“Somali-Americans’ Media Use and Trust in News Sources”

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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June 2019

Acknowledgements

This dissertation would never have been finished without the support and advice of my adviser, Kathleen Hansen. My earlier advisers, Mark Pedelty and Daniel Sullivan, also played key roles in helping me through the research and dissertation process. Thank you all for your support, encouragement and expertise.

Dedication

I dedicate this to my student Sahra, where it all began, and her lovely sisters.

Abstract

This dissertation is the culmination of a 10-year ethnographic study of immigrant news consumption, providing an in-depth view of Somali-American's criticisms of mainstream news representation of their community, and examining the role of trust in media consumption. The results from this study inform traditional news media about different worldviews and what is needed to engage immigrant audiences. Data from this dissertation also sheds light on what the immigrants who participated in this study do to create their own media forums and build community. This document includes analyses from interviews, social media posts, public events, a pilot survey and newspaper coverage of Somalis.

Keywords: immigrant, refugee, Somali, trust, news-attending, ethnic media, social media, minority representation, ethnography, community building, Islamophobia

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Chapter One: Background

Introduction

As I made the final edits to this dissertation about the role media play in the lives of a segment of new Americans, President Donald Trump shut down the U.S. federal government for the longest period in history in an ill-fated attempt to get Congress to approve funding for his "border wall" to keep out immigrants. The President's tweets about problems with immigrants and broadcast images of asylum seekers make immigration a hot topic in the news. Coverage of a "caravan" of immigrants heading toward the southern U.S. border, parents tossing their children over walls to relatives, and a mother with diaper-clad children being tear-gassed by ICE agents, all bring images of immigrants into our daily lives.

The topic of immigrants, news and media use is an important one. This dissertation joins the work of scholars interested in news representation of immigrants and other marginalized communities and media consumption and production by these communities. In 1922, Park captured the history and contents of the immigrant press. More recently, Kent Ono and Vincent Pham (2009), Ilia Rodriguez (2009), Catherine Squires (2009), and Federico Subervi and Vinicio Sinta (2015) and others have documented how mainstream news media give selective coverage to minorities, sensationalize negative aspects, over emphasize shortcomings and attach a cultural identity when it is not relevant. This study also sits comfortably with critical cultural scholar Stuart Hall's

recognition that we need to look closely at media texts to ascertain influences of social, political, and economic power (1982). My dissertation extends this knowledge to mainstream news representation of Somali immigrants and their viewpoints of such coverage. While Park looked at the "the inner life of immigrant peoples and their efforts to adjust themselves to a new cultural environment" through the eyes of editors (1922, p. xix), my study looked at coverage of Somali Americans through the eyes of immigrants in Minnesota, where the largest diaspora community of Somalis live.

From years of studying Somali-Americans in the community and online, I knew they did not trust mainstream news media. So, I wondered how they get information necessary for successful integration into U.S. society? My other key questions were: How and why news organizations fall short with immigrant audiences? What news organizations might do to engender trust and engagement? What role do social media play in community building? My dissertation investigated and analyzed how a sample of Somali-Americans feel about mainstream news coverage of Somalis, what media they use instead, and what drives their trust of some sources, but not others. I address these questions by drawing attention to specific events and Somali-Americans' reactions to mainstream news coverage through review of existing data and using quantitative and qualitative research methods.

In my previous studies with Somali-Americans, they reported difficulties with media representations concerning their ethnicity and Muslim religion, especially in the aftermath of 9/11 (Kelley, 2012). This dissertation advances

scholarship by analyzing news coverage of Somalis before and after 9/11, exploring participants' perceptions of media coverage of the Somali community and documenting how Somalis are using media to counteract mainstream stereotypes and tell their own stories. This study extends the literature on "trust"—a subjective term with multiple areas of scholarship exploring its use and application—with the literature on news attending to answer why new immigrants attend to certain media sources and platforms and not others, taking cultural influences into consideration. Knowledge generated by this inquiry sheds light on immigrant news needs and informs journalistic practices, politicians, health providers, educators and others interested in immigrant audiences.

In this 10-year study, my main thrust is to answer how and why Somali-American refugees in Minnesota respond to news about their community through qualitative methods: ethnography, participant observation, interviews, and social media content analysis. I also apply quantitative analysis in a pilot survey and analysis of mainstream news coverage to answer questions about specific media use and provide evidence to support or disprove Somali's claims about mainstream media.

Since I am neither Somali nor an immigrant, being embedded in the Somali-American community since 2009 was imperative to building trust with informants and participants and gaining a foundation of knowledge from Somalis about their lives and perceptions of media. I followed Somalis on social media, read and viewed Somali ethnic media, attended private and public events focused on the Somali community, interviewed people and conducted focus

groups for this and previous studies. For this dissertation, I member-checked and clarified my assumptions by interviewing a carefully selected group of Somali-American professionals and everyday people on the street. I am grateful to those who spent time to instruct me, encourage me and welcome me into their lives.

In this dissertation, I use the terms immigrants and refugees interchangeably when referring to Somali-Americans; however, they have distinct meanings. “An immigrant is someone who chooses to leave her country and live permanently in a new one” (Ratsabout, 2018, para.13). The term, refugee, refers to “a person who is unable or unwilling to live in his or her native country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion” (Minneapolis Foundation, p. 2). Most Somalis in the United States came as refugees starting in 1992. Those who came earlier were mainly scholars and students.

Context and Background for This Study

Some of the first work I conducted in this long-term study examined whether representation of Somalis changed after 9/11, as my participants reported in conversations. I conducted a content analysis of representations of Somalis in *The New York Times* and the *Star Tribune* in Minneapolis, six months before and six months after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center to determine trends in coverage of Somalis. I sampled these papers

because one is a key national paper and the other a key local paper in the city where the largest number of Somali immigrants live.

Media coverage of a crisis closer to home also informed my dissertation. The incident involved the fatal shooting of a 40-year-old Australian woman living in Minneapolis, Justine Ruszczyk Damond, by a Somali-American police officer, Mohamed Noor, on July 15, 2017. The reactions to this crisis played out in mainstream, social and ethnic media and began to support my notion about why Somalis' dislike mainstream news media coverage.

I also conducted a pilot survey with women of Somali descent to ascertain media use and identity. While these aspects of my study enrich this dissertation, the bulk of the data in this dissertation came from qualitative interviews, focus groups and participant observation at events, on social media and elsewhere. My research began in 2009 after I helped one of my university students through a personal trauma. When she confided in me and I realized I really did not know much about Somalis nor the Muslim faith, I determined to make learning about these newcomers and their culture my mission and research area.

The first chapter of this dissertation begins with the background and context for the study, along with a brief section about Somali immigrant history. Next addressed are the problem and purpose statement, research questions, rationale and significance of the study. Following these sections are a review of pertinent literature, theoretical frameworks, and methods. A large chapter on my findings and analysis is followed by a conclusion, limitations, and possibilities for future research.

Somali Immigrants in Minnesota

Somali immigration can be "traced back to the mid 1800s when Somalia was divided between France, England, and Italy, all of which maintained colonial control until the 1960s" (Macalester, 2008, p. 1). Somalia gained independence from its European colonizers in a peaceful transition; however, nine years later "General Mohamed Siad Barre led a military coup, forcing Somalis into political, economic, and social turmoil" (2018, Wilhide, para 6). In 1991, Barre was ousted by a resistance movement and a civil war ensued.

The modern nation of Somalia was entangled in Cold War politics for three decades. The country was ravished by war as "clans, 'war lords,' and then the Islamic Courts Union controlled parts of Somalia" (2018, Wilhide, para 7). An immigration report published by the Minneapolis Foundation stated: "civil war erupted while the Soviet Union was collapsing; atrocities and natural disasters—famine, flood, drought—forced more than a million Somalis to seek refuge in neighboring countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia" (2008, p. 1). Famine and violence killed "more than 200,000 Somalis" (2018, Wilhide, Overview, para 2). While some Somalis returned to the country after "the first parliamentary elections were held for a permanent and internationally recognized Somali federal government" in 2012, most in the United States remained (2018, Wilhide, para 7).

The first Somalis to arrive in Minnesota were scholars and students in the 1960s, but tens of thousands more came to escape the civil war and famine beginning in 1992. Some Somalis in the state came from Somalia's coastal,

agricultural and/or nomadic regions, while others were urban residents (Minneapolis Foundation, 2008). About one-third of Minnesota's Somali residents came directly from refugee camps. Others settled first in another state and then relocated to Minnesota, which is home to the largest population of Somali residents in the United States. "One reason they have chosen Minnesota is for its strong social services including education and the relatively high employment opportunities" (Macalester, 2008, p. 3). "Many local churches have played a strong role in assisting the Somalis with their resettlement" (Macalester, 2008, p. 3). My informants told me they came to Minnesota because the state had a reputation for providing good educational opportunities or because they had friends and relatives there.

Faced with language barriers, unemployment, and harsh winters, Somali refugees have had many obstacles as new immigrants in Minnesota. "Adapting can be even harder for them because so many are recovering from traumatic experiences such as losing their homes and loved ones to war, being separated from family members, or witnessing and experiencing violent acts" (Dunbar, 2010, p. 1). Most Somali immigrants speak several languages, but do not speak English, which makes adjusting difficult on all fronts.

In addition, "underutilization of professional skills is a problem for many African immigrants" (Minneapolis Foundation, 2008, p. 11). Professional licenses that are obtained abroad often are not recognized in the United States, so immigrants who formerly were "doctors, nurses, engineers, teachers, and lawyers are earning a living through manual labor…" (Minneapolis Foundation,

2008, p. 11). Many Minnesotan-Somalis fill positions that do not require strong English skills, provide businesses and services to other Somali immigrants, and engage in other entrepreneurial efforts, such as taxi driving. The Foundation documented in 2008 that “more than 120 African-owned businesses can be found along Minneapolis’ Lake Street-corridor” (p. 11). Today, in 2019, in addition to the many businesses along Lake St. and in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood in Minneapolis, the Somali Karmel Mall offers East African wares and incubates small retail businesses, the Minnesota History Center has a large Somali exhibit of more than 700 artifacts (Ratsabout, 2018, para. 1), and the world’s only Somali culture museum elevates and advances the work of Somali artists (The Somali Museum of Minnesota, n.d., para. 1).

Official estimates put Minnesota’s current Somali population at about 57,000, while community leaders believe it could be as high as 80,000 to more than 100,000, which represents about half of all U.S. Somali immigrants. Ohio has the second largest population of Somalis (Chambers, 2017). Most Somalis in Minnesota live in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, a thriving metropolitan area along the Mississippi River. Deemed the Twin Cities because of the two cities’ close proximity, Minneapolis has a population of 422,331 and the state’s capital, St. Paul, has about 306,621, according to 2017 census estimates. Some Somalis resettled directly to Minnesota from refugee camps, while others came from other states. The majority immigrated to the Twin Cities metropolitan area, but others settled in smaller towns throughout the state, such as Willmar, Rochester, or in Marshall where they found employment in turkey

processing plants (2018, Wilhide, Overview, para 3). Other migrants and refugees that came to Minnesota in the late 20th and early 21st centuries were Hmong, Khmer, Lao, Vietnamese, Mexican, Salvadoran, and Karen.

Much earlier (in the late 1600s), the first European settlers who came were French, French-Canadian fur trappers and British. Later, “Minnesota became a home for Swedes, Irish, Germans, and Italians in the late nineteenth century, for Poles and Mexicans in the early twentieth century” (Ratsabout, 2018, para 1). In the 19th century, the “Ojibwe and Dakota people who have made this land their home for centuries were joined and then driven out or confined by European settler-colonists” (Ratsabout, 2018, para 1).

“By the 1850s, settler-colonists with British roots had already ventured west to Minnesota Territory to create a ‘New England of the West.’ Immigrants from Sweden, Norway, and Germany followed them throughout the 1860s and 1870s” and produced ethnic enclaves (Ratsabout, 2018, para. 7). Norwegians flocked to Minnesota after the Homestead Act when a new Board of Immigration started to promote immigration. By 1880, 120,000 Norwegians had relocated there (Ratsabout, 2018, para. 8). In the 1890s, 40 percent of Minnesota’s “population was foreign-born, compared to 11 percent of the US population overall” (Ratsabout, 2018, para. 9). Like many other immigrants, Latinos/as came to Minnesota in search of economic opportunities in the early 1900s and settled in St. Paul and West St. Paul in the 1920s (Ratsabout, 2018, para. 23). The majority of the 276,000 people of Latino/a descent in Minnesota today are U.S.-born (Ratsabout, 2018). Latino/a people have always experienced

discrimination and the “deportation of Mexican and other Latinx immigrants continues” today (Ratsabout, 2018, para. 26).

Today, an estimated 8 percent of 4,417,700 Minnesotans are foreign-born and whites make up 82.1 percent of Minnesota’s population (Minnesota State Demographic Center, 2016, p. 10). Seven percent of residents are “native-born Americans who have at least one immigrant parent” (American Immigration Council, 2017, p. 37). More concentrated numbers of immigrants live in the Twin Cities: 15.9 percent foreign-born residents live in Minneapolis and about 18 percent in St. Paul, according to 2017 census estimates. People of Somali descent make up 0.9 percent based on using official numbers of 46,300 of people from Somalia and descendants born in the U.S. (Minnesota State Demographic Center, 2016). Other large groups of immigrants in Minnesota come from Mexico, India, Laos, and Ethiopia (American Immigration Council, 2017, p. 37).

While Minnesota has a history of welcoming immigrants, some of this support eroded in the early 2000s when Minnesota voters “moved noticeably to the right, both in political party affiliation, and in attitudes toward immigrants” (Fennelly, 2006, p. 8). During this time, “the state of Harold Stassen, Hubert Humphrey, Walter Mondale and Paul Wellstone” elected “a House of Representatives with a Republican majority, and a conservative Republican governor” (Fennelly, 2006, p. 8). That governor, Tim Pawlenty, “made a punitive response to ‘illegal immigration’ a major theme of his administration” (Fennelly, 2006, p. 8). Despite anti-immigrant sentiment in some quarters, Minnesota

elected lawyer and former refugee Mee Moua as “the first Hmong person elected to the Minnesota legislature—and to any state legislature” in 2002 (Ratsabout, 2018, para. 22). Asian Americans “are the fastest-growing ethnic group in Minnesota”, including a large Hmong and Laotian population that began arriving in the mid-1970s from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam and Korean children who have been adopted (Ratsabout, 2018, para. 22). Another milestone occurred in 2016 when Ilhan Omar was the first Somali-American in history to be elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives and any state legislature. Then, in 2018 she was elected, with 78 percent of the vote, to serve in the United States House of Representatives as the first Somali-American (O’Grady, 2018). The *Washington Post* described Omar as: “…the first Somali American, first Muslim refugee and first hijab-wearing Muslim woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. She also became the first woman of color to represent Minnesota in Congress” (O’Grady, 2018, p. 1). Omar remarked during her victory speech, “When people were selling the politics of fear and division and destruction, we were talking about hope. We were talking about the politics of joy,” (O’Grady, 2018, p. 1). Some of the data for this dissertation came from my participant observation during her two campaigns and interviews while she was a state representative.

Somali-Americans as Muslims in the United States

Since the U.S. Census does not ask about religious affiliation in its national surveys, there are only estimates of the size of the Muslim American

population (Pew, 2007, p. 3). In the 10 years I have been working on this study, the estimated number of Muslims in the United States has gone from 2.35 million (Pew, 2007) to 3.45 million in 20 and is projected to reach 8.1 million in 2050, based U.S. Census data combined with surveys from the Pew Research Center (Mohamed, 2018, p. 1). That would be 2.1 percent of the U.S. population and surpass Jews as the second-largest religious group after Christians (Mohamed, 2018, p. 1). Total U.S. population figures from the U.S. Census population clock were 328,416,729 on Feb. 10, 2018 (2019). Muslims have been the fastest growing religious segment in the United States; however, President Donald Trump issued an executive order in 2017 to ban people coming into the U.S. from mostly Muslim countries, which could impact these predictions.

Race and religious exclusion new concepts to Somalis.

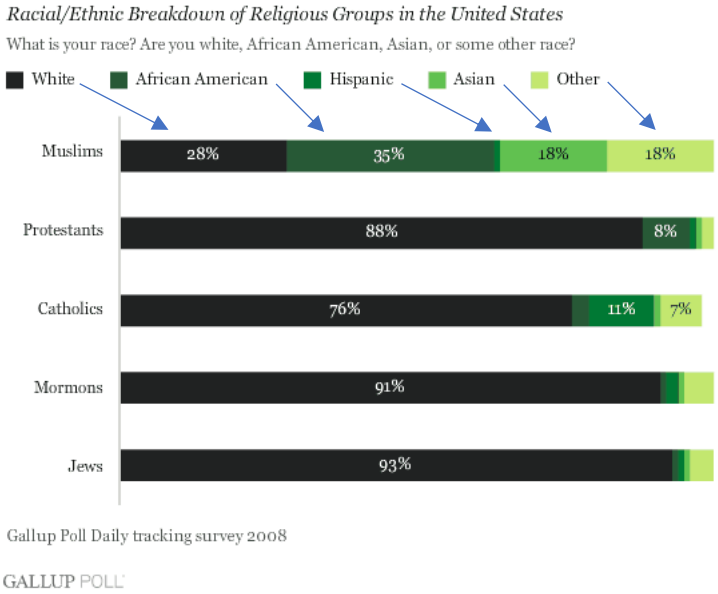
> *Minnesota's immigrant history reveals that state and federal legislation has impacted the movement of people to the state. When nativist sentiment rose, restrictive legislation often followed. The challenges of today's political environment have again brought to light the xenophobia of the past. Restrictions and exclusions that Southern European, Chinese, and Jewish immigrants once faced are now aimed at Muslims and other war refugees seeking to make the United States and Minnesota their home.* -Ratsabout, 2018, para. 2

Participants in my study said they were unaware of race until they moved to the United States. In Somalia, they were simply Somalis. When they arrived,

they were labeled black and African American, but the only identification they related to was Somali. In addition to dealing with racism in the United States—a country with a long history of oppression of racial minorities—Somali immigrants also recounted dealing with prejudice and ignorance with regard to their religious beliefs. In Somalia, being Muslim was just part of everyday life.

In the United States, Muslims have suffered persecution throughout their history, which dates back to colonial times; however, since the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, anti-Muslim sentiment came to the forefront of public attention. Many U.S. citizens equate Muslims with terrorists and Islamic extremists; however, Pew Research polls revealed that "Muslims in the United States reject Islamic extremism by larger margins than do Muslim minorities in Western European countries "… absolute levels of support for Islamic extremism among Muslim Americans are quite low, especially when compared with Muslims around the world" (2007, p. 7-8). The Pew study also showed that "Muslim Americans are a highly diverse population, one largely comprised of immigrants. Nonetheless, they are decidedly American in their outlook, values, and attitudes. Overwhelmingly, they believe that hard work pays off in this society" (2007, p. 7). A study by Gallup said that "Muslim Americans are the most racially diverse group surveyed in the United States, with African Americans making up the largest contingent within the population, at 35%" (Younis, 2009, p. 1). Gallup broke down Muslim ethnicity in the United States as follows.

Table 1. Racial/Ethnic breakdown of religious groups in the United States



(Younis, 2009, p. 1)

Muslim countries of origin are diverse. “More than a third of Muslim American adults (37%) were born in the United States” (Chahbi, 2011, p. 13). Those who have immigrated to the United States “come from at least 77 different countries, with no single country accounting for more than one in six” (Chahbi, 2011, p. 14). “A relatively large proportion of Muslim immigrants are from Arab countries, but many also come from Pakistan and other South Asian countries” (Pew, 2007, p. 8). Contrary to common misconceptions, only 20 percent of the world’s Muslim population is Arabic-speaking (CAIR, p. 11). Muslims are not a monolithic group. Muslims in America are an extraordinary mosaic of ethnic, linguistic, ideological, social, economic, and religious groups (America.gov, p. 48).

African-American Muslims comprise from one-fifth to one-third of the total for all Muslim Americans (America.gov, 2008). Approximately 30 percent of the estimated 10 million Africans brought to North America as slaves, between 1619 and the 1800s, were Muslims. Other Muslims migrated from the Ottoman Empire, which includes today's Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey. Somalis, from East Africa, are among the most recent Muslim immigrants to the United States. Somali-Americans are isolated from other Muslims because most other Muslim immigrant groups came to the United States by choice, seeking educational and other economic opportunities (Dunbar, 2010), whereas Somalis come as refugees from their homeland in the Horn of Africa.

Somali-Americans are a small minority, some three to six percent, of the total Muslim-American population, but a significant percentage of the Minnesota Muslim population. An article by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis said, "The Muslim community in the Twin Cities includes individuals with roots in Africa, South Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East, plus members of the Nation of Islam and other groups" (Woessner, 2002, p.1). "The largest group of Twin Cities Muslims is made up of immigrants from the East African nation of Somalia. Because nearly all Somalis are Muslim, many estimates use the number of Somalis in the area as a basis for calculating the larger Muslim population" (Woessner, 2002, p. 1). In Minnesota, 99.9 percent of Somalis are Sunni Muslims (Macalester, 2008, p. 3).

"While Minnesotans may view Somali-immigrants as a monolithic group, Somali society is actually composed of multiple groups, affiliated by language,

culture, geography or other commonalities" (Minneapolis Foundation, 2008, p. 11). For those Somali-Americans who choose to practice faith beliefs, their practices publicly mark them as Muslims. The Minneapolis Foundation reports that:

> In Minnesota—especially at school and in the workplace—Somalis find they must negotiate for time and space to pray (at five, predetermined times a day, facing Mecca), for permission to wear the hijab (a head covering, a religious observance of modesty for Muslim women), and for understanding as they fast from dawn to dusk during the month of Ramadan (a lunar month near the end of the calendar year). Islam also prohibits charging or paying-interest, which makes it difficult to purchase homes or otherwise participate in Western economic life (Minneapolis Foundation, 2008, p. 11).

As these Somali immigrants explore their cultural, religious, and ethnic identities as Muslims and as Americans, dominant and online social media play distinctive roles. Dominant media coverage of Somalis tends to focus on violence and other problems associated with Somalis with fewer stories about their positive contributions to American society. News has tended to focus on things like the high-profile cases of young Somali men being recruited to terrorist groups, the controversial Islamic center proposal in lower Manhattan, President Trump's disparaging remarks about Somalis when he visited Minnesota in 2016, his "Muslim ban" in 2017, and divisive immigration discourse. Participants in this dissertation study voiced concern about negative stereotypes and a public

opinion poll confirmed that a 52 percent majority of Muslims said “that government anti-terrorism policies single out Muslims in the U.S. for Increased surveillance and monitoring” and 55 percent said being a Muslim in the U.S. since 9/11 is more difficult (Pew Research Center, 2011, p. 2). These opinions were somewhat consistent with survey data from 2007. However, there was a surprising shift in several new polls that showed a slight increase in favorable views of Muslims in the United States.

When the Pew Research Center compared ratings between 2014 and 2017, it found that of all religions, “Americans feel coolest toward Muslims and atheists” with mean ratings increasing “from a somewhat chilly 40 and 41 degrees, respectively, to more neutral ratings of 48 and 50” (Pew Research Center, 2017, para. 2). The principal investigator who compared three Brookings Institute polls had this to say:

> Remarkably, despite heated campaign rhetoric on Islam and Muslims, and the Orlando shooting, attitudes toward Islam and Muslims have become progressively more favorable from November 2015 to June 2016, and more Americans have come to say that Islamic and Western traditions are compatible over the same period (Telhami, 2016, p. 1).

The polls showed that “Favorable attitudes toward Muslims improved from 67 percent to 81 percent” (Telhami, 2017, para 6). The increase in favorable attitudes overall came about from Democrats (up 12 percent) and Independents (up 17 percent), while “a majority of Republicans continued to express the view that Islam and the West are incompatible, with little change across the three

polls" (Telhami, 2016, p. 1). Other findings concurred that Democrats and Democrat-leaning respondents expressed "somewhat warm feelings toward Muslims, giving them an average rating of 56 on the feeling thermometer [with a range of 0 to 100], up from 47 in 2014 (Pew Research Center, 2017, p. 6). In an opinion piece, University of Maryland professor and Brookings Institution fellow, Shibley Telhami argued that candidate Trump's anti-Muslim rhetoric is what fueled the change in opinions. "As on almost all issues, partisan divisions intensified during a highly divisive election year. The more one side emphasized the issue—as happened with Trump on Islam and Muslims—the more the other side took the opposite position" (Telhami, 2017, para. 8).

Problem Statement

When I started making my way into the Minnesota Somali community as a researcher, I found very little scholarship available except for *Bildhaan*, which is an international journal of Somali studies. Founded in 2001 by five different educational institutions, the journal's website states that "it is the first of its kind and encourages submissions in all fields that are relevant to Somali peoples around the world" ("About the journal," 2019, para. 1). The journal's editor in chief is a scholar at Macalester College and archives are available through Digital Commons. Another early source who was very helpful to me was Cawa Abdi, associate professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Minnesota, who shared her work and insights with me. Beyond those academic sources, there were a handful of articles about Somali immigrants. In the

mainstream media, there was an occasional news story and a more in-depth series on MPR radio, but most of what I learned about Somalis came from informants and others I met over time. I also began to read ethnic and social media that were available in English.

I eventually situated my master's thesis, which focused on the role social media play in communication and development of ethnic, religious, and cultural identities, with Stuart Hall's concept of identity as being shifted and negotiated (1982) and Benedict Anderson's idea of imagined community (1983).

I also build from the work of scholars interested in mainstream media's portrayal of marginalized communities in both my master's thesis and this dissertation. The term "dominant" may be more accurate, in that mass media assert power dominance and not all dominant media reflect a "mainstream" perspective. A principal characteristic of dominant mass media is that they help maintain social order (or the status quo) by covering news and producing content that helps support the dominant elite value systems. In doing this, mass media reflect a mainstream bias and marginalize perspectives outside dominant elite value systems. Mass communication and media scholar, David Demers defines mainstream bias this way:

> The mainstream bias stems from the structural dependence that journalists have on government and on established power groups for the news. News beats are anchored in the powerful institutions in a society and these institutions help legitimate the role of news media in society,

just as the media help legitimate the institutions and the elites who run them (2005, p. 175).

Catherine Squires argued that most mainstream journalism "reinforces the racial status quo and dominant understandings of racial categories" (2007, p. 5). "Through the framing process, news media influence the public's sense of the salience of racial issue," she said. This, in turn, "influences public opinion and policy by delimiting the discussion of racial issues" (2007, p. 5). I add to this body of literature by documenting mainstream coverage of a new group of Americans from the African continent. My participants also reveal their experiences and opinions about mainstream media's framing of Somalis, providing new data for others to build upon.

Many scholars argue that dominant mass media play a key role in defining, preserving, or weakening ethnic (and national) identities (Squires, 2009a; Riggins, 1992; Kelley, Brehe, Nangyal, Reed, 2010). Others concur that dominant news media under-represent and misrepresent particular minority groups, issues, and sources because they perpetuate patterns of negative association, stress differences, conflicts, and criminal behavior in coverage of minorities (Rodríguez, 2009). This dissertation supports those findings.

In another study, Klein and Naccarato examined "how local television news has been shown to misrepresent minorities. Minorities are portrayed more frequently as criminals than are whites, and minority misrepresentation has been shown to be out of proportion to crime statistics" (2003, p. 1611). They recap previous research, including Linton 1995, which showed "'African Americans'

main complaint about news coverage is that it contains too much negativity about Blacks and excessive emphasis on crime" (p. 1613). My informants voiced these complaints about Somalis as well.

When news media continually focus on negative stereotypes they reinforce frames in the public's minds (Entman, 2007). Entman asserted that "agenda setting, framing and priming fit together as tools of power" under the overarching concept of bias in news media (2007, p. 163). Entman explicated "*framing* as the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation" (2007, p. 164). Frames "shape and alter audience members' interpretations and preferences through *priming*" in which frames introduce or raise ideas that activate schemas that affect the way audiences think or feel about the subject (Entman, 2007, p. 164). So it is not surprising that a Pew Center opinion poll documented the half of the U.S. public have negative views about immigrants (Pew Research Center, 2015, p. 13).The most negative views centered on "the economy and crime: Half of U.S. adults say immigrants are making things worse in those areas" (Pew Research Center, 2015, p. 13).

Gettleman (2010) found that many stories in mass media focus on problems that a minority of Somali men are experiencing, such as news accounts about homicides in the United States, Somali pirates, and young men who join terrorist groups and return to Somalia to fight for their homeland, as seen in articles such as those found in *The New York Times*. My research supports these findings and expands on them by showing why Somalis distrust mass media and

how they circumvent mainstream media to share their news and information.

Federico Subervi's vast portfolio of scholarship established and recently confirmed that Latinos/as are "mostly invisible and problematic" in TV news. He wrote:

> Among the findings of this study is the fact that the patterns of coverage, or most accurately stated neglect of the coverage of the nation's largest ethnic minority population, has remained practically frozen in time or has worsened. Albeit Latinos represent a population of over 54 million that now surpasses 17 percent of the U.S. national total, stories about Latinos and Latino issues constitute less that .78 percent of the news in the studied networks. This percentage is a meager .41 percent regarding stories exclusively about Latinos. Moreover, that coverage continues to remain significantly focused on Latinos as people with problems or who cause problems (Subervi & Sinta, 2015, p. 2).

My dissertation concurs that dominate media have covered our newest immigrants with the same kind of misrepresentation and negative representation as earlier immigrants. It is time for dominant media editors and reporters to listen to scholars and immigrant voices and learn to provide more balanced coverage of immigrants and marginalized communities if they are to uphold their responsibility as a forum for all. McGown (1999) warned that "consequences of misunderstanding for both immigrants and immigrant-receiving societies are significant" (p. 5), and added that:

> In the absence of that understanding, there is a tendency to exaggerate the inflexibility of the barriers between cultures … a tendency to conclude that some distances are too far to bridge, that essential differences separate certain cultures and religions from others, and that assimilation—the rejection of the values of one culture and their replacement with the values of another—is the only workable path to cohabitation (McGown, 1999, p. 4).

In keeping with this philosophy, my study responds to the scarcity of documented evidence about Somali immigrants, who are among one of the newest immigrant populations in the United States. From East Africa, Somali refugees also are among the most recent Muslim immigrants. I maintain that society benefits as a whole from documenting immigrant populations and sharing their cultural heritages with inhabitants in the host country.

In addition, this dissertation responds to the desire expressed by my Somali-American participants to increase understanding in the public arena about their cultural and religious beliefs and practices, their history, and the positive contributions they make in the United States. Since cultural and religious beliefs set Somalis apart in U.S. society, this study takes particular interest in providing deep and nuanced information about the role of trust in Somali media consumption as well as other important contextual data.

Some would say that the purpose of the news media as a social institution is to strengthen people's capacity to work for the mutual benefit of society and build community; however, if immigrants don't trust mainstream media sources

nor the government, how do they get information necessary for successful integration into U.S. society? For news organizations, vast increases in the diversity of the community and in the ever-changing capability of communications technologies make the question of how to measure and grow social capital or community more complicated than that of how to measure and grow profits. Of chief concern to Coleman (1988) in defining social capital was the existence of interactions between members of society. The varying needs and interests of increasingly diverse individuals—all acting as citizens, consumers, and social beings—are distinct from those of society at large. To determine media's influence on community building for Somalis and the broader community, this dissertation explored some of the categories in which Coleman divided social capital including the obligations, expectations, and trustworthiness of structures; information channels used by Somalis in the study; and, third, norms and effective sanctions (1988).

Curran advocated for strengthening community through the media, arguing for a "division of labor in which different sectors of the media have different roles, practice different forms of journalism, and make different contributions to the functioning of the democratic system" (Curran, 2005, p. 128). Curran identified seven values that would help sustain a "culture of 'civic democracy'"– civility, empathy, mutuality, objectivity, public interest, democratic efficacy, and social inclusion (2005, p. 128). Schudson and Tifft wrote: "The journalist's role as the arbiter of information has diminished, yet the need to alert citizens to the misleading, the false, and the propagandistic has never been

greater" (2005, p. 42). Every one of the press' functions seems important to the issue of increasing social capital, but the media's role can no longer be passive. Their role is to actively promote ways (forum/access/knowledge) in which citizens—hosts and new comers—are engaged in the communication process, each other, and society.

Rainie and Anderson state that "[a] vast research literature on trust and 'social capital' documents the connections between trust and personal happiness, trust and other measures of well-being, trust and collective problem solving, trust and economic development and trust and social cohesion" (2017, p. 2). If journalists are to uphold their historically agreed upon roles they need to accommodate the news and information needs of immigrants. Those roles are: to serve as a watchdog keeping government and other sources of power accountable; to inform citizens about what they need to lead their lives in society; to provide a forum and common space for competing viewpoints to be in dialogue; to represent (or be an advocate) for people and what they think or want in relationship to governance; and, according to some, to resolve conflict by working to promote norms and procedures of democracy and to resolve problems (Overholser & Jamieson, 2005).

The health of communities and the nation depends on news media fulfilling their roles. The Hutchins Commission report in 1947, *A Free and Responsible Press,* evaluated press performance. Davison (1988) built from the commission's studies to examine an urban community's health in light of mass media as part of a broader media network. CUNY journalism professor, Jeff

Jarvis suggested: “Community means connecting people intimately and over time to share interests, worldviews, concerns, needs, values, empathy, and action” (2018, para. 3). Jarvis argued that journalists and social media should enable community or belonging. This dissertation expanded on these ideas by providing evidence of how a group of immigrants use social media to connect as a community. My study also examined how and why news organizations fall short with immigrant audiences and how journalists might restore trust and engagement with news.

Trust and Distrust of Media

Mayer et al. developed a model of dyadic trust that clarified the role of risk between two specific parties. They argued that previous models, which looked at dating, generalized trust, and trust as a social phenomenon, neglected the “relationship-specific boundary condition” of their approach (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1955, p. 711). A definition adopted by some advertising and communications scholars, Mayer et al. conceptualized:

> The definition of trust proposed in this research is the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party (1955, p. 712).

They purported that this “definition of trust is applicable to a relationship with another identifiable party who is perceived to act and react with volition

toward the trustor" (Mayer et al., 1955, p. 712). Mayer et al. explored the concept of trust between an employee and an employer organization. Other scholars have applied the concept to e-commence, advertising, and social media (e.g., Mcknight & Chervany, 2001-2002; Roy, Huh, Pfeuffer, & Srivastava, 2017), where vulnerability and risk certainly are factors in whether someone trusts enough to risk taking a certain action. Findings from this dissertation also address other constructs of trust, as explained in McKnight and Chervany's interdisciplinary typology (bold type applied by this author.):

Disposition to trust comes primarily from trait psychology, which says that actions are molded by certain childhood-derived attributes that become more or less stable over time. **Institution-based trust** derives from sociology, which says that behaviors are situationally constructed. In this paradigm, action is not determined by factors within the person but by the environment or situation. (e.g., [37]), (Mcknight & Chervany, 2001, p. 42).

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the concept of trust and news-attending among immigrant audiences. The study asks why members of the Somali-American community trust some news sources and not others, what media they use or "attend" to for news and information and why they make the choices they do. A better understanding of the needs, issues and motivations in news attending by immigrants will benefit scholars, media outlets, and immigrant communities to make more informed decisions.

Rationale and significance of study. Much of what we know about minority/ethnic communities and media addresses the viewpoint of media producers, both mainstream and ethnic. This study aims to shed light on media use from the viewpoint of immigrants themselves. This kind of work is difficult and takes time, but the researcher has been embedded and following members in the local Somali community since 2009, which facilitated her ability to locate informants for her research.

A rich body of literature exists on the *practice* of journalism (Belair-Gagnon, Agur, & Frisch, 2017; Kaufhold, Hinsley, Lewis, & McCombs, 2012; Lewis, Holton, & Coddington, 2014; Padgett & Allen, 2003; Schudson & Tifft, 2005; Usher & Lewis, 2012), but fewer studies explore the perspective of news consumption from the immigrant audiences' viewpoint. Park's seminal work laid a foundation of knowledge about the "immigrant press" from the perspective of editors of such publications in the early 1900s (Park, 1922). Miller chronicled 28 different U.S. ethnic groups' newspapers, excluding black and Native American media (S. M. Miller, 1987, p. xiv). Squires' scholarship on "African Americans and the Media" provided an interdisciplinary overview introducing the varied ways "[b]lack Americans have navigated cultural, political, and economic obstacles both to make their own media and to critique mainstream media", covering the early black Press in 1827 to New Media and the Obama presidential campaign (2009, back cover). A companion textbook to Squires' by Ono and Pham aimed "to dispel the misconception that media represent Asian Americans accurately, to cut through the misinformation presented daily in mainstream media, and to

gesture toward the part of Asian American lives, identities, and experiences that are not available, at least in mainstream media" (2009, p. 4).

The largest body of scholarship on immigrant newsmaking has been written about Latino/a media, which date back to 1808 in the United States as shown in an exhibit that celebrated the bicentennial of the Latino/a press facilitated by Félix Gutiérrez, professor of journalism, communication and Mexican American studies at the University of Southern California. In addition, Rodriguez traced the historical and economic forces that shaped Latino/a-oriented newsmaking from the late 19th century and early 20th century U.S. Spanish language newspapers to contemporary times (1999). Among others' work, Valdivia's textbook provided an introduction to Latina/o's relationships to media through Denis McQuail's model: "production, content, audiences, and effects" (2010, p. 27).

This dissertation builds from these and other scholars' work on the ethnic/immigrant media to call attention to one of the newest groups of immigrants in the United States, Somali Americans, about which literature is scarce. Rather than focus on the newsmakers' perspective, this dissertation is focused on Somali-Americans news-attending, which I define equate to news consumption. I looked at what news Somali immigrants pay attention to and what they think of the mainstream coverage of Somalis.

Somali immigrants consume both mainstream and ethnic media and alternative media sources for news, information, political, and entertainment content to meet their integration, communication, cultural identity, and

community-building needs. They also produce media for these purposes, and to challenge dominant values of political and economic elites and representations in the mainstream media. As long as mainstream media largely ignore minority populations or focus on negative attributes, those populations will seek to locate media sources that fulfill their needs as citizens and as members of an ethnic community. This dissertation documents media sources used by participants in my study.

Overarching research questions. This study advances scholarship by analyzing participants' perceptions of media coverage of the Somali community. This study extends the literature on "trust"—a subjective term with multiple areas of scholarship exploring its use and application—with the literature on news attending by answering the questions:

• Where and why do Somali-Americans go for news affecting their community?

• Who/what media do Somali-Americans trust and why?

• What media do Somalis in this study pay attention to and why?

• What role do social media play in community building?

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

Vivian Martin suggested that people have many reasons to be ambivalent about news-attending and simultaneously embrace and pull away from the news (Martin, 2008). I interpret Martin's term, news-attending, to mean paying attention to the news. In other words, to listen or be present with the news. She highlighted the role cultural identity plays in news-attending. Martin further states: "The discounting awareness with which African-Americans attended mainstream media accounts they felt misrepresented blacks is a heightened example of how people in general work around news media in everyday life" (2008, p. 90).

This study also took up Martin's call to answer focused questions about news-attending. She proposed that "…qualitative audience studies could benefit from dedicated studies, some longitudinal, that focus on small groups of people reading, viewing, talking about, and acting on the news" (Martin, 2008, p. 90). As Martin suggested, this dissertation delves deeply into the social network of a group of people in order to "address the questions of cultural context more deeply" (Martin, 2008, p. 90).

Media scholar and sociologist Manuel Castells conceptualized the Internet as "the network society" in which social and organizational networks formed through global digital technologies were not bounded by geography (2010, p. xviii). They were powered "in ways that allowed their endless expansion and reconfiguration, overcoming traditional limitations…" (Castells, 2010, p. xviii). Where traditional media were the gatekeepers of news and information, new

media has opened up new “gateways” for immigrants to publish and exchange opinions. Denis McQuail defines gateway: “Door to access information on the Web or to access the Web itself” (2010, p. 139)

Zizi Papacharissi indicated that “[i]dentity, community, and culture present primary organizing points for most researchers interested in new media” (2011, p. 309). Castells explained: “I understand by identity the process by which a social actor recognizes itself and constructs meaning primarily on the basis of a given cultural attribute or set of attributes, to the exclusion of a broader reference to other social structures” (Castells, 2012, p. 22). Maria Leonora G. Comello proposed that various selves—material, social, spiritual—which in combination provide a sense of personal identity, have implications in the study of communication (2009).

The notion of identity also is related to the formation of groups or *communities.* Papacharissi suggested that online social networks enable “both identity expression and community building” (2011, p. 305). David McMillan and David Chavis (1986) suggested that membership in a community can be based on psychological feelings, as in, a *sense of community*. Relevant to online communities is Benedict Anderson’s concept of *imagined communities*. Anderson suggested that nations are “*imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (1983, p. 15). This dissertation addresses immigrants’ complex communication needs and media choices as they simultaneously try to maintain their Somali

cultural attributes and achieve a sense of community, as they integrate into American society.

"In relation to *integration and identity*," the question remains whether new media "are a force for fragmentation or cohesion in society" (McQuail, 2010, p. 141). Media scholar Henry Jenkins asserted in a video:

> A new media system is being born; an era when spectatorial culture is giving way to participatory culture; where a society based on a small number of companies controlling the storytelling apparatus is giving way to a much more complex mediascape where average citizens have the ability to seize control over the media technology and tell their own stories in powerful new ways (Highest Common Denominator Media Group, 2009).

This study also builds upon my earlier work with a group of Somali-American women, where I found that "For this group of Muslim women, Facebook provides a veil that allows participants to selectively represent and conceal their evolving identities as Somalis and Americans" (Kelley, 2012, p. 120-121). My research with Somali-American women showed they do not choose to identify simply with either Somali values or American values, they choose "both and" to varying degrees, and private and public discourse through social media play a key role in the process. In this dissertation, I argue that in times of crisis, Somali-Americans also look to social media as a place for sharing and responding to news.

This dissertation draws on W. P. Davison's findings that a "community bulletin board" served as an important source of news and contributed to

community well-being in a New York immigrant neighborhood before the advent of social media (Davison, 1988). This study explores how social media operate as a “community bulletin board” and a trusted news source that provide a conduit for Somali-Americans to gather, seek information, respond, and facilitate a sense of community.

Relevant to this study is to recognize: “The normal distinction between public and private does not work for Facebook,” (Miller, 2011, p. 174). Rather than what might be considered an unbounded anonymous mass, “[T]he ‘public’ represented by Facebook is better understood as an aggregate of private spheres” (Miller, 2011, p. 175). Whereas, Papacharissi argued that social network sites are accessed in moments of privacy on devices, whether from home or elsewhere. She contends these “privée spaces are socially enabled via networked technologies, and social network sites afford this form of networked, mobile, and flexible sociality” (Papacharissi, 2011, p. 306). Both of these ideas certainly are relevant to how Somali-American populations use Facebook and other social media to facilitate community discussions and debates in what this researcher perceives as a combined public-private sphere.

Trust is an important construct in analyzing immigrant use of media. In their interdisciplinary conceptual typology, McKnight and Chervany (2001) offered conceptual-level and operational-level trust constructs bringing together concepts from many different disciplines. Their analysis of trust definitions fell into two broad categories. They found “*different conceptual types*, such as attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and dispositions” and a second broad group

"reflecting *different referents*: trust in something, trust in someone, or trust in a specific characteristic of someone (e.g., honesty)" (Mcknight & Chervany, 2001, p. 39). These concepts are discussed in more detail in the literature review.

Lastly, this study explores the *push and pull* toward "assimilation" of a particular immigrant group and the role media play. Park captured the history and contents of the immigrant press and "the inner life of immigrant peoples and their efforts to adjust themselves to a new cultural environment" through the eyes of editors (Park, 1922, p. xix). This dissertation builds on Park through the eyes and voices of immigrants.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

The Immigrant Audience: Attending the News

This dissertation does not focus on "mainstream" media (alternately called dominant, legacy, traditional); however, the roles/influences of these outlets were important for me to consider in relationship to their coverage of immigrants. Research on mainstream media finds they lack coverage of ethnic groups, misrepresent them in hegemonic or stereotypical ways, or focus only on negative or violent attributes (e.g., Dixon & Linz, 2000; Ono & Pham, 2009; I. Rodríguez, 2009; C. Squires, 2009a). Others reason: "Mainstream American journalism rests on a pluralist model of democracy that conserves the status quo, essentializes culture, and trivializes diversity" (Glasser, Awad, & Kim, 2009, p. 57). Glasser et al. also argue that a multicultural perspective "that questions existing arrangements, posits a relational view of culture, and defines diversity in terms of patterns of discrimination and inequality" is important to diversifying journalism and restructuring the American press (2009, p. 57). By doing this, they contend such journalism heightens "sensitivity to cultural differences" and "strengthens the role of minority media in the struggle to achieve social justice and political parity" (Glasser, Awad, & Kim, 2009, p. 57). My dissertation showed how Somali immigrants produce their own media to these ends.

This dissertation also takes up Martin's call to answer focused questions about news-attending to "address the questions of cultural context more deeply" (2008, p. 90). She found that people "work around news media" giving

"discounting awareness" to things they find offensive, such as African-Americans who felt mainstream media misrepresented blacks (Martin, 2008, p. 90).

> James Carey suggested that news-attending be treated in a ritual context: News reading, and writing, is a ritual act and moreover a dramatic one. What is arrayed before the reader is not pure information but a portrayal of the contending forces in the world. Moreover, as readers make their way through the paper, they engage in a continual shift of roles or of dramatic forces (Carey, 2008, p. 16-17).

Carey argued that "A ritual view does not exclude the processes of information transmission or attitude change," but contends these processes cannot be understood "aright except insofar as they are cast within an essentially ritualistic view of communication and social order" (2008, p. 17).

Social order, ethnic and cultural identity have a lot to do with immigrant responses to the media. Martin argued that people attend to news inadvertently in everyday life, but that some "news rises beyond inadvertent" attendance to become "part of people's lives" or they consciously "disattend" it (2008, p. 76). She agreed with Carey's idea of news being a drama that people enjoy vicariously, but that daily news attending is disrupted by "concerns with representation, distrust of news media as a profit-making institution and ideological apparatus, as well as the insidiousness of news media" (Martin, 2008, p. 77). This dissertation explored these reasons and others that contribute to immigrant ambivalence toward attending to mainstream news, such as the experiences they had with media and political elites before immigrating, trauma,

and emotional factors. My participants did find mainstream media offensive; however, for the most part, they did not give it discounting awareness.

Doris Graber reported that “from the standpoint of average Americans, haphazard news processing is quite satisfactory” (1988, p. 251). People manage the flood of news available by skimming. “Only 18 percent of the stories in an average newspaper are read in full” and, in a television newscast of 15 to 18 stories, “no more than one is retained sufficiently” (Graber, 1988, pp. 249–250). People pay attention to news or reject it based on whether it might be “personally significant” or entertaining (Graber, 1988, p. 251).

Others posit that people pay attention to news that is “close to home,” but Nina Eliasoph hypothesized that apathy and self-interest are only part of the picture in understanding why people avoid news and politics (1997). In her two-year study, she questioned the roles that “culture, power and emotions” play in social change (Eliasoph, 1997, p. 606). “[I]nstead of focussing just on inner beliefs and knowledge,” she listened to “how people actually talk”—“focussing on the public sphere—to find “a process of conversation that cultivates or impairs citizens’ abilities to talk, think, and imagine together” (Eliasoph, 1997, p. 606).

Martin’s finding that people “avoid what they perceive as media imposition” is supported by my earlier research with Somali-Americans. People avoid or “work around” media that affronts them (Martin, 2008, p. 90). In Martin’s interviews with black Americans, she found that group identity rises to the “forefront in more resistive ways” when people felt racial or ethnic “systematic alienation” from media (2008, p. 89). Somali-American research participants also

expressed their dissatisfaction with media representations in focus group discussions and interviews with this researcher (Kelley, 2012). More recently, Somali-Americans' resistance to mainstream media representations was documented in news coverage of an event concerning a Somali-American police office in Minneapolis, Minn. (Hirsi et al., 2017). Members of the Somali-American community in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area (Twin Cities) also spoke out on social media posts about their distrust of journalists, backing up Martin's claims of people being ambivalent about media; however, I did not find that participants in this dissertation research consciously disattended media.

In the past, political scientists may have seen "ambivilance" as an indicator of a lack of information or ignorance in public affairs, but some now see that the "presence of ambivalance and disjuction in individuals signifies awareness of, rather than obliviousness to, the complexities of the political and social context" (Cramer, 2007, p. 140). While many political scientists think that people vote based on how they feel about issues, Katherine Cramer put forward that cultural and geographic identities outweigh issues and political party when it comes to public opinion (2016). In her study of how people think about politics, she found that "issue stances" are not front and center in voting. People are more interested in "is this person like me? Does this person understand people like me" than issues (Cramer, 2016, p. 7). Her idea that people use social categories to understand their political world is pertinent to how distinctive cultural groups make calculations about various media sources.

In her book about how audiences interact with media, anthropology scholar S. Elizabeth Bird found in her focus groups that Native American participants felt “alienated and marginalized in mainstream media culture” (2003, p. 168). She found that cultural identity was a “crucial framing device” and that minority audiences “view representations through a lens that places ethnic identity in the forefront”; whereas, white focus group participants did not. Bird’s study showed that Native Americans, “like many other minorities, do not see themselves, except as expressed through a cultural script they do not recognize, and which they reject…” (Bird, 2003, p. 117).

Differences in perspectives based on race also are apparent in Cramer’s studies. In community forums structured to discuss race, Cramer found that people of color “become aware of how little the whites in their community understand the extent of racism” and the “Whites express surprise or a newfound alertness to the extent to which race matters in everyday life” (2007, p. 138). Since the majority of mainstream media outlets are run by whites that employ white journalists, this could be a factor in a lack of understanding between the media and audiences of color. Also relevant in the civic dialogue programs that Cramer observed was the way participants responded to the task of “negotiating a concept of citizenship in the contexts of diversity” (2007, p. 140).

> Some people entered these discussions without recognizing that it might not be appropriate to conceptualize people simply as people…. People who made unity claims were confronted with the fact that even some of

those who wanted to see all people as equal also saw a value in paying attention to difference (Cramer, 2007, p. 140).

Also relevant is the importance of providing a public forum for struggling with the topic of race in society. “Recalling Habermas, Dewey and Arendt, the public realm is something that people collectively create” and “[c]ollectives produce capacity in ways that individuals can not, particularly individuals existing in a racially segregated world” (Cramer, 2007, p. 141). As mainstream media have failed at providing such a forum, this dissertation explores whether social media can provide such a place “to address public problems” and also be a site “in which people struggle to define citizenship and community identity” as Cramer found in organized community forums (Cramer, 2007, p. 13).

Cramer also conceded that “collective struggles are not always pretty” but having the opportunity to engage in a public forum about race allowed people to generate “the task of balancing unity and difference” (2016, p. 141). “Collectives produce capacity in ways that individuals can not, particularly individuals existing in a racially segregated world” (Cramer, 2016, p. 141).

Habermas distinguished the public sphere as a “realm” accessible to all citizens “in which something approaching public opinion can be formed” (1974, p. 49). A second-generation member of the Frankfort School, Jürgen Habermas conceived the theory of the public sphere, or space, between private and public interests for political discussion that emerged during the Enlightenment and the American and French Revolutions (Keller & Durham, 2006, p. xviii). Habermas saw the public sphere as “a sphere which mediates between society and state, in

which the public organizes itself as the bearer of public opinion" (2006, p. 73-74). Historically, the public sphere of information "had to be fought for against the arcane policies of monarchies" (Habermas, 2006, p. 74). Habermas (2006) reckoned that institutionally guaranteed public discussions critical of political power had not always existed but emanated from a particular phase of bourgeois society. Joan Landes contested that women did not have the freedom to participate in the public sphere and that their domain was domestic (1988). And, Everett found that blacks have struggled historically in the United States for access to the public sphere (2009). Somalis in my dissertation also struggled to achieve full access to mainstream media. They looked to social and ethnic media instead, which helped build an ethnic enclave, but had limited reach as a true public sphere.

The idea of a "public connection" is compatible with Habermas' public sphere theory where participatory democracy happens—"a site where decisions and norms are collectively contested and redeemed" (Couldry, N., Livingstone, S., & Markham, 2016). They coined the phrase "mediated public connection" to describe their assumption that citizens have shared concerns about their world that is "sustained by the convergence in the media they consume" (2016, p. 3).

Couldry, et al. differentiated "'public connection'" from "attention," in that public connection is a "basic level of orientation that can reliably, particularly at times such as elections, be translated into attention" (2016, p. 3). They suggest that the public connection may be threatened as "media outlets and delivery

platforms are multiplying," so that "it is all the more important to listen to citizens' own reflections" (Couldry, N., Livingstone, S., & Markham, 2016, p. 4).

Where the town square may have been the realm of public discourse and debate in days past, Habermas suggested that "newspapers and magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere" today (1974, p. 49). This dissertation expands on Habermas by contending that the Internet and social media are important sites of public connection today for immigrants in this study. As people have become more distrustful of democratic institutions, the role of the media as a forum for "'public'" or "'political'" information is of vital concern (Couldry, N., Livingstone, S., & Markham, 2016, p. 23).

The Concept of Trust and Immigrants' Use of Media

Numerous conceptualizations of "trust" exist within the many disciplines that study it. "…academic disciplines such as sociology, psychology, economics, marketing, Management Information Systems (MIS), and communication have paid attention to the important role of trust in human interactions" (Huh & Shin, 2014, p. 172). Communication scholars, Jisu Huh and Wonsun Shin, offered a generally accepted definition of trust in their article about direct to consumer websites as "one party's willingness to rely on another party when uncertainty and risk exist" (2014, p. 172).

Business scholars explained that prior to the Internet people made purchases or sought advice from those they knew personally or "by reputation through trusted friends" (Mcknight & Chervany, 2001, p. 35). The town square or

public sphere was a place to gather, commune and learn who to trust and who not to trust. People knew their corner grocer, they knew professionals in their community from church, a club or the PTA (Mcknight & Chervany, 2001). Today, the Internet can be a risky trip into unknown territory or a place where trusted friends and relatives provide advice. But, what is trust and why is it important to consider when looking at immigrant sources of news?

As a sociologist, Barber began his exploration of the meanings of trust by looking at social interaction and the "expectations that actors have of one another" (1983, p. 9). He selected three fundamental meanings of trust. One is the expectation "of the persistence and fulfillment of the natural and the moral social orders," such as "'I trust the heavens will not fall'" (Barber, 1983, p. 9). This is the trust in expectations that the world will persist—be regular, have order and stability (Barber, 1983, p. 11). Secondly, he described trust in the expectation "of technically competent role performance" from people with whom we are in "social relationships and systems" (Barber, 1983, p. 9). For example a statement that reflects expectations of competent role performance is "'I trust my doctor to perform the operation well," which reflects "expert knowledge" or "technical facility" (Barber, 1983, p. 14). Competent role performance could also involve "everyday routine performance" (Barber, 1983, p. 14).

The expectation "that partners in interaction" will "place other's interests before their own" is a third kind of trust, according to Barber (1983, p. 9). He called this trust one of "fiduciary obligation" that "goes beyond technically competent performance to the moral dimension of interaction" (Barber, 1983, p.

15). Fiduciary responsibility is placed on those with special knowledge, skill, status or power, in regard to others within the social system. This kind of trust can be seen “in the concept of trusteeship in international relationships” (Barber, 1983, p. 15). Trust “is a social mechanism that makes possible the effective and just use of the power that knowledge and position give and forestalls abuses of that power. Society usually seeks to instill the moral sense of fiduciary responsibility in those who wield power, whether they be parents, government officials, foundation heads, or professionals” (Barber, 1983, p. 15). Barber suggested that the social relationship must be taken into consideration when conceptualizing trust because different systems may have conflicting expectations of trust. In addition, various kinds of trust can exist between individual actors, between individuals and systems, and between organizations (1983). Barber also laid out that trust has a function of social ordering or control.

A Pew study concurred that trust is a key element in holding society together. “When trust is absent, all kinds of societal woes unfold—including violence, social chaos and paralyzing risk-aversion” (Rainie & Anderson, 2017, p. 2). Furthermore, “Trust is a social, economic and political binding agent” (Rainie & Anderson, 2017).

Business scholars Mcknight and Chervany posited that the term “trust” is “confusing” and there is a “reluctance to define” it from researchers. They also suggested that trust is a vague term and that every discipline sees it through its own lens. “The other problem is that empirical research drives most definitions of trust” and limit its scope through factor analysis to fit the type of research the

scholars do (Mcknight & Chervany, 2001, p. 37). In their interdisciplinary conceptual typology, McKnight and Chervany (2001) offered conceptual-level and operational-level trust constructs bringing together concepts from many different disciplines, including psychology, sociology, social psychology, economics, political science, management, and communications. Their analysis of trust definitions fell into two broad categories. They found "*different conceptual types*, such as attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and dispositions" and a second broad group "reflecting *different referents*: trust in something, trust in someone, or trust in a specific characteristic of someone (e.g., honesty)" (Mcknight & Chervany, 2001, p. 39). In other words, "what type of construct trust is" or "the object of trust" (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 40). Both of these broad categories are relevant to the study of immigrant trust and distrust of media. McKnight and Chervany (2001) state that "[d]istrust should be defined as the mirror-image opposite of trust [48]" (p. 37)

McKnight and Chervany categorized trust into dispositional, institutional and interpersonal trust concepts, as seen here in their diagram, Figure 1 (2001, p. 42). They put Trust-Related Behaviors outside the trust typology model because these behaviors duplicate other constructs "(e.g., cooperation, information sharing, entering agreements with, risk taking, involvement with)," (Mcknight & Chervany, 2001, p. 41). Dispositional, institutional, and interpersonal trust constructs come from different disciplines and reflect different research perspectives.

Figure 1. An interdisciplinary model of high-level trust concepts

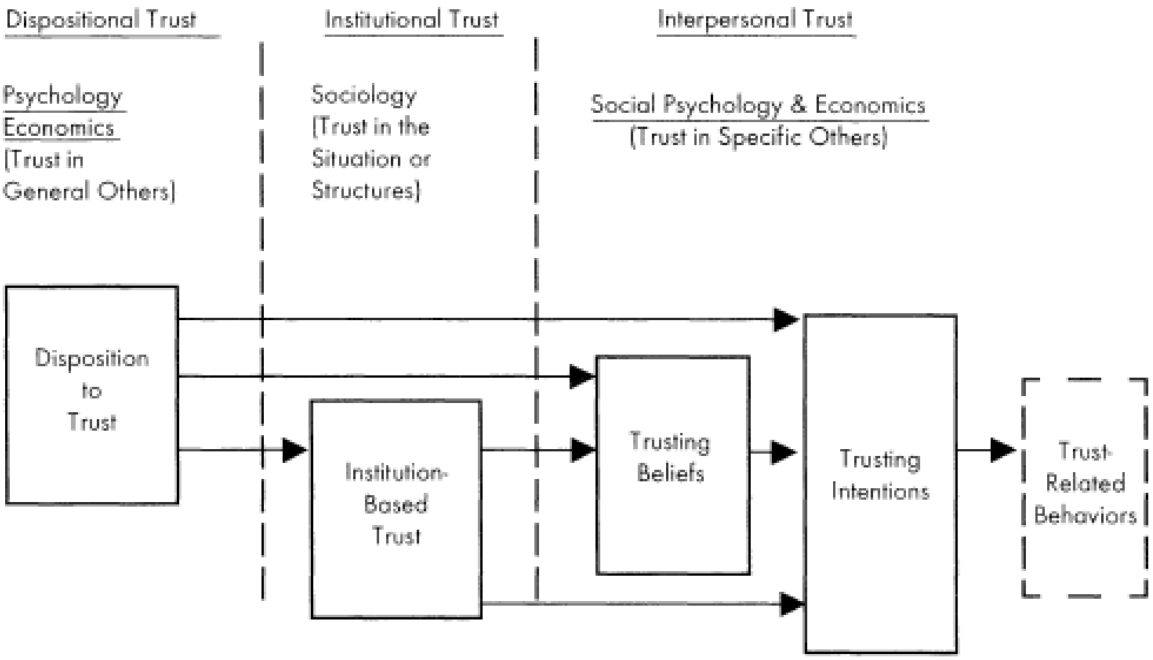


Figure 1. An Interdisciplinary Model of High-Level Trust Concepts

Note: The Trust-Related Behaviors construct lies outside the trust typology.

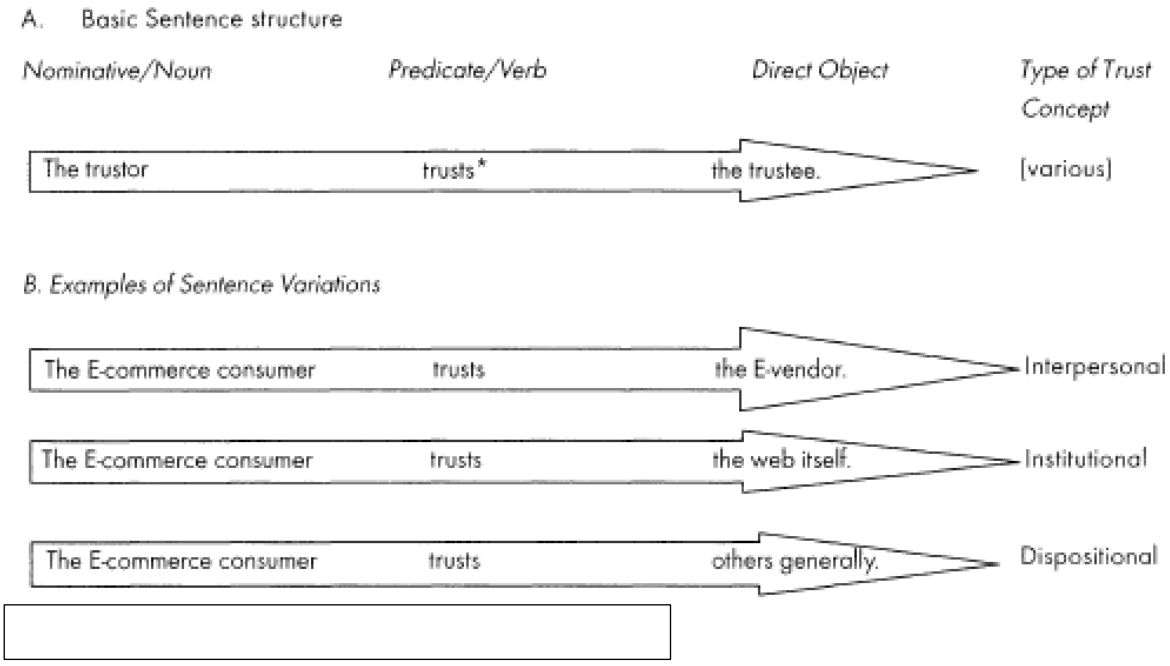
(Mcknight & Chervany, 2001, p. 42)

Trust concepts explained by Mcknight and Chervany:

> Disposition to trust comes primarily from trait psychology, which says that actions are molded by certain childhood-derived attributes that become more or less stable over time. Institution-based trust derives from sociology, which says that behaviors are situationally constructed. In this paradigm, action is not determined by factors within the person but by the environment or situation. Trusting beliefs and intentions reflect the idea that interactions between people and cognitive-emotional reactions to such interactions determine behavior (Mcknight & Chervany, 2001, p. 42).

They also evaluated the three trust concepts through a grammatical approach in which the "trustor is the subject or nominative of the sentence, trust itself is the verb or predicate, and the trustee is the direct object" (Mcknight & Chervany, 2001, p. 42), see their Figure 2. This approach showed "that the direct object is the differentiating factor" among the three trust constructs: "dispositional trust means that *one trusts others generally*, institutional trust means that *one trusts the situation or structures*" and in "interpersonal trust, the *direct object is the specific other individual one trusts* (italics, my emphasis, Mcknight & Chervany, 2001, p. 42).

Figure 2. Grammar of the trust model



(McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 42).

Based on the grammatical approach, these scholars put forth this comprehensive definition of trust: “This suggests the essence of the definitions of the psychological state known as trust: to willingly become vulnerable to the trustee, whether another person, an institution, or people generally, having taken into consideration the characteristics of the trustee” (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 42).

Mcknight and Chervany also identified subconstructs of the four main trust constructs, which relate to the parent constructs but have attributes that differentiate them. There are two aspects implicit in all the definitions that they would add to each of the subconstruct defintions: “felt security” and “a risky situation” (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 45). Having a feeling of security means feeling “safe, assured, and comfortable (not anxious or feaful)…” (2001, p.45). “Risk” or the “possibility of negative consequences” “is what makes trust in unfamiliar or uncertain situations like the Internet important but problematic [22, 25, 60, 81]),” (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 45). In such situations, people rely on their own general “*disposition to trust*, which “means the extent to which one displays a consistent tendency to be willing to depend on others in general across a broad spectrum of situations and persons” e.g., a “trust in humanity” and having “a trusting stance” (Mcknight & Chervany, 2001, p. 44-45). Whether they acquire this general disposition to trust as a child or later in life, it “does not necessarily imply that one believes others to be trustworthy,” but it is a generalized tendency to trust situations and people (Mcknight & Chervany, n.d., p. 45). “Dispositional trust” may be an important concept to consider when

assessing Somali-Americans' trust of online sources. Can a refugee who has been exposed to civil war, government failures, war, famine and ostracizing in their new host country trust anything?

Incorporating Mcknight and Chervany's concepts, advertising scholars Huh and Shin explicated trust and its importance this way:

> *Trust*, broadly defined as one party's willingness to rely on another party when uncertainty and risk exist (Doney & Canon, 1997; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995), has been considered one of the most important factors facilitating sustainable interpersonal relationships, commercial transactions, and online interactive communication, especially when a high level of risk and uncertainty is involved (Doney & Canon, 1997; Fukuyama, 1995; Mayer et al., 1995; McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002a) (Huh & Shin, 2014, p. 172).

Since immigrants have lives filled with uncertainty as newcomers in a foreign society, trust is an important factor in every aspect of their lives in the United States, especially those who have gone through traumatic experiences in their homeland. "…the influx of new people into old communities, the growth of urban populations, and, more recently, widespread job turnover and geographic movement has shifted the basis of trust from personal knowledge to institutional knowledge" from Zucker (1986) as reported by McKnight and Chervany (2001, p. 36).

In addition to immigrants' lives being fraught with uncertainty, Huh and Shin (2014, p. 172) summarized the work of Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Liu,

Marchewka, & Yu, 2005; Metzger, 2006; Schlosser, White, & Lloyd, 2006 saying that for people in general there are “higher levels of risks and uncertainty in the online environment because of the relative anonymity in online interactions” for reasons such as “dubious websites, spam and spyware problems, and various online privacy and security issues related to collection and sharing of personal information by online marketers” (Huh & Shin, 2014, p. 172). Somali-American immigrants that participated in my study said they are particularly concerned about privacy and security online. People don’t trust online encounters and fear that the website is tracking personal data on the user, which is salient to immigrant audiences, especially in the current U. S. political climate as public discourse against Muslim immigrants heightens.

Huh and Shin (2014) suggested that trust may “play an important role in consumers’ responses to and interactions with information websites” in addition to researchers who found trust issues with transactional websites (p. 173). Possible “risks and uncertainties” in using informational websites are that sponsors are not always identifiable and not all content is verified (Huh & Shin, 2014, p. 173). This trust framework could also be applied to online survey research as well as online news media sources, according to conversations with my research participants.

Pew Research Center authors agreed that “there is considerable concern that people’s uses of the internet are a major contributor” to a lack of trust (Rainie, Project, & Anderson, 2017, p. 2). Besides online surveillance, cyberattacks and scams, “the emergence of trust-jarring digital interactions has

also coincided with a sharp decline in trust for major institutions, such as government (and Congress and the presidency), the news media, public schools, the church and banks" (Rainie et al., 2017, p. 2). In a national survey of factors that influence people's trust of information sources, Pew Research Center found that 38% of people "have relatively strong interest and trust [in] information sources," 49% "are relatively disengaged and not very enthusiastic about information" or learning, "especially when it comes to navigating digital information," and 13% are interested in learning, but "are not particularly trusting of information sources" (Horrigan, 2017, p. 2). In Pew's typology of these groups, the "Eager and Willing" group that "exhibit the highest levels of interest in news and trust in key information sources" (which makes up 22% of U.S. adults) are more than half minorities: 31% Hispanic, 21% black, and 38% white, with the remaining percent made up of other racial and ethnic groups (Horrigan, 2017, p. 2-3). Immigrants is not a category in the typology. Those people (25% of adults) least interested in news and information, with "low trust in sources of news" and "little interest in acquiring information skills or literacies" were "heavily male 59%" and older, with one-third over the age of 65.

The American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) found that different kinds of people have different credibility problems with news media. Chaffee et al. pointed out that trust and credibility are different, in that "trust refers to the press as an overall institution not just to the believability of messages in one medium over another" (1995, p. 111). People who share similar demographic characteristics may focus on the distrust of the motives and competence of

reporters, while people who share certain attitudes may dislike opinions in the news media (American Society of Newspaper Editors, & MORI Research, 1985). Of particular importance to people's distrust of the media was that their distrust seemed to be based on "people's identification with "'victims'" of the press—and their corresponding fear of being victimized themselves" (American Society of Newspaper Editors, & MORI Research, 1985, p. 15). Among key aspects affecting news media credibility included a lack of respect for reporters, editors and media institutions. The study showed that "some people question the honesty and ethical standards" while others believe "the news media are manipulated by powerful groups" (American Society of Newspaper Editors, & MORI Research, 1985, p. 15). Other scholars characterized the audience's perceptions of the press as ranging from those "who consider media anything from a critical source of information about the world beyond their own immediate experience, to just another page in the propaganda menu" (Gunther, Hong, & Rodriquez, 1994, p. 628).

In many countries outside the United States, media institutions are connected to the government, so that "trust in one is tantamount to trust in both" (Chaffee et al.,1995, p. 113). If citizens approve of the government's actions they have confidence in press coverage and if they reject government power they distrust the media, they reasoned. In the United States, the press has a "watchdog" function, in which the media hold sources of power accountable—big business, politicians, and the government. Americans view the press and government as separate institutions. They seem to develop trust or distrust of

either institution independently (Chaffee et al., 1995). Even so, Gunther et al. (1994) found that while the press "may indeed have a widely acknowledged adversarial role, the press enjoys no more trust than other institutions" (p. 630). Interestingly, in the Pew Center study, government sources and local news organizations were rated about the same for their trustworthiness, with only 18% of U.S. adults saying they trust the two institutions a lot. The numbers who had "some" trust in information sources was 54% for local news organizations and 43% for government sources (Horrigan, 2017, p. 32). The American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) also found that the media "are not always believed or trusted" (American Society of Newspaper Editors, & MORI Research, 1985, p. 9). A key factor was people's belief that the press is exploitive, which explained why "so many different kinds of people, including blacks, young people, and people at opposite ends of the socioeconomic spectrum" doubted the media's credibility (American Society of Newspaper Editors, & MORI Research, 1985, p. 9).

One factor that diminished people's views of news media was being aware of conflicting news reports. The ASNE study reported that people who have had "negative personal experiences with media coverage" or "are aware of conflicting reports in the news" "have greater distrust" of the media than others 1985, p. 9). Since many studies show that immigrants are not accurately covered in the news, this may indicate that a relatively high number of immigrants distrust the news media. Another explanation might be found in advertising studies. A number of studies showed that deceptive advertisements produced a negative bias in consumers that spread to their distrust of advertising and marketing in

general (Darke & Ritchie, 2007). Deceptive advertising “activated negative stereotypes,” making consumers defensive,” according to Darke and Ritchie (2007, p. 114). I argue that immigrants may also project a distrust of news media in a similar way based on my conversations. Their experience of misrepresentation of immigrants may become a generalized distrust of all news media.

Turning the tables, Dinesen looked at the origins of trust of non-western immigrants to explore two main perspectives on trust: whether generalized social trust of other people is cultural or experiential. The cultural perspective says that trust is passed down from “one generation to the next through parental socialization” and the “experiential perspective argues that trust is formed by experiences” (Dinesen, 2012, p. 273). Dinesen writes that:

> …the two perspectives on trust can be examined by looking at whether immigrants, in spite of a shift in environment, retain the level of trust of their (or their parents') country of origin or, alternatively, tend to acculturate to the level of trust of natives in their new country, indicating that experiences living in this context have affected trust (Dinesen, 2012, p. 273).

Dinesen argues that his study approaches the “missing link” in research by examining parental transmission of trust to their children in Denmark as well as examining the alternative experiential perspective (2012, p. 274). He argues that “scholars have found a strong transmission of trust from parents to their children among natives,” but that immigrants have not been studied. He also

notes that some have posited there is a genetic component to parents handing down a trust trait (Dinesen, 2012, p. 275).

In relation to experiential trust, the appearance of a lack of fairness in the treatment of immigrants by officials as opposed to the majority "breeds mistrust in other people," among immigrants in particular. "Negative experiences of being discriminated against and treated unfairly by public officials will have a negative spill-over effect on the overal perception of fairness of state institutions, which in turn will depress trust in people" (Dinesen, 2012, p. 276).

In his analysis of survey data from native and immigrant families, the results showed that "children's perceptions of institutional fairness are a function of both parental transmission of values and concrete experiences with teacher fairness" and that "the parental transmission of perceptions is stronger, but only slightly, 'for Danes than for second generation immigrants,' and for second generation immigrants this transmission is not significant" (Dinesen, 2012, p. 285). "Conversely, the impact of experiences of fairness of teachers in school is significantly stronger for immigrants than native Danes. There is no significant difference between the two immigrant groups" (Dinesen, 2012, p. 285). The impact of experiences on children's perceptions was much stronger than parental transmission of trust in institutions. For native Danes, impact of experience verses parental transmission was not significant. "The results show that young immigrants in Denmark are considerably more trusting than their parents and to a large extent tend to acculturate to the trust levels of native Danish children"

(Dinesen, 2012, p. 286). These are important findings to consider when looking at immigrant experiences with institutions and media in the United States.

Chaffee et al. (1995) examined how Korean immigrants to the United States adjusted between the two nations' media systems. The authors assumed that immigrants would contextualize their understanding of the American press based on what they experienced in their country of origin. Whereas "indigenous Americans" develop trust (or lack thereof) of news media and the government independently, the Korean immigrant respondents had learned to see government and news media in close alignment. The study showed "much more confidence in American institutions than in those of Korea, and higher trust in the press than in the government for both countries," (Chaffee et al., 1995, p. 115). They found a high correlation that "the perceived connection between media and government is being carried over from Korea to the U.S." (Chaffee et al., 1995, p. 115). This is an important factor to consider when examining Somali-American immigrant news consumption.

Gunther, Hong and Rodriquez (1994) looked at how people distinguish between the press and the government after Taiwan print media were given freedom from government control. Building on Lipset and Schneider's (1987) balancing mechanism that showed that "as trust in the executive branch went up, trust in press performance declined, and vice-versa," Gunther et al. found that people in Taiwan were able to distinguish their trust in government from trust in media (1994, p. 630).

Studies also show various factors that influence trust of the Internet. One national trends survey of 6,369 people aged 18 years or older, compared trust of different channels of information. Respondents were divided in their trust of the Internet “with about one fourth expressing a lot of trust and one fourth expressing no trust” (Hesse et al., 2005, p. 2620). Radio was the least trusted source. Trust was strongly age and sex dependent with 18- to 34-year-olds being more than 10 times as likely, and 35- to 64-year-olds being more than 5 times as likely, “as those 65 years or older to report a lot or some trust in the Internet” (Hesse et al., 2005, p. 2620). Data suggested that almost two thirds (63.7%) looked online for health information (Hesse et al., 2005). Use of the Internet was “generally more common among persons who were younger than 65 years, women, those who were white or other race (e.g., Asian), and those who had higher levels of education and income” (Hesse et al., 2005, p. 2619). “Those with higher levels of education (i.e., a high school education or greater) were more trusting of the Internet, magazines, and newspapers than persons with less than a high school education” (Hesse et al., 2005, p. 2620). In the Pew study on trust in sources of information, Social Media, such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram (among social media users) were the least trusted with only 3% trusting it a lot, 31% some, 37% not too much and 28% not at all (Horrigan, 2017).

Looking ahead to the next decade, Pew Research Center found in a canvass of experts that 24% believed that trust in online interactions will “diminish because the Internet is not secure, and powerful forces threaten

individuals' rights," while 48% predicted that trust will be strengthened (Rainie & Anderson, 2017, p. 3-4).

The Concept of Community in the Digital Age

The concept of community in relation to news and digital media consumption is important to consider in immigrant media use. The concept of community can be defined in many different ways. A group of scholars at Vanderbilt University, who first conceptualized community in 1976, suggested that membership in a community can be based on psychological feelings, as in, a *sense of community* (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). They defined community with four elements: The "feeling of belonging" or "personal relatedness"; "a sense of mattering" to one another; getting one's needs met; and "a shared emotional connection, the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history, common places, time together, and similar experiences" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9). A "community" can be *territorially* based—a place, versus *relationally* based—a community of mutual interests.

Henri Tajfel and his colleagues formulated a theory called social identity. They proposed that people psychologically identify as a member of certain social groups, "ingroups", and not others, "outgroups" (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). They later incorporated other ideas, such as self-categorization, into their approach to define social groups and their interactions (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, 1979; Turner, 1999). Certain affinities can cause boundaries between people and groups, distinguishing those who are perceived to belong from those who do not.

Affinities can be anything from geography, to ethnicity, to fashion, to religion, to music and so on.

Another definition of community based on formation of nation-states was conceived by Benedict Anderson as *imagined communities*. He suggested that nations are "*imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" and that all communities larger than a very small village are imagined (Anderson, 1983, p. 15).

The advent of the Internet, and its related technologies, has changed the way immigrants are able to construct their identities and build communities. For immigrant populations, reconstructing their "nation" is possible through self-representation and connecting on the Internet through various social and online ethnic media. These virtual, imagined communities may be formed by individuals who seek and connect with others who possess characteristics consistent with what they deem to be important. This perspective concurs with Fox, who said: "Applying the idea of imagined community to virtual community allows for an understanding of the concept as more than just people interacting online" (Fox, 2004, p. 51). "… a virtual community is entirely predicated on an individual's extended consciousness, which helps to imagine his virtual community as real" (Fox, 2004, p. 52). "For individual members to truly belong, they arguably must be able to both imagine the community and in turn perceive themselves as a part of the community" (Fox, 2004, p. 52).

Calhoun takes Anderson's theory of imagined community beyond print media and his central concern with nationalism (Calhoun, 1991). In conceptualizing a "stronger sociological foundation" Calhoun called attention to two features that "reflect the modern production of an increasing split between the world of direct interpersonal relationships and that of large-scale collective organization" (Calhoun, 1991, p. 95). The first is social structures or networks, which he calls "indirect relationships—those mediated by information technology, bureaucratic organizations, and more or less self-regulating systems such as markets" (Calhoun, 1991, p. 95). The second concept is cultural—"the production of imagined communities … linked by common identities but minimally by networks of directly interpersonal relationships—nations, races, classes, genders, Republicans, Muslims, and 'civilized people'" (Calhoun, 1991, p. 95-96). Recognizing the role of indirect relations and imagined communities provides a way to understand the "increasing split between" everyday life and "large-scale social systems", thus potentially informing and improving Jürgen Habermas's account of social verses system integration (Calhoun, 1991, p. 96).

Rheingold suggested that virtual communities are self-sustaining social systems that engage online (Rheingold, 2000). Building from Blanchard's and others' research on community building, Blanchard states that the "distinguishing feature of virtual communities is their sense of community, i.e., their participants' feelings of membership, identity, influence, and attachment with each other" (Blanchard, 2008, p. 2107). She found that the sense of virtual community is

increased when groups create norms of behavior by “exchanging support and creating identity” (Blanchard, 2008, p. 2121).

Calhoun suggested “the building of imagined communities is dramatically accelerated by broadcast media…” (Calhoun, 1991, p. 110). In addition to classes being thought of as imagined communities (particularly subaltern classes) as suggested by Anderson, Calhoun added “genders, races, a wide variety of political groupings, and groupings constituted by their contrast to dominant sexual mores or identifications, musical cultures, and even tastes in consumer goods” (Calhoun, 1991, p. 110).

Along this vein, Somali imagined communities are accelerated by media. Calhoun discussed how television offers “visual and aural information at the same time, something closer to the physical embodiment of experiential learning,” where viewers “believe they have observed them first-hand” (Calhoun, 1991, p. 110). I argue that digital media also operate in this way. Traditional and new media facilitate both direct and indirect relationships.

In support of Calhoun’s claims about television consumption, media research found television to be the “most accurate, most informative, most ethical, easiest to use, and most essential” and that newspapers were useful for their advertisements (Mersey, 2010, p. 41). Mersey reviews how uses and gratifications showed a paradigm shift in the 70s to a “focus on the self,” and found that reading was “work,” young adults did not “grow into” newspaper readers and consumption tumbled from 73 percent in 1970 to 34 percent in 2007 (Mersey, 2010). In an article based on a conference that provided a forum for

some 170 scholars from 29 countries to analyze and discuss the future of newspapers, visions ranged from the death of newspapers, to newspapers adapting to technological innovation, to the most positive visions of new media technologies in news rooms and living rooms empowering a “growing army of citizen journalists, bloggers and readers” joining journalists in a “more open and interactive discussion” (Franklin, 2008, p. 631). I found in former studies with a group of Somali-American women, the latter is certainly true with the caveat that the online discussions were in niche media posted and read by Somalis and not a joining of “mainstream” journalists and ethnic immigrant voices.

Interestingly, Tim Vos reported that many media gates exist and that those who consume niche media also consume large amounts of media in general based on research conducted by numerous scholars (C. Anderson, 2006; Elberse, 2008). This is true of the Somali women in this author’s ethnographic work. There are several reasons why this is relevant to this current study of ethnic media and immigrant information needs. First, ethnic audiences consume ethnic media as well as mass and pop culture media, facilitating cultural maintenance of an imagined community on one hand and integration into U.S. culture on the other.

Marshall McLuhan envisioned that media would bring us together as a “global village” (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967, p. 63). The advent of the Internet certainly provides connections far beyond those he envisioned with radio and television since it allows for participation, not just consumption and reaches people through cell phones in all corners of the world.

In the *Internet Galaxy*, Castells offered this definition: “The Internet is a communication medium that allows, for the first time, the communication of many to many, in chosen time, on a global scale” (2001, p. 2). Castells suggested:

> The elasticity of the Internet makes it particularly susceptible to intensifying the contradictory trends present in our world. Neither utopia nor dystopia, the Internet is the expression of ourselves—through a specific code of communication, which we must understand if we want to change our reality (2001, p. 6).

Other scholars offered these related definitions: “The ability to use the Internet to meet information needs is often labeled *digital literacy,* while access to the Internet in order to apply the skills of digital literacy is often discussed in terms of *digital inclusion*” (Thompson, Jaeger, Taylor, Subramaniam, & Bertot, 2014, p. xiii). Some scholars reported a “digital divide” between white users having more access and representation than people of color (C. R. Squires, 2009).

Howard Rheingold predicted that computer networks would change human relationships.

> The technology that makes virtual communities possible has the potential to bring enormous leverage to ordinary citizens at relatively little cost—intellectual leverage, social leverage, commercial leverage, and most importantly, political leverage. But the technology will not in itself fulfill that potential; this latent technical power must be used intelligently and deliberately by an informed population (Rheingold, 2000, para. 21).

Appadurai theorized that media and migration are interconnected, and create a "joint effect on the work of the imagination as a constitutive feature of modern subjectivity" (1996, p. 3), which is very relevant to this study of Somali immigrants. In his argument, Appadurai tracks ways in which electronic mediation transforms preexisting worlds of communication and conduct. With a Somali diaspora population, his notions seem to be readily apparent and applicable: Electronic media "compel the transformation of everyday discourse.…They are resources for experiments with self-making in all sorts of societies" and "…provide resources for self-imagining as an everyday social project" (Appadurai, 1996, pp. 3–4). My research participants showed that "…the work of the imagination, viewed in this context, is neither purely emancipatory nor entirely disciplined but is a space of contestation in which individuals and groups seek to annex the global into their own practices of the modern" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 4).

Others predicted that the Internet "will give new voice to people who've felt voiceless" (Gillmor, 2006, p. xviii). Castells conceptualized a new social structure, which he deemed "the network society" brought on by the shift from traditional mass media to the Internet and wireless communication (Castells, 2010, p. xviii). Social and organizational networks formed through global digital technologies were no longer bounded by geography. They were powered "in ways that allowed their endless expansion and reconfiguration, overcoming traditional limitations…" (Castells, 2010, p. xviii).

These technologies offered virtual communities the ability to work through two common cultural features: horizontal, free communication and self-directed networking "in an era dominated by media conglomerates and censoring government bureaucracies" (Castells, 2001, p. 54-55). In the current era of media consolidation, where a handful of companies own the television, radio, film, and other mass media industries, the Internet allows people to go outside the boundaries of "mainstream" and determine what news and information they want to consume and even produce.

Even those "constrained by income and the uneven deployment of communication infrastructure" make wireless communication a priority (Castells, 2010, p. xvi). "…poor people give high priority to their communication needs and use a substantial proportion of their meager budget to fulfill them" (Castells, 2010, p. xvi). Lastly, Friedland asked whether the concept of community is relevant in a networked society, or social organization (Friedland, 2001).

Front Stage, Back Stage, and Identity

Karim suggested: "Global migration trends have produced transnational groups related by culture, ethnicity, language and religion" (Karim, 1998, p. 1), which also is seen in my study of Somali-Americans' uses of media. Relevant to my study, Sherry Turkle contended that in cyberspace communities "we invent ourselves as we go along" (1995, p. 10). She predicted that technology will bring shifts in the way "we create and experience human identity" (Turkle, 1995, p. 10).

In her 1995 book about the Internet, *Life on Screen*, Turkle described how the Internet promotes the existence of multiple identities because it erodes "boundaries between the real and the virtual" (1995, p. 10). In the documentary, *Digital Nation*, poignant examples of this are shown. In one example, a boy in Japan lost touch with reality. He was no longer interested in school or even food because of his addiction to online gaming. In another segment, a branch of the armed services used the blurring of boundaries to advantage by recruiting young men through gaming centers (Rushkoff & Dretzin, 2010).

Comello (2009) suggested that a combination of various selves—material, social, spiritual—provide a sense of personal identity and have implications in the study of communication. Reaching back in an effort to explicate identity, the philosopher and psychologist William James reasoned in 1890 that a person can have many "potential or actual selves" (James et al., 1981, p. 297). James theorized that the consciousness of self, involved a stream of thought including the "I", which knows and remembers all parts and past selves, and the various "me's". The experiences of the me's fluctuate and can be studied empirically as "*constituents* of the me in a larger sense,—such are the clothes, the material possessions, the friends, the honors and esteem which the person receives or may receive" (James, Burkhardt, Bowers, & Skrupskelis, 1981b, p. 379).

James' concept of identity as multifaceted is relevant to the study of immigrant media uses and integration. He contended that various selves are in conflict or rivalry, so that James is, as is everyone, "confronted by the necessity of standing by one of my empirical selves and relinquishing the rest" (1890/1981,

p. 295). Applying this idea to mediated communication is helpful in thinking about the way online communication facilitates more or less freedom in identity expression depending on how "public" an individual deems the mediated space to be.

Related to the expression of identity, is Goffman's concept of people having a front stage and back stage performance (1959). He related people's behaviors or identities to a performance with a front area where the performance is presented and a backstage, which is a helpful concept in examining how people present their identities on social media and in other situations (Goffman, 1962, p. 3). To fully document and "understand" the "actors' motives in interaction" there needs to be mutual trust established so that the researcher understands the public and private performances of their participants and why they might want to distinguish between the two (Goffman, 1962, p.3). What does their public performance signify about their private beliefs? Do they present public and private selves as consistent performances? In Leage & Chalmers' 2010 study with Arab girls,[1] norms of modesty- and gender-appropriate behaviors kept some of the informants from participating on the "public" Facebook stage, while others found a creative way to negotiate identity through social networking, and another segment of participants saw Facebook as a way to achieve freedom of expression (Leage, R. & Chalmers, 2010).

Anthropologist Gerald D. Berreman (1963) built on Goffman in "Behind Many Masks." He said it is not the researcher's job to determine which of the

[1] In Middle-Eastern Arab countries the term "women" connotes females who have engaged in sexual intercourse. The unmarried females in this study prefer to be called "girls" (p. 29).

performances—on stage or back stage—are the “true feelings” of the subject, but to employ techniques “that reveal not only the performance staged for the observer, but the nature of the efforts which go into producing it and the backstage situation it conceals” (Berreman, 1963, p. 24). His work serves as a concise explication of methodological procedures for dealing with impression management, which he said is “a feature of all social interaction” (Berreman, 1962, p. 24). Berreman also cautioned that the ethnographer must be aware that “the opinions and behaviors of one stratum are insufficient for understanding a whole society” (1962, p. 24). And, not only are there different stratums within a society, but there are different performances within the group a researcher has chosen to work. Internet ethnography scholar Daniel Miller also discussed how our ideas have changed about anonymity and its effect on online and offline selves. He elaborated on Goffman and Turkle in his Trinidad Facebook study saying that all versions of the self are to “some degree performative and based on certain frames of expectation,” (D. Miller, 2011, p. 177). Zizi Papacharissi claimed: “The process of self-presentation becomes an ever-evolving cycle through which individual identity is presented, compared, adjusted, or defended against a constellation of social, cultural, economic, or political realities” (2011, p. 304). Echoing Goffman, she argued that the internet and multimedia tools enable individuals to put on a variety of “faces” for “more controlled and more imaginative performances” (2011, p. 307).

When looking at identities portrayed by Somali-American immigrants, the different roles they play in life are affected by many factors, not just whether they

are online or offline. This was demonstrated in the study of Arab girls in Qatar on the Arabian Peninsula, where the social network site Facebook presented challenges to cultural expectations for those who desire to express identity (Leage & Chalmers, 2010). While perceptions of social media continue to change rapidly, this study suggested that some girls in this conservative Islamic country felt pressure to assent to their culture in order to protect their reputations by limiting their images, contact with males and other expressions on Facebook. Relatedly, this researcher found that social media enabled a source of freedom in self-expression to Somali-American women, but the women were caught between their desires to articulate various "American" identities, but also maintain their Somali cultural norms (Kelley, 2012).

In this current study of Somali-Americans' use and trust of media, it's important to keep in mind the way in which individuals constantly make tradeoffs between various identities and look at the reasons why people suppress one identity over another. This research is situated with Stuart Hall's concept that identities need to be understood within a specific conjuncture. Hall saw identification as "constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal … the discursive approach sees identification as a construction, a process never completed—always 'in process'" (S. Hall & DuGay, 1996, p. 2). Participants in my previous studies illustrated this idea when they changed their positioning as they constructed and reconstructed different identities as a reflection of shared ideals (Kelley, 2018). My work also builds on Hall's idea that identities "emerge within

the play of specific modalities of power" in the "marking of difference and exclusion…" (Hall & DuGay, 1996, p. 4) and that identities "arise from the narrativization of the self…" (Hall & DuGay, 1996, p. 2) as seen in my participants' discussions surrounding their modest versus sexy identities, and how they are influenced by mass media messages and Somali culture.

Tomlinson asserted that "all cultural identities—be they national, regional, local—are, in one way, of the same order. They are all representations of belonging…" (Tomlinson, 1991, p. 81). Appadurai questions how small groups (especially families) deal with "new global realities as they seek to reproduce themselves and, in doing so, accidently reproduce cultural forms themselves" (Appadurai, 1990, p. 597). As I found in my earlier work, he contends that transgenerational and gendered relationships are strained as people negotiate their identities and challenge "existing repertories of knowledge and practice…" (Appadurai, 1990, p. 597).

Looking at the diaspora and communication uses "illustrates the hybrid and ever-changing nature of identities" that are not bound in just one, stable and exclusive place, just one imagined community, but they are actually at least two nation(-states)" (Georgiou, 2006, p. 3).

History of the U.S. Immigrant Press

While Robert Ezra Park explicitly defined "immigrant press," he declared that the press is "an organ of speech" and that "every group has its own" in his 1922 book on the immigrant press and assimilation (p. 13).

Park said: “As long as there are people in this country who have common racial or nationalist interests, they will have papers to interpret events from their own peculiar point of view” (1922, p. 13). As stated above, Park shed light on the history and contents of the immigrant press and “the inner life of immigrant peoples and their efforts to adjust themselves to a new cultural environment” (Park, 1922, p. xix).

Assimilation involves more than adjusting to a new place. It is not a binary choice, but a continuum that shifts and changes—like identity, as defined by Stuart Hall (Hall & DuGay, 1996). William James suggested a person can have many “potential or actual selves” in his 1980 work on psychology (James et al., 1981b, p. 297). James theorized that the experiences of the self fluctuate and can be studied empirically as “constituents of the me in a larger sense—clothes, material possessions, friends, honors, titles etc.” (James, 1981, p. 297). In a report on Latin-American immigrants, Pew Research Center suggested that immigrant assimilation has a psychological dimension in addition to economic and social measures (Pew Research Center, 2009). Pew Center reported that it is too early to tell if the process of loosening identity from the old country and binding to the new within a few generations will “play out for today’s Hispanic immigrants and their offspring in the same way it did for the European immigrants of the 19th and early 20th centuries” (2009, para. 12). About half of the nearly 40 million immigrants that have arrived in the United States since 1965 are from Latin America, according to the Pew report. Of the remaining 40 million, a quarter come from Asia and the rest from Europe, Canada, the Middle East and Africa

(Pew Research Center, 2019). Research with newer waves of immigrants is needed to capture data as it happens, which applies to my Somali-American focus on the *push and pull* of being both Somali and American and why social media is a trusted source of news over mainstream media for these immigrants. The following table lists where immigrants have come from in the “Three Great Waves of Immigration to the United States” (Pew Research Center, 2013b, para. 18).

Table 2. Three great waves of immigration to the United States

Table 1.1
Three Great Waves of Immigration to the United States

Era & Country	Total *(thousands)*	Share of Immigrants (%)	Immigrants per 1,000 Population
Modern Era (1965 to 2008)			
Total	**39,847**	**100**	**4.6**
Mexico	11,468	29	---
China	2,070	5	---
Philippines	1,782	4	---
India	1,696	4	---
Vietnam	1,203	3	---
Korea	1,189	3	---
Former USSR	1,162	3	---
El Salvador	1,051	3	---
Cuba	994	2	---
Dominican Republic	789	2	---
Region totals			
Latin America	20,013	50	---
South & East Asia	10,048	25	---
Europe & Canada	5,621	14	---
Mideast (Asia & Africa)	1,531	4	---
Southern/Eastern Europe Wave (1890-1919)			
Total	**18,244**	**100**	**8.8**
Italy	3,764	21	---
Austria-Hungary	3,690	20	---
Russia & Poland	3,166	17	---
Germany	1,082	6	---
Ireland	917	5	---
United Kingdom	1,170	6	---
Other Northern Europe	1,581	9	---
Other South-Eastern Europe	757	4	---
Canada	835	5	---
Latin America	551	3	---
Asia	631	3	---
Northern Europe Wave (1840-1889)			
Total	**14,314**	**100**	**7.7**
Germany	4,282	30	---
Ireland	3,209	22	---
United Kingdom	2,586	18	---
Other Northern Europe	1,620	11	---
South-Eastern Europe	1,058	7	---
Canada	1,034	7	---
Latin America	101	1	---
Asia	296	2	---

Notes: Persons from Puerto Rico not included. China includes Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao. Data for 1965-2008 include legal and unauthorized immigrants. Data for 1840-1919 include only legal admissions. Immigrants per 1,000 population is estimated separately for each five-year period in the interval. The figure shown is the numeric average of the five-year rates.

Sources: 1965-2008—Pew Hispanic Center tabulations from Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples for 1980, 1990, and 2000 Censuses and 2008 American Community Survey. 1840-1919—Table 2 from Office of Immigration Statistics, Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, 2008

(Pew Research Center, 2013b, para. 18)

Before the Trump administration's crackdown on immigration, recent statistics showed that the total population in the United States was 322,326,727 on December 13, 2015 and changes every eight seconds with a net gain of one person every 16 seconds (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). The number of "lawful permanent residents" in the United States was 13.1 million on January 1, 2013, and 8.8 million of them were eligible to naturalize (Homeland Security, 2014), which is about 25 percent of the population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, one international migrant (net) comes into the country every 33 seconds.

Journalists see the need to be more inclusive of all communities of people in their coverage. In the American Society of Newspaper Editors, *Journalism Values Handbook,* their system of values includes "capturing diverse voices and viewpoints" and being accessible to communities (ASNE Ethics and Values Committee, 1995, p. 7). Some media organizations (such as *MinnPost* in the Minneapolis-St. Paul urban area) are attempting to increase their coverage of ethnic populations to either gain readership or provide policymakers with coverage that addresses our burgeoning immigrant populations. The advent of digital technologies and online publishing are making diversity coverage and niche markets more possible economically.

A thorough understanding of immigrant/ethnic media history is pertinent to this study. Language and tradition bring together immigrant populations. At the time of Park's writing, there were "no language groups so insignificant that it does not maintain a printing press and publish some sort of periodical" (1922, p. 7). Some newspapers, written in a native tongue, were called the "foreign-language

press" by Park (1922). These papers were popular for numerous reasons. Immigrants looked to their publications for nationalistic reasons and to preserve or revive their native speech. Some immigrants were not allowed to read their native languages in their home countries and enjoyed that liberty in the United States. Others couldn't read English, according to Park.

The foreign-language press also was a way to organize—culturally, politically, religiously, or simply to satisfy the "human desire for expression in his mother tongue," or enjoy literature in one's native language (Park, 1922, p. 11). However, sociological scholarship finds "that the ethnic heritage, including the ethnic mother tongue, usually ceases to play any viable role in the life of the third generation" (Nahirny & Fishman, 1965, p. 311). Today, Somalis consume media in their native tongue, as well as in Arabic, which many learned for religious purposes, English, and some other African languages, such as Swahili, for all the same reasons Park identified.

Earlier groups of immigrants guarded against assimilation through their churches (depending on the purposes of the clergy) (Park, 1922, p. 52), private schools, patriotic societies and the immigrant press, which helped them preserve their languages "…and maintain contact and understanding between the home countries and their scattered members in every part of the United States and America" (Park, 1922, p. 55). Today, Somali-Americans look to their Mosques, charter schools, Somali media outlets, international news outlets and many forms of social media to maintain their cultural attributes and communication across continents.

Some immigrants during Park's day came to the United States with the intention to make money and return home to their own country or to wait for political change in their governments, as do some immigrants today. While many Somali immigrants might have similar dreams of returning to Somalia, their trajectory as refugees from a war-torn country makes them unique from many earlier immigrant groups, except those groups who also were fleeing persecution, such as the Jews during the Holocaust and, more recently, Laotian Hmong refugees who sought asylum beginning in 1975 (Pfeifer, Chiu, & Yang, 2013).

While the immigrant press aids in maintaining a connection to native homelands, readers also want and need local news. "News is a kind of urgent information that men use in making adjustments to a new environment, in changing old habits, and in forming new opinions" (Park, 1922, p. 9). Rhodes concurs that historically, the immigrant press' primary focus in the United States was to create "an old world community in the new world through language maintenance, cultural emphasis, religion, and political discussions," but the press also helped immigrants assimilate into American culture (2010, p. 3). In this way, the immigrant press served dual purposes of cultural preservation and assimilation into the host country, aiding rather than preventing "the drift toward the American community" as local news, gossip, and advertisements in the immigrant press influenced its readers (Park, 1922, p. 79). In Park's (1992) book, the publisher notes:

> Americanization is the uniting of new with native-born Americans in fuller common understanding and appreciation to secure by means of individual

> and collective self-direction the highest welfare of all…. With all our rich heritages, Americanism will develop best through a mutual giving and taking of contributions for both newer and older Americans in the interest of the common weal (Park, 1922, v).

The process of "Americanization" can be seen in the language changes of immigrants when they incorporate English words and idioms (Park, 1922, pp. 79–80). "The culture of the immigrants is also influenced by American life and tends to become, like their speech, neither American nor foreign, but a combination of both" (Park, 1922, p. 84). I found in my earlier research that my Somali-American respondents' speech and apparel were influenced by pop culture through mainstream fashion magazines, in addition to their exposure to other Americans and Somali culture (Kelley, 2018). Park elaborated that a key role of the foreign-language press in the process of "Americanization" is how they enable immigrants to "participate in the national life….For it is participation rather than submission or conformity that makes Americans of foreign-born peoples" (1922, p. 89).

More recent scholars, Viswanath and Arora, contend that ethnic and immigrant groups' media production and consumption is growing. Some find "that ethnicity has grown stronger among both newer and older immigrant groups in the United States," according to Viswanath and Arora in their essay on ethnic media in the United States (2000, p. 40). This is in part due to modern means of communication that enable new immigrants to "maintain their links to the homeland more easily than earlier waves of immigrants" (Viswanath & Arora,

2000, p. 41). They find several factors influencing the role an ethnic press plays: Mode of entry into the United States (colonization or immigration), socio-economic status of the group and "the group's experience in America subsequent to their emigration," which is influenced by the first two (2000, p. 40). Equating the ethnic press as a kind of community press, Viswanath and Arora see various roles, including "sentinels, acting as both radars and early warning systems against external threats" (2000, p. 49), "promoting assimilation" by helping immigrants learn "the ropes of the system" and providing information "about events occurring not only within the community, but also in their native homeland" (2000, p. 50). My research supports this work. I saw "sentinels" on social media as well. In Facebook conversations, which are covered in my findings, Somali friends warn other Somalis to quit talking to the press because they cannot be trusted.

Viswanath and Arora argued that the increasing ethnic diversity in the United States is undeniable and that further study of ethnic media is needed. "Given the rising levels of immigration into the United States, increasing tensions and questions about immigration, and the growing importance of media, it is worthwhile to systematically examine and explore the role of the ethnic press…." (Viswanath & Arora, 2000, p. 40).

While the idea of assimilation has been criticized in favor of multiculturalism for some time, recent scholars have revisited this and other functions of the immigrant press. They contend research on ethnic media "largely deemphasizes assimilation and dilutes the specific experiences of immigrants by

focusing on larger cultural cleavages" (Hickerson & Gustafson, 2014, p. 6). In a sample study, these scholars found support that immigrant media "facilitate assimilation," opening the door for future studies. They suggested that facilitating assimilation "has fallen out of favor because of the value-laden aspects of these terms and our embrace for multiculturalism" (1922, p. 16). They suggested a need to find "contemporary terms to describe experiences that challenge erasure of language, community, identity, and culture" (Hickerson & Gustafson, 2014, p. 16).

Even in Park's day, immigrant media producers had varying ideas about the media's role in assimilation. Based on a play of that name, the *melting pot,* was a dominant metaphor about the United States that even some of Park's interviewees resisted. One editor said, "It is the contrary of that toward which we strive, and this doctrine must be so much the more sharply and decisively antagonized by us as it is enthusiastically accepted by the thoughtless rabble" (Park, 1922, p. 61).

Park questioned whether the "foreign-language press is a brake or an accelerator" in the process of assimilation (1922, p. 86). In Park's research, the editor of a Lithuanian paper asserted the press prevented assimilation because it isolated foreign-language communities, while others asserted that it helped them become part of the American community (Park, 1922, p. 86). Park wrote that the immigrant press helped newcomers become familiar with American events, customs and ideas in order to "get along" as residents and employees in the United States (1922, p. 87).

These functions are as important today as in Park's for newcomers to the country. The United States may not be a "melting pot," but it is a "racial tapestry" growing more diverse by the day (Taylor, 2014a, n.p.). Pew Research Center reports that in 1960 the U.S. population was 85% white and will be 43% white by 2060 (Taylor, 2014a). Once a black and white country, "now, we're a rainbow" (Taylor, 2014a, n. p.). Along with academic scholars and media producers, product marketers know the demographics are changing the country and they are paying attention to media and the need to address ethnic. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated there were 41,056,885 foreign-born people in the United States in 2014 with a total population estimated as 314,107,084. One international migrant (net) comes into the country every 33 seconds (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). The year 2015 marked the first year that there were fewer white babies than non-white born in the U.S. This is an "aha" moment, "as three iconic brands, Coke, Chevy and Cheerios, rolled out ads during the Super Bowl and Olympics in 2014 that were aimed at what one voice-over called "'the new us'" (Taylor, 2014a, n.p.).

The Media Landscape in Relation to Ethnic Populations

Some scholars subsume the "immigrant press" under the title of *ethnic media*. In her history of the "ethnic" press in the United States, Sally Miller chronicles 28 different ethnic groups' newspapers, which were a small portion of ethnic media. Two ethnic groups she did not include were blacks and Native Americans because "their presses would not reflect the immigration and

adaptation processes" (S. M. Miller, 1987, p. xiv). While data on the number of publications is in constant flux, she determined that during Park's time, between 1884 and 1920, "3,444 new papers were started and 3,186 failed" (S. M. Miller, 1987, p. xiii). She surmised the highest number of papers published was in 1917, "in the pre-quota era … during World War I when interest among immigrants in overseas news was greatest" (1987, p. xiii). Publication rates rose again in the 1970s, "when lifting of the quota system led to a revived flow into the country and concomitant increase in the number of non-English newspapers" (1987, p. xiii). Today, the New America Media (NAM) reports that ethnic media is the fastest growing segment of American journalism ("New American media," 2017). NAM is an organization that collaborates and advocates for more than 3,000 ethnic news organizations that reach more than 60 million ethnic adults. Nam was founded in 1996, with headquarters in California and offices in New York and Washington, D.C. NAM's website states:

> NAM is dedicated to bringing the voices of the marginalized—ethnic minorities, immigrants, young people, elderly—into the national discourse. The communities of the New America will then be better informed, better connected to one another, and better able to influence policy makers ("New American media," 2017, para. 3).

Media targeted to Latino/as are among the oldest ethnic news outlets in America. The bicentennial of Latino/a newspapers in the United States was celebrated in 2009. The first U.S. Latino/a newspaper, *El Misisipí*, was founded in New Orleans in 1808 in support of the movements for independence from Spain

of the emerging Spanish American nations (Mendoza, 2009). “Throughout the 200 years, U.S. Latino newspapers played multiple roles…. They have been a voice for the people and to the people, whether they were students, women, labor unions or community organizations,” (Mendoza, 2009, para. 5). In an article about an exhibit on the history of the U.S. Latino/a Press, Mendoza quoted Félix Gutiérrez, professor of journalism, communication and Mexican American Studies at the University of Southern California who said: “They’re acquainting people to the U.S. who may not have been welcomed but have always wanted to be a part of American society” (Mendoza, 2009). Many ethnic minority media have low circulations and are “too small, too poor, or too scattered to have much appeal for advertisers” (Riggins, 1992, p. 15); however, this is not true for many large ethnic media companies, such as *Univision,* which target Hispanic Americans (UCI PR Team, 2017). The company boasted outperforming “one or more of the English-Language broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC or FOX) on six out of seven nights this past week among Adults 18-34 and on three out of seven nights with Adults 18-49” during primetime September 4 through 10 in 2017 (UCI PR Team, 2017, p. 1).

“Latino media in all forms, including newspapers, are growing at a time when others are suffering declines” (Mendoza, 2009, para. 11). They reflect the experiences, stories and “history of America as reported by U.S. Latinos,” which differs from what English newspapers report (Mendoza, 2009, para. 7). Latino/a newspapers have played a role “in advocating Latin American independence, adapting to U.S. conquest of the Southwest, acquainting newcomers with U.S.

ways, serving as a voice for leaders, and using new technologies to reach larger audiences" (Mendoza, 2009, n.p.). Latina/o media scholar, América Rodriguez, predicted: "Whether Spanish or English language or both, Latino newsmaking is likely to endure as long as Latino communities have identifiable needs and interests not being served by other media" (1999, p. 146).

Historically, early African American presses were not interested in assimilation or acculturation but were created to "establish a national voice for their people" (Rhodes, 2010, p. 4). According to Rhodes, there have been 5,539 African American newspapers since 1827 (Rhodes, 2010, p. 4). Another media scholar reported in 2009 that "Black and Latino online activity has more than doubled in less than 10 years" (Squires, 2009, p. 267). The black press and radio serve black audiences with cultural information seldom found in dominant (aka mainstream) periodicals (Squires, 2009). *Insight* is one example of many successful papers that serve black readers, building on an African American tradition that started with pamphlets denouncing slavery and continue with boycotts of Hollywood to fight for adequate representation in the mass media industries of the United States (C. R. Squires, 2009).

Black radio set a national agenda for racial equality starting in the 1940s (Savage, 1999) and has evolved into a successful industry. Today, Radio One, Inc. is one of the nation's largest radio broadcasting companies and the largest radio broadcasting company that primarily targets African-American and urban listeners (Radio One, 2015). In 2015, the company celebrated its 35th year. Established by Cathy Hughes, an African-American woman, with one radio

station in Washington, D.C., the company now has 53 urban stations in 16 markets as well as radio syndication, cable television, digital and an integrated marketing agency reaching 82 percent of black households in the United States (Radio One, 2015).

Many Latino/a and black media outlets have been successful in setting a U.S. national agenda for racial equality. Ethnic media in Minnesota have a vibrant history serving several waves of immigrants to the northern Midwestern area. In Minnesota, there are numerous well-established ethnic media outlets—African American *Insight News, Asian American Press, LaVoz* and *Twin City Planet,* among many others.

While immigration of people from Asian and Latin American countries has slowed, they wield significant economic and political influence as one in 11 Minnesotans are Latino/a or Asian (American Immigration Council, 2015). In addition, Minnesota hosts the largest group of newcomers in the United States from African nations, who made up 82 percent of immigrants to the state from 2000 to 2001 (American Immigration Council, 2015).

The total U.S. foreign-born population from Africa has doubled every decade since 1970 with an increase from about 80,000 in 1970 to about 1.6 million between 2008 and 2012, according to American Community Survey statistics (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Somali-Americans have a large presence in Minnesota, where they number between 45,000 and 150,000 depending on the source. Minnesota's newest African American immigrants have different media needs from historically black audiences. They come primarily from

Somalia (with smaller influxes from Ethiopia and Liberia) and often move to the United States from refugee camps.

"There is a gap in the literature on the production practices of diasporic media, its news-processing and its consumption by the diasporic communities" (Ogunyemi, 2015, p. 3). I found this to be true when researching media production by Minnesota Somalis, Hmong and Latino/a immigrants. I found little has been written about ethnic media published by and for these immigrants to Minnesota; however, an abundance of historical records at the University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center archives of such publications are available for analysis.

Hickerson and Gustafson find a lack of clarity in the literature between immigrant, ethnic, minority, alternative and multicultural media (2014, p. 4). By conflating immigrant and ethnic media, most research neglects the "potential desire" that immigrants may have to assimilate (Hickerson & Gustafson, 2014, p. 5). They find that most research looks at "how groups align or contrast themselves to mainstream society" (2014, p. 5). Hickerson and Gustafson suggest communication scholars should conceptually distinguish "immigrant" from "ethnic" media. Ironically, research on ethnic and transnational media, "so rooted in resistance and counter-narratives, actually homogenizes" and lumps together the experience of all immigrants (Hickerson & Gustafson, 2014, p. 14). Hargittai (2007) also finds that researchers lump together social media, generalizing their findings when they should be looking at systematic differences between people who use (and don't use) particular media platforms. She argues

that a “person’s gender, race and ethnicity, and parental educational background are all associated with use, but in most cases only when the aggregate concept of social network sites is disaggregated by service (Hargittai, 2007, p. 276).

In their study, Hickerson and Gustafson (2014), building from Park, determine “immigrant” media is especially applicable to media that serves first-generation immigrants who may have different needs and desires from people with more varied backgrounds. However, some of the ethnic media participants in their study of immigrant and ethnic media producers, particularly younger interviewees and those who came to the United States as children, “were opposed to the idea of identifying their work as immigrant journalism or immigrant media” because it could be seen as “alienating” or “pejorative” (Hickerson & Gustafson, 2014, p. 14).

Another characteristic of the immigrant press reported by Park and elaborated on today by Hickerson and Gustafson is its role as “a cultural and civic explanatory tool,” which they find overlaps content in ethnic and transnational media (2014, p. 14). The difference they find is that “ethnic and transnational literature embrace liminality as an end,” a space between two cultures, not necessarily as “a catalyst to assimilation” (2014, p. 14).

Other scholars use a related term: the *diaspora*. Diasporization is “the relocation of people in space and their ability, desire and persistence to sustain connections and commonality across the globe” (Georgiou, 2006, p. 2). Ogunyemi describes diasporic media as “a platform for self-expression, the representation of cultural artefacts and the contestation of negative stereotypes

by migrant people in the public sphere" (Ogunyemi, 2015, p. 1). Professor Ralph Negrine of the University of Sheffield asserts: "Studying the 'media of diaspora' today, as in Robert Park's day, offers us opportunities to think about how migrant communities connect to one another, seek to preserve their identity and also, in some way, seek to find a place in a different and, literally, foreign environment" (Ogunyemi, 2014, p. xiv). My dissertation documents how Somali participants in this study consumed and produced ethnic and social media over a period of 10 years.

The difference, or changes, between the immigrant press in Park's day and today is that diasporic audiences are exposed to a *globalized media landscape* where different messages "are available to consumers who are no longer insulated by language, geography or politics" (Ogunyemi, 2014, p. xiv). The Internet[i] and related technologies have changed immigrant communication. Certainly, some of the functions of immigrant and ethnic newspapers remain unchanged, and they have simply adapted to a new electronic form.

Depending on the circumstances in the host country, as in Park's day, ethnic media producers"

> [W]ho wish to create the means of communication for their compatriots are always aware … of the need to look to their communities and to their wider societies' to explain themselves to one another, to offer them guidance, support and a voice, and also to inform them of the environment in which they exist (Ogunyemi, 2014, p. xiv).

What is different today is the speed at which messages fly, the boundaries (or lack thereof) between journalists and audiences and nations, and the variety of tools available. These technologies and the growing diaspora phenomenon leave many unanswered questions. One media effects scholar defines our research area as “Internet effects,” which, “in practical terms, refer to the social changes that can be observed and measured at an individual, group, institutional and societal level” (Lin, 2009, p. 582). My dissertation answered questions about tools used by Somali immigrants in Minnesota to consume media, produce media and connect around the world.

Social Media Use by Immigrants and Minorities

Social media are one kind of online media. Social networking scholars, danah boyd and Nicole Ellison, proposed a comprehensive definition of social network sites (SNSs) as:

> web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (2007, p. 211).

This dissertation defines social media as Internet-based social networking sites, blogs, tweeting, texting, photo-sharing and mobile applications (apps). Lüders distinguished mass media from “personal media” by looking at the differences in the kind of involvement required from users. Personal media “require users to perform actively as both receivers and producers of messages”

and the communication does not have an institutional or professional context (2008, p. 691).

The idea of "new" media also requires discussion. In McQuail's *Mass Communication Theory*, the author suggested these hypothetical effects of new media (2010, p. 141):

- Digitalization and convergence of all aspects of media
- Increased interactivity and network connectivity
- Mobility and delocation of sending and receiving
- Adaptation of publication and audience roles
- Appearance of diverse new forms of media 'gateway'
- Fragmentation and blurring of the 'media institution'

Many of these aspects of new media are relevant to immigrant audiences and their use of various media forms. Increased interactivity, mobility and digitalization of all aspects of media play an important role in the media landscape of immigrants. Bird contended that electronic media offers "possibilities for active civic participation beyond the role of the consumer" noting that bloggers such as Jonathan Peterson on his "Way Nu" deconstructs and refutes the texts of a Fox network CEO (2003, p. 183). Other media and cultural studies scholars (such as boyd & Ellison, 2007; boyd, 2012; Castells, 2012; Granka, 2010; Hindman, 2009; Jenkins, 2013; Rheingold, 2000; and Rodríguez, 2001) continue to debate the opportunities for participation afforded by the Internet versus the constraints inherent in it.

When looking at Internet use, especially outside the United States, boyd and Ellison said that although it is changing, scholars have a limited understanding of who is and who is not using social networking sites, why, and for what purposes. “Such questions will require large-scale quantitative and qualitative research. Richer, ethnographic research on populations more difficult to access (including non-users) would further aid scholars’ ability to understand the long-term implications of these tools” (boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 224).

In her book, *Digital Diaspora*, Everett focused on how the African Diaspora engages with cyberspace. She argued that colonization is not over and that it is a continuing process in globalization (Everett, 2009). While she does not dismiss unequal technology distribution along with “the unbearable whiteness of cyberculture during its earliest discursive formations” as factors contributing to a “digital divide,” she advanced the point that the “digital divide” is really “repressed racial difference in the information age” (p. 149).

Beyond inherent technical limitations, gaps in accessibility are closing for people who have access to libraries, schools, and smart phones, which provide points of Internet access for a wider population of people in the United States (Lloyd, 2011). Prado reminds scholars in the Global North, who “increasingly enjoy reliable and affordable connectivity almost everywhere,” that “most people in the developing world cannot count on reliable and affordable Internet access,” (Prado, 2010, p. 11). She says that expanding opportunities for digital inclusion of all people is “espoused by the United Nations Development Program” so “they may lead healthy, creative, and prosperous lives” (p. 10). Prado (2010) states

that public Internet hubs at libraries, government agencies, telecenters, kiosks and Internet cafes, provide access to people in developing countries where individual access is not affordable or technologically accessible. In an exploratory study with women between the ages of 13 and 25 in the Dominican Republic, the scholar explains:

> [W]omen are living through a transition, stepping beyond traditional roles and engaging in new activities that were once forbidden or frowned upon. These changes, often brought about by economic necessity, also result from increased access to information from global trends happening in the outside world (Prado, 2010, p. 9-10).

Media scholar Henry Jenkins contended that in the digital age "the public began to take media into its own hands and began to assert its right" "and tell their stories in powerful new ways" (HCDMediaGroup, *Henry Jenkins,* September 21, 2009). Jenkins has argued that a "spectatorial culture is giving way to participatory culture" and that "[c]ulture precedes technology, but technology amplifies the trends of the culture and makes them available to a much larger segment of the population" (HCDMediaGroup, *Henry Jenkins,* September 21, 2009); MIT Enterprise Forum, 2012). "We take control of the media as it enters our lives and that's the essence of convergence culture" (HCDMediaGroup, *Henry Jenkins,* September 21, 2009).

Jenkins also states that:

> Convergence culture is a world where every story, every sound, brand, image, relationship plays itself out across the maximum number of media

channels. It's shaped as much by the decisions teenagers make in their bedrooms as it is by the decisions made in the Viacom boardroom (HCDMediaGroup, *Henry Jenkins,* September 21, 2009).

In my studies with Somali-American women, my participants used "different media contexts as interactional sites for positioning themselves in relation to macro cultural influences" (Kelley, 2018, p. 25). The women's self-presentations revealed attributes that rarely show up in dominant news media coverage. For example, mainstream media tend to focus on Muslim women as modest, hijab-wearing, submissive women, but my study showed their strength and interest in being fashionable American women (Kelley, 2018). They considered the social media platform, Facebook, as a somewhat private space where they openly expressed their opinions as they negotiated identity, power, faith, education, politics, relationships, family and daily life as immigrants and daughters of immigrants in an online diaspora.

In the section, "The Anthropology of Facebook," Miller offers 15 theses based on two months' fieldwork and a year's observation of people's use in Trinidad, a Caribbean island near Venezuela. Inhabited by 1.3 million, Trinidad's population is composed of "around 40 per cent descended from former African slaves, 40 per cent descended from former Asian indentured labourers, with the remainder having widespread origins, including China, Maderia and Lebanon" (Miller, 2011, p. xi).

Miller contends Facebook did not invent social networking, but facilitates and expands it. His anthropological starting point is that every individual is

literally a social networking site without Facebook (2011, p. 165). Relevant to my study, is the recognition that "[t]he normal distinction between public and private does not work for Facebook," (p. 174). Rather than what might be considered an unbounded anonymous mass, "The 'public' represented by Facebook is better understood as an aggregate of private spheres" (Miller, 2011, p. 175). Miller's ideas are certainly relevant to how my population uses Facebook and other social media to facilitate community discussions and debates in what I perceive as a combined public-private sphere.

Grasmuck, Martin and Zhao's study suggested that "ethno-racial identities are salient and highly elaborated" on Facebook (2009, p. 158). They found differences in self-presentation of ''the cultural self'' in the displays by distinct ethno-racial groups. "African Americans and Latinos invest most intensively, Vietnamese and whites least intensively, and Indians fall somewhere in the middle of the continuum depending on the enumerated item," (Grasmuck, Martin, & Zhao, 2009, p. 170). While some researchers have found that people have divergent online and offline identities (Turkle, 1995), others showed that offline identities are reflected online (boyd, 2001). My previous research showed that Somali-American women vary their online and offline identities, which are highly dependent on social context (Kelley, 2012).

Dorian B. Crosby suggested that more documentation is necessary to provide a comprehensive understanding of the struggles and triumphs of resettled African women in the United States (Crosby, 2006, p. 69). In her article she puts forward that "many female refugees are from patriarchal societies where

men tend to dominate the political, economic, and social decision-making processes" (Crosby, 2006, p. 68).

Another author found that gender and age played a significant role in social media use. Venkatraman used the family as an overarching category in her study of social media communication patterns in South India. Her study found that females are restricted from mobile phone ownership until married or at college, while males were not, in lower and lower-middle socio-economic class families (Venkatraman, 2017). She also found that people saw Facebook "as a demonstrative platform" that "is always directed to the outside world" by different family members (Venkatraman, 2017, p. 106). Mobile phones were a "major networking tool for intra-family communication" with members inside and outside the country (Venkatraman, 2017, p. 106). Interestingly, she found that Google Hangout and Skype were popular and "WhatsApp" is increasingly used for personal communication. "WhatsApp" is a free smartphone app that uses the Internet instead of the user's cell plan voice minutes, providing free texting, voice and video calls anywhere in the world (WhatsApp, 2017). This finding concurs with my data about Somali-Americans' media use of WhatsApp and Viber by older Somali-Americans to reach friends and relatives not living in the United States.

Another survey of young people about their use of Social Network Sites (SNS) found that people's "gender, race and ethnicity, and parental educational background are all associated with use …" and contribute to "differential adoption" and "digital inequality" (Hargittai, 2008, p. 276). In this study, Hargittai

disaggregated use of various sites and warned researchers to be careful generalizing about SNSs because various sites and user communities have distinct differences and may be drawn to specific sites for a variety of reasons. At the time her study was conducted, both Hispanic and Asian/Asian American students showed significantly different behavior than whites in choice of SNSs. Hargittai supports other's findings that "one's existing offline network influences which site one embraces" (2007, p. 290). The website, *Statista*, estimated the following social media use worldwide:

> One of the defining phenomena of the present times reshaping the world as we know it, is the worldwide accessibility to the internet. The lovechild of the World Wide Web is social media, which comes in many forms, including blogs, forums, business networks, photo-sharing platforms, social gaming, microblogs, chat apps, and last but not least social networks. The power of social networking is such that the number of worldwide users is expected to reach some 3.02 billion monthly active social media users by 2021, around a third of Earth's entire population. An estimated 750 million of these users in 2022 are expected to be from China alone and approximately a third of a billion from India. The region with the highest penetration rate of social networks is North America, where around 70 percent of the population has at least one social account. As of 2017, 81 percent of the United States population had a social networking profile (Statista, 2018, n.p.).

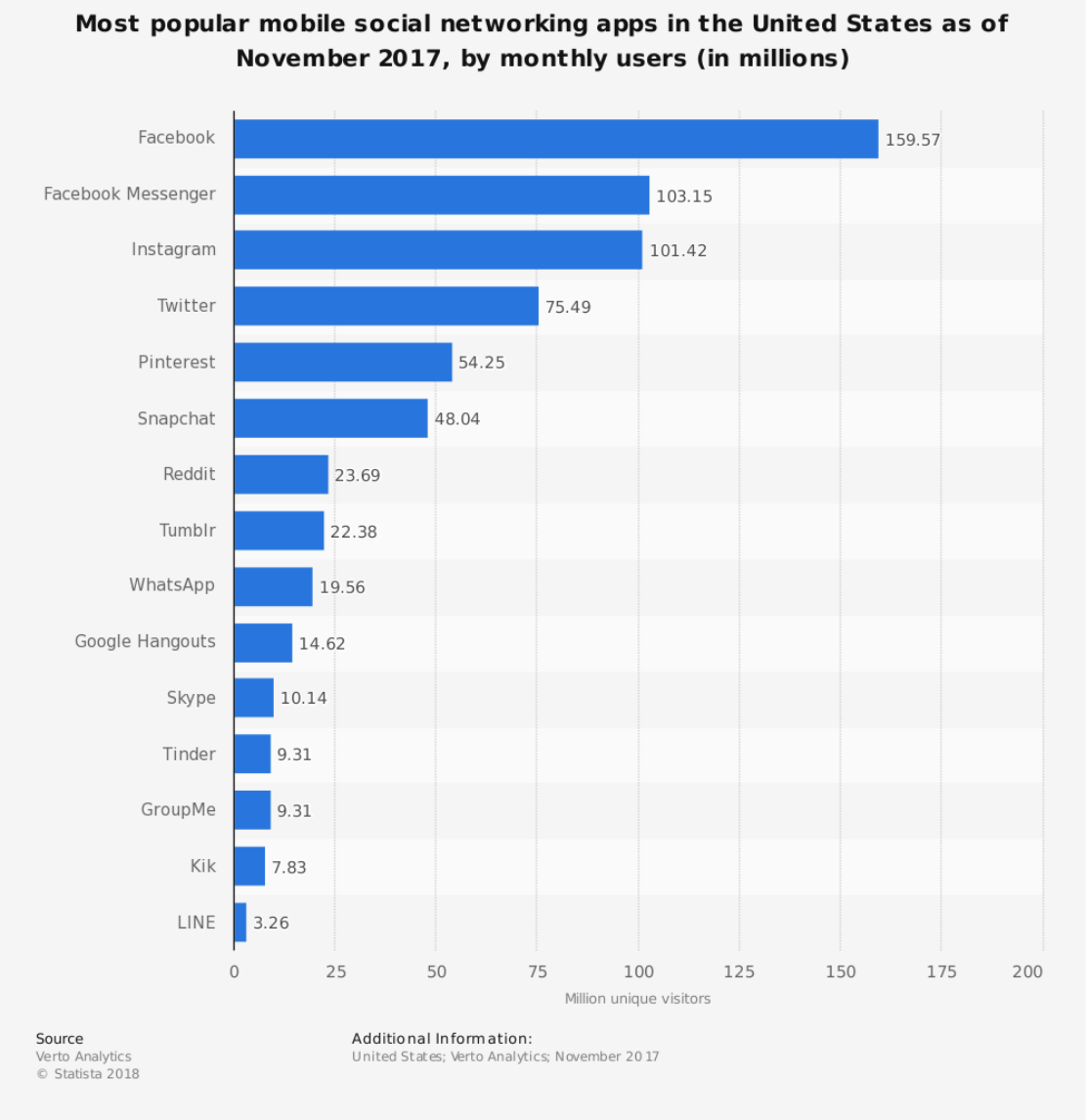
A Pew Center report showed increases in social media use in the United States were driven by “Americans who are older, less educated, and nonwhite” (B. Y. J. Gottfried & Shearer, 2017, p. 2). They found that two-thirds (67%) of Americans get news from social media (B. Y. J. Gottfried & Shearer, 2017). About “three-quarters of nonwhites (74%) get news on social media sites,” which includes all nonwhite ethnic groups other than non-Hispanic whites (B. Y. J. Gottfried & Shearer, 2017, p. 3).

Not surprisingly, the largest social media users are people under 50; however, more than half (55%) of Americans age 50 and older now report getting their news on social media, according to the Pew Center survey (Gottfried & Shearer, 2017) . While the portion of users who get news increased on Twitter by 15%, YouTube by 11% and Snapchap by 12% in the past year, “Facebook by far still leads every other social media site as a source of news” with almost “half (45%) of Americans” getting their news there (B. Y. J. Gottfried & Shearer, 2017, p. 6). In the first quarter of 2017, Facebook had 1.94 billion global monthly active users (“Facebook - Statistics & facts,” 2018). While “YouTube has a larger user base” (58%) than Facebook, it has fewer Americans (18%) using it for news (B. Y. J. Gottfried & Shearer, 2017, p. 6). Twitter has the opposite statistics, with 74% of Twitter followers using it for news, but only 11% of U. S. adults are using it (B. Y. J. Gottfried & Shearer, 2017). The report indicated that 13% of Americans don’t use the Internet.

Worldwide, the use of social media is on the rise, “including blogs, forums, business networks, photo-sharing platforms, social gaming, microblogs,

chat apps, and last but not least social networks" (Statista, 2018). The Statista site estimates that a third of the world's population will be active social media users by 2021. North America had the highest rate of use with 81 percent of the population in 2017 having a social network profile (Statista, 2018). This graph showed the breakdown of social networking application use in the United States:

Table 3. Most popular mobile social networking apps in the United States



In addition to providing diverse forms of entry, social media offers many aspects to consider in the study of immigrant usage; however, with greater equality of access, also comes increased surveillance of users and manipulation of what gets seen because of control by institutional algorithms. In addition, Internet freedom, or net neutrality, continues to be threatened by media conglomerates and others who support a tiered-system of paid access.

Chapter Four: Methods

I conducted research for this dissertation in Minnesota, where the largest population of Somali immigrants resides (Gambino, Trevelyan, & Fitzwater, 2014). From years of studying Somali-Americans in the community and online, I knew they did not trust mainstream news media; so, I wondered how they get information necessary for successful integration into U.S. society? This led me to a series of questions:

• How and why news organizations fall short with immigrant audiences?

• What news organizations might do to engender trust and engagement?

• What role do social media play in community building?

My dissertation investigated and analyzed how a sample of Somali-Americans feel about mainstream news coverage of Somalis, what media they use instead, and what drives their trust of some sources, but not others. I address these questions by drawing attention to specific events and Somali-Americans' reactions to mainstream news coverage through a long-term ethnographic study, review of existing data, and using quantitative and qualitative research methods.

The Use of Mixed Methods

The definition of a method according to Croucher and Cronn-Mills, who authored *Understanding Communication Research Methods*, is that it is a procedure used to conduct research. Each kind of method is systematic and has "particular 'rules' or guiding principles" that need to be followed (Croucher &

Cronn-Mills, 2015, p. 6). They also explain the difference between method and methodology. “Essentially, in a methodology you discuss the theory behind the method … the method is ‘how-to,’ and the methodology is the theory behind the method” (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2015, p. 7).

Both primary and secondary sources of information were used in this dissertation. I employed mixed methods, both qualitative and quantitative, including ethnography, interviews, focus groups, survey research, and analysis of media coverage, social media posts, and existing data sets and reports; however, my focus on ethnography and in-depth interviewing are essential to understanding people and culture, which is the gist of my interest.

Ethnography is defined as “the study of, writing about, and or a description of (*graphy*), people or folk (*ethno*) (Berg, 1988; Spradley, 1979)” (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2015, p. 134). The important elements of ethnography are to learn about, become attuned to, and be accepted by the host culture (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2015). “At its very essence, ethnography is attempting to describe a culture from the viewpoint of a cultural insider (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003)” (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2015, p. 134). Croucher and Cronn-Mills stated that data can be gathered from “interviews, observation, media, documents, artifacts, etc.” (2015, p. 137), but the core practice of ethnography is being embedded in a community in real or virtual space.

As described by Lindlof & Taylor (2002), I have been an embedded researcher in the field relying on situational cues to engage in *informal conversational interview*s since 2009. In keeping with the epistemological

assumption, I attempted to get close to the people I observed to gain knowledge through their subjective experiences. Qualitative research authority, John Creswell explained that "the longer researchers stay in the 'field' … the more they 'know what they know' from firsthand experience" (2013, p. 20). Ontologically, I also embrace the idea that there can be multiple realities. With both philosophies, using participants' actual words as evidence is important in my study.

The "*axiological* assumption" inherent in this qualitative approach means that I realize I bring my own values to the study and make them known (Creswell, 2013, p. 20). Reflexivity is important in this work. "[T]he schema of "white Americans may match up well with frames that are dominant in mainstream news media, thus reinforcing problematic racial beliefs" (C. Squires, 2009, p. 42). Since I am white, I take care to be cognizant of such frames about race, ethnicity, religion, and social status. My research provides some data to expose such dominant racial frames, but mainly focuses on my informants' contestation of dominant frames and documents their "real-life" experiences.

I first became interested in studying Somali-Americans' media use because of an undergraduate student I had of Somali descent who immigrated to Minnesota with her family as a child. When she confided in me about a family tragedy, I was touched and honored by her trust. I decided I wanted to learn more about her culture. She has been graduated, married, has two children, and is a working professional now. Sharing her sorrow and her triumphs and getting to know many more wonderful Somali immigrants has been the most rewarding

aspect of teaching and attending graduate school. I admit to my interest in providing a place within my work for Somali-American voices to be heard.

Even so, I am not Somali, an immigrant, nor a Muslim. I am a white woman and accept that my life experiences affect my perspective and interpretation of data. As a researcher, I acknowledge that all ethnographic encounters involve intersubjective study of difference in participant observation with informants. I relate to "the inadequacy of the dichotomies between Subject and Object, Self and Other, the West and the Rest" as felt by contemporary feminist ethnographers Behar and Gordon (1995, p. 7). I attempt to engage with feminist ethnographer Ruth Behar's and feminist historian of anthropology Deborah Gordon's idea to construct other models, as those in *Women writing culture*, by being "sensitive to the racial history, sexual politics, and moral predicaments of anthropology" (1995, p. XII). I acknowledge that the data I collected and interpreted are "value laden" and have attempted to position myself and make my presence "apparent in the text" (Creswell, 2013, p. 20). Within the presentation of my research data, I use the participants' own words as much as possible, thus giving them power within my research.

Lastly, I draw on religious studies scholar Robert Orsi's (2004) method of study, in which he attempts to be transparent in his positions, but non-judgmental in working with his participants. Orsi's method helped me place myself in an empathetic relationship within the religious group under study and employ what Orsi described as a "disciplined suspension of the impulse to locate the other (with all her or his discrepant moralities, ways of knowing, and religious impulses)

securely in relation to [one's] own cosmos" and be transformed by the experience of getting beyond any stereotypical constructs I have, to discover the participant's feelings and intentions (Orsi, 2004, p. 198) through the opinions they voice in person, in media coverage, and in online postings.

The methodology used in this dissertation is "inductive, emerging … from the ground up, rather than handed down entirely from a theory…." (Creswell, 2013, p. 20). Data collection sometimes happened spontaneously as opportunities presented themselves. And, while my interview strategy was planned, I modified my plan as needed to gain a detailed knowledge of my topic.

Media ethnographers study communication. The process of communication involves a sender, a message, and a receiver of the message. Croucher & Cronn-Mills provided this definition: "Communication is a process of sharing meaning with others" (2015, p.5). Some communication receives a direct response, while others do not. When the receiver responds (provides feedback), "a transaction occurs between the communicators" (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2015, p.5). The transaction can be verbal or non-verbal and can be intentional or non-intentional. Croucher and Cronn-Mills distinguished the word communication from *communications*, which is a "technological system for transmission of information" (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2015, p.5).

This dissertation focuses on news-attending by Somali immigrants to the United States through the lens of trust. I built on many years of ethnography within the physical and virtual spaces of Somali-Americans in Minnesota. This

study expanded on my ethnographic experience through in-depth interviews in order to address specific questions and issues related to trust and media use.

Selection of Interviewees

As an embedded participant observer over the years, I have had many opportunities to talk to Somali-Americans—those I know and strangers I met at various events. For instance, I spoke with a number of women and men of different ages at a special event in Minneapolis called “Crossing the Divide: Storytelling & Somali Identity in America” held October 5, 2017. I also have had impromptu interviews with Somali-American taxi drivers, business owners, students, and political campaign volunteers. In addition, I recorded and transcribed media interviews and public presentations given by Somali-Americans as well as gathering data from social media posts.

For my formal interviews, I chose several well-connected people who could act as spokespersons, including the first Muslim woman of Somali descent to be elected to the Minnesota Legislature, Rep. Ilhan Omar (who later went on to become the first Somali woman to be elected to Congress in 2018); Abdirizak Bihi, director of the Somali Education and Social Advocacy Center and volunteer host of KFAI’s Somali Link Radio show; and the executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations of Minnesota (CAIR-MN), Jaylani Hussein.

In addition, I met with people who are not elites by reaching out in public places, like the Somali museum (Somali Museum of Minnesota), the Somali mall (Karmel Center), coffee shops, online, and by word of mouth through

acquaintances. Even though I varied the participants by age, gender, and occupation this is not a representative sample, but a further ethnographic pursuit that provided a variety of views and perspectives to help me shape my interpretations. I also engaged in member checking, which is a practice of checking in with some research participants to make sure my perceptions were accurate. This array of interviews, combined with my ethnographic data, allowed me to identify themes that emerged about perceptions of trust and news consumption.

Methods Used to Address the Research Questions

Over the course of 10 years of study, I asked many questions about Somali-American media choices. Some of my earlier papers focused on how media was used to negotiate identity (Kelley, 2012; Kelley 2018). I also conducted a pilot survey. This dissertation investigated and analyzed how a sample of Somali-Americans feel about mainstream news coverage of Somalis, what media they use, and what drives their trust of some sources, but not others.

Content Analysis

Media construction of Somali-Americans. My research participants criticized mainstream media's portrayal of Somalis and indicated negative associations of them started after 9/11. To ascertain if their perceptions were founded on fact, I conducted a quantitative content analysis of two mainstream

media outlets. I found news frames associated with Somalis and quantified and analyzed those themes.

Somali-Americans' consumption patterns and trust of media. The main focus of this dissertation involved gathering data through participant observation with primary sources through ethnography, interviews, social media posts, events, and focus group discussions. Data also were gathered from secondary sources, such as journals, news articles, and reports. The overall questions to be answered were:

a. Do Somali immigrants find some media sources more trustworthy than others and why?
b. Do Somali-Americans avoid "news-attending"—work around mainstream media as suggested by Martin (2008)?
c. How do cultural factors and personal experience affect media use and views of media.
d. What role does new media or technology play in providing a "public sphere," building a sense of community, maintaining Somali culture or integrating into American society?

Data Collection and Coding Process

Data collection for this dissertation took place from March 2010 through November 2018. The IRB at the University of Minnesota granted approval for interviews, a survey, focus groups, and data collection from social media sites of Somali-Americans. I also obtained IRB exemption for collection of data from

professionals and journalists. In addition, I collected data from events and media coverage. In accordance with the desires of some of my participants and the possibility of repercussions, some of the names have been changed in the reporting of these results. Some participants are public figures and I used their full names; others were more comfortable using only their first names.

For the most part, I used open coding to identify and later analyze a series of emerging themes based on grounded theory principles (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Then, I focused on the data related to the theoretical lenses of trust and news attending. I used trust as a construct in analyzing immigrant use of media. There are many definitions of trust. In their interdisciplinary conceptual typology of trust, McKnight and Chervany offered conceptual- and operational-level trust constructs bringing together concepts from many different disciplines, including psychology, sociology, social psychology, economics, political science, management, and communications. Their analysis of trust definitions fell into two broad categories. They found "*different conceptual types*, such as attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and dispositions" and a second broad group "reflecting *different referents*: trust in something, trust in someone, or trust in a specific characteristic of someone (e.g., honesty)" (Mcknight & Chervany, 2001, p. 39). Martin found that people "work around news media" giving "discounting awareness" to things they find offensive, such as African-Americans who felt mainstream media misrepresented blacks (Martin, 2008, p. 90). She found that people "avoid what they perceive as media imposition" and avoid or "work around" media that affront them (Martin, 2008, p.

90). These two constructs—trust and avoiding news—proved helpful in coding and analyzing the data in this study.

Qualitative research methods scholars instruct that: "…categorization and coding are essential to making sense of qualitative data" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 214). Themes or codes are simply units of information that researchers identify by critically reading through the rich data they amass.

I recorded data on digital recorders and my cell phone from interviews, focus groups, and events, which I transcribed or had transcribed by a service. I also took detailed notes and made field notes. I used the closed caption option to collect text from videos online. For Facebook posts and other online media texts, I used a screen grab tool or simply copied and pasted into separate documents. For my newspaper analysis, I used LexisNexis to search for all articles containing the search term "Somali" in the *Star Tribune* and *The New York Times* three months before 9/11 and three months following 9/11. I downloaded all the articles the search revealed. I conducted my survey online and downloaded responses. The quantitative results are not reported in this dissertation; however, I included a few of the responses in this dissertation because they informed topics in this study.

I used a two-pronged approach to find categories and make sense of my data. I examined the data through several sessions of close reading, using inductive thinking "to stimulate the development of categories" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 215). I highlighted passages of text into "high inference" or "ambiguous" categories, which "call for knowledge of cultural insider meanings or require the

researcher to assimilate several pieces of evidence" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 215). Eventually, I found various units of data that related to each other and began to form categories of "concepts, themes, constructs" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 216). My process went the way that Lindlof and Taylor described it in their book:

> Using pen, pencil, or highlighter, or computer mouse clicks, the analyst marks what seems to make cultural or theoretical sense. What that 'sense' consists of may take more markings of text, more thought given to how and why they cohere as a group, and more attempts to craft a definition that 'would be self-explanatory to a newcomer,' as Turner put it (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 216).

Lindlof and Taylor characterize this kind of "open coding" as a "creative act" (2002, p. 217).

Secondly, I began to look at my accumulated categories of data through the lens of my theoretical frame(s) and applied them to the data in "deductive or *etic* fashion" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 214). In this study, my theoretical framework categories are related to the participants' trust of news media and media consumption. In doing this, Lindlof and Taylor caution: "A priori theory can sensitize one to what could be important, but it should never override or over-shadow the meanings that the researcher discovers in the scenes being studied" (2002, p. 215).

Philosophical Approach and Interpretive Framework

In the next step, I grouped similar items according to my theoretical framework and began the long process of analyzing, interpreting and later interjecting my thoughts within the text. In this study, my ultimate purpose was to document how a sample of Somali-Americans feel about mainstream news media representations of Somalis, how they work around mainstream media, and what engenders trust of media. After I categorized data, I member-checked my themes with some of my participants.

In his qualitative research textbook, John Creswell (2013) organized 13 different authors' typologies or approaches to qualitative inquiry into five representative discipline approaches: Narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. He also provided a summary of philosophical assumptions and interpretive frameworks that inform qualitative research. My interpretive framework for this study rests within the *transformative* framework, since "postpositivists impose structural laws and theories that do not fit marginalized individuals or groups and the constructivists do not go far enough in advocating action to help individuals" (Creswell, 2013, p. 25). Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998) described this as participatory action research with such attributes as collaborative, emancipatory, practical, and life changing. "The basic tenet of the *transformative framework* is that knowledge is not neutral and it reflects the power and social relationships within society" (Creswell, 2013, p. 25). The focus of the research is "on helping individuals free themselves from constraints found in the media, in language, in work procedures, and in the

relationships of power…" (Creswell, 2013, p. 26). Besides providing participants "voice" within the research process and the report, the researcher also provides a plan for "addressing the injustices of the marginalized group" (Creswell, 2013, p. 26). My approach also aligns with a feminist approach, which asks questions related to "gender in the shaping of our consciousness" and includes trends that "address protecting indigenous knowledge and the intersectionality" of "race, class, gender, sexuality, able-bodied-ness, and age" (Creswell, 2013, p. 29). A feminist approach echoes tenets of the transformative framework and seeks to establish relationships that are "nonexploitative" and situate the "researcher within the study so as to avoid objectification…" (Creswell, 2013, p. 26).

I refer to some of the participants in my study by their first names because they did not want me to use their last names. Otherwise, I use last names on second reference even though Somalis often go by their first names. The survey I conducted was done online and participants were anonymous, so I referred to them as respondents.

Chapter Five: Findings and Analysis

Setting the Stage: Somali Immigrants in Minnesota

Before war and famine forced Somalis into refugee camps, many Somalis lived a nomadic, agricultural life. At the end of the day, families gathered around the fire to prepare dinner and let their herds rest from a long, hot day of walking before milking the goats, the cows, the camels. As they worked around the fire they shared stories and songs and news with other families. They gathered together, like small-town Americans might at the town square to exchange the news of the day.

When Somalis arrived as refugees in the United States and other countries around the world, they needed ways to keep in touch with relatives as well as learn how to survive in their new locale. In diaspora, they follow *BBC Somalia*, *Al Jazeera*, and *CNN international.* Along with many immigrant groups, Somalis also look outside traditional media to meet their need for news and to "amplify the community's positive contributions" (Hirsi, 2018, para. 1).

While African American media provide a voice for black Americans, Somali-Americans have created ethnic newspapers, television, radio and online media that focus on success of Somali-American individuals and businesses, products from Somali-owned businesses, sports, politics, and news. People also keep up with news from Somalia through online media, such as *Mshale*, an African community newspaper; and *Allsomali24*, a Somali news site. Multi-ethnic news organizations, such as *Twin Cities Daily Planet (Daily Planet)* or *KFAI* radio

in Minneapolis, provide a local focus. The *Daily Planet* delivers content twice a week through social media and an online newsletter striving to be "radically engaged in its communities" (*Twin Cities Daily Planet*, 2018, About section). *KFAI,* a non-commercial FM radio station, has a mission similar to many ethnic media:

> A volunteer-based community radio station that exists to broadcast information, arts and entertainment programming for an audience of diverse racial, social and economic backgrounds. By providing a voice for people ignored or misrepresented by mainstream media, KFAI increases understanding between peoples and communities, while fostering the values of democracy and social justice (*KFAI*, 2018, About section).

Like *KFAI*, many ethnic media rely heavily on volunteers. And, many ethnic media organizations are financially challenged; however, Somali media have proliferated in Minnesota. A weekly show called "Somali Link Radio" on *KFAI* was one of three additions in 2017 to an already active Somali-focused print and broadcast media landscape (Hirsi, 2018, p. 1). Also new were a monthly newspaper and a television channel. The newspaper, *Somali American*, has a circulation of 10,000 and is distributed for free in public places where Somali-Americans visit regularly. The TV channel, *GTN News*, is a bilingual television channel in St. Cloud (Hirsi, 2018, p. 1).

Prior to 2017, a low-power FM station, *KALY Somali-American Radio*, began to broadcast in 2015 to "provide Somali-Americans with around-the-clock news and music programming" at "101.7-FM, online and via an app" (Hirsi, 2018,

p. 2-3). In 2014, Ciyaartoy—an online news outlet—changed its name to *Tusmo Times,* started printing a monthly newspaper in Somali and English with a circulation of 5,000, and expanded its coverage from sports to include hard news (Hirsi, 2018, p. 2). Somali-Americans echo familiar reasons for starting their own media outlets: "to change the negative image people have of immigrants and refugees" and "to talk about issues facing the Somali-Americans and accentuate their contributions" (Hirsi, 2018, p. 4). The head of *KALY* radio said that the station *"*"is helping, protecting and empowering the voiceless people in the East African community'" (Hirsi, 2018, p. 3).

Mogadishu in Minneapolis. Minneapolis is the "Somali Capital" of the United States, according to Abdirizak Bihi, a Somali community outreach activist (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018). A large proportion of Somali-Americans live in the Cedar-Riverside area of Minneapolis; however, they also occupy homes in other parts of the city, St. Paul, and the suburbs of both Twin Cities. Still other large numbers of Somali immigrants live in smaller Minnesota towns, such as Rochester, Faribault, and Willmar.

In the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, which is on the West Bank of the Mississippi River and adjacent to the University of Minnesota and Augsburg University, there are grocery stores, cafés, restaurants, apartments, and businesses operated by and serving Somali-Americans and others who live, work, attend school or just hang out on the West Bank.

The Cedar-Riverside neighborhood is where I conducted most of my interviews for this study. It's a vibrant, bustling place most days. Sometimes I

sipped tea and enjoyed the activity in the neighborhood, other times I met participants at an African restaurant and deli, the African Development Center or the Cedar Riverside Opportunity Center. The opportunity center is across the street from a park filled with children climbing on colorful play equipment and adults zipping by on bicycles. The center is filled with people attending workshops and meetings.

An array of brightly-colored long dresses and scarves adorn some of the sub-Saharan women walking down the street, while others wear brown or black clothing, and still others are dressed in “Western” attire or some combination of both. Men, too, wear a mixture of traditional Somali apparel and American fashions. The Cedar-Riverside area is an amalgamation of students, punks, goths, musicians, artists, old hippies, health care workers, business people, and the largest population of people of Somali descent in the United States.

Mainstream Media Portrayals of Minorities and Immigrant Populations

Mainstream media reputations. In general, the Somali-Americans in this study did not have high regard for U.S. mainstream media. All the Somali-Americans in this study said mainstream news media did not portray them accurately and they did not trust most mainstream media. This is higher than average as reported by the 2017 Gallup/Knight Foundation survey, which found that 43% of Americans have a negative view of the news media and 66% say “most news media do not do a good job of separating fact from opinion” (Gallup & Knight Foundation, 2018, p. 3).

The framing of minorities in mainstream media. The following intro to *MSNBC*'s televised town hall in Philadelphia on racism in America is an apt beginning point for a discussion on the framing of minorities, and Somalis, in the media.

> …I don't hate our president, I hate that anyone at all might possibly be afraid of me. I'm a proud man. I'm a proud Black man. I just wanted you to get to know me better, before you called the cops (Reid & Hayes, 2018).

Entman asserted that "agenda setting, framing and priming fit together as tools of power" under the overarching concept of bias in news media (2007, p. 163). The first function of framing is *agenda setting*—"defining problems worthy of public and government attention" (Entman, 2007, p. 164). Entman explicated "*framing* as the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation" (2007, p. 164). Frames "shape and alter audience members' interpretations and preferences through *priming*" in which frames introduce or raise ideas that activate schemas that affect the way audiences think or feel about the subject (Entman, 2007, p. 164). Tewksbury and Scheufele likened journalistic framing to that of an artist who chooses a particular frame for a work of art so that the "audiences see the image in just the right way" (2009, p. 17). Journalists assemble the images and words into packages "that have the power to influence how audiences interpret and evaluate issues and policies" (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009, p. 17). "A frame is what unifies information into a package that can influence audiences" (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009, p. 17).

Many scholars have documented the frames in mainstream media associated with non-whites. In sum, Ilia Rodríguez wrote:

> The coverage of cultural diversity in news media shows an emphasis on documenting the enduring underrepresentation and misrepresentation of particular minority groups, issues, and sources; on identifying patterns of negative association and editorial stress on difference, antagonism, conflict, and criminal behavior in coverage of minorities; and on how such representations reproduce "modern" or "symbolic" racism (2009, p.170).

My research backed up these findings. Early in my study, participants talked about how the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, reactions to the event, and the "War on Terror" affected perceptions about Muslims and hence Somalis. At the time of this writing, President Trump's anti-Muslim rhetoric continued to spur regular coverage of anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, and negative associations with Somalis. "I feel like everything now provokes a negative ... reaction or like a negative headline" said then-Minnesota State Representative Ilhan Omar, in an interview with me at the Minnesota Council on Islamic American Relations (CAIR) on September 5, 2018. CAIR's Executive Director, Jaylani Hussein, agreed, during the same interview. In his job, Hussein holds educational workshops for journalists to educate them about Muslims. He talks "to them about these articles and that the language they're using associating a crime to Muslims" he said. "In addition, whenever they cover the Minnesota community, they always omit Muslims" (Hussein, September 5, 2018).

Discourse studies scholar Teun A. van Dijk showed years ago how the "Press" reproduces "racism in white, western society" that reflects "the close relationship between the Press and other major institutions and elite groups in society" (1991, p. 250). While not all "Black or (White) audiences accept all media messages", Catherine Squires explored how negative and stereotypical framing of blacks may strengthen negative schemas or associations people have (2009, p. 4). "[T]he schema of white Americans may match up well with frames that are dominant in mainstream news media, thus reinforcing problematic racial beliefs" (C. Squires, 2009, p. 42). Participants in this study agreed that negative headlines and stories about Muslims and African Americans reproduced racism.

American Muslim global media commentator, Arsalan Iftikhar, lamented the media's coverage of Islam: "…one of the many things that keeps me awake at night is our Western media's inability to view Islam and Muslims as anything more than a static monolithic entity" as perpetrators of terrorist acts and other stereotypes (Iftikhar, 2018, p. 18). In addition, "tensions over Islam" was the most covered religion by the media (surpassing coverage of the Roman Catholic Church sex abuse scandal) in a study done by Pew in 2011 (Holcomb, para. 1, 2012). A study by Ogan, Willnat, Pennington & Bashir (2014) also linked media coverage with a rise in anti-Muslim prejudice. This dissertation adds to these studies of media coverage and Muslims.

Negative framing of Somalis. There is a large body of scholarship concerning mainstream media's neglect or negative framing of immigrants and other marginalized groups. Among others, these scholars have documented that

most mainstream news coverage gives selective coverage to minorities, sensationalize negative aspects, over emphasize shortcomings, and attach a cultural identity when it is not relevant: Ono & Pham, 2009; I. Rodríguez, 2009; Squires, 2009; Subervi & Sinta, 2015. Other studies (Amnesty International, 2012; Holcomb, 2012; Padgett & Allen, 2003; Pew Research Center, 2013) specifically explored media coverage and attitudes toward Muslims. Ogan et al. (2014) stated:

> Since media coverage of Muslims and Islam is likely to shape the opinions of those who have limited or no contact with this religion and its people, it is important to analyze the potential associations these media portrayals might have with people's attitudes toward Islam in general and Muslims in particular.

This dissertation adds to this body of media research, by looking particularly at U.S. media coverage of Somalis and Somali-American's viewpoints on media. My study begins to fill a void by focusing on the immigrants' perspective and links to the broader body of scholarship concerned with mass media, minorities, and marginalized communities.

My 10-year study employed ethnography, qualitative and quantitative analysis that demonstrated that the treatment of Somalis in the news aligns with previous research with other groups of immigrants and people of color. Early on in my research, I did a pilot survey with a large group of American women of Somali descent to ascertain their media preferences and feelings about identity development. I also conducted a traditional content analysis of newspaper

coverage of Somalis to see if my participants were right about their impressions about mainstream coverage of Somalis.

Dissatisfaction with Mainstream Media Coverage

I conducted a pilot survey of 28 Somali-American women to address media choices and identity formation, as one of the first steps in my mixed-methods approach (Appendix C). While such a small sample is not statistically valid, the women's responses to questions and open-ended comments provided meaningful perspectives. I found that a large majority of the respondents were dissatisfied with representation of the Somali community in U.S. mainstream media (e.g., local and national newspapers, commercial radio and network TV). Thirty percent of the women said they were very dissatisfied with mainstream media coverage of Somalis and 55 percent were dissatisfied. Their comments included this one about balancing her identity as a Somali-American Muslim woman living in the United States: "It can be difficult at times because people assume things about you based on what they've seen in the news or their past experiences with the Somali community" (Respondent 19, Somali Women/Media Survey, Nov. 2010-Jan. 2012).

The study focused on 18- to 44-year-old Somali-American women, who used online technology. The survey mode was an online, web-based, self-administered survey that 28 participants took between November 2010 through January 2012. In subsequent conversations, focus groups, and interviews with some of the survey participants and others over the years, I found that 100

percent of the Somali-Americans I met said they were dissatisfied with mainstream media coverage of Somali-Americans. Some people also expressed disgust for tweets and social media posts that were anti-Muslim and hate-filled toward Somalis. I conducted a content analysis study to ascertain if the participants' viewpoints were accurate.

Content Analysis Showed Negative Framing of Somalis

I conducted a quantitative study of mainstream coverage of Somalis with one local and one national elite newspaper to ascertain if my participants' perceptions were accurate. I collected all articles that mentioned the word Somali and categorized the words associated with Somali. Data from this study, which appear in this section of this dissertation, showed that, indeed, there was a drastic change in coverage of Somalis after the events of 9/11. After 9/11 the focus shifted from "Somalis" or "East Africans" to describe Somalis as "Muslims", part of the "Muslim Community", wearers of head coverings, and being Islamic. Rhetoric about Somalis and Muslims became more negative, focused on violence, terrorism, and associated them with problems.

This content analysis study provided validation of my participants' perceptions about what local and national mainstream coverage was saying about Somalis. Since Somalis in my study felt that the public image portrayed in media changed after 9/11 and the "war on terror", I analyzed data around that period. My analysis supported my participants' claims that media coverage of Somalis changed after 9/11. In the quantitative study of coverage, I looked at the

framing of Somalis in a major local mainstream newspaper, the *Star Tribune*, six months prior (March through September 10, 2001) and six months after (-September 11 through February 11, 2002) the event of 9/11. A LexisNexis search for the term "Somali" returned 74 documents resulting in 144 pages.

Analysis of local news coverage of Somalis. In keeping with van Dijk's (1993) concept of macropropositions as key ideas remembered by the reader, I read each article and identified the major themes. I divided the articles into two groups: those with a Somali-related macroproposition and those only mentioning Somali, such as an article about translators being available to translate tax forms, where Somali was mentioned in a lower paragraph as one of several languages available for translation. Next, I reanalyzed each article and quantified the terms associated with Somali.

Both before and after 9/11, the articles that mentioned Somalis—but didn't focus on them—most often related to the census, housing (affordable or "immigrant"), or what some institution or employer was doing to help immigrants learn English or understand cultural norms. Within the census articles, Somalis did not lead the news, but were mentioned as accounting for the black population growth in the Twin Cities, among other changes. In 2000, both the mayors of St. Paul and Minneapolis had a somewhat optimistic outlook on the census growth in the urban core.

There were 12 articles that mentioned Somali's benignly before 9/11 and only three afterwards, including one in November around Thanksgiving that featured what food shelves needed for growing immigrant communities, such as

goat meat, corn gruel, rice sticks, and fish sauce. The story quoted a food shelf spokeswoman: “You can imagine that someone from Somalia comes in and has no idea what to do with, say, a can of pumpkin pie filling” (*Star Tribune*, Nov. 24, 2001).

In the six months prior to September 11, 2001, there are 18 articles with a Somali-related focus. Interestingly, not one article mentions Somalis as Muslims until September 13—two days after the attacks on the New York World Trade Center. Before 9/11, macro themes involved Somalis as perpetrators in stabbings, involved in a shooting, and smuggling Khat (a natural stimulant that comes from a bush and is often chewed). The newspaper covered Somali arrests and indictments; a bias suit against a car rental company by Somali employees; and alleged police harassment during a national Somali event along with responses from Somali community leaders and the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union.

Before 9/11 a few articles covered conflicts between Somali and African-American youth and responses from school and community leaders to address cultural challenges. Police and news media were criticized for blowing “the story out of proportion in order to hype sales or drive a wedge between African-Americans and Somalis”; marginalizing people “by sensationalizing events” (*Star Tribune*, May 2, 2001); and attaching unnecessary racial or ethnic descriptions. Other than articles about cultural tensions and crime, there is one article that challenges results of the national census survey and another about African business owners’ hopes for success at a new International Mall in Minneapolis.

After 9/11 the focus shifts from “Somalis” or “East Africans” to describe Somalis as “Muslims”, part of the “Muslim Community”, wearers of head coverings, and being Islamic. Several articles expressed Somalis’ fears because of “threats following Tuesday’s terroristic attack on America” (*Star Tribune*, September 13, 2001). Eighteen articles focused on Somalis before 9/11 and 38 after 9/11. The increased coverage focused on anti-Muslim sentiment; allegations about Somalis donating money to “Islamic terror groups”; FBI terror probes, worldwide crackdowns, and closing money-transfer services used by Somalis; and contestations regarding shutdowns, money blocks, raids, and Somali connections to Osama bin Laden. In addition to adding the religious identifier of “Muslim” in stories about Somalis, other changes included the description of “residents”, “immigrants”, and the hyphenated term “Somali-American” in the three months following 9/11. For the first time, the phrase that described Somalis as resettled refugees from the “war-torn East African nation” was used, and is seen repeatedly through today, more than a decade and a half later.

Other new themes entailed Somalis who used false identification to get into the United States, leaving the Twin Cities because of terror investigations; September 11 influencing jurors to trust police more than “Muslims” in verdicts alleging police brutality; and fears of backlash against Somalis as anti-American after the release of the film, *Black Hawk Down*, in which the U.S. forces’ mission in Somalia went awry.

One significant signal in relation to changes in immigration policy after 9/11, is an article titled “Immigrants feel winds of change; the U.S. War on terrorism has sparked changes in immigration policy and procedures that are unfolding in a number of ways” (*Star Tribune*, Nov. 21, 2001) that summarized headlines and text about immigration and visa rules tightening, refugee entry freezes, security checks, and expanded power to track and detain noncitizens. Even an event, Somali National Week, meant to engender positive relations was overshadowed by negative coverage.

Even though this coverage came from one newspaper, it is a significant finding. Minnesota is home to the largest number of Somalis in the country and the *Star Tribune* is the largest newspaper in the state. I argue that this change in coverage is indicative of framing that occurred nationwide after 9/11. Rhetoric about Somalis and Muslims became more negative, focused on violence, terrorism, and associated them with problems as immigrants. Instead of new citizens making their way into the community, they became linked with differences from dominant elite and threats to the white non-Muslim population.

Table 4. *Star Tribune* frames: Somali linked with differences

Key: Before 9/11 = black, After 9/11 = red

Muslim	Ethnicity	Race	Gender	Language barriers	Refugees/ Immigrants	Population	American?
7 pray or fasting: 5	3, 1 cultural differences: 4	3 racial profiling: 5, 2	2 head covering: 2	5, 1	2, 18	1 growing faster 1 census not accurate	1 not sure Somali-Americans: 2
12 after	7 before, 1 after	8 before, 2 after	2 before, 2 after	5 before, 1 after	2 before, 18 after	2 before	1 before, 2 after

Table 5. *Star Tribune* frames: Somali linked with problems

Illegals	Terrorists	Violent/Crime/ Cause friction	Religion Radical	Poverty/ Economy	Housing Needs	Victims (hate, discrimination)
1, 2	22	12, 13	4	8 in Somalia In MN:1	3	3, 11
1 before, 2 after	22 after	12 before, 13 after	4 after	9 after	3 before	3 before, 11 after

Table 6. *Star Tribune* frames: Somali linked with positive attributes

Fill/Seek Jobs	Entrepreneurs	Well-behaved	Hard working	Learning English	Educated or bright	Foster cultural understanding
1 (before recession)	4 9 wiretap services (linked to terrorism)	1	2	2	1, 2	3, 6
1 before	4 before, 9 after	1 before	1 before, 1 after	2 before	1 before, 2 after	3 before, 6 after

Table 7. *Star Tribune* frames: Other terms linked to immigrants/immigration

Major influxes	Flooded into	Swelled population	Squeezing into housing				

Table 8. *Star Tribune* frames: Americans' responses to Somalis

Employer	Principal	Police	Media	Mayors	Philanthropy
1 patient, supportive, accommodating to religious differences 2 bias suits against 1 will transfer supervisor accused of harassment/ discrimination	1 cultural barriers cause conflict	crime facts: no evidence of bias as motive; Trying to improve relations	report and/or defend coverage when criticized 1, 4	1 good for the cities (before recession)	1 Oprah gives to WomenVenture
3 before, 1 after	1 before	1 before	1 before, 4 after	1 before	1 before

Table 9. *Star Tribune* frames: Kinds of articles and lengths

Breaking News	Feature	Service/Volunteers	Community Event
Census: minorities double; 12 percent of total. MN tops all: growth of blacks (Somalis) 844	Employers accommodating cultural/religious differences 988	Volunteer tax help for non-English speakers (Spanish, Vietnamese, Hmong, Somali) 206	National Somali Week
Census: Somali major influx in cities 925		Augsburg College makes a difference in urban lives 879	
Stabbing by Somali youth of Af Am youth 386			
Court charges for stabbing 335 Complaints/Poll about headlines; one mentioned ID of stabbing crime being related to race 624	Stabbing: Reflects on Somali-African American Relations 1036		
Dept of Health conducts asbestos study in NE Mpls 857			

Analysis of national news coverage of Somalis. In addition to analyzing local mainstream media coverage of Somalis, it was also important to look at national coverage to provide some context for claims made by my participants about reports associated with Somalis. The national coverage analyzed, also validated my participants' claims about mainstream media. I looked at national coverage of Somalis for the same time period before and after 9/11. A LexisNexis search of *The New York Times* for "Somali" in the six-month time period surrounding 9/11 (March 2001–February 2002) resulted in 22 articles totaling 52 pages—less than a third of the coverage found in the *Star Tribune*. Only six of the 22 articles appeared before 9/11. Most of *The New York Times* articles related to Somalis as victims or perpetrators of terror or violence and

such coverage increased significantly after 9/11. For instance, there were three articles about terrorism before 9/11 and eight afterwards; one article about Somalis being violent before and five afterwards; and one article portraying them as radicals associated with Al Qaeda or bin Laden before and nine afterwards.

The New York Times coverage focused on national and international concerns. Three articles were about a trial of two suspects thought to have been involved with the 1998 American embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. Focused on covering the court proceedings, one article reported how prosecutors tried to link the earlier 1993 Black Hawk disaster in Somalia to the 1998 embassy bombings as part of a global terrorism conspiracy to kill Americans that was led by Osama bin Laden. A later article reported that the judge excluded that testimony from the trial. In an article that appeared in between the two, the defense attorney expressed concerns to the federal judge that he was not able to find "experts willing to testify about the United States' intervention in Somalia in 1993" because they "were scared off because of the terrorism allegations in the case" (Weiser, 2002, p. 2).

Also linking Somalis or the country of Somalia with violence, a fourth article reported that gunmen in Somalia killed at least eight Somalis, wounded 30 more people and abducted nine foreign medics. A fifth piece reported on a 15-hour battle between rival militias in Mogadishu, Somalia's capital, that left 40 people dead and 100 people wounded, including 21 civilians. Lastly, Somali nomads were mentioned in a book review about a Polish press agency

correspondent's memoirs from 40 years of reporting from Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Posted from Nairobi on Sept. 12 (still Sept. 11 in the United States), a story appeared about "Pirate Militias from Somalia" that "spill" into the surrounding seas off the Horn of Africa that were terrorizing ships (Lacey, 2001, p. 2). No other Somali-related stories appeared until November when a Somali leader pleaded for America to re-engage in Somalia. The article reads:

> The president of Somalia's transitional government says he understands why his country is getting the cold shoulder from the United States. His anarchic homeland is still overrun with well-armed warlords, just as it was when 18 American soldiers perished on the streets of Mogadishu, the capital, eight years ago (Lacy, 2001, p. 4).

In Nairobi for talks aimed to "restore peace and unify his fractured country", the president hoped the "Sept. 11 attacks will serve to unite Somalia and the United States, not attract American bombs aimed at rooting out suspected links between his country and Osama bin Laden" (Lacy, 2001, p. 4).

Other stories related to 9/11 included a story about Somalis arresting four Iraqi Kurds and a Palestinian for possible Al Qaeda links; an editorial by a Somali novelist and author titled "Somalia Is No Hideout for bin Laden"; and several stories related to the Black Hawk Down movie. Different from the personal fears voiced by Minnesota Somalis in the *Star Tribune* article, *The New York Times* stuck to a review of the movie.

The *New York Times* film review, “Mission of Mercy Goes Bad in Africa”, didn’t mention Somalia until the third paragraph and focused the directing, acting, visual elements, and other aspects of film-making, which is much different from the *Star Tribune’s* approach of reporting personal reactions from Somalis in Minneapolis. However, within a subsequent story, called “A NATION CHALLENGED: TRACKING AL QAEDA, Somalia’s Multitude of Factions Hinders Antiterror Efforts”, the reporter used the Black Hawk Down events to illustrate problems “the United States is facing as it scrutinizes Somalia for links to Al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden's network” and not cooperating with warlords (Lacey, 2002, p.14). Another article tied the showing of the movie in Mogadishu to 9/11, writing: “Tensions between the United States and Somalia are once again raw, this time over the prospect that Somalia’s chaos provides a haven for Al Qaeda terrorists, and that American troops may once again arrive on a violent manhunt” (McNeil, 2002, p. 4). Another article from the Foreign Desk in February 2002, repeated the 1993 “Black Hawk Down” events in a 1588-word feature on Somalia’s fractured government, anarchy, warlords, and the chaos and confusion within the country. The feature talked about the United States’ “new interest in the country since Sept. 11, believing that it may become Osama bin Laden's hiding place, a refuge for experienced terrorists and a breeding ground for new ones” (McNeil, 2002, p. 4). There also was an editorial regarding Somali gunmen’s treatment of a pilot captured in the Black Hawk Down incident, which called for the Bush administration to “rise to the level of Somali gunfighters and apply the Geneva Convention to the men at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba” (Kristof,

2002, p. 21). Lastly, a review of a television show on the History Channel, titled "Looking at Actual Horrors of 'Black Hawk Down' Case" appeared in January.

Another *New York Times* topic dealt with "Al Qaeda's money-raising apparatus" and money-transfer services. The *Star Tribune* reported multiple times on the wire-transfer story, often covering reactions by Somali individuals in Minnesota. *The New York Times* did one in-depth, 3074-word story, titled "Terror Money Hard to Block", based on U.S. government official sources, and another one about the money-transfer raids in Minneapolis, quoting Somalis concerned with sending money back to relatives in Somalia who wanted "to make clear that they did not send money to terrorists" (Fountain, 2001, p. 7).

Two additional stories after 9/11 in *The New York Times* were related to terrorism. One was an article on bioterrorism that mentioned a Somali student from a Midwestern university as one of the people the F.B.I. identified on its short list of suspects "who had the means, opportunity and possible motive to have sent anthrax-laden letters…" (Miller & Broad, 2002, p.1). Another article looked at Sweden's concern over three Somali-born Swedish citizens who were on the U.S "terror list" and whose assets were frozen by the U.S. war on terrorism.

Two final articles were a feature on the history and current plight of Somali Bantus, who would like to immigrate to the United States under refugee status, being caught up in delays owing to additional scrutiny since the Sept. 11 attacks. In particular the article stated: "Some refugee officials in Africa fear that the Bantu, who converted to Islam in recent generations, may be less welcome these days, especially with talk of Somalia possibly becoming a target of the American

antiterrorism campaign" (Lacy, 2001, p. 4). The last story is a somewhat humorous account. From Nairobi, Kenya, a correspondent chronicles his flight with an exporter of khat, which is "chewed while green for a coca-leaf sort of high that speeds up your heart, clears your sinuses and makes you jumpy and a little euphoric—but still able to drive or shoot as straight as is normally required in Somalia" (McNeil, 2002, p. 7) An illegal drug in the United States, khat is legal and commonly used in Kenya and Somalia. The correspondent's main point was that it is easier to take a drug flight into Mogadishu than take a flight from one of five "airports" controlled by whatever "warlord" controls the dirt landing strip since the real airport closed. The headline makes his point: "Correspondence/Touring Somalia; When All Else Fails (Like the State), Take the Drug Flight Into Town" (McNeil, p.7).

In both *The New York Times* and the *Star Tribune*, there is a lack of coverage of any positive contributions about the Somali refugees who immigrated to the United States and elsewhere. The rare mention of women of Somali descent focused on head coverings, which contributes to another stereotypical "difference" setting them apart from non-Muslims in the United States. These findings support the claims of my participants and Rodriguez's (2009) and other scholars who argue that most mainstream news media give selective coverage to minorities, sensationalize negative aspects, over-emphasize shortcomings, and attach a cultural identity when it is not relevant (Ono & Pham, 2009; I. Rodríguez, 2009; C. R. Squires, 2009; Subervi & Sinta, 2015).

Table 10. *The New York Times* frames: Somali linked with differences

Key: Before 9/11 = black, After 9/11 = red

Muslim	Ethnicity	Race	Gender	Language barriers	Refugees/ Immigrants	Population	American?
2 Muslim militant					2 policies/freezes on		
1 fundamentalists							
3 after					2 after		

Table 11. *The New York Times* frames: Somali linked with problems

Pirates	Terrorists Terror War on Terror	Violent/Crime/ Cause friction	Al Qaeda; bin Laden or Radicals	Poverty in Somalia	Chaos Fighting Warlords Militias Somalia	Victims (mainly in Somalia)
1	3, 8	1, 5	1, 9	1,	4, 9	Bantu 1—discrimination, raped, etc.
						1 Somali-Swedes funds frozen
1 after	3 before, 8 after	1 before, 5 after	1 before, 9 after	1 before	4 before, 9 after	2 after

Table 12. *The New York Times* frames: Somali linked with positive attributes

Fill/Seek Jobs	Send money home	Well-behaved	Hard working	Learning English	Educated or bright	Foster cultural understanding
	1		1			

Table 13. *The New York Times* frames: Other terms linked with Somali

Attack(s) 1 before, 1 after	Nomads 1 before	Drugs, Arms smugglers 2 after	Gunman scrupulous with POWs 1 after	Anthrax suspects 1 after			

My participants' reaction to this kind of media coverage helped explain why they dislike the majority of the coverage of Somalis and distrust mainstream

media. This fits with findings in a report done by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), which said people who share similar demographic characteristics may focus on the distrust of the motives and competence of reporters, while people who share certain attitudes may dislike opinions in the news media (American Society of Newspaper Editors, & MORI Research, 1985). Somali-Americans in my study shared some demographic characteristics and many shared similar attitudes. According to the report, of particular importance to people's distrust of the media was that their distrust seemed to be based on "people's identification with 'victims' of the press—and their corresponding fear of being victimized themselves" (American Society of Newspaper Editors, & MORI Research, 1985, p. 15). I saw evidence of this phenomenon in newspaper articles and social media. Somalis voiced their concerns to others, warning them to stay away from giving mainstream media interviews for fear that the media would misconstrue what they said and make Somalis look bad. Based on the way mainstream media covered Somalis in the past, participants in my study did not trust media to give them unbiased treatment in news accounts.

Role of Trust in Somali-American Media Consumption

Business scholars explained that prior to the Internet people made purchases or sought advice from those they knew personally or "by reputation through trusted friends" (Mcknight & Chervany, 2001, p. 35). The town square or public sphere was a place to gather, commune and learn who to trust and who not to trust. People knew their corner grocer, they knew professionals in their

community from church, a club or the PTA (Mcknight & Chervany, 2001). The categories and definitions of trust are covered in my literature review, page 42–58. Briefly, these scholars offered the following comprehensive definition of trust:

> This suggests the essence of the definitions of the psychological state known as trust: to willingly become vulnerable to the trustee, whether another person, an institution, or people generally, having taken into consideration the characteristics of the trustee (Mcknight & Chervany, 2001, p. 42).

But, why is it important to consider trust when looking at immigrant sources of news? A Pew report contended that trust is a key element in holding society together. “When trust is absent, all kinds of societal woes unfold—including violence, social chaos and paralyzing risk-aversion” (Rainie & Anderson, 2017, p. 2). For media scholars and journalists, understanding why immigrants may or may not trust some news sources and not others is essential. If media are to abide by historic standards of providing a forum for public and political information and debate, they need to listen to the needs and criticisms of New Americans. The inclusion of all voices is essential to building a connected public. This dissertation explored why Somali-Americans in this study do not trust mainstream media institutions or journalists in general.

One of the interviewees in this study asked the question, should trust be “earned” or just “given.” She suggested that whites trust the news about Somalis and they should not. She said:

> So, if you are a suburban mom and you're watching the news, you're trusting the news, but what do they do to earn your trust? What proof are they showing you to earn your trust? Have you gone out there, and figured out something else that this might not be true? (Amal, personal communication, July 1, 2018).

This idea suggests that "experience" or the lack of experience in getting to know Somalis also could be a condition of trusting the media. Building on the idea of "experience" influencing trust as an important factor, I suggested to Amal that Somali's experiences also must influence their trust in media. Somalis' history of trauma, civil war, political corruption, refugee camps, and PTSD, must make it hard to trust. Amal agreed and explained how being shunned in everyday life in the United States also makes it hard (Amal, personal communication, July 1, 2018).

The least-trusted and most-trusted media. In a report commissioned by the Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI) at the University of Missouri, the least- and most-trusted media organizations were ranked in ascending order: the *Guardian, PBS, NPR, BBC, Reuters, Public Television* and the *Economist,* shown in the graph (Kearney, 2017). This finding concurred with the participants' opinions in my study. They said the media outlets most trusted were the *BBC* and "British" media.

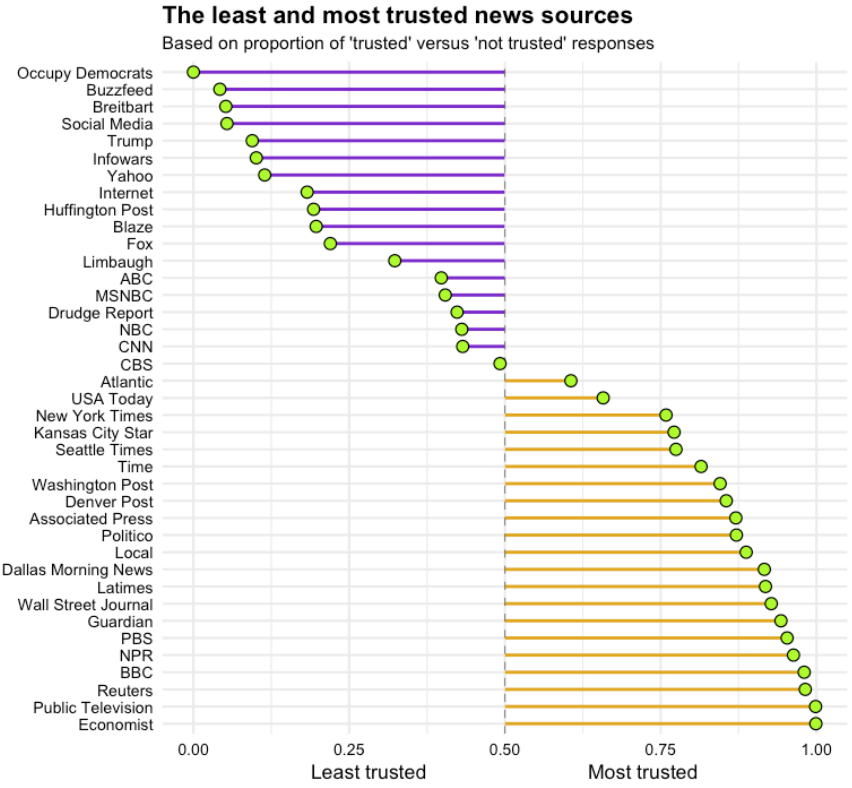
When I asked interviewees if there are mainstream media they trust, these were some of their comments:

Jama: Yes, some media I trust. Not Western media (Jama, personal communication, June 26, 2018).

Amal: *Fox*. I don't trust *Fox News*. But in general, all the news actually, I don't. I got so discouraged (Amal, personal communication, July 1, 2018).

Bihi: Speaking in general about Somalis: "They more likely to rely on British news" (Abdirizak Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Table 14. The least and most trusted news sources



(Kearney, 2017, p. 12)

Bihi explained why Somalis attend to British news sources over U.S. news media: “They think that U.S. news interests in Africa or part of Middle East is one sided or no interest…. [British news] covers the whole world” he said. He also said that *CNN* is always on “…unless the World Cup is playing. Everywhere you go is *CNN*.…Before it was *Al Jazeera*, they were loyal to *Al Jazeera* because they thought *Al Jazeera* had a different view of the world” when *Al Jazeera* was broadcast in English in the United States (Abdirizak Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018). Other interviewees said people still watch *Al Jazeera* through online streaming and added that many Somali-Americans have switched from *CNN* to *MSNBC.* “Yeah, they might have moved” from *CNN* to *MSNBC*, said Jaylani Hussein, the head of CAIR in Minnesota. House Rep. Ilhan Omar explained: “The community is finding that … even *CNN* in, in their fair reporting, right?... is trying to give space to hateful rhetoric” (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018). Ilhan Omar also reported that Somalis listen to news like the *BBC* because it is not so parochial. Her friend, Jaylani Hussein added:

Hussein: That predates coming to the United States.

Omar: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Hussein: But, that's the radio and that's actually in Somali language. Nobody listens to the English version (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

I asked whether Somalis were still listening to *Al Jazeera* and got this response:

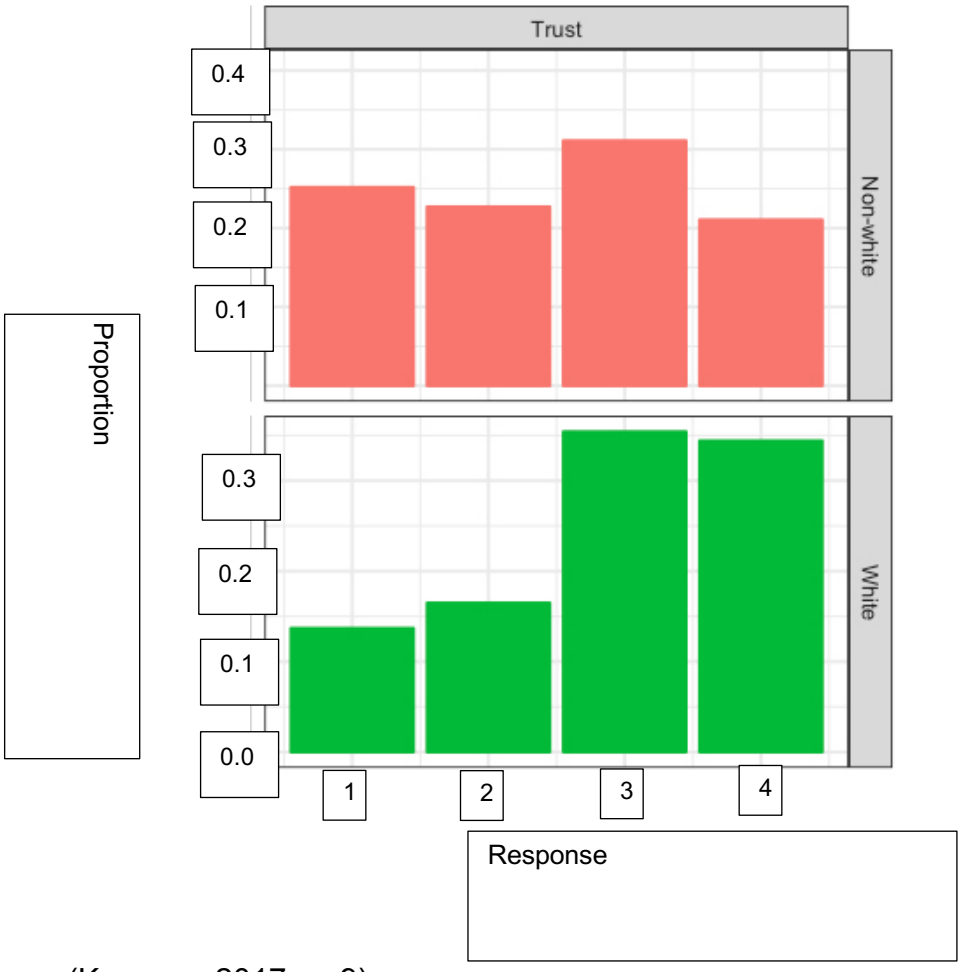
Hussein: …a lot of Somalis have, what we call, the international channels and they watch Somali live TV from Somalia. These boxes that have wire streaming online broadcasts. And, they watch *Al Jazeera* there, because it's a free content, right? Would you agree?

Omar: I mean, I would say for older Somalis they probably watch, Al Jazeera as much as they watch *CNN*.…I think there is, there's a lot of Somalis who watch international *CNN* because it is, it's more credible.… We have gotten used to a really great level of journalism, right? And, and I think there, there is a higher expectation of people like reporting more than what's happening in your neighborhood. And, a lot of our elders have issue with the way that most of American journalism really doesn't fully expand on…. world news, you know, everything else that's happening. So, they just, they kind of see them as not doing the work or you know, trying to cover, as much. So, they will try to watch Al Jazeera, watch *CNN* international, try to broaden the amount of information that they're consuming (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

The RJI study also correlated certain demographic factors with trust in media. Relevant to my participants were the data related to race. That study found non-white respondents' trust in media was low, much lower than whites' trust in media, which my study with Somali-Americans supports (Kearney, 2017).

In the RJI study, media trust was measured on a 1-4 scale with 1 meaning very unlikely to believe information from news media and 4 meaning very likely to believe information from news media as depicted in the graph (Kearney, 2017, p. 9). Interpreting the graph in Table 15, approximately 55 percent of non-white respondents were very likely or likely to believe information from news media, while 70% of white respondents trusted the media.

Table 15. Demographic factors related to trust in media



(Kearney, 2017, p. 9).

What the numbers in the graphs of these studies do not reveal is *why* non-white audiences have lower rates of trust in media. The findings in this dissertation shed light on some of the reasons immigrants do not trust mainstream media. One reason Somali-Americans in my study said they do not trust mainstream media is that they perceive coverage of Somalis as negative. They perceived the negative coverage became more prominent after the events of 9/11.

Why Somali-Americans Do Not Trust Mainstream News Sources

Media "trash non-white people." Jama, who has lived in the United States nearly half his life, told me that one thing that mainstream media have in common, whether they are "left" or "right" leaning is "trashing non-white people." He said that *Fox News* and *CNN* have a "difference of opinion or maybe ideology," but they both make "Muslims" or "Blacks" look bad (Jama, personal communication, May 29, 2018).

A 30-year old semi-truck driver, Jama, said news media publish things about Somalis that create a "bad impression" based on race and religion. If a Muslim does something wrong, "He's hit somebody, or he tried … to blow up whatever, they, they say it … 20 times, 40 times…like all day they're repeating again and again and again" (Jama, personal communication, May 29, 2018).

But if a white person "kill like 20 people—students, children, women"—they say "oh, he's crazy" he said. The news media interview "his girlfriend, you know" saying "he was shamed" or something, Jama said. "So how you gonna

trust" mainstream media?" he reasoned (Jama, personal communication, May 29, 2018).

As Executive Director for CAIR, Jaylani Hussein has regular discussions with journalists and news editors about their coverage of Muslims. He recounted a phone call he had with the editor of a newspaper in Hutchinson over a recent op-ed, "I told him, 'You know what, how did you let this guy write this crap? …Because you are racist to my community, and your racism blinds you from seeing this…" (September 5, 2018).

Minnesota Rep. Ilhan Omar's views agreed with Hussein's and Jama's: "It's almost like … something innate in journalists these days, where … it's not only, like, Somalis, or Muslims, but the bias in the way that [they] report and the descriptions that [they] give, it's just, it's very different when it is about, White people, or others" (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

A recent study also concurred with Jama's assessment that a crime perpetrator's race influences media coverage. Scholars from Ohio State University found "that the shooter's race could strongly predict whether the media framed him as mentally ill" (Frizzell, Lindsay, & Duxbury, 2018, para. 12). In fact, "white shooters were nearly 95 percent more likely to have their crimes attributed to mental illness than black shooters" and "only two percent of articles describing a black shooter mentioned mental illness" according to these scholars (Frizzell et al., 2018, para. 13—14). They found further that articles about white perpetrators more often focused empathetically on their redeeming qualities, while highlighting

dangerous aspects of black perpetrators even when their personal histories were similar.

Media perpetuate Islamophobia.[2] Another interviewee, Amal, also brought up the topic of negative coverage of Somalis as Muslims. A 30-something professional who works in the public schools, Amal said: "It's that whole guilt-by-association thing" (Amal, personal communication, July 1, 2018). She, too, complained about the media putting all Muslims into one category—that of being terrorists. "Honestly, to think about it, most of the time, Somalis are not the one bombing people, or, you know, blowing up things. It's people we share religion with" she said. Amal also pointed out the way the acts of a few Somalis are generalized to represent all Somalis as terrorists, when whites are portrayed as individuals. Turning the table, she said: "Just because a Caucasian guy kills people in Maryland" doesn't mean that another Caucasian is going to kill a group of people. "It's two different people. They might be Christian, both, but that doesn't mean he's going to kill, too" Amal said.

The association of Muslims with terror is widespread in the United States and has its roots in "Orientalizing" (Said, 1978). This "deeply embedded race-based prejudice toward Middle Easterners in American culture" began to "reach the New World colonies as early as the 1500s" (Love, 2017, p. 86). The many factors leading to Islamophobia over time are complex, but the "attacks of 9/11 profoundly exacerbated these racial dynamics" and political rhetoric and

[2] The term, Islamophobia, "is functionally similar to *xenophobia* and offers a useful shorthand way of referring to a dread or hatred of Islam and therefore a fear or dislike of Muslims" (Sheridan, 2006, p. 317).

stereotypical images in various forms of media have perpetuated it. "…commentators who placed the blame for 9/11 squarely on Muslims and the religion of Islam found a large, receptive audience in the ensuing months and years" (Love, 2017, p. 90).

One study conducted after 9/11 identified possible factors leading to increased anti-Muslim sentiment or Islamophobia in Europe and the United States by a secondary analysis of data from the Pew Global Attitude project in 2008 and Pew News Interest Index from 2010. Their findings indicated that "negative attitudes toward Muslims and Islam are most strongly and consistently associated with political conservatism on both sides of the Atlantic" and that "older people were more likely to hold negative opinions" (Ogan et al., 2014, p. 40-41). Also significant was the finding that people "who paid more attention to news stories about the 2010 controversy surrounding the planned Islamic Community Center" in New York City held stronger anti-Muslim attitudes (Ogan et al., 2014, p. 40). Respondents "who paid more attention to media coverage of the Park51 issue were less likely to support the building of an Islamic Community Center in New York City, more likely to think that Islam is a religion of violence, and that Muslims should not have the same rights as other religious groups" (Ogan et al., 2014, p. 41)

Anti-Muslim sentiment is something my participants voiced they are confronted with on a daily basis. Jama brought up the problem of "Islamophobia" in our discussion and suggested I watch an investigation about it on *Al Jazeera* online:

> You can watch it and, and can read it, and can see it. You know, they even talking about Minnesota. They talking about Arizona. They talking about every, everywhere who is creating … hate for Islam. It's big people. People who have uh, big powers (Jama, personal communication, May 29, 2018).

I asked Jama if he was talking about President Trump when he indicated that people with big powers are creating "hate for Islam." He said: "He's one of them, yeah" (Jama, personal communication, May 29, 2018). Jama seemed to connect the political climate and Trump's statements with mainstream media, by the way he switched from talking about mainstream media to powerful people causing Islamophobia (Jama, personal communication, May 29, 2018). Like Jama, many people I interviewed found it difficult to handle the constant barrage of news coverage of Trump's negative actions and tweets regarding immigrants and Muslims.

Amal agreed that coverage of Somalis as Muslims is "not good really" (Amal, personal communication, July 1, 2018). "I mean our president came and said we were all terrorists, so that was not a good thing" Amal said (Amal, personal communication, July 1, 2018). Like many local citizens of Somali descent, the remarks still sting, made by then candidate, Donald Trump, in November 2016 about Somalis in Minnesota. In one of several campaign stops just before the election, Trump "emphasized his strict opposition to admitting refugees into the United States over concerns about terrorism" (Johnson & Sullivan, 2016, sec. Post Politics, para. 1). News media documented Trump

saying “Somali migrants are a ‘disaster’ for Minnesota (Jacobs & Yuhas, 2016, p. 1). Trump also said:

> Here in Minnesota, you’ve seen firsthand the problems caused with faulty refugee vetting, with large numbers of Somali refugees coming into your state without your knowledge, without your support or approval, and with some of them then joining ISIS and spreading their extremist views all over our country and all over the world (Johnson & Sullivan, 2016, sec. Post Politics, para. 4).

Trump also was quoted as deriding “protections for immigrants from ‘shithole’ countries”, including Somalia (Dawsey, 2017, p. 1).

As backed up in the Ogan et al., 2014, what people see in media coverage affects the way they view Somalis, Amal contended. “I have been fortunate enough to have a lot of Caucasians that are very respectful and very diverse, but you run into those suburbs sometimes where people are not nice….It’s not because they know you, and they chose to know you, but just because of what they heard, and what somebody else said and” what they see in the media, Amal explained (Amal, personal communication, July 1, 2018). Ogan et al. also found that “respondents who claimed to know Muslims personally were more likely to hold positive attitudes toward Islam (2014, p. 40). Amal and others told me they also get frustrated with negative accusations that appear in the news that get blown out of proportion and the constant conflation between ethnicity and religion. “It upsets me that the Somalis contribute so much more to

society in general, and that at least if they [media] were playing both sides, it would be nice" she said (Amal, personal communication, July 1, 2018).

In CAIR media training for journalists, Hussein tries to teach journalists not to "continuously identify the person with their nationality" and fuse Somali with Islam. "Minnesotans, the majority of Minnesotans are unfamiliar with Islam and they're unfamiliar with Somalis. And what has happened is they've identified Islam as Somali" he said. Omar added: "it's even messing with our own identity … because we grew up with that being differentiated." It's also difficult for newer generations of children growing up in the United States because "there's the mixing" of ethnicity which has its own cultural attributes with what people think "Muslim culture should be" she said (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018). Another confusing or challenging cultural attribute to people of Somali descent is because "racial identities … are in play" as well, Hussein said. In Somalia, they "didn't have racial identities, really, before you were faced with being here" he said. "If you're a White Bosnian Muslim, you're not going to be identified as a Muslim" he said (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018). Omar added: "We want to be recognized as Minnesotans making an impact here.…It's not like, 'hey, I'm Ilhan, the Somali legislator'" and "'I only legislate on Somali issues.'" When covering other legislators, "they don't say 'the White' legislator" she added (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

The racialization of Muslims along with ascribing a religious identity makes addressing Islamophobia difficult, according to Ogan et al. Since the media and

others do not openly admit their views of Muslims as the "'other' in terms of their religious and cultural views and practices" nor assign them a "racial category", "deconstructing and then exposing the roots of Islamophobic ideas will not be easy" (Ogan et al., 2014, p. 42).

Somali history: Media are the voice of government. As frustrating as Trump's speeches and tweets are to Muslims such as Amal and Jama, they understand that media institutions are separate from the government and that news media outlets make their own decisions about what to cover. Some older Somalis don't understand that distinction; they conflate media and the government.

Many older Somali-Americans do not understand that the role of mainstream media is to be a watchdog for the people. They see the media as the voice of the government. Therefore, trust and distrust of media gets conflated with President Trump and the government in general. One reason for this is because mainstream media constantly covers what Trump says, as I discussed with Bihi:

Kelley: But don't you also think that mainstream, when you think about these certain events. Like, what Trump was saying when he was running.

Bihi: Yeah.

Kelley: Then he got elected.

Bihi: Yeah.

Kelley: Then we get the Supreme Court.

Bihi: Yeah.

Kelley: Holding up the travel ban.

Bihi: Yeah.

Kelley: And, you know? And you get this constant Tweet, and it's getting picked up in mainstream media.

Bihi: Yeah.

Kelley: So in a way-

Bihi: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kelley: Do people sort of conflate mainstream media with Trump?

Bihi: He, a lot of people are still unable to differentiate the government and the people. (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Another reason for conflating the government and the media is because of what people experienced in Somalia. In Somalia, “they see a war happened and lasted over 28 something years” Bihi explained (personal communication, July 2, 2018). Older Somalis “knew only a dictatorship” and “media belong to the state”, while those under 30 “have never seen a Somali government” he said. In Somalia “the radio, and later the TV, and the one newspaper, they all belonged to the revolutionary guard and the government” so the media were not trusted sources of information, he said. “Your loyalty is not demanded or asked. But it's

forced" he said. "A lot of people are still unable to differentiate the government and the people" he said. Some elders assumed that any white person was a government official when they first came to the United States. As an example, Bihi explained that if he invited me, a white person, to meet with some elders a while back that they would think I represented the U.S. government and would say: "Tell the U.S. government" this or that (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Bihi also explained that many elders do not understand levels of government and do not understand that someone who works for the city, for instance, does not report directly to the president of the United States. Older Somalis who have immigrated to the United States also are not familiar with everyday citizens having a voice. "…you had no freedom in expressing yourself" Bihi said. "It's a completely new concept" he said (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Trust in media is at an all-time low. National statistics bear out what discussions with my research participants showed. "Public trust in the media is at an all-time low," according to a Knight-Gallup report (Watzman, 2018. p. 1, para. 1). Whether it is because of all the political rhetoric about "fake news," the feeling of being misrepresented, or, in the case of online media, the fear of surveillance, "most Americans believe it is now harder to be well-informed and to determine which news is accurate" (Gallup/Knight Foundation, 2018, p. 2). In a worldwide survey on news consumption, the Reuters Institute also showed that:

> …consumer trust in news remains worryingly low in most countries, often linked to high levels of media polarisation, and the perception of undue political influence. Adding to the mix are high levels of concern about so-called 'fake news', partly stoked by politicians, who in some countries are already using this as an opportunity to clamp down on media freedom (Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy, & Nielsen, 2018, p. 3).

In this study, the participants distrust in media echoed these reasons as well as feeling singled out as Muslims and Somali immigrants. Muslim's and immigrants' distrust of media is well founded. Anti-Muslim propaganda is intentionally promoted, picked up and repeated in publications, social media, and President Trump's tweets, according to the investigative journalism website, *BuzzFeed News* (Daro, 2018). Daro detailed how such "propaganda travels from Europe to North America to Trump's Twitter account" when the president tweets misinformation about immigrants and Muslims based on what he watched on a *Fox News* program (2018, p. 1).

> When "President Donald Trump falsely tweeted last month that Germany's acceptance of millions of refugees had led to a dramatic rise in crime, he was not only defending his administration from criticism over its immigration policies, but also echoing a common anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant trope that paints Europe as a continent plagued by crime and dysfunction due to an influx of Muslim newcomers" (Daro, 2018, p. 1).

This is not the only instance where Trump spread anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant tropes. Daro (2018) states that "[i]n pro-Trump corners of the internet,

however, the specifics did not matter as much as the overall message" (p. 2). Many of these false claims originate on "Breitbart and other websites that contribute to this flow of information…" form "what experts have dubbed the international 'Islamophobia network,'" (Daro, 2018, p. 2). According to *BuzzFeed*, the propaganda travels back and forth between Europe and the United States. "In the first five months of 2018, more than half of Breitbart London's 50 most shared articles on Facebook about mainland Europe were primarily about Muslims and migrants; 23 of the articles cited non-English local news sources in countries such as Germany and Sweden" (Daro, 2018, p. 2).

Surveys reflect how this misinformation affects public opinion. In surveys conducted by Gallup "in the United States, Great Britain, France and Germany from 2008 to 2011 significant percentages of respondents (from 30% in France to 52% in the United States) have reported that Western societies do not respect Muslims" (Ogan et al., 2014, p. 28). My study also shows how individuals feel about these tropes and what it has done to their trust in the media and other institutions.

Unfortunately, many media institutions and government elites have fallen short of their "fiduciary obligation" to be trustworthy, which upsets the social order (Barber, 1983, p. 15). "Society usually seeks to instill the moral sense of fiduciary responsibility [through trust] in those who wield power, whether they be parents, government officials, foundation heads, or professionals" (Barber, 1983, p. 15). This dissertation shows how some of these actors have negated their social

responsibility and failed to fulfill “the moral dimension of interaction” (Barber, 1983, p. 15).

With rampant misinformation about Muslims and immigrants circulating on social media, from political elites, and in the news, it stands to reason that participants in this study did not trust the media and other institutions, illustrating one of Mcknight and Chervany’s trust constructs where “one trusts the situation or structures” (2001/2002, p. 42). The taxi driver, Jama and others, said they do not trust the institution of mainstream media because of their experience as immigrants and Muslims and the negative representations perpetuated in the news and the president’s tweets. For instance, Amal explained how Trump’s tweets, quotes, and negative news have affected her:

> So, if you’re a mom from the suburbs and you’ve never had a co-worker who is Somali, you’ve never heard anything, and then you hear Donald Trump talking about it, you hear other Caucasians talk about it based on their experience of what somebody [heard] or [saw] some news—so, the first interaction you have with me is like, “Oh, you’re a terrorist” (Amal, personal communication, July 1, 2018).

Others also voiced their dissatisfaction with coverage of Somalis as immigrants and Muslims. Evidenced here is a participant voicing her frustration with portrayal of the Somali community. One of my survey respondents, #4, had this to say:

> Coming from a community that is struggling or perceived to be broken is very difficult. I often feel the need to advocate and defend a whole nation

or community b/c there is always collective shaming/blaming for communities of color. Much of my identity or purpose is a response to this struggle—which I also feel like gives me wisdom and courage.

Since Minnesota Rep. Omar is a public figure and, at the time of this writing, a candidate for the U.S. House, she is often in the news. One thing that she and Hussein find annoying about news coverage of her is that she gets cast with stereotypes about Somali immigrants. Omar complained that negative immigrant tropes get included even when a story is positive about her winning an election:

Omar: Right, right. So, I think, all of this to say, for Somalis, it's actually fascinating, ‘cause even if they write positive stories, so there would be this story about me, or … about Jaylani, or, you know, … those of us who have found success, right?

Omar: But … in some weird way, there will be a part of the story that is about us coming to Minnesota for resources. It doesn't matter… I have always said … we were in Virginia, my family came to Minnesota because Minnesota was number one in education.… But there's always, and it's not a quote from us, right? There's always a line or two that says ‘Minnesota has resources that refugees are after’, whatever. ‘That's why they came here’.

Omar: And I have called reporters and said ‘please explain to me how this part found itself in my story. Because I did not tell you this. Right? Like, why do you need to quantify it on your own. Why do you need to add your opinion into a story that's supposed to be based on facts?’ (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

The narrative of “immigrants coming to take away resources” from existing citizens is one that gets repeated over and over. Amal told me: “It's an unfortunate thing, too. …a lot of immigrants, they came to the US, because that was the safety place. That was like starting your life all over again, to contribute to it. And most immigrants that live now in Minnesota, we don't just come and sit. We come and we do businesses, we're self-sufficient, we contribute to society, we pay taxes, you know, some of us won't even take ... assistance…. But that's not something that's pointed out most of the time” (Amal, personal communication, July 1, 2018). In a separate interview, Jaylani Hussein stated the same sentiments and explained why this trope is not true.

Hussein: So, this idea that immigrants are somehow … chasing resources. It's the opposite, in fact. Every community needs, particularly new immigrants. So, they don't want to say it in Minnesota, but Minnesota has been trying to attract immigrants for the longest time. They, they don't need it from a perspective of diversity. That’s

economic viability. As soon as the, the unions were busted, in the early ‘80s, on farming, poultry, factory work. I think the ‘80s or ‘70s. When that happened, those people started to leave, and they didn't want to work there anymore.

And so guess what happened? There was a huge white flight from Minnesota. The hard laborer intensive workers in Minnesota left Minnesota, started going to the Detroits of the world, and other places where they felt like they could still get good honest labor job. And so when that happened, Minnesota just needed them. And so it wasn't accidental to bring the Hmong here, and continue to bring them, the Vietnamese and others. Minnesota needed them. And they needed them in these places.

And the Latino population in fact was the great secret. There’s a lot of people going to Latin America and saying, go to Minnesota. And it was Minnesota farmers who were saying that. Like, this history of, like, no, people were telling people to come to Minnesota, because they needed them to work in these places. But I would say the second point to Somalis is, is their family kinship. Somalis are an

oral society, we communicate a lot, we want to be connected to others, so when you landed in Idaho and you felt alone, you go to the one place where there's more of you. (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

Resettlement agencies help to disperse refugees in communities around the country, but many Somalis came to Minnesota from other locations “because somebody said this is a great place” Omar said.

Omar: We are a community that is, historically, nomadic. So, in a culture where people are nomadic, they usually send someone, right, who finds a space that they're comfortable in, and, and they say, “This is a good place to live.” …I don't think there was a Somali online doing some research, and being, like, “oh, there is like ten dollars more on food stamps I can get in Minnesota, so I'm going to move to Minnesota.” But the stories that they tell about us, that's, that's what [the media] they’re saying (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

Hussein suggested that the trope about immigrants consuming too many resources is not true. “The dirty secret behind immigration in the United States is first-generation immigrants are the hardest-working, they'll do anything for anything” he said.

Hussein: The second-generation are the most innovative, because they lived

in a home where their parents have sacrificed, and told them of the sacrifices….In fact, that model is the reason why 50% of all Fortune 500 companies in the United States, and especially 70% of the last, since 2000, have been created by second-generation or first generation immigrants. (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

Amal also wished the media would cover Somalis in an unbiased way by telling the good stories, not just the bad. “You know, it would be nice, a balance of the two. But when you’re just showing somebody negative, negative, neg—it’s like … all you can think about them [Somalis] is negative” she said (Amal, personal communication, July 1, 2018).

The Minnesota Council on Islamic American Relations (CAIR) monitors news coverage of Muslims and Somalis and attempts to educate journalists through workshops or by contacting them about misperceptions when they write something biased or unbalanced. CAIR’s Executive Director, Jaylani Hussein gave a number of examples. He also commented on negative op-eds they found in small town newspapers:

Hussein: …we have actually a software that does this. So, I get an alert every single blog that's written, every single article that's written. And one of the things a lot of people don't know is right now we are in 50 negative op-eds to one positive op-ed in the state of Minnesota. Now most people don't know that in Twin Cities

> because we don't see those on Star Tribune and Pioneer Press. The majority of the negative op-eds are in small papers. And I would say almost 20 percent of those negative op-eds are actually coming from columnists (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

Hussein and others who work at CAIR advocate for better coverage of Muslims—before and after articles are written. Hussein also holds educational workshops with journalists to help them understand what is offensive and how they are looking through a white hegemonic lens. A recent example was the coverage of the Muslim festival Super Eid, or feast of the sacrifice, where families gather to celebrate and give food to the poor. “It’s almost as if they [media] don’t know what is negative anymore” Omar said (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018). The festival is based on the story of Ibrahim and his wife Sarah in the Quran (Abraham in the Bible). They were blessed with being able to conceive a child in their old age; however, Ibrahim was asked to sacrifice his son to show his love and obedience to Allah. As blindfolded Ibrahim was about to sacrifice his son, Allah substituted a ram. Media coverage of the festival focused on animal slaughter. While most people don’t butcher their own animals, a headline and story that originated from the *AP* stated that no animals would be slaughtered at the Eid event on the floor of the Minnesota US Bank Stadium. Omar said if they called the media and asked “’What is wrong with you?” they would be told “’You’re being sensitive.” She said by running a headline like that they were actually fueling readers’ fears about

Muslims, not “dismissing” their fears. “…it's like you're actually confirming. You're confirming their fear. That there **was** going to be [slaughtering of animals] but now it's not. Which like, in reality there never is. Right?” Omar said (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

Hussein remarked that he attempts to educate journalists about articles such as the Eid slaughter story and points out that they are frequently associating crimes with “Muslims.” He also purported: “Whenever they cover the Minnesota community, they always omit the Muslims.” Whenever there is a story or photograph that represents Minnesota, “they're not part of the picture” he said.” Instead, the only time you see Muslims is when there's this negative story associated” Hussein said (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

Other interviewees also offered their perspectives on what is not covered about them as immigrants from Somalia and as Muslims. One participant who has been in the United States for 13 years said this about mainstream media: “If you don’t speak English, or you don’t born here, that’s not meaning we are idiots… or don’t understand … what they talking about” Jama said (Jama, personal communication, May 29, 2018). One problem with stations “like CNN or whatever” is that “we don’t have people working there” as “correspondents” Jama said (Jama, personal communication, May 29, 2018). Hussein and Omar said sometimes it doesn’t even help to have Somalis working in mainstream media outlets (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018). They explained about two journalists of Somali descent at the *Star Tribune*:

Omar: They don't write anything positive.

Hussein: They're stuck in a position where, it's just like the cops, it's like, when you walk into that environment, you just fail to—and I even told them—I said, “you guys are, you guys are like a diamond in the rough. Everybody wants a Somali journalist. You don't have to feel like you're stuck to the choir.” And I said, “knock it off.” But they're interested in, like—and I've even told them—I said, “if it's a Somali-based story, you don't have to be involved in it…. The fact of you being involved in it creates a lot of problems for yourself,” because they would insert themselves in this process, and then dig in within the community. And they would get all these random comments from people, and just created to be, you know, a horrible story.

Omar: It's almost like something innate in journalists these days, where, I mean, and it's not only Somalis, or Muslims, but the bias in the way that you report and the descriptions that you give, it's just, it's very different when it is about, white people, or others (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

While Rep. Omar and Hussein are faced with talking to news media daily and advocating for fairer coverage of Somalis and Muslims, many people in the community avoid talking to media altogether. Another recent event highlighted a general lack of trust in the news media by Somalis in Minnesota.

A case study: Somali-Americans' reactions to mainstream media coverage. The crisis involved a Somali-American police officer who shot a white woman in Minneapolis. The reactions to this crisis played out in mainstream, social and ethnic media and supports my argument that mainstream media focus on negative aspects of Somalis, showing why Somalis' distrust mainstream news media coverage.

The incident involved the fatal shooting of a 40-year-old Australian woman living in Minneapolis, Justine Ruszczyk Damond, by a Somali-American police officer, Mohamed Noor, on July 15, 2017. Worldwide media coverage of the event ranged from accolades about the officer's past to accusing him of intentionally killing the woman because of cultural reasons. An *Associated Press* article reported the police officer, Noor, age 32, was a celebrated role model in the Minneapolis Somali community when he was hired two years earlier. A report by *KSTP-TV* reported Noor had two complaints against him on file and a third that had been released (Malloy, 2017). A *Star Tribune* story elaborated on the complaints reporting that Noor had been sued earlier in the year for allegedly violating a woman's rights when police entered her home and Noor "grabbed her right wrist and upper arm" (Chanen & Mahamud, 2017, para. 11). Racial

comparisons also were rampant in media articles, especially in the wake of the shootings by police officers in Minnesota of two African American men, Philando Castile in 2016 and Jamar Clark in 2015.

Most mainstream news media kept their coverage of former Minnesota Congresswoman and 2012 U.S. presidential candidate, Michelle Bachmann's opinions to a short quote that stated Noor "may have shot Damond for 'cultural' reasons" (Otárola, 2017, para. 13). A far-right fringe outlet covered Bachmann's ideas at length. In that piece, Bachmann, founder of the Tea Party Caucus (Sherman, 2010), opined that she "believes 'it's prudent to ask whether the police officer Noor shot Justine due to a Somali/Shariah mindset'" (Clancy, 2017). Bachmann said this drastic cultural rift could have contributed to Noor's decision to shoot Justine, positing, "'Was Noor acting like the Muslim religious police, maintaining strict adherence to keeping women's bodies covered when he shot Justine? Was he acting from a cultural instinct?'" (Clancy, 2017, para. 12).

Social media exploded with reactions to the shooting and media coverage surrounding it. A Somali-American refugee advocate, Suud Olat, was both applauded and criticized on his Facebook page for talking to mainstream media reporters about the incident (Suud Olat, Facebook post, July 19, 2017). People who commented on Olat's Facebook on July 19 ranged from a few who supported Olat, to those who thought Olat was interested only in self-promotion. Many of the Somali-Americans who left comments felt news media could not be trusted or that Olat should not try to represent the entire Somali community. One man wrote on Olat's Facebook "You don't represent the community nor any of us

can speak for community, so don't even bother to answer their stupid, one-sided questions" (Suud Olat, Facebook post, July 19, 2017).

Olat answered:

> So you want to let them to tell the story how they want e.g. Digging negative sides about officer noor like he was sued one time
>
> If a reporter asked me about. I will tel him I met once and he was a good officer professional and like mentor Now he involved this shooting it has nothing to do with our community (Suud Olat, Facebook post, July 19, 2017).

Many people commented on Olat's Facebook page that they distrust the media. One man said "Be careful Suud Olat for these media guys will trick you into a mess. They are trained to twist talks and manipulate words to their own advantage" (Suud Olat, Facebook post, July 19, 2017). Another woman posted that she did not agree with Olat granting media interviews:

> I don't agree with you on this, the media have tendencies to twist words and make it look like something else, don't trust the bastards. I believe we should use social media to air out MNoors good character but not the media. (Suud Olat, Facebook post, July 19, 2017).

Yet another woman brought up racial concerns in her post:

> When your interview becomes something you don't recognise due to editing then you'll know whether you defended your community or not. Iska ilaali bro it's better not to say anything plus this is not about Somalis

> as much as they are trying to pin it on to us, I've never seen a white cop's community being interviewed (Suud Olat, Facebook post, July 19, 2017).

To counter the anti-Somali rhetoric after the shooting, a Minneapolis City Council member of Somali descent, Abdi Warsame, held a news conference on July 23, 2017. *MinnPost's* coverage of the conference focused on the complicated relationship between the media and the Minnesota Somali community. *MinnPost* reported:

> Since Justine's death, there has been an intense focus on officer Noor, blaming his actions on his race, ethnicity and religion,' said Warsame...That's very dangerous, because you're seeing an action of an individual, a member of the Police Department, being given to the whole community. That's unacceptable. (Hirsi, 2017, para. 10-11).

In the same *MinnPost* article, University of Minnesota media scholar Professor Catherine Squires explained why the Somali community finds it hard to trust the media. In addition to concerns about media coverage of radicalized Muslims and Somali youth becoming terrorists, scholars such as Squires have shown a long-term trend of negative coverage of marginalized communities by mainstream media. Squires elucidated "If you look at the history of representations of any group that's not considered white,' she said, 'you'd see a very clear pattern of over representation of negative stories, whether it's crime or problems with education or poverty'" (quoted in Hirsi, 2017, para. 7).

The controversy surrounding media coverage of police officer Noor reflected the distrust that Somali-Americans have for mainstream media. From

this example during a crisis involving a Somali-American, we can see how social media became a public sphere for debate and discussion. Ethnic media also became such a space as Somali-Americans felt “under siege” and maligned by mainstream coverage (Bihi, 2017).

Later the same month, Somali Link Radio on KFAI in Minneapolis devoted a large portion of a show to the controversy surrounding the media coverage of the incident and the issues facing the Somali-American community. The show’s host, community activist Abdirizak Bihi, invited Suud Olat and another community leader, Abdimalik Hassan, to discuss the controversary. Bihi introduced the topic by pointing out how coverage and treatment of the Somali police officer differed from earlier shootings by police. He said:

> We are talking about several issues, one of them being the recent tragedy … where an Australian woman who came here to marry her husband, was shot and the officers, one of them, was Somali-American and … the community felt under siege. And instead of being the actions of one MPD [Minneapolis Police Department] officer, it become the accountability or responsibility of Somali-American community (Bihi, 2017).

The Somali-American community also witnessed vicious messages that were posted to social media or on mainstream media comment sections as seen in this account from Abdirizak Bihi during his show, “That the community become really worried and concerned about their safety. We are seeing social media and hateful messages….And, uh, it’s kind of crazy time” (Bihi, 2017).

The incident of the shooting and coverage surrounding it is one example of reactions from Somali-Americans about their distrust of media.

Somali-Americans' News-Attention Patterns: A Love-Hate Relationship

Not only is trust in media down nationwide, but so are viewership and readership of news media. The Pew Research Center, which tracks audience and economic indicators within the U.S. news media, found that the "audience for nearly every major sector of the U.S. news media fell in 2017", except for radio (Barthel, 2018, section 1, para. 2).

Academic scholar Vivian Martin suggested that people have many reasons to be ambivalent about news-attending and simultaneously embrace and pull away from the news (Martin, 2008). She found that race played a role in people's reasons for avoiding or working around news. She highlighted the role cultural identity plays in news-attending "The discounting awareness with which African-Americans attended mainstream media accounts they felt misrepresented Blacks is a heightened example of how people in general work around news media in everyday life" (Martin, 2008, p. 90).

A Pew Research survey also documented: "Those less favorable toward the news media are also the most 'worn out.'" (J. Gottfried & Barthel, 2018, para. 3). And the 2017 Reuters Institute Digital News Report, based on surveys in 36 countries, showed:

> Almost a third of our sample (29%) say they often or sometimes avoid the news. For many, this is because it can have a negative effect on mood

[48%]. For others [37%], it is because they can't rely on news to be true (Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy, & Nielsen, 2017, p. 9).

Still others [28%] in the Reuters' study said they avoid the news because "I don't feel there is anything I can do about it" (Newman et al., 2017, sec. 3.3, p. 40).

Contrary to these studies and others that indicate people avoid news because of misrepresentation, lies, bias, or feeling incapable of doing anything about it, this does not seem to be the case with Somalis. I found Somali immigrants in my study attended to news, whether or not they liked it. And, trust had nothing to do with why they read, watched, or listened to the news. This is in keeping with some political scientists' work, such as Cramer (2007). In the past, some may have seen "ambivalence" as an indicator of a lack of information or ignorance in public affairs, but others now see that the "presence of ambivalence and disjunction in individuals signifies awareness of, rather than obliviousness to the complexities of the political and social context" (K. Cramer, 2007, p. 150). Somalis' feelings about mainstream coverage was not ambivalence, it bordered more on disgust.

Unlike studies that showed people avoid news they disagree with, surprisingly, Somalis in this study even watched news outlets they hated. Just as Cramer (2016) found people use social categories to understand their political world, Somali Muslims, make calculations about various media sources based on their distinctive cultural attributes and history. So much so that many Somalis favored presidential candidate Trump because of his rhetorical style, not because

of his stance on issues. Somalis verbal style is forthright. They do not hold back on what they think, whether it is politically correct or not. Both Abdizirak Bihi and Amal gave me similar examples of the way Somalis refer to people by a physical characteristic. Bihi told me: “In Somali culture, after the war, it's not politically correct. As matter of fact, if there's one person, a person who is disabled and has only one leg, they will call him one-legged man. It doesn't mean that they hate the person.” He explained how this relates to Somali history.

Bihi: It's a Somali nomadic nature, of just, you know, having no filter in your language.

Kelley: Right.

Bihi: Of being a cowboy. You know? That feels independence. And they found someone who just shoots, who doesn't, who is not politically correct (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Bihi gave me an example from a conversation he heard in a golka (Somali chat room) in which someone said: “’I don't care what he does or what he says about Islam. I like the guy. You know? He's doing everything he wants to do. Nobody can stop him’” (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

It wasn’t until the media reported on presidential candidate Trump trashing Somali immigrants specifically that dissuaded those in favor of his rhetorical style from voting for him. Bihi said “a huge number wanted to vote [for] him” until he came to Minnesota “and called Somalis bad names” (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

According to Bihi, there was another cultural attribute that accounted for Somalis' attention to the news. "Somalis are news junkies" Abdirizak Bihi said. "They spend a great deal of time on the news" he said. Bihi said he knows what people watch because they tell him when they see him on the news. "So they hate *Fox 9* and they also watch [it]" he said. "Almost everyone I see, they watch [it]" he said. "I spoke on that a lot because they were really close with following me on the radicalization and the work I was doing" Bihi said (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018). He explained to me that Somalis have a "love and hate" relationship with the mainstream news media:

Bihi: … If I'm interviewed by WCCO, I see less people. If I'm interviewed by KARE 11, I see less people. But somehow they hate Fox 9, and Fox 9 they all watch it and they all tell me if I was right what I said. If I was wrong. Or if, or they congratulate me. Somehow even the kids watch. So, the feedback I get. "I saw you on the news last night." "Which one?" "Fox 9."

Kelley: (laughs).

Bihi: So, there is that dilemma of love and hate.

Kelley: Yes.

Bihi: They also condemn when they [the media] say something bad.

Kelley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Bihi: Yeah. "Oh. It's Fox 9. What do you expect?" That's what they say. But they watch it (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Amal agreed she does not like *Fox 9 News*, but she still watches it. During our discussion about being discouraged with news media coverage of Somalis, she said “I was never somebody who watches news … but now, I think I watch it just so that I can know and be aware of it…. Whether it’s a negative or positive, at least to be in the loop of what’s going on, it’s more useful than to be clueless” (Amal, personal communication, July 1, 2018). Amal explained further:

> So, then you can be aware of your surroundings and what’s happening, and what is happening to people like you, and why, why it is happening, or how you can prevent it from happening to you, and so forth. So, using it as a tool to protect yourself, but also to be aware of society in general, of ... what their feelings are about yourself (Amal, personal communication, July 1, 2018).

Ilhan Omar and Jalani Hussein did not think Somalis watch *Fox News* regularly. Hussein said: “They'll find a story that *Fox* did from other media, then they'll go watch it on social media, but not like sit and watch” (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018). Omar explained:

Omar: You can kind of gauge like what Somalis, who are Muslims, see as credible organizations by the kind of news outlets that they share on their social media.

Kelley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Omar: You will rarely find a Somali person, or even a Muslim … who is on their social media sharing any kind of news positively, from those, those outlets. *[Fox*]

Omar: … I think if we watch it, we watch it … just to see. Because I watch Tucker sometimes [Tucker Carlson Tonight is a nightly political series on national *Fox News*.]

Hussein: I think most of the times, yeah, they'll find

Omar: But, I don't watch the local one.

Hussein: They'll find a story that Fox did from other media, then they'll go watch it on social media, but not like sit and watch (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

When I suggested to Abdirizak Bihi that people watch *Fox 9* because they want to know what is being said about them, Bihi offered an additional reason for Somalis' attention to all kinds of news outlets: "Yeah. I don't know. They watch it. But the other thing is, Somalis are news junkie[s]" (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018). Bihi explained to me:

Kelley: [Somalis are] news junkies?

Bihi: Yes. [That is] something that I would say [about] all of them. They spend a great deal of time on news.

Kelley: Hm.

Bihi: And also, they interpret the news according to what they believe. So, you will see a continuous battle in our community. Over social media.

Kelley: Oh, continuous battle?

Bihi: Battle of, “No. That's not what, *BBC* said.” “No. This is what they said.” Because we're not there…. We're highly opinionated.

Kelley: Hm.

Bihi: So, I will read the news. And try and interpret all of it to others. According to what I want to see.

Kelley: Oh yeah.

Bihi: Not what the paper said. (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Omar and Hussein agreed:

Omar: Bihi's right about one thing. Right? Like we

Hussein: Are news junkies.

Omar: Are news junkies, and yeah … and we like the discussion of news.

Kelley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Omar: So yes, we consume it and then we discuss.

Kelley: Debate and talk about.

Omar: Yeah, yeah (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

Bihi, a Somali community activist explained to me: “You have to know it’s a very oral society.” For example, he said: “So if you give a professor a flyer, they will tell you, ‘Tell me what is it about?’ They have to hear it.” He also talked about

how being in the know is important within Somali culture (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Bihi: Information is important. You are supposed to know everything.

Kelley: Ah.

Bihi: …When we say hey to each other, we say “Warya” [singular] or “Waryaada” [plural]? We call ourselves warya society. Warya means hey. Warya, which means info.

Kelley: How do you spell it?

Bihi: War means hello. War means talk.

Kelley: Talk?

Bihi: Ii waran when I say hi. I will say “ii waran” [singular]. That means talk to me. Tell me something.

Kelley: Hm.

Bihi: So that's comes from the word war. Like war. W-A-R. In Somali it's war. So ii waran. Hey. So, war or talk or info is part of Somali DNA (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

My friend and research informant, Sahra, helped clarify these Somali words further: “From my understanding of the Somali language, the root word of ‘warya’ is ‘war’ (Sahra, personal communication, Nov. 18, 2018). The root word ‘war’ actually means ‘news or information.’” She said that “’warya’ is usually used to call or get the attention of a male” and ‘nayaa’ is “used for females.” She also explained that ‘ii waran’ is the singular and “ii warama” is “used when you are talking to more than one person.” This Somali greeting illustrates the oral

nature of the Somali culture and the importance of news. Sahra elaborated: “When someone says, ‘ii waran’ it literally means ‘give me information or news’, but it can generally be translated into ‘what's up?’ or ‘what's new?’” (Sahra, personal communication, Nov. 18, 2018).

When I mentioned the idea of Somalis being “news junkies” to my Lyft driver, Ahmed laughed heartedly in agreement. From northern Somalia, he had been in the United States for four years. He recalled that when he was at home in Somalia, people were always talking about “politics, politics, politics” (Ahmed, personal communication, November 2, 2018). He said if someone had a radio, people would gather around it to listen to the *BBC* together. Abdirizak Bihi elaborated on this:

Bihi: Also radio is part of life. Not anymore. Radio now comes through the social media. Nobody buys the set. They are like this picture I had, um.

Kelley: But they're still listening. Just via social media. [Bihi then showed me a photo on his cell phone.]

Bihi: Yeah. They're still listening. Like this picture I had in Somalia. It’s in Somalia. I love it. It's actually people listening on a daily basis in the evening. They listen to the radio. And you don't listen to the radio at home. You listen to the radio with the community.

Kelley: Hm.

Bihi: Yeah. You listen to the radio with the community. So the whole community gathers outside. In a coffee shop. And they listen to the

BBC. Or the news around the world.

Kelley: Hm.

Bihi: So, it really was part of life. But now they listen through their phone. Now you can dial a number for free, and you get to hear VOA [Voice of America].

Kelley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Bihi: That's another radio.

Kelley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Bihi: There. Let me see. I have to show you this picture.... that's the radio.

Kelley: That's cool.

Bihi: Yeah.

Kelley: Wow.

Bihi: So, everyone's quiet and intense because they have to debate about the news around the world later.

Kelley: Ah.

Bihi: And that's what happens at the Starbucks [in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood].

Kelley: Oh.

Bihi: We call it "fadhi ku dirir" is a term we coin after the war. Which means sit, fighting while sitting down.

Kelley: Fighting while sitting down?

Bihi: Yeah. Because you're arguing. So become louder after the war.

Kelley: Hm.

Bihi: And become more opinionated in the fighting. Yeah (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

An article by Doug McGill furthered explained the meaning of “fadhi ku dirir” (2006, para. 8) and the “coffee shop warriors” (2006, para. 12) that meet at the Starbucks. McGill explained the historical significance of the word:

> When clan warlords forced Somali’s Prime Minister, Siad Barre, to flee the country in 1991, plunging the country into a civil war, “fadhi ku dirir” became an essential activity of the Somali street both in Somalia and in the Somali diaspora that stretches across eastern Africa (especially Kenya and Ethiopia), to the United Kingdom, Sweden, Canada, and the United States. (2006, para. 9).

Without a government, Somalia is run by dozens of warlords, each of whom claims a territory, a platform for national governance, and a fight-to-the death constituency (2006, para. 10).

Not only do Somali men meet at the coffee shop to verbally fight, but they also do it online in Somali chat rooms, according to McGill. While arguing may be better than “fighting to the death”, it’s frowned upon by many Somalis. Whether online or in person, some contend that the name calling “works against the broader aim of unifying clans into a single peaceful nation” (McGill, 2006, para. 16). Abdirizak Bihi agreed and had concerns about political discourse today in general.

Bihi: That's basically what's happening in America right now. That's actually what's happening in America right now. I mean-

Kelley: Talk about that.

Bihi: Now people are divided.

Kelley: Yeah.

Bihi: Whether you're Trump, or you're against it. And they fight passionately.

Kelley: Mm- hmm (affirmative).

Bihi: So it's really, we, we sense that. That's really not good.

Kelley: No.

Bihi: Yeah.

Kelley: Because you've been through a civil war.

Bihi: Yes. Yes. And we see the same symptoms [happening here in the United States].

Bihi: Yeah.

Kelley: And that's why people are still paying attention to mainstream media even if they don't like it.

Bihi: Yeah (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

The Role of Technology in Somali-Americans' Media Use

In his study of ethnic minority media producers, Budarek found that "participants combine a lack of access to majority media with the need for media they can control" (2017, p. 208). He found that the media producers were

motivated by the need for “self-representation, countering negative mainstream media representations of Africans and, in some cases, transcending the either/or dichotomy of ethnic and professional media identity” (Budarick, 2017, p. 208). My research supports Budarek’s findings. Participants in this study and media producers consistently felt maligned by mainstream media and sought ways to cope or resist these stereotypes through producing their own media or being active on social media.

Somali community social advocate, Abdirizak Bihi, is a good example of someone who has taken media into his own hands as a tool “to break the isolation of the community and bring people and neighbors together” (Bihi, personal communication, July 13, 2017). He not only started the “show that speaks funny English,” the Somali Link Radio program in 2017, but hosts a live show in the Somali language through community access television on cable and Facebook that reaches some 20,000. Bihi also started a 26-city Facebook group of Somali leaders around the world to “talk about issues people won’t talk about. About radicalization” Bihi said (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

When Bihi first started talking about radicalization across mainstream media outlets, he was criticized by other Somali-Americans who do not trust the news media. Perpetually on the go, Bihi keeps an office in the Cedar Riverside Opportunity Center, but is always out in the community trying to build bridges between the Somali and non-Somali communities and advocating for youth programs. He came to the United States in 1996 as a cultural counselor and

interpreter, helping Somali refugees understand U.S. procedures and systems (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

After his nephew went missing in 2008, Bihi became an advocate for providing a positive environment for Somali youth "to grow and stay in school" he said. He also "served as a member of the Somali-American task force, a U.S. Attorney's Office program aimed at combating terror recruiting in the state, after his nephew was recruited and killed by al-Shabab" (Sanchez, 2018, p. 6). His nephew's fate also prompted Bihi to become outspoken about radicalized youth. He has been interviewed "over thousands of times" by mainstream media in the United States and globally, he said. It was controversial for a Somali to talk to the media, much less about Muslim extremists, and still is today. When Bihi became an outspoken advocate for the Somali community in the news media, he received mixed reactions (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Bihi felt it was important to get the word out about how youth were being radicalized because not even the Somali community was aware of the tactics being used to recruit the youth to become extremists. *Fox 9* TV news and the *Star Tribune* newspaper in the Twin Cities were interested in covering the radicalization from a local standpoint. "We developed a relationship, rather than a Brazilian TV or *ABC* from New York or *New York Times* from New York" Bihi said. "It's difficult to explain to them [media outside of the Twin Cities] the things that was happening" he said (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Today, when Bihi appears on a television news show "people come to you and say, 'I love that." Others "will say, 'You shouldn't have said that'" Bihi said.

Still others tell him: "'You should have said this.' They will tell you what you should have said" he relayed laughingly (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Technology, community and "public sphericules." While new technologies provide a "public sphere" in which immigrants are able to participate in discourse, it is often segregated, not allowing for full participation as conceptualized by Habermas (1974). Some theorists "hold that media actually envelop the public sphere" (Sinclair & Cunningham, 2000, p. 27). Building from Hartley's (1999) typology that within the public sphere there are "minoritarian" public spheres, Sinclair and Cunningham problematized they "are rarely sub-sets of classic nationally bound public spheres, but are nonetheless vibrant, globalized but very specific spaces of self- and community-making and identity" (2000, p. 27). While these authors focused mainly on television, my research supports the use of social and ethnic media by Somalis in the formation of "ethno-specific minoritarian" "public sphericules" (Sinclair & Cunningham, 2000, pp. 28–29). For instance, my research showed that Somali-American women used social media for negotiation of identity (Kelley, 2012). This dissertation shows how Bihi and others have used media technologies to reach people of Somali descent with community news and to debate mainstream news.

My research did not find a "digital divide" as argued by Hargettai (2001) because most people have access to digital media; however, many of the public sphericules used by immigrants—social and traditional ethnic media—are not necessarily reaching white audiences.

While not a Somali-owned station, *KFAI* offers three shows focused on Somali issues. The volunteer-based community radio station doesn't have any demographic data available on listenership for its radio shows, but its mission is to:

> [B]roadcast information, arts and entertainment programming for an audience of diverse racial, social and economic backgrounds. By providing a voice for people ignored or misrepresented by mainstream media, KFAI increases understanding between peoples and communities, while fostering the values of democracy and social justice (KFAI, 2018, About).

In keeping with that mission, Bihi's Somali Link Radio show on *KFAI* in Minneapolis is broadcast in English and is one of few Somali media outlets that reaches both Somali and non-Somali audiences. Bihi explained his objective for the program, which has aired more than 100 shows:

> The whole idea with the radio was to reach out to the young people and the mainstream community. Without nothing, without apologizing to nobody. But telling our stories as we do in Somalia. But also saying in English so everybody else can share that (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

The show is a significant space for community building, promoting cultural identity, and it reaches an audience that is about a half Somali and half non-Somali. His guests are often people of Somali descent, but he also reaches out to others. One white guest from a Christian ministry credited Bihi with changing

his attitude toward Somalis. When Bihi first had the man on the show "he told me something I don't know about him" Bihi said. "He said, 'before I met you I used to hate Somalis and Muslims'" Bihi recalled. "And that guy is the guy who brings the Christians to the mosque, and tell the Muslims how good they are" he said. "So, radio is a tool … where the language is sharable" Bihi said (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Most shows produced by Somalis are spoken in Somali and don't reach a mainstream audience. Bihi hosts a second radio program, Somali Link Radio, and a TV show in Somali on community access television. The TV show, Somali Media TV, which airs on Fridays on the Minneapolis Television Network and live on Facebook, reaches about 15,000 to 20,000 viewers. Bihi said he focuses on employment and job training opportunities, housing, transportation, and some "mainstream" news. Through his ethnic media shows and social media, Bihi has helped thousands of people. "My goal is, we all know baby boomers are retiring, so that is a window … to upgrade the community to career" he said (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Another radio station, *KYLA*, is an example of what Sinclair and Cunningham called "ethno-specific minoritarian" "public sphericules" that are "vibrant, globalized … very specific spaces of self- and community-making and identity" (2000, pp. 27–29). When I asked Omar and Hussein if there was a way media helped build community, Hussein told me: "Somalis, we have our own media…we do have those voices, we have a Somali radio that ... plays Somali music all day…." Hussein connected the founder of the station to others in

Somali ethnic radio, which helped get “him off the ground” (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018). Excerpts from our discussion included:

Kelley: *KYLA*, where is that one from?

Hussein: It's a small community radio.

Kelley: Online? Or is it here?

Hussein: It’s here.

Omar: Yeah, it's on your car radio.

Hussein: It’s available, yeah.

Omar We have daily programming.

Hussein: Yep.

Kelley: Have you been on it?

Hussein: Yep, yep.

Omar: Okay. I haven't yet.

Hussein: Yeah, I'm supposed to do a [crosstalk].

Kelley: Is it all in Somali?

Hussein: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Omar: There are [some] of their like media personalities who are not, who-who use both languages, right?

Kelley: Yeah.

Hussein: Yeah, yeah, they have English as well.

Kelley: Like Abdirizak’s [crosstalk]?

Omar: No, no, no that's different.

Hussein: No, no, no, no, no that's *KFAI*.

Omar: No, Abdirizak is at public radio.

Hussein: *KFAI*.

Omar: Yeah.

Hussein: But uh ...

Omar: This is-this is Somali owned, Somali run ... right?

Hussein: Yep.

Omar: Yeah, yeah it 100%, it's all day, it's 24 hours.

Hussein: *KALY* 101.7 FM. (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

Somali Immigrants are heavy social media users. Beyond ethnic broadcast and print media, Somali immigrants are extremely active on social media, especially on their cell phones. Abdirizak Bihi explained how Somalis used social media: “People always in social media. Actually now exploding.” He also told me: “Facebook … Twitter and other social media and Snapchat for young kids, it's really happening. People are telling their stories” (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Besides public platforms like Facebook, they also use more private voice and video apps because online social media can provide an uneasy venture into unknown territory and they also fear being surveilled upon. Reasons for seeking private media spaces are numerous. One media professional offered this synopsis about the state of media:

> Traditional media is disrupted, wiht (sic) local media outlets disappearing; racist, anti-Semitic, and other hate-filled content fills social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube; and journalists mostly talk to each other about what fresh hell has befallen the industry (Watzman, 2018a, para. 8).

Whether Somalis use social media as a place to connect with trusted friends and relatives, seek and share news, or participate in a community forum, they are heavy users of social media. The director of CAIR, Jaylani Hussein said this about Somalis: “Now they use social media greatly and there’s ones popping up every single day, everywhere” (personal communication, September 5, 2018). For instance, one of my research informants recently started a YouTube channel “to discuss social our society and social issues” with another Somali woman. Her partner explained in their first video that their purpose is to discuss “everything you want others to talk about, but nobody wants to say anything in front of others” (Sahra & Fartun, 2018, n.p.).

In my pilot survey of Somali-American women, 80% said they found no difficulty “Speaking my mind on Facebook or Blogs.” When asked how important various media were to them in expressing their feelings or opinions, social media ranked highly with Facebook/Other Social Media garnering 75%, Texting 75%, and Emailing 80%. Skyping and iChating came in with 60% of participants choosing important or very important. In keeping with Somali oral tradition of gathering together and sharing stories, “face-to-face conversations” was chosen by 100% of respondents as important or very important. Today, these social

media figures would also rank among the top newer technologies, such as SnapChat, WhatsApp, and Viber, according to conversations I had. Abdirizak Bihi also confirmed that Somalis are high users or social media and that women have taken to social media in a big way to express themselves.

Bihi: We are I think number one community that overuse it. To silence each other. As well as to express our opinions there. And lastly, … woman are actually making huge change by expressing themselves.

Kelley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Bihi: And dictating what they believe and what they should say (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Free phone apps are especially important to older Somalis who do not use Facebook and do not want to leave a digital footprint when calling friends and relatives in the United States and abroad, according to people I interviewed. One young woman told me: “because you’re communicating with the diaspora, you’re relying on apps where you can call them for free … so those easy-to-access apps like What’sApp and Viber let immigrants call all over the world (anonymous woman, personal communication, October 5, 2017). This is in keeping with a Reuters Institute survey of more than 74,000 people in 37 countries in 2018 on digital news consumption. The researchers found a continued “rise in the use of messaging apps for news as consumers look for more private (and less confrontational) spaces to communicate” (Newman et al., 2018, pp. 9–10).

As a self-appointed community activist, Abdirizak Bihi constantly posts on social media using what he called his “third TV, that’s called iPhone.” He said: “Anyone on the street could be my producer and camera man or woman.” The day I met with him he was campaigning on Facebook for a county commissioner candidate who had helped the Somalis turnaround a decision and get the light rail into their neighborhood. “So, the latest I've done today is about the campaign…. One of the people I'm campaigning for is our Hennepin county commissioner…. So, I'm really getting people door knocking, turning hundreds of people to vote” he said (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018). I asked him how he was reaching people with his iPhone. He showed me a video he made on his phone and said:

Bihi: Okay. What I'm doing is … like this, this video I did today. Because I'm identifying when the LRT [light rail transit] was coming to this area. Peter [the commissioner] was a big force. But [non-Somali] homeowners in Cedar Riverside, did not want the train station here.

Kelley: Hm.

Bihi: Because, yeah. For good reason. They didn't want a lot of bad people come here.

Kelley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Bihi: And the value of the property…. Go. Zero. So, they have a concern. And we [Somalis] were not aware of LRT. So, one day I'm visiting elders outside. And I see a flyer that's

outdated…. It's two months earlier. The meeting took place. They voted against it.

Kelley: Hm.

Bihi: Then I call the city. The former mayor, she was African American woman. And I said, 'We were not aware of this. It was not written in Somali and nobody brought it to our attention.' Then I called Peter and I said 'Who said we don't want the train station?' Finally he helped us, and she helped us to convene.

Kelley: Hm.

Bihi: A turnout, I turned out 700 people.

Kelley: Wow.

Bihi: And the homeowners become 10. And we want the train. And he help us. So now we are the only neighborhood in the Twin Cities that has two train stations (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

This is just one example of how Bihi is reaching a large portion of the local Somali-American community on social media. In addition to campaigning and posting job opportunities on his personal page, he has several other sites on Facebook. One is called, Somali American Post of resources and opportunities, which used to be national, but now is primarily local. Another is Somali Communities Connections, where his posts range from warnings about such things as "how parking in the wrong spots costs the community tons of money and frustrations" (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018) to promoting

cultural celebrations and prominent people. Some of the social media sites are locally focused while others have an international audience. All in all, Bihi administers or co-administers 30 sites, “if not more than that….one of them is 40,000 people” he said (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018). Other sites he posts on are for Somali professionals and entrepreneurs around the world and another one serves as a political forum, among others. His radio show on KFAI also gets posted to social media and “one day 5,000 people listen to it” Bihi said. He had this to say about the power of social media: “So, social media actually is annoying because we say bad things about each other, but it's empowering communities.” According to Bihi: “People are speaking out…we’re not used to that. A lot of people are getting mad … but it’s really within 40 minutes I know what is happening around the world [and] I don’t have to speak English” (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Social media have taken the place of face-to-face conversations. On social media “people are talking to each other” Bihi said. “People are telling you about their life and they will tell you what’s happening…. It’s like my friends, we don’t have lunch anymore. It’s a sad thing” he said. Whereas in the past someone would say “’Oh, I got to see you; we have to talk about this’” he said. They don’t need to get together anymore. “It’s just like you are together all the time, but there’s no physical, the old ways are gone” Bihi said (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

When Bihi and others talk about the “old ways” they are referring to the Somali tradition of talking and sharing stories and news. “It’s a very oral society”

Bihi said. At a public event the playwright, poet, and filmmaker, Said Salah Ahmed, explained how rural families in Somalia told stories around an open fire while they cooked their dinners and waited for the evening star, the planet Venus, to indicate when the animals were rested enough to be milked. Also a teaching specialist at the University of Minnesota Department of African American and African Studies, Ahmed related the importance of storytelling in Somali identity formation:

> Around the fire therefore, children get not only stories for entertaining … the poetry and all literature they receive is exactly related to their life. That is where they learn to raise the animals or how to raise the agriculture and do the farming. This is where they learn who they are and their background in their existence and identity. That is where they learn hundreds of poems and then can recite among themselves later…. In the daytime, when they are out there with the animals they come together with the different families and different homes under a tree. They interchange the stories they heard last night and that's how it is so significant that stories link people and therefore hearing from there how the family members respect each other by receiving. This is how the young ones know that their parents are knowledgeable of something. Not at present, as here, that they think they are ignorant. And that is how they teach them. And then this family's stories passed to the other family and to the other community and to the nation and therefore when people have the same stories, moral stories, believe same ideas, and have the same in relation

> to the storytelling, is when their minds can be in the same set…. In the urban home the same stories are told in the living room there…. In the diaspora, it is the same thing that these stories are to be told…. Storytelling for Somali culture is both for education, the link between generations, it is the point of making of an adult…(Sennott et al., 2017, n.p.).

Living in the United States, many Somalis no longer gather to tell stories or hear news, except on their phones. “Everybody, they belong to their own society” through their phones, Bihi said. One can walk around the Cedar Riverside neighborhood and see the older Somali men still gathering every day, albeit at Starbucks over coffee or tea, but even more striking are the people walking down the street or in line at a store attached to their cell phones. When I met with Abdirizak Bihi his wife was away visiting relatives, so he was “a single father now. And my daughters, unless I take the stuff away and we go to the mall or somewhere, we’re not talking” he said (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

But Somalis are gathering, in chat rooms across the globe via apps like Viper and What’sApp. According to my informants, Somali-Americans frequent chat rooms to hear and debate news, facilitate cultural maintenance, and to voice their opinions about issues among other Somalis. Bihi said:

> What’sApp is very good. The only thing is, everybody finds your contact… so everybody can send you. And people will, like *Facebook*, like What’sApp, all social media, they will create their own groups.

> Immediately, and without you knowing, you're part of a group. So, I'm in groups of over 700…. I'm learning how to get out of it. It's just too much information (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Social media "has its own downside" with people getting angry and being overwhelmed with information, as Bihi mentioned. But it's also "amazing." He said: "It's amazing … especially [for] a society like the Somali community that lives off information." Bihi told me there are probably 88 Somali chat rooms. "So everywhere you see [people] having you phone here [Bihi holds his phone up to his ear], either listening to a sermon by imam, or … they are part of a group. Chat group" he said. "Those people, they feel they are like all in one room. Though they are everywhere around the world" Bihi said (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

These Somali chat rooms are by invitation only and are called "qolka" in Somali, which means the room. "There's a lot of them. Tons of them and they have different names. Some of them are as big as 40,000 people" Bihi said. "It's kind of a social media, a customized social media" he said. The way the chat room works is that people call in on a toll-free, 800 number and sign in with a password. "They will tell you how many people are ahead of you in the room. In the chat room. They say, '2,000 people are here.' And everyone joins" Bihi said (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

There are moderators "from different parts of the world that have the time and they collect the news first, to tell the news" Bihi explained. He said the moderators can be from different parts of the world but must have "the same

political leanings." The moderators invite political leaders, such as "the prime minister of Somali…a minister…a position party [or] sometimes it's the president himself" Bihi said. Moderators also invite Bihi and other "local people or leaders" to "talk about a current issue that's happening in Minneapolis" he said. "Minneapolis, and Minnesota, is very important to them. To the diaspora. We feel like we are the capital city of the Somali diaspora" Bihi said (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018). He explained further the way the chat room functions:

Bihi: So, you get invited [as a guest]. Then they get to ask you questions. And the moderator lets them do that. And they identify themselves on what part of the world they are.

Kelley: Cool.

Bihi: Yeah. And it's tons of them.

Kelley: So that's one of the most popular ways for Somali Americans to hear news?

Bihi: Yes. They hear news. They also talk to each other. And they, everyone's interest what's happening in your city…. I personally use them [chat rooms] to get the word out because I'm an elder person (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Bihi noted some recent chat room topics that were of interest to the Somali listeners:

> So, there could be a guy in Denmark who is presenting about the last time a mosque was raided. Or some young people were trying to attempt to leave [and it has] become national news …. So they want more detail. So, they invite a guest (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

One topic that Bihi discusses frequently is employment. “So a lot of people got jobs and trainings and they invite me to talk about how more people in our area were [doing], their loyal listeners … have questions” he said (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018). Bihi also relayed his surprise at the reach the chat rooms have:

> The first time I was the speaker there, I was surprised [by] the feedback. You know? …my 60-year-old neighbor of mine that I never thought she is savvy. She was like, ‘I liked your speech.’ ‘What speech?’ ‘On 88 last night.’ I was like shocked how members of this different golka, how many members they have. That people you never thought they, they are involved that much…So now those places are important for my outreach (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

As seen with the chat rooms and other examples in this dissertation, technology (broadcasters, bloggers, websites and social media) provides a place for immigrants to participate in media production and a community forum, but as these comments from Jaylani Hussein and Ilhan Omar showed, these outlets do not necessarily achieve a true multi-ethnic sphere:

Hussein: There isn’t actually a platform where it's a public platform where the engagement is beyond Somalis, where Somalis are part of it as a-

as a direct focus. I would say NPR probably does the best as a radio show, so they invite, but all of it is negative.

Omar: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Hussein: I would say 90% of the radio stuff is negative. Unless Ilhan wins, or something like that (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

A public sphere "requires an exchange between parties: not a plethora of ghettoised parallel communicative systems, but interaction within and between publics" (Husband, 1996, p. 8). Husband continued:

> The viability of a multi-ethnic public sphere cannot be measured only by the vitality of a rich diversity of communicative players; but also by the extent of their interaction through shared audiences, and secondary transmission into parallel systems (Husband, 1996, p. 8).

Husband argued that creating a multi-ethnic public sphere "requires nothing short of a revolutionary transformation of the status quo" (Charles Husband, 1996, p. 12).

This dissertation showed just how difficult Somali immigrants in this study found having equal access and a true public forum exchange through mainstream, ethnic and social media.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Future Study

Many studies have documented misrepresentation and a general lack of coverage of minorities (Squires (2009), Subervi and Sinta (2015), Rodriguez (2009), Ono & Pham (2009), etc.). A rich body of literature exists on the *practice* of journalism (Belair-Gagnon et al., 2017; Kaufhold et al., 2012; Lewis et al., 2014; Marvin & Meyer, 2005; Padgett & Allen, 2003; Schudson & Tifft, 2005; Usher & Lewis, 2012), but fewer studies explore the perspective of news consumption from the immigrant audiences' viewpoint. The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate the concepts of trust and news attending by Somali-American immigrants, about whom academic literature is scarce. Relative newcomers to the United States, Somalis in Minnesota have a large presence.

Taking cultural influences into consideration, this study explored whether and why these new Americans trust certain media sources and platforms and not others. It also showed that trust did not determine their choices in media consumption. This dissertation also investigated how people of Somali descent work around mainstream media and use social and ethnic media to express their feelings about mainstream media, voice their opinions, seek information, and share news with other Somalis.

This study, which took place from 2009 to 2019, employed multiple methods, primarily through an ethnographic pursuit involving participant observation and interviews. Data also were generated from a pilot survey, social media posts, news articles, and reports to uncover Somali immigrants' media

habits. Since I am neither Somali nor an immigrant, being embedded in the Somali-American community since 2009 was imperative to building trust with informants and participants and gaining a foundation of knowledge from Somalis about their lives and perceptions of media. I have followed Somalis on social media, read and viewed Somali ethnic media, attended private and public events focused on the Somali community, interviewed and conducted focus groups for this and previous studies. For this dissertation, I built from my ethnographic work and earlier studies by interviewing a carefully selected group of Somali-American professionals and non-elites.

Somali Immigrants' News-Attending Patterns

This study took up Martin's call to answer focused questions about news-attending. She proposed that "…qualitative audience studies could benefit from dedicated studies, some longitudinal, that focus on small groups of people reading, viewing, talking about, and acting on the news" (Martin, 2008, p. 90). As Martin suggested, this dissertation examined the social network of a group of people in order to "address the questions of cultural context more deeply" (Martin, 2008, p. 90). Martin suggested that people have many reasons to be ambivalent about news-attending and simultaneously embrace and pull away from the news (Martin, 2008). She highlighted the role cultural identity plays in news-attending.

The discounting awareness with which African-Americans attended mainstream media accounts they felt misrepresented blacks is a heightened

example of how people in general work around news media in everyday life (Martin, 2008, p. 90).

My findings also showed that Somali immigrants felt misrepresented by mainstream media; however, they did not pull away from attending to the news. Contrary to literature that showed people avoid news they find offensive, the Somali-Americans in this study did not avoid the news. Even though they believed mainstream news gave biased coverage of Somalis, many still watched, read, and listened to mainstream news outlets. They also supplemented local news with news from international outlets, such as the *BBC,* international *CNN,* and *Al Jazeera*, to obtain a worldwide perspective. They sought these sources because they thought “it's more credible” and they “have gotten used to a really great level of journalism” according to then-Minnesota State Representative Ilhan Omar (I. Omar and J. Hussein, personal communication, September 5, 2018).

Unlike studies that showed people avoid news they disagree with, surprisingly, Somalis in this study even watched news outlets they hated. Just as Cramer (2016) found people use social categories to understand their political world, Somali Muslims, make calculations about various media sources based on their distinctive cultural attributes and history. So much so that many Somalis favored presidential candidate Trump because of his rhetorical style, not because of his stance on issues. Somalis’ verbal style is forthright. They do not hold back on what they think, whether it is politically correct or not. Bihi attributed this to Somalis’ nomadic “cowboy” nature. It wasn’t until the media reported on presidential candidate Trump trashing Somali immigrants that those in favor of

his rhetorical style were dissuaded from voting for him. Bihi said “a huge number wanted to vote [for] him” until he came to Minnesota “and called Somalis bad names” (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Another cultural attribute factored heavily into Somalis’ attention to the news. For Somalis, knowledge of what is in the news has cultural significance. Somalis are an oral society that takes pride in knowing information, debating, and interpreting the news. In Somalia, they gathered around the radio together, listened to the news, and debated what they heard. A common greeting among Somalis is *ii waran,* which “literally means ‘give me information or news’, but it can generally be translated into ‘what's up?’ or ‘what's new?’” My informant, Abdirizak Bihi said that seeking the news or being “news junkies” is built into Somalis’ DNA. My participants all agreed that they are heavy news consumers. Some keep up with news outlets they dislike to see what negative characteristics are being ascribed to their community, but in general Somalis want to know the news so they can share, debate and interpret it to others. Men often go to coffee shops to debate the news they hear from Somaliland radio, the BBC or Al Jazeera as well as local and U.S. politics. One of my informants, Amal, said she watches news on mainstream television at home with her mother. Since her mother does not speak English, Amal said: “I control what it is that I tell her.” Amal is selective about the news she interprets for her mother because she does not want the news “causing stress” when there isn’t anything she can do to change it. “Rather than [telling her mother], ‘oh yeah, he’s [Trump] is banning this…’” Amal tells her, “they are just talking about some meeting, Mommy.” This

way she protects her mother from losing “sleep over it … because she’s getting older, she’s going to think about ‘my kids have to live with this’” Amal explained (Amal, personal communication, July 1, 2018).

Because Somalis spend so much time on the news, I would categorize my participants among the 22% of U.S. adults deemed “Eagar and Willing” by a Pew study. In the study, the eager and willing category was comprised of more than half minorities: 31% Hispanic, 21% black, and 38% white, with the remaining percent made up of other racial and ethnic groups (Horrigan, 2017, p. 2-3). In the Pew study, those in that category “exhibit the highest levels of interest in news and trust in key information sources” (Horrigan, 2017, p. 2-3); however, in my study, trust was not the primary factor for Somalis’ consumption of news. They had heavy media consumption whether they trusted the source or not.

Trust and Distrust of Media

In this study, as applied to audiences and news organizations, the idea of trust connects in a couple of ways with this example from Mayer et al.: “When a trustor takes a risk in a trustee that leads to a positive outcome, the trustor's perceptions of the trustee are enhanced. Likewise, perceptions of the trustee will decline when trust leads to unfavorable conclusions” (1955, p. 728). While some Somalis in this study continued to risk talking to media, others exercised their “volition” not to talk to media. Somali immigrants in this study perceived mainstream media misconstrued what Somalis said in interviews and admonished other Somalis not to trust the media. For example, other Somalis

posted warnings on Facebook, such as: “the media have tendencies to twist words and make it look like something else, don't trust the bastards” to Suud Olat after he posted that he was interviewed by the *Star Tribune, Minnesota Public Radio, The Associated Press, Voice of America* and *CBS News* about the Justine Damond shooting and officer Mohamed Noor (Olat, 2017).

Mainstream media’s focus on negative coverage of Somalis and repetition of negative immigrant tropes gave people in this study reasons not to trust the media. Besides not wanting to take the risk of talking to media, lack of trust in relationship to this trust construct also makes Somalis less likely to risk believing mainstream media and trusting that they can rely on the information for making decisions. Many Somalis in this study acknowledged consuming news from outlets they did not trust; however, they spent much more time on media they did trust. One interviewee said that Somalis attend to news that is “more credible” and more global than most local mainstream media. Minnesota Rep. Ilhan Omar said:

> We [Somalis] have gotten used to a really great level of journalism, right? And, and I think there, there is a higher expectation of people. [They] like reporting more than what's happening in your neighborhood. And, a lot of our elders have issue with the way that most of American journalism really doesn't fully expand on…. world news, you know, everything else that's happening. So, they just, they kind of see them as not doing the work or you know, trying to cover, as much. So, they will try to watch *Al Jazeera*,

watch *CNN* international, try to broaden the amount of information that they're consuming (personal communication, September 5, 2018).

Personal and cultural history also factors into why Somali immigrants trust media or not. Since immigrants have lives filled with uncertainty, trust is an important factor in every aspect of their lives in the United States, especially those who have gone through traumatic experiences in their homeland. Findings from this dissertation also support other McKnight and Chervany's constructs of trust [Bold type applied by this author]:

> **Disposition to trust** comes primarily from trait psychology, which says that actions are molded by certain childhood-derived attributes that become more or less stable over time. **Institution-based trust** derives from sociology, which says that behaviors are situationally constructed. In this paradigm, action is not determined by factors within the person but by the environment or situation (Mcknight & Chervany, 2001, p. 42).

Both of these constructs—the disposition of trust based on childhood experiences and environmental factors that affect institutional trust—are applicable to Somali immigrants. How could a refugee who has been exposed to civil war, government failures, famine, refugee camps, resettlement, and ostracizing in their new host country trust anything? It would be almost impossible to acquire dispositional trust during childhood or institutional trust based on their experiences in Somalia and now in the United States. But, trust is not stagnant, it is a dynamic concept that can be changed. And since, "Trust is a social, economic and political binding agent" (Rainie & Anderson, 2017, p. 2),

mainstream media and governmental institutions should be cognizant of their failings with immigrants and other marginalized communities and work to build trust.

The findings from this dissertation also backed up Reuters' quantitative study results about trust in media and provided a greater depth of understanding as to why people, especially Somali immigrants, do not trust news media and seek alternatives.

This dissertation found among immigrants in this study that higher numbers of Somalis distrust mainstream media than the general public. Reasons are numerous. My pilot survey, content analysis study, and qualitative data confirmed that one reason for their distrust was negative portrayals of Somalis: as violent, a drain on public services and resources, as Muslim terrorists, and as hijab-wearing submissive women.

Another reason for the distrust of media was the conflation of the news media with the government, especially for older Somalis. As Chaffee et al. found, "immigrants understand American media in terms appropriate to the nation of origin" (1995, p. 111). Whereas, the government and the media were linked in Somalia, the U.S. media system is independent from government with press freedoms protected by the First Amendment, but Somalis new to the United States are used to government-run media.

Journalists and editors can learn much from this study about why immigrants and marginalized communities do not trust mainstream news media. While trust may not be the primary factor in Somalis' choice of news

consumption, trust is a large factor in intercultural relations and community building. The news media has an opportunity to gain trust with Somali immigrants because they consume vast quantities of news and have a personal interest in news. To engage these audiences, newsrooms need to be made aware of the stereotypical coverage they give people of color and Muslims. When they focus on what makes ethnic groups different—apparel, not-being "white," dangerous, freeloaders, that they have monolithic religious or cultural beliefs—it robs our society of the rich individual stories of our diverse residents. Mainstream media need to undergo diversity training and cover Somalis and other immigrant groups in their everyday lives, not just when there is sensational news surrounding them. Media cannot perform their role in protecting and preserving democracy without a relationship of trust with citizenry—both new and longtime Americans.

Somali Immigrants: Adept Users of Technology

As news junkies and people who like to engage in oral discourse, Somalis in this study also demonstrated heavy use of social media. My earlier study showed that the group of women I followed saw Facebook as a liminal space where they could connect, try out, and negotiate American versus Somali identity (Kelley, 2012). This current study further showed that Somalis use social media to connect around the world, acquire/share news, gain information pertinent to them, and debate with each other. One informant told me that he and others use free apps, like WhatsApp and Viber, to "call overseas a lot" and that having that ability is "life and death." He also said that social media are "empowering

communities" through various online forums, chatrooms, and news programs. Bihi said: "Within 40 minutes I know what's happening around the world" and "I don't have to speak English" (A. Bihi, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Somali ethnic media and the public sphere. Just as Park found in 1922, I found that language and tradition brought together Somali immigrants and spawned ethnic media. As Park described in his volume on the immigrant press, Somalis look to their media for nationalistic reasons, to organize culturally, politically, and religiously and simply to satisfy the "human desire for expression" in their "mother tongue" (Park, 1922, p. 11).

Somalis in this study showed they are heavy users of technology. There are many, many traditional ethnic broadcast, print, and social media that are produced in Somali and deal with issues faced by Somali-Americans. Others are in English to reach non-Somalis and to engage those who no longer speak Somali. One radio show's mission is to reach out to a diverse audience by speaking in "funny" English and brings a variety of guests on the show in an effort to build a bridge between communities; however, many of the "public sphericules" (Sinclair & Cunningham, 2000, pp. 27–29) used by immigrants—social and traditional media—are not reaching white audiences. Somalis in the United States and around the world facilitate and sign in to chatrooms to hear the news, listen to sermons, and debate politics. They post on Facebook and other social media to share news, voice opinions, promote educational and occupational opportunities, to negotiate American versus Somali identity, and to

build and maintain Somali community. They rely on apps like WhatsApp and Viber to keep in touch with friends and relatives daily.

Media and community building. This dissertation drew upon Davison's idea that a community bulletin board served as an important source of news and contributed to community well-being in a New York immigrant neighborhood before the advent of social media (Davison, 1988). This dissertation showed how social media operated as a new kind of community bulletin board and a trusted news source that provided a conduit for Somali-Americans to gather, seek information, respond, and facilitate a sense of community. Even though Somalis do not share a neighborhood as the immigrants in Davison's study, they share cultural interests. One way to define community is through the social identity theory of in-groups and out-groups, formulated by Henri Tajfel and his colleagues (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Groups are created by affinities. Certain affinities can cause boundaries between people and groups, distinguishing those who are perceived to belong from those who do not. Affinities can be anything from geography, to ethnicity, to fashion, to religion, to music and so on (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, 1979; Turner, 1999).

A proliferation of social media and ethnic media available online has provided Somalis in diaspora a *sense of community,* defined by four elements: The "feeling of belonging" or "personal relatedness"; "a sense of mattering" to one another; getting one's needs met; and "a shared emotional connection, the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history,

common places, time together, and similar experiences" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9).

This dissertation answers Hargittai's call for qualitative studies of social network users after her survey showed: "A person's gender, race and ethnicity, and parental educational background are all associated with use, but in most cases only when the aggregate concept of social network sites is disaggregated by service" (Hargittai, 2008, p. 276). My research did not find a "digital divide" in the sense that Somalis lack access to technology as some earlier internet studies have shown. As Hargittai's data suggested about use of social network sites, I found "less intermingling of users from varying backgrounds than discourse about the supposed freedom of online interactions may suggest" (Hargittai, 2008, p. 293). Somalis in my study reported heavy use of social network sites that were Somali-specific. In this way, Somalis in the diaspora and globally are able to connect as a "community" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9) or an imagined community (B. Anderson, 1983), but not in a shared multi-ethnic public sphere (C. Husband, 2000).

Even though social media and ethnic media were important outlets for building self-identity and Somali community-identity, they were not a true public forum for debate and discourse within the wider community. This is where the role of mainstream media needs to fit into the media matrix to better serve immigrant audiences. Mainstream media outlets need to be aware of their hegemonic white bias in order to become a true public forum in the interest of building and maintaining a democracy in which all citizens have a voice.

Future Studies

> *Technological advances have made it easier for Americans to connect with each other and to find information, including details about the major issues facing the country. But those advances present both challenges and opportunities for individuals and U.S. institutions*
>
> -Gallup/Knight Foundation, 2018, p. 1.

There is much work to be done to document Somalis' migration to the United States and incorporate their media needs within the mainstream media system. Additional in-depth interviews with other Somali immigrants would provide support for the topics in this dissertation and further illuminate the findings.

This dissertation showed that Somalis in the diaspora have seized upon the communication opportunities that technology affords them. More research should be done to document immigrant use of new media by taking an in-depth look at the various media outlets and formats, such as analyzing use of individual chatrooms, apps like WhatsApp and Viber, news forums on social media, and even individual rising stars on Facebook and YouTube, and further analysis of specific Somali ethnic media.

This dissertation did not take up the challenge of determining whether ethnic media are a "brake or an accelerator" in the process of assimilation (Park, 1922, p. 86). Nor did it confirm or dissent from Hickerson and Gustafson's finding that immigrant media "facilitate assimilation" and answer their call to find

“contemporary terms to describe experiences that challenge erasure of language, community, identity, and culture” (2014, p. 16).

Many of the findings in this study concerning coverage of the Somali community in mainstream media and the reasons for their mistrust of news outlets, might also apply to other immigrant groups. Knowledge generated by the inquiry in this dissertation sheds light on immigrant news needs and can inform journalistic practices, politicians, health providers, educators, and others interested in reaching immigrant audiences.

This dissertation opened the door for future quantitative and qualitative studies by picking up and expanding on survey research of Somali media use and content analysis of mainstream media coverage of Somalis and Muslims, as well as Somali ethnic media. Future studies can build from the findings in this dissertation by conducting a survey to look at media consumption broadly, addressing where and why immigrants seek news/discourse for language maintenance, culture, religion, political discourse, medical/healthcare advice, legal/immigration support, entertainment, fashion, gossip, advertisements/ shopping, local news, national news, international news, news about Somalia, and so on.

Psychologically-focused studies could examine the unique circumstance of very high news-attending while at the same time very low trust. This study explained it in terms of Somali cultural background. Psychologists could examine the phenomenon from that perspective, asking why does this specific immigrant community actively seek out “news they hate” and distrust?

Speaking to the challenges that technology presents to the institution of mainstream news also is an area ripe for additional study. Trust, misinformation, disinformation, too much information, media bias/education—all need further study if mainstream media are to understand and fulfill their role as a true public forum for all. The good news for mainstream media is that Somalis and other Americans believe that the media are needed. Askenazi, (2018a) writes:

> Thankfully, Americans do believe that the news media have an important role to play in our democracy. They just don't see that role being fulfilled. They believe that much of what they read is biased—a majority can't name a trustworthy news source. And with the deluge of information they come across each day, they feel less informed" (para. 2).

This dissertation sheds some light on issues that mainstream media could address to gain audience trust. Further research to explore media's coverage of Muslims and Somalis is important in documenting the coverage of one of our most recent immigrant populations. This research could further reveal inequities and biases in coverage of Somalis and provide media a new lens to understand why communities of color distrust the news.

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Appendix A

Debra Kelley Recruitment Script 2018

Protocol Title	Somali-Americans' News-attending Patterns and Trust in News Sources
Faculty Advisor	Name: Kathleen Hansen Department: Hubbard School of Journalism & Mass Communication Telephone Number: 612-625-3480 Email Address: K-hans@UMN.EDU
Principal Investigator /Student Investigator	Name: Debra Kelley Current Academic Status: PhD student Department: Hubbard School of Journalism & Mass Communication Telephone Number: 612-626-7446 Institutional Email Address: dkelley@umn.edu

Hi,

My name is Debra Kelley and I am a graduate student at the University of Minnesota School of Journalism & Mass Communication. I am conducting research on Somali-Americans' news patterns and trust in media. [When appropriate: I got your name from (person, news article or institution].

Would you be willing to participate in an interview about your feelings about news media coverage of Somalis and your consumption of news/media? I would like an hour of your time or less if that is too much. We can meet at any location that is convenient for you.

I will use the data from my research in my dissertation for my doctoral degree. You may choose to be anonymous if you would like.

I have a consent form to share with you that gives more details, if you are interested in participating. If you participate, I would like to give you a $30 gift card as a thank you gift.

Thanks so much for considering my request.

Debra Kelley

Appendix B

Consent Form

Title of Research Study: Somali-Americans' News-attending Patterns and Trust in News Sources

Investigator Team Contact Information: *Debra Kelley*

For questions about research appointments, the research study, research results, or other concerns, call the study team at:

Adviser Name: Kathleen Hansen Departmental Affiliation: Hubbard School of Journalism & Mass Communication Phone Number: 612-625-3480 Email Address: K-hans@UMN.EDU	**Student/Principal Investigator:** Debra Kelley Departmental Affiliation: Hubbard School of Journalism & Mass Communication Phone Number: 612-626-7446 Email Address: dkelley@umn.edu

Supported By: This research is supported by the University of Minnesota, Hubbard School of Journalism & Mass Communication.

Key Information About This Research Study

The following is a short summary to help you decide whether or not to be a part of this research study. More detailed information is listed later in this form.

What is research?

- The goal of research is to learn new things in order to help people in the future. Investigators learn things by following the same plan with a number of participants, so they do not usually make changes to the plan for individual research participants. You, as an individual, may or may not be helped by volunteering for a research study.

Why am I being invited to take part in this research study?

I am asking you to take part in this research study because I am interested in how Somali-Americans feel about the news media. I have located you through a mutual friend or because you are attending a Somali-oriented event.

What should I know about a research study?

- I will explain this research study to you.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part.
- You can agree to take part and later change your mind.

- Your decision will not be held against you.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Why is this research being done?

This study is being done to investigate the concepts of trust and news attending to answer why people use certain media sources and platforms and not others. Many studies exist on the practice of journalism, but fewer studies explore the perspective of news consumption from immigrant audiences' perspective.

How long will the research last?

I expect that you will be in this research study for an hour interview period.

What will I need to do to participate?

You will be asked questions about the news media, whether you trust news media sources, and what alternative forms of media you use.

Is there any way that being in this study could be bad for me?

There are no inherent risks in participating in this study. If we use your name in quotations of what you say, you could possibly get feedback from others about your opinions. You may choose whether or not to be quoted anonymously.

Will being in this study help me in any way?

You will not benefit from this study personally, other than having an outlet to voice your opinions about the news media. Some possible benefits to the community might include helping journalists and others understand the opinions and news needs of Somali-Americans, which might improve coverage.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research?

You do not have to participate in this research.

Detailed Information About This Research Study

The following is more detailed information about this study in addition to the information listed above.

How many people will be studied?

We expect about 8 to 10 people will be in this research study unless more information is needed. There will be no more than 40 people interviewed.

What happens if I say "*Yes, I want to be in this research*"?

- The principal researcher will set up a time that is convenient for you to be interviewed, at a location convenient to you or over the phone.
- The interviewer (principal researcher) will ask you questions and record your answers on a digital device, such as a phone or a video camera. The recording is required so that the researcher can be exact and accurate in gathering answers to her questions.

- The interviewer (principal researcher) will ask you if you would like to add anything else to the conversation.
- The interview will take about an hour.
- The researcher will look for common themes in the answers from the people interviewed.
- The researcher will write an analysis of the interviews and other data she collects, which will be part of her dissertation to obtain a doctoral degree.
- The researcher will ask you to sign this consent form and ask whether or not you would like your name to be kept anonymous.
- You will be asked whether or not you give permission to be contacted by the researcher in the future for clarification concerning the interview or questions that arise later.
- If desired, you will be emailed a copy of the finished dissertation.

What happens if I say "Yes", but I change my mind later?
You can leave the research study at any time and no one will be upset by your decision. Choosing not to be in this study or to stop being in this study will not result in any penalty to you or loss of benefit to which you are entitled. If you choose to withdraw from the study and would like the researcher to exclude your comments from her study, you will need to contact her within a few weeks of the interview.

Will it cost me anything to participate in this research study?
Taking part in this research study will not lead to any costs to you.

What happens to the information collected for the research?
Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete confidentiality. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the committee that provides ethical and regulatory oversight of research, and other representatives of this institution, including those that have responsibilities for monitoring or ensuring compliance.

We will not ask you about child [or vulnerable adult] abuse, but if you tell us about child [or vulnerable adult] abuse or neglect, we may be required or permitted by law or policy to report to authorities.

Will anyone besides the study team be at my consent meeting?
No.

Whom do I contact if I have questions, concerns or feedback about my experience?
This research has been reviewed and approved by an IRB within the Human Research Protections Program (HRPP). To share feedback privately with the HRPP about your research experience, call the Research Participants' Advocate Line at 612-625-1650 or

go to https://research.umn.edu/units/hrpp/research-participants/questions-concerns.
You are encouraged to contact the HRPP if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research participant.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Will I have a chance to provide feedback after the study is over?
The HRPP may ask you to complete a survey that asks about your experience as a research participant. You do not have to complete the survey if you do not want to. If you do choose to complete the survey, your responses will be anonymous.
If you are not asked to complete a survey, but you would like to share feedback, please contact the study team or the HRPP. See the "Investigator Contact Information" of this form for study team contact information and "Whom do I contact if I have questions, concerns or feedback about my experience?" of this form for HRPP contact information.

Can I be removed from the research?
The person in charge of the research study or the sponsor can remove you from the research study without your approval.

Will I be compensated for my participation?
If you agree to take part in this research study, we will give you a $30 Target gift card as a thank you for your time and effort.

The results of this study may also be used for teaching, publications, or for presentation at social scientific meetings.

Optional Elements:
The following research activities are optional, meaning that you do not have to agree to them in order to participate in the research study. Please indicate your willingness to participate in these optional activities by placing your initials next to each activity.

Yes, I agree	**No, I disagree**	
_____	_____	The investigator may audio or video record me to aid with data analysis. The investigator will not share these recordings with anyone outside of the immediate study team.
_____	_____	The investigator may audio, photograph or video record me for use in scholarly presentations or publications. My identity may be shared as part of this activity, although the investigator will

_____ attempt to limit such identification. I understand the risks associated with such identification.

_____ _____ The investigator may contact me in the future to see whether I am interested in participating in other research studies by Debra Kelley.

_____ _____ I would like to receive a copy of the researcher's dissertation.

_____ _____ The researcher may contact me to clarify information from this interview.

If yes to either of the last two questions, provide the following contact information:

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Signature Block for Capable Adult:

Your signature documents your permission to take part in this research. You will be provided a copy of this signed document.

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

_____
Printed Name of Participant

_____ _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Appendix C

Debra Kelley Interview Guide 2018

Protocol Title	Somali-Americans' News-attending Patterns and Trust in News Sources
Faculty Advisor	Name: Kathleen Hansen Department: Hubbard School of Journalism & Mass Communication Telephone Number: 612-625-3480 Email Address: K-hans@UMN.EDU
Principal Investigator /Student Investigator	Name: Debra Kelley Current Academic Status (Student, Fellow, Resident): PhD student Department: Hubbard School of Journalism & Mass Communication Telephone Number: 612-309-5487 Institutional Email Address: dkelley@umn.edu

Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to share your opinions about news media and alternative media sources.

News Media Consumption

1. What are your go-to media sources?
2. How frequently do you use them?
3. Why do you choose them?
4. Are some media sources more trustworthy than others and why?
5. How does age, gender, religion affect media use?
6. Do you choose different news sources based on different kinds of events?

   (medical news, political news, etc.)

7. Do you recall any media coverage of any events that you found particularly great or offensive? What and why?
8. Did you discuss these news events with other people through social media use, one-on-one, in groups? And what did others' think?
9. Do you feel any media provide a forum or public sphere that enables them to participate fully?
10. What media help you find or create "community"? What is your definition of community?
11. How do media support or hinder integration into U.S. society and/or maintaining Somali culture?

Appendix D

Interviews and Other Personal Communication Quoted

Abdirizak Bihi, May 11 and 29, 2018; July 2, 12, 13, 17 and 20, 2018; March 23 and 24, 2019

Amal, July 1, 2018

Anonymous people, October 5, 2017

Sahra, November 18, 2018

Jaylani Hussein, September 5, 2018

Jama, May 29, 2018; June 26, 2018

Rep. Ilhan Omar, September 5, 2018