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How a marginalised Somali community used pro-am journalism to transform lives and build community identity

Dave Porter, Manchester Metropolitan University

Introduction

The normal challenges for any citizen journalism project – lack of finance and the difficulty of retaining volunteers – are exacerbated for ethnic minority communities already disadvantaged in terms of employment, housing, access to amenities, and a lack of engagement with and knowledge of media production.

For those in the Somali community can be added a generational divide, a digital deficit, and a language barrier, which all add to the challenges of setting up a pro-am newspaper project. Without access to printers, editing and design software, and an understanding of the editorial process, there is little hope of getting such a project off the ground: partnering with a university journalism department enabled a particular and unusual venture to succeed.

A Somali charity in the north west of England approached the university where I teach journalism asking for help in setting up a newspaper. They were clear on what they wanted and did not want: they did not want a hyperlocal website or a flashy venture into digital journalism through a WordPress site – they wanted a printed bilingual newspaper with articles written in both English and Somali focussing on the is- sues affecting their community. The charity had previously worked with the university on a research project (Omar, Abdikaadir et al, 2014) which examined the challenges facing the Somali community in the north west. One of the needs identified in the research was for older members of the community – primarily first-generation im- migrants – to access basic information on services such as housing, welfare, immigration and employment, a common concern for such communities (Lin, Wang-Yin 2006; Veronis, Luisa and Ahmed, Rukhsana 2015; Lay, Samantha and Thomas, Lisa, 2012). Language barriers combined with a lack of access to digital media means they suffer an information deficit, and a printed newspaper which could be distributed to homes and picked up from places such as mosques and community centres was viewed as a way to redress this imbalance. (Bailey, Olga et al., 2008; Hickerson, Kristin & Gustafson, Andrea, 2014; Luce, Ann et al, 2016; Ramasubramanian, Srividya 2016; Shumow, Moses, 2010).

The paper was also seen by the Somali community as an attempt to bridge the generational divide between younger and older Somalis and help forge a greater sense of community identity. For others, their involvement with and knowledge of the project led to a renewed sense of pride and positive outcomes, with one volunteer editor going on to work with the Red Cross in Kenya and another volunteer taking a masters course in journalism at the university as a direct result of the newspaper project.

For journalism students involved in what was a voluntary, extra-curricular activity, it gave them a chance to step outside the comfort zone of the academic world and be part of an editorial team made up of a cross-section of the community usually hidden from view. It allowed them to work alongside a small Somali team collecting stories, interviewing members of the community, and editing and designing a community newspaper as part of an experience outside the usual sphere of student journalism. The author's role was as co-ordinator, trainer and editor-at-large.

One member of the editorial team was appointed editor alongside three Somali reporters and a small

number of student journalists. It was decided the paper would consist of 12 pages, with six pages of stories each in both English and Somali. For members of the Somali reporting team, stories were written either in English or in Somali depending on their language and writing skills, and then translated back. Students helped source and write stories and had a hand in editing and designing pages alongside the Somali team. In terms of design and production of the paper, the Somali editorial team were involved in proofreading all Somali stories on page and translating headlines from English to Somali, a task that, given the different composition of the English and Somali languages, presented a unique set of design challenges. The author took charge of final production of the paper in terms of exporting print-ready pages and arranging overnight printing. (As a side note, the Somali reporting team were invited by the printers to see an edition roll off the press, a hugely enjoyable and novel experience for them).

Basic training was given at the university to the Somali team in sourcing and writing stories. It was agreed that content of the paper would concentrate on issues which dominate members of the Somali community in their day-to-day lives: access to council services, health services, immigration services, employment etc – as well as case studies of members of the community the charity has successfully helped. This is not untypical of many ethnic minority news publications (Harcup, Tony, 2011; Luce, Ann et al., 2016; Lay, Samantha and Thomas, Lisa, 2012; Fabregat, Eduard et al., 2018). Some training was also given to the editorial team by the Media Trust through its Somali Voices project, focussing on how to pitch good news stories to the media and increase the profile of the Somali community in mainstream media. Such training, as noted by Bailey, Olga et al. (2008) can lead to a 'hybrid' form of journalism.

As a small charity working on a shoestring budget, it was made clear from the start there were no extra funds for printing the newspaper. While the time of the author and students was given for free, together with access to university PCs and editing software, the cost of printing and producing 1,500 copies of a 12-page newspaper was no small matter. For the first two editions the cost was defrayed by the journalism department taking out adverts promoting its courses, including journalism. Subsequent editions were paid for out of the proceeds of a council neighbourhood grant.

The reality of professional journalists helping to set up a community newspaper is not without precedent. Cardiff University, for example, supports hyperlocal news websites through its Centre for Community Journalism, and it has been suggested that journalism departments within universities are more than well placed to act as a conduit and training hub for community news ventures (Dickinson, Andrew 2017).

The original ambition was to produce editions quarterly, but it soon became clear that this was too ambitious given the level of commitment required for the project. The Somali volunteers had their day-to-day lives to contend with and both the author and the volunteer students had academic duties to negotiate. The logistics of producing a newspaper on a non-professional level and the cost involved, as well as fluctuations in volunteer numbers, were the main reasons behind the rethink. Luce, Ann et al. (2007) highlight the difficulties in sustaining ethnic media ventures, citing low self-esteem, technological barriers, and fear of being 'shot down' contributing towards low take-up of volunteers. Volunteers are hard to come by for many practical reasons, as the Somali editor of the newspaper states: 'I think it's a big challenge because for me I was working two places. I was working here [charity offices] and I was also working in a warehouse as a clerk, but I had to do it because I was committed to it.' (Participant one)

The paper survived both the departure of its editor to take up a role with the Red Cross and austerity cuts from the council which at one time threatened the very existence of the charity. The search for a new editor as well as new sources of funding for printing costs had to be overcome, such issues illustrating the practical difficulties experienced by those engaged in community journalism (Harcup, Tony 2013; Liu, Dandan, 2010). But an unforeseen positive which came out of the project was that the idea of a bilingual paper had the potential for adoption in UK cities with large Somali populations. The author, together with members of the editorial team, were key speakers at a conference in London organised by the Media Trust focussing on the visibility of Somalis in the media. The session on the bilingual newspaper generated many intriguing questions about logistics, its production, cost and viability, and whether the project could even become a blueprint for a national Somali newspaper.

Pro-am journalism

Citizen journalism has been famously described as journalism produced by 'the people formerly known as the audience' (Rosen, Jay 2006). Such journalism can take on a multitude of guises, from lone bloggers

to hyperlocal news websites covering neighbourhood patches left vacant by traditional news outlets. The advent of digital media and the opportunity for people to produce content online quickly and easily is the hallmark of citizen and pro-am journalism. Hyperlocal and community news websites are commonplace and anyone with a WordPress account can set up their own blog within a matter of hours. (Fabregat, Eduard et al, 2018; Harcup, Tony 2011; Luce, Ann at al, 2017). Pro-am journalism is a hybrid variant of citizen journalism where the input of professionals is sought for their knowledge, expertise and leadership qualities (Bruns, Axel et al, 2008). It is widely acknowledged that the first large-scale example of pro-am journalism was the south Korean news outlet, OhmyNews, which combined the editorial oversight of professional journalists with user-generated content produced by citizen journalists and was seen as an early example of crowdsourcing by mainstream media. The benefits of co-opting professional journalists in a citizen journalism venture – in this instance the author – has positive aspects other than simply being able to learn about the editorial process. Legal and ethical issues which amateur journalists are unaware of can be picked up on and dealt with during news production by those Bruns, Axel et al. term (2008) 'preditors', professionals who work in collaboration with citizen journalists. As Wilson, Jason (2008) et al state: 'Few successful citizen journalism websites thrive on the efforts of users alone' (p1).

In some ways, this editorial judgment is that far removed from a journalism lecturer introducing their students to the basic concepts of journalism. 'The need to exercise editorial judgement over user-submitted copy, which is necessary and common in a range of citizen journalism initiatives, means that the skills and professional competencies of traditional journalism have continuing relevance' (Bruns, Axel et al, p.18).

The direction and expertise provided by professional journalists to those on the ground can also increase the chances of longevity for a citizen journalism venture, by helping push forward the 'tedious tasks of journalistic work' (Bruns, Axel 2005, p.15). The resources, commitment and knowledge needed to drive news production means many amateur citizen journalism ventures cannot be sustained indefinitely, most having a limited shelf life. Professional journalists can bring with them a set of working standards to ensure the quality of news production is maintained, which in turn generates an on-site, informal training and development programme for community journalists. Bruns, Axel et al. (2008) label this professional input that of the preditor, a neologism formed from a combination of producer and editor, someone able to 'service, guide and man- age a community team' (p.17). The authors identity four key areas of concern for the preditor: networking, community work, content work and tech work, all necessary skills when harnessing the input of amateur journalists. Additionally, the importance of bringing a professional network of contacts to an amateur news project cannot be underestimated, something experienced directly by the author in their attempts to cajole, impress and corral support for the newspaper from both the university and a range of journalism contacts. A preditor - such as the author - is able to use their professional network to bring media attention to com-munity journalism projects, to call upon colleagues – and in this case journalism students – to contribute time and resources, as well as opening up avenues into professional life for members of the community, something witnessed by the author. The bilingual newspaper secured national media attention on a number of occasions through the efforts of the author alerting the wider world to the project. In one instance this resulted in a member of the Somali editorial team being interviewed by a South African radio station. 'Getting noticed requires establishing collaborative relationships' (Bruns, Axel et al, p.25)

Pro-am journalism can also be viewed as a form of community service and academic knowledge exchange, giving professional journalists the opportunity to become leaders and enablers. They act as a conduit to a different, more professionalised world and – in the case of the author's experience – help and encourage communities tap into support networks afforded by academic and civic institutions. This may include financial help in securing grants (the university was crucial in helping the Somali charity secure a city council grant to help defray printing costs) and training opportunities provided by universities, as well as a host of other opportunities which disadvantaged communities find it hard to access. In this way, they can discover a 'new-found role of a monitor and facilitator' (Min, Seong-Jae 2105, p.578) within the local communities in which they are embedded.

Citizen journalism sites are predominantly web-based, often hyperlocal news sites or subject-specific blogs. The advent of digital media has allowed the flourishing of 'we media' (Bowman, Shane and Willis, Chris 2003), affording a democratic opening to anyone with internet access the ability to publish and share content at very low operating costs. However, the low-tech, heuristic nature of the internet is sufficiently different to the intricate demands of producing a newspaper, with its particular edit and design, print and distribution requirements. When such a newspaper is also bilingual, another layer of complexity is added. By themselves the Somali community the author worked alongside would not have had the resources and editorial pull to oversee production of a newspaper. Of course, in the relationship between the amateur and the professional, there may be a conflict between the news values of the professional journalist and those

of the amateur journalist, something the author himself experienced. It can be difficult for the professional to resist from imposing their established news sense on amateur journalists and dictating what should make the news and what should not. The currency of news is one instinctively recognised by the professional journalist and something as educators we try to instil in our students. However, amateur journalists may be less interested in the finer machination of news gathering and are less troubled by issues of balance, bias and impartiality than the professional journalist. There were many occasions when the author simply had to let go of professional concepts of news and admit that a different, perhaps more partisan, agenda was being followed. For Bruns, Axel (2005), this conflict signifies the dichotomy between gatekeeper (professional journalists) and gatewatchers (amateur journalists), the former concerned with imposing professional news values and directing people to news, the latter with signposting and commenting upon news. Although tellingly, in many pro-am news set-ups it is content produced by professional journalists which is often the most read or receives the most page views.

The concept of hybrid journalism, previously touched upon, is a looser definition than pro-am journalism and one which can refer to any relationship which breaks down the traditional schemata of journalism; it does not necessarily refer to pro-am journalism per se. For example, it can refer to different ways of working (offline and online), a mix of legacy media such as print with new technologies, the intended audience, and platforms for delivery (Porlezza, Colin and Di Salvo, Philip 2020). A hybrid media system is one in which journalism is 'produced by different actors with different backgrounds, intentions and norms' (p.205). It has been suggested that such hybrid journalism means a relinquishing of mainstream, 'traditional' news values such as impartiality and objectivity which many citizen journalists would claim have lost their claim to authority. (Mast, Jell, Coesemans, Roel and Temmerman, Martina 2016). Such ventures are often set up in opposition to mainstream media and serve a radically different audience (Fabregat, Eduard et al, 2018; Lay, Samantha and Thomas, Lisa, 2012; Rigoni, 2005). They allow otherwise ignored or marginalised groups to bypass mainstream media, create their own content and use the media as a tool for self-empowerment, filling news vacuums left by large media corporations and challenging the mainstream news agenda (Harcup, Tony 2011; Luce, Ann et al, 2016; Lay, Samantha and Thomas, Lisa, 2012; Fabregat, Eduard et al, 2018). Conversely, the non-commercial nature of citizen journalism, its lack of proprietors, news production by the audience, and strong campaigning vein also make it attractive to such communities (Harcup, Tony 2011). They can act as a mobilising force for community solidarity around issues of inequality, injustice and oppression, and can lead to democratic engagement (Harcup, Tony 2011; Rigoni, Isabelle, 2005).

It can be argued that another role of pro-am journalism is to act as a corrective to mainstream media. A clutch of high-profile court cases involving the Somali community left many in the community the author works with feeling stigmatised by both national and local media. One of the aims of training by the Media Trust in its Somali Voices programme was to teach volunteers how to present positive stories to the media and wrest a degree of control over the narrative. This played a part in the impetus to set up the bilingual newspaper, to act as a platform for the Somali community to tell its own story and establish a stronger sense of community identity in the face of hostile media coverage. By offering a space of resistance, pro-am journalism has the potential to offer a platform for 'counter-hegemonic' views (Bailey, Olga et al, 2008; Fabregat, Eduard at al, 2018). For immigrant communities who are sometimes characterised as living in 'two worlds', one their host country and the other their home country, this can be a liberating force, though it can also lead to accusations of bias and lack of objectivity in the journalism it produces (Shumow, Moses 2010).

The availability of printed newspapers as a platform for ethnic minority or immigrant communities is an important consideration. For example, Lay, Samantha and Thomas, Lisa (2012) mapped 175 ethnic minority media across London and found that only 32 percent of ethnic media had an online presence, suggesting that the internet was 'over-stated in the case of ethnic media' (2005, p.374). They quote one Bangladeshi editor as saying that the community 'is more comfortable with the print edition' (ibid.). A decade on, and with the advent of digital media, while this is undoubtedly less true, the need to produce a print product was the prime motivation for setting up the bilingual newspaper in this project.

Methodology

The study follows a qualitative approach to methodological inquiry. The author has been embedded as an actor within the field of study and has been able to observe participants in their natural setting; and because of this has sought to retrieve themes, patterns and findings which emerge naturally from the data using an inductive approach. The position of the author as both participant and observer is central to the line of inquiry,

as is securing the meaningful voice of participants. Grounded theory (Glaser, Barney and Strauss, Anselm, 1967) has been drawn upon to generate broader theoretical interpretations arising from the data. The rationale for using interviews as a research technique reflects the choice of grounded theory as it enables the emergence of concepts and as a research tool adds credibility to the study in terms of the trustworthiness of data collection. As the researcher in this instance is more than unusually involved in the field of study, their positionality has been interrogated as part of the process of carrying out reflexive ethnography.

The newspaper project with the Somali community began life as a university knowledge exchange initiative and from there developed into a PhD study, which is ongoing. A pilot study was conducted with members of the editorial team, using semi-structured interviews linked to research objectives, with data being hand coded. The main research questions were:

Why did you want the newspaper need to be bilingual? What was the kind of news you wanted to put in the paper?

How do you think the Somali community is portrayed in the mainstream media?

Can a newspaper help to bridge the generation gap in the community between young and old?

How do you think a Somali newspaper or website could help bring the Somali community together?

Out of the interview process several key themes emerged, along with a number of sub-themes. The six thematic categories to emerge from the data were:

- The need for information Challenge to find funding Challenge of recruiting volunteers
- The need to counter negative publicity
- A generational divide within the Somali community
- Language barrier for first generation immigrants

Out of these main themes, a number of sub-themes emerged: the need for an editor; distribution difficulties; newspaper as a model for other communities; news from the home country; lack of a reading culture in Somalia; volunteer training; a regional Somali divide; possibility of attracting newspaper advertising.

Discussion

Identity

Data from the pilot study revealed that despite being geographically concentrated, the Somali community in the north west struggles to forge a wider community identity. A generational divide, a digital gap, lack of resources, and a language barrier, particularly for older members of the community, contribute to a sense of fracture. The data shows this was compounded by a lack of information among the community about their rights, access to housing and benefits, and how to navigate a bureaucratic system when English is not your first language. A bilingual newspaper was posited as a possible answer to such an information deficit, but also a way of cementing community identity, as well as having the potential to redress both the language barrier and the generational divide which can define some immigrant communities (Bailey, Olga et al., 2008; Hickerson, Kristin & Gustafson, Andrea 2014; Luce, Ann et al., 2016; Ramasubramanian, Srividya 2016; Shumow, Moses 2010). For the older generation, increased familiarity with the language of the host country, in this case English, alongside their native Somali language, may well act as an encouragement to learn English. One of the stated aims when setting up the newspaper was to reach out to young Somalis and try to involve them in both its production and to be part of its readership, as a member of the editorial team stated: 'We want a connection from the youth and the elderly people and the newspaper is the bridge you can connect the two.' (Participant one)

Geo-ethnic and diaspora media

What is termed geo-ethnic or diaspora media (Deuze, Mark, 2006) can be a driving force for change in local communities in much the same way that more traditional hyperlocal news websites can. Lay, Samna-

tha and Thomas, Lisa (2012) quote the editor of one Somali newspaper as saying: 'ethnic media tends to campaign for local issues relevant to local communities and informs the public to what is happening in local areas' (2102, p.375). Diaspora media by its very nature taps into a broader, global narrative which may be viewed as being in opposition to Western values and culture (Georgiou, Myria 2009). The 'universal' values of democracy and participation may not be accorded as high a status within geo-ethnic media because of a transnational identity where immigrants identify as part of a larger, imagined community (Anderson, Ben 1991). Somalis living in the UK, it is argued, have a direct cultural connection with Somalis living in Paris which may be stronger than their connection to the native community in their host country (Georgiou, 2009). Geo-ethnic media has led to a 'hybrid' form of journalism (Shumow, Moses 2010) where people live in 'two worlds: a study of Venezuelan immigrants involved in citizen journalism shows they report on events 'back home' as well as providing information which helps newer immigrants assimilate into the US.

Assimilation / acculturation

The question of how a community news venture can also help in the process of assimilation into a host country is a vexed one. For first-generation immigrants such as those in the Somali community, a sense of apartness or even estrangement is prevalent. Moses Shumow's (2010) study of Venezuelan immigrants in Florida who established a bilingual newspaper highlights the displacement and disorientation many feel. He identifies two related themes: community media contributes to a sense of an exile identity, and this in turn can lead to a dependence on maintaining links with the home country. Whether ethnic media inhibits or promotes assimilation into the host country is a contested area, but commentators agree that it leads to a shared identity and community cohesion (Husband, Chris 2005; Lay, Samantha and Thomas, Lisa 2012; Zhou, Min and Chai, Guoxuan 2004). However, it can hold back 'their adaptation to the host country' (Lin, Wang-Yin 2006, p.382) because of a preoccupation with events 'back home'. The prevalence of satellite dishes on many Somali homes testifies to this connection. Proficiency in English is seen as one of the criteria for acculturation among immigrant communities and can lower levels of 'acculturative stress' (Dalisay, Francis 2012). However, the concept of assimilation is not a simple one. While the establishment of ethnic media in the UK is an indication such communities are capable of forging a different identity (Bailey, Olga at al, 2008), justified questions can be asked about the functions of the immigrant press services are and who it serves (Hickerson, Kristin 2016). First-generation immigrants are the main consumers of ethnic media which provide civic and cultural information to ease the assimilation process especially and help with navigating day-to-day living.

The use of traditional media such as bilingual, print newspapers to access information about issues such as housing and health reflects the language barrier many face on entry into their new host country. Being able to glean information in their native language is important both as a way of expressing community identity and serving a need for basic information (Lay, Samantha and Thomas, Lisa 2012). In their study of four immigrant communities in Ottawa, Canada – one of which was Somali – Veronis, Luisa and Ahmed, Rukhsana (2015) discuss the 'integrative' role ethnic media plays, finding that among the Somali community there was low usage of council websites for accessing information, compared with newspapers and social networks, possibly due to a strong oral tradition. Others suggest that television can play a similarly educative role diasporic family life by preserving the mother tongue and maintaining a sense of transnational identity as well as being a source of nostalgia (Bailey, Olga et al, 2008).

Volunteers

The challenge of retaining volunteers over any length of time was a consistent motif among interviewees, all of whom had been involved in the newspaper production since its inception in 2014. This was viewed in part as a concomitant of the immigrant experience where the need to find work and housing and to establish a family take precedence over community activities such as running a newspaper which demand a lot of time and energy. One participant stated: 'Yes, it was very difficult because they are all busy. In UK it is very busy lives with family and jobs.'

Another participant touched upon the personal demands of living in a host country: 'We are dealing with many issues, like benefits. Some of them they are unemployed, the level of unemployment, it is really high, and that's why we are here and one of the purposes of this newsletter is motivate [people] to get skills and

work and jobs'.

Evidence from the data shows that the newspaper was well received in the Somali community and that people valued the role it played in relaying important information on issues such as jobs, immigration law and housing. However, this did not translate into a greater number of volunteers coming forward. Some people volunteered for training and/or roles within the paper only to leave after a relatively short period of time. Some did not stay long enough to see one edition published. Luce, Ann et al. (2016) map the sense of disconnect amateur journalists within ethnic minority media can feel by getting involved in community ventures:

'For some participants there was a sense of temporality to both their empowerment and engagement with the self-constructed journalistic identity, since they failed to make a meaningful contribution to or connection with the respective projects after the workshops were concluded'. (2007, p.279)

Part of the reluctance to sign up as a volunteer may also be the fear that journalism is a specialist profession which requires skills beyond the reach of many immigrants, allied with the language barrier difficulty of writing stories in English when it is not your first language. 'Journalism is not what you think you know, you have to learn and practise and you have to know that you cannot write what you think unless you know the rules.' (Participant one). Outside the core editorial team, volunteers had to be recruited on an ad-hoc basis, not something a professional newspaper would have to contend with but one which those working in citizen journalism face with each edition. Even when students were co-opted onto the paper they too were limited by time and the demands of their university course.

'It has been a big challenge and is still a big challenge for us because some of the volunteers help us on one issue and then they have got other things, and then they leave so you have to try to get volunteers in-between issues, so I think it is one of the challenges we are having' (Participant 3)

The need to recruit and retain volunteers is key to the sustainability of any pro-am media project, something the Somali reporting team were acutely aware of.

'I think it is one of the great challenges we have and I think if we wanted to keep this as it is now we need to put efforts on this to have volunteers that will remain and stay with us a for year, two years. We need someone who decides to stay with us two years, three years…' (Participant 3)

Services

The rationale for setting up the newspaper was to deliver vital information to members of the Somali com- munity through their letterbox in a language they could understand and which did not require access to digital media. Many Somali residents need to access services provided by the city council and seek information on issues such as housing and health. In their study of the Somali community in Ottowa, Canada, Veronis, Luisa and Ahmed, Rukhsana (2015) found low usage of the council's website to access information about services, seen as part of a wider inhibitive attitude when it came to using digital media. As one participant stated: 'It's local news, local government, the council's information: benefits, health, sports. The main purpose is to educate, to inform our people, to educate our people, and to guide our people to the right way.' (Participant 2)

Harcup, Tony (2011) characterises what he calls 'alternative journalism' as playing a vital role in helping immigrants to access information and services in the host country and on the path to 'active citizenship'. It allows them to communicate with each other and take part in a wider democratic dialogue within the host community. More importantly, 'In the very production of their own media, alternative media participants have given themselves a voice.' (p.19). Producing a newspaper was seen as a form of wresting control of the media narrative by the editorial team: 'I think in a way this newspaper is a fightback against some of the negative stories that some of the national newspapers always write about Somali community' (Participant 3)

Language barrier

First generation immigrants are the main consumers of ethnic media where it fulfils a practical purpose for an audience which cannot read or write English (Hickerson, Kristin 2016). Added to this is the fact that mainstream media does not provide the information needed by members of the Somali community in a language they understand. While the internet and digital media may offer a cheaper alternative to print for

immigrant and marginalised communities, giving them the opportunity to 'develop alternative mediated spaces' (Georgiou, Myria 2008, p.26), a newspaper provides a specific function other platforms cannot. Deuze, Mark (2006) suggests that different generations of immigrants have different approaches to the consumption of media: first and second generation as a tool for information, and third generation as a means of reconnecting with their parents' homeland. Attempting to bridge this generational divide was a stated aim in setting up the newspaper: 'We want a connection from the youth and the elderly people and the newspaper is the bridge you can connect the two.' (Participant one).

First-generation Somalis value their language as an emotional and practical link with their home country and can become frustrated when they find their children do not share the same linguistic and cultural values. Refugees who have often fled persecution and political upheaval in their home country, such as those from Somalia, feel an added sense of turmoil when faced with a language barrier in their host country. These factors mean they take refuge in a 'transnational identity', which is reassuring and a source of anxiety at the same time (Bailey, Olga et al. 2008).

Conclusion

A special edition of the Somali newspaper was published during the first year of the pandemic, concentrating the call for members of the community to get vaccinated given low take-up. However, this proved to be the final edition, at least for the time being. The attendant difficulties of funding, finding volunteers and fitting production of a newspaper around already overstretched lives ultimately brought the venture to an end. However, the author remains embedded within the work of the charity and the Somali community and a weekly newsletter with a growing subscription list has now taken off. That the paper survived for so long compared with other community journalism ventures is perhaps a reflection of the pro-am nature of its origins and the tenacity of the community in striving to put out its message.

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