



Somali Foodways in Bristol and how these influence household sustainability

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SPE Research Showcase: Healthy, resilient, smart and sustainable places

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Presentation Outline

- Context and Problem
- My PhD Research
- Timeline to date
- Questions & Objectives
- Fieldwork Overview
- Emerging Findings
- Next Steps

Context and Problem

“Contemporary agendas for net-zero and ‘inclusive growth’ in rich countries such as the UK (...) treat all citizens as equally responsible for mitigation, thereby imposing unjust expectations on people who have lived part of their lives in countries on the frontlines of the climate crisis.

At the same time racialised immigrants from climate-challenged, colonised countries of the Global South are often (...) wrongly assumed to be disinterested in environmentalism.

The lack of research with these communities, alongside the invisibilisation of environmental activism within racialised/minoritised (...) communities, means that the potential for transformative, anti-racist approaches to climate justice is limited” (Macgregor, S. *et al.*, 2022).

Researching *with* people in everyday life

My PhD research uses qualitative methods to:

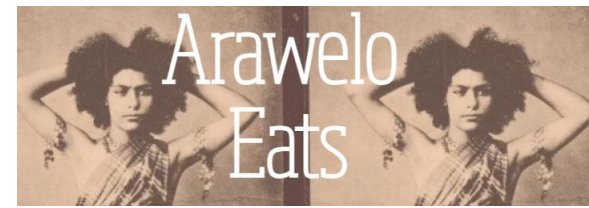
Critically examine Somali Foodways in Bristol for new insights into household sustainability to inform city policy and strategy.

Timeline to date



- Nov 2018: Start PhD
- Jun-Oct 2019: Literature Reviewing, methods development
- Nov 2019-Feb 2020: Literature reviewing, Fieldwork development, Ethics application
- May-Oct 2020: Data collection instrument design/pilot studies
- **Nov 2020-Summer 2022: Fieldwork**

Researching *with* people in everyday life




My Research Questions and Objectives

- What are the Somali foodways in Bristol, with a focus on Somali foodway values and practices?
- How do these Somali foodway values and practices contribute to household sustainability in Bristol?
- What are the barriers faced by Somali households in Bristol that make household sustainability difficult?
- To formulate policy, advice and recommendations to advance household environmental sustainability.



A Participatory Approach...?



Three Qualitative Research Traditions

Narrative method of **Story Interviews**

- Conversations about “past memories, associations, histories, experiences” – to find out about present life (Valentine and Sadgrove, 2014:1982).
- **My research:** Story interviews with 10 Somali women about food in their daily life, in Somalia and in Bristol. Each interview lasted between 1-2 hours.

Participatory photographic method of **Photovoice (Milne & Muir, 2020).**

“(...) widely recognised as an important participatory research approach with the potential to develop insights into the lived experiences of people and communities, which in turn can challenge prevailing representations, promote dialogue, and contribute to social change” (2020:4).

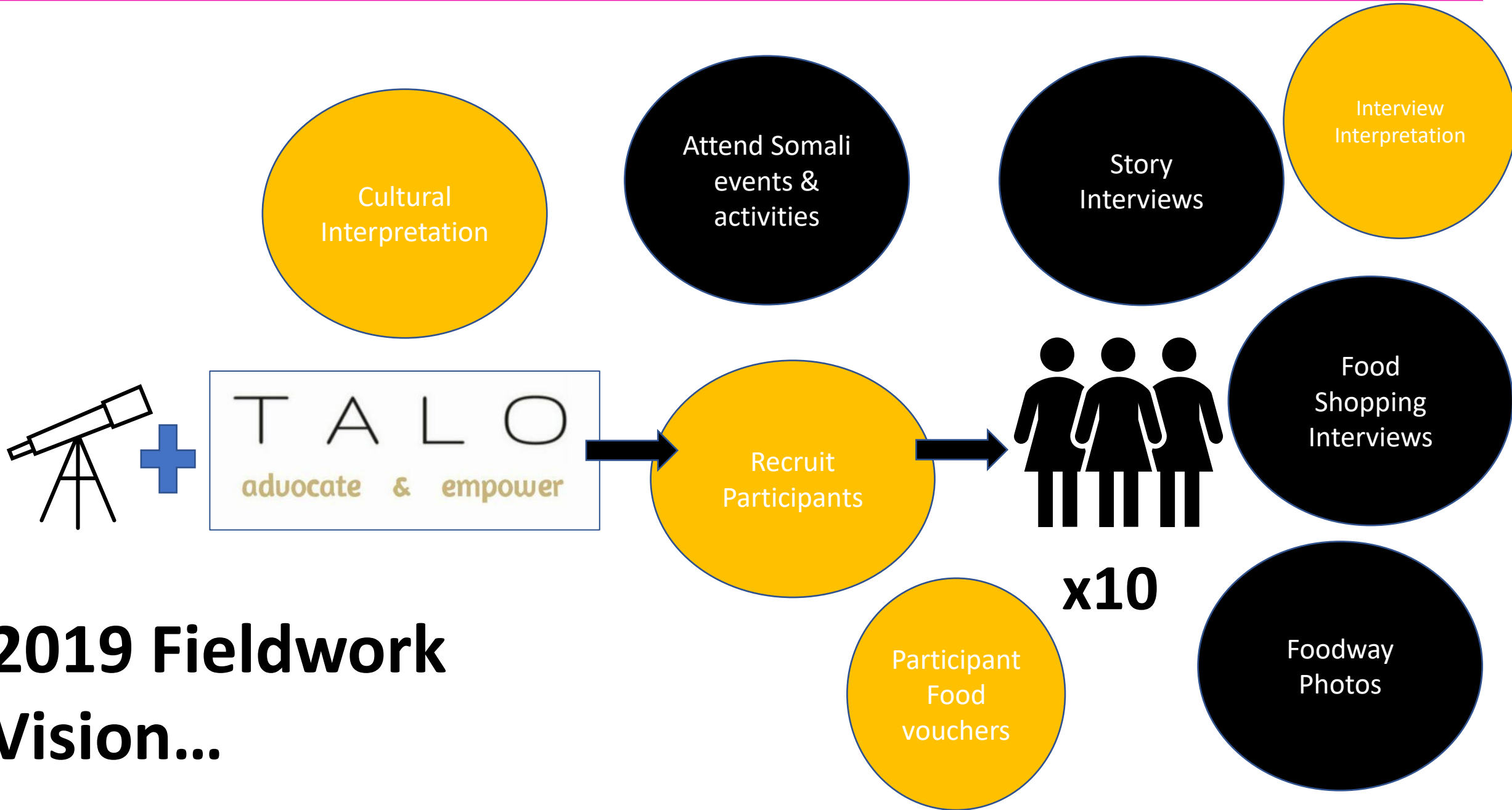
My research: Somali women took Somali foodway photos with their phones and sent them to me via WhatsApp.

Ethnographic method of **Go-alongs** (Kusenbach, 2003).

more focused than ‘hanging out’ the researcher accompanies their participant on an everyday outing and asks questions, listens and observes to explore participant’s experiences and practices as they move together through the physical environment.

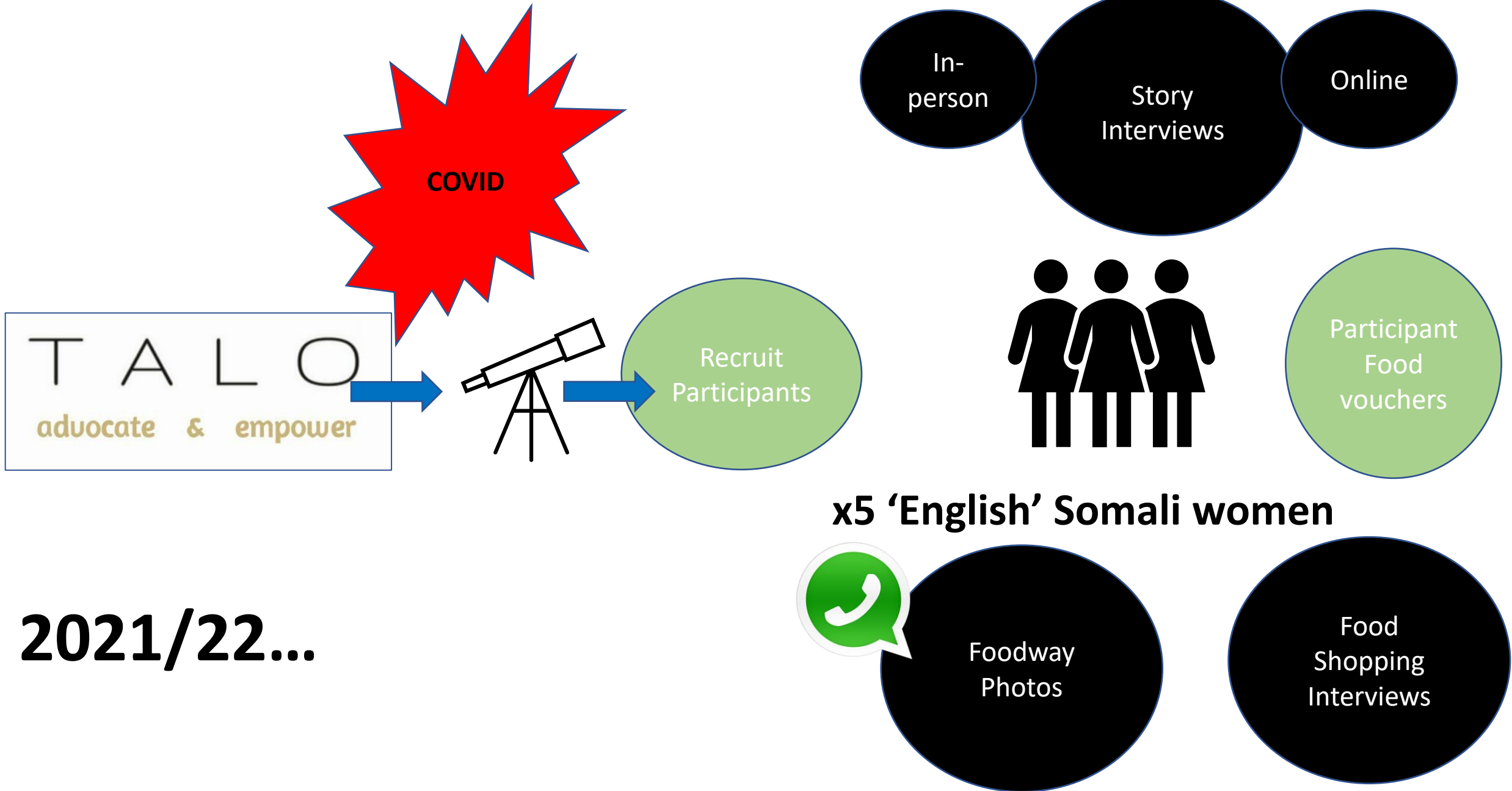
My research: Food shopping trips with Somali women to see where and how they shop and the food they buy and have conversations.

Close, Frequent and Ongoing Research Discussions & Conversations with Talo



**2019 Fieldwork
Vision...**

Fieldwork Discussion & Conversation with Somali women



2021/22...

Interview Themes (emerging)

Foodway learnings from Somalia: useful lessons for the UK

Islamic Values

- Do not waste resources – e.g. food, energy and water.
- Strong sense of community, within village or city neighbourhood.
- Belief in the importance of a good diet for good health.
 - Incl. home grown, fresh, organic food.

Somali Practices

- Inter-generational households.
 - Households look after the poor and needy, e.g. household doorstep meal provision.
 - Inter-generational knowledge sharing and learning.
 - Generations in households share tasks (shopping, meal preparation, cooking, clearing up).
- Food shopping - locally and daily.
- Buying, preparing, cooking and eating only what you need.
- Daily cooking from scratch.
- Regular food hospitality to house guests.

Interview Themes (emerging)

Somali Foodways in Bristol

Mix of Islamic and western Values

- Do not waste resources – e.g. food, energy and water.
- Importance of caring for the needy.
- Importance of Somali food for connections to back home and Somali identity.
- Some tensions – e.g. eating meat permitted in Islam vs a personal desire to be vegetarian to care for environment and animals.

Mix of Somali and western Practices

- Travel to food shops: car, public transport, on foot.
- Food shops: lo-cost supermarkets, Somali/halal/ethnic shops, organic and zero-waste shops.
- Meal planning and only buying what is needed.
- Preference to cook daily from scratch - batch cooking, one-pot cooking and freezing.
- Meals: mixture of traditional Somali and western foods "a bit half and half":
 - some meals entirely traditional Somali, some meals entirely western, some a mixture of the two on one plate.

Interview Themes (emerging)

Barriers to household sustainability in Bristol

- Busy, costly and 'convenient' Western lifestyles, e.g.
 - Time pressures – e.g. work and childcare.
 - Financial pressures – e.g. affordability of organic food.
 - Too much packaging and plastic.
- Social housing and lack of provisions, e.g.
 - Small kitchens with little space for freezing food, recycling.
 - Lack of, but desire for, food growing spaces.
- Lack of access to learning/information, e.g.
 - food growing and composting, how to get an allotment.
 - understanding food waste and recycling processes (in and outside of the household).

Next Steps:

- Summer 2022: Additional Fieldwork, as necessary.
- September 2022-Summer 2023: Literature. Review Update & Fieldwork Analysis.
- Summer 2023-Summer 2024: Writing Up.
- **Summer 2024: Submit Theses.**

References

- Macgregor, S., Ali, N & Kapoor, A. (2022). Centering Global South immigrant voices in UK climate justice research. Roundtable discussion, Royal Geographical Society Annual Conference, Newcastle: 30 August – 2 September 2022.
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- E-J Milne, E.J. & Muir, R. (2020) Photovoice: A Critical Introduction in The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods, SAGE Publications, London.
- Kusenbach, M. (2003) Street phenomenology, *Ethnography*, 4(3): 455–485.