates drink, smoke, they have
- 9 loads of girlfriends that they treat like dirt. I'm not like that. I'm not judging
- 10 them, each to their own. It's like you get it from all sides. I've got pressure

11 from my parents, thinking I'm not being good enough then  
pressure from my  
12 mates, thinking I'm too good. I could have gone to Liverpool  
Reserves  
13 match tonight, my mate Goshi had a spare ticket. Can't go.  
Wonder why?  
14 Oh yeah, I'm working in the shop, again. This gives me two hours  
15 to get me finished.

Follow Osama's arm down to an essay he's writing. When we come back up his arm, we have another actor playing him.

### **Osama 3**

16 There's always more responsibility on the oldest. I'm not asking  
for the  
17 world, I'd just like a bit more freedom. I'm spending half my life  
working for  
18 my dad in the shop, and the other half is spent either at school,  
doing  
19 homework, or going to Arabic school. Weirdest thing is, even  
though he  
20 wants me In the shop all the time, he never shuts up about me  
not ending  
21 up a shopkeeper like him. I like school. My school is good. But I  
get sick of  
22 the idiots. I've lost count the number of times I've been called Bin  
laden and  
23 asked if I've got a bomb in my bag. Just cos I'm a Muslim. I'm  
proud of  
24 being a Muslim.

### **INSIDE. LIVING ROOM. DAY**

Abdi Mohammed is 50 years old. He is sat with a copy of the Independent. The character is played by a much younger actor. Abdi has just had an argument with his son, Osama.

Throughout Abdi's speech images of older Yemeni men fade in and out of shot...This can be used as the linking device when swapping actors

Abdi Mohammed 50 years old. Liverpool.

**Abdi 1**

25 I worry so much about my boy, it's making me ill. He doesn't  
understand.  
26 He thinks I'm an old fool who doesn't know what's happening. I  
know. I  
27 know what goes on round here. There are bad kids. Kids whose  
parents let  
28 them run around and do exactly what they want, taking drugs,  
joining  
29 gangs, drinking alcohol. Good parents know what their children  
are doing  
30 and make sure it is always the right thing, and, that it's good for  
them and  
31 for their family.

Holding up his newspaper.

**Abdi 1 (CONT'D)**

32 Look at this. Every day there are stories of racist attacks,  
children  
33 running round with guns and knives, killing each other. Children  
killing  
34 each other. No wonder I don't sleep at night.

Lifts the paper up over his face. When the paper is lowered, Abdi is played by another young actor.

## Abdi 2

35 I feel like I have lost control of Osama. He doesn't want to  
listen to me.  
36 I left Yemen over twenty years ago but the values of my country  
are still  
37 very much with me. I want my son to have this too. He doesn't  
want to  
38 spend any time with me, he doesn't want to come to the  
Mosque with  
39 me anymore. I just take the younger three. We try to go to  
Yemen every  
40 couple of years for a holiday. When we are there, we are  
together as a  
41 family and Osama behaves like the other boys there. He eats  
with us,  
42 spends time with us. When we get back to Liverpool, he reverts  
to  
43 British behaviour, wants too much freedom. He wants me to tell  
44 him when things of him

Abdi gets up and paces about the room.

## Abdi 2

45 Children do not need to know why; they should just do as  
they're told.  
46 Although, I have heard that in this country, some children have  
47 reported their parents to Social Services if they try to stop  
48 them doing what they want. It scares me to think my son could  
49 do this to me. I love him very much.

When Abdi turn back to face camera, he is being played by a third young actor.

### **Abdi 3**

50 My oldest son is growing away from me. I was told that he  
was seen  
51 with boys who are known to be drug users and drinking  
alcohol. What  
52 am I supposed to do? He is my son, I have to protect him. I  
want to  
53 trust him but he is still very young. He thinks he knows  
everything  
54 but he's a boy. I wish we could understand each other better.

### **INSIDE. SHOP. DAY**

Osama, Actor 3, is working in his dad's shop.

Osama age 15. Two weeks later.

### **Osama 1**

55 Dad and I talked today; for the first time, really talked about  
our  
56 problems with each other. We were at this group. It was  
good. He  
57 listened.

### **INSIDE. LOCATION 3. DAY**

### **Abdi 1**

58 It must be very hard for these boys trying to be British and  
Yemeni at  
59 the same time. My son and I live in a different world to the  
one my  
60 parents and I lived in. Maybe their job was simpler than mine.

## **INSIDE. SHOP.DAY.**

Osama is serving someone in his dad's shop.

### **Osama 2**

61 We are interested in our culture, in our religion. I'm dead  
proud of who  
62 I am, where my family comes from. I was even able to tell my  
dad  
63 about Arabic school I know it's important and I want to learn  
about my  
64 faith but the school is boring and it doesn't need to be. We  
talked  
65 about ways of making it more interesting and fun. Dad  
listened. No  
66 criticism, big drama, just listened.

## **EXTERNAL. STREET. DAY**

Abdi is walking towards his shop.

### **Abdi 2**

67 Back in Yemen, I was a lawyer but my law degree wasn't  
recognized here.  
68 I couldn't afford to start again; studying taking exams not  
with a  
69 young family to support. I want my boy to be able to  
achieve anything he wants.  
70 I will never hold him back and I'll do anything I can to help  
him.  
71 He's a good boy and he deserves it.

**INT. SHOP. DAY.**

**Osama 3**

72 I've learnt a lot from my father and I know he's got a lot more to  
teach

73 me. He can learn from me as well.

Abdi comes into the shop.

**Abdi 2**

74 For the first in a long time, I feel hopeful that my son and I can  
feel closer again.

Section ends

**INT. STUDIO. DAY**

Music. Spoof Documentary style scene in very sparse studio space. An old  
fashioned looking scientist enters.

**Scientist**

76 Hello. I am a Scientist. Today I am conducting a highly  
scientific

77 experiment in the name of science. We are asking the  
question, 'What

78 makes a perfect British boy, what makes a perfect Yemeni  
boy,

79 and how do we fuse the two together? Look, here is a British  
boy....

The British boy character enters and stands beside the scientist.

80       **British boy:** Hello.

81       **Scientist:** And look, here is a Yemeni boy.

The Yemeni boy enters and stands at the other side of the Scientist.

82       **Yemeni boy:** Hello

83       **Scientist:** Let us begin.

84       **British boy:** The perfect British boy should always show  
respect for

85       those around him.

86       **Yemeni boy:** The perfect Yemeni boy should always show  
respect for

87       those around him.

88       **Scientist:** And moving on.

89       **British boy:** When the perfect British boy is watching 'Match of  
the

90       Day' and his father comes in and puts BBC News Channel on  
instead,

91       the boy should politely complain and make the point that he  
was there

92       First

93       **Yemeni boy:** When the perfect Yemeni boy is watching 'Match  
of the

94       day' and his father comes in and puts the Al Jazeera News  
Channel on,

95       he should thank his father for helping him with his education.

96       **Scientist:** I see. Next.

97       **Yemeni boy:** The perfect Yemeni boy should look after his  
parents and

98       extended family for life.

99       **British boy:** The perfect British boy should get out of the

house at  
100 sixteen, get a job and stand on his own feet.  
101 **Scientist:** Very interesting. But how do we bring the two  
together  
102 to make the perfect Yemeni British boy? The answer is.....Oh  
dear.  
103 That's all we have time for, tune in next week when we will  
asking why  
104 do noses run and feet smell. Goodbye.

Music. Scientist and boys wave.

### Appendix 5.3.3g

#### Example of a coded transcript of a semi-structured conversation

This young Somali man (M) describes his work with the Liverpool City Council to me (R):

<b>Semi-structured conversation</b>	<b>Themes elicited</b>
1 <b>M:</b> we doing this work around culture.... learning..... we' re doing this DVD about	<b>Deictic centres</b> <b>Localization</b> <b>Language negotiations of place</b>
2 Somali culture.....all about family life... or how...what's what's the food like.... what's the dresses like....	<b>Cultural contexts</b>
3 not like a pantomime but something like that...so we got all the boys dressed as women and old men	
4 And we said like we based it on a family a Liverpool Somali family coming to England...	<b>Deictic centres</b>
5 Half of the family is already here in England and some of them are coming over from Somalia... some of them are coming you know what I mean...	<b>Mutually re-negotiated centres</b>
6 . So how... the story is about how their culture divides them, how they don't understand each other... and that how it is like that...	<b>Narratives as transitional objects</b>
7 .... how one of their sons had a British culture and how the other had a strong Somali culture	<b>Struggles in bi-cultural identities</b>
8 <b>R:</b> What was happening within the family?	
9 M:.....the son, got two sons one's coming over and one is already here but the son up here he' s very bad he's out in the streets he's into drugs not drug culture but bad culture which is the culture that we live in day to day	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"><b>Challenging logic of appropriateness</b></div> <b>Process of detachment/separation from constitutive norms</b>

- 10 What did the other members of the family think about this the ones that are coming from Somalia?
- 11 That that not the way of life...the family however... eventually manages to get the sons together and show him that its not the way of life.....they get him focused! **Family as identity marker  
Social support**
- 12 It was a struggle to get him together... that's how it goes! Yeah it was a struggle yeah! **Family as identity marker  
Challenges in assuming bi-cultural identities  
Social support  
Positioning of older other  
Narratives as transitional objects**
- 13 **R:** Is that what you wanted to show (in the play?)
- 14 **M:** We didn't want to show just that what we wanted to show was....we wanted to show the whole Somali culture in our pantomime that we organized for our young... **Re-negations of social categorization of self through dramatic representations**
- 15 **R:** How did you get the idea of getting young people together to work on this drama?
- 16 **M:** the young people.....they got the idea themselves... they got the things themselves ...they just done the pantomime and all that **Sense of otherness  
Social categorization of self as we  
Narrative as transformations**
- 17 **R:** Is this part of the work that you are doing with the Liverpool city council?
- 18 **M:** Yeah that's right...part of the city council yeah .....they offered the grant to the young persons.....
- 19 **R:** Did you kind of coordinate this whole work?
- 20 **M:** yeah
- 21 **R:** What do the young person's get out of it ?
- 22 **M:** They learnt from it, yeah ...they enjoyed it...we even went for a whole day out as well, an away day...the whole DVD.....it was a group thing yeah **Social categorizations of self  
Negotiating time, place others self**
- 23 **R:** Did you know these young people before you started off?
- 24 **M:**Yeah...I knew them but I didn't know they were capable of acting and all that.....we discovered things about each **Transformations**

other

- 25 you discovered things about each other
- 26 yeah, yeah and I'll tell you more.....about the boys dressed as women...this might be quite offensive and rude in Somali culture...but these kids are born in Liverpool, they don't see it as that (rude) they see it as drama...they imitate to get the message across..... They were acting kind of you know what I mean so they actually enjoyed it! Really! Serious!
- 27 **R:** What did you get out of the whole thing? What did you discover about yourself?
- 28 **M:** I discovered many things... like even prayer, that Islamic culture...Islamic religion..... Its part of our Somali culture, it's our culture it's what you have to do. Ain't it?! I learnt to care about things ...care about life....
- 29 **R:** Thinking back, how did you learn to care about things, about life? Any specific episodes in your life that have helped you to do this?
- 30 I had just come over with my family from Somalia, I was about 7 or 8...and at school there was this guy, who bullied me... we ended up fighting... and I picked up a brick and threw it over his back.
- 31 My uncle was very angry and he said what did you just do? You will get into trouble...the boy was also well known in the neighbourhood.
- 32 I kept myself at a distance from the boy after this incident...Strangely enough I met this boy again...after many years...he is in my same Uni class!
- 33 We recognised each other and this guy actually came up and apologised at what had happened years back!
- 34 We became friends now. It reminded me of a wise Somali proverb? After a fight, there is true friendship.
- 35 ....as a teenager you go to the centre 'out there'...and you start thinking...I'm not British...I'm not Somali..... so who am I?
- 36 It's all very confusing at first until you get to know...you discover...like me...when I
- Challenging constitutive norms**  
**Different cognitive models**  
**Hyphenated identities**  
**Process of detachment/separation**  
**Different deictic centers**
- Re-formulating aspects of Identity-religion as Identity marker**
- Self immersed in past**  
**Masculine positioning**
- Positioning of the older other**
- Approach, ambivalence, avoidance in language discourse of self and others**
- Narratives as transitional objects**
- Transformations**  
**Exhorting sense of otherness**
- Challenges in identity formation, reformulating hybrid identities**
- Negotiating/reformulating identities/challenging social/constitutive norms**

was a young kid...I took much from the  
British culture...now that I' m twenty-two,  
I feel Somali .....it took time

## **Appendix 5.5.2**

### **The British Psychological Society's Codes of Ethic and Conduct (The British Psychological Society, 2010)**

(i) Each research step was considered from the standpoint of research participants, for the purpose of eliminating potential risks to psychological wellbeing, physical health, personal values, or dignity.

(ii) The research project was undertaken with due concern for the potential effects of, for example, age, disability, education, ethnicity, gender, language, national origin, race, religion, marital or family status, or sexual orientation. When appropriate, consultation was sought from those knowledgeable about such effects.

(iii) From the initial contacts, research participants were asked about individual factors that might reasonably lead to risk of harm, and research participants were informed of any action they should take to minimise such risks.

(iv) The Research Team refrained from using financial compensation or other inducements for research participants to risk harm beyond that which they face in their normal lifestyles. However, as part of funding obtained, the young men were remunerated for the translations they carried out.

(v) From their first contacts, research participants were informed that their right to withdraw at any time is not affected by the receipt or offer of any financial compensation or other inducements for participation.

(vi) From first contacts research participants were informed that they were free to decline to answer any questions put to them, while conveying as well that this may lead to termination of their participation, particularly when safety issues are implicated.

(vii) Research participants were informed when evidence is obtained of a psychological or physical problem of which they are apparently unaware, if it appears that failure to do so may endanger their present or future wellbeing.

ix) Exercise particular caution was exercised when responding to requests for advice from research participants concerning psychological or other issues. Referrals for assistance were offered when inquiry appeared to involve issues sufficiently serious to warrant professional services.

#### **Appendix 5.5.4**

### **Information Sheet for participants- Description of Research and Research Informed Consent Form**

Date:

Dear participant,

My name is Anne-Marie Micallef and I am a research student with Manchester Metropolitan University. We are currently working together with Building Bridges and the Somali Umbrella Group/Liverpool Arabic Centre on the fathers and sons project which as you know started recently last May 2008 through the consultation groups with members of the Somali/Yemeni community and also through a community-based meal event we had together. This coming work on the \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. magazine/DVD) with the younger community members is a continuation of this project as are the parenting meetings we have been having at PSS Gateway over the last few weeks with some of the fathers.

#### **What are the aims of this study?**

The aims of this study are:

- To work together with the male members in this community through the participation in this project.
- To try to understand how story- telling in different forms (e.g. the stories read out in the meal based event, the stories in the magazine or DVD) will help us to understand the social and cultural worlds inhabited by Muslim males in Britain today.
  - To try and understand how processes of social identity of young Somali and Yemeni British Muslim males are generated from intergenerational dialogue and action research activities, mainly narrative community workshops, local focus groups, semi- structured interviews, the production of a magazine and a DVD.

- To explore the relevance of community stories in participants' quest to narrate about the social and cultural worlds they inhabit.
- To understand how stories told by community members to other community members help both generations to share about who they are and what is important to them.
- To examine the role that Participatory Action Research (PAR) plays in the social construction of identity transitions through narratives and to encourage methodological innovation in the study of identities.
- To develop new understandings of how these young Somali and Yemeni British Muslim males reconcile conflicts of social identities with their contemporary life in Britain.
- To develop different and more friendly ways of working with local communities
- To provide recommendations for policy-making that will contribute in making these community participation activities a regular part of community life.

### **What will happen if I take part?**

If there are no objections on your part, the stories collected today during the \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. semi-structured interviews/ local visual groups/ DVD role play etc) will be audio recorded. This will make it easier to remember the stories afterwards and to refer to them later so that main themes are elicited. The stories will be later transcribed and all personal details will be removed. Some of these stories will then be included in the magazine/ DVD and in the writing of the research study. These stories will be then utilized to help us understand the aims described above and whether they have been reached.

### **Confidentiality**

All audiorecordings and other forms of written stories will be safely kept in a

cupboard in our offices. All Yemeni and Somali stories will be later translated in English by the project participants. All other digital and paper transcripts of these stories and group discussions will be also kept safe in a separate place. All material will be stored on computer that requires a personal password. All audio material will be erased 6 months after the completion of the research study.

Group members are asked to keep confidentiality of any personal stories disclosed by the group.

### **Risks**

There are unlikely to be any risks related to your participation in these community activities. However, if you do experience any form of distress, please let us know so that we will be able to help you.

### **What will happen after the study?**

After the study is completed, participants will be briefed on the study findings during the dissemination event. Feedback will also be given through the community co-ordinators at the Somali community centre/Liverpool Arabic Centre.

You can decide to withdraw from any of these activities at any time you want without having to offer any explanations and your participation will not be affected.

I really thank you for your time in reading this.

Please keep hold of this sheet.

If you need any further information about this study or you feel you would like to discuss any of the issues involved, please get in touch with:

Anne-Marie Micallef, MMU (tel: \_\_\_\_\_)

Carolyn Kagan Research MMU, Institute for Health and Social Change

(tel: \_\_\_\_\_)

Name of Somali Co-ordinator (tel: \_\_\_\_\_)

Name of Yemeni Co-ordinator (tel: \_\_\_\_\_)

**Consent Part:**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study

In signing below, I agree that I have read and understood the above information sheet discussed together in detail about this study.

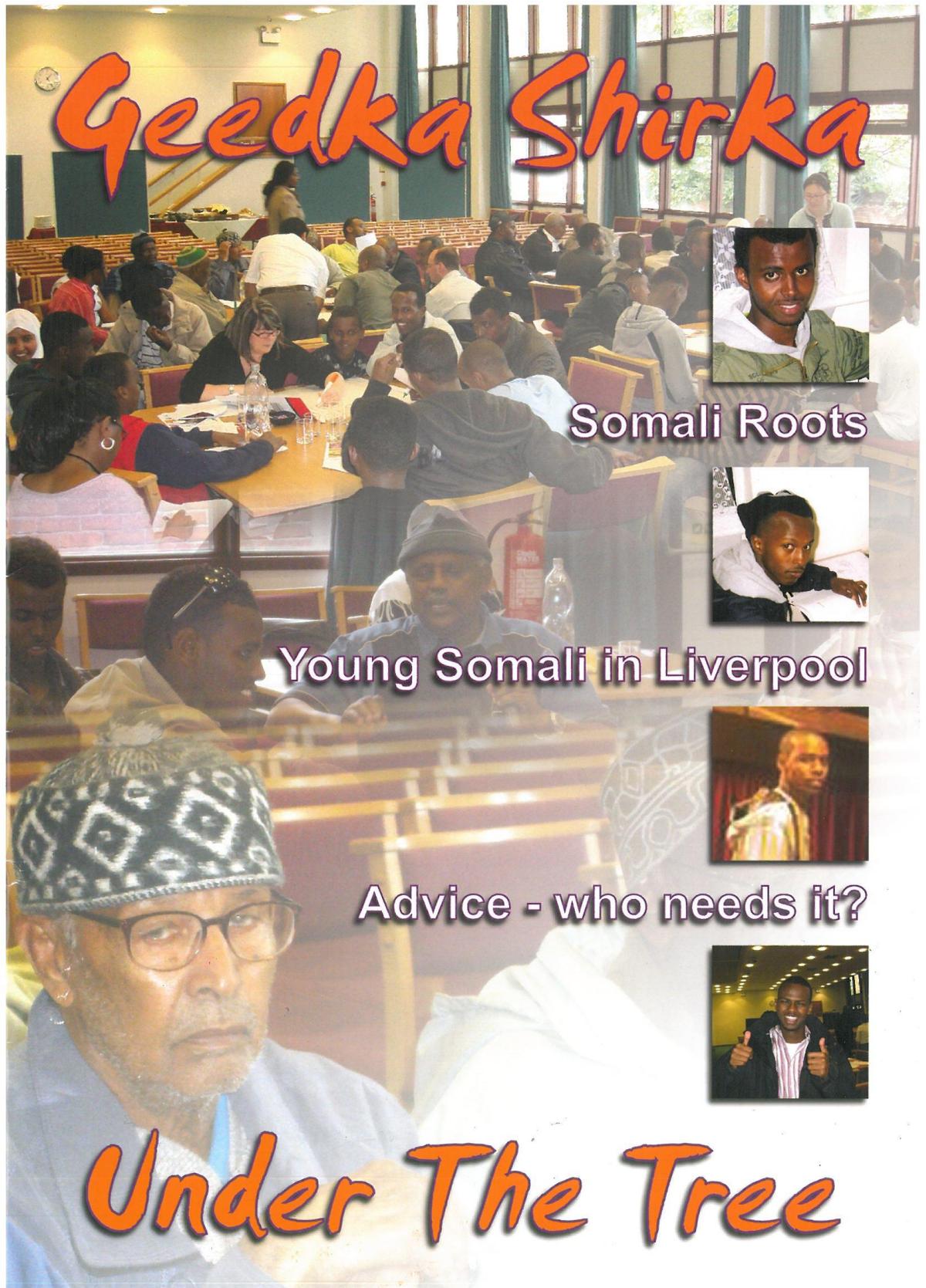
Name of participant:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 5.3.3a:

Copy of the Somali boys' magazine and backdrops used in the narrative workshop



## our team

Sharmarke ~ Zakariya ~ Mubarak ~ Ahmed ~ Abdisalam  
Ahmed ~ Hussein ~ Yusuf ~ Hussein ~ Jama

Welcome to our magazine. We are a group of young Somali men living in Liverpool. This magazine came about because we wanted to think more about our Somali roots, our life in Liverpool and our relationships with the rest of our community. In particular we wanted to think about the older generations of Somali men in our community. Life is very different for us now to how it was for them in Somalia, or when they first came to Liverpool. We wanted to find a way to bridge the gap between young and older men in our community and we decided to bring our thoughts and ideas together into a magazine.



The idea for a magazine emerged from our Somali Fathers and Sons Project to which we dedicate a special feature in our first edition.

Fathers and Sons is a project that aims to improve relationships between fathers and

sons. The project is funded by the Parenting Fund and delivered by Liverpool Arabic Centre and Building Bridges, (Royal Liverpool Children's Trust). For the last 18 months we have been working closely with people from Building Bridges, Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) and The Somali Umbrella Group to produce this work.

We really wanted to get to know some of the older men, particularly the fathers in our community. Creating the magazine has started a journey in getting to understand more about where we are all coming from. We have a rich Somali history and a culture we want to learn more about as we are very proud of it. We have met with and interviewed some of the fathers in our community and asked them about their experiences as fathers, their experiences as sons when they were young and for any advice that may help us with our lives.

We hope that creating this magazine may also help our community to learn some more about us too, and something of what it is like for us being young Somali men in Liverpool today. Enjoy!

# Somali roots

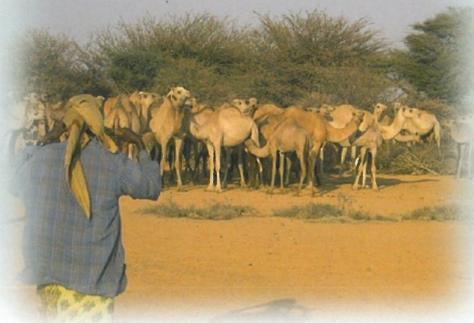
## Early memories of Somalia...

*"When I was young people were mostly nomadic and my earliest memory which I never forgot is a night when I was young boy and I was sleeping close to the family camels and a lion came hunting for some thing to eat and took the baby camel out of the herd. The lion brought it inches away from me while I was still asleep, a family member which I think was my uncle saw me and quietly dragged me by pulling my leg from the spot where the lions were eating the prey. That is a memory which I will never forget". (One of the men from the Fathers group).*

*"What I remember about life in Somalia is the people, the people used to be village people; they used to have livestock like camels and sheep. They protected their livestock from predators; they created their houses from the grass and earth. The son and father would listen to each others concerns and problems, for example the son would ask the father about marriage, when the son wanted a wife, he would consult his own father first, out of mutual respect. Without even the father telling his son or his desired wife, he would meet her family and ask them on his behalf for their daughter to marry his son, this displayed the total respect the father and son had established. Instead of money the father and his son would give their livestock to the other family in order to create a relationship between the two families. This was known as **yaarad**. When the son got married, he established his manhood and created his family next to his own father's family, to display to his father his matured status".*

Being a young Somali man in Liverpool has positives and negatives. As a group we have thought lots about what it means to us, our Somali roots, our Liverpool lives, how the past influences us and our hopes for the future. Here are some of the things we learnt from questioning the older men in our community, there are some surprising answers here!

We all have early memories that stay with us and make us who we are...



# Somali Games



another. We used to go at night, and take the camels for walks. In this period there were many stories being told, communication was at its most, in all a pleasant time".

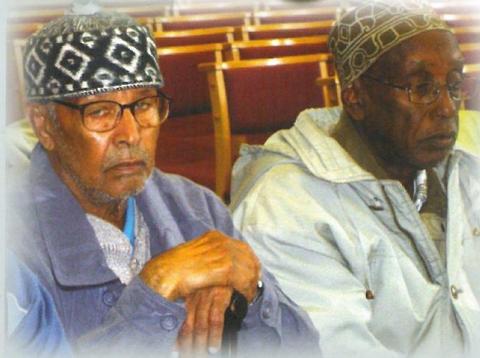
## "Cado Cado" ...and the history of Golf!

"The games that we used to play when I was young were varied. One was a game called "Cado-Cado" (Brightness-Brightness). This is a game which young people play at night when the moon is shining and it lights up the night darkness. We also used to play a game called 'Luuf' which is a game similar to golf but different. I think golf is more modernised version of Luuf which we used to play. In "Luuf", a hole gets created on the ground and everyone who wishes to play collects a stone. Everyone is ready, a line gets drawn on the ground (which no one can pass while throwing their stone). In turns everyone throws their stone towards the hole and who ever gets their stone inside or closest to the hole wins! The one whose stone is far-off from the hole is loser. The loser has to carry the winner on their back and has to play the game again!"

## Ever wondered what games the older generation got up to as youngsters?

"There were many games and they differed, we played with the girls however we never touched them out of respect and honour for the female. Our culture is not one that allows males and females to touch other; however we were allowed to have fun, dance and sing with one

# A Day at LACE



telling day... The boys and ourselves met separately at the Merseyside Somali Association and together with Building Bridges, we were all free to discuss and express our feelings and discuss our concerns our worries about living between two cultures. We also come up with solutions... put them together in different stories and read these stories at the meal" (a father).

What we tried to do at this meal based story telling day was to get us boys and fathers to come together and spend some time together and listen to these stories. We asked different people from our community what they thought about the story telling meal we had at LACE last May...

"We got to know people from Building Bridges who did work with black and minority ethnic communities in Liverpool. They provided support to families who are finding it difficult to cope and experiencing stress. They had bilingual workers who were sensitive to racial cultural and religious needs of the people they worked with". We also got to know Ahmed from the Somali umbrella group. Ahmed acted as interpreter at the meal and also coordinated the work with the people from Building Bridges. He is also a young father. We really got on well with him". (a boy)

"I think it all started when we got asked to take part in these consultation groups where we used to meet up and prepare for this story

"We think that mutual respect is very important. We feel there is a big gap between fathers and

sons and also a lack of communication between fathers and sons. We were very enthusiastic about this day as it set dialogue between our husbands and our sons” (a mother)

and our palms were actually sweating! For most of us it was the first time and in the beginning we felt that we had to impress.... I think we all were a bit afraid of what the fathers who were present might think of the stories...

This came from the assumptions and perceptions we had of the elders before we spent the day with them but none of the fears materialised” (Son)

“There were things we did not agree to like when one of the fathers said that boys should follow the law and obey it we felt that it was off task, – we didn’t like it, so ignored that” (Son)

“We often feel that as families, we are losing our togetherness. There is also what we see and experience as interference from police and social services - they too need to know about our culture and try to help us to stay as one family unit. We know that the way parents relate to each other leaves an impact on our children” (A mother)

“At the day we discussed about the impact of migration and how this affected our relationship with fathers, the problems and worries that fathers and ourselves face in Liverpool and also ways to improve our relationships.” (a boy)

“We all felt that this story telling day had served its purpose. ... Although it was rather scary to read the stories on stage and our hearts were banging as we read the stories loud on the mike

Somali women have always been and remain the main source of support in the Somali family structure. Somali women have extensive experience of running large families and have learnt to cope with the negative effects of migration on family life... the struggle to make ends meet, the different ways of seeing things at home that often might lead to arguing at home, the worries on their shoulders about their husbands and their children.

“.....one of the women professionals present at the meal said something really cool... the stories reminded her about her own community and how in Liverpool there is no sense of her people any more... she was touched by the fact that we Somalis were all there gathered together... trying to find ways to be together... to stay together ... she urged us to keep this sense of belonging up and not to lose it... this really touched me” (father and son)

“At times we were afraid fathers would get upset and thought that the parents would criticise the stories especially we were worried about the part when we said what we thought about chewing Khat. However, we feel that some of the people who attended have found it helpful, the atmosphere between the fathers and sons was good!. And some fathers were really pleased and proud of us. We think that we managed to show that we are serious about the message” (the boys)

# Young ... Somali ... in Liverpool

We talked about some of the things that stress us out. For some of us it's things to do with school or college, problems in the city, for others it's worries about our future.

The following story illustrates some of the issues we have encountered as young Somali men in Liverpool ...

*"There have been cases of young men taking their own life within the community and this has left (us) very shaken"*  
( A Somali Mother )

telling me to do something good with my time. I want that too ... but he does not understand how hard it is for me. I spend a lot of time with my friends. We meet outside the Somali Centre because there is nowhere else to go. We feel safe standing there ... we feel this is where we belong because when we move to another street we face racial abuse. Sometimes the elders call the police on us. We think they must do it for discipline but what really happens to us is that we get questioned... have our finger-prints taken. My father also worries about his children being attacked by racist people ...

"There is this respect issue and a language barrier between sons and fathers. They need to understand each other and communicate better"

"They need to stop chewing khat, should give more time to their family"

"There is a lack of trust between fathers and sons... they need to spend more time together and understand each other"

"We often feel that we do have many opportunities to share their ideas and feelings with fathers. For this to happen we need to have more communication with our fathers, which means we both need to listen to and make time for

*My name is Ali and I am 22 years old. I came to this country when I was 13 years old with my mother, father two brothers and two sisters. We left Somalia during the war. There were soldiers everywhere, many families' houses were burnt. I stopped going to school, it was very frightening.*

*...we understand our fathers' worries but we need to go out and meet our friends. Liverpool is our home now".*

Liverpool was very strange to me. I went to school but did not understand the lessons, there was no one to help me... There were other Somali boys in the school but their English was better than mine and they laughed at me... exams were very difficult and I left school without any qualifications. I tried getting a job working in a shop in the city centre but I was not successful. My father expects a lot from me. He is always

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**Did You Know?**



Adam Dirir - Somali Voice  
London's Sound Radio - Friday Evenings

# Advice - who needs it??!!!!!!!

Tough one!..... We decided that sometimes we all need it. Life is no easy game

## Agony Aunt

My name is Abdi and I am eleven years old. Today has been a long day, I've tried telling my teachers but they don't seem to understand my situation. I am being called names like 'Sambo'. It started with one boy, but now there are a group of them taunting me. They've attacked me in PE because of my colour and the teacher ran away. My parents don't know what is happening to me. What can I do?

*Dear Abdi,  
We feel really touched by your story. We would advise you to speak to your form teacher and explain the situation. Even though you may be scared and embarrassed, speak to your parents about it as they would be able to relate to your situation. They will also be able to help you and support you by talking to the school. They won't be angry with you. Your learning mentor and child-line are also alternatives. Don't give up and more importantly, don't suffer in silence. There are many children in your position. I hope your situation is soon sorted out (the team).*

## Our fathers and elders have worries too.....

"I am 45 years. I came to Britain in 1993 after the civil war broke out in Somalia... before I came here I had thought it would be easy to settle in and that it would be easy to find work. We've been living on benefits and I have only

been able to really afford basic necessities such as food and clothes for the children and paying the bills. My wife and children want more than that... some men feel that they are losing their status as fathers and as bread winners because the family depends on government benefits and not them. This can cause fighting and the family ends up splitting up... or the husband wants to avoid the arguing and ends up staying out and chewing kat all night. I also worry about my children and how they are going to grow up here. Whether they will get a good education and find jobs or whether they follow the ways of the other children in this country. Will they be good Muslims and respect their elders?"  
(from father's story read at LACE)

*"We know that coming to this country was not easy, leaving family and home behind. We know it is frustrating not being able to find a job especially when there are expectations from relatives in Somalia. We know there is a big difference between the culture our fathers were raised in and this culture we are growing up in... but we value our fathers... we see them as our only link to our history and identity... we would like them to tell us about being a Muslim in Somalia. We are interested in our religion and we know that it is important for us"*  
(from boy's story, read at LACE)

**What problems or worries are you experiencing? Need some help or advice? Check out the addresses on the back of the magazine (page 23) if you need some support.**



## Where did our fathers go for advice?

We decided to check out what the older generation of men in our Somali community used to do when they looked for advice.

*"When I was young and I needed advice the only people that I used to seek for advice were my parents and my relatives who were older than me. I believe that parents always want the right things with*

*"When I was young the people that I used to look up to were those who achieved good things and I used to spend my spare time with them and they were mainly older than me. If the person is older than you they maybe more experienced and can try and stop you if you are doing wrong".*

***"Wax badan ayad wax waxkusiiya aragtaa, lakin wax yar ayad wax kula taliya Hiisha".***

*"You see, many will offer you help but only few will give you valuable advice"*

*Sometimes it can feel hard to think about the future and to have confidence in our dreams, what advice would you have for young people with ambition no matter how small?*

*"I believe every person can be what ever their ambitions are, no matter how long it takes them. To be honest when I was young my dream was to get a better life and to avoid getting involved in illegal activities such as selling drugs. It was my ambition to never misuse my time. I used to think about my future and my different dreams".*

*"I think only people who want the right thing for you, can show you the right thing. Your role model should be only those who show you positive things and would like to see you succeed, which are often your parents"*

**Maybe there is something to be learnt from this...  
living in the city, it's not easy.**

# Stories and tales!

Somali culture is a such a rich culture for stories and amazing tales. When you start to research into Somali stories you realise this is one of the main ways that generation after generation taught each other all about life. This is where so much advice can be found!

**"I liked the stories being told to me, the stories of my forefathers past and how they lived their life at them times. Also I liked to know how my country's well being was. I wanted to tell the stories to other people, and I liked to ask anyone about Somalia's culture and past"(Elder).**

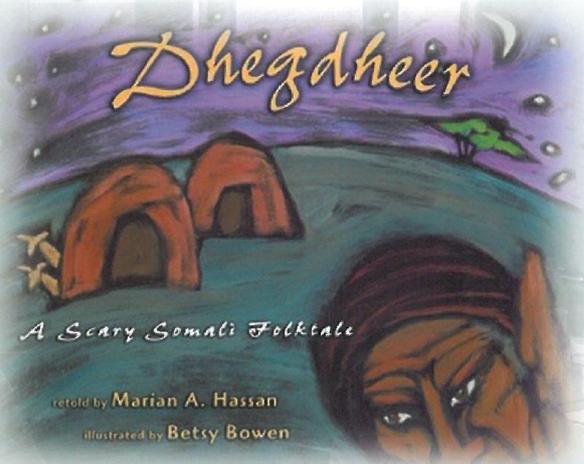
We felt it would be great for our fathers to tell us traditional Somali stories, that can also teach us about Somali morals. The men in our fathers group told us their favourite tales. We interviewed them, translated their stories and edited them.. here they are... We need to know about our history and heritage, it will give us a sense of belonging, pride and identity. We can then re-tell these stories to our children in the future, younger brothers, cousins and friends, so they understand as well.

Somali stories and tales are so varied, we heard comic tales, sad stories, poetic parables...

There are many stories and all of them can't be mentioned here!. There are different types of them... they were always told at night to entertain ourselves with.

"The most interesting yet I used to fear the most was the story of **Queen Araweelo**. This story was about a woman who once was a queen and her name was Araweelo. She hated men so much that she used to tell people to catch all the men for her and then cut off their private parts!

"There was also the story of **Wiil-Waal** and the story of **Igaal Shidaal**. Wiil-Wall was very brave and his stories were very interesting and were told to make us more fearless and Igaal Shidaal was cowardly man who used to fear every-thing".



These stories that we were told mainly carried a message whether it was bravery, or fearfulness. The boys use to be scared of Araweelo use to fear her where as the girls loved her stories and used to tell us that they going to take us to Araweelo.

**Igaal's is a character who features in many tales... very funny but there is wisdom in his tales too....**

'One night when it was dark, Igaal was walking alone in a road something that had the shape of a person appeared in front of him. Igaal thought that this was a monster waiting for him and stopped. He stood there all night and at dawn he saw that the thing was a tree trunk. Igaal couldn't believe and talked to the tree trunk and said 'what I thought you were or what you turned out to be, I thought you were a person waiting for me but you turn out to be a tree trunk however you taught me to never walk at night again'.

We liked the stories because they were continuous and mainly had an exciting feel to them. Secondly these stories were usually told at night time when people are waiting for the food to be cooked. In Somalia people eat their supper late, so in order to entertain the children, these stories were read. Also in the countryside children were told these stories, especially when they are waiting for the milk from the camel to arrive. The way these stories were told was, children gather around the person telling the story usually around a campfire and then the stories were told.

# So what is Somalia's story?

We all felt we wanted to know much more about our home country. We searched the Internet and talked to our friends and family. When we met with the fathers group we asked them loads about life in Somalia. Here are some of the things we found out from them and some things we researched as well (we got so much information we couldn't fit it all in the magazine... there is a wealth of facts out there about Somalia - go and check them out!!)

In Somalia there are two different lives, life in urban areas and life in the bush. Life in the urban area is pretty much similar or follows the same process as here e.g. get up have a shower, breakfast, go work and come back home. However live in the countryside is different and there are traditions. Men have their own roles and woman have their own roles. Usually the men look after the livestock during the day time and usually they visit each other after they bring the livestock back in the house at sunset.

"The culture of the people who live in the rural areas is based around their livestock and their main mission is to preserve their livestock in terms of taking them to somewhere where there is enough food for the animals because their lives are dependent on their livestock, whether they produce milk or meat for them"  
(Father's group).

## What is mainland Somalia?

*Somalia started off in two parts; Italian Somalia and Somaliland which was British protected. The 2 parts united on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1960 to gain powers from the colonial powers*

### Location and Size

Somalia is located on the coastline of East Africa, the area is also known as the Horn of Africa. Somalia shares its border with Ethiopia, Kenya and the Republic of



Djibouti. Somalia has a large coastline, with a total area of 637,656 sq. km, and the capital is Mogadishu.

### Population

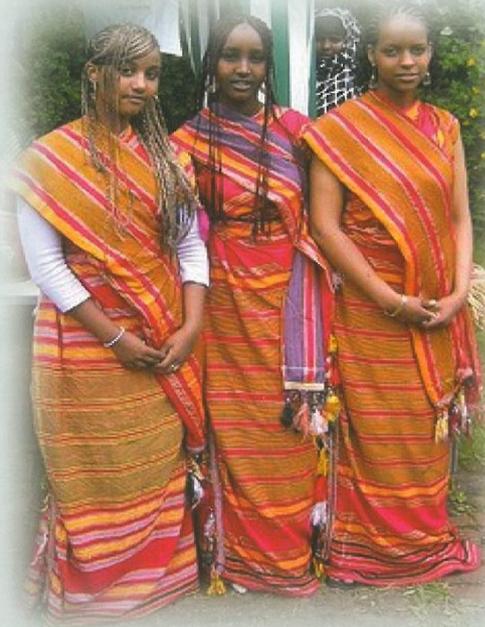
The 2007 estimate was 9,118,773, though the estimate is about 13 million including Somalis living outside Somalia.

### People



Somali people mainly live in Somalia, north east Kenya and north east Ethiopia. The people of Somalia have a traditional clothing style to suit the hot climate. Men traditionally wear a *macawiis* (pronounced maa-wiis), this is similar to a sarong that is

traditionally worn also by males from the Indian subcontinent. Due to the hot climate this is often paired with a vest and shirt. The head is usually covered with a hat, this is called a *kofiyad* (pronounced coffee-yad). As with most Islamic countries, some members of the male population also wear an *Imaamat*, this is similar to a scarf, it is draped over head to provide shade and protect the wearer from sunlight. Footwear is usually a pair of nice sandals. Traditionally women wear a long flowing dress; this is often made from soft silk. The dress is called a *diriic* (pronounced der-reih) and often has bright multicoloured patterns.



The dress often resembles a flowing night gown. The women also wear a headscarf, this is called a *maser*, the head scarf is wrapped around the head, with a fastening on the side. Quite commonly worn are gold earrings, these are called *dahab* (pronounced da-hab). Footwear for the ladies is also a nice pair of sandals, however the ladies sandals have high heels!

The women wash clothes with their hands, and this still happens in the countryside. Also in the countryside, cooking is still done on an open fire. In the city it is more developed.

### Language

The language spoken by the people of Somalia is called Somali. Originally an oral language, this became a formalised written language in 1972. Somali is written in the Roman/Latin alphabet, the words are influenced by the colonial presence and also Arabic. Approximately 25% of words are formed from Arabic, with others being influenced by Italian and English.

### Religion



The people of Somalia follow Islam, it is said that 100% of the population are Sunni Muslims.

## DID U KNOW?

Telling the story of Somalis in Britain is hard work. We did not find the exact number of Somalis in Liverpool, however in the UK there is an estimated number of 43,000 Somalis in the 2001 census. Other experts suggest a much higher number, about 95,000 and as many as 250,000!

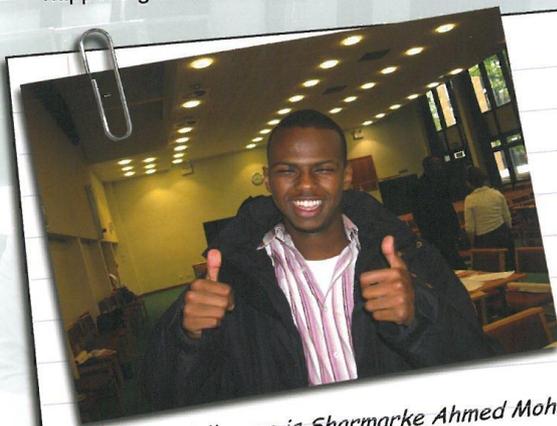
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# Liverpool Somali Voices

For our first edition of our magazine, we met up and spoke to three of our community members in Liverpool and asked them about their lives in Liverpool. It is natural to get discouraged when we listen to all the negative stuff that is happening around us...

...but look what we found out about boys and men in our community!!!! This is what they shared with us:

## Mubarak describes his work with the Liverpool City Council.....



Hi! My full name is Sharmarke Ahmed Mohamed I was born in Djibouti in Republic of Djibouti, one of the east coast countries in Africa. I am 18 years of age. I lived in Somalia for 11 years. I moved to England in February 2002, with my little brother to join my mum who came here in 1996 and my little brother who was born in Liverpool. I went to St. Silas primary school, at year 6. During that last year of the primary school I've had a lot of help with improving my English. In September 2002 I started secondary school, at New Heys School where I have achieved 7 GCSEs, grades Bs & Cs. Now I am in 6<sup>th</sup> form. My options of A-levels are Business studies, I.C.T. and Sociology. In the future I intend go to University and I would like study Combined business and economics.

"we doing this work around culture... learning... we're doing this dvd... all about Somali culture... family life... what's the food like... what's the dresses like... we got all the boys dressed as women and old men... we based the story on a family, a Liverpool Somali family. Half of the family is already here in England and some of them are coming over from Somalia. The story is about how their culture divides them, how they don't understand each other... how one of their sons had a British culture and how the other had a strong Somali culture... in the story the son over here is very bad... he's out in the streets... He's into the culture we live in day to day... the family, however, eventually manages to show him that its not the way of life... they get him focused! It was a struggle to get him together, that's how it goes!

How did you get the idea of getting young people together to work on this drama?

The young people....they got the idea themselves... they got the things themselves... they just done the pantomime and all that.

"We want sons to be educated, to work and (have a) good character... I think that the education system is letting down (the) Somali community"

"The culture before arriving and the culture in school is different - respect (is) lost and mix with different cultures... there is a lack of role models - people are jobless, criminalized and role models are disappearing".

Is this part of the work that you are doing with the Liverpool city council?

Yeah that's right... part of the city council, yeah .... they offered the grant to the young persons.

Did you kind of coordinate this whole work?

Yeah

What do the young persons get out of it ?

They learnt from it, yeah... they enjoyed it... we even went for a whole day out as well, an away day... the whole dvd... it was a group thing, yeah.

Did you know these young people before you started off?

Yeah... I knew them but I didn't know they were capable of acting and all that... we discovered things about each other. I'll tell you more... about the boys dressed as women... this might be quite offensive and rude in Somali culture... but these kids are born in Liverpool, they don't see it as that (rude) they see it as drama... they imitate to get the message across... so they enjoyed it!

What did you get out of the whole thing?  
What did you discover about yourself?

I discovered many things. Like even prayer that's Islamic culture... Islamic religion... It's part of our Somali culture, it's our culture it's what

you have to do. Int it?! I learnt to care about things... care about life.

*"I had just come over with my family from Somalia, i was about 7 or 8 and at school there was this guy who bullied me... we ended up fighting... and I picked up a brick and threw it over his back. My uncle was very angry and he said what did you just do? You will get into trouble... the boy was also well known in the neighbourhood. I kept myself at a distance from the boy after this incident. Strangely enough I met this boy again after many years. He is in my same uni class! We recognised each other and this guy actually came up and apologised at what had happened years back! We became friends now. It reminded me of a wise Somali proverb? After a fight, there is true friendship"*

*"as a teenager you go to the centre 'out there'... and you start thinking... I'm not British... I'm not Somali... so who am I? Its all very confusing at first until you get to know... you discover... like me... when I was a young kid... I took much from the British culture... now that I am 22, I feel Somali ... it took time "*

*"My father told me about the culture of the Somali people, and how my forefathers had established themselves as people. My hopes and ambitions were to learn and gain more knowledge, to achieve wealth and property. Also to get married and have a family of my own", I think i have managed to do what is important in my life"*  
(a father talking to the lads)

## Let's Celebrate...



Our culture has a long history of really being able to celebrate in style... colourful clothes, different kinds of amazing food, music, dancing, story telling and poetry. These all play such an important part in Somali culture. We spoke with people we knew from different backgrounds, many of them really impressed with our rich traditions and ways of celebrating. We want to remember and keep those important celebrations and get together. The older generation we spoke with remember back to when they were younger in Somalia:

*"There are traditional folk dances which people go to at night. There are mainly three types of dances and the one I mostly used to*

go to was one called 'Jaan dheer' also known as 'Ciyaar reer hawd'" (father)

As a community there is also a culture which is after hardship time when the spring season comes all the people meet. There are traditional dances at night time which mainly everyone comes except the old and the children. Young people get to know each other in these traditional dances and mainly these are where marriages start from.

## Celebrating Marriage

*"The last traditional wedding which I have been to was in either 2001 or 2002. In this wedding, people were wearing traditional cloths and shoes. There was a camel which was sent from the countryside carrying milk which people drink at the wedding; this was some thing which people used to do back in the days and everyone who comes to the wedding have to drink from the milk. In this wedding the ladies were wearing dhacle iyo adexqayd (which is the ladies traditional clothing) and the men were wearing Faygamuur shoes and two plain white sheets".*

For all of us younger lads, there were lots of questions we had about dating and meeting someone to marry, how it was in the past, how it might differ to now. Here are some of the things we found out...

*"Today's marriages and the ones in the past are far too apart. The family can easily be broken*

*but in the past, it was rare for people to get divorced and usually it was the last solution because a lot used to be done before people got married in the past. When two want to marry each other the first thing was that the two families had get to know each other very well and secondly the men must be able to take responsibility. After the two families get to know each other the men's family had to come to the girl's farther and ask for the girl. This process sometimes used to take two years and the wedding used to go on about 9 days after the two people get married. ... they don't move out, a new house gets built by the girl's mum's house and the new family used to live with the girl's family until the first child".*

Today's marriage is much quicker and in some cases people get to know each other over the phone and get married weeks later, as there was no build up for the marriage and the fact the two families don't have any relationship the marriage can be broken for something which is silly. Marriage is not formal to day and some people don't see marriage as what really marriage is. There is saying which goes:

**"Everything leaves you,  
the way you got them**

I mean by this, before it was hard to get married and there was a lot of preparation so it was hard to get divorced. But now it is simple to get married and it is simple to get divorced. Marriage was a big thing and was very highly valued.

## Poetry Battles

Poetry plays a big part in Somali culture and tradition. It is the first way in which history and traditions have been recorded. This is linked with the development of the Somali written language, and also linked with the custom of passing traditions through generations via narration.

We loved the idea of poetry battles. What a way to come together!! To solve things, to learn about each other and to be so spontaneously creative! Bring on the first Liverpool Somali poetry festival!!

*"I'm not Somali, but I've always loved poetry. Since working with these young men I have been genuinely impressed with what creative and poetic ways they are able to view the world. Many of them are really not afraid to express themselves through poetry. Young people from other cultures in Liverpool could learn a lot from them. I have learnt from the older generation that poetry was not only a way to entertain, but also to work through conflict, to inspire new ideas and to learn. It seems a very important skill and tradition to nurture." (worker involved with our magazine)*

**"In the past the best stories I heard was the way the elders would do poetry and have in sense poetry battles, I loved listening to it because it was something new that I had never heard of. The youth never got angered by having poetry battles" (father)**



## *A story about a boy called Nasir*

Let me tell you a little story about a boy called Nasir,  
born on the year 1987 and to his parents his birth was a blessing,  
but by the age of four his whole world turned upside down,  
cause civil war had struck his home town,  
his father had no choice but to move his family away,  
so they embarked on a new life in the UK,  
it seemed as though that after one tragedy another came along,  
cause after a few years in, his father has passed away and was gone,  
So his mother had to care for the family on her own,  
and it seemed from then Nasir to a life of madness was thrown,  
Little did he know about his country's past and culture,  
never really knew about the life he was living or even  
about the dream he was missing,  
years had passed and Nasir mixed with the wrong crowd,  
And from a sweet loving boy he had become a thug that was loud,  
Instead of looking up to his elders, Nasir took gangster rappers as his role models,  
but away from all this inside he was a shambles,  
not knowing where he was going in his life, or the path he was taking,  
Nasir's mental state was thin and not that far from breaking,  
But he knew he had to get away from the darkness and go towards the light,  
Nasir understood he had to escape, he weren't no dumbo he was bright,  
Got away from those that were pulling him back,  
Nasir heard a few lectures on Islam, Nasir's mind was like damn,  
cause he had forgotten his true purpose in life,  
from that moment Nasir fixed up and changed his ways,  
Nasir tried his best to redeem himself for them past days,  
Ladies and gents that was a brief telling of Nasir's tale,  
And of the consequences if a parent's teachings fail.

Poem by Zakariya Hussein

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## Until the lion learns to speak

Until the lion learns to speak  
The tales of hunting will be weak  
My poetry hails within the streets  
My poetry fails to be discrete  
It travels across the earth and seas  
From Eritrea to the West Indies  
It knows no boundaries, no trees  
It's studied in parts of the Greece

Runtaa  
Hadii kale waxaan lahaa  
Hahee

I am sick as far as lyrics  
I with it as far as gimmicks  
I spit barraging limit  
The shit they talking, rip it  
I am hip, the hop is living  
I skip the obvious women  
Don't get what I am presenting  
No rims, my mind is spinning

Runtaa  
Hadii kale waxaan lahaa  
Hahee

I was born and raised in the place  
Where the thorn of flame would blaze  
Where the foreigners are not  
embraced  
Where they warn you in jogging pace  
Where the loners lower their gaze  
Where the corners slower the chase  
Where they twist and turn in a maze  
With a pistol upon your face

Runtaa  
Hadii kale waxaan lahaa  
Hahee

So come with me to my lungs  
The depths can be overrun  
With passion, see how I come  
No cash, I'm free in the slums  
And the past, can we overcome  
I'm asking we be the ones  
To actually be the ones  
To free our people from guns

Runtaa  
Hadii kale waxaan lahaa  
Hahee

Until the lion learns to speak  
The tales of hunting will be weak  
My poetry hails within the streets  
My poetry fails to be discrete  
It travels across the earth and seas  
From Somalia to the West Indies  
It knows no boundaries, no trees  
It's studied in parts of the Greece

Runtaa  
Hadii kale waxaan lahaa  
Hahee

Say, I am sick as far as lyrics  
I with it as far as gimmicks  
I spit barraging limit  
The shit they talking, rip it  
I am hip, the hop is living  
I skip the obvious women  
Don't get what I am presenting  
No rims, my mind is spinning

Runtaa  
Hadii kale waxaan lahaa  
Hahee

Lyrics By K'NAAN

# Saying Goodbye

Last March 2008, a young 17-year old Somali boy, Ahmed Mohamed Ibrahim was killed in Sefton Park by a group of other Somali youngsters.

How "Sefton Park" affected us....

"As a community, we all know what happened a few months ago in March, at Sefton Park. As a community... we were at a loss... it is still very painful to speak about it and many of us find it easier to cope with by choosing not talk about it. But when it happened, it left a mark... for some time we could not even bring ourselves to continue thinking... about our lives, our future... about why these things happen... we even stopped working on our magazine... at the end, we felt it was important though to pay tribute and respect to Ahmed and his family, because he was one of us, a boy like us, with dreams and ambitions... we spoke to some community members about what happened."

"I did not like the way the newspapers wrote about the incident. It highlighted the gang culture around us all the more... it started out as a stupid fight... which ended up really badly"

"I did not really want to talk about it. I was hoping the memory would just go away..."

"I cried and cried. I could not sleep for a whole week when I heard what happened. I got flashbacks of war scenes back in Somalia when I was a kid before I left... my friends who were killed in the war... and the terrible scenes I had seen around in the streets".

"You know what some of the elders think of our Somali youth. What we spoke about in the project about fathers thinking we are always up to no good. I think this sort of disappointed them and hurt them all the more. It confirmed their worse fears... that is why maybe they did not wish to speak about it."



# Working with the lads...

In this section we got some comments of some of the people we worked with on our magazine adventure! This is what they had to say.....about us!! : )

## Ahmed

*"I first got to know these boys last May from the consultation groups we were doing to prepare for the meal based event. Then at the event day itself. After the day, taking up the boys suggestions, we started working together on this magazine. It has helped me appreciate the boys, the young Somali culture and get to know the boys who were born and bred here. I like the challenges that were collected as we went along.....there was a lot of commitment from these boys in particular in the beginning... I discovered the enthusiasm and commitment that they have shown... it was quite amazing! After the conversations we had with some of the fathers, they were excited at the things they learnt about our Somali culture in particular the games, stories that the fathers spoke about with so much passion. Then the fact that they translated the conversations into English. That is a real achievement!*

*As a father, I felt that there is not much of an age group gap... it made me develop a special relationship with them.....I did not really talk with the other fathers about this work, to be honest. I was afraid they would be rather skeptical about it... they question the outcomes, even about the parenting meetings we had. I can understand the reaction of the fathers though. If you grow in the UK..... parents get used to parenting groups, but in Somalia, this is not part of our everyday culture. They might say : What do we get out of it? It is easy for some*

*fathers to laugh at it as they would not be familiar with the concept. It is like introducing something strange... For me, conversations are everywhere. In Somalia, when a young mother has a baby, members of the family, the elder women go and stay with her for a while and show her how things are done with the new arrival... it is like training!!!*

*I feel this experience was a way of sharing, a platform between fathers and their sons, talking about the same problems. I also enjoyed sharing and reminiscing about Somali life with the other co-ordinators... sharing about the nomadic way of life of Somali men and women who move from place to place and who meet under the tree to talk, to rest to exchange information of what is going on in the community, to gossip... sharing this makes me appreciate my culture, my roots"*

## Georgina

*I can't begin to explain what a privilege it has been to work with these young men. Even though I came to work with the group towards the end they made me feel very welcome*

*and came forward with their ideas with great energy. I have learnt a lot from them about Somali culture and about their own community in Liverpool. I have been truly amazed at the commitment the young men have shown to the magazine; turning up after a long day or rearranging things to come and work on the magazine. The young men really showed enormous strength and commitment, even at a time of shock and upset for the community, they came along because they wanted to keep working for the best for the community. I think that took real courage.*



I will take away with me lots of learning about Somali culture. I think non-somali people in Liverpool could learn and enjoy a lot of inspiration from Somali culture. As an artist I was particularly impressed with the rich sense of creativity, poetry and story in the community. This is expressed brilliantly in the young men's research, words, art work and ideas in this magazine. I hope they can take pride in their hard work. It has been a very rich experience for me and a pleasure to work with all of the young men involved, the older men whom I met and my colleagues Ahmed (Somali Umbrella Group) Anne-Marie and Amira (Building Bridges).

**Amira**

"Working with the young Somali men is one of the richest experiences I have encountered. I was impressed by the dedication, commitment and perseverance of the young men. Despite their busy schedules with some men balancing work and school; the enthusiasm they showed in producing this magazine was exemplary. What really struck me was the pride these young men take in their culture. Their eagerness to find out more about their roots and traditions was incredible. I am particularly amazed by the respect and love they have for their parents. I specifically remember when we were rehearsing stories in preparation for the meal event for fathers and sons, and some of the boys asked if their mothers could attend the event so they can see their work. The young men were aware of the importance of having a good relationship with the older generations. Moreover they were able to come with brilliant suggestions of how to improve these relationships. I have really learned a lot from these young men about the Somali culture and have truly appreciated their openness and their honesty sharing their experiences as young Somali men growing up in Liverpool. Their



ability to cope with living between two cultures without losing their identity as Somalis has always touched me. This is evident in the young men's ability to remain bilingual, even those who were born here".

**Anne-Marie**

"Working with the Somali community this year was really precious time. Getting to know and working with them was really important. I will carry this experience in my heart forever. The boys interest, light humour, intelligence, enthusiasm and commitment was incredible!! I understand it is not easy to cope with school, work or college and still attend meetings and I admit we were demanding at times especially towards the end when we had the deadline of the magazine to be published!



I feel I learnt so much... maybe the most important thing I observed was how important religion is in a Muslim's life... the way God's will is sought and how prayer is woven into the everyday life of this people... This is admirable in today's busy lives....I think that this was a constant reminder for me... that spirituality is an essential element in our lives. It made me reflect a lot when I travelled back home from meetings on the train or even at home. I think that working together is the best way to create significant relationships....when we work together and get to know each other and laugh together, then respect and admiration is born... getting to really know people brings about personal meaning to relationships. Working with communities is fascinating. It opens new doors, new levels of trust, an understanding that touches the hearts... Thank you to the Somali community in Liverpool....I'm sure we will keep in touch!... and keep up the good work... there are so many resources and people with so many talents... so much determination... so many strengths!"

# Listening Ear...

## Dheg ku furan

"The most important thing that people need when they come here is that they often need someone to talk to, someone who is ready to sit down and listen to their stories. Many people are still carrying images of the war torn cities and villages they have left and it still effects them even if they have been living here in the UK for a very long time" (community development worker, MAAN).

"I came to the UK when I was 11. Although some time has passed now i still remember the fighting in the streets before we left Somalia and some of the images in my head of what I've seen are still very vivid. I've lost five of my precious friends and they were gone just like that. One thing I was talking to them and then I never saw them again. I think this has effected me and the work I have chosen to do" (community development worker, MAAN)

MAAN stands for our Somali Mental Health Project.

"There are different Somali community development workers working in the community. This job also involves influencing policy makers and the community to develop new services appropriate to the community needs and traditions.

We improve awareness of cultural contexts. Some people say communities are hard to reach. They are not hard to reach ! We invite them; if you come and talk with us here, We're happy to show you our work in the community!"

"I really believe that there is so much power in the sharing of human experiences!"

In our community there are many services. We spoke to some of the staff members there who are Somali and got to know more about their services. We have also added a list of useful addresses and telephone numbers at the end of this page... do pop in, they are ready to help out!

"When people come over at our centre to talk, I understand them because even though I left Somalia when I was a child, I can really understand what they have been through. People often walk in with a variety of problems to solve and sometimes we just have to sit down and list what they need in order of importance. Sometimes we settle the practical stuff like arranging an appointment with the lawyer and ask them to come in the next day".

"We feel satisfied when we manage to get a smile on people's faces. It is often the little things that make these smiles happen!"

### Somali Umbrella Group (SUG)

Our main purpose is to provide, maintain and enhance vital services to the whole of the Somali Community within Merseyside, combined with highlighting other Somali interests in the City.

*"It looks to establish itself as an example for the other racial minority and community based organisations... increases the visibility of the Somalis in Merseyside... improve access to information in the Somali language both written and verbal and tries to work at breaking the stereotype image of Somalis so that attitudes may change while the cultural identity is retained.*

*It tries to attract more resources to the community in terms of the people, money and a building and tries to help people get jobs that inspire them.*

*SUG aims to be a unifying force for the Somali community in general and encourage all local Somali community organisations to work together"*  
Visit <http://somhealth.org.uk> and click on SUG

if you are experiencing any problems or worries about anything... from housing to welfare benefits to debt or you are in need of some help or advice on education, leisure or social issues. We have added a list of some of community services available in Liverpool. For more information you can also visit this website: [www.heal8.org](http://www.heal8.org)

## Services

### **MAAN Project**

The Gateway Building  
26, Princes Avenue, Liverpool L8 2UP  
**tel:** 0151 728 7789  
**email:** [liverpool.maan@btconnect.com](mailto:liverpool.maan@btconnect.com)  
**contact:** Mohammed Ashur

### **Somali Umbrella Group**

Toxteth Town hall Community Resource Centre  
15, High Park Street, Toxteth Liverpool L8 8DX  
**tel:** 0151 727 2648  
**email:** [info@toxtethtownhall.org.uk](mailto:info@toxtethtownhall.org.uk)  
**contact:** Ahmed Saeed Farah

### **Merseyside Somali Community Association**

145 Granby Street, Liverpool L8  
**tel:** 0151 726 0594  
**contact:** Mrs Insaf Hagelsafi

### **PSS Gateway Project**

26, Princes Avenue, Liverpool 8 2UP  
**tel:** 0151 727 1133 **fax:** 0151 7271214  
**email:** [gateway.project@pss.org.uk](mailto:gateway.project@pss.org.uk)  
**contact:** Mohamed Alasow, Manager  
**email:** [Mohamed.Alasow@pss.org.uk](mailto:Mohamed.Alasow@pss.org.uk)  
[www.pss.org.uk](http://www.pss.org.uk)

### **Somali Women's Group**

171, Lodge Lane, Liverpool L8 OQQ  
**tel:** 0151 734 1908  
**email:** [mags@somaliwomensgroup.org.uk](mailto:mags@somaliwomensgroup.org.uk)  
**contact:** Reception

### **Kuumba Imani Millenium Centre**

4 Princes Road, Liverpool L8 1TH  
**tel:** 0151 708 5278  
**contact:** Reception  
**email:** [info@kuumbaimani.org.uk](mailto:info@kuumbaimani.org.uk)  
[www.kuumbaimani.org.uk](http://www.kuumbaimani.org.uk)

### **Liverpool Somali Community**

57, Granby Street, Liverpool L8 2UN  
**tel:** 0151 709 3853  
**contact:** Reception

### **Somali Women's Group**

Beaconsfield Road, Liverpool L8  
**tel:** 0151 726 0267  
**contact:** Reception

## What Next?

So, there it is. The first edition of *Geedka Shirka!* We really hope you enjoyed it. We don't know yet what the future holds for the magazine. We would certainly like to make this a regular magazine, inshallah, encouraging connections between the younger and older generations, learning more about our culture, having a way to communicate creatively to our community and beyond.

### Acknowledgements

So many people were involved in this magazine. In particular, our special thanks go to:

The Parenting Fund  
MAAN,  
Somali Umbrella Group  
Merseyside Somali Association (for providing us with rooms for our meetings, for being friendly and available.)  
RLCT Building Bridges (Fathers & Sons Project)  
Manchester Metropolitan University (Urban Regeneration Project)  
Liverpool Arabic Centre  
Georgina Hughes - community artist  
Barbershop magazine and Bridges magazine, whose issues and format have inspired us in our first issue of our magazine.

Some of the photographs were taken at the Somali Fathers and Sons narrative workshop last May 2007. Others were download from Somali and/or other related websites.

### The boys were assisted by:

Amira Hassan - Counselling Psychologist (Building Bridges, Fathers & Sons); Ahmed Saeed Farah - Community Development Worker and Somali Coordinator (Somali Umbrella Group); Georgina Hughes - Community Artist, Anne-Marie Micallef - Researcher, (Manchester Metropolitan University).



# Geedka Shirka



And finally a really heart-felt thank you for all our community members who took part in so many ways, who always provided us with rooms to meet in, tea to drink, all the fathers, sons, mothers and daughters who came willingly to the meetings and who shared from their heart the beauty of being Somali. Without these people, these initiatives would not have been possible. Thank you!

المركز العربي - ليفربول  
Liverpool Arabic Centre

Building  
Bridges

Royal Liverpool Children's NHS  
NHS Trust

Manchester  
Metropolitan  
University

The Parenting Fund

Somali Umbrella Group

# Yemeni Father and Son's Meal

*'Bringing together Fathers and Sons'*

Conference Centre at LACE, Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool, L17 1AA

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 12.00pm – 4.30pm

*Prayer Room facilities provided*



# Somali Father and Son's Meal

*'Bringing together Fathers and Sons'*

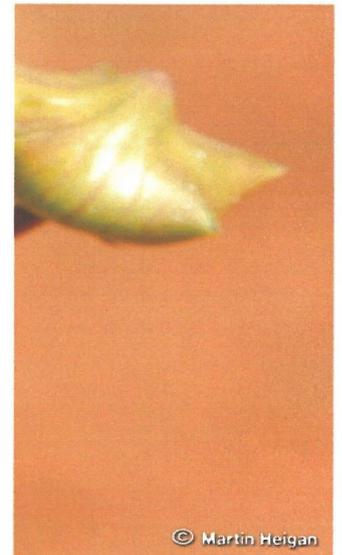
## Conference Centre at LACE

Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool, L17 1AA

**Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2007**

**12.00pm – 4.30pm**

*Prayer Room facilities provided*



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Metropolitan  
University**

**uclan**

