Chapter 5
Conclusion

This book is about the lives and experiences of European Somali women and men. By reconstructing part of their stories, it illuminates the relevance of cross-border mobility practices in their strategies to improve their living conditions. It also strives to integrate those stories within larger structures, contextualising their practices with regard to local institutions and hierarchies, as well as within transnational social fields. The local, national and transnational environments in which these individuals navigate need to be understood in the context of the (often conflicting) social positions that actors occupy. This concluding chapter outlines the main results of the study and contextualises them within wider theoretical and empirical debates in migration, integration, transnational and mobilities studies.

As I have emphasised throughout, the respondents in this study are representative of neither the migrant population in general nor all first-generation Somali migrants in Britain or in Switzerland in the early twenty-first century. I developed the sample to specifically include respondents who mostly belong to the first waves of refugees to arrive in Europe from the late 1980s to the late 1990s. The context in which they left their country of origin, as well as the conditions they encountered upon their arrival in Europe, distinguished them from other Somali migrants, in particular those who had been settled in Britain for a few generations, on the one hand, and those who have applied for asylum in Europe more recently, on the other. Further differentiations exist between generations (the study includes only first-generation migrants) as well as – in the British context – between those who arrived directly from Somalia and those who are citizens of a first European country of settlement (the study includes people of both types). The focus on mobility practices also influenced the construction of the sample: my attempt to look for mobile respondents in particular led me to encounter people who were involved in "visible" activities, for instance through participation in voluntary associations or NGOs. This bias is mitigated, however, by the fact that I also actively sought participants who were not affiliated in one way or another with visible Somali activities or networks.

The specificities of my sample raise questions regarding the generalisability of the results. A qualitative study such as this has no ambition to describe the reality of all migrants or all Somali migrants. I do not claim that only the Somali migrants of this specific migration wave are able to accumulate mobility capital, or that the processes described here are particular to migrants from Somalia. The wide literature on migrants' transnational and mobile practices shows that secondary movements or return visits to the place of origin, for instance, are common among many groups.

Yet the conditions under which most Somali migrants left their country of origin and the situation there in the decades afterwards have surely exerted some influence on their trajectories and strategies. A significant number of people of Somali origin now live outside of the borders of their country of origin: the on-going conflict and the uncertain routes to a safe place have led to a wide dispersal of this refugee population. Most of the people I met belong to families that had the resources to reach industrialised states, but in many cases their families' trajectories were quite diverse, and they are now spread around many parts of the world. These wide transnational connections constitute a solid basis for the development of transnational and mobile activities. Besides, the recent economic and political development of Somaliland and – to a lesser extent – other parts of Somalia has had some effect on those who live in Europe, North America and other industrialised countries. The resources they have been able to accumulate, in terms of cultural capital in particular, give them some advantages in the reconstruction process. Simultaneously, the relative stability of some regions of the country has allowed an increasing number of people to return to and visit their place of origin, shaping new aspirations for some of them.

I do not want to suggest that cross-border mobility is the only avenue to success for marginalised migrants, that mobility is always experienced positively by those who undertake it or even that mobility is intrinsically a good thing. My aim, rather, is to illuminate, through the detailed accounts of a selected number of respondents, some of the (underexplored) processes that take place in the lives of some marginalised yet settled migrants, the strategies – based on cross-border practices – that some people are able to devise and the conditions under which these strategies are possible.

I have also chosen to focus on migrants' strategies, a choice that partially obscures the structural conditions in which social actors' practices take place. My interest is in the ways in which individuals engage with their environments in their everyday actions and decisions. For this reason, I have discussed their strategies for dealing with difficult conditions, but also for taking advantage of opportunities. This decision may lead to a reading of their situation that is either overly instrumental or exceedingly romanticised, one that ignores the material and symbolic frameworks that constrain actors' agency. My focus on social actors has stemmed from the desire to take seriously some aspects of migrants' lives that are rarely discussed in either academic or policy debates. This study's aim is not to tell what may look like the "success stories" of a small number of people, but to show that, even in difficult circumstances, some migrants are able to build on perhaps unexpected resources located in different places, and to develop alternative strategies to those

that are generally studied. For this reason, this book is built on data from migrants who have accumulated some mobility capital and have been able draw some benefits from their mobility practices. In many places, however, it has also examined how cross-border mobility is framed by structuring elements, in particular states' immigration policies, international relations, local and international economic contexts, international institutions and even large transnational family relations. It has also examined other factors that influence migrants' options and actions, such as chance encounters (or bad encounters), unexpected opportunities, love and friendship.

5.1   A Typology of Cross-Border Post-Migration Mobility Practices

This book describes and discusses different types of cross-border movements undertaken after an initial migration to and settlement in a country of immigration. While many of these movements have already been analysed, by transnational scholars in particular, they have almost always been investigated individually, as single objects of research (but see Jeffery and Murison 2011; Hugo 2013). In contrast, my typology of post-migration mobility practices, which has emerged out of the empirical data, constitutes an attempt to analyse all the possible relevant cross-border mobility practices undertaken by respondents within a single framework.

Based on recent conceptual debates in the field of mobilities studies, I have been able to narrow down my definition of "relevant" cross-border movements. Through their focus on mobility as movement infused with meaning and embedded in specific power relations, scholars in this area argue that mobility has the potential to cause change in people's lives (Kaufmann 2009; Cresswell 2010a). In line with this argument, I define "post-migration mobility practices" as any type of cross-border movement undertaken by settled migrants that is significant enough to create some kind of change in their lives. This definition justifies the methodological focus on respondents' biographies rather than a snapshot of a particular moment in their lives. Reconstructing their stories illuminates the changes that have occurred along the way, with particular attention here on the ways in which mobility practices are intertwined with other aspects of their lives.

Migrants' cross-border movements thus participate in the development of specific mobility systems. These systems include not only all the places one visits or has visited (Stock and Duhamel 2005), but also the ways in which these places are visited, i.e. the regularity of the visits, the length of these stays, the activities undertaken there and the type of relationship created with those places. It is useful to note that the typology developed here focuses on the practices of cross-border mobility, and not on the types of people who engage in them.

The typology contains six ideal types (see Fig. 2.2 in Chap. 2 for a visual summary). *Star-shaped mobility* (type 1) occurs when migrants travel regularly to

different places, always coming back to their place of residence after a short time away. The destinations (i.e. the tips of the star) are multiple and may change over time, but the main place of residence (the centre of the star) remains the same. These regular cross-border movements thus take place alongside a rather strong anchorage in the place of residence.

Pendular mobility (type 2) is based on systematic to-and-fro movements between two places in which the person is anchored. Although each of those places offers distinct advantages, both of them are considered places of residence. The country of origin may or may not be included in this type of mobility.

Secondary migration (type 3) takes place when migrants leave the place where they have lived for some years and settle in another country. Such single moves constitute a change in the main place of residence, yet in many cases migrants retain important connections with their previous country of residence. In the European context, the majority of these movements are undertaken by migrants who are natu-ralised citizens of a continental European country and attracted by what they con-sider better opportunities in Britain.

Temporary visits to the place of origin (type 4) consist of a series of trips to what people have come to consider as "where they come from". This study illuminates how this place to which people return may be reconstructed (some people "return" to places where they have never actually lived) and reinvested with meaning over the years and depending on personal or contextual circumstances. In all cases, these temporary visits to the place of origin are followed by a return to the main country of residence. When migrants decide not to come back, they undertake a *definitive return* (type 5), which entails a change in the main place of residence. Given the geographical framework of the study, no respondent corresponds to this ideal type in this book.

Finally, *immobility* (type 6) concerns those migrants for whom cross-border movements are of no interest, or for whom they constitute a hassle, a negatively connoted experience or a practice that causes more difficulties than rewards, and which they therefore prefer to avoid. This last type reminds us that, while most migrants in this study have developed one or more mobility practices, low levels of mobility are probably more common among (Somali) migrants established in Europe.

Table 5.1 summarises the characteristics that distinguish the six ideal types.

The typology underscores that, while migrants – in particular those from poorer countries – are generally considered to be incorporated into their new country of residence, they may also physically circulate in transnational social fields. The dif-ferent case studies presented in this book demonstrate that local anchorage and cross-border mobility occur simultaneously.

Furthermore, the study establishes a direct link between migration and mobility that is particularly explicit in the core concept of "post-migration mobility prac-tices". It contributes to an understanding of migrants' lives that takes both migration and mobility into account within a single analytical framework. It takes seriously the fact that the people under study have operated, at one stage in their lives, an important cross-border movement followed by settlement in a (new) country of

Table 5.1 Distinctive features of the ideal types

Ideal type	Frequency of the movements	Duration of the stay(s)	Place(s) of mobility	Change of the main place of residence
1. Star-shaped mobility	Frequent to very frequent	Short	Multiple: Country of origin and/or third country/countries	No
2. Pendular mobility	Frequent	Medium	Country of origin or third country	Addition of a simultaneous place of residence
3. Secondary movement	Single move	Long (settlement)	Third country	Yes
4. Temporary returns	Occasional to frequent	Short to medium	Country of origin	No
5. Definitive return	Single move	Long (settlement)	Country of origin	Yes
6. Immobility	Absent to very rare	–	–	–

residence (which is what "migration" is typically understood to mean), and it takes equally seriously the possibility that they may later cross borders in ways that have a significant impact on their current and future lives. The added value of combining notions of migration and mobility is discussed in the next section.

5.2   Challenging Taken-for-Granted Distinctions Between Migration and Mobility

This description and analysis of migrants' post-migration mobility practices contributes to recent academic debates regarding the linkages between migration and mobility. While these linkages have gained visibility in the recent literature, the two concepts are not always clearly defined, and they are often used dichotomously, with "migration" standing for poor people who want to settle in a new country, and "mobility" referring to more highly qualified persons with no clear intention to settle permanently. This dichotomy tends to reflect, sometimes uncritically, states' legal categories, for instance EU distinctions between "mobile people", EU citizens who move between member states, and "migrants" who come from outside the EU to settle within its borders (Martiniello and Rea 2014). Crucially, such categorisations carry strong connotations: mobility is perceived positively, and even promoted, while migration is a subject of concern, framed in terms of integration and social cohesion, and as something that needs to be controlled and limited (Pellerin 2011; Favell 2007; Faist 2013; Verstraete 2003; Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013). This dichotomy builds on boundaries based on nationality, ethnicity/race, level of education and gender to evaluate cross-border movements. In turn, it leads (receiving) states to legitimise certain movements while disapproving of others, and to design

differentiated policies and legislation accordingly. In this sense, the discursive juxtaposition of these two categories "is an outcome of upholding and reproducing social inequalities on a national and global scale" (Faist 2013).

This book has addressed the relationships between mobility and migration at the theoretical level by building on the recent field of mobility studies, where mobility is used as a heuristic device rather than a descriptive term (see for instance Cresswell 2010b; Kaufmann et al. 2004). Such a perspective encompasses many different types of movements and goes beyond understanding mobility as only a practice: rather, it is "a system of potential movements that can be more or less actualised" (Lévy 2000, personal translation).

Perhaps surprisingly, given their interest in people moving across borders, migration scholars have shown a "somewhat muted enthusiasm for mobilities research" (Hui 2016). Yet this book has shown that a mobility perspective makes it possible to go beyond an exclusive focus on international migration, which is often assumed to be the most important event in migrants' biographies and mostly a unique and unidirectional movement. Such a focus uncritically reflects the logic and categories of nation-states, in particular those for which border control and the management of migration have become increasingly important (Dahinden 2016; Hui 2016).

An epistemological implication is that the event of migration becomes one movement among others in a migrant's social and spatial trajectory. Martiniello and Rea (2014) use the idea of "migratory career" to address the diachronic construction of a migrant's biography, which can include multiple and multi-directional movements. At the theoretical level, this perspective has led some scholars to contend that international migration could be perceived as one type of mobility among others (Favell 2007; Amelina and Vasilache 2014), an argument subject to contestation (see for instance Skeldon 2015). I have treated the migratory move to Europe as the starting point for my analysis not because it is these migrants' only or most significant border crossing, but because of the critical impact of that migration on their lives. They have been labelled as migrants by states. But they are not just any kind of migrants: they are Black, Muslim, African migrants who came mostly through asylum channels from a country with very little international clout. Focusing on a significant segment of their social and geographic trajectories is a way to illuminate how this important migratory move to Europe articulates with other types of mobility at different moments in their biographies (see also Schapendonk and Steel 2014).

In other words, rather than opposing migration to mobility, I strive to examine their dynamic interconnections. How does the fact of having migrated and settled in one place affect subsequent opportunities and constraints in undertaking other types of cross-border movement? Also, to what extent do these "post-migration mobility practices" modify the lives of these migrants in their country of residence? While I analytically differentiate the processes at stake on the basis of their temporality (migration comes before mobility) and their outcomes, I do not attribute them to different types of people. I thus operate a decoupling of processes and people. Migrants may be people on the move. Mobile people may be former migrants. In short, migrants and mobile persons are not necessarily two different types of people.

Linking both types of processes has allowed me to explore practices that are generally excluded from studies on migrants. I have demonstrated that circulation and other types of temporary movements do not necessarily involve the country of origin. There is strand of literature, mostly by French scholars, that analyses transnational circulation *from the place of origin* as a possible alternative to settlement migration: it is a strategy that allows people to overcome limited opportunities "at home" without having to change their place of residence (Morokvasic 1999; Schmoll 2005). The present study demonstrates that similar strategies may take place not *instead* of settlement migration, but *following* settlement migration (see also Schmoll and Semi 2013; Tarrius et al. 2013). The migration experience constitutes the basis on which some migrants can, under certain conditions, develop favourable cross-border mobility practices. Similarly to those people who circulate from their country of origin, their capacity to move and cross borders becomes a fundamental resource that allows them to access opportunities in different places and acquire other resources. In this regard, I follow Dahinden's (2010) call for more academic attention to the relationships between mobility and sedentarity, circulation and settlement. Far from being mutually exclusive or incompatible, the two are dynamically intertwined in the lives of some established migrants.

This study has thus demonstrated that migrants – who are often considered by policymakers, but also by researchers, as sedentary – may well also circulate transnationally and benefit, like other people on the move, from their cross-border movements. It has uncovered processes that are similar to those generally associated with highly skilled migrants who navigate a globalised world and economy. Many studies focusing on "mobility" concentrate on economically and socially advantaged groups: they show how, through their cross-border movements, they become some kind of cosmopolitan elite (see for instance Fournier 2008; Ong 2003; Weiss 2005; Dahinden 2009a, 2013; Bilecen and Van Mol 2017). These scholars show how highly skilled and/or economically privileged people may build on their assets to develop and benefit from highly mobile lifestyles. Among these assets is their legal ability to engage in cross-border mobility, which is related to their being particularly well positioned in global power relations (Glick Schiller 2010; Weiss 2005).[1] Their mobility and entry into, and even settlement in, other nation-states is rarely limited, which grants them a high level of spatial autonomy (Weiss 2005). This "global elite" (Dahinden 2009a) is highly transnational, and it has a cosmopolitan orientation.

The present study has revealed how, despite the structural obstacles they have encountered in their trajectory and their weak position within both their country of residence and global power relations, people who are not part of a "transnational upper class" (Weiss 2005) are also able to develop highly mobile lifestyles. Although they possess limited amounts of various types of capital (or possess capital that receives little international recognition), some migrants become "artistes of the border" (Beck 2007) who actively capitalise on their mobility practices to create better living conditions for themselves. Furthermore, the kind of cosmopolitan attitude

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[1] The fact that they are generally not labeled "migrants" is one indication of their elite status.

often attributed to highly skilled, global migrants is in many cases denied to "sedentary migrants": scholars (and policymakers) have focused on the "diasporic" character of these migrants' identifications and networks, neglecting other possible orientations (Glick Schiller et al. 2011). The migrants in this study demonstrate that it is possible to develop relationships based on ethnic ties and an openness to the world simultaneously, which can be defined as a cosmopolitan orientation (see also Darieva 2011; Glick Schiller et al. 2011). Paul (2015) describes the mobile Filipino labour migrants she studied as "working-class cosmopolitans", a term that could apply to many people in this study.

In sum, by comprehensively examining different post-migration mobility practices, this study challenges commonly accepted dichotomies between poorly qualified migrants or refugees who supposedly settle and mobile highly skilled workers who keep circulating; between transnational migrants allegedly attached to their "ethnic group" and a cosmopolitan elite perceived as open to the world.

5.3 Differentiated Forms of Transnationality

This study also contributes to debates in the field of transnational studies by refining or nuancing some assumptions about transnational practices. In this study, transnational practices and identifications have been examined neither through the lens of one particular movement (for instance, return or onward migration), nor through a focus on one particular activity (for instance, remittances or political involvement in the country of origin). Instead, transnational social fields constitute a framework within which various types of cross-border mobility practices and activities may develop. Starting from the specific point of view of post-migration mobility practices makes it possible to shed new light on migrants' transnationality at three different levels.

First, countries other than the country of origin may be included in migrants' transnational fields. The logic of nation-states, which sometimes pervades migration studies, has mostly limited the perspective of researchers who have not imagined that other places may also be relevant in migrants' practices and identifications (but see Levitt 2012; Sperling 2014). The findings of this study go beyond this limitation and show that migrants may navigate in multi-focal transnational social fields (see also Gowricharn 2009). The mobility practices described in this book involve travel to various places on different continents: the respondents visit friends and family members who have settled in other countries, they participate in political meetings and social gatherings, they activate institutional or professional networks in previous places of residence and they carry out business activities in cities where they can buy goods they want to sell elsewhere. In short, they are influenced by, but also concretely move in and further expand, transnational social fields that include more than two countries. These "other places" they travel to are significant enough to influence their lives and future projects. In this sense, they cannot be ignored in transnational analyses.

Second, and relatedly, this study has shown that migrants' transnational social networks are not exclusively characterised by relationships or ties with people from the same national or ethnic background, contrary to what some scholars have implicitly assumed. While earlier studies on migrant's social networks have focused on their relationships with people with a "shared community origin" (Massey et al. 1993), some scholars have started to apply what Dahinden (2013) has called a "post-ethnic approach", which attempts to examine all types of connections as they emerge from the empirical data. For example, the literature on cross-border circulation practiced by suitcase traders or those who act as intermediaries for them (Schmoll and Semi 2013; Schmoll 2005; Peraldi 2001), cabaret dancers (Dahinden 2009b, 2010) and mobile doctors (Tarrius et al. 2013) has shed light on alternative forms of transnationality based on cosmopolitan ties. While the transnational networks within which the migrants in this study navigate and that they actively mobilise are largely based on ties with kin or other Somalis, they also include significant connections with people with other national or ethnic backgrounds. People organise their business activities according to economic criteria rather than solely on the basis of the national origin of the partners; secondary movers often maintain professional, associational or friendship connections, not all of which are "Somali-based", in their previous country of residence; involvement in the country of origin sometimes takes place through the mediation or with the support of institutions not characterised by an exclusive "Somali orientation". These heterogeneous transnational networks are essential in the development of respondents' mobility practices and are mobilised to obtain new resources or capitalise on those they already have.

Those who adopt a restrictive definition of transnationalism would reject the appropriateness of including ties that connect migrants outside of the "country of residence – country of origin" dyad in the field of transnational studies. They would also reject, perhaps even more vigorously, the inclusion of ties that link migrants to people who do not originally come from the same country. However, we run a danger of "groupism" (Brubaker 2004, 2005) when we assume that migrants' activities can only be considered significantly "transnational" when they are oriented towards migrants' homeland and co-ethnics. As argued in the Introduction to this book, I do not consider "the transnational" according to pre-defined characteristics, but as a theoretical and methodological lens that allows researchers to acknowledge migrants' practices without restricting their analysis to the migrants' country of residence (see also Dahinden 2017). This study demonstrates that the transnational social fields in which mobile Somali migrants navigate consist of complex, dynamic and interwoven connections that link them to multiple places and to people with various ethno-national backgrounds. Amelina and Faist (2012) argue for the need for transnational studies to "avoid the non-reflexive use of ethnic categories when defining the unit of analysis" (1711) and to be aware of their constructed character. Isolating the links that connect migrants to their country of origin and co-ethnics from more heterogeneous links is legitimate only when it is part of an analytical endeavour that aims to understand the processes underlying the distinction. Following from my initial theoretical commitment not to consider ethnicity as an

explanatory variable, I also do not want to define transnationality through the exclusive prism of links with the country of origin and its "people".

Third, this study adopts a perspective that attempts to account for the dynamic character of migrants' social ties (see for instance Boyd 1989; Brettell 2000). It conceptualises (migrants') social networks as changeable entities, relational efforts and social accomplishments (Schapendonk 2015). Networks evolve and develop in different directions; some relationships are maintained while others lose importance and sometimes dissolve; new relationships are created while old ones are reactivated (see also Ryan 2010; Cederberg 2012). Transnational networks themselves are not stable and change over time, depending on external circumstances and changes in the lives of the migrants. While some relationships may become less important over time, others may be reactivated. Some relationships may be "dormant": they remain relevant in people's lives because they can be reactivated, remobilised, "awoken" in specific circumstances, and thereby guarantee access to resources that may not be available otherwise (Anthias 2007; Dahinden 2005). These possibilities exist when people are part of (transnational) social fields even if they do not themselves concretely participate in transnational mobility or even identify with transnational networks: being in contact with those who do so may be sufficient to mobilise some of the social relationships that are part of the social field (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004).

The mobility practices described here showcase the dynamic character of transnational social networks. Transnational scholars, in particular in the US, have often focused on the stable networks that migrants may keep alive after having migrated, in particular those that connect them to those "left behind" (see for instance Glick Schiller et al. 1995; Goldring 1998; Mahler 2001; Portes et al. 2002; Waldinger 2008). The present study shows that transnational networks, even those that are related to kin or the homeland, are not simply exported and sustained over time, but also expanded and "awoken" depending on the circumstances. It further demonstrates that cross-border mobility is a fundamental aspect of the evolving character of respondents' networks. While new communication technologies may facilitate contacts across borders, physical presence in many cases is an asset that makes it possible to establish new connections and secure a favourable social position within newly accessed networks. The cross-border movements of many respondents have led them to new, almost chance, encounters significant enough to become new connections that could eventually also be mobilised. Transnational weddings may constitute opportunities to meet new, potentially interesting, people who live elsewhere. Being introduced to local networks while visiting family or friends is another way through which some people may expand their transnational connections. However, social connections are not "out there", waiting to be activated once they become useful: some work is needed to create and maintain them if they are to be considered social capital (Pathirage and Collyer 2011). This study shows that some respondents have actively sought, at some moment in their lives, to recreate connections with family members who live elsewhere, sometimes securing these connections through common projects oriented towards their country of origin. Some people have even strategically attempted to expand their networks according to specific needs at a

specific time. Some projects – for instance, related to cross-border business or to political or development activities in the region of origin – necessitate entry points to localised networks. Some respondents are in a position to mobilise the transnational connections they already have to make new ones and thereby obtain the (localised) resources they need.

Some of these newly created connections may be considered instrumental, (Morokvasic 1999), but this in no way excludes the possibility that they serve other purposes as well (for instance, to meet emotional needs). Nor is their instrumentality a sufficient reason to exclude them from migrants' social networks, since they may become relevant links in people's lives, or they may also become "dormant" but remain "mobilisable" in the future. In this sense, they are an important aspect of migrant's mobility capital: connections are (re)activated with the purpose of transforming simple mobility practices into a type of capital.

The focus on the cross-border mobility practices migrants undertake from their country of residence thus sheds lights on specific dimensions of transnationality that have sometimes been glossed over. It constitutes a new starting point in analysing migrants' transnational practices, connections and identifications: as such, it opens fresh avenues to think about transnationality. Because it builds on complementary theoretical frameworks, in particular those inspired by the field of mobilities studies as well as studies on circulation, this study challenges taken-for-granted definitions of transnationalism. It presents empirical and theoretical evidence in favour of acknowledging that migrants may develop long-term, stable connections not only with people and institutions in their country of origin, but also in more diversified types of transnational social fields. These fields may involve people and institutions with whom they do not share a common national or ethnic background. They may also involve practices and connections in places other than the place of origin. Finally, they can change, expand and retract, depending on the individual's life stage, projects and needs.

5.4   Mobility Capital and the State

I have opted to examine Somali migrants' cross-border mobility practices through a specific theoretical lens. Access to, and the potential for, movement is unequally distributed among social actors: accordingly, mobility is a resource that can be mobilised and transformed into social and economic advantages under certain circumstances; it is thus a source of social differentiation (Kaufmann et al. 2004; Cresswell 2010b). As Beck (2007) points out, the sociology of class "overlooks the fact that the resource and capacity of 'border use', that is: to cross nation state boundaries or to instrumentalize them for accumulation of life chances, has become a key variable of social inequality in a globalized world" (695–6) (see also Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013).

I have argued that mobility is a practice or a strategy that many people "do", but it is also, for some people under certain conditions, a type of capital, i.e. something

that they "possess" (see also Moret 2017). Having accumulated diverse mobility experiences and skills, migrants can capitalise on them by converting their cross-border practices into other types of capital, and vice versa (Kaufmann et al. 2004). This study demonstrates how respondents build on their other assets (economic, cultural, social and legal capital) to develop "productive" mobility practices. In turn, it shows how motility (a synonym for mobility capital) is activated to obtain various types of resources in different places, transfer them and convert them to their advantage. This definition of mobility as a type of capital is further supported by empirical evidence showing the need for migrants to acquire all three aspects of motility as defined by Kaufmann and his colleagues (Kaufmann 2009; Kaufmann et al. 2004; Flamm and Kaufmann 2006): technical access to mobility (in particular through a secure legal status), specific skills related to a *savoir-circuler* and the cognitive ability to take advantage of the opportunities that arise from cross-border movements. This last aspect is best illustrated by the moves undertaken by some respondents in order to acquire specific resources (a diploma, knowledge of English, connections to particular people or institutions) they already know they will use elsewhere. Previous cross-border movements have allowed some of the respondents to take stock of the opportunities located in one place, but also of the assets they are lacking in order to be able to fully take advantage of those opportunities. An intermediary step involving one or more moves is necessary to complete their portfolio and fruitfully implement further mobility practices. I thus argue that unequal access to mobility capital is an important axis of social hierarchies among my respondents, in interaction with other lines of social differentiation, such as gender, class, age and legal status.

The literature on migration has explored the idea of "migration capital", mostly referring to the different abilities and resources that migrants mobilise or acquire during their migration trajectory or which relate to their migration experience (see for instance Suter 2012; Paul 2015; Kõu and Bailey 2014; Ryan et al. 2015; Massey 1990). The concept of mobility capital developed here goes beyond the idea of migration-specific forms of capital: besides acknowledging the relevance of early experiences of mobility in shaping further (im)mobility decisions, it includes a second, closely related, facet. Mobility capital is not only about past experiences, but also about the potential for future movements – in other words, the unequally shared ability to be mobile again when it appears worthwhile to be so (Moret 2017). Drawing on mobilities studies has been very helpful in illuminating this particular aspect of mobility capital. "Potential" implies that people are able cross borders should they want or need to do so, but also, and crucially, that they have the option of not moving as well.

The significance of capital in general has been defined with regard to the level of control social actors are able to exercise over their resources (Morawska 2001). Mobility, like other types of resources, is transformed into capital through its use in pursuing social advantages, but also through the control gained over it. Massey (1994), for instance, contrasts the control that Western academics and journalists exercise over their mobility, and which allows them to use that mobility and turn it into an advantage, with refugees and undocumented migrants who may move a lot

but do not have as much control over their mobility. Franquesa (2011) convincingly argues that "power is not so much located in the pole of mobility, as an intrinsic attribute of it, but rather in the capacity to manage the relation between mobility and immobility" (1028). Being in a position to decide for oneself – and for others – whether to move or not, and under what conditions, is a determining factor.

Having gained some degree of control over one's mobility does not equate, however, with being constantly on the move. While this study focuses on the mobility practices of some migrants, it also shows that the lives of these migrants are also characterised by incorporation, in the sense of being anchored in one place and spending time and energy to develop activities and connections there. By considering mobility a type of capital, it is possible to investigate the ways in which social actors may be in a position to articulate and benefit simultaneously from local anchorage and mobility practices. These balancing acts may include a high degree of mobility at some stage, very few cross-border movements at a later one and a more mobile lifestyle again later. What is important is not whether people move a lot (and in fact moving a lot may constitute a burden and create disadvantages), but whether they are able to mobilise the experiences, knowledge, economic means and social networks they have accumulated.

States strongly shape social actors' control over their mobility, through both external and internal policies. In a world organised according to a logic of nation-states, states (but also international organisations) manage, name and classify those who move across borders and their practices (Favell 2007; Söderström et al. 2013; Crawley and Skleparis 2017) and develop tools to "discipline" those who move in ways that are considered illegitimate (Pécoud 2013). States have the power to facilitate or restrict the mobility of individuals on the basis of their nationality, ethnicity or race, gender and educational level. States shape the mobility practices of those who come and settle in their territory by having the power to grant or deny them a stable legal status, and to determine whether they can become citizens of the country in question. Excluding them from legal capital mostly excludes them from opportunities at the transnational level that others are able, sometimes even prompted, to take advantage of. Faist (2013) has called for migration and mobility scholars to explore the social mechanisms through which specific types of mobility are legitimated and others are not. He argues that the differentiated valuation (and thus hierarchisation) of people's mobilities contributes to the reproduction of social inequalities at the national and global levels (ibid). Those with less capital are given fewer opportunities to accumulate resources by being excluded from the opportunities that mobility would grant them. They further need to comply with the rules set by states, for instance regarding the countries they are allowed to travel to, how long they are permitted to stay and the types of jobs they are permitted to hold.

Western states' border control and migration regimes thus have an impact on social actors' control over their mobility. The Somali migrants I have met arrived in Europe uninvited but were (partially) protected by international conventions. They were confronted by such regimes and initially had little control over their mobility. Most of them crossed some borders in irregular ways at some point; some were offered some kind of legal status but were (temporarily) forbidden to cross more

borders; and others were forced to move again (for instance through the Dublin Regulation). Once they had entered a European state, other national policies, in particular those related to asylum, immigration and settlement (in a wide sense), shaped their ability to obtain a stable legal status, further influencing the degree of control they had over their mobility. Despite their (sometimes provisional) right to settle in their new country of residence, these migrants were confronted with specific criteria framing their access to long-term residency rights and naturalisation.

Mobility capital is not shaped by all states of the world equally, however. States occupy different positions within global power hierarchies (Glick Schiller 2010): the political status of migrants' country of origin in this international system is particularly important in determining how much freedom of mobility those migrants possess (Beck 2007). In other words, depending on "where they come from", migrants experience different obstacles or incentives to their cross-border mobility. "The position of (national) spaces in which an actor is situated structures the opportunities he/she is offered" (Weiss 2005: 713).

The migrants in this study who attempt to accumulate mobility capital need to deal with legal regulations and external or internal policies reflecting othering processes based on ethnicity, nationality, race, religion, gender and class. Exclusionary practices in their countries of settlement may also act as incentives for them to develop cross-border mobility. This book demonstrates how mobility practices are a way for migrants who are mostly marginalised and stigmatised in Europe to negotiate their living conditions by expanding the geographical and social environment in which they are involved. A shortage of opportunities, even after having obtained a secure legal status in their country of residence, certainly has an impact on people's attempt to activate assets located and/or better valued elsewhere.

Some of the Somalis I have met find themselves in a position to benefit from their mobility practices, and to develop mobile lifestyles similar to those generally discussed with regard to a circulating elite. However, their stories show the extent to which the control they exercise over their mobility is framed, at all stages of their biographies, by the states in which they have established themselves. It is true that transnational institutions and agreements (in particular those pertaining to the rights of refugees and to human rights) partially impinge on these states' sovereignty, most obviously because most Somali migrants would not have been allowed to settle in Europe without them. But in a world organised in nation-states, countries with a better political status have the power to influence the mobility of individuals, in particular when it comes to people from countries that do not exert "cultural and economic hegemony" (Weiss 2005). In this sense, arguments regarding "postnational citizenship" (Soysal 1994) are compromised by unequal global relations between states and the continuing importance of influential states on migrants' control over their own mobility (see also Benhabib 2005, 2007).

5.5   From Diversified Contexts to Somali-Oriented Social Fields

This book also has also explored the mechanisms through which some migrants concretely activate their mobility capital: the processes through which capital is transnationalised stand at the heart of migrants' cross-border mobility practices. Migrants' strategic circulation of assets builds on inconsistencies in their social position in different contexts and on differentials in the valuation of their assets. Transnationalisation of capital appears as a strategic way for migrants with little negotiating power to "play" with those inconsistencies to their advantage (Moret 2016). The life stories in this book show that these processes take place through a geographical shift: respondents invest resources in places other than those in which they acquired them, benefiting from a favourable symbolic exchange rate between the different places.

But this study has added a layer to our understanding of the ways in which capital is transnationalised. It has demonstrated that transferring resources from one geographical place to another is not the end of the story. A close analysis of the social fields, networks and hierarchies through which those processes take place reveals another shift as well, one that I have referred to as a shift in the frame of reference – that is, a change in the social fields in which resources are gathered and/or reinvested.

I have opted for a broad reading of Bourdieu's concept of "social fields" and included all possible "frames of reference", the configurations in which power struggles between agents take place (Lahire 2001). Migrants occupy different social positions vis-à-vis not only the country they are in, but also the specific hierarchies to which they relate. Decisions regarding the ways in which resources are transferred from one place to another involve an assessment of the social contexts in which these resources are acquired and especially the contexts in which they are mobilised and converted.

One striking finding of this study is that the respondents often favour frames of reference characterised by some kind of "Somali orientation" when deciding to invest the resources they transnationalise. While the respondents are embedded in relatively diverse social fields from which they draw some of their economic, social and cultural capital, they mostly reinvest their (transnationalised) assets in fields that are Somali-based or homeland oriented, i.e. where ethnicity is highly relevant. It appears that most activities performed through mobility *in fine* either address (more disadvantaged) Somali migrants' needs in Europe or fulfil aspirations in contexts directly related to the country of origin (Moret 2016).

Neither the research process nor the analysis of the data was conducted with ethnicity as an *a priori* relevant category. However, the findings reveal the ethnicity does indeed emerge as a relevant category when it comes to understanding the transnational contexts in which the mobility of the respondents is grounded. This study has thus revealed complex processes related to ethnicity: rather than interpreting this shift as a natural preference for those who are considered similar, I understand

it as the outcome of wider processes, including external categorisations as much as identification with specific groups (Jenkins 1997). Given the generally marginalised social position of most Somalis in Europe, the tendency of the migrants in this study to reinvest their resources in social fields where ethnicity matters can be understood as a strategic way to build on hierarchies *within* the "ethnic group". These migrants are faced with difficulties in validating their assets in more dominant hierarchies in their country of residence; but they can find it advantageous to build on other "sets of unequal social relations" (Walby et al. 2012) based on gender, age, family situation, education and legal status. Businesswomen are able to benefit from their cross-border informal trade because of the differences that separate them, as older, established women, from other Somali women who have more limited access to mobility. Similarly, access to higher education in Britain allows migrants there to build on hierarchies related to this asset (based on the level of education, but also on the place where education has been acquired): these boundaries distinguish them from Somalis in their region of origin.

Mobile migrants' strategies are the result of diverging social positions within different interacting sets of social relations. They avoid entering into "symbolic struggles" (in the sense of Bourdieu 1987) they have a good chance of losing, largely because of their ethnicised and racialised position, and compensate for their lack of access to a "contextually validated national symbolic capital" (Hage 1998) through other strategies. They have opted to have their assets valued within other social fields where they have a better chance of converting them into further capital. In other words, while their capital endowment is low in more diversified networks, it may be given credit and legitimation in environments where "Somaliness" is an asset, whether in Europe or in Africa. Furthermore, while mobility is not the only means to these ends, it is an important factor in making these strategies effective. Ethnicity comes to be seen as a resource (see also Anthias 2007; Anthias and Cederberg 2009) in the sense that the "ethnic group" becomes a field in which social differentiation occurs and some are able to achieve a higher status, rather than as (only) a comforting, supportive and rallying community of belonging and identification.

This study has also demonstrated the role played by (mainstream) local and transnational institutions in these processes. In a study about migrant women active in intercultural mediation, Lutz (1993) demonstrated that hierarchies are the result of internal, but also external forces: building on internal differences, in particular those pertaining to education, women are hired to cater specifically to (less privileged) migrants with the same ethnic background (see also Erel 2009). Similar processes can be seen when Somali migrants mobilise their ethnic background as a resource they couple with a European citizenship and education in order to work for international organisations or NGOs in their country of origin.

Migrants transnationalise their capital within particular contexts, and partially in response to institutions' expectations, which tend to channel migrants into specific niches where their ethnic background is valued as much as their other assets, if not more. The risks of these strategies are that they allow little space to challenge existing hierarchies. While people are able to build on differences *within* the ethnic

group, the question remains as to whether this ability can improve their social position within more general hierarchies – within the institutions they work for and the wider society as a whole.

This book therefore challenges common-sense interpretations of the salience of ethnic networks in migrants' strategies, particularly those that involve cross-border mobility practices. While this study does not assume that migrants naturally stick to their own ethnic networks, it has allowed the possibility to emerge from the data, while examining the contexts in which these networks become relevant in specific ways, and treats ethnicity as one category of difference among others.

5.6   Towards a Transnational Understanding of Incorporation

This study contributes to academic debates on the transnationalisation of social inequalities because of its comprehensive analysis of varied types of mobility practices and focus on the multi-directional flows of resources. Until now, most research has focused on the ways in which some migrants are able to enhance their and their family's social position in their country of origin through transfers of resources from their country of residence, thanks to wealth differentials between the two contexts (Nieswand 2011; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001; Salih 2003; Goldring 1998; Sagmo 2015). Taking into account mobility practices that do not necessarily include only the country of origin and the country of settlement makes it possible to attain a wider understanding of those processes. Some respondents are able to gather or invest differentiated resources in previous countries of settlement, in places where they have ("mobilisable") relatives and in places where they have developed functional networks and skills in relation to particular activities.

Migrants' gendered, ethnicised/racialised and classed positions vary depending on where their resources are valued. Anthias (2016) argues that "belonging has become a term that can no longer be linked to a fixed place or location but to a range of different locales in different ways. […] People might occupy different and contradictory positions and have different belongings globally" (183). This is why it becomes possible, for instance, to live in London and mobilise high-level Dutch politicians met before undertaking a secondary move in order to set up projects in Somaliland. Inconsistencies in social positions and differentiated access to resources also influence the strategy of earning money in Switzerland in a satisfying work environment while investing it in in education in London (for oneself or for one's children), and to simultaneously consolidate specific networks in Britain that might become useful in Somalia in the future.

The migrants in this study do not simply "move" or "travel a lot". It's not just "exercise", as Awa stated in the quotation that opened this book. Thanks to their mobility practices, they try to find the best ways to benefit from the complex, multiple and often inconsistent social positions they occupy in different places. Their

migration trajectories and subsequent cross-border mobility practices have led them to navigate in complex transnational social fields: this study has demonstrated that some migrants are able to "play" with their access to resources that are valued differently in different contexts.

These results challenge contemporary Western states' policies and expectations regarding "their" migrants. Classical pathways of integration have always focused on incorporation into the local society: following these premises, migrants are expected to become sedentary and use their resources as well as develop new ones within the boundaries of their nation-state of residence. According to this perspective, transnational ties, activities and identifications are at best impediments to integration and a threat to social cohesion, and at worst a danger for the security of the states of residence.

The connections between transnationalism and incorporation into the country of residence have been the object of intense scholarly debates. While some scholars argue that transnationalism can only be a temporary phenomenon and will naturally give way to incorporation (Waldinger 2015; Kivisto 2001), many others explore how the two processes interrelate. Empirical studies reveal the many ways in which transnational practices and local anchorage may co-exist and combine in migrants' lives (see among others Bilgili 2015; Mazzucato 2008). Going a step further, Bivand Erdal and Oeppen (2013) argue that under some circumstances transnational lifestyles can be synergistic with processes of local incorporation, rather than simply additive or even antagonistic to them.

Similarly, the present study has revealed the complex ways in which transnationality and incorporation intertwine in the lives of some settled migrants. But it has also examined the equally important relationships between mobility and sedentarity and how they mutually influence each other as migrants' biographies unfold.

First, local anchorage and periods of sedentarity are important steppingstones in becoming mobile. Most of the respondents are locally active in the labour market in one way or another. They have obtained a stable legal status. They join pension schemes, create associations, become politically active, build relationships in their neighbourhoods, manage the schooling and religious education of their children and pursue continuing education for themselves. Yet this study has demonstrated that migrants' local and national anchorage in their main place of residence is crucial in shaping their post-migration mobility practices. Building up mobility capital paradoxically involves the need to "sedentarise" (Dahinden 2010; Tarrius et al. 2013). Moments of sedentarity, sometimes lasting for years, and processes of incorporation are necessary for the development of mobility practices because it is during those moments that migrants acquire the necessary capital: legal capital primarily, but also – as this study has shown – economic, cultural and social capital located in the country of residence.

Second, however, local mooring is in many cases associated with experiences of exclusion and discrimination based on migrants' national, ethnic, racial and, increasingly, religious background, which may push some migrants to pursue different aspects of their integration in different places (see also Ahrens et al. 2014). Some authors refer to the transnational practices and identifications prompted by

migrants' experiences of discrimination or racism in their place of residence as "reactive transnationalism" (Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo 2005; Snel et al. 2016). Similarly, my study has shown that migrants' (perceived or real) lack of opportunities and the feeling that they are not accepted as full members of their place of residence have a strong impact. Migrants become the "ethnic others" when they first cross European borders to settle (Beck 2007); they later negotiate these othering practices and their consequences by employing assets located elsewhere and developing transnational mobility practices to profit from them. In this sense, mobility takes on a "reactive" character in some instances (Moret 2017).

Third, this study has provided evidence that cross-border mobility may have beneficial effects on migrants' local incorporation. Since its beginnings in the 1990s, much of the literature on the connections between integration and transnationalism has focused on the ways in which the former may positively influence the later. Less evidence exists on the reverse process, when the "synergy" of transnational activities increases chances and opportunities in the country of residence (but see for instance Mazzucato 2011 on "reverse remittances"; Oeppen 2013). Being able to go to different places, to settle or come back – in other words, retaining some control over one's mobility and immobility – increase opportunities to accumulate resources that are not accessible locally. Once circulated, these resources can be reinvested, including in the (European) country of residence, a process that contributes to improving one's local living conditions. Examples of such synergetic processes include developing transnational businesses but catering to local populations and transferring economic capital earned elsewhere to the education of one's children in one's country of residence.

In other words, migrants do not necessarily conform to the rules and logic of nation-states regarding how and where they should integrate (Tarrius 1993). By becoming "artistes of the border" (Beck 2007) and transforming mobility practices into a type of capital, they can extend the boundaries of the territory in which they exert their agency beyond the nation-state. The transnational lens challenges current understandings of local integration, considering it instead "a contingent and partial process, which takes place in the interaction of different socio-spatial units of reference" (Nieswand 2011). So does an empirical and theoretical focus on post-migration mobility practices, which reveals that some migrants are able to design original strategies, partially based on cross-border mobility, to pursue upward social mobility even in their country of residence, if not for themselves, at least for the next generation.

Unfortunately, European policymakers are far from acknowledging the reality and impact of many migrants' simultaneous and inconsistent social positions in different places (Anthias 2016; Nowicka 2013). It goes against states' concerns and political agenda to admit that migrants' relevant social networks often transcend national borders. Yet formal and informal social protection occurs across borders rather than solely through state-led (or supra-state) mechanisms (Faist and Bilecen 2015). This study has shown that transnationality sometimes implies mobility: the mobility capital that migrants may accumulate helps increase their social and economic wellbeing. Without access to multiple localities and the abil-

ity to circulate assets between them, their options remain limited. Yet the fact that mobility practices are integral to some people's life strategies contradicts nation-states' sedentarist logic.

Interestingly, European states recognise the potentially positive effect of transnational anchorage and mobility for selected groups of people. The mobility of (highly-skilled) citizens stands at the heart of the European Union's vision and is believed to be an important aspect of economic competitiveness and identity building (Favell 2008). Similarly, transnational mobility has become a condition for a successful academic career and is seen to benefit universities (Schaer et al. 2017). Things are different, however, when it comes to migrants who were considered unwanted when they first arrived and have since become citizens who struggle to belong fully. States privilege the movements of some and forbid or stigmatise those of others, a phenomenon that Glick Schiller and Salazar (2013) refer to as "regimes of mobility". For poor, racialised migrants, recent trends in European immigration and integration policies have increased expectations of exclusive loyalty and decreased an acknowledgment of the potential benefits of activities that take place across borders. Forcing such assimilationist models of integration on migrants who could obtain resources in varied places and transnationalise them thanks to their acquired mobility capital causes migrants to miss out on opportunities that could benefit them, but it may also have the same effect on their new countries of residence. Changing this approach would require European policymakers to change their perspective radically, and to start acknowledging the creative strategies that migrants implement, the mobile dimension of some of these strategies and the transnational resources they draw on.

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