



Youth Identity and Political Participation in Urban Somalia: An Ethnographic Exploration

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Abstract

Youth in urban Somalia face complex socio-economic challenges that impact their identity formation and political engagement. This ethnographic study employed participant observation, semi-structured interviews with 30 urban youth, and focus group discussions to capture diverse perspectives. Youth identified strongly with Somali cultural heritage but also grappled with perceptions of marginalization in urban settings. Political awareness was influenced by access to information channels such as social media and community elders. Urban youth's identities are pivotal in shaping their political participation, highlighting the need for culturally sensitive governance strategies that engage marginalized communities. Governments should prioritise cultural inclusivity programmes and enhance digital literacy initiatives to foster more inclusive urban governance structures.

Keywords: *Urbanization, Cultural Identity, Community Engagement, Critical Theory, Participant Observation, Diaspora Studies, Postcolonial Analysis*

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