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Black Migrants Matter: A Narrative Study of the Experiences of Haitian Migrants in the United
States

by

Brittany Ingrid Pradere

Under the Direction of Sarita K. Davis, PHD

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2021

ABSTRACT

Migration from Haiti is driven by a variety of factors. Many Haitians migrate to the U.S. to escape the challenges they face in their home country, and to create a better life for themselves and their families. Unfortunately, migrants from Haiti face unique challenges when attempting to relocate to the U.S. This study uses the narrative interviews of 8 Haitian migrants to explore the influence of marginalized intersecting identities on their experiences migrating to and living in the United States. The research questions that are guiding this study are as follows: 1. What motivates Haitian migrants to relocate to the United States?

2. How does the intersection of class, race, gender, immigration status, ability, and ethnicity affect Haitian migrant's experiences both migrating to and living in the United States?

This research is relevant to the field of African American studies, because it expands the literature, and offers an innovative contribution.

INDEX WORDS: Migration, Haitian migrants, Haiti, Haitian history, Human rights, Critical Race Theory, Narrative research

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2021

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States

by

Brittany Ingrid Pradere

Committee Chair: Sarita K. Davis

Committee: Natsu Taylor Saito
Akinyele Umoja

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Services

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

May 2021

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my benevolent and loving God. Thank you for never forsaking me, even when my faith was low. I dedicate this work to my honorable and good ancestors and guides. Thank you for walking with me and protecting my path. I dedicate this work to Esterline. Thank you for taking the risk and coming to America. I dedicate this work to my Mom and Dad. Thank you for your endless sacrifices. I dedicate this work to the study participants, as well as all the black migrants in the U.S. and across the globe. Thank you for inspiring me.

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I would like to thank my committee for their feedback, encouragement, and inspiration throughout this process. I want to thank Dr. Sarita Davis for being a wonderful committee chair. Thank you for all the words of affirmation you are constantly speaking into me, and thank you for being there to guide me through this process as easefully as possible. Thank you to Dr. Natsu Saito for helping me think through the legal aspects of my document, as well as for making the time to help with my extracurricular presentations as well. Thank you to Dr. Akinyele Umoja for providing his expert historical perspective, and for providing the laughs that were well needed. I will be forever grateful for you all's guidance (academically, professionally, and personally) throughout this process. This work wouldn't be what it is today without you.

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PREFACE

I am a part of the first generation of my family to be born in the United States. There is one woman who is responsible for my family being in the U.S. today. Her story goes like this:

In the early 1970s an economic immigrant, who I will give the pseudonym Esterline, traveled to the United States from Port Au Prince, Haiti, because of political strife and lack of opportunity in the country. Her chance came when she met an employee of the US embassy, who agreed to sell her a tourist visa under the table for \$850. This would equate to about \$5500 today. She sold many things, including her home, to afford it. During this time, there were great class implications of Esterline having to sell her home to afford an under the table visa to come to the U.S. However, one must also acknowledge that there is privilege in the fact that she even had a home to sell. It's one thing to give up everything you have for the promise of something better. It's another thing to have nothing to give up.

Esterline left behind her husband and three children to seek a better life in the United States. She remained in the U.S. after the expiration of her visa, so in other words "illegally," for many years. She was finally reunited with her family almost an entire decade later when she was able to secure legal permanent residence. Her voyage is what inspired this research. This research seeks to center Haitian migrants, who like Esterline, have had migration experiences that have been complicated. These stories deserve to be highlighted in migration discourse, because the experiences of black migrants offer a profound look at the intersection of race, class, gender, nationality, ability and immigration status, and exposes the inequities in our migration system.

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes a background of the problem, statement of the problem, purpose, significance, and nature of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, and a summary. It will discuss migration in the United States, including the history, policies, and implications of the U.S. immigration regime. The intention of this chapter is to briefly discuss the broad scope of U.S. immigration history and policies in order to provide context for the specification that occurs in chapter two, four, and five with the discussion of the history of Haiti and Haitian migration to the U.S. specifically, as well as for the narratives of the study participants.

1.1 Background of the Problem

Haiti and the United States have a history that is inextricably linked. Haiti is an island made up of descendants of enslaved peoples who were able to free themselves by the might of their own hand, however the repercussions from world superpowers in response to Haiti's audacity to be free combined with ineffectual leadership has caused the slew of problems devouring the country today. The intense poverty, corruption of governmental officials, and natural disasters combined with the neocolonial imposition of U.S. (among other states) desires has undermined the freedom Haitians fought for and won in 1804. The deeply rooted systemic and institutional problems in Haiti make the island unlivable for many people. Migration serves as a way for Haitian people to find opportunities for a better life in other countries. Migration provides access to basic human rights that are often unavailable in Haiti. Additionally, migration allows for political asylum for many of those who challenge governmental corruption.

Migration is a necessary lifeline for so many people, and in many cases, the only chance for survival. The focus of this thesis will be migration from Haiti to the U.S. for a variety of reasons, including the aforementioned. However, while the U.S. has taken advantage of (and in some cases caused) the political instability of Haiti for their own benefit, they simultaneously deny entry to and deport many Haitians seeking to relocate to the U.S., leaving many Haitian migrants in destitute and desperate situations. My intention with this research is to identify the specific push and pull factors that drive Haitians to migrate to the United States, as well as to determine how the intersection of class, race, gender, immigration status, ability, and nationality affect Haitian migrant's experiences both migrating to and living in the United States.

1.1.1 Types of Migrants

The physical act of humans moving from one place to another with the intention of settling (either temporarily or permanently) is defined as migration (International Organization for Migration, 2020). Migrant is an “umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons” (International Organization for Migration, 2020). While there are some migrants who chose to leave their countries voluntary, such as economic migrants, there are others who are forced to leave due to war or other disasters, known as involuntary migrants or refugees.

1.1.2 Reasons for Migration

Approximately three percent of the world's population lives outside their country of origin (OHCR, 2019). Migrants emigrate from their countries for a variety of reasons, and while some are by choice (for example, in the hopes of increased economic opportunity), others are “forced to leave their homes for a complex combination of reasons” (OHCR, 2019).

Migration is driven by what is known as push and pull factors. Push factors are factors that push migrants to move voluntarily, and in some cases, the individual is at risk if they stay. Push factors may include lack of jobs, poverty, civil strife, war, political and religious persecution, and environmental issues (The Levin Institute, 2017). Pull factors are factors that pull migrants to the destination country, as they attract the individual to leave home. Pull factors may include higher standards of living, higher wages, labor demand, or political and religious freedom (The Levin Institute, 2017). Haitians who emigrate from their home countries all have unique stories and reasons for leaving, however some common themes include political persecution, natural disasters, abject poverty, and lack of access to necessities such as clean water and housing.

In many cases, these “push and pull” factors are a consequence of Western influence. Tendayi Achiume notes that countries are politically interconnected through a history of colonialism and neocolonial imperialism (2019). Achiume writes, “Colonialism pursues political interconnection predicated on the subordination of certain members of the association it creates, and grants colonizers “certain prerogatives” and permission to deny the same to the colonized” (2019). Even after the period of formal decolonization, there was a shift to neocolonialism and neocolonial imperialism (Achiume, 2019). In neo-colonial and neo-imperial dynamics, while

countries may have formal independence, their economic and political systems are determined by outside States (Nkrumah, 1965) (Achieme, 2019). This false sense of sovereignty ensures that First World states are still able to exploit their previously formally colonized lands. The underdevelopment of third and fourth world nations for the benefit of the First World cannot be forgotten as contributing to the instability and underdevelopment that has inspired migration in the first place. Haiti is a clear example of this concept. Foreign colonial and neocolonial states, such as France and the United States, have interfered on the island socially and politically, and have enacted policies that have been to the detriment of Haitian citizens. This is an influencing factor in Haitian emigration.

1.1.3 Methods of Entry

Entering the U.S. involves an entry process. The documentation and passport necessities “depend on the country you are arriving from and your citizenship or status” (USAGov, 2020). Documentation includes specific visa types, as well as ensuring that passports aren’t set to expire within a six-month period of the date of travel. The purpose of travel, in addition to other factors, determine the necessary visa type under U.S. immigration law. Visa applicants must meet all visa requirements to qualify. There are both nonimmigrant and immigrant visas. Nonimmigrant visas are temporary, while immigrant visas are for people who plan on living in the U.S. permanently. Nonimmigrant visas include visitor visas, student visas, temporary work visas, O visas (for people with an extraordinary ability), P visas (sports teams and coaches), Visas for Victims of Crime and Human Trafficking, and Diversity Immigrant Visas, among many others (U.S. Department of State, 2020). Immigrant visas include the immediate relative and family

sponsored category and subset, the employer sponsored category and subset, and the other immigrant category and subset (U.S. Department of State, 2020). The U.S. embassy writes, “an immigrant visa is for an alien who plans to live permanently in the United States (U.S. Department of State, 2020). This visa must be obtained before traveling to the United States. After entering the country on this visa, the alien will be granted Permanent or Conditional Resident status. A permanent resident card (“green card”) is issued by USCIS after admission and is later mailed to the alien’s U.S. address” (U.S. Department of State, 2020). There are thirty-nine countries that are a part of the non-visa USA program.

The United States Department of Homeland Security defines the unauthorized resident immigrant population “as all foreign-born non-citizens who are not legal residents” (2019). When foreign nationals enter the U.S. in violation of U.S. immigration law it is considered illegal immigration (Pozo and Goldstein, 2017). Common methods include illegal entry (such as border crossing) and visa overstay (Pozo and Goldstein, 2017).

1.1.4 Pathways to Permanent Residence and/or Citizenship

Immigrants that desire to live in the United States, must first become lawful permanent residents. First, those seeking permanent residence must have someone file a petition for them. Then, immigrants must be eligible under one of the following categories: green card through family, green card through employment, green card as a special immigrant, green card through refugee or asylee status, green card for human trafficking and crime victims, green card for victims of abuse, green card through other categories, green card through registry (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2020). Based on whether the immigrant is inside or

outside the U.S., they will need to either use an adjustment of status or consular processing (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2020). Next, there will be a biometrics appointment and an interview (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2020). If the applicant is accepted, the green card will be valid for 10 years. Applicants can be denied a green card if they are found inadmissible. The wait for a green card tends to range from three to twenty-five years. Olsen-Medina and Batalova write, “Today, nearly all Haitians in the United States who obtain lawful permanent residence (LPR status, also known as getting a green card) do so through family reunification channels, either as immediate relatives of U.S. citizens or through other family-sponsored channels” (2020).

Permanent residents who have been in the United States for 5 years (or 3 years if filing as a spouse of a U.S. citizen) can file an application for naturalization. They must have demonstrated continuous permanent residence and physical presence, and lived within the state for at least 3 months prior to filing (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2020). They must also demonstrate good moral character, an attachment to the ideals of the constitution, an ability to read, write, speak, and understand English, and demonstrate knowledge of U.S. history and government (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2020). Olsen-Medina and Batalova note that “in 2018, 61 percent of the 687,000 Haitians residing in the United States were naturalized citizens, compared to 51 percent of all immigrants” (2020).

1.1.5 Timeline of History of Immigration Policy in the United States

Immigration policy in the United States has fluctuated throughout history. There have been eras of vast and encouraged immigration to the U.S., and there have also been eras of tempered immigration and xenophobic policies. The initial influx of Haitian migrants to the U.S. came under the 1965 Hart-Cellar act. Below is a timeline of immigration policies in the U.S.

Table 1 Immigration Polices

<i>Policy:</i>	<i>Implications:</i>
1790 <i>Naturalization Act:</i>	The 1790 naturalization act excluded non-white people from eligibility to naturalize (Cohn, 2015). Naturalization requirements include being a “free white person” of “good moral character,” who has lived in the country for two years (Cohn, 2015). The Naturalization Act of 1795 extended the residency requirement to five years (Cohn, 2015).
1798 <i>The Alien Friends Act/ The Alien Enemies Act:</i>	The Alien Friends Act “authorized the president to imprison or deport any alien who was deemed dangerous to the U.S.” (Cohn, 2015). This was the first act to authorize deportation of immigrants (Cohn, 2015). It expired two years later. The Alien Enemies Act “authorized the imprisonment or deportation of male citizens (ages 14 and older) of a hostile nation during times of war” (Cohn, 2015). This act was used during World War II, and a

	<p>modified version still exists today that permits the president “to detain, relocate or deport alien enemies during war” (Cohn, 2015).</p>
<p>1870 <i>Naturalization Act:</i></p>	<p>The Naturalization Act of 1870 amends the naturalization requirements to allow eligibility to persons of African nativity or descent (Cohn, 2015).</p>
<p>1882 Chinese <i>Exclusion Act:</i></p>	<p>The Chinese Exclusion Act banned Chinese laborers from immigrating over the following 10 years and allowed deportation of unauthorized Chinese immigrants (Cohn, 2015). Cohn writes, “any Chinese immigrant who resided in the U.S. as of Nov. 17, 1880, could remain but was barred from naturalizing” (2015). This was extended for an additional 10 years by the 1892 Geary Act, and required Chinese nationals to obtain identification papers (Cohn, 2015).</p>
<p>1924 Johnson- <i>Reed Act:</i></p>	<p>The Johnson-Reed Act was created to restrict immigration based on nationality. It utilized quotas based on 2% of the foreign-born individuals of that nationality on the 1890 census, with a minimum quota of 100 (Cohn, 2015). Cohn writes, “as a result, the law favored migration from northern and western European countries with longer histories of migration to the U.S. while limiting migration from eastern and southern European countries with newer immigration patterns. Immigration from Asian countries continued to be barred, and the law added a</p>

	<p>formal restriction on Japanese immigration. Denied entry to the U.S. to anyone who is ineligible to become a citizen due to race (only whites and people of African nativity or descent were eligible)” (Cohn, 2015).</p>
<p>1952 McCarran-Walter Act:</p>	<p>This act “formally removed race as an exclusion for immigration and naturalization and granted Asian countries a minimum quota of 100 visas per year” (Cohn, 2015). This law includes political activities, ideology and mental health, among other criteria, as a basis for exclusion and deportation (Cohn, 2015).</p>
<p>1953 Refugee Relief Act:</p>	<p>This act “authorized special non-quota visas for more than 200,000 refugees and allowed these immigrants to become permanent residents” (Cohn, 2015).</p>
<p>1965 Hart-Cellar Act:</p>	<p>This act replaced the national origins quota system with a seven-category preference system (Cohn, 2015). It emphasizes family reunification and skilled immigrants (Cohn, 2015). The Eastern Hemisphere was granted 170,000 of the total visas each year (20,000 cap per country), and in 1968 the Western Hemisphere was given 120,000 visas annually (no specific country limits) (Cohn, 2015).</p>
<p>1976 and 1978 Immigration and</p>	<p>Cohn writes, “The 1976 amendments to the 1965 law included the Western Hemisphere in the preference system and</p>

<p><i>Nationality Act Amendments:</i></p>	<p>the 20,000 per year visa limits. This mostly affected Mexico at the time since it was the only Western Hemisphere country that substantially exceeded 20,000 visas annually” (2015). The 1978 amendment to the law established a worldwide annual limit of 290,000 visas, removing the prior Eastern and Western hemisphere caps (Cohn, 2015).</p>
<p><i>1980 Refugee Act:</i></p>	<p>This act created a general policy for refugee admissions, and adopts the United Nations’ refugee definition (Cohn, 2015). This act also “removes refugees from the immigration preference system, expanding the annual admission for refugees. The removal of refugees from the immigration preference system reduced the annual visa allocation to 270,000” (Cohn, 2015).</p>
<p><i>1986 Simpson-Mazzoli Act:</i></p>	<p>The Simpson-Mazzoli act “granted a pathway to permanent residency to unauthorized immigrant workers who lived in the U.S. since 1982 or worked in certain agricultural jobs” (Cohn, 2015). Additionally, Cohn writes, “In 1987, the Reagan administration decided that minor children of parents who were legalized under the 1986 law should be protected from deportation. In 1990, the George H.W. Bush administration decided that all spouses and unmarried children of people who were legalized under the 1986 law could apply for permission to</p>

	<p>remain in the country and receive work permits. (This policy was formalized in the Immigration Act of 1990.)” (2015).</p>
<p>1990 <i>Immigration Act:</i></p>	<p>This act increased annual immigration caps (Cohn, 2015). Additionally, this act “authorized the attorney general to grant “temporary protected status” (TPS) to nationals of countries suffering from armed conflicts, natural disasters or other extraordinary and temporary conditions” (Cohn, 2015).</p>
<p>1996 <i>Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility act:</i></p>	<p>This act increased enforcement at the border, which included fence mandates for high incidence areas (Cohn, 2015). Additionally, this act “establishes or revises measures for worksite enforcement, to remove criminal and other deportable aliens, and to tighten admissions eligibility requirements” (Cohn, 2015). Expands restrictions on access to public assistance programs for permanent residents and unauthorized immigrants (Cohn, 2015).</p>
<p>1998 <i>Haitian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act:</i></p>	<p>This act ensured that “certain nationals of Haiti who had been residing in the United States could become permanent residents (get a Green Card). Principal applicants wishing to apply for permanent residence under HRIFA had until March 31, 2000 to file for adjustment of status” (USCIS, 2020).</p>
<p>2002 <i>Homeland Security Act:</i></p>	<p>Cohn writes, “in the wake of 9/11, the Homeland Security Act transfers nearly all the functions of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to the new Department of Homeland</p>

	Security (DHS), which includes U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)” (2015).
<i>2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals:</i>	President Obama implemented an executive action in which young adults (ages 15 to 30) “brought to the U.S. illegally as children can apply for temporary deportation relief and a two-year work permit” (Cohn, 2015).

1.1.6 The Broad Scope of U.S. Migration

Historical trends in migration to the U.S. have fluctuated. When the Jamestown colony was founded in 1607, it was established in spite of the Indigenous Americans ownership of and ties to the land. In the continual formation of what would later be the United States, and as a result of the continuous entry of European migrants, Indigenous Americans were continuously pushed out of their land and massacred. American chattel slavery in the United States brought scores of enslaved Africans to the country from 1619, however they were considered property not migrants, and had no rights to citizenship. Although the unpaid labor of enslaved Africans built the foundation of what the United States would become, they would not be granted citizenship until 1868. The first wave of European immigrants (British) after the United States

became a sovereign state arrived prior to the keeping of records began in 1820, the second wave was majority Irish and German Catholics in the 1840s and 1850s. After the US-Mexican war, and the taking of almost half of Mexico's territory by the United States, "the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the war on February 2, 1848, gave Mexican citizens residing in the ceded territory one year to remove themselves and their property back into Mexico. Those who did not move automatically became American citizens, with federal guarantees, as spelled out in the Treaty, stipulating that their rights, property, and "white" racial status would be honored and held inviolable; guarantees that were rarely honored *de facto*" (Gutiérrez, 2019). The movement of Mexican migrants to the United States would continue to be spurred by "poverty and unemployment and ... American labor markets with higher wages" (Gutiérrez, 2019). Asians began immigrating to the U.S. in large numbers in 1850 during the California Gold Rush (Ward et al., 2006). Chinese migrants were victim to xenophobia and violence based on nativist beliefs, and ultimately were excluded by the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 (Library of Congress, 2015). Japanese, Korean, and South Asian migrants initially filled the gap in labor demand left by the exclusion of Chinese migrants, however they were eventually excluded from migration as well with the Asiatic Barred Zone Act of 1917.

The third wave of European immigrants arrived after the civil war, between 1880 and 1914, and included over 20 million Europeans (Martin, 2014). After this wave, immigration in general slowed down significantly due to the implementation of numerical quotas with the Johnson-Reed Act, in addition to WW1 and the great depression. After the 1952 immigration act, as well as the 1965 Hart-Cellar act, the fourth wave of immigration "has been marked by rising numbers of immigrants from Latin America and Asia" (Martin, 2014). In regard to the legal definition of white and the rule of racial unassimilability, Ngai writes "The origins of these

concepts lay in the Nationality Act of 1790, which granted the right to naturalized citizenship to “free white persons” of good moral character. However, that idea- including the legal boundaries of “white”- was contested throughout the nineteenth century with regard to the citizenship status of Native American Indians and African Americans and later with regard to the eligibility of Asians to citizenship. The resolution of the latter in the early 1920s constituted the perfection of racial doctrine in citizenship law, which remained in effect until 1952 when the McCarran-Walter Act abolished all racial requirements to citizenship” (2004).

According to recent data, The U.S. foreign-born population reached 44.4 million in 2017 (Radford, 2019). Immigrants account for 13.6% of the U.S. population (Radford, 2019). The Pew Institute asserts that, “most immigrants (77%) are in the country legally, while almost a quarter (23%) are unauthorized” (Radford, 2019). In 2017, 45% of the foreign-born population were naturalized U.S. citizens, 27% of immigrants were permanent residents, and 5% were temporary residents (Radford, 2019). Based on region of birth, South and East Asia immigrants combined accounted for 27% of all immigrants, Mexico (25%), Europe/Canada (13%), the Caribbean (10%), Central America (8%), South America (7%), the Middle East (4%) and sub-Saharan Africa (4%) (Radford, 2019). The Pew Institute also notes that, “since the creation of the federal Refugee Resettlement Program in 1980, about 3 million refugees have been resettled in the U.S. In fiscal 2018, a total of 22,491 refugees were resettled in the U.S. The largest origin group of refugees was the Democratic Republic of the Congo, followed by Burma (Myanmar), Ukraine, Bhutan and Eritrea. Among all refugees admitted in that fiscal year, 3,495 are Muslims (16%) and 16,018 are Christians (71%)” (Radford, 2019).

The unauthorized immigrant population more than tripled in size from 1990 to 2017 (Radford, 2019). In 2017, “there were 10.5 million unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. ...

accounting for 3.2% of the nation’s population” (Radford, 2019). Around 295,000 immigrants were deported from the U.S. in 2017 (Radford, 2019). Between 2009 and 2016, the Obama administration deported about 3 million immigrants, in comparison to the 2 million immigrants deported by the Bush administration between 2001 and 2008 (Radford, 2019). In 2017, the Trump administration deported 295,000 immigrants (Radford, 2019). The Migration Policy Institute estimates that as of 2012-2016, Mexicans and Central Americans account for roughly two-thirds (67 percent or 7.6 million) of the unauthorized immigrants in the United States, about 1.8 million (16 percent) were from Asia, 685,000 (6 percent) from South America, 579,000 (5 percent) from Europe, Canada, or Oceania, 351,000 (3 percent) from the Caribbean, and 318,000 (3 percent) from Africa (2020). The top five countries of birth for unauthorized immigrants were Mexico (53 percent), El Salvador (6 percent), Guatemala (5 percent), and China and Honduras (3 percent each) (Batalova, Blizzard, and Bolter, 2020).

Removals and returns are conducted both by ICE and CBP, and “result in the confirmed movement of inadmissible or deportable aliens out of the United States” (Batalova, Blizzard, and Bolter, 2020). In 2018, CBP conducted 190,285 removals and returns, up 17 percent from 2017 (Batalova, Blizzard, and Bolter, 2020). During 2018, ICE conducted 256,085 removals and returns, an increase of 13 percent from 2017 (Batalova, Blizzard, and Bolter, 2020).

1.1.7 Black Migrants in the United States

The United States has essentially always had a significant black population, due to the country’s history of enslavement. Black people made up one-fifth of the population in the country’s earliest census (Anderson, 2015). After the end of slavery, black migration halted for

about 150 years, due to racial restrictions, as well as the racism and subjugation experienced by black people in the U.S. (Anderson, 2015). However, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, the Refugee Act of 1980, and the Immigration Act of 1990 allowed for a wider variety of immigrants, and led to the modern wave of black immigrants in the U.S. (Anderson, 2015). Today, there are about 3.8 million black immigrants living in the United States, and black immigrants now account for 8.7% of the nation's black population, nearly triple their share in 1980 (Anderson, 2015). Caribbean migration increased significantly in the 1960s, because U.S. companies "recruited large numbers of English-speaking workers (from laborers to nurses) from former English colonies (e.g., Jamaica)" (Zong and Batalova, 2019). Simultaneously, political instability in Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic encouraged migration amongst their elite populations (Zong and Batalova, 2019). The waves of migration that followed consisted mostly of their family members and working-class individuals (Zong and Batalova, 2019).

1.1.8 Xenophobia and Sentiments in the U.S. Towards Migration

Immigration to the U.S. was initially encouraged. However, in the 1880s, restrictions began to be employed, and by the 1920s quotas were set for the number of immigrants that could be accepted each year (Martin, 2014). European migrants were given preferential acceptance. The 1924 Johnson-Reed Act was created to restrict immigration based on nationality. It utilized quotas based on 2% of the foreign-born individuals of that nationality on the 1890 census, with a minimum quota of 100 (Cohn, 2015). Cohn writes, "as a result, the law favored migration from northern and western European countries with longer histories of migration to the U.S. while limiting migration from eastern and southern European countries with newer immigration

patterns. Immigration from Asian countries continued to be barred, and the law added a formal restriction on Japanese immigration” (Cohn, 2015). However, in 1965, these national origin preferences were dropped (Martin, 2014). Immigration from Asian and Latin America countries drastically increased as a result (Martin, 2014). The 1990s ushered in a period of debates surrounding “the relationship of immigrants and their children to the U.S. educational, welfare, and political systems; and more broadly, whether the immigration system served U.S. national interests” (Martin, 2014). Immigration debates since then have focused on terrorist prevention, managing unauthorized migration, and migrants filling jobs (Martin, 2014). Debates centering the prevention of unauthorized migration, as well as how to deal with the unauthorized population already living in the United States are polarized (Martin, 2014).

While xenophobia is not readily definable, it is intricately linked with race, and thus is a phenomenon intimately experienced by black migrants. Natsu Saito notes, “While we may not be able to define xenophobia with precision, it’s clear that the construct encompasses both actions and attitudes that construct individuals as well as peoples as outsiders—often racialized outsiders— and use that construction to exclude them from benefits associated with an insider status that is often associated, accurately or not, with a national or statist identity” (2019). These immigration laws in the U.S. over time reflect historical sentiments of xenophobia and anti-immigration, particularly from countries with people of color.

Irrespective of the racism and xenophobia within our government and subsequent immigration policies, a majority of Americans have positive views about immigrants. According to Radford, “six-in-ten Americans (62%) say immigrants strengthen the country “because of their hard work and talents,” while about a quarter (28%) say immigrants burden the country by taking jobs, housing and health care” (2019).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Migration is an ever-occurring phenomenon, however, the experiences associated with moving across borders (of all kinds) depends greatly on who is doing said migrating. The mechanics of borders and migration are deeply entrenched in a conversation of race, nationality, gender, immigration status, ability, and class. For Western travelers with money and access, borders offer no real issue, and countries are seamlessly interconnected (Achieme, 2019). For poor or undocumented migrants, borders are divisive, separating the in from the out (Achieme, 2019). As noted, Haitian migrants are the focus of this study, and they carry the weight of their blackness, their foreignness, and any other marginalized identities they hold as they operate in this white supremacist patriarchal anti-black anti-immigrant society. The trauma they collect from the racism, xenophobia, and any other discrimination they encounter associated with their migration experiences can have far reaching effects on all aspects of their life. A review of the literature shows that black migrants are often left out of the immigration conversation in the U.S., although they experience the gamut of the immigration system. Haitians have a particular and nuanced history with and within the U.S. that colors their migration experiences, and may leave them vulnerable to increased discrimination and abuse while navigating this system. There is very little research that centers black migrants broadly, and Haitian migrants specifically.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study begins to fill gaps in migration research, as it explores factors that drive Haitian immigrants to migrate to the U.S., as well as the ways in which class, race, gender,

ability, immigration status, and nationality influence their experiences with migrating to and living in the U.S. This study utilized semi-structured qualitative interviews to explore the impact of marginalized intersecting identities on Haitian immigrant's experiences and decision-making processes regarding migration. This study provides a comprehensive assessment of the participant's lives by considering how all of these various aspects of their identity operate in tandem with their experiences.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study seeks to broaden the scope of migration research, as well as to inspire more equity and justice in U.S. immigration policies. A review of the literature revealed that much of the U.S.-based migration studies tends to focus on the Southern border, as migration between the U.S. and Mexico is a prominent conversation in the media, and a point of contention politically, leaving a void in the literature in regard to black migrants. While black immigrants are a substantial entity within the migrant population, their experiences tend to be erased from the narrative. The small amount of U.S. migration research that does center black migrants tends to focus on acculturation and labor markets, neglecting to tap into the fullness of the black migration experience. There is a devaluing and dehumanization of immigrants in general, but black immigrants are rarely acknowledged, adding additional layers to their dehumanization. This study begins to fill this gap. U.S. immigration policies have historically been rooted in racism and xenophobia, favoring European migrants, limiting opportunities for migration from Asian, Latin American, and African countries (Ngai, 2004) (Cohn, 2015). While the 1960s

allowed for increased migration for people of color, this legacy still colors our views of and interactions with migrants today.

Migration is a human rights issue, and black migrants are in need of increased visibility, solidarity, and support. Diasporic black migrants are being subjugated, abused, and mistreated without repercussion, because many people fail to realize they even exist. Haitian migrants are one group who is bearing the brunt of this invisibility. This study provided Haitian immigrants with the opportunity to voice their experiences with the U.S. immigration system. The results of this study may spark more justly due attention to the plight of Haitian migrants specifically, and black migrants generally. As there is still much needed immigration reform in this country, this study serves as an opportunity to dissect the racism and xenophobia that is sparking reform conversations.

1.5 Nature of the Study

Narrative research gives a chronological account of an event or series of events (Creswell, 2007). The procedures for implementing this research consists of choosing a few participants, gathering data through the collection of their personal life histories, reporting individual experiences, and chronologically ordering the meaning of those experiences (Creswell, 2007). Limitations of narrative research for this study are that it requires deciphering the multiple layers of identity, it requires the researcher to be mindful of how their own personal and political background may shape how they *re-story* the accounts, and there is are also complications surrounding the collecting, analyzing, and telling of individual stories. Despite these limitations, narrative research is the most appropriate method for this study. The strengths

of narrative research are that it expresses specific stories, requires a small number of participants, and actively involves participants in the research. This study will be using the chronological life histories of Haitian immigrants to analyze and develop themes that answer whether exploring the life experiences and personal narratives of Haitian immigrants show how race, nationality, class, immigration status, ability, and gender influence their decision to migrate to the U.S., as well as their experiences migrating to and living in the U.S. Additionally, the researcher will also use historical immigration policies, as well as historical sentiments to contextualize the stories of the immigrants in their respective time periods. Additionally, the researcher will use the plot points of their personal histories to speak to how their marginalized identities impacted their experiences.

1.6 Research Questions

Migration is a fundamental part of human evolution and human history, however the experiences one has while migrating varies greatly based on who they are and where they are from. This research aims to explore the experiences of Haitian migrants. More specifically, this research seeks to dissect their motivations for migrating, as well as the experiences they encounter both migrating to and living in the United States based on their identities.

Therefore, the research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What motivates Haitian migrants to relocate to the United States?
2. How does the intersection of class, race, gender, immigration status, ability, and nationality affect Haitian migrant's experiences both migrating to and living in the United States?

1.7 Theoretical Frameworks

This research sought to center the experiences and interests of Haitian migrants. The researcher found it most useful to position this research through the lens of a human rights framework, as well as critical race theory.

1.7.1 Human Rights Framework

According to the Migration Policy Institute, “migration and human rights intersect at a number of points, starting when the migrant crosses a frontier, the act that defines international migration” (Grant, 2005). Haitian migration to the U.S., as well the experiences and treatment of Haitian migrants in the U.S., demonstrate the intersection of these points clearly. Although migration serves as a form of hopeful escape for many victims of abuse and oppression in Haiti, sovereign states have the right to deny any person from entering their country, irrespective of refugee status or implications. States are marked by borders, and within those borders, governments have the sovereign right to determine who may enter and remain in their lands (United Nations, 2014). Grants writes, “While international human rights law recognizes the right to leave one's country, there is no corresponding right to enter another country, even for a refugee, without that state's permission. This means that where a state decides that a migrant entered the country illegally, this decision does not of itself, and if properly taken, conflict with human rights principles” (2005).

Yet and still, migrants are entitled to human rights irrespective of their documentation status. A migrant entering and remaining in a territory illegally does not negate that country's duty to respect their basic rights under international law (Grant, 2005). According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "The prohibition on discrimination, which is at the centre of all the human rights treaties, gives equal protection to citizens and migrants. The fundamental rights protections contained in the two International Covenants [ICCPR and ICESCR], and in the conventions protecting the rights of children [CRC], and prohibiting racial discrimination [ICERD], discrimination against women [CEDAW], and torture [CAT] apply universally to citizens and to all migrants, regardless of their immigration status" (2019). Additionally, "where a state determines to deport or remove a migrant, the means it employs must respect the migrant's rights, for example to be protected against cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment" (OHCR, 2019). Some of the general principles of international human rights law include the idea that no human being is illegal, the best interests of the child, detention as a last resort, right to life, due process in immigration proceedings, right to seek asylum, non-refoulement, prohibition on torture and inhumane treatment, non-discrimination, and respect for family life (International Justice Resource Center, 2018). Migrants are a population that is increasingly vulnerable to these human rights violations, and the United States has been found in violation of all of these rights listed at various points (International Justice Resource Center, 2018).

Migrants have a propensity to be especially vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation and marginalization, due to their living and working conditions, and their fear of complaining to or interacting with authoritative figures (OHCR, 2019). The lack of migration governance contributes to this consistent violation of migrant's rights (OHCR, 2019). The human rights of

every single global citizen, including migrants, must be honored and protected at all times (OHCHR, 2019).

1.7.2 Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a theory that was conceived by legal scholar activists. The basic assumptions of critical race theory include, “(1) racism is an enduring and integral part of American life; (2) Whites accept and support equality in the form of laws and policies as long as they do not diminish the power and privilege to which they are accustomed (this is known as the interest convergence theory); and (3) historical context of racism influences present social conditions and outcomes” (McDougal, 2014). CRT recognizes racism as engrained in every aspect of American society, and whether racism is being perpetuated on an individual level is trumped by the institutional racism in the dominant culture (UCLA School of Public Affairs, 2009). Additionally, power structures such as white privilege and white supremacy sustain the oppression of people of color (UCLA School of Public Affairs, 2009).

There are ideas perpetuated by the media and those in power about the kinds of immigrants that “deserve” to come to the U.S. and the kinds that do not. There is rhetoric calling for immigrants to migrate to the U.S. the “right way.” There are those who perpetuate rhetoric that the U.S. immigration system provides equal opportunity to migrate irrespective of nationality or race. However, the historical precedent of unfair immigration laws in the U.S. and the documented xenophobia and racism towards migrants paints a different picture and distinctly shows that the U.S. immigration regime is not equal nor fair (Cohn, 2015) (Dawsey, 2018). CRT highlights these ideas of meritocracy and equal opportunity that are wildly prevalent in global

migration discourse, and particularly in U.S.-based migration discourse. Since racism and white supremacy is entrenched in all aspects of U.S. systems, the immigration system is not excluded, and black migrants would therefore experience racism and xenophobia as an offshoot of this system. This study utilizes a CRT framework to examine these racial power structures within the immigration system in the U.S, and how these power structures impact the migration experiences of Haitian immigrants.

1.8 Summary

This chapter offered an introduction to this study, including its background, purpose, significance, nature, research questions, theoretical framework, and limitations. The next chapter provides a discussion of the literature pertaining to the experiences of Haitian immigrants specifically. This broad discussion of the historical and cultural context of U.S. migration policies will be used to contextualize the experiences of the Haitian migrants in the literature review, as well as for those that participated in this study in chapter four and five of this thesis.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

While migration has always been a part of the human experience, in our modern society, the world is marked by borders, and states have the ability to decide who they let in to their borders. The migration experiences of white migrants, particularly those who come from backgrounds of wealth and prestige, can be vastly different than that of black migrants, because they may not be subjected to any or most of the xenophobia, classism, sexism, and racism that is commonplace in all U.S. systems, including the immigration system. Additionally, immigration discourse in the U.S. tends to focus on the Southern border specifically, leaving many gaps in the literature about black migrant experiences. The nature of these gaps lends itself to a lack of research that centers the experiences of Haitian migrants, particularly in narrative form. Therefore, this literature review relies on the historical and cultural nuances impacting Haiti to speak to the research questions as opposed to literature explicitly about the narrative experiences of Haitian migrants, which was minimal.

The literature presented in this chapter is representative of the depth of historical and migration discourse and their related databases. This chapter speaks to the depth of Haitian history and migration in an attempt to answer the research questions posed: What motivates Haitian migrants to relocate to the United States? How does the intersection of class, race, gender, immigration status, ability, and nationality affect Haitian migrant's experiences both migrating to and living in the United States?

This literature review will be presented in following sections: Section one describes Haitian history in relation to the United States. This section addresses the first research question 'What motivates Haitian migrants to relocate to the United States?' by providing context for the

historical and cultural occurrences that prompt Haitian migrants to relocate to the U.S. over the years, including dictatorships, corruption, poverty, and natural disasters, which can all be considered push factors. Section two describes the concept of the “American Dream.” This section also addresses the first research question, because the romanticizing of the “American Dream” and the idyllic view of the U.S. are pull factors that inspire migration as well. Section three describes the history of Haitian migration to the United States. This addresses the second question “How does the intersection of class, race, gender, immigration status, ability, and nationality affect Haitian migrant’s experiences both migrating to and living in the United States?” specifically the former part regarding their experiences migrating to the United States. Section four describes experiences associated with Haitian migrants living in the U.S., and section five describes sentiments in the U.S. towards Haitian migration. Both of these sections also address the second research question as well, although they focus on the latter half of the question regarding their experiences living in the U.S. These sections describe Haitian migrant’s experiences both migrating to and living in the United States historically, highlighting how aspects such as class, race, gender, immigration status, ability, and nationality have impacted these experiences.

2.1 United States & Haiti Historical Relations

Christopher Columbus landed in Haiti in 1492. The island was inhabited by the Taíno people, who were almost completely decimated by European diseases, as well as the encomienda system (Graves, 2000). The French ruled the Haitian portion of the island from 1625-1804.

The Haitian Revolution, led by General Toussaint Louverture, began in 1791 and ended in 1804. Haiti became the first black republic to gain its independence. However, this independence was not formally recognized by many Western countries like the United States and France. Western states also refused to trade with Haiti, isolating the nation economically. In 1825, Haiti signed a treaty with France in which it agreed to pay 150 million francs in order to be recognized as a sovereign nation (MacLeod, Lawless, Girault, & Ferguson, 2020). This reparation to France, coupled with the economic isolation, decimated Haiti's economic growth (MacLeod, Lawless, Girault, & Ferguson, 2020). The rest of the century saw a series of presidencies, and increased political and economic instability.

In the early 1900's, German influence began to grow in Haiti, which the U.S. greatly opposed. In 1914, the U.S. government seized \$500,000 from the Haitian National Bank. When Haitian President Vilbrun Guillaume Sam was killed in 1915, President Woodrow Wilson sent U.S. marines to the island, and the U.S. occupation of Haiti began. The marines declared martial law, took control of the capital city, and instilled new pro-U.S. President Philippe Sudré Dartiguenave, as well as a new constitution that better aligned with U.S. interests by allowing foreign land ownership on the island for the first time (Clammer, 2016). This occupation lasted until 1934. The Post-occupation era of Haitian history saw the Parsley Massacre in which 30,000 Haitians living on the Dominican side of the border were murdered (Wucker, 2017). Haitian President Sténio Vincent resigned under U.S. pressure in 1941. He was replaced by Dumarsais Estimé, who was then later replaced by Paul Magloire (1950–56). President Magloire's anti-communist stance gained him the support of the U.S., and the increased political stability led to increased tourism (Raymond, 2013).

The Duvalier dynasty lasted from 1957-1986. President Francois Duvalier, also known as “Papa Doc,” was despotic and highly violent, though is said to have initiated great progress within the country. After his death, he was succeeded by his son Jean-Claude Duvalier, or “Baby Doc.” In the 1970’s under Baby Doc’s rule, Haitian farmers were severely impacted by two different issues. The first being a swine fever outbreak that impacted the Creole pig, a pig indigenous to Haiti. U.S. officials did not want this to affect their pork industry, so they led a campaign to completely exterminate the race of pigs from the island (MacLeod, Lawless, Girault, & Ferguson, 2020). This was highly criticized as it left rural communities, who used these pigs as investments, facing economic hardships. These rural farmers were not adequately compensated, and the pigs imported from the U.S. to replace the losses were not suitable for the environment (MacLeod, Lawless, Girault, & Ferguson, 2020). The second issue was the agricultural policies at this time. Kushner writes, “The US pressured Haiti to reduce its tariffs on imported crops, then shipped surplus American crops into Haiti’s ports under the guise of “food aid.” Haitian farmers could not compete with all the artificially cheap rice and other food crops from abroad, which was part of the point. The strategy was to create another market for American farmers while pushing Haiti’s labour force away from the fields and into factories” (2019). Baby Doc was eventually forced to resign under U.S. pressure.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide became Haiti’s first democratically elected president in 1990, but was overthrown by a military coup d’état in 1991 (MacLeod, Lawless, Girault, & Ferguson, 2020). There was military rule from 1991-1994, that was highly oppressive and violent. Many Haitians would attempt to flee to the United States, however most were denied entry and repatriated back to Haiti (MacLeod, Lawless, Girault, & Ferguson, 2020). In 1994, Clinton convened a negotiating team to persuade military leaders in Haiti to step down (Clammer, 2016).

Aristide was able to return in 1994 until 1996. Clinton also furthered the negative agricultural policies implemented in the 70s, by “creating massive surpluses of crops such as rice by extending hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidies to U.S. farmers. In Haiti, the result was that thousands upon thousands of farmers lost their land” (Kushner, 2019). Clinton would not acknowledge the failure and devastation of this program until 2010.

Aristide’s second term was 2001-2004 after a period of political dead lock with opponent René Préval (Hallward, 2007). In 2004, however, there was another coup d’état. Aristide maintains that he was effectively kidnapped and ousted by U.S. officials (Clammer, 2016). While the U.S. denies these allegations, and maintains that Aristide resigned, many witnesses, and scholars, find the details surrounding the U.S. involvement in the coup highly suspicious (Clammer, 2016) (Hallward, 2007). Many believe that this 2004 uprising was actually a foreign controlled coup d’état. After this coup, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) began to ensure a secure environment and human rights. However, Edmonds writes, “the mission leaves behind a deeply tarnished legacy in the country, including but not limited to the introduction of cholera, widespread allegations of sexual violence, extrajudicial killings, and political oppression” (2017).

Préval won a second term in 2006. In 2010, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck the island with death toll estimates ranging from 200,000-300,000 (Archibold, 2011). The capital city was destroyed, and a million Haitians were left displaced (Archibold, 2011). While billions of dollars of aid were raised, most of the aid did not reach Haitian companies or citizens. For example, USAID spent 1.5 billion after the earthquake, and most of the funds “went to American companies and hardly any passed through Haitian hands. Less than 3% of that spending went directly to Haitian organizations or firms” (Kushner, 2019). The devastation of the earthquake

was followed by a cholera outbreak caused by UN workers (Clammer, 2016). This was covered up by the UN, with the assistance of the U.S. (Katz, 2016). The UN took 6 years to apologize, and never took financial responsibility in rectifying the damage (Gladstone, 2017). Following the earthquake, the U.S. was heavily involved in Haiti's 2010 election. Although illegitimate and corrupt measures were employed, the U.S. supported the election of Michel Martelly (Moran & Shahshahani, 2015). In 2011, the Obama administration pressured Haiti not to raise its minimum wage to 61 cents an hour, or 5 dollars a day, in the interest of U.S. companies (Chittum, 2011). After the earthquake, Haitians that were able to migrate to the U.S. were granted Temporary Protected Status. After the devastation of category-four Hurricane Matthew in 2016, the U.S. and other countries provided direct aid to the country.

This history of political and economic turbulence and devastating natural disasters can be thought of as push factors, and can provide insight into what motivates Haitians to relocate to the United States.

2.2 The American Dream

While the historical violence, political turmoil, and natural disasters discussed can be considered push factors as mentioned, the idea of the American Dream can be considered a pull factor in Haitian migration. The American Dream was coined by James Truslow Adams in his 1931 book "Epic of America," in which he describes it as "that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement" (Barone, 2021). It is considered a "happy way of living that is thought of by many Americans as something that can be achieved by anyone in the U.S. especially by working

hard and becoming successful” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Additionally, this idea is rooted in the Declaration of Independence, which purports ideals about all men being equal and having the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Historically, this idea has been highlighted and upheld by various communities such as Germans fleeing the 1848 revolution who enjoyed political freedom in the U.S., or beneficiaries of the California gold rush who amassed quick wealth (Bogen, 2004) (Brands, 2003). Martin Luther King even evoked the American Dream in his Letter From Birmingham Jail, in which he wrote *“We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands ... when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judeo-Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the Founding Fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence”* (1963).

The American Dream has been a source of inspiration for immigrants looking to establish a new life in the United States. Fantastical ideas about the United States being a paradise land of milk and honey have been perpetuated, and this mythology has often taken root in third world countries. In some cases, while the American Dream may not be accessible for migrants themselves, the children of migrants may often reap some benefits within this system. Research shows that “children of immigrants from nearly every sending country have higher rates of upward mobility than children of the US-born. Immigrants’ advantage is similar historically and today despite dramatic shifts in sending countries and US immigration policy. In the past, this advantage can be explained by immigrants moving to areas with better prospects for their children and by “under- placement” of the first generation in the income distribution. These

findings are consistent with the “American Dream” view that even poorer immigrants can improve their children’s prospects” (Abramitzky et al., 2019).

This concept that anyone in the United States can achieve success through hard work, however, has been criticized and critiqued many times over. Classic literary works such as *The Great Gatsby*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *Death of a Salesmen* have discussed and highlighted the illegitimacy of this concept. Barone writes “The criticism that reality falls short of the American dream is at least as old as the idea itself. The spread of settlers into Native American lands, slavery, the limitation of the vote (originally) to white male landowners, and a long list of other injustices and challenges have undermined the realization of the dream for many who live in the United States” (2021). The foundation of white supremacy, colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy in the U.S. has ensured that those who do not fall into the group of white, male, property owner have a much harder time at achieving success and the American Dream in the United States.

2.3 History of Haitian Migration in the United States

Due to the political instability, poverty, and violence as noted, many Haitians have sought refuge by migrating to the United States at different periods during the country’s history. Haitians are the fourth largest group from the Caribbean in the U.S., and there are large communities of Haitian migrants in Florida and New York, which are home to 70 percent of the U.S. Haitian population (Schulz & Batalova, 2017).

The national-origins quota system severely limited Haitian immigration to the U.S. from 1920-1965 (Higham, 1955) (Fouron, 2013). Fouron writes, “Haitian mass migration to the

US was spurred by the transgressions and brutality of the US-backed Duvalier dictatorship (1957–1986), the 1965 Hart-Celler Immigration Act, the UN and US recruitment initiatives in Haiti and the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)” (2013). Only 5,000 Haitians lived in the U.S. in 1960, however after the end of the Duvalier reign, Haitian immigrants began migrating to the U.S. in increased numbers (Schulz & Batalova, 2017). The violence and oppression of the Duvalier regime resulted in political opponents, activists, professionals, and members of the middle class emigrating. Many of these Haitian migrants took advantage of the 1965 act’s “refugee provision, its family reunification programme, and its immigrant credentials stipulations” and were able to “regularise their status and sponsored their qualified relatives as legal immigrants” (Zhou, 2001) (Fouron, 2013). The 1980s saw thousands of Haitians hoping to obtain political asylum being granted permanent residence. Fouron continues, “Finally, when IRCA was enacted in 1986, many undocumented Haitian immigrants legalised their status through its amnesty provision and sponsored their relatives as well” (2013). Having legal status is not a privilege that all Haitian migrants have access to. This pathway is often inaccessible due to pricing, and required documentation. For example, the price of a nonimmigrant U.S. visa in Haiti today is about \$160 (15200.00 in HTG) (ustraveldocs, 2017). This may not sound like a lot of money; however Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere, and the annual per capita income for Haitians is \$450 U.S. dollars. This means it would take about one-third of their annual income to afford the fees to apply for a visa to come to the United States. Additionally, that fee is just for the application. After spending that amount of money, there is no guarantee that the visa request will even be approved. Due to these obstacles, Haitian migrants have continuously used nontraditional and often illegal methods to forge a pathway to First world states in order to seek a better life for themselves outside of their home country.

Some Haitian migrants who could not secure U.S. visas traveled to the United States by boat, leading to the “Haitian boat people” moniker. These working class and poor Haitians risked their lives to travel by boat to the United States in the hopes of bettering their existences (Fouron, 2013). However, unlike Cuban refugees, they were often denied entry. Pierre-Louis writes, “while the Cuban refugees were offered asylum and economic support as soon as they landed on US shores in the 1980s, Haitians were incarcerated and forced to return back to Haiti” (2013). Fouron writes, “... Haitian refugees were considered as trespassers who lacked a legitimate claim to rights. When captured, they were imprisoned in faraway places, distant from the Haitian immigrants and the US advocacy groups that had volunteered to offer them legal assistance, and, while waiting to be deported, they were denied their basic human rights” (Maher 2002, p. 21) (Fouron, 2013). Haitian migrant’s request for political asylum was rejected at a higher rate than any other national group (Glick-Schiller & Fouron, 1990). Haitians were detained in large part due to their nationality, which was not common amongst other immigrant populations in the U.S. (Glick-Schiller & Fouron, 1990). These migrants were often detained in locations such as the Krome Detention Center and Guantanamo. After the overthrowing of Haitian President Aristide in 1991, his supporters sought refuge in the Bahamas and the U.S. based on fears of retribution. Only 28 out of 23,000 refugees were granted asylum, and human rights advocates have found evidence that many migrants were victims of arrest, imprisonment, and physical abuse upon returning to Haiti (Lennox, 1993) (Fouron, 2013).

After the 2010 earthquake, the number of Haitian immigrants in the U.S. “increased by 17 percent from 2010 (587,000) to 2018 (687,000)” (Olsen-Medina & Batalova, 2020). In November of 2017, the Trump Administration “announced that Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians will end in July 2019” (Edmonds, 2017). However, “a series of lawsuits

challenging the administration's decision have blocked those orders from taking effect, giving the vast majority of these immigrants a reprieve until early 2021" (Cohn, Passel, & Bialik, 2019). TPS grants temporary legal status in the United States to people who fled catastrophes, such as major earthquakes, in their home country. Many Haitians were granted TPS status because "Haiti faces a range of crises, from ongoing damage from the 2010 earthquake to 2016's Hurricane Matthew to the de-regularization and deportation of nearly 300,000 individuals of Haitian descent from the Dominican Republic. This combines with the ongoing political instability, much of which is tied to foreign political interests..." (Edmonds, 2017). The potential expiration of the TPS status of these Haitian migrants in 2021 leaves many of their futures in jeopardy. This denial of refugee claims and expiration of TPS has created a system where Haitian immigrants primarily enter the U.S. via family reunification (Olsen-Medina & Batalova, 2020).

2.4 Haitian Migrants' Experiences Living in the United States

The poverty, political strife, and violence that have been outlined in this chapter are all motivating factors that drive Haitians to leave their home country and migrate to the U.S. Haitian immigrants may find that migrating to and living in the U.S. is a mixed bag of experiences. These experiences may be influenced by a variety of factors including one's class, race, gender, ability, nationality, and documentation status. While living in the U.S., the themes that are prevalent for Haitian immigrants in the literature are identity, remittances, and language. Identity is a salient issue for Haitians while living in the U.S. Some Haitians refuted the black or African-American identity attributed to them in the United States, because "this identity was racially

based and was used to delineate populations with limited access to the productive system, to status, and to power. To accept a black identity in the United States would mean accepting the subordinate status of black Americans” (Glick-Schiller & Fouron, 1990). Some Haitians would instead try to differentiate themselves by overly identifying with the French aspects of their culture, while others identified with Hispanics or West Indians (Glick-Schiller, 1975) (Glick-Schiller & Fouron, 1990). This tendency to dis-identify was also witnessed within “mulatto sectors of the immigrant population, who came from an upper-class background in Haiti and who had been slowly moving away from participation in any efforts to organize the Haitian population” (Glick-Schiller & Fouron, 1990). While black Haitians were dis-identifying with black Americans, mulatto Haitians were dis-identifying with blackness more broadly, whether Haitian or American (Glick-Schiller & Fouron, 1990). Glick-Schiller & Fouron write that mulatto immigrant populations “tended to react to the negative stereotyping of Haitians by staying even farther away from any identification with them. Some Haitian professionals also tried to maintain their distance. Asked to help in the detention camps, many declined to have any contact with the refugees ... There was a widespread reluctance on the part of many immigrants to identify themselves as Haitians, given the negative image held by the larger society” (Glick-Schiller & Fouron, 1990).

Another notable aspect of Haitian immigrant’s experience while living in the U.S. is remittances, as many Haitian immigrants are responsible for supporting their families back home. Jean-François writes, “Haitians with family and friends abroad have been at an advantage. Remittances are an essential, ubiquitous component of daily life in developing countries. In Haiti, one out of five households depend on them to meet basic needs, according a 2006 World Bank/Inter-American Dialogue report” (2009). These remittances are primarily used for daily

necessities and survival, as well as to pay for schooling for children, and because they contribute directly to the receiving families, they are “the largest and most effective force in poverty reduction” (Jean-François, 2009). Haitian immigrants must budget and plan for the support they provide their family and friends back home, and this often requires that they spend less money on themselves, seek higher paying jobs, work more than one job, or work overtime (Jean-François, 2009). Thus, this obligation can potentially be a great source of stress and financial strain.

Language is an important aspect of their experience while living in the U.S. as well. Research shows that the ability to speak English is necessary for adapting well within the United States (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). Researchers identify English proficiency as a relevant indicator of acculturation (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). Belizaire & Fuertes found in a sample of Haitian migrants that English proficiency was associated with lower levels of acculturative stress (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). This means that participants who spoke English better had less stress while adjusting to life as an immigrant in the United States (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). Additionally, Belizaire & Fuertes found that “the variable years living in the United States was significantly associated with lower levels of anxiety attachment, less use of maladaptive coping strategies, and lower levels of acculturative stress” (2011). Belizaire & Fuertes concluded that for their participants, English proficiency and number of years spent living in the United States allowed for lower levels of acculturative stress, anxiety attachment, and unhealthy mechanisms of coping (2011). However, years living in the United States as a stand-alone factor was not beneficial for this sample as it was associated with aging and diminished QOL (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011).

2.5 Sentiments in the United States Towards Haitian Migrants

While immigration policies have evolved in certain respects, the historical precedents of racism and xenophobia prevail. For example, in January of 2018, nearing the 8th anniversary of the Haitian earthquake, President Trump was quoted in an immigration meeting referring to the nation of Haiti, as well as other African and Latin American nations, as “shithole” countries. The president singled out Haiti specifically, telling lawmakers that Haitian immigrants must be left out of any deal, remarking: “Why do we need more Haitians, take them out” (Dawsey, 2018). President Trump suggested that the United States should instead bring more people from countries such as Norway instead (Dawsey, 2018). Their race is a critical factor in this discrimination, and many migrants have filed a lawsuit stating that “Trump’s rhetoric demonstrates that his administration’s cancellation of TPS was motivated by bigotry, rather than policy concerns” (Woodhouse, 2018). Furthermore, in regard to this idea of *need* as mentioned by President Trump, Natsu Saito writes, “*Why do we need them?* That is the question at the heart of the settler colonial enterprise. Only those people of color who are “needed” have a place in settler society and their internal subjugation ensures that they serve the perceived needs of those in power; all others are to be excluded or eliminated” (2019). Thus, is the experience of Haitian migrants specifically, and black migrants and refugees generally. Sentiments tend to focus on the ways in which black migrants will *take* from the host country leading to the idea that they are not “needed.” In the eyes of the settler colonial state, Haitian migrants have nothing to offer, and even more radically, Haitian migrants are not allowed to *just be* and exist in this system.

President Trump’s rhetoric is not an isolated occurrence. Haitian migrants in the U.S. have faced explicit xenophobia historically. Fourman writes, “As more (Haitian) refugees

entered the US, many negative stereotypes were appended upon them. They were accused of being a disruptive social force destroying communities and draining public resources (Stepick, 1982). They were painted as hopeless destitute and diseased people who came to the United States to sponge off the welfare system (Sabatier 1988); others described them as illiterate monolingual Creole speakers who had brought nothing to contribute to the United States (Stepick and Portes 1986); still others characterized them as backward and superstitious Voodoo adherents who practiced witchcraft (Lawless 1992)” (2013). In the 1980s, Haitians were designated as a primary group at risk for AIDS, and even after their removal from this list the FDA still refused blood donations from Haitians. Fouron describes how “irrational fears of acquiring the HIV virus through casual contacts with Haitians fueled anti-Haitian feelings among the larger US population” (2013). These anti-Haitian feelings lead to dehumanizing treatment. For example, eighty-nine HIV-positive Haitian refugees were pushed off the Coast Guard cutter with a fire hose to avoid contact when returned to Haiti (Ratner, 1994) (Fournier, 2013). Glick-Schiller & Fouron describe how “Haitians were portrayed as ragged, wretched, and pathetic and were said to be illiterate, superstitious, disease-ridden and backward peasants. They became visible scapegoats for the failures of U.S. capitalism” (1990).

2.6 Summary

This chapter focused on the literature regarding Haitian migrant’s motivations for relocating, as well as their experiences with migrating to and living in the U.S. Beginning with the historical relations between the United States and Haiti, this chapter demonstrated that the two countries have a history that is interconnected, and that the U.S. has been actively involved

in the island's historical trajectory and politics. This history of Haiti detailed instances of poverty, natural disasters, economic hardship, and political violence. These are all contributing factors that have motivated Haitians to emigrate out of the country. Additionally, romanticization of the American Dream, as well as more liberal immigration policies drew many migrants, including Haitians, to the U.S. in hopes of achieving constitutional freedoms and economic abundance that was not available in their home countries. This chapter then discussed the historical trends of migration from Haiti to the U.S. Many Haitian migrants were met with hardships and challenges while migrating to the U.S. The historical aspects of Haitian migration to the U.S. is important, because it establishes a precedent for the experiences of the participants in this study. In this section, the experiences of Haitian migrants were assessed and discussed with more specificity and nuance. They faced xenophobia and racism that limited their legal options for migrating to the U.S. Acquiring visas can be very expensive which prices out poor and working class Haitians. Haitian migrants that decided to pursue illegal methods of entry to the U.S. risked their lives and/or freedom to come here using methods like falsifying documents, visa overstay, and traveling by boat. Haitian migrants that were caught sometimes experienced unfair treatment in detention centers that violated migrant rights. Many Haitian migrants were deported or are currently facing deportation, leaving their future in jeopardy. Haitian migrants who are able to survive migration and create a life in the U.S. face many challenges as well. Their identities, including nationality and language, make them a target for both xenophobia and racism. Remittances highlight the class issues that are prominent within Haitian migrant populations as well. Lastly, this chapter then proceeded to discuss historical sentiments in the U.S. towards Haitian migration, which also situates the experiences of the participants in the historical context of xenophobia within our media and governmental institutions. After dissecting

the literature, it is clear that there are gaps in migration research, specifically in regard to Haitian migrants. The hope of this study is to address the gaps in the literature through this research. The next chapter discusses the methodology of the study.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study explores the experiences of Haitian migrants in order to identify why they choose to migrate to the U.S., as well as if race, nationality, class, ability, immigration status, and gender impact Haitian migrant's experiences with migrating to and living in the United States. A qualitative approach was used to assess the following questions: What motivates Haitian migrants to relocate to the United States? How does the intersection of class, race, gender, ability, immigration status, and nationality affect Haitian migrant's experiences both migrating to and living in the United States?

The following chapter addresses the methodology of this study. It discusses the use and appropriateness of the narrative approach selected for this study, as well as the criterion for the participants, and the steps for the interviews conducted. The chapter first begins by discussing the design of the study, followed by sample selection and criterion, the setting and participants, then sampling procedure, followed by data collection and analysis. The chapter concludes by discussing validity, generalizability, and reliability, limitations, and a summary.

3.1 Design of the Study

The aim of this study is to understand what drives Haitian migrants to relocate to the United States, as well as to identify how class, race, gender, immigration status, ability, and nationality influence their migration and lived experiences in the U.S. Therefore, a narrative approach was chosen. Narrative research gives a chronological account of an event or series of events (Czarniawska, 2004) (Creswell, 2007). The procedures for implementing this research

consists of choosing a few participants, gathering data through the collection of their personal life histories, reporting individual experiences, and chronologically ordering the meaning of those experiences (Creswell, 2007). There are many types of narrative studies. Analysis of narratives, narrative analysis, and paradigmatic reasoning all use analytic strategies. Biographical studies, autobiographical studies, life histories, oral histories, contextual focus, organizational focus, and theoretical lens are all forms found in narrative research as well (Creswell, 2007). This study uses the chronological life histories of Haitian migrants to analyze and develop themes that answer whether exploring the life experiences and personal narratives of Haitian migrants show why they decide to migrate to the U.S., as well as how race, nationality, class, ability, immigration status, and gender impact their migration to and lived experiences within the United States. Additionally, the researcher uses historical immigration policies, as well as sentiments (via news reports) to contextualize the stories of the migrants in their respective time periods. The researcher restories their histories into an account of their experiences of migrating to and living in the U.S. that follows a chronology of events. Additionally, the researcher uses the plot points of their personal histories to speak to how these migrant's marginalized identities impacted their experiences. In short, the researcher uses an exploratory examination of several Haitian migrant's oral histories based on qualitative interviews that were conducted, in order to identify potential patterns experienced over the life course that may influence decisions to migrate, as well as patterns that expose how their identities impact their migration and lived experiences. The oral histories of these migrants add depth and context to migration research concerning black migrants generally, and Haitian migrants specifically, a chronically under studied population.

3.2 Sample Selection and Criterion

The design strategy for this qualitative study is purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling was chosen over random sampling, because the researcher wanted to be intentional about enriching the data fully. Purposeful sampling in this study was also chosen, because of the specificity of the work, as it is not meant to be generalizable to the larger migrant population, but is meant to provide deeper reflection on the experiences of Haitian migrants in the U.S.

The following criteria was selected to provide the researcher with a sample that will provide the most relevant information for this study:

- Between the ages of 18-89 years old;
- Identified as Black;
- Born in Haiti;
- Migrated to the United States;
- Willing to speak freely about their migration experiences;
- Available for direct contact for clarification regarding the data collected;
- Had their own transportation to interview locations; and
- Had internet or phone connection for distant interviews.

It was important that participants were willing to speak openly and candidly about their migration experiences, in order for the researcher to have a fully detailed supply of data. While this wasn't a primary criterion, and did not always translate across every question, it was important to the researcher to establish this expectation and gauge participant willingness. In addition, participants had to be willing to participate in follow up while data analysis was occurring in order to ensure they were being accurately represented. The researcher speaks both

English and Creole, and therefore was open to accepting migrants who could speak either language. Lastly, all participants needed either transportation to the interview locations, telephones, or proper internet connection to accommodate the Covid-19 guidelines.

3.3 Settings and Participants

This study utilized purposive sampling from directly within the community. Only participants who were able to meet all outlined and identified criterion were selected in order to ensure that the data was rich. Eight participants were chosen, and all participants were residents of the United States. Criterion for sampling included migrants who were between the ages of 18-90, who identified as black, who were born in Haiti, and who currently live in the United States. Prior to the start of interviews, participants completed a demographic questionnaire to ensure that they met the criteria to participate. Participants were asked to confirm the following: if they identified as black, the location of their home country, whether they migrated to the U.S., and other demographic information.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

This research utilized both maximum variation sampling and snowball or chain sampling in order to recruit participants for this study. To recruit participants for this study, the researcher created a flyer and posted it online on her Facebook, as well as sent it out to her network. The flyer included a brief description of the study, and how interested persons could contact the researcher via telephone or email. The researcher created a demographic questionnaire used to

ensure interested participants met all criterion in order to participate in this study. The flyer and questionnaire are provided in the appendices. Once participants were recruited and screened, the researcher utilized snowball sampling to find additional participants. The researcher recruited participants until there was a diverse enough sample, and until the data were saturated.

The researcher received a number of calls and emails from people interested in participating in this study. Interviews occurred from January 21st to February 17th. All audio was recorded, transcribed, coded, and relayed to participants to ensure accuracy of descriptions. The voluntary nature of the study, as well as expectations of confidentiality were explained at the start of the study. As mandated by the Human Subjects Office, participants were also provided with informed consent regarding the purpose of the research, procedures, risks and benefits, confidentiality, and withdrawal of participation. Participants were informed that interviews would last about 35-60 minutes, and that they would receive a \$25 gift card as compensation at the end of the interview. The interview process intended to garner a clear identification of the migration experiences of the participants. The interview questions were constructed with participant comfort and knowledge-base in mind. Questions allowed for honest vulnerability in the relaying of memories, as well as the emotions and values associated with those memories. The interview process ensured that the participant's voices were centered and uplifted. The researcher did not invalidate or minimize any experience, emotion, or value that was provided. The interviews were semi-structured and rich in content. Interviews were contextualized by relevant historical and cultural evidence, as well as relevant immigration policy and law.

3.5 Data Collection

This study utilized the interview guide approach, outlined as one of three interview options by Patton (1990). An interview protocol was developed for this study, which included a series of questions to guide the conversation. Six interviews occurred over the phone due to Covid-19 restrictions. Two interviews occurred in person, however masks were worn and social distancing guidelines were followed. Interviews were recorded using the voice memo app on the researcher's iPad. The conversations were fluid, and questions were referenced as a guide, and were not always asked in a specific order. The conversation was also allowed to deviate from the scheduled questions, if the conversation naturally flowed there. The participants were encouraged to give in-depth responses, and follow-up and clarification was prompted if a question wasn't answered clearly or fully. However, participants were not pushed to share anything they did not feel comfortable sharing.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study included a review of each interview. All data collected from interviews were transcribed. After transcription, interviews were printed. Manual coding was utilized for this study. First cycle coding utilized a multiple coding method employing emotion and value coding. Emotion coding involves emotions recalled by or inferred about the participant. This method of coding was chosen as a way of describing the participant's reactions to the experiences they were having. Value coding involves values, attitudes, and beliefs reflecting the participant's perspective. This method of coding was chosen in order to

demonstrate the worldview of the participants, and how this view was shaping their perception of their experiences. Second cycle coding methods utilized focus coding. Saldana notes that focus coding involves searching “for the most frequent or significant codes to develop the most salient categories in the data and deciding which codes make the most analytic sense” (2014). This was key for this study, because many of the emotions, values, and categories/themes the researcher identified were frequently repeated amongst the interviews. Patterned categories were further refined into thematic concepts. Thus, the identified emotions and values led to the broader overarching concepts, which led to the thematic elements of the study.

3.7 Validity/Reliability/Generalizability

Reliability is determined by a study’s ability to be repeated with similar outcomes. Threats to the study reliability were minimized by accurate coding of the information for each measure. The data collected from the intake questions and the interviews were analyzed throughout the process. A moderate sample was recruited with migrants directly from the target population, meaning results should be similar with different migrants from this same group in a repeat test. Forms of validity include construct validity, external validity, and internal validity (Yin, 2003). Construct validity refers to whether the study is measuring what it claims to be measuring. The researcher was adamant in ensuring that the interview questions accurately addressed the research questions she was attempting to answer. Necessary changes were made to interview questions throughout the process to ensure that validity was up to par. External validity discusses generalizability. The population is purposely specific, as results are not necessarily meant to be generalizable to all immigrants, but instead meant to broaden the literature to include

a demographic that is often neglected. This population is reflective of their community, and a moderate number of participants provided accurate data. Internal validity refers to the integrity of the study. This will be not entirely relevant in this study, as it is descriptive, and not meant to establish a causal relationship. However, by ensuring that interview questions were addressing the correct information, and acquiring clarity on the participant's full experiences, confounding factors were mitigated as best as possible.

3.8 Limitations

Despite the best efforts of the researcher, limitations are present within the study. Primarily, the criteria of identifying as Haitian, excludes black immigrants from varying countries with valuable stories from this research. However, Haitian migrants are an often invisible community within this conversation, and therefore the researcher sought to uplift their voices within this study. Additionally, because this study solely focuses on Haitian immigrants, results will not be generalizable to the entire immigrant community as a whole, or even to black migrants as a whole. Implications of this study are potentially vast. Addressing the histories of Haitian immigrants can help us to better understand the barriers impacting their experiences, and can inspire the broader society to push for policies in our immigration system that are not rooted in racism, sexism, and xenophobia.

3.9 Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology of this study. It assessed the narrative approach chosen, as well as the selection criterion for participants, and the interview precautions taken. One on one interviews were conducted for this study to amplify the voices of the participants. This chapter also discussed data analysis, reliability/generalizability/validity, and limitations. The detailed approach of this study ensured an enriched data set and accurate findings, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

4 RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore whether the life experiences of Haitian migrants show why they choose to relocate, as well as how race, nationality, class, ability, immigration status, and gender influence Haitian migrant's experiences migrating to and living in the United States. The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What motivates Haitian migrants to relocate to the United States?
2. How does the intersection of class, race, gender, ability, immigration status, and nationality affect Haitian migrant's experiences both migrating to and living in the United States?

This study utilized a qualitative design. Interviews were conducted from January 21st to February 17th. Interviewees were recruited using flyers on social media and snowball sampling. The flyer was posted on the researcher's Facebook, which has a network of about 311 people. She also shared the flyer amongst her network of family and friends to circulate on their social media and amongst their networks as well. Of those recruited, 8 Haitian immigrants (4 men and 4 women) were interviewed for about 30-60 minutes. Six interviews took place over the phone and online to adhere to Covid-19 safety precautions. Two interviews took place in person, and safety precautions were taken, such as wearing masks and remaining socially distant. All interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Interviewees agreed to be contacted at a later date for clarification on responses, and of the 8 participants, three were contacted for follow-up. Those follow-ups (done via phone and text) were included in the data and transcribed as well.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is participant profiles (pseudonyms were used and identifying information was removed), the second section discusses the data and thematic elements of the interviews. The final section of this chapter provides a summary.

4.1 The Participants

Eight participants who live in Georgia, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island participated in this study. Four of the participants were women, and four of the participants were men. All participants identified as cisgender and straight. Ages ranged from 42-63. All the participants identified as black Haitian immigrants. All participants identified as Christian. The participants had varying levels of education (some high school to doctorate). Participants had a variety of occupations, and educational backgrounds, including nursing and other health care jobs, store clerk, and immigration lawyer. In the following section, a brief description of each participant is provided:

Samuel. Samuel was born in 1965, in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti, as the fourth of seven children. He is a 56-year-old father of two. Growing up, he lived in Haiti with his father and stepmother, while his birth mother lived in the United States. His birth mother moved to the U.S. in 1971, when he was 6 years old. His family lived in a middle-class neighborhood in Haiti, and his father made a decent living. Eventually, his father, stepmother, and three eldest siblings gained visas, and migrated to the U.S. as well in 1981, so he became the primary care giver for himself and his younger siblings at 16 years old. He gained a visa for the U.S. in 1983, when he was 18 years old, and began traveling back and forth between the U.S. and Haiti. This travel to

the U.S. allowed him to finally see his mother again after 12 years. This period in which his family migrated to the U.S. was during what is known as the Duvalier dynasty in Haitian history. The Duvalier dynasty lasted from 1957-1986. President Francois Duvalier, also known as “Papa Doc”, was despotic and highly violent, though is said to have initiated great progress within the country. After his death, he was succeeded by his son Jean-Claude Duvalier, or “Baby Doc.” Many Haitians fled the country during his presidency due to the killing and torture of thousands of citizens (Cook, 2011). When Samuel began living in the U.S. permanently, he was under-documented, meaning he entered with a tourist visa and stayed after its expiration. He was living in Brooklyn, New York, and he worked at a factory during this time. His father applied for permanent residence for him, and eventually he received a green card, which allowed him to go to school and pursue his dreams, including graduating college and eventually even getting a Masters. He currently lives in Acworth, Georgia with his wife and two kids. He has never applied for American citizenship, and has no intention to.

Joseph. Joseph is a 49-year-old Haitian man living in Boston, Massachusetts. He is from a town in Haiti called Léogâne. Growing up, his family was involved in the alcohol making business, and this was a good source of income for them. He enjoyed a middle-class upbringing. He decided to migrate to the U.S. with the help of his mother. In the early 1990s, he boarded a boat that was headed to the U.S. The trip took 5 days. They landed in a Southeastern state, and upon arrival were promptly arrested. Joseph spent the next 5 days in a detention center before being transported to Miami, Florida for deportation. Due to a lack of flights and the demands of the other detainees to speak with the consulate, they were put in a hotel for holding. Joseph jumped from the third story window of his hotel room, and ran until he couldn't any longer. The number he had as a point of contact was disconnected, however he eventually found a Haitian

woman who was able to direct him to some of his family members living in Florida. He spent some time working as a day laborer, before his mother sent him some money to get on his feet. He was eventually able to purchase and live under false documentation some years down the line. In 2000, he was granted amnesty under immigration policies of the Bill Clinton presidency. In 2001, he finally traveled to Haiti for the first time since living in the U.S. Although he originally had no intention of applying for U.S. citizenship, he recently filed after 30 years of living in the country.

Ronald. Ronald is a 42-year-old husband and father living in the suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia. He grew up in a middle-class neighborhood in Fort-Liberté, Haiti with his mother and sister. Growing up, his mother worked as a Nurse and a Public Health Director. His father lived in the U.S. as an America citizen for most of his childhood and teenage years. His grandfather was Dominican, so growing up he would also spend his summers in the Dominican Republic. He saw the stark contrast in living conditions and work and educational opportunities that were available in the Dominican Republic compared to Haiti, and Ronald had hopes of living there when he was older. However, his father applied for U.S. permanent residence for both he and his sister, and in 1995 when he was 16-years-old, he moved to the United States, specifically Florida. While he witnessed colorism, and the favoritism of lighter-skinned people in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, Ronald mentioned that he did not truly experience racism and xenophobia until after moving to the U.S. He also struggled significantly to learn the language and develop a community. Additionally, while family reunification is a beautiful and sought after process in the migratory experience, the learning curve of living with a parent that he did not grow up with was also hard. He focused on surviving day by day, learning the language, and

making it by, and was eventually able to graduate from high school. He applied for and received U.S. citizenship in his late 20's. He went on to eventually receive his doctorate in Public Health.

Emmanuel. Emmanuel is a father of two, living in the suburbs of Atlanta. He was born in 1961 in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti. He grew up in a middle-class neighborhood, with his father, stepmother, and 5 other siblings. His father worked as a governmental official in the Duvalier government, which allowed him access to higher-level private education and resources growing up. He visited the United States when he was 12 and 15 years old. As a teenager and young adult, he had no real desire to live in the United States. However, at the end of the Duvalier dynasty, he and his family faced political persecution for their association with the Duvalier government, and so he and his siblings were sent to live with their Uncle in Miami, Florida. He was 24 years old at this time. His father died soon after, so he decided not to return to Haiti. He came to the United States on a tourist visa, and stayed after its expiration. After spending a few months in Florida, he moved to Brooklyn, New York, where he lived for about 20 years. He worked many odd jobs and played in a Haitian Kompa band during that time. In 2000, he was able to go to school and get training in IT and computers. In 2006, he moved to Georgia with his wife, and has been living there since.

Darline. Darline is a 55-year-old mother of three living in the suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia. She was born and raised in Port-Au-Prince Haiti. Her parents migrated to America in 1973, so from the time she was 8 years old, she and her two other siblings lived with their Aunt. Although she missed her parents, she was well taken care of and grew up living a comfortable middle-class life. By 1981, when she was 15 years old, her parents were able to secure legal residence due to a policy enacted by President Jimmy Carter in 1977 granting permanent resident status for undocumented immigrants who had been in the U.S. since 1970, and she and her

siblings was able to join them in America (Boundless, 2017). The culture shock of moving from Port-Au-Prince, Haiti to Brooklyn, New York was huge, however Darline was also amazed by the buildings, shopping malls, and grocery stores. She taught herself English by watching children's programming such as Sesame's Street. She experienced violent xenophobia in her high school, including days where other students would plan to "beat up Haitians." She stayed safe by forming community with other Haitian students. After graduating from high school, she went on to receive an Associate's degree. After she was married, she applied for and received U.S. citizenship in 1994 at the age of 28. She moved to Georgia in 2003 and has been living there ever since.

Esther. Esther is 57-year-old mother living in Rhode Island. She is from Léogâne, Haiti, and grew up in a middle-class neighborhood. She grew up as one of five children, and was the only girl. Her father lived in the United States in her youth and had U.S. citizenship, and when she was five years old, she came to the U.S. to get hearing aids, as she is deaf. She returned to Haiti after a few months, and spent the next 25 years living there. She attended a school for deaf children, and she really enjoyed her experiences there. She lived in a dormitory, and learned how to cook, knit, play sports, and more. However, she did get teased for being deaf growing up. When she was older she worked as a teacher's assistant in the school. There is a severe lack of opportunities and resources for the deaf community in Haiti, so after completing school, she decided it would be best to move to the United States. By 1994, she was granted permanent residence through her father's petitioning, and made the move to the U.S. In 1999, she became a U.S. citizen. While she has not been able to pass her GED test yet, she has been able to work and make a living in the U.S., which may not have been an option for her back in Haiti.

Fabiola. Fabiola is a 42-year-old wife, mother, and attorney living in Georgia. She was born and raised in Port-Margot, Haiti with her six siblings and mother. Her neighborhood was working class, and community oriented, and she describes her childhood as very idyllic. Her father moved to the U.S. when she was about three years old. When he would come back and visit, he would bring brand-new gifts that perpetuated the idea of America being a land of fortune and opportunity. In 1991, by the time she was twelve, her father had applied for permanent residency for she and her siblings. Two of her siblings moved first, and then she and the rest of her siblings moved about 6 months later due to issues with the immigration process. Her mother was not able to migrate until about three or four years later due to issues with her paperwork as well. She transitioned from living with a single mom to living with a single dad, which was quite an adjustment. She had to struggle through learning English, as well as dealing with xenophobia and anti-blackness after arriving. After graduating, she went to college, where she applied for and received U.S. citizenship. She continued on to receive her JD, and is now a practicing immigration lawyer. She has experienced continued sexism, racism, and xenophobia in her career, however she continues on, because she has been able to look back and see the errors and difficulties she and her family encountered during their own immigration process, and uses that as inspiration to help other immigrants achieve legal status.

Roseline. Roseline is a 63-year-old retired mother of two and grandmother of two. She was born in 1957 in Haiti. She grew up in a middle-class neighborhood in the capital city of Port-Au-Prince. Growing up, she was highly motivated to pursue her education. In her mid-twenties, she was pursuing a medical degree in Haiti, which was very uncommon for women in the country. However, she decided to drop out when her mother sponsored her to come to the U.S in 1983. Her siblings would migrate to America as well in the years to follow. After arriving

in America, she decided to pursue nursing, and received her certification as a Licensed Practical Nurse. She became a U.S. citizen after her marriage, and although she is unsure about the exact year, she knows that it was during Bill Clinton's presidency (1993-2001).

4.2 Overview of Themes

The purpose of this study was to explore why Haitian migrants choose to relocate, as well as how race, nationality, class, ability, immigration status, and gender influence Haitian migrant's experiences migrating to and living in the United States. The interviews based on following research questions, *1. What motivates Haitian migrants to relocate to the United States?* and *2. How does the intersection of class, race, gender, ability, immigration status, and nationality affect Haitian migrant's experiences both migrating to and living in the United States?* developed three themes. The theme developed in response to the first research question was *"I love my home country, but there more is more out there..."* The second and third themes developed in response to the second research question were *"All that glitters isn't gold..."* and *"Taking the good with the bad..."*

Table 2 Themes

Questions	Themes
What motivates Haitian migrants to relocate to the United States?	<i>"I love my home country, but there is more out there..."</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants experiencing fond remembrances of their home country • Utopic ideas of the American Dream and the desire for increased opportunity • Family reunification
How does the intersection of class, race, gender, ability, immigration status, and nationality affect Haitian migrant's experiences migrating to the United States?	<p><i>"All that glitters isn't gold..."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration and entry point • Acclimation to the United States • Xenophobia and language barriers
How does the intersection of class, race, gender, ability, immigration status, and nationality affect Haitian migrant's experiences living in the United States?	<p><i>"Taking the good with the bad..."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent residence and citizenship • Increased opportunities

4.2.1 "I love my home country, but I need more..."

This theme addressed the first research question "*What motivates Haitian migrants to relocate to the United States?*" A variety of questions pertaining to childhood memories, class

status, and ideals about the U.S. prior to relocating were asked. This theme expresses the nuance of what prompts Haitian migrants to relocate the United States.

4.2.1.1 Fond remembrances of home country

In search of aspects that motivated migration, an aspect that actually did not motivate relocation quickly became clear. All the participants affirmed that a lack of affinity for their home country was absolutely not a reason why they relocated. For these 8 participants, migration was not prompted by a disdain for or a lack of connection with Haiti. Every participant expressed nostalgic and prideful remembrances of Haiti, despite any the political or economic turbulence occurring at the time. For example, Roseline described that, “Growing up in Haiti was a great experience. It was the most beautiful island in the world. We have beautiful beaches, good food. The cost of life was very cheap.”

Her sentiments were echoed by all the other participants. Every single interviewee described their childhood memories in a positive way. These fond remembrances may be influenced by the fact that all the participants in this study affirmed that they are from middle class backgrounds. All the participants migrated during a small window of time (1983-1995) as well, encompassing the Duvalier era, as well as the transitional and military governments of the late 80s and early 90s. Migrants who lived in Haiti post the 2010 earthquake, for example, may have more negative remembrances and experiences. Additionally, all the participants have been living in America for at least 25 years, so their childhood memories may be influenced by nostalgia and time.

4.2.1.2 Utopic Ideals about the United States

Migration was, however, inspired by utopic ideas of the U.S. and the popularity of the ideal of the American Dream. Most participants expressed emotions of enchantment in their perceptions of the U.S. prior to arriving. Fabiola remarked that she was told that “America was the land of opportunity. America does great things. If you are in America you have everything that you need... money, fame, fortune, all of that. That was America. That was the place to be, that was the place everyone wanted to be.” Samuel added that the desire to relocate to America was prevalent among his peers, “America was like a dream. Most of my generation we were dreaming of coming to America. Especially New York.”

In line with these American dream ideals, participants expressed that they believed or were told that the U.S. would provide educational and job opportunities not available in their home countries. Education and success were identified as important values in this group. Darline discussed the unavailability of educational and job opportunities in Haiti, stating “Back home its different. You could be done and have your degree and still not be able to find work. But here even though it’s not always easy, but you would absolutely find something somewhere to do.” This sentiment was echoed by Ronald who put in plainly when he said, “If I was in Haiti I would probably finish college or university and I would probably have no job.” His assertion was described in contrast to what he has been able to achieve since being in America, “The sky is the limit in how far a Haitian can go when you put them in a place where they can thrive. Despite all my trails that I go through, last year I graduate with my doctorate degree. And that speaks for itself.”

4.2.1.3 Family Reunification

Lastly, family reunification was a major factor that inspired migration amongst this group of participants as well. Many participants described being separated from at least one parent who was in the U.S. during their childhood. Samuel mentions:

“My biological mom... I hadn’t seen her since she left Haiti in 1971.

When I saw her again it was 1983... that was a long long time.

So yes, that was like a big dream come true for me ... I had this grudge that my mom had abandoned me and my sisters. So, when I came here I wanted to see her and ask her why she did that.”

As shown, Samuel mentioned how family separation sparked some intimacy issues and feelings of abandonment in his youth. This was common among the other participants as well.

For example, Darline described that:

“At times I felt like, oh my god, I wish I could see my mother.

But then my auntie that raised me would make me understand that your mom is not here only because she is trying to get a better way of life and working on bringing you there. So, I always had hope because the fact that I know that she just didn’t just dump or she just didn’t want me. That wasn’t the case.”

Generally, the desire to reconnect with loved ones greatly inspired migration.

These utopic ideas of American life, the desires for education and success, as well as the need for family reunification led these participants to migrate to the U.S.

4.2.2 “All That Glitters Isn’t Gold...”

This theme addresses the second research question “How does the intersection of class, race, gender, ability, immigration status, and nationality affect Haitian migrant’s experiences both migrating to and living in the United States?” More specifically, the ways intersecting identities complicate the actual migratory experience (meaning the actual migration/point of entry, as well as the period of acclimating to the United States). A variety of questions were asked regarding how the participants arrived in the U.S., as well as their experiences with race, xenophobia, and language soon after arriving.

4.2.2.1 Migration and entry point

The participants described their variety of entry points into the U.S., which are often influenced by class and access. Many participants were able to relocate to the U.S. with a green card through the family reunification process, because they already had one parent living in the U.S. Ronald mentioned:

“My dad was living here in the US. So, my dad was already here, but I was back home in Haiti with my family just pretty much enjoying life. Until one day he came and he told me that within a couple of months he would like for me and my sister to join him here in the US. So through him, I came legally with green card.”

This experience of lawful entry and residence was echoed by Esther, Fabiola, Darline, and Lisa.

Other participants were able to enter the U.S. with a tourist visa, so although they may have entered legally, they were under-documented after the expiration of that travel visa. Samuel was one of these people, and described that,

“The process was simple. My stepmom she went to the consulate and made a request for a visa for me. I was still underage so with no problem I was granted a visa. I was going back and forth and traveling ... when I first decided to live here permanently, I did not have my green card yet. So, my dad applied for me and I got it later through my dad.”

Emmanuel also came into the U.S. on a travel visa to escape political violence. He said:

“My father was working for the government and they were having uprisings in Haiti... So, the family ran before they would get killed. Because in Haiti, when they have uprisings, they go around and kill everybody in your family if you are affiliated with the government. So, I got sent to America to stay with my uncle.”

Only one participant in this group entered the U.S. illegally. Joseph described his experience of entering the U.S. on a boat in the early 1990s. He said:

“I spent five days on the sea, no food no water. So, when I got to (Southeastern state), it was actually my birthday. I turned 19 years old, and they put me in handcuffs. That was the most humiliating thing that ever happened to me... They took us to a detention center, then we got transported to Miami. But the time that we got to Miami there was no flights to Haiti, so they put us in a hotel waiting for flights to Haiti Meanwhile I was thinking about a way to get away.

So, I jumped from a third-floor hotel window in Miami, and I started running and was running for a long time. That's how I got away.

This is how I got here.”

4.2.2.2 Acclimation to the U.S.

The lack of documentation, as well language barriers, xenophobia, and class subjugation complicated the participant's experiences upon arrival to the U.S, and with acclimating to the new country. The idyllic view of American life they had prior to arriving was shifted by the reality of what life in the U.S. is actually like for migrants. Regarding lack of documentation, this forced some of the participants to work jobs that would not have been in alignment with their middle-class experiences in Haiti, and was not on par with the expectations they had of what the U.S. could offer. For example, Samuel had to work in a factory, because he was under-documented, until he could acquire legal status. He stated, “Once I have a green card, I would no longer work in the factory. Now I start working in parking lot and garage and parking cars. I was doing that during the night, meaning 12-8 a.m. I go home. And then by 3 o clock I had to be out to go to college.”

Joseph came to the U.S. with no documentation at all, and described his horror at having to work as a day laborer upon arrival, before his mother was able to send him a loan with some money to hold him over. He stated:

“I found myself working in the field of vegetables in Florida.

Picking up cucumbers, picking up tomatoes and peppers

as a labor worker for \$4.25. That never happened to me in my country...

When I went to work the first day there was not even one inch of shade in the field. And you were there from 5 in the morning to 5pm, for \$35... Man, but fortunately for me I contacted my mother and say that I need money. I need to buy clothes and go to school... so after some days of that hard labor, slavery labor, \$35 dollar a day, I received a letter from Haiti with \$500 dollars in it. So, I call all my friends and I say look, after today I want you guys to make a cross on the ground and kiss it. Don't you ever dare insulting me again, asking me to go work in the field with you again. Never. So that was the last time. I didn't go back working on that field after that ever again."

4.2.2.3 Xenophobia and Language Barriers

As mentioned, xenophobia and language barriers also made the adjustment hard after initial point of entry as well. Participants expressed feelings of frustration and anger when language barriers would occur, particularly when people belittled them based on their accent or lack of ability to speak English fluently. Language barriers also created an isolating and divisive experiencing for migrants, making it harder to adjust and acculturate into the new society. Roseline said, "I remember not getting a job, because of my accent. My English was not good, and I remember the man called me stupid. I was not stupid, I just could not speak the language that well yet. I cried and cried, because I was so mad." Many of the participants echoed Roseline's frustrations about the difficulty learning the language, and the frustrations of being otherized as a result of not speaking English. Fabiola mentioned an incident in school where an

American girl got into an argument with one of her Haitian friends and said, “You’re Haitian, you speak creole!” as if that was a bad thing.

Additionally, targeted xenophobic episodes shaped the migration experiences of these migrants as well. Ronald described how classmates in his school refused to even sit next to him or interact with him, because he was Haitian. He went so far as to say, “Being Haitian was almost like a curse.” Darline discussed how there were days where Haitians would be subjected to targeted violence in her school:

“The other students, who were from... let’s say an English-speaking island.

They thought they were superior. So that was a problem. They would call us Frenchie. They would beat up Haitians...they would make up things to confront the Haitian students, so they can get upset, and so they can go start a fight and pull out guns, bats, you name it.”

Roseline was amongst the thousands of people in New York who protested the xenophobic banning of Haitians from donating blood due to the AIDS epidemic, and the classification of Haitians as an at-risk group (Hilts, 1990). She said:

“I told you this before but I was a part of the march in New York.

We had a march because they said Haitians are the ones that bring AIDS to America. We knew that it was not true.

That is ridiculous. So, we all did a march to let them know that Haitians are not the ones.”

The lack of expectations met, as well as the language barriers and xenophobic experiences they experienced, quickly offered a sobering reality of the truth of U.S. life for

migrants. All the participants identified feeling disillusioned with some of their experiences upon arrival.

4.2.3 “Taking the Good with the Bad...”

This theme also addresses the second research question “How does the intersection of class, race, gender, ability, immigration status, and nationality affect Haitian migrant’s experiences both migrating to and living in the United States?” More specifically, the ways intersecting identities complicate the experience of living in the United States as an immigrant long term (post-acclimation period). Therefore, the questions that were asked focused on life after the migrants were better adjusted and acclimated to the U.S. They primarily focused on achievement, identity, and citizenship.

4.2.3.1 Permanent Residence and Citizenship

As mentioned, five of the eight participants came to America with a green card or permanent residence. All five applied for and received American citizenship at different periods in their life as well.

For the three participants that were undocumented/under-documented, pathways to permanent residence and citizenship were more complicated. Samuel’s father was able to apply for permanent residence for him after some time of him functioning in the U.S. being under-documented. However, he has no plans of applying for U.S. citizenship, stating “Actually I’ve been living in the United States for at least like 30 years and guess what? I’m not a citizen. I’m

not an American citizen. I was born Haitian and I will remain Haitian. I am proud of being Haitian.” Joseph was granted amnesty under Bill Clinton’s presidency. He said:

“I tried to marry someone ... and it did not work. I continued functioning without papers. I did fine. I find fake papers eventually and I go to work. That’s it. And then when Bill Clinton was president he gave amnesty. And he said if anybody was here in 1995 up to when he was president, they are granted amnesty. So I was granted amnesty by Bill Clinton in 2000. I went to Haiti for the first time in 2001.”

Joseph also had some contentious feelings surrounding citizenship, stating:

“The thing about it... the U.S. does whatever the U.S. wants in Haiti. The U.S. tells Haiti which president to have. They tell Haiti what to do. So, what’s the point of me becoming a U.S. citizen. I am already under the rules and governance of the United States to begin with without being a U.S. citizen, whether I am in Haiti or in America. So, what’s the point? So, I figure I might as well be Haitian and just go with the flow. That’s why I never did it. How can another country tell a sovereign nation how to govern itself? This is what I didn’t like. So, there’s no point either way.”

He mentioned however, that he did recently apply for U.S. citizenship this year, because when he retires, he wanted to be able to benefit from all his hard work. Emmanuel’s present documentation and citizenship status was not made explicitly clear. He stated, “I tried to marry somebody for a green card. Didn’t work (laughs). But I tried a couple of times...”

The participants described the citizenship process as inaccessible for people who could not read or write English, or for people who do not have money. Roseline described the strenuous process of her citizenship test:

“You don't know what kind of questions they will ask you.

You have to be knowledgeable about the constitution and other things in order to pass a test, because when you go to the immigration agent and the immigration agent start asking you question, you have to be able to answer the question.

They will ask you to write a sentence. I remember they asked me to write a sentence. They want to know if I were able to write English. Besides speaking it, you have to be able to write it.”

Ronald stated that the hardest part about the immigration test for him “was the fee.” All five of the participants with American citizenship, Fabiola, Darline, Ronald, Esther and Roseline described that they identify as “Haitian-American” as a result of their citizenship status. Darline stated, “I am a U.S. citizen but I identify as Haitian American, because my passport says my native land, which is Haiti.” Fabiola mentioned that the Haitian part of her identity comes first, stating:

“I am always identifying myself as Haitian American.

Even with my kids, who are born here, what I teach them is that you are Haitian American. Haitian is first. It is in the blood, so no matter what that Haitian culture is still within.”

Emmanuel, Joseph, and Samuel identify solely as Haitian. Joseph recently applied for American citizenship, and when asked if he will identify as American once his application is

complete, Joseph stated “Never. How could I? I been living here 30 years... still Haitian. Becoming a US citizen is by law, by norms, by society. Your blood is different.”

4.2.3.2 *Increased Opportunities*

Increased opportunities for jobs and education has been a long-term benefit of living in the U.S. for these participants, even if this country did not reach the fantastical descriptions of the American Dream that they were told. They were able to “make something of themselves,” even if they had to work extremely hard to achieve it. They maintained, however, that while America is the land of opportunity in some ways, it is not a land of equal opportunity. Samuel stated:

“I came and I had a lot of opportunities. I could have been a doctor if I wanted to. I could have been anything I want living in the United States. Except that...I always say that this is the land of opportunity. But it’s not the land of equal opportunity. Meaning that I have to struggle a lot before I can get something done. But for a white man, it’s not the same thing.”

Fabiola echoed this sentiment stating “What I have learned in America is that hard work does pay off. So, it’s not easy but it’s not impossible. So, when I was coming here to the United States I didn’t realize I would have to work as hard as I did to be in the position that I am in. But there’s still that path.” Emmanuel and Joseph were the only two participants who had a differing position on this idea. Joseph agreed that the U.S. provided opportunities, however he stated “Sometimes I don’t know if it was a mistake to leave Haiti or not. I can’t tell. I don’t know the

future. But from this past 30 years, I still can't decide if it was a mistake or not. I was thinking that this was just the path of life." Emmanuel agreed that the U.S. does provide more opportunities as well, however he stated that:

"America is the land of trickery. Opportunity only comes to those who know how to get it. You gotta learn to lie. That's not opportunity, that's trickery. Over here, you got guys from Harvard running the government and running the economy, and they are the biggest thieves. So, you gotta trick people to get ahead. That's not land of the free, that's land of the opportunists."

For women, specifically, sexism was imbedded in their home country experience. Darline identified that women in Haiti had limited options, and were regulated to being housewives. She stated, "mostly I think they were like the homemakers. They stayed home. Some of them would think the man was superior. Cause men would go to work. And they would stay home, take care of the children, and cook and clean. And do all of that. So, I feel that they think the man was superior." Regarding sexism, Samuel stated "When I was growing up... to me I feel that women almost did not have any rights. I didn't see them having any rights. Meaning that there were things that a man can do that a woman cannot do." The participants expressed that women in the U.S. were more liberated and had more options outside of the home. Roseline stated "I told you last time that I believe that women in America work harder than women in Haiti, because women in Haiti are mostly housewife. But in America, the women go to work and they raise their children at the same time. They do both men and women job." Darline mentioned:

"Yeah because here to me women had more freedom. It's like they could provide for themselves, and do for themselves. Whereas back home, if a

woman even wanted to buy a pair of shoes they would have to consult the husband. Because you are not working, you don't have a job. So, it would have to come from the husband. So for me, here in the U.S. there is more freedom for women.”

In terms of ability, Esther discussed how the U.S. has increased resources and opportunities for the deaf community. She stated:

“It is very hard to be deaf in Haiti” and how “America was great for deaf education. And I had all the equipment for deaf, and they had everything in America. So that's why I wanted to come, I wanted to see for myself. Life was good. I had everything. I had video phone here, which I didn't have there. I never had a phone in Haiti.”

Therefore, despite the negative aspects of their experience that they have encountered, all the participants identified with the idea that the U.S. provided them with opportunities that would not be available in their home country. While the U.S. is not a paradise land of milk and honey, it's a place that has allowed them to make a decent life for themselves. Additionally, all the participants mentioned disappointment in the present state of Haiti. For example, Darline mentioned, “I'm not proud really of what is happening now. All the things happening now, we did not have growing up. People look at Haiti now as a very poor and crazy country.” This disappointment was echoed by the other participants, and helps to reaffirm their decision to leave in the first place.

4.3 Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore why Haitian migrants choose to relocate, as well as how race, nationality, class, ability, immigration status, and gender influence Haitian migrant's experiences migrating to and living in the United States. The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What motivates Haitian migrants to relocate to the United States?
2. How does the intersection of class, race, gender, ability, immigration status, and nationality affect Haitian migrant's experiences both migrating to and living in the United States?

In order to understand how intersectional identities impact the experiences of Haitian migrants, this study focused on motivations for relocation, experiences during migration and acclimation, and the experiences living in the U.S long term. The factors and their correlating themes were discussed in detail in this chapter, and a synopsis is provided below.

Regarding motivations for relocating, although participants discussed positive memories associated with life in Haiti, they described a collective belief that the U.S. essentially had more to offer. This idea was expressed through participants experiencing fond remembrances of their home country, while also expressing utopic ideas of the American dream, and the desire for increased opportunity. Additionally, family reunification was a major reason for relocating, as many participants had a parent or loved one already living in the states.

Regarding the impact of intersectional identities on the actual migration and acclimation process, each participant's entry point to the U.S. was contingent upon their access to resources and privilege. Additionally, most of the participants described a disillusionment with what the

United States was actually like. This idea was expressed through participants describing the lack of met expectations in association with the American dream, the lack of opportunity they experienced based on their identities, as well as xenophobia and language barriers.

Regarding the impact of intersectional identities on the participants lived experiences long term, they expressed a collective agreement that the U.S. provides increased educational and job opportunities overall. Additionally, there are more opportunities and resources for women and differently abled people (specifically the deaf community) in the U.S. as well. Participants also expressed a disappointment in the present state of Haiti, contributing to the need to make the best of their life in the U.S., because there is essentially nowhere safe or sustainable to go back to in their country.

Overall, participants did not leave Haiti, because of a lack of pride or affinity, but because they bought into the myth of the American Dream, and wanted to reunify their family. While they acknowledge that the U.S. had offered many educational and job opportunities that would not have otherwise been available, it is not the utopic society that was described to them prior to migrating. Racism, xenophobia, immigration status, class, gender, and ability all impact the migration and lived experiences of migrants in the United States.

5 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore why Haitian migrants choose to relocate, as well as how race, nationality, class, ability, immigration status, and gender influence Haitian migrant's experiences migrating to and living in the United States. The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What motivates Haitian migrants to relocate to the United States?
2. How does the intersection of class, race, gender, ability, immigration status, and nationality affect Haitian migrant's experiences both migrating to and living in the United States?

Eight Haitian immigrants between the ages 42-63 participated in this study. Participants were recruited using flyers posted online and sent to personal networks, as well as through snowball sampling. All participants were interviewed individually. 6 interviews occurred over the phone, 2 interviews were in person and socially distanced to adhere to Covid-19 precautions. This study utilized a qualitative research design, where emotion and value coding was employed. While the information from these interviews served as the primary source of data, relevant historical, cultural, and legal context was utilized for context, particularly throughout the discussion. Data analysis revealed three major themes in relation to the research questions. The theme developed in response to the first research question was *"I love my home country, but there more is more out there..."* This theme described participants experiencing fond remembrances of their home country, utopic ideas of the America Dream and the desire for

increased opportunity, and family reunification. The second theme developed in response to the second research question, specifically regarding the migration and acclimation experience, was *“All that glitters isn’t gold...”* This theme described class and privilege associated with the ability to migrate, as well as a disillusionment of the American dream, and lack of opportunity for a variety of reasons upon arrival. The third theme developed in response to the second research question, specifically regarding the experience of living in the U.S. long term, was *“Taking the good with the bad...”* This theme discussed increased educational and job opportunities overall, as well as more freedom, resources, and opportunity for women and deaf people. The current instability of Haiti was also discussed as well. This chapter provides a discussion of the conclusions of the study, as well as limitations, and recommendations for future research.

5.1 Discussion

Research question number one sought to discover what motivates Haitian migrants to relocate to the United States. Based on the responses and experiences of the participants, it is clear that while migration is inspired by a variety of push and pull factors, there were some commonalities that were prevalent.

In regard to push factors, class status and the historical and current state of Haiti seem to be the most prevalent influences in terms of motivation to relocate. Class plays a significant role in the migratory experience. Discussions of class in Haiti must be contextualized by the fact that it is a third world country with a struggling economy, political turmoil, and plentiful human rights violations. Class delineations in Haiti must also be rooted in the historical context of the

country as well- as a slave colony, independent nation, and neocolonial island. Historically, Haiti had a class system that was divided into three strata: the whites, the free people of color or mulattoes, and the enslaved people (Wingfield & Parenton, 1965). After the Haitian revolution, Haiti transformed into a two-class system, where the mulatto population became the new elite ruling class, and the formerly enslaved people became the peasant mass (Wingfield & Parenton, 1965). The military offered one of the only means of advancement for black Haitians during this time (Haggerty, 1989). This system lasted until the twentieth century, when the emergence of a middle class began (Wingfield & Parenton, 1965). The expansion of government services, educational reform, increased black consciousness, and economic stimulation after World War 2 contributed to middle class development (Haggerty, 1989). President Dumarsais Estimé (1946-1950) had a political mission to strengthen the middle class, as well as to strengthen the social position of dark skin Haitians (Haggerty, 1989). President Francois Duvalier was also known for his allegiance to the black middle class in Haiti (Haggerty, 1989). However, institutionalized corruption during the Duvalier dynasty stunted the economic growth of the country. The farmer peasant class in rural Haiti usually passed down land generationally, however a percentage of this population worked as sharecroppers and tenant farmers on the land of others (Haggerty, 1989). The urban low class was concentrated to Port-Au-Prince and the major coastal towns. This constituted the class of people who traveled to these cities from rural areas for work, however they often suffered unemployment and underemployment, because industrial growth could not keep up with the labor surplus (Haggerty, 1989).

All the participants in this study described their upbringing in Haiti as middle class. However, due to the newer creation of the strata as outlined above, the qualifications of what constitutes middle class in Haiti is not always consistent. Haggerty defined being middle class in

Haiti as having “a non-manual occupation, a moderate income, literacy, and a mastery of French. Middle-class Haitians sought upward mobility for themselves and their children, and they perceived education and urban residence as two essential keys to achieving higher status” (1989).

Samuel was one participant who fit more neatly into this definition of middle class. He mentioned being from the more privileged class in Haiti, and the privileges he recounted were as follows: “I was able to eat whenever I want... and I was able to go to catholic schools.” Access to consistent food, and an elite education constituted middle class in his case. Regarding Haggerty’s definition, he also spoke fluent French, and a fair amount of English, because of the school he attended. His parents had non-manual occupations as well. However, while all the participants self-identified as middle class, they did not all meet each of these requirements. It was clear throughout the study that middle class existence required negotiations on a social and economic level to maintain daily living and to get ahead. Some of the participants spoke French fluently (particularly in school), while others did not. A few of the participants had parents who spoke French, while some participant’s parents did not. Some of the participants had access to elite education, while others did not. Some of the participant’s parents had what would be considered more elite middle class occupations such as working in the government, while others sold commerce, had small businesses, and worked manual jobs. The only consistent marker of middle class strata that all the participants echoed, in harmony with Samuel, was a conflation of being middle class with having your basic necessities met. This meant access to food every day, having a home to live in, and having some level of access to consistent education. They saw themselves as different than, for example, the urban low class that would often work as domestic laborers in homes, and who did not have access to education. Within the class structure of Haiti, they could differentiate themselves from the peasant or poor class, so even if they did not meet

all of the markers of the newly minted middle class, they associated themselves with that strata. It's obvious that this group holds privileges, because supplemental income is needed to purchase visas to come to the United States, or to send your children to private schools, even if you are stretching the last bit of money you have. However, when we try to superimpose Western ideals of middle and upper middle class onto these participants (as seen with Haggerty's definition), many would need a different class delineation. This was echoed by Samuel, who mentioned:

“I'm realizing it was a fallacy to think that I was middle class in Haiti.

Because most of the necessities... I did not have them.

For example, America... they have hospitals, free education...

they have everything. These things are things every human being

needs. On the contrary, in Haiti, these things are considered luxury.”

So, although Samuel was one of the participants that fit the most neatly into the middle-class definition provided, this ironic mid-interview realization shows the complicated nature of class in this third world country. Middle class in Haiti includes a variety of people with different backgrounds, some with more income and access than others, however the most common element that seemed to link the participants to their middle-class identity was daily access to what in the United States would be considered basic human necessities (food, shelter, education). This influences the desire to migrate, because the participants described wanting more than what their country or their class status could offer (job opportunities, resources, etc).

The historical and current economic state of Haiti has also motivated Haitian migrants to relocate to the United States. Historical context is needed to conceptualize the current economic plight of Haiti. Haiti was one of the most lucrative colonies prior to its independence from France in 1804 (McClellan, 2010). After Haiti won its independence however, it was isolated

from international trade and formal recognition, and had to pay France reparations totaling to 150 million francs until 1947. This international isolation and exploitation mixed with corrupt ineffective government created a perfect storm that has left Haiti as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere (The World Bank, 2020). Low employment rates and a lack of job opportunities and resources has made it difficult for Haitian citizens to thrive and truly create a life for themselves. Remittances are one of the most important forms of financial support in the country, however this leaves citizens dependent on outside sources to get their needs met. The lack of opportunity they would have experienced if they remained in Haiti was discussed by the participants. Darline and Ronald, for example, discussed the unavailability of educational and job opportunities in Haiti even with a college education. Although all the participants described themselves as middle-class, ultimately this class delineation could not have insulated them from the lack of economic opportunity that so many Haitians face due to the stagnation of the economy, corruption of the government, and interference of foreign entities. Additionally, the participants described that Haiti is in a much worse state politically, socially, and economically today than when they were growing up. All of the participants were at least 25 years removed from Haiti, and they all expressed that the country has only continued to further deteriorate in that time. Although they identified still having pride in their home country, it reaffirmed their initial decision (or parent's decision) to relocate. Ronald stated:

“I feel like things are deteriorating and progress has not been made.

So, it's really hard to keep the pride in something that's

not progressing in a sense... but I still love my homeland and I

still love my people. But there are other things I am not so proud of.”

Even Joseph, who was not interested in identifying as American stated “The pride of my country is in the past. I cannot say anyone in my country has done something for me to be proud of. They are all bought. Money is their leader, nobody cares about the country, nobody cares for the people.” This economic stagnation has created a country where unemployment, regardless of education, is a norm. This motivates Haitians to relocate to the United States for better opportunities.

In regard to pull factors, family reunification and ideals of the American Dream inspired migration the most amongst this group. Family reunification was greatly discussed amongst these participants. Family reunification is the largest channel of entry for Haitian migrants in general. While the U.S. provides 675,000 permanent immigrant visas per year, “the INA sets no limit on the annual admission of U.S. citizens’ spouses, parents, and children under the age of 21” (American Immigration Council, 2019). Therefore, migrants may have an easier time gaining legal permanent residence this way, as seen amongst the study participants.

On the opposite end, Fabiola discussed having to leave her mother behind due to issues with their immigration paperwork, stating:

“But my mom, same crazy process with immigration... she ended up staying back. And my mom probably stayed in Haiti at least another 3 years later before she migrated here. So, five of us end up growing up here with my dad, and you know this is kind of like the first time we were meeting him, and we end up spending at least like 3 to 4 years with him as a single dad.”

The disconnection and severance of family structures as a migratory experience and the desire to reconnect as a source of motivation for migration was made clear throughout this study.

As mentioned, all the participants described being inundated by the mythos of the American Dream, which inspired migration as well. For example, Darline mentioned:

“America to me was like a dream land. At the time, we thought everything was A+. Like there was no hunger, everything was perfect. People picture it like a land that’s almost like heaven. Even though it’s not what most people dreamed about. But at the time we thought America was the place to be. The land of opportunity, like they say.”

These same ideals of the American Dream described by Darline were consistent amongst the participants. This idea that one can come to the United States and gain access to fame, fortune, and opportunities, especially easily, was something that each participant was taught and believed, and that also inspired migration amongst this group as well.

There was not much literature regarding the specific push and pull factors for Haitian migration to the U.S. However, the history of the country, including political and economic turmoil, and natural disasters, as well as the American Dream were cited as possibilities. While the subpar conditions in Haiti contributed to the issues that pushed the participants out of the country (lack of educational and job opportunities), the American Dream and family reunification were cited as pull factors amongst the participants, as was reflected in the literature.

For research question two, *How does the intersection of class, race, gender, ability, immigration status, and nationality affect Haitian migrant’s experiences both migrating to and living in the United States?*, all the intersecting identities listed were ultimately shown to affect Haitian migrant’s experiences either migrating to or living in the United States, though sometimes not both.

Regarding their experiences migrating to the U.S. (which included the point of entry and the acclimation period), the participants discussed a variety of experiences that highlighted how identity impacts the migration experience. First, the identities that did not seem to impact the migration experiences of the migrants will be discussed. Although historically, race does impact the migration experiences of Haitian migrants (considering the differences in treatment of Cuban refugees versus Haitian refugees, and the comments made by President Trump as discussed in chapter two), race was not highlighted as an important factor that impacted migration amongst this group, although it did impact their lived experiences. Additionally, while gender and ability did impact the experiences of migrants while living in the United States long term (and will be discussed further in this section as well), it did not seem to have a significant impact on the actual migration/point of entry and acclimation experiences of this group. The identities that had the largest impact on the migration experiences of the participants were class, immigration status, and nationality. Class and immigration status seemed to be intertwined, and were important to the migration experiences of the participants, because they influenced the point of entry and acclimation. Some participants were able to enter the United States legally as green card holders, which allowed for a less complicated point of entry. For example, Ronald mentioned “Yes, my dad was a U.S. citizen at that time. He still is. So, I came here legally with green card and now I am also a U.S. citizen.” There are class implications and privileges associated with access to a legal means of entry into the United States. However, legal entry for the participants does not always indicate a smooth entry process for the parents. Darline, for example, entered the U.S. legally with a green card as noted, however her parents came to the U.S. on a tourist visa and remained after its expiration. It took seven years for them to obtain legal status and file for their children to join them in the U.S., and in that time, they worked as

domestic laborers since they did not have proper documentation. This is an obvious example of the ways in which class and immigration status impact migration experiences. For Emmanuel, Joseph, and Samuel, being under-documented and undocumented had a significant impact on their experiences as well. For Samuel and Emmanuel, entering on tourist visas made for a simpler point of entry, however it critically impacted their acclimation to the new country in terms of jobs, schooling, and other opportunities. For Joseph, entering the country by boat was dangerous in terms of the actual migratory experience (on sea with no food or water for five days), and because being arrested as soon as he landed on shore put him in contact with the immigration system. It further complicated his acclimation to the country, because like Samuel and Emmanuel, it impacted his opportunity for jobs and schooling.

Nationality did impact the migration and acclimation experience as well. Each of the participants described how xenophobia impacted them in their primary experiences in the United States, whether it was bullying, barriers with language, or work discrimination. These types of experiences severely impacted the migrant's ability to acclimate to the country.

The literature discusses the difficulty in acquiring visas for those who do not have access and extra money. Many of the participants described themselves as middle class, and could procure the necessary documentation to enter the U.S. legally (even if they remained after visa expiration). Haitian "boat people" were discussed in the literature as well, and this experience was affirmed by one research participant. Haitians who came after the 2010 earthquake were in jeopardy of having their TPS status revoked, however there were no participants who fit this demographic in this study. Xenophobia was an important aspect of the migratory experience as discussed in the literature, and as noted, this was reflected in the experiences of the participants as well.

Regarding their experiences living in the U.S. long term (which included the period post acclimation), the participants discussed a variety of experiences that highlight how identity impacts the experience of living in the U.S. as a Haitian migrant. Class was a complicated identity in terms of the lived experiences of the participants. On one hand, the dishonesty of the American Dream leaves many Haitian migrants at-risk and unprepared for the reality of life in the United States, particularly in regard to class. Joseph mentioned, “The American dream is something ignorant Haitians are selling to the Haitians in Haiti. It is false. It is not real. It is fake. They never told the Haitians in Haiti how hard they had to work here to save money.” Joseph is describing how the capitalist structure of the U.S. requires overworking oneself to make ends meet. Low wages and other exploitations of workers make it hard to save money or get head. This sentiment was echoed by Emmanuel, who argued the semantics of the commonly held belief that the U.S. provides a better life, stating “What better life? You come here and work 10-12 hours a day for what? For a measly \$300 a week? And by the time you are ready to enjoy it, all your bones are cracked? Come on.” Additionally, Emmanuel discussed the dangers he faced while living in New York:

“We went from a middle-class neighborhood in Haiti to a dump.

Eastern parkway in Brooklyn. My neighborhood was poor...

I got mugged a few times. They would come put the knife to your side and take your wallet out your pocket. I would be so mad.

That never happened to me in my country.”

The American Dream myth shielded them from the truth about these types of realities, essentially leaving them unprepared and unsafe. Ronald discussed being limited in his career because of his race and nationality:

“I had some jobs where I was over qualified for but I couldn’t move further because of my accent or because I’m Haitian.

There are some other jobs where I feel like I perform way better than my counter parts and I never get promotions...

Being black and being Haitian definitely had something to do with that.”

The participants didn’t account for how discrimination would limit the scope of their American Dream. The barriers and inconsistencies of the American Dream are reflected in policy, popular discourse, and public opinions. In general, the United States has low economic mobility making it hard for many to achieve their ideals of success (Corak, 2013). Hout states “Your circumstances at birth—specifically, what your parents do for a living—are an even bigger factor in how far you get in life than we had previously realized. Generations of Americans considered the United States to be a land of opportunity. This research raises some sobering questions about that image” (2018). Issues such as climate change, lack of healthcare, student loan debt, and state violence undermine the validity of this national mythology for a wide variety of Americans as well. Institutional measures such as redlining, Jim Crow, and disparities in school funding highlight state sanctioned policies that at best hinders one’s opportunity for success, but more aptly- strips one of their humanity and right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” For migrants specifically, xenophobia, language barriers, and documentation and status, add an additional component that hinders their pursuit of the American Dream, and these aspects were expressed in the narrative histories of the participants. In polls done by Hanson and Zogby, while many Americans reported that the American Dream is more about spiritual happiness than material goods, and that hard work is the key to success, there is a growing minority that stated that hard work and determination does not always ensure success (2010).

Many Americans stated that it will be more difficult for future generations to achieve the American Dream with fair means, and they are less optimistic about the opportunity for working class communities to achieve success (Hanson & Zogby, 2010). A 2013 poll found that 41% of responders stated that it is impossible for most to achieve the American Dream, while 38% stated that it is still possible (Henderson, 2013). By perpetuating the fantasy of the American Dream that inspires migration to the U.S., as opposed to the reality of life in the U.S., we leave Haitian migrants unprepared for the xenophobia, class shift, crime, or exploitative nature of the capitalist structure in the United States that causes obstacles and hindrances on the path to success.

On the other hand, when asked directly, most of the participants described their class in the United States positively, and referred to themselves as middle class. This class delineation by the participants could be due to the complication of class strata in Haiti as described earlier. Since all the participants were getting their basic necessities met, and now had access to healthcare, colleges, job opportunities, and other resources, they definitely described themselves as middle class in the U.S as well. Additionally, research indicates that black migrants in general tend to have higher educational and economic outputs than U.S. born blacks, which could also explain the warped impact that class status seemed to have on these participant's experiences. According to The Pew Research Institute, "Immigrant blacks ages 25 and older are also more likely than U.S.-born blacks to have a bachelor's degree or more (26% versus 19%), less likely to live in poverty (20% versus 28%) and on average, have higher household incomes. They're also much more likely to be married (48% among those ages 18 and older versus 28%) than U.S.-born blacks, which is likely tied to their higher median age" (Anderson, 2015). These outputs may be fueled by the class strata and country of the person migrating, cultural values, and familial pressures to succeed in this foreign land and make their sacrifice "worth it."

Race impacted their lived experiences as well. Developing a consciousness of race after living in the United States for some time was discussed by all the participants. They each mentioned that they were not consciously aware of their race in Haiti, and while they were able to track colorism between the mulatto and dark skin Haitians, there wasn't any discrimination or focus on race that they were aware of. This lack of race consciousness meant that racism was a shocking reality for them after moving to the United States. For example, Joseph mentioned:

“I knew I was black, but I didn't know what racism was. I know it was just normal to be black, I didn't know that people would hate me for the color of my skin. I just know I'm black. It wasn't until I came here that I discovered that being black was a sin.”

This sentiment was echoed through the rest of the interviews as well.

Gender also impacted the lived experiences of the migrants, though positively in most cases. As discussed in chapter four, the participants described that women in the U.S. had more freedom and opportunities, as many women in Haiti were regulated to being housewives. Three of the four women that participated in the study were college-educated, and one worked as a lawyer, one worked as nurse, and one worked in a health office. The participant who was not college educated was still able to work an entry level position, and make a living for herself and her daughter. Fabiola mentioned that “women in other places really do not have a voice at all. So, it's amazing and it's a blessing in America seeing that at least there is a fair fight that is happening for equality between genders.”

Ability impacted the lived experience of Esther positively, as her quality of life increased as a result of living in the United States. As mentioned in chapter four, she had access to resources such as a video phone, which would not have been available to her in Haiti.

Additionally, she discussed how most deaf people in Haiti cannot find work, however she has a job here with proper accommodations.

Immigration status impacted the lived experiences of both Emmanuel and Joseph long term. As discussed in chapter four, they had to navigate the U.S. without documentation or later with fake documentation, which impacted their trajectory, and the things they were able to accomplish. Everyday occurrences are increasingly risky when operating in this country without proper documentation, and this hinders one's ability to move about freely.

Lastly, nationality impacted the lived experiences of these migrants as well. Xenophobia, intimidation, and ignorance would continue to be an issue the participants faced throughout their lives, because anti-blackness and anti-haitianismo (usually attributed to the Dominican Republic) are still issues in this country and globally. On a positive note, the participants described developing community with other Haitian migrants in the U.S. and staying connected to their culture. As previously mentioned, Darline described how students at her high school had days they would violently target Haitians. However, Darline described how the Haitian boys at her high school would try to protect them from the targeted violence, stating "the Haitian guys was always trying to protect us by telling us "hey girls, go home. Don't even stop at McDonalds today because Jamaicans are gonna fight Haitians or Puerto Ricans are gonna fight Haitians." They always did that." This community and comradery helped to make the lived experience safer and more positive.

The literature, as noted in chapter two, primarily discussed racial consciousness and identity, remittances, and language in accordance with the experiences of Haitians living in the U.S. The participants described developing a racial consciousness and becoming aware of racism, but none of them mentioned wanting to dissociate with blackness or black Americans, as

was discussed in the literature. None of the participants discussed remittances as a significant factor of their experience, however this could be due to their class status and age at migration. Language and xenophobia, however, were discussed as significant factors impacting their lived experience, in line with what was discussed in the literature. The participants discussed additional aspects, such as better options for marginalized members of the Haitian community, which was not aptly discussed in the literature reviewed for this study, thus expanding the literature.

5.2 Limitations

Despite the best efforts of the researcher, limitations are present within this study. The study's findings may have been impacted by the small number of participants, as well as the lack of diversity in age, immigration status, and socioeconomic background.

All participants were interviewed in-depth, and their thoughts and opinions were represented in their own words, however a sample size of eight is relatively small. Eight participants were a manageable amount considering the time restraints of this thesis, however it is too small for the results to be considered reflective of the entire Haitian migrant population in the U.S. The results provided unique insight in understanding how intersectional identities impact the experiences of Haitian migrants, and while there are some universal truths reflected in the experiences of this group, this group is not reflective of all Haitian migrants.

The researcher intended to have a participant pool with a wider variety of age, immigration status, and socioeconomic range. However, Covid-19 guidelines restricted access to Haitian migrants in other areas, forcing the researcher to choose a sample of convenience based

on location and network. This severely limited to number of participants. The researcher acknowledges that a wider variety of participants may skew findings.

Lastly, discussing migration experiences (particularly methods of entry and status) is an uncomfortable topic. Therefore, there is always the potential for participants to relay inaccurate or untrue information. There is also the potential for participants to misremember certain aspects, considering that many of them migrated 25-30 years prior. Attempts to minimize this limitation were done via the emphasis of confidentiality, the use of pseudonyms for each participant, as well as cross-referencing stories with relevant cultural, historical, and legal context. Despite the push in ensuring that all participants knew that confidentiality was a priority, and while much of the information that was able to be cross-referenced was deemed accurate, this may not have been enough to ensure that the participants were providing entirely truthful answers.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to explore why Haitian migrants choose to relocate, as well as how race, nationality, class, ability, immigration status, and gender influence Haitian migrant's experiences migrating to and living in the United States. A qualitative study design was used to conduct this research. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed for future research:

1. Conduct this study with Haitians who migrated after the 21st century
2. Conduct this study with Haitian migrants with increased variety in age and socioeconomic background

3. Use alternative or additional qualitative methodologies to explore the themes that were prevalent in the study

5.3.1 Conduct this study with Haitians who migrated after the 21st century

This study only included participants who migrated to the United States prior to the 21st century, more specifically from the years 1983-1995. Future studies should consider conducting this research with Haitians who migrated to the United States after the 21st century. Haiti experienced incredible political turmoil after the turn of the century, including a coup d'état in 2004, a massive earthquake and subsequent cholera outbreak in 2010, and in more recent years, protests against President Jovenel Moïse. The political and economic landscape has continued to deteriorate, and residents have experienced increased poverty, violence, and stagnation as a result. The impact of the intersectional identities on experiences for these migrants may differ vastly from the participants in this study, who come from a more middle class background, and remember Haiti as a fairly stable and peaceful place in their youth.

5.3.2 Conduct this study with Haitian migrants with increased variety in age and socioeconomic background

All of the participants were between the ages of 42-64. Additionally, this study primarily focused on participants from middle class backgrounds in Haiti. It would be useful for this research to be conducted with a group of participants with a wider age range. The experiences of

people currently in their 20s and 30s, and their 70s and 80s, may provide a new dynamic and much needed perspective. Additionally, interviewing migrants who come from different socioeconomic backgrounds, such as migrants from farming communities, those who have worked as domestic laborers in the homes of middle class Haitians, and even Haitians who are considered wealthy or elite would add additional nuance and perspective to this work. Conducting this research with a wider variety of participants will also make the work more generalizable.

5.3.3 Use alternative or additional qualitative methodologies to explore the themes that emerged in the study

The qualitative method utilized in this study was individual interviews. While the conclusions drawn from this data were thorough, the study could have benefitted from a deeper exploration in order to increase the understanding of each of the themes discussed in chapter four. For example, an analysis of court cases featuring Haitian migrants could have been conducted. Additionally, a study of media portrayals of Haitian migrants in film, television, and literature, and the impacts of these portrayals could have been conducted as well, in order to compare popular culture's perceptions of Haitian migrants to the lived experiences in their own descriptions. A phenomenological approach could also be utilized in order to really experience what life is like to live amongst Haitian migrants in communities where they are heavily populated such as certain areas in Miami, Florida. All of these alternative methodologies would provide interesting and insightful results that may vary greatly from what was presented.

5.4 Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore why Haitian migrants choose to relocate, as well as how race, nationality, class, ability, immigration status, and gender influence Haitian migrant's experiences migrating to and living in the United States. The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What motivates Haitian migrants to relocate to the United States?
2. How does the intersection of class, race, gender, ability, immigration status, and nationality affect Haitian migrant's experiences both migrating to and living in the United States?

This study adds to the existing body of literature on migration, intersectionality, and the experiences of Haitian migrants. It investigated how the intersectional identities of Haitian migrants influence their experiences. The findings showed that class status, the political and economic state of Haiti, family reunification, and believing in the American Dream inspired migration. Regarding how identities impacted the migration and lived experiences of the migrants, the findings showed that all the intersecting identities listed were ultimately shown to affect Haitian migrant's experiences either migrating to or living in the United States, though sometimes not both. Explanations of these conclusions, as well as limitations and recommendations for future research were also provided in this chapter.

The participants provided great insight into the research questions, and the themes presented a lot of unexpected and interesting information. While each participant had their own

unique experience, there were similarities regarding push and pull factors, and the migration and long term lived experiences. The narrative histories of these participants revealed the ways in which the migration experiences of Haitian migrants are complicated. While interest in migration and immigrant communities is becoming more popularized in both research and mainstream news, the nuances impacting communities of color are being neglected from the conversation. There is a lack of research that thoroughly dissects the variety of influences that inspire migration, as well as the experiences of Haitian migrants upon arriving. Additionally, the criminalization of “illegal” immigrants in mainstream media dehumanizes migrants, and ignores the intersecting marginalized identities that complicate pathways to permanent residence and/or citizenship. This research is relevant to the field of African American studies, because migration is a human rights issue that affects the entire diaspora. Additionally, Haitian migrants endure trauma that is informed by deeply rooted oppression that impacts all facets of their being, and they could greatly benefit from being centered in research that provides a platform to tell their story. Therefore, this research seeks to address these gaps in migration research specifically in relation to the narrative histories of Haitian migrants.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Recruitment Form

Hello! My name is Brittany Pradere. I am a Master's student at Georgia State University in the Department of African American Studies. I would greatly appreciate your participation in my study, *Black Migrants Matter: A Narrative Study of the Experiences of Haitian Migrants in the United States*. The objective of this study is to explore why Haitian migrants choose to relocate to the United States, as well as if their race, nationality, class, ability, immigration status, and gender impact their experiences migrating to and living in the United States. This research is significant, because it seeks to address the gaps in migration research, as well as to inspire more equity and justice in U.S. immigration policies.

In order to be a participant in this study, you must:

- Self-identify as a black
- Born in Haiti
- Be over 18 years of age
- Live within the United States

If you are interested in participating in this study:

If anonymity is of concern:

- Choose a pseudonym name for the study
- Call me at 404-509-6590
- Identify yourself with the name you have chosen

If anonymity is not of concern:

- Call me at 404-509-6590
- Email me at bpradere1@student.gsu.edu
- Please include your name, best number to reach you, best available times to call, and email address.

Thank you for taking interest in this study.

Georgia State University
African American Studies Dept

BLACK MIGRANTS MATTER: A STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF HAITIAN MIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES

HOW TO SIGN UP:
CALL OR TEXT (404) 509-6590 OR EMAIL BPRADERE1@STUDENT.GSU.EDU

Participate in a research study by doing an interview so we can learn more about the experiences of Haitians who migrate to the United States

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?
ANY HAITIAN WHO MIGRATED TO THE UNITED STATES, WHO IDENTIFIES AS BLACK, AND IS OVER 18 YEARS OLD

EVERY PARTICIPANT WILL RECEIVE AN AMAZON GIFT CARD UPON COMPLETION OF INTERVIEW

Figure 1

Appendix B: Informed Consent

Title: Black Migrants Matter: A Narrative Study of the Experiences of Haitian Migrants in the United States

Georgia State University

Department of African American Studies

Informed Consent Form

We are asking you to participate in a research study. It is called Black Migrants Matter: A Narrative Study of the Experiences of Haitian Migrants in the United States.

Principal Investigator: Sarita Davis

Student Investigator: Brittany Pradere

Introduction and Key Information

You are invited to take part in a research study. It is up to you to decide if you would like to take part in the study,

The purpose of the study is to learn about the life experiences of Haitian migrants show why they choose to relocate to the United States, as well as if different parts of their identities impact Haitian migrant's experiences with migrating to and living in the United States.

Your role in the study will last 40-90 minutes. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire and participate in an interview.

Participating in this study will not expose you to any more risks than you would experience in a typical day.

Upon completion of the interview, you will receive a \$25 amazon gift card.

Overall, we hope to gain information about the migration experiences of Haitians who relocate to the United States. If you do not wish to participate in this study, the alternative is to not take part in the study.

Purpose: This study explores if the life experiences of Haitian migrants show why they choose to relocate to the United States, as well as if different parts of their identities impact Haitian migrant's experiences with migrating to and living in the United States. You have been invited to participate, because you self-identified as a Haitian migrant over 18 years old, who is black, and lives in the United States.

Procedures: A total of 8 migrants will be in this study. You will complete a questionnaire, as well as an in-person or phone/online interview conducted by the student researcher. Participation will involve a one time commitment of about 40-90 minutes on a chosen day to complete both the questionnaire and the interview. The interview will either take place on the phone or online, or in person at a location that is convenient for you.

Future Research: Researchers will remove information that may identify you and may use your data for future research. If we do this, we will not ask for any additional consent from you.

Risks: There is no more risk than in a typical day by participating in this study. You may be triggered by talking about past experiences in your life. If this occurs, resources such as the GA Crisis Hotline, can be provided to you.

Benefits: There are no personal benefits to partaking in this study. The results of this study may also help to inspire more equality in U.S. immigration policies.

Alternatives: The alternative to taking part in this study is to not take part in the study.

Compensation: You will receive a \$25 amazon gift card at the completion of the interview.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Participation in the research study is completely up to you. Please understand that you are not required to participate in this study. If you join the study and change your mind, you are allowed to drop out at any time. You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled based on these decisions.

Confidentiality: All your records will be kept private to the allowable extent of the law. Only the PI, student researcher, as well as the GSU Institutional Review Board, and the Office for Human Research Protection (if necessary) will have access to the information you provide. Data will be saved on the researcher's password protected laptop under a pseudonym (fake name). Data will be transcribed and deleted within 14 days of the interview. Personal information will not be used when presenting or publishing this work.

Contact Information: If you have any questions regarding the study, contact Brittany Pradere at (404)-509-6590 or via email: bpradere1@student.gsu.edu. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research study, please contact Principal Investigator, Sarita Davis in the Department of African American Studies at Georgia State University at skdavis04@yahoo.com. The IRB at Georgia State University reviews all research that involves human participants. You can contact the IRB if you would like to speak to someone who is not involved directly within the study. You can contact the IRB for questions, concerns,

problems, information, input, or questions about your rights as a research participant. Contact the IRB at 404-413-3500 or irb@gsu.edu.

Copy of Consent Form: You will be provided a copy of this consent form.

It is up to you to choose if you want to take part in this study.

Do you agree take to part in this study? Please say Yes or No

Appendix C: Demographic Questionnaire

1. Age: _____

2. Highest Level of Education:

Some High school ___ High school Graduate ___ Some College ___ College Graduate ___

3. Employment:

Employed ___ Unemployed ___ Self Employed ___ Student ___ Other _____ (Specify)

4. Occupation: _____ (if applicable)

5. Gender: Woman Man Transman Transwoman Agender Other

6. Sexual Orientation: Straight Gay Lesbian Bisexual Queer Asexual

7. Religious Affiliation _____

8. Do you identify as black? Yes or No

9. Did you migrate to U.S.? Yes or No

10. What is your home country? _____

11. Where do you currently live? _____

12. How long have you lived in the United States? _____

Appendix D: Interview Guide

1. How would you describe your memories as a child/teen/adult in your home country?
2. How would you describe your role in your immediate family within your household growing up?
3. In a few words describe the neighborhood in which you grew up. Compare this to the neighborhood that you currently reside in.
4. What did racism/sexism mean to you in your home country?
5. Did you have pride in your home country? Do you have pride in it now? If so, what was the source of your pride?
6. Do you identify as an American? If not, how do you identify?
7. How would you describe your views about America before migrating?
8. What were you told about America before arriving?
9. Did it live up to your expectations?
10. Tell me about the process you experienced while attempting to come to America. How did you get here? What visa did you receive, if applicable? What was migrating like? What was your experience with gaining permanent residence?
11. Tell me about your experience when you first arrived. Compare it to your experience now.
12. How did you experience your nationality in America? Gender? Religion?
13. Describe your most vivid memories with any encounter with racism after migrating.

14. How would you describe your experience with others forms of discrimination in America (based on gender, country of origin, class)?
15. Have you ever been discriminated against on a job, in a class, in a medical office or any other social setting? If so, what was your experience like?
16. Have you ever been treated unfairly as a woman? As an immigrant? As a Haitian?
17. What does it mean to be Haitian in the U.S.?
18. What places make you feel at home in the U.S? Why?