Points of Entry and Existence: A Case Study Examination of East African Migrants in Clarkston, Georgia

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Points of Entry and Existence: A Case Study Examination of East African Migrants in Clarkston,

Georgia

by

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Under the Direction of Lia Bascomb, Ph.D.

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

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ABSTRACT

Many studies on East African immigrants focus only on immigrants from the Horn of Africa and/or primarily take place in the Midwestern United States, specifically Minnesota's Twin Cities area of the United States, as a comparison. In contrast, this study aims to explore the experiences of immigrants from diverse areas in the East African region and is set in the major Southern immigration hub of Clarkston, Georgia. This exploratory case study examines the experiences of East African migrants exploring the following research questions: (1) What are the experiences with United States immigration and citizenship processes that East African migrants hold? (2) How does the intersection of race, class, nationality, and citizenship status affect and influence East African immigrants' migrant and lived experiences in the United States?

INDEX WORDS: East African immigrants, Refugees, Immigration process, Clarkston, Atlanta

POINTS OF ENTRY AND EXISTENCE: A CASE STUDY EXAMINATION OF EAST

AFRICAN MIGRANTS IN CLARKSTON, GEORGIA

by

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DEDICATION

Completing this master's thesis is a culmination of the leaps I have taken thus far in life. I would not be at this point, able to take such leaps, without the support that has been poured into me. This work is in honor and dedication to all of those who have helped me get to where I am. I dedicate this work to my mama, Shetara. Thank you for your ever-present belief in me - without question. Everything I do is done with you in mind, and, as simple as it sounds, all I want to do is make you proud. As I grow into my womanhood, I am only now aware of how resilient you have been throughout your lifetime, and, in that, you have inspired me every day to keep going. Destiny, my little sister, thank you for always being "ten toes down," and for being a huge source of my motivation. Being the firsts in our family to do what we have, sharing this college journey alongside you has been something I have truly cherished in more ways than you know. Leondre, my big brother, you have always been my first point of inspiration in my education journey. And, beyond that, your kindness and giving spirit is something I am constantly working to mirror in the work I put out into the world. To Yiyah, my extended family, and everyone else rooting for me, I am thankful for you. All your prayers, love, and support fill and power me. I love you all so much.

I dedicate this work to my faithful ancestors. In my ever-going spiritual journey, I have always felt and known that you all have been with me on this path. Every day I am a stronger Black woman because of you, and in this life, I can only hope to be a fraction of an inspiration as you have been for me.

I dedicate this work to my participants, whose stories I hope this research has reflected in a special way. Thank you for everything you have taught me and for being part of my journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1   INTRODUCTION

This qualitative case study explores the experiences of East African migrants living in Clarkston, Georgia.

Specifically, this chapter outlines the background of Clarkston, Georgia as a premier immigration hub in the U.S. South., key United States immigration policy that relates to East African migrants, and occurrences in East Africa that have historically led to migration and refugees. In this chapter there is also the issue this study examines, the study's purpose and significance, research questions, theoretical framework, description of cases, and limitations and delimitations as well. The positionality the researcher takes in conducting this study is also discussed.

1.1   Background

In 2019, the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) reported that there were approximately 2.1 million sub-Saharan African migrants living in the United States. Over the past four decades, since the 1980s, the population of sub-Saharan African migrants in the country has increased by sixteen times. For the purposes of this study, focus on migrants from East African countries is privileged. Of those migrants, in 2019 the Pew Research Center reported that 260,000 are from Ethiopia, 130,000 are from Kenya, and 110,000 are from Somalia. A few years later, in 2022, those populations are still on the increase. Further, the U.S. Census Bureau projects that the "total foreign-born Black population will more than double by 2060, to 9.5 million" (Batalova et. al, 2022).

Along with the amount of East African migrants, where they migrate to is also central. At 42%, the South is where the largest concentration of the country's foreign-born Black migrant

population resides. In metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia around 190,000 of those migrants are found (Tamir, 2022).

This study examines the experiences of East African migrants in the U.S. southeastern community of Clarkston, Georgia and is centered in reference to "East African" meaning those migrating from any of the countries highlighted in Figure 1.1 below:

Figure 1.1

Those highlighted are Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Djibouti, Sudan, and South Sudan. It is also key to note that South Sudan exists as a nation-state. These are all included in the United Nations' "Classification and Definition of Regions" definition of the subregion of East Africa except Sudan and South Sudan. Migrants from each of these countries have different reasons for migrating to the United States, specifically Clarkston. The participants in this study share the all-embracing identity of being migrants, but each participant's case has a unique story.

1.1.1   Clarkston and Migration

Clarkston is a city located in DeKalb County, Georgia - just ten miles northeast of Atlanta. Since its establishment in 1882, Clarkston has earned the titles of "the most diverse square mile in America"' and the "Ellis Island of the South" because of its robust refugee and immigrant community, including immigrants from East Africa (Hong, 2018, p. 10). Ellis Island is an island in New York that served as the federal gateway for immigrants, mostly from Europe, to enter the U.S. in the early twentieth century. The island saw more than twelve million immigrants in its 60-year run (Horn-Muller, et. al). However, Clarkston could also be seen as the "Angel Island of the South." California's Angel Island was an immigration processing station that was used for three decades in the early twentieth century as well. Angel Island mostly saw Chinese immigrants, but, overall, migrants from over 80 countries were processed through the facility (CA State Parks). Angel Island saw a more diverse makeup of immigrants than Ellis Island, and that is why it could be monikered with Clarkston as well. Even between 2015 and 2019, the city ranked first in the nation for resettling the highest number of refugees per capita amongst cities resettling more than 100 refugees per year (APM Research Lab).

More than half of Clarkston's population were born outside of the U.S., coming from an array of 40+ countries (Hinojosa et. al, 2012). The city originally saw its growth in refugees and immigrants migrating to the city in the early 1990s. Much of Clarkston's diverse population can be attributed to resettlement just over the last three decades. On this, Kathryn E. Wilson writes:

> Clarkston's population reflects current and historic refugee flows: it is currently home to African (Somali, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Sudanese), Asian (Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian) and, most recently, Syrian and Congolese arrivals. Businesses in Clarkston along Market Street, Ponce de Leon Ave, and Montreal Road include Nepali, Burmese, Ethiopian, and halal restaurants, Asian and Ethiopian groceries, and a Thrift Town which has stayed in business for 25 years by catering to the refugee communities' needs (Wilson, 2020).

The city's demographics have not always been this diverse, and prior to that growth, the city was almost entirely almost American-born. Now, it is now a community where half of its residents were born outside of the U.S. (Haley, 2019).

Clarkston having a large refugee and immigrant population is directly tied to its convenient location. In the 1990s, global conflict led to an influx of asylum seekers. Those who would seek asylum in the U.S. were helped by refugee resettlement entities (Haley). Clarkston was valued by resettlement entities because of its "close proximity to the metro-Atlanta area, public transportation, and affordable housing" (City of Clarkston).

1.1.2 Types of Migrants

Of Clarkston's population, 60.2% report their racial origin to be Black or African-American. More specifically on demographics, that group includes migrants coming from countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, Rwanda, and more. The distinction between voluntary migrants versus those who come under refugee circumstances is central in examining the population as well.

Ethiopian-born migrants are the second largest African immigrant group in the U.S. - following Nigeria. Prior to the 1980s, the Ethiopian population in the United States was small. The Hart-Cellar immigration act of 1980, discussed in greater detail in the following sub-section, is what initially propelled Ethiopian migration to the country because of its formal focus on African migration. By 1991, "an estimated 50,000 to 75,000" Ethiopian migrants were living in the U.S. (Kobel).

There are various reasons that Ethiopian migrants have arrived in the U.S. Some migrate for reasons like education or work opportunities to improve the quality of their lives. There are

also those who are refugees of conflict in Ethiopia and were placed in the U.S. Between 1981

and 2013, "approximately 48,600 Ethiopian migrants were admitted to the United States as

refugees. More than 1,000 Ethiopian refugees were resettled in the United States during each

year from 1981 to 1993 and 1999 to 2007 (with the exception of 2002)" (Migration Policy

Institute). One of the most substantial moments in Ethiopian history to bring refugees to the U.S.

was a famine that lasted from 1983-1985. Regarding the famine and refugee migration, Paul S.

Kobel wrote:

> During the 1980s famine in Northern Africa and during the repressive Marxist rule, many
> Ethiopians migrated to Sudan. The majority of Ethiopians that ultimately migrated to the
> United States came from Khartoum, Sudan. The transitional resettlement period for
> Ethiopians in Sudan during this period was unpleasant for most … Given the poor
> economic status of Sudan at the time, Ethiopian refugees would not fare well in the
> region. When the opportunity to resettle to a third country emerged, most Ethiopians
> targeted the United States. They believed that they would receive the greatest opportunity
> to improve their condition as previous refugees in North America had (Kobel).

Within movements such as described above, the Atlanta metropolitan area has become one of

America's Ethiopian immigrant population centers (MPI, 2014).

One of the largest influxes of Somali refugee resettlement to the U.S. is due to Somalis

who fled Siyaad Barre's attacks on northern and central Somalia in 1987–1988. Along with that,

in 2004, the U.S. Bureau of Population, Refugee, and Migration facilitated a massive

resettlement of Somali-Bantu refugees from the Somali-Kenya border to the United States.

Outside of those instances bringing Somali refugees to Clarkston, the way that Somalis have

historically ethnically organized themselves is also a factor to Clarkston's large Somali

population.

Somalis are ethnically organized in clans. The six ethnic clans are Darod, Hawiye, Isaaq,

Dir, Digil, and Rahanweyn. Across the six clans, more than three-fourths of the Somali

population are historically nomadic. In the experience of movement and migration, clanship and

clan dynamics, maintaining "the existence of a tightly knit Somali community, even evident to

outsiders" is fundamental to Somali culture (Leymarie, 2014, p. 3). On this, Brian J. Hesse

writes,

> What is more, not all Somalis agree to which lineage lines other Somalis belong. Somali
> genealogy presents individuals with a seemingly infinite number of ways to affiliate with,
> or disassociate from, fellow Somalis - which may be the point. Whether one is looking at
> those in a day-to-day nomadic existence in a semi-desert, day-to-day existence in an
> urban area of a failed state, or day-today existence as newly-arrived émigré's in a foreign
> land, Somalis need to have durable yet malleable ways to negotiate limited opportunities
> and limited resources. The Somali lineage system accomplishes this (Hesse, 2010, p.
> 249).

In other words, even in a nomadic culture belonging and what that looks like is a primary

concept in Somali culture. There are an infinite number of ways to negotiate lineage and

affiliation. Somali lineage values create a culture of "staying together" - even in migration. And

factors such as that, the desire to be around family and close-ones give way to communities such

as Clarkston to have high concentrations should Somalis move there voluntarily.

A Burundian refugee population has also existed in the United States. In 1972, a series of

mass killings, known as the Ikiza, struck the country of Burundi. The killings led to thousands of

refugees fleeing the country. And in 2006, over three decades later, the U.S. agreed to "resettle

thousands of Burundian refugees who fled their homeland in 1972" after decades of limbo in the

neighboring country Tanzania (Mahecic, 2006).

There are several Kenyan-born refugees that are in the United States as well. What is

interesting about this population, however, is that "ten percent of the United States' Kenya-born

population is Somali, not Kenyan origin: based on Kenya-born individuals in the United States

reporting two Somali parents, nearly 8,000 Kenya-born individuals are Somali refugees" (MPI).

So, a substantial portion of what accounts for the "Kenyan population" in the United States is really Somali refugees as well.

Outside of being refugees, there are many East African migrants who come to Clarkston and America for their own reasons such as education, work, and other opportunities. Along with that, outside of these countries already discussed, there are migrants from other East African nations that have settled to Clarkston and the U.S. based on varying histories and other positive reasons.

1.1.3 The United States' Immigration Practices

Since its inception, the United States has had a lengthy history of immigration policies and practices. There have been eras of high influxes of immigration, and slower periods with attribution to callous exercises of power. The timeline of immigration policy in the U.S. overall is important to East African migrants as it a culmination of what experiences migrants may face in the U.S. today. However, there are specific policies that relate to East African migrants. They are the Immigration Act of 1891, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Hart-Celler Act), the Refugee Act of 1980, the Homeland Security Act (2002), and the Muslim Travel Ban (2017).

The Immigration Act of 1891 expanded the list of exclusions for immigration to America. This act authorized the deportation of illegal immigrants or those who could be "excluded from migration based on previous legislation" (Cohn, 2015). The Hart-Celler Act of 1965 "replaced the national origins quota system with a seven-category preference system emphasizing family reunification and skilled immigrants. No visa cap was placed on the number of immediate family members of U.S. citizens admitted each year" (Cohn, 2015). The Refugee Act of 1980 created the U.S.'s general policy for refugees and was when the country formally adopted the United Nations definition of "refugee" (Cohn, 2015). This act also "[removed] refugees from the

immigration preference system, [expanded] the annual admission for refugees, and included

deportation relief and admission [into the U.S.] based on region or nationality (Cohn)." The

Homeland Security Act of 2002 was instituted after the attacks of September 11, 2001. The act

created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and restructured immigration practices in

the U.S. In 2017, the Muslim Travel Ban enacted an Executive Order that banned visitors from

seven largely-Muslim-populated countries: Somalia, Sudan, Libya, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.

Visitors from these countries were banned from entering the United States for 90 days. The ban

also stopped citizens of Tanzania from applying for the Diversity Visa lottery.

Each of these acts of legislation are tied to what a person migrating from East Africa

could face in their process of getting to the U.S., and/or during their time here. Hart-Celler

(1965) and the Immigration Act of 1891 are, even as they are close to a century apart,

foundational pieces to what it means to be an immigrant in the U.S. today. The Refugee Act of

1980 is extremely relevant as many East African migrants are in the U.S. today as refugees. That

act is directly linked to their experiences. The Homeland Security Act and the Muslim Travel

Ban create space for xenophobia that East African migrants could experience – as explored later

in the literature review.

1.1.4   The United States and East Africa

Beyond those listed policies, there have been policies specifically relating to the United

States' relationship with the East African community. One major affair in the relationship is the

Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007. This act stated that it is the right of the

United States to:

(1) support human rights, democracy, independence of the judiciary, freedom of the

press, peacekeeping capacity building, and economic development in the Federal

Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

(2) collaborate with Ethiopia in the Global War on Terror

(3) seek the release of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Ethiopia

(4) foster stability, democracy, and economic development in the region

(5) support humanitarian assistance efforts, especially in the Ogaden region

(6) strengthen U.S.-Ethiopian relations (HR.2003).

This act supported the admission of nonimmigrants, those here temporarily, and immigrants from

Ethiopia to the United States (H.R.2003)

The aftermath of the 2017 Muslim travel ban has also been an ongoing major event for

the relationship between East Africa and the United States. The impetus of Immigration Customs

and Enforcement (ICE) raids that target East African migrants is a specific, substantial part of

that aftermath. In 2017, there were a string of raids in Clarkston where "many Somali nationals"

were arrested (Redmon, 2019). Clarkston's city council did approve policy to block any city

jurisdiction to arrest anyone under the orders of ICE (Redmon, 2019).

1.1.5 *Getting to Citizenship*

Participants in this study were not required to have U.S. citizenship, nor were they required

to discuss their citizenship status. Every migrant's path is unique, so it cannot be stated how long

this process takes to become a U.S. citizen. It can take months to years to become a naturalized

U.S. citizen. However, the types of visas used to arrive to and/or reside in the U.S. are more

definite. Generally, visas are for vacation, education, work, or immigration reasons.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

This study seeks to address two primary problems. First, the body of work concerning East African migrants in the United States primarily privileges those in the communities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. While I do understand that that area has the highest concentration of East African migrants in the U.S., there is a special area to explore by looking at Clarkston. There is existing work focusing on research focusing on East African migrants in smaller populations such as Somalis in San Diego, Ethiopians in the D.C. metro area, and Catherine Besteman's work on Somalis in Maine. These are explored in the literature review. However, the larger conversation on immigrants in the United States, historically and contemporarily, does not equitably address the experiences of African immigrants, let alone those specifically from the East African region. Simply put, this research hopes to build upon the current body of literature on East African migrants in the U.S., to give the attention deserved to these specific narratives, and recognize that all immigrants do not experience the United States in the same ways.

1.3   Purpose of the Study

This study examines eight East African migrants with experience living in Clarkston, Georgia with specific consideration to their experiences with U.S. immigration practices and how the intersection of race, class, nationality, and citizenship status affect their experiences.

This study is conducted through a qualitative, exploratory case study approach. A case study is "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life contemporary [case] or multiple [cases] through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and case themes" (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). Within case

studies, there are six categorical types as well. Of those, an exploratory case study approach is used in this study. Exploratory case studies are "used when there is no single set of outcomes" (Dissertation Workbook, p. 2). This research recognizes that all the experiences detailed in the data collection process are not the same. Because of that, this study seeks to achieve multiple, multi-experience-encompassing goals: (1) to gain a general better understanding of the experiences of East African migrants in Clarkston, (2) to gain a greater understanding of what this demographic faces in the process of accessing U.S. citizenship, and (3) to see how the intersection of race, class, nationality, and citizenship status affect their experiences.

1.3.1 Positionality

I believe that especially involving African people and concepts, research should not be done just for research's sake. As a researcher with these interests, I must (and do) have an objective for this work to contribute to the upliftment of the groups I am exploring.

While I am not an East African migrant myself, I arrived at my interest in this study's population and concepts based on the marrying of time spent abroad in Tanzania and an unwavering love for my home region, the South.

Three undergraduate semesters of taking Swahili moved me to want to study abroad. So, in the fall academic semester of 2019, from August to December, I lived in Tanzania under the guidance of a study abroad program. After an initial introductory week spent in the capital city of Dar es Salaam, most of my time in Tanzania was spent living in the city of Iringa and taking classes at Ruaha Catholic University there. While I exclusively learned alongside a cohort of eight other American students, I had the unmatched opportunity of taking courses taught by native Tanzanian professors. Those classes included History of East Africa, Sustainable Rural Development, and intermediate Kiswahili. Along with those courses, I fulfilled an internship

requirement where I interned at a children's home called Daily Bread Life (DBL) on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Owned by a Tanzanian pastor and his wife, DBL, at any moment, housed around forty orphaned children ranging from ages 3-16. The children's home was steeped in values of education and faith in Mungu (God). I would re-experience my time at DBL ten times over if I could. I built bonds with the children that were so special, gained comfortability in my position as an instructor, had unparalleled cross-cultural exchanges, and, overall, had a fun time.

In November, my cohort left Iringa to live in Kidete Village for the entire month. Kidete is about two hours from Iringa. In Kidete, I lived with a host family during weekdays, and reconvened with my classmates at a community organization that hosted our cohort on weekends. I thoroughly enjoyed my time living with a host family. My host mama was the sweetest, most attentive woman, my bibi (grandmother) was full of humor and spunk, and it was easy to have siblings, Florida and Raymond, who were close to my age. Outside of my host family, it was comforting to have several "aunties" across the village with whom my classmates lived to welcome me into their homes and never left me unfed.

The community organization that hosted my cohort in Kidete is called Rural Development Organization (RDO). In collaboration with RDO, in groups of three, my cohort conducted needs assessments across Kidete. My group focused specifically on education needs and adult education. With the help of a university student from Kidete, who worked as a translator and liaison, we were able to conduct nine interviews and one focus group. All participants received monetary payment for their time. That was my first experience conducting research and is present in my mind even as I work on this study.

My time at DBL and conducting the needs assessment with RDO taught me a great deal about working with vulnerable populations. The children at DBL were not only vulnerable in

that they were children, but being orphaned is, in my belief, a factor that adds another layer of vulnerability. Those who participated in the needs assessment were vulnerable in that they lived in a small community with the possibility of being identified and the community was led by one chief whom members did not want to upset.

What states constitute the South is, I have found, an ongoing debate. Even as a Tennessean, born and raised, I have been told on multiple occasions that I, being from Tennessee, am not from the South. I do not privilege the popular definition of the South that is guided under the Mason-Dixon line. That is in part because of its original Civil War implications, but also because of how I became aware of my Southernisms as I moved to Washington, D.C. to attend college at Howard University. And how D.C., Maryland, and (northern) Virginia, all included in the Mason Dixon, did not *feel* like the South. My definition is not informed by a longstanding institutional definition, but is informed by what, I feel, are both geographically **and** culturally Southern.

Figure 1.2

The image in Figure 1.2 above from World Atlas is closest to my imagination of the South. While it is entitled the "Deep South," how I define of the South would be the same image

with the addition of North Carolina, Arkansas, and southern Kentucky and Virginia. The Southwestern region of America is not included in this study's definition of the South because it does not meet my criteria for what is culturally Southern. My definition of culturally Southern includes states that are in alignment with one another on certain customs, practices, cuisine, and music. This definition respects that customs, practices, cuisine, and music looks different across cities and states, which makes the cultural South even more enhanced, but notes that even in difference they are still aligned.

All of this has been said to say, I am passionate about where I am from and the places I have been. The meshing of those passions to contribute to my research interests is something that happened organically and unexpectedly.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for a multitude of reasons. This research seeks to offer a holistic perspective on East African immigration in the United States through insight on two areas not privileged in the field of migration research: (1) East African migrants (2) East Africans migrants in the South. There are gaps in this line of research that this study aims to fill. Such gaps include a wider scope of African migrants and a focus on the Southern U.S.

This study also holds specific significance to the field of Africana Studies as well. Primarily it is relevant to the field because it explores experiences in diasporic and transnational movement. In this study there is a point on how East African migrants may view their experiences in the U.S. in relation to how African-Americans have experienced the U.S.

1.5 Research Questions

This research seeks to explore the experiences of East African migrants living in Clarkston, Georgia. More specifically, this research seeks to explore the shared experiences with U.S. migration and citizenship processes and how social factors affect and influence their migrant and lived experiences in the U.S.

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

1. What are the experiences with United States immigration and citizenship processes that East African migrants hold?

2. How does the intersection of race, class, nationality, and citizenship status affect and influence East African immigrants' migrant and lived experiences in the United States?

1.6   Theoretical Framework

This research is positioned through the theoretical frameworks of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Intersectionality.

CRT is the primary framework used in this study, and it is recognized here as it is conceptualized by civil rights attorney Derrick Bell's notion of the permanence of racism in America. The theory states that American social systems are inherently racist and have different outcomes for different people based upon race. CRT is also rooted in five tenets:

(1) the notion that racism is ordinary and not aberrational;

(2) the idea of an interest convergence;

(3) the social construction of race;

(4) the idea of storytelling and counter-storytelling; and

(5) the notion that whites have actually been recipients of civil rights legislation (Hartlep, 2009, p. 6).

CRT is used in this study to explore implications of race in these migrant experiences.

Intersectionality is the critical framework that social categorizations intermingle to create systems of disadvantage. The framework was coined by Kimberle Crenshaw in her 1989 paper, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimation Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." She wrote:

> The point is that Black women can experience discrimination in any number of ways and that the contradiction arises from our assumptions that their claims of exclusion must be unidirectional (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 149).

Crenshaw originally coined the term to describe the erasure and discrimination Black women face in judicial settings. The intersectionality framework can be used to examine various situations where identity is used to create disadvantageous dynamics. Intersectionality is utilized in this study to explore how race, class, nationality, and citizenship status affect the experiences of East African migrants.

1.7   Definitions

This study is centered on certain field-specific terms. How they are used in this study may not be synonymous with their universally understood and accepted definitions. Therefore, how they are used in this study are defined below:

1. East Africa: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Sudan, and South Sudan.

2. *The Horn of Africa* is the eastern African peninsula made up of the nations of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia (Somaliland) and Djibouti pictured in Figure 1.3 below:

Figure 1.3

3. Somaliland (not pictured in Figure 1.3) is a de facto, autonomous state in the northern region of Somalia. This independent state was founded in 1991 following the Somali Civil War.

4. The South: States in the southeastern part of the United States, including Georgia.

5. Migrant: In this study, someone who has moved from an Eastern African country to the United States.

6. Refugee: A person who has been forced to leave their country due to violence, conflict, or natural and structural disasters.

7. Voluntary migrant: Someone who is not a refugee; someone who emigrates at their own free will.

1.8   Description of Cases

This study utilized the qualitative approach of exploratory case study. In this exploratory case study, there were eight participants. Participants came from six East African countries:

Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan. All participants were at least eighteen years old, and their ages ranged from nineteen to forty-three. Each participant was born outside of the United States, and they all migrated here at various points in their lives. The participants migrated between infancy to twenty-three years old. Each participant did not live in Clarkston upon initial arrival to the U.S., nor do they all live there now, but each of them has had experience living in the community. Participant profiles are discussed more in depth in chapter four, Findings.

1.9   Limitations and Delimitations

1.9.1   Limitations

There are several limitations of this study that are in the criterion for participation. Participants must be able to speak English proficiently, be migrants from one of the country this study focuses on and be willing to speak about their experiences.

Another limitation of this study is the timeline it is conducted under, compounded with its case study approach. Discussed further in the third chapter, "Methodology," a case study approach has the potential to be conducted over lengthy amounts of time.

1.9.2   Delimitations

The choice to focus on East African migrants and the choice to focus on Clarkston, Georgia are this study's greatest delimitations. Migrant studies in the U.S. generally do not focus on African migrants. Those that do tend to privilege migrants from West Africa. While that can be attributed to the United States' history of African exploitation and enslavement, in the following chapter "Literature Review," the importance of this study's focus on East Africa to the greater body of migrant literature is explained. The same formula applies for this study's focus on Clarkston.

1.10 Summary

In this chapter, the fundamental concepts of this study were introduced. The background of Clarkston and the types of East African migrants there was explored, a timeline of U.S. immigrant policy was presented, and specific policy that affects East African migrants examined. The study's problem, purpose and significance, research questions, theoretical framework, description of cases, and limitations and delimitations were discussed as well. The following chapter will be a review of literature regarding four overarching themes that deal with East African migration to Clarkston.

2   LITERATURE REVIEW

Migration has been a constant part of the human experience. Humans have moved and will continue to do so. In the advancements of modernity, however, migration has been marked within the parameters of borders, nations, and even simply municipalities. Modernity, in this, refers to the inception of "Africa" as a defined domain and follows the thought of Africana philosopher Lewis R. Gordon that Africana philosophy, as this study is, starts with modernity in relation to Africa. In addition, those migration markers have also been compounded with and complicated by the creation of racial difference. These modern "advancements" of difference thrive upon separation of human experiences. Gordon justifies the continual existence of human separation as there being stock or gain within the perpetuation of these differences for their creators (Gordon, 2012). One result of that, today, is that these markers of difference affect the lived experiences of East African migrants in Clarkston, Georgia.

There is not much literature that encompasses the topic of East African migrants in Clarkston, Georgia, and their experiences with U.S. immigration practices all in one writing. Therefore, this literature review seeks to be a "puzzle-piecing" of all those matters in their respective lanes. Individually, literature on East African immigrants, Clarkston, Georgia, immigration and law in the United States, identity intersections, and American citizenship will be reviewed and critiqued.

2.1   How We Arrive at Clarkston

Black history scholar Manning Marable describes the development of African enclaves in America, in the times of enslavement and beyond, as a form of social protest (Marable, 1985). Being that Clarkston is undeniably an African enclave - epitomizes the word - this perspective,

speaking to what it means to be an immigrant, East African, and/or Black in America, is relevant to the community.

The city of Clarkston offers an important perspective on East African immigration to the U.S. as it has become known as the "'Ellis Island of the South'" (Hong, 2018, p. 10). This moniker highlights Clarkston's welcoming of immigrants as Ellis Island was a point of entry for nearly 12 million immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The suburb of Atlanta is also home to several East African immigrants from varying countries. Researcher Yenny Yang makes an important contribution to the research in an exploration of what makes Clarkston's "model of refugee resettlement" (Yang, 2020, p. 30), so successful. Refugees found a sense of true community membership as local governments encouraged participation from refugee leaders to have roles in leading Clarkston. These findings are relevant to this study as they offer a model to potentially explore how to optimally support the East African immigrant population in the U.S. as a whole. Yang also found that economic self-sufficiency is one of the most important indicators of successful resettlement in the eyes of refugees, as they believe that self- sufficiency allows them to regain control of their lives and build their confidence to start a new life with dignity" (Yang, 2020, p. 4).

In the study "Resettled Somali Women in Georgia and Changing Gender Roles," researcher Dorian B. Crosby explores resettlement in Clarkston from the perspective of Somali women "forced into the diaspora" (Crosby, 2006, p. 69). In this, Crosby addresses a factor not so often outlined in the larger body of research relating to Clarkston: What initially propelled migrants to resettle in Clarkston?

While Crosby and Yang provide substantial examples, much of the literature on ethnic enclaves in the U.S. does not focus on African and East African communities. What much of it

does is iterate that the sustainability of ethnic enclaves would be the factor of quality of comfort. Whatever factors bring East African migrants to Clarkston, the South, or America in general and wherever they land in the U.S., there should be comfortability regardless. Besides comfortability, however, a look into the history of other factors that influence the creation of African and East African communities in the U.S., not by the power of those that inhabit them, is necessary.

There is literature on East African communities in other parts of the country that does exist. In Making Refuge: Somali Bantu Refugees and Lewiston, Maine, Catherine Besteman discusses Somali Bantu refugees living in Maine through the use of narratives. Bestemen offers insight into historical systems that make up division in Somalia, which then into war, and now has an outcome of displaced refugees. This work also provides insight into the relationship between Somalia and the U.S., on Somali soil, and how that affected Somalis and Somali who would become refugees. She wrote,

> Somalia's civil war is indeed complicated, but the support of the U.S. government for a merciless dictator who armed his country and fostered discord among his citizens is a reminder that while the ultimate responsibility for war and peace lies with local people, behind every story of civil war is a story of connections and influences that span the globe (Besteman, 2016, p. 55)

Besteman's exploration of the Somali community in Lewiston is meaningful, too. She moves through harmful ideas about these "unexpected" and "uninvited" residents to the reformation of what community means. That is especially relevant to this study as Clarkston has changed over time, and, because of migrants and refugees, what the community is now is not what it has always been. Along with the Somali community in Lewiston, there are other East African smaller communities that are across the U.S.

For example, in "Foundations of Somali resilience: Collective identity, faith, and community," researchers Alec Terrana, Najla Ibrahim, Bonnie Kaiser, and Wael K. Al-Delaimy

highlighted the Somali community in San Diego, California. Specifically, the study focused on Somali women and examined their experiences of resilience. It was found that community was largely emphasized in what helps these women successfully cope. These researchers conducted their study with considerations of xenophobia and racism just as Besteman does in <u>Making Refuge,</u> and just as is done in this study. Also, Elizabeth Chacko explores Ethiopian place-making in her study "Ethiopian Ethos and the Making of Ethnic Places in the Washington Metropolitan Area." Chacko found that while trying to maintain their ethnic identity, the Ethiopian community in the D.C. metro area has created transformative spaces of their own. This is not limited to just living spaces or even physical spaces, but online, religious, athletic, business, and media communal spaces as well (Chacko, 2003). Just in these few study examples, it is clear how important community is in the space of being an immigrant in the U.S.

The gap that exists, though, for these works, from Crosby, to Besteman, and in between, is that they focus on migrants from one specific country, while this work examines migrants from an entire continental region who all live amongst each other in a community.

The following subsection *Historical Context* is just that: historical context. Because, in discussion of the United States and East Africa(ns), a look into history is what must be done. Expanding upon Manning Marable's notion mentioned earlier, Marable also states that "another approach to the problem was the development of autonomous African enclaves or separate communities … [this represented] a political and cultural rejection of the existing formation" (Marable, 1985, p. 30). A look into history reveals exactly what this "problem" African people in America endure is. From there, greater understanding of Clarkston, and largely immigrant groups in the U.S. are propelled.

2.1.1 Historical Context

The following is an examination of the history that influenced and played a role in African migration to and within the U.S. Going back centuries ago, it is widely understood and accepted that during the transatlantic slave trade, many enslaved Africans that arrived to what is now the United States of America arrived from Western and Central Africa. While those areas *do* have a large contributing role as to what makes up much of the U.S.'s Black and African population, it is worth exploring that same type of history, that is history with East African enslavement and the United States.

East African people have had a constant presence in the United States. On a larger scale, growth in this presence can be dated in the eighteenth century. Dr. Wendy Wilson-Fall's work that is part of the book *Memories of Madagascar and Slavery in the Black Atlantic* details the Malagasy people in the U.S. Wilson-Fall writes that the first recorded Malagasy people in the United States were in New York, brought under Dutch enslavement in the early 1700s. During that time, Malagasies were also imported in Virginia. Wilson-Fall wrote that she has even been able to identify people with Malagasy ancestry in Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, and Ohio - those ancestors arriving as enslaved after 1825.

Outside of the Malagasy people, East African people in the U.S. also have origins simply from the migration of people within the continent of Africa. Historian George Shepperson's "The United States and East Africa" discusses movement of Bantu people from Africa's east coast to what is now South Africa. As that southern area was a source for slaves to be sent to the U.S., "slaves sent to the United States from [South Africa] had, probably, an East African origin" (Shepperson, 1952, p. 26). U.S. trade with the coastal island of Zanzibar is also a source for East Africans into America.

In these histories between the U.S. and Africa, the African diaspora has been present as well. The diaspora involves a choice to be connected to Africa on the continent or outside of it - as seen in the histories of enslaved Africans in America and beyond. So, even as much of the presence of East African people in the U.S. has a history involving enslavement, the African diaspora is not something that was constructed at the hands of slavery, nor constructed in general. The use of "construction" when discussing the diaspora purports that the African diaspora is something that was made, initially and in large, by an imposed, outside entity: Europe. On this, German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel is arguably the person most notably responsible for beliefs and attitudes that undermine the abilities of Africa and Africans by way of his analysis of European imposition onto Africa. He most infamously states that there is "no movement or development on the African continent, and that it makes no contribution to the world. Remarks such as those by Hegel, manifest presently in the United States', as a powering entity, relationships with Africa, African groups, and African people.

2.1.2   *How We Discuss the Relationship Between East Africa and America*

Shepperson's "The United States and East Africa," is one of the most relevant pieces of literature regarding the history between the United States and East Africa. What Shepperson does do in the article, and what is worth noting the most for this discussion, is that he calls for deeper investigation of East Africans in the U.S.'s slave labor. He writes, "few would deny that West Africa was the main source of the American [slave] supply; but this should not mean, in spite of all difficulty, that the East African source is not worth more investigation than it has receive" (Shepperson, 1952, p. 26). East Africa as one source for the African population in America needs more attention. However, it is also worth noting that the text was published in 1946 and

outdated, by far. For example, use of "Negro" in the article, by this white, British historian highlights the time in which the work was produced.

Decades following Shepperson's 1943 text, Terrence Lyons published "The United States and Ethiopia: The Politics of a Patron-Client Relationship." In contrast to the general East Africa collective that Shepperson work addresses, Lyons offers more focus on specifically Ethiopia in the 1950s and 60s. Lyons' work also articulates the relationship between Ethiopia and the U.S. in a more explicit manner, rather than Shepperson's general outlining: a patron-client relationship. Lyons shares that his work is informed by Robert R. Kaufman's definition of "patron-client" that sees the relationship as "[occurring] between actors of unequal power and status … based on the principle of reciprocity, [and] it is a self-regulating form of interpersonal exchange, the maintenance of which depends on the return that each actor expects to obtain" (Lyons, 1986, p. 54). The use of a "patron-client" lens to describe the relationship between Ethiopia and the U.S. is a skillful choice by Lyons. Choosing to describe this relationship in this way emphasizes each parties' stakes. "Patron-client," plainly, assumes there is autonomy on the behalf of the patron to do business with the client, and they can excuse themselves from the business relationship without substantial loss. What "patron-client" does not consider, however, is that even as Ethiopia would be considered a willing participant in the relationship, there is a history of exploitation that influences this business relationship.

In 1993, Shepperson's "African Diaspora: Concept and Context," conceptualizes what the meaning of *African diaspora* is. With consideration to Ethiopia, again, Shepperson suggests that the concept of an African diaspora holds origins far before in time than the widely accepted 1950s and 60s coining of the phrase - birthed from the collapse of formal colonialism across the continent. Shepperson details Hebrew and Greek scriptures that describe an outward extension of

Ethiopian people from their homeland. From there, it is evident that, for a long time, at least, history has acknowledged the movement of African people. So, again, Hegel's misshaping of African people, leading to how African people in the West and African migration to the West is viewed, is an unfortunate influence. Hegel's view and influence is polarizing. Consideration of the fact that, within the historical relationship between the United States and East Africa, the U.S. participated in African enslavement and still exercises its hegemonic power can exist at the same time with consideration of the truth of the autonomy of some African migrants in history.

Joseph E. Harris' "Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora," acknowledges autonomy as well in its discussion of East Africa, the United States, and colonialism. Harris describes "Freretowns," or "freetowns," which are communities inhabited with the descendants of free, formerly enslaved Africans. Freretowns could be found in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zanzibar (Tanzania). Just as Shepperson addressed, Harris highlights that the choice to move and migrate has *been* part of African history. And Shepperson concludes another work, his 1993 "African Diaspora: Concept and Context," with the notion that there needs to be a "redressing of the balance of world history, not only in the interests of Africans and their descendants but for the whole of humanity" (Shepperson, p. 1952, p. 47). However, the way that Africa(ns) and East Africa(ns) are discussed in relation to the U.S. today still does not fulfill the redressing of history that Shepperson urged for nearly three decades ago.

2.1.3   *Factors for Contemporary Migration*

What exactly brings East African people to migrate to Clarkston - and the United States - is a far-reaching question. People migrate for various reasons, and in the general discussion of the topic, migration is categorized into "push" and "pull" factors. Push factors for migration are simply factors that make people want to exit a place or situation. Pull factors for migration are

factors that attract people to a place. The "push-pull" model is what is fundamentally accepted and understood in migrant and migration studies.

Despite its wide acceptance and use, the push-pull model has not been above critique. In 1946, sociologists Margaret Jarman Hagood and Louis J. Ducoff critiqued the classical model and explained, "we have historically relied on the automatic operation of the push-pull factors to produce spatial migration … in general this has produced an insufficient volume of migration from chronically overpopulated areas" (Hagood & Ducoff, 1946, p. 565). Their study focuses on internal American migration out of the South and Great Plains states (Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana), and their emphasis on underdevelopment signals that greater research on the actual migrant populations, as opposed to their situation, should be attributed to the question "why" in migration.

As Hagood and Ducoff looked into underdevelopment, in the study of migration, there should be careful consideration while discussing underdevelopment and migration when the focus is on migration from peripheral nations (i.e., East African countries) to core nations (i.e. the United States). From a sociological lens, peripheral nations are often ill-defined with definitions focused on their dependency, instabilities, and inadequacies rather than their exploitation. Kenton Bell's definition of peripheral nation, "nations that have limited industrialization and uneven distribution of urbanization, that are exploited by core nations and semi-peripheral nations" (Bell, 2013), does well in that it does not fail to mention the factor of exploitation. In many cases of migration, exploitation of peripheral nations, by the very core nations its citizens migrate to, is a factor somewhere between the countries' histories, yet the push-pull model does not suffice to include that.

Researchers Nicholas Van Hear, Oliver Bakewell, and Katy Long, in "Push-pull plus: reconsidering the drivers of migration," interrogate the usefulness of the push-pull model. Their study examines Somali migrants. These researchers question, too, the usefulness of the push-pull model and the way that it "[suggests] that migrants were pushed by low incomes in their countries or regions and pulled by better prospects in more affluent areas" (Van Hear et. al, 2017, p. 928). The classical model reinforces uninformed sentiments and generalizes migrant experiences. It also does not take into consideration that these "poor" countries may be, at least in part, exploited by the "affluent" areas, as mentioned earlier. Addressing that hole, Van Hear, Bakewell, and Long propose the use of four certain drivers to create a more comprehensive approach when exploring migration. Just as Hagood and Ducoff, these researchers propose categories of predisposing, proximate, precipitating, and mediating drivers. In essence, the categories are:

> *Predisposing drivers:* Those contributing to the creation of a context in which migration is more likely. Such drivers become manifest in structural disparities between migrants' place of origin and place of destination, both being shaped by the global macro-political economy (Van Hear et. al, 2017, p. 931).

> *Proximate drivers:* Those with a more direct bearing on migration and are derived from deep-seated structural features. In countries and regions of origin, they include manifestations such as economic or business cycle downturns; a turn for the worse in the security or human rights environments, displacement and marked environmental degeneration. In places of destination, they include manifestations such as economic upturn or wider societal improvement (Van Hear et. al, 2017, p. 931)

> *Precipitating drivers:* What actually triggers departure, as individuals and households take decisions to move or stay put. Precipitating factors are usually tied to an identifiable event or events. They may occur in the economic sphere or the political sphere (Van Hear et. al, 2017, p. 932)

> *Mediating drivers:* What enables, facilitates, constrains, accelerates or consolidates migration, and may diminish migration too (Van Hear et. al, 2017, p. 932)

Van Hear, Bakewell, and Long's proposal of these more expounded upon categories for examinations of what drives migration is a useful solution.

2.1.4 U.S. and East African Relations

The United States and the East African community have an extensive history with each other. Shepperson offers an interesting perspective of the United States' influence since the American Civil War. It is interesting because American literature generally fails to discuss East African involvement in the war. On that, Shepperson writes,

> Even more surprising is the neglect by American scholars of the East African "frontier," although the conditions under which Africa was being opened by the time of the Berlin Conference of 1884 reminded delegates of "the first epochs of the history of the American Union." Similarly, in 1910, Theodore Roosevelt had declared that life in East Africa brought to his mind "the western frontier of America, (and) the pioneer farmers and ranchers who built up the states of the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains (Shepperson, 1952, p. 30)

Shepperson is a true historian on the topic. An examination of those intricacies mentioned above does not occur often in the larger body of literature.

Ethiopia and the United States: History, Diplomacy, and Analysis by Getachew Metaferia does not explore the same areas as Shepperson, but the text still details history in the same way. Metaferia chronologizes the relationship between Ethiopia and the U.S. in relation to their linkages over trade, regional security in East Africa, military support, and more. Through that discussion, Metaferia pushes forward the important question of how Ethiopia has remained marginalized despite the relationship.

What Shepperson and Metaferia both achieve in these historiographies is that their explorations are not what is commonly done in writings about the U.S. and Africa. The United

States and East Africa have a rich historical relationship with each other. Within it lies so much excluded from mainstream American academia. In a post-9/11, post-Trump Muslim ban twenty-first century, it is simple to only define the relationship between the nations in a way that lacks nuance.

To further understand East African immigrants in America in a contemporary context, however, a discussion of American political and law practices in place regarding immigration that affect their experiences here must occur. The following section of the literature review will do so.

2.2   Immigration and Law

2.2.1   Racism and Law

"In every sphere - political, economic, and cultural - racism is not simply a "body of ideas," but distorted and inverted structures in which such ideas operate and become active force." — Manning Marable, "Historical Prologue" p. 6.

Face at the Bottom of the Well by Derrick Bell is a framing of racism in America. The book is built upon the premise of there being a "permanence of racism" in American culture. Bell articulates this as,

> The fact of slavery refuses to fade, along with the deeply embedded personal attitudes and public policy assumptions that it supported so long. Indeed, the racism that made slavery feasible is far from dead in the last decade of the twentieth-century America; and the civil rights gains, so hard won, are being steadily eroded. Despite undeniable progress for many, no African Americans are insulated from incidents of racial discrimination. Our careers, even our lives, are threatened because of our color (Bell, 1993, p. 20).

American public policy and laws are absolutely not excluded from the country's permanence of racism. Principally, Bell asserts that policy in America can very well be racial. He reiterates that through detailing policy dealing with admissions, forestry, licensing, hiring processes, and more.

Bell also details an often-untold history between America, Alabama specifically, and Black Muslim communities. The "Stop the Muslims" movement of 1969 that targeted Black Muslims in St. Clair County Alabama persecuted Black Muslims for various innocuous reasons such as "failure to register as a Muslim" and "acting as agent for an unlicensed foreign corporation" (Bell, 1993, p. 56). The movement led to multiple civil and federal lawsuits and called the court to question an Alabama statute that required registration of certain social groups. Applied to a contemporary context, this movement carries same sentiments of the 2017 Muslim travel ban along with former president Donald Trump's commentary on African countries as discussed in the following subsection *2.2.2. A Slight From the Head of State.* Bell then used the happening of that movement to propel a discussion of Black enthusiasm for emigration. While these groups of Black people Bell details aspired of emigrating outside of the U.S. to an "Afrolantica," it aligns with the desire for immigrants, African immigrants, that live amongst themselves in cultural enclaves.

The Other African Americans: Contemporary African and Caribbean Immigrants in the United States, is a holistic volume concerned with exploring America's contemporary - post 1960s - African immigrants. There, writer Yoku Shaw-Taylor presents the observation that, "the momentum of the Civil Rights Movement and Civil Rights legislation gave impetus to the 1965 Hart-Cellar Act. The changes to immigration law were made in consonance with the trend toward eliminating legal racism in the United States as the Civil Rights Movement gained traction" (Shaw-Taylor & Tuch, 2007, p. 8).

The Hart-Cellar Act of 1956 eliminated the national origins quota system and focused on policy to reunite immigrant families and attract skilled immigrant labor to the U.S. Prior to the act, immigration policy was in place that capped the number of immigrants allowed into the U.S. based on national origin - this was the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924. Johnson-Reed was a clear discriminatory practice. The act even caused immigration numbers in the U.S. to fall drastically. In hindsight, though, the changes made within immigration law with a trend toward eliminating legal racism, moving from Johnson-Reed to Hart-Cellar, is interesting to examine. In recent years immigration laws and policy have, arguably, worked to do the opposite of that elimination trend and have trended toward welcoming legal racism again.

2.2.2   A Slight from the Head of State

"Oppression is not merely imposed by force. It is most dimly instituted when those in power have established their self-serving ideas as the 'common sense' of the society." — William Sales, From Civil Rights to Black Liberation, p. 43.

Throughout time, negative attitudes across America toward immigrants have persisted, African immigrants included. On this, authors Ana S. Liberato and Joe R. Feagin wrote:

> The traditional image of the United States as a great land of immigrants remains as true today as it ever was. Earlier immigrants made the United States the strong and vital country it is, albeit at the great expense of indigenous peoples of color. Today, continuing immigrations provide many new people, both workers and families, that keep the country strong and dynamic, even as European countries are in demographic and, at least potentially, socioeconomic decline. Sadly, the hostility of many native-born Americans toward the recent immigrant groups … is also part of a continuing contradiction of nativism historically directed toward each new group of immigrants (Shaw-Taylor, 2007, p. 117).

African migration to the United States, pre and post the nation's inception is not a new phenomenon, and that leads to one critique of this work in that it places African immigrants, a

dynamic group throughout history and time, with the distinction of "new." Liberato and Feagin's

fault is also reminiscent of author Toni Morrison's theory of "othering" - as it relates to Black

communities. And this can, arguably, be applied to Shaw-Taylor's language in titling the volume

"The **Other** Africans." The book is not an anthology of African people writing about other

African people in the U.S., so the position of the writers and the language choices do not seem

totally appropriate.

Coming from a privileged position, there must be a level of cognizance when discussing

marginalized communities of which you do not belong. So, as former president Donald Trump

slighted an entire community of African people with his statement of "Why are we having all

these people from shithole countries come here?" in 2017, there arose another added layer of

what to consider in language and literature. In "Trump's Insult is Fed by Deep Ignorance about

Africa among Americans," Julis A. Amin stated,

> Trump's derogatory comments should be turned into teachable moments because the
> miseducation of Americans about Africa runs deep. America's perception of Africa and
> its people as "other", and "different" has been integral in shaping policy towards the
> continent. It is embedded in what Derick Bell referred to as the "permanence of racism"
> in American culture (Amin, 2018, p. 2).

Just as earlier discussed with Derrick Bell's notion of the permanence of racism outlined in

"Faces at the Bottom of the Well," Bell's article "Racism in American Courts: Cause for Black

Disruption or Despair?" discusses racism in American courts more exclusively. Bell's

examination of racism in the court is, again, absolutely applicable to the experiences of East

African migrants in the U.S. because immigration court is not exempt. The already racial

challenges that simply come with being Black in America - which can be coupled with the

American perception of Africa and Africans previously discussed - are not exempt from immigration court.

In 2017, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported immigration arrests in Clarkston that targeted Somali residents. Writer Jeremy Redmon calls attention to the connection between targeted deportations and the 2017 Muslim travel ban. Redmon wrote that, "ICE's latest arrests also follow President Donald Trump's attempts to temporarily ban visitors from Somalia and five other Muslim-majority countries as well as refugees from around the world …. An ICE spokesman emphasized his agency is not targeting people for deportation based on their religion" (Redmon, 2017). Despite the ICE spokesman's remarks, those immigrant arrests clearly are marked at the intersection of racially, nationality, religious-based discrimination. While Redmond's report does not offer a critique of the policy and language imposed onto targeted immigrants (i.e., the outdated use of "alien"), his article does show an effort to uplift the voices and perspectives of those living in and connected to Clarkston. Organizational leaders and even former mayor Ted Terry were given the larger platform in the article as opposed to immigration enforcement representatives.

Fundamentally, policy-based discrimination against migrant people of color, specifically those emigrating to the United States, has continued to be a centuries-long societal dilemma. In that, focus on the United States is widely on Latinx immigrants because of the land proximity of Central and South America, and Asian immigrants because of the U.S.'s history with Asian migrants in the early twentieth century. However, it is, at times, lost that the Black and African population in the U.S. has grown nearly equally as growing Latinx and Asian populations. From 1990 to 2000, in the U.S. the African American population grew 17.9%, the Afro-Caribbean population grew 66.9%, the African population grew 166.9%, the Latinx population grew 61.4%,

and the Asian population grew 44% (Logan, 2007, p. 52). The growth in the African population

is attributed to constant African migration to the country. John R. Logan, in "Who Are the Other

African Americans?" part of Shaw-Taylor's holistic examination of Africans in America,

synthesizes the make-up of America's African population.

Within Logan's work lies cues as to how African immigrants would be affected by the

bans and statements made in 2017 and 2018 by the former president. The article is heavily

structured on population statistics, i.e., "Nearly 17 percent of recent growth in the Black

population is due to increases in these new [African and Caribbean] groups … in metro areas

they constitute 20 percent or more of the Black population" (Logan, 2007, p. 65). From statistics

such as that, Logan's most prime point is that common social and political problems associated

with generally and simply being Black in the U.S. runs the risk of being coupled with national

origin differences and creating divisiveness, which manifests, like discussed in this section, as

limiting migration into either American society or even within African-American communities.

Simply put, there are already problems that come with being a Black person in America, then, to

compound those issues with challenges that arise being a migrant, *plus* issues of socioeconomic

status, educational attainment, and more, would undeniably be an arduous experience.

In the following section of the literature review, there will be a discussion on

intersections of various layers of discrimination in greater detail. regarding East African migrants

in the U.S.

2.3   Intersection of -Isms and -Phobias

In *America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States,"* author Erika Lee defines xenophobia in terms of a Trump-era America, like discussed in the previous section. Lee writes,

> The United States is also a nation of xenophobia. Even as it has welcomed millions from around the world, it has also deported more immigrants than any other nation-over fifty-five million since 1882. Americans have been wary of almost every group of foreigners that has come to the United States: German immigrants in the eighteenth century; Irish and Chinese in the nineteenth century; Italians, Jews, Japanese, and Mexicans in the twentieth century; and Muslims today. Americans have labeled immigrants threatening because they were poor, practiced a different faith, were nonwhite. They have argued that immigrants were too numerous, were not assimilating, were taking jobs away from deserving Americans, were bringing crime and disease into the country, had dangerous political ideals, were un-American, or even hated America … It has exploited and segregated the foreign-born, allowing them to be *in* America but not accepted as fully American (Lee, 2019, p. 4).

Essentially, xenophobia, the hatred of outsiders and foreigners, is steeped in American practices. And based on Lee's discussion, xenophobia and racism can undeniably be found within the experiences of East African migrants. There is a long list of examples to be used to highlight xenophobia and racism in America. And the way writers choose to write about these happenings either work to dismantle or perpetuate them.

Within the 2017 statements and policy made by former U.S. president Donald Trump, the issue of Islamophobia is present. More specifically, when in reference to East African nations, such as Somalia which holds a 99% Muslim population, the greatest in the region, anti-Blackness is, simultaneously, intersecting with that Islamophobia. Namira Islam's "Soft Islamophobia" article excellently explores where Islamophobia and anti-Blackness meet in the 21st century U.S. with consideration to Trump's statements.

First, Islam's articulation of Islamophobia is:

Islamophobia builds upon concepts like nativism (Scholastic n.d.) and xenophobia (UNESCO n.d.), where Islamophobes point to Islam as a "foreign" belief system that is

considered dangerous in part due to it being "un-American". This is shown in how readily the stereotypes regarding national origin and citizenship play a role in who Islamophobes have targeted. Non-Muslims who are "perceived to be Muslim" have been attacked or discriminated against in places of worships, in communities, and in places of public transit. Islamophobes have frequently uttered statements like "go back to your country" or other common anti-immigrant talking points (Islam, 2018, p. 2).

There is an inherent anti-immigrant nature that comes along with Islamophobia. And Islam does not stop at the articulation mentioned above. She goes further to explain the need for a shift in how Islamophobia is interpreted and that it *should* be considered within the context of how influential it is to law and policy. She wrote:

> Whichever term is utilized, Islamophobia is not simply about interpersonal disagreements between Muslims and non-Muslims, or about a "fear" of Muslims that non-Muslims act on … Islamophobia refers to the long-standing system of discrimination that is enshrined in law and policy to specifically target those who practice the Islamic faith, i.e., individuals who are known as Muslims (Islam, 2018, p. 5).

The occurrences discussed in the previous subsection, *2.2.2. A Slight from the Head of State,* affirm Islam's position.

Researchers Karsten Muller and Carlo Schwarz's study, "From Hashtag to Hate Crime: Twitter and Anti-Minority Sentiment," on the relationship between social media and hatred against marginalized groups, focused on the political rise of Donald Trump, also points to an increase of xenophobia, and heightened negative attention toward the Muslim community during that time. Since their study was published in 2020, Muller and Schwarz did have the opportunity to discuss contemporary well-known incidents of anti-Blackness and Islamophobia as those occurrences could have been corroborated with each other to further their analysis, but they chose not to.

In "The Intersection of Assimilation, Race, Presentation of Self, and Transnationalism in America," again, author Yoku Shaw-Taylor discusses the normative social structure of America

and what that means for African-American-ness. The chapter, part of an anthology serving as an inquiry on the experiences of African-American and immigrant Black African families, looks at social trends post-1965. A nod to Derrick Bell's notion of America's permanence of racism, Shaw-Taylor shapes the chapter based upon historical writings such as *The Souls of Black Folk* (W.E.B. DuBois) that also grapple with America's history with race.

In contrast with Muller and Schwarz, Shaw-Taylor, in this work, is concerned with discrimination or perceived discrimination found inter-communally and intra-racially. Across variations of Blackness, i.e., African Blackness, Caribbean Blackness, American Blackness, differences in historical experiences influence "distinct forms of ethnic or racial consciousness" (Shaw-Taylor, 2007, p. 24). On inter-communal relations, Shaw-Taylor wrote, "the adoption of social identities becomes part of the public order in society" (Shaw-Taylor, 2007, p. 25). The choice to not adopt certain social identities could negatively affect lived experiences.

2.3.1   *What it All Means to Migrant Reality*

However, in all of that discussed before, it is not lost on migrants how they must navigate this American reality.

In "The Impact of Intersecting Dimensions of Inequality and Identity on the Racial Status of Eastern African Immigrants," researchers Katja M. Guenther, Sadie Pendaz, and Fortunata Songora Makene found that East African immigrants in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota are able to navigate America's "implications for nonwhites." One of the study's participants reflected that "eastern Africans believe that their status as immigrant outsiders unfamiliar with U.S. customs and systems limits their ability to identify racist acts and to negotiate racial inequality. Still, [they] recognized racial prejudice and discrimination as significant in the United States" (Guenther et. al, 2011, p. 107). Upon entry migrants are challenged with their lack of

familiarity, yet they still enter with the knowledge that racial discrimination is significant in the country. This exemplifies a line of knowledge versus application. Even being knowledgeable about American discriminatory practices does not mean one is equipped with the means to deal with it. The researchers then presented that "Both time spent in the United States and educational attainment served to counteract this tendency [to be confused and overwhelmed by United States race relations]" (Guenther et. al, 2011, p. 108). This connects back to Bell's notion of the permanence of racism, which would be an inherent influential factor in the experience of East African migrants in the U.S.

The existence of those same implications needing to be navigated can be easily applied to East African migrants living in Clarkston as it is, honestly, a general tenet of being nonwhite in the U.S. Yet even the ability to navigate non-whiteness in America and the recognition of the country's racist nature does not deter the reality that stressors arise with that ability - especially for immigrants who have different realities in their home countries. Hugo Kamya's "The Stress of Migration and the Mental Health of African Immigrants" recognizes the truth that African immigrants have varying experiences but draws on psychological and sociological literature to explore mental health challenges that may arise in the group. Kamya breaks down some negative aspects of being an African immigrant in America through the concepts of social isolation, culture shock, cultural change, and goal-strive stress. And in discussion of coping strategies, Kamya shows that in that headspace, the intersection of ethnic and religious identity meet. Kamya works through how, for African migrants coming to the U.S., regarding spirituality "it is not uncommon for spiritual beings to be invoked in times of difficulty" (Kamya, 2007, p. 270). As for ethnic identity and coping "[an] African worldview reflects an overwhelming interrelationship between the personal and collective worlds … the will to survive is lived most

intimately in their sense of endurance" (Kamya, 2007, p. 270). There are instruments that African migrants may carry with them to influence their migrant experiences positively. And while migrant experiences are not monolithic, Kamya's choice to draw upon "African-ness" or tenets of African culture to inform how he discusses migrant experiences is notable.

Ultimately, there is an existent challenge in being an East African migrant in America, by way of numerous matters. The following section of the literature review explores what that means for migrants and American citizenship.

2.4   Citizenship

2.4.1   *The American Dream*

Among many definitions, citizenship is belonging and membership in a community. U.S. Immigration Services defines obtaining United States citizenship after birth as "having all the same rights and privileges as every American-born citizen" (U.S. Immigration). The Declaration of Independence declares that all men are created equal and are entitled to the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. To be an American citizen means to reap those very benefits. That is the American dream, and by assumption the American Dream should be available even to those who migrate to the U.S.

"The American Dream" was coined by James Truslow Adams in his 1931 "The Epic of America." Adams 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," and when everyone can be "be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position" (Barone, 2022). Historically, the idea of the American Dream has been upheld by the U.S. in its acceptance of immigrants fleeing Ireland for religious conflict

or refugees from the former Soviet Union. Even about a century and a half before Truslow

Adams coined the term, French-American writer J. Hector St. John de Crèvecœur wrote on the

opportunity of America for travelers to the country. Crèvecœur proclaimed that "here, the idle

may be employed, the useless become useful, and the poor become rich" (Taylor, 2013). From

all of that mentioned, American citizenship was not a requirement for participation in the dream,

and that being in America was enough. However, the landscape of immigration and law in

America has drastically changed since the time of Crèvecœur. And, for Black and African people

in America, there have been specific challenges.

In "A New Model in the Civil Rights Movement," William Sales articulates Dr. Martin

Luther King Jr.'s critique of the American Dream. Sales writes:

> Dr. King consciously embraced the American Dream, which he understood to be part of
> the U.S. liberal democratic tradition as embodied in the secular documents – the
> Declaration of Independence and the Constitution – and in the religious tradition of the
> Protestant variants of Old and New Testament Christianity. Thus his criticism was not of
> the conception of the dream itself but the hypocritical and selective way that Whites
> implemented the Dream. As James Cone put it, King believed that the federal
> government, southern moderates, northern liberals, and the White religious community
> had both the material resources and moral capacity to extend the dream to Black folks
> (Sales, 1994, p. 46).

Dr. King's critique of the American Dream exemplifies the complexity of being an African

person in America wanting to affirm that you do belong, and/or simply being a Black American.

Drawing on the Declaration of Independence and religious values so heavily ingrained in

American society, King finds the dream versus reality very contradictory. And the questioning of

America's federal government, southern moderates, northern liberals, and the White religious

community is key as well as they inform citizenship experiences.

Ami R. Moore's *The American Dream Through the Eyes of Black African Migrants in*

Texas, uses Truslow Adams' definition of the American Dream to explore if the realities of

African immigrants in Texas are in line with the dream. Moore's work is unique in that it is constructed through the lens of researching in a Southern setting. This study considers the viewpoints and experiences of Black African migrants from two East African countries, Ethiopia and Kenya, along with Ghana and Nigeria as well. Moore fantastically, uses how these immigrants, themselves, define the American Dream and juxtaposes those meanings with Truslow Adams' definition. The two definitions are not from each other. "Opportunity" and "freedom" were at the crux of participants' definitions, and the participants' gauge of their achievement of the dream was widely rooted in material means - such as the "riches" part of Truslow Adams' definition.

Moore writes on Imani, an Ethiopian, resident in Texas. Her feelings toward the American Dream. pre-migration are:

> I was excited. I was sixteen. Who did not want to come to America at that age? ... You get the excitement. You are going to have everything you want, clothes, TV, and so on. You watch all the shows about America and you think you will have a chance to live some of it (Moore, 2013, p. 20).

> Abasi, a Kenyan immigrant, also had pre-migration views of the U.S. They are:

> Although I was happy to secure a visa for the United States, I knew that America is not a land of milk and honey where anyone can easily get these. Also, I knew that there are racial issues and I planned to stay to myself as much as possible. I was happy that I received a graduate scholarship. I admire the United States for granting scholarships to people anywhere in the world to come and study (Moore, 2013, p. 20).

Although Imani and Abasi's pre-migration views differ from each other, there are signals within each on the American Dream and its actuality. Imani's pre-migration views and aspirations are aligned with the American Dream's promise; what Truslow described it to be in its purest form. Abasi's views, however, signal just how tensile and the American Dream is.

Participants, including Imani and Abasi also provided their post-migration views later in Moore's study, and some views did shift. External factors were considered in their post-migration conceptualizations of the American Dream, and Moore correlated them to the sentiments of Crèvecœur, mentioned earlier. Moore wrote, "they believed that the available opportunities were not for everyone, but for the willing" (Moore, 2013, p. 39).

2.4.2 Citizens' Relative Deprivation

In Moore's participants' attitudes towards opportunities being available for the willing, there is a pointing to the concept of relative deprivation. Relative deprivation is a classical model for social movements, and it signifies holes and inequities in social systems. It is argued that African Americans, Black Americans, experience relative deprivation in the United States by way of inequities and being deprived of resources. So, even those who are willing may not get to participate in the "available" opportunities of the American Dream. That, in turn, carries lasting, trickle-down effects to the citizenship experience of East African migrants in the United States.

On this, in "Race and Relative Deprivation in the Urban United States," researchers Reeve D. Vanneman and Thomas F. Pettigrew correlate social stratification with racial attitudes. In Vanneman and Petigrew's findings, it was noted that among varying types of deprivation (i.e., fraternal deprivation) American society, racism is a variable in those feelings.

Ultimately, though, literature on relative deprivation and migration is heavily focused on relative deprivation in migrants' home countries. They are centered on the "push-pull" model as discussed earlier, and do not consider the relative deprivation of those in the migrants' new countries that could influence their migrant experience simply by category.

2.5 Summary

East African immigrants arrive and settle in Clarkston for a number of reasons. The United States has a lengthy history of immigration policy and that affects real lives beyond those decrees and mandates. So, the usefulness of the classical push and pull factor theory for justification why groups emigrate to America is questionable not only in twenty-first century study, but also when examining diverse groups as well. America's oppressive and racist nature informs what East African migrants experience in the U.S.

The existing body of literature relating to the matters listed above have been, in this chapter, reviewed and critiqued. The goal of this review was to develop an understanding of the experiences of East African migrants and, further, how those experiences are written about. In the following chapter, "Methodology," the approaches and actions taken to actualize this research are presented, explained, and justified.

3   METHODOLOGY

The following chapter outlines the methods used in this study. Here, the researcher explains and justifies the chosen approaches. Criteria used to select participants, the setting of the study, measurements, and procedures are discussed as well. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the analysis process used with data collection and a chapter summary.

3.1   Design and Approach

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of East African migrants in Clarkston, Georgia. Specifically, the shared experiences with U.S. immigration and citizenship processes amongst participants and the intersection of race, class, nationality, and citizenship status affect and influence their migration and lived experiences in the U.S. are probed. To investigate that, a qualitative approach was chosen.

A qualitative approach was used to investigate the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences with U.S. immigration and citizenship processes that East African migrants hold?

2. How does the intersection of race, class, nationality, and citizenship status affect and influence East African immigrant's migration and lived experiences in the United States?

Qualitative inquiry was chosen as best suited for this study. The University of Texas at Austin Library defines "qualitative research" as:

> A process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting. It focuses on the "why" rather than the "what" of social phenomena and relies on the direct experiences of human beings as meaning-making agents in their everyday lives. Rather than by logical and statistical procedures, qualitative researchers use multiple systems of inquiry for the study of human phenomena (UTA Libraries, 2019).

Qualitative inquiry is best suited for this study as it questions the "why" of aspects of the human experience. Under qualitative research, there are five approaches to inquiry: Phenomenology, ethnography, narrative study, grounded theory, and case study.

The nature of this qualitative research is an exploratory case study. In <u>Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches</u>, author John W. Creswell defines case study as "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life contemporary [case] or multiple [cases] through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and case themes" (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). For case studies, Creswell recommends the researcher use the logic of replication across each case. The logic of replication is "[when] the inquirer replicates the procedures for each case" (Creswell, 2013, p. 99). Following that recommendation, identically for each case included in this research, individual interviews were conducted. In this study's findings, each participant has a unique case description, and data collected from the interviews is used to identify major themes across the cases.

With the case study approach, there are six types of case studies: exploratory, explanatory, comparative, intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. This research is an exploratory case study. The exploratory component answers questions of "how" and what" - as in the two research questions - and is used when there "is no single set of outcomes" (Dissertation Workbook, p. 2). In this research, each participant was not expected to have mirroring responses to the interview questions presented to them. That is what makes an exploratory case study approach appropriate for this specific line of inquiry, as this study does not seek to "prove" a theory, it simply seeks to explore experiences.

3.2   Sample Selection and Criterion

This qualitative study focuses on a specific demographic. Purposeful sampling and snowball sampling were utilized to gather participants rather than, merely, random sampling. The following criteria is used to select participants:

- Self-identify as an East African immigrant.
- Must have been born in one of the following countries: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, South Sudan, or Djibouti.
- Be over 18 years of age.
- Have emigrated to Clarkston, Georgia.
- Willing to speak freely about their migrant experiences.
- Available for further contact after interview for follow-up inquiry if necessary.

Eight East African migrants from the countries of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Burundi, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan were selected to participate in this study. All participants were at least eighteen years old, and the study did not include minors to reduce possible risks. To reflect the experiences of minors, adults who migrated as minors are welcomed participated in the study.

Participants were recruited through a flyer shared via email to a student organization and passed out around a local community college. Some participants were recruited through word of mouth that they needed to be a migrant to participate in the study.

In the sample selection criteria, participants were not required to disclose their immigration or citizenship status. In *Lessons Learned From the Recruitment of Undocumented African Immigrant Women for a Qualitative Study,* researchers Oluwatoyin Olukotun and Lucy Mkandawire-Valhmu wrote, "when immigrants are sampled for a study, investigators are likely to veer away from assessing participant's immigration status to avoid creating discomfort and stirring mistrust" (Olukotun and Mkandawire-Valhmu, 2020). The sample is a vulnerable

population, but they ultimately did choose to speak about their status freely. Wherever participants were in their citizenship, visa, or immigration processes, in the parameters of the above criterion, was not a hindrance to their ability to participate.

Further, as an added measure for safety, all participants were assigned pseudonyms and their identities will remain confidential. The participants were made aware of pseudonym assignation before their participation in the study.

3.3 Setting

This study uses purposeful sampling within the target community. All participants are migrants who have experienced living in Clarkston. The study mostly took place virtually with some recruiting and one interview taking place in Clarkston. If participants were not able to do their individual interviews in person, they were allowed to have a virtual interview.

3.4 Procedures

This study occurred through a set of chronological processes. Participants were first recruited through purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Hard-copy recruitment flyers were passed out around the Georgia State University Perimeter College Clarkston campus, and one was posted in a local business. Digital recruitment flyers were shared to two student organizations. The flyer includes a description of the study's purpose, participation criterion, a note that identities will remain anonymous, and my contact information. Snowball sampling was used after multiple interviews as well.

It was anticipated that data would be collected through both individual interviews and a focus group. Due to time constraints and lack of attraction, only the eight interviews occurred. Six interviews were held over the phone, one interview occurred over Zoom, and one took place in person. Every interview was one-on-one with just me and one participant. Prior to interviewing, all participants were given and read an informed consent. Before the start of the interview, participants were given time to ask any questions they had. Participants agreed to the informed consent before interviewing started. All participants were informed that their identity would remain confidential, any information that could link them to the study would be omitted, and they would be assigned a pseudonym. Names, emails, and phone numbers linked to the participants were denoted by pseudonym and put into document after all interviews and follow-up contact occurred. This document is stored in a password protected file and will be stored for one year.

An in-depth interview guide was used for consistency across the interviews. During each interview, I asked various follow-up questions based on participants' responses. The interviews were recorded using an electronic device, all recordings were then uploaded as MP3 files into a password-protected cloud software. The recordings are going to be stored for an indefinite amount of time. Participants were made aware of how recordings are being stored, and it was included in the informed consent.

Interviews occurred from March 9th, 2023, to March 25th, 2023. Interviews lasted approximately thirty minutes to one hour. At the end of their interviews, participants were paid $25 for their time through digital and physical gift cards. Participants were provided with the contact information of the researcher, should they have any questions or concerns about the interview or this study.

For multiple reasons, all participants were for paid their time and participation in this study. One, ethically, it is not comfortable for me as a researcher to use human subjects for my academic and professional interests and gain without paying them. Two, the migrants who participate in studies outside of their home countries are a vulnerable population. And that applies to this study's entire sample. As this study is dependent upon participants being immigrants, by providing compensation, the researcher aims to express her gratitude for any risks - which the researcher does not anticipate - associated with the sample's participation. Three, for centuries the United States has profited from the free labor of Black and African people. For various reasons, participation in this study calls for participants to exercise mental and emotional labor. The researcher does not seek to be a contributor to the American tradition of gaining from Black and African free labor.

All the discussed procedures have been approved by Georgia State University's Institutional Review Board. When results are produced and published, participants who expressed interest receiving a copy of the study, will be contacted.

3.5   Validity

Validity in qualitative research considers the accuracy and truthfulness of interpreted data. There are three types of validity: construct, internal, and external. Construct validity and external validity are relevant to this study. Internal validity is not necessarily relevant to the nature of this study.

Construct validity is concerned with ensuring that the data collection process accurately addresses the research questions and the appropriateness of conclusions drawn from data collection. During the interviewing process, I remained sure that the questions asked are relevant

to the research questions this study aims to answer. External validity is concerned with generalization and the application of irrelevant, outside context to the study. I recognize that this study's participatory population is a specific demographic and the results gathered from their participation is not meant to be generalized onto all immigrants and East African immigrants.

Eight participants ensured that the study reflects an array of experiences, while also considering that the study is focused on a small population where a large number of people may not be available or open to sharing their experiences.

3.6   Reliability and Trustworthiness

3.6.1   *Reliability*

To ensure reliability, any variations of the setting and/or context of the interview were noted and documented to share if any changes reflected and/or swayed the information in the interviews. Multiple cycles of coding and cross-referencing of data was employed to ensure reliability as well.

3.6.2   *Trustworthiness*

Building and maintaining trustworthiness is extremely important to the researcher throughout this process, especially with the involved vulnerable sample group. *Sampling in Difficult to Access Refugee and Immigrant Communities,* an evaluation of sampling strategies used in a study on Ethiopians and Somalis in Minnesota, provides useful insight on experiences sampling the East African population in the U.S. The researchers wrote, "rapport-building activities among investigators, field staff, and immigrant communities made it possible to obtain the sample and gather sensitive data. Maintaining a culture of trust was crucial in recovering from damaging environmental events that threatened data collection" (Spring, et. al, 2013, p. 1).

3.7   Analysis

Data analysis occurred through coding once all interviews were conducted. Coding is used to detect patterns in the collected data. Multiple cycles of coding are used to ensure optimal analysis of data. This study's collected data was analyzed through two cycles of coding.

First cycle coding occurs in a direct, initial manner. It is the space to "take ownership of the data" (Saldana, 2016, p. 69). In the first cycle of coding, multiple coding methods were used. They were holistic coding and versus coding. Holistic coding is described as "macro-level coding" (Saldana, 2016, p. 166) that identifies general themes found in the data. It is an exploratory coding method, meaning it is an "exploratory and preliminary [assignment] of codes to the data before more refined coding systems are developed and applied" (Saldana, 2016, p. 165). Holistic coding was used in this study primarily to establish common themes found across participant responses. Versus coding is described as "identifying in dichotomous or binary terms the individuals, groups, social systems, organizations, phenomena, processes, concepts, etc. in direct conflict with each other. It is an affective coding method, meaning it "investigates subjective qualities of human experience by directly acknowledging and naming those experiences" (Saldana, 2016, p. 124). In this study, affective coding was used to identify factors that influence actions during migration and after.

After the first cycle, the second cycle of coding is a more analytic process consisting of "classifying, prioritizing, integrating, synthesizing, abstracting, conceptualizing, and theory building" (Saldana, 2016, p. 69). Second cycle coding is used to "[reorganize] and [reanalyze] data" and "develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual and/or theoretical organization from [the] array of first cycle codes" (Saldana, 2016, p. 234). In this study, the second cycle of

coding consisted of pattern coding. The first cycle codes were coded again in the second round through an examination of patterns. A further step was taken to attribute cross-case meaning to the original codes found in cycle one. From there, four major cross-case themes were identified.

In this coding process, a transcription software called Descript was used. The software transcribed interviews. Each transcribed interview was printed and read, and an array of highlighter colors were used to categorize alike responses. Each color was attributed to one specific category. The original highlighted responses were used to identify the first-round codes. After the first-round codes were identified, they were reviewed again, for a second-round of coding, in a search for patterns amongst the responses. From that, four major cross-case themes were identified.

3.8   Summary

In <u>Qualitative Research from Start to Finish,</u> author Robert K. Yin describes qualitative research as "collecting data from a variety of sources, evaluating the data, analyzing evaluations to produce findings, and presenting the findings" (Yin, 2016, p. 8). In this chapter, all but one of those criteria is fulfilled. A qualitative, exploratory case study approach was chosen for this study because of its nature to answer the "what's" and "how's" of the research question. The sample is selected through a list of selective criteria. Interviews and focus groups are used to collect data. Validity, reliability, and trustworthiness measures are in place to assure that the collected and interpreted data is well grounded. Data is then analyzed through multiple cycles of coding.

In the following chapter, "Findings," the remaining criteria for Yin's description of qualitative research, "presenting the findings," occurs.

4   FINDINGS

This study was conducted in an effort to explore the experiences of East African migrants living in Clarkston, Georgia. Considerations of race, class, nationality, and citizenship status were at the forefront of this exploration. This study was conducted under the guide of two research questions:

1.   What are the experiences with U.S. immigration and citizenship processes that East African migrants hold?

2.   How does the intersection of race, class, nationality, and citizenship status affect and influence East African immigrant's migration and lived experiences in the United States?

This study used a qualitative, exploratory case study approach to begin to answer and explore these research questions. "Begin to answer" is used as participant responses in this study cannot be used to generalize the experiences of all East African migrants in Clarkston, the South, or all of America. And, simply, the conclusion of the study reveals that there is more to be explored. Eight interviews were conducted from March 9th, 2023, to March 25th, 2023. Interviewees were recruited through a flyer shared via email to a student organization and passed out around a local community college. Snowball sampling was also used to recruit some of the interviewees. Six interviews took place over the phone, one was conducted via Zoom, and one was done in person. The interviewees agreed to be contacted for a follow-up should I need clarification on their responses, and of the eight, only one was contacted again. That information is also included in the data.

This study was originally designed to have two methods of data collection: an interview and a focus group. I believed that a conversation with participants in community with each other

and having space to build upon each other's responses would have been a valuable contribution

to the research. However, the focus group was presented to participants as being an optional,

subsequent activity to follow the interview for an extra incentive. Time conflict between the

interviewees and the research timeline coupled with a general lack of demand for the focus group

created an outcome where the focus group did not occur. In the following chapter, Conclusion, I

discuss suggestions for future studies to include focus groups and what could have been done

differently in this research protocol to bring the focus group to fruition.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first is a presentation of the cases detailing

participant profiles. All identifying information is removed, and participants are named with

pseudonyms. The second is an analysis of cross-case themes found amongst participant

responses. The third is an analysis to address how both of the study's research questions were

answered. The final part is a summary.

4.1   The Cases: Participant Profiles

Eight participants who are currently living in Clarkston or who formerly lived there

participated in this study. Six of the participants are men, and two of the participants are women.

Each participant self-identified as an East African migrant or refugee. The participants range

from ages 20-43. Every participant was presented with the same interview questions. In that,

though, they all provided valuable responses of their own, rooted in their real, lived experiences,

and I hope that as a researcher I have maintained the integrity of their valuable contributions.

Below is an overview of the participants, their home countries, and ages:

Pseudonym	Home Country	Age
Menelik	Ethiopia	21
Noab	Ethiopia	20
Dawit	Ethiopia/Eritrea	24
Miriam	Burundi	32
Ibrahim	Sudan/South Sudan	24
Tesha	Eritrea	19
Abdi	Somalia	43
Umar	Sudan	21

The majority of participants hail from the Horn of Africa. Each of them is a unique case, though. Following the case study approach, it is important to situate each participant, each case, in their real-life, lived contexts. Participants' points of conceptualization that are reflected in the data are grounded in the context in which they are coming from. However, it is not only important to situate each participant in their real-life, lived contexts, but, too, their stories are included simply because they are worth sharing. In the following pages, a detailing of each of the participants is provided:

Dawit

Dawit is a twenty-four-year-old Ethiopian student, coach, brother, and son. In 1998 he was born in Ethiopia's Tigray region. Dawit has a mother, father, and is the oldest brother of six with an older sister, three younger brothers, and a younger sister. Despite being born in Ethiopia, Dawit self-identifies as Ethiopian and Eritrean. "Half Ethiopian, half Eritrean," he says. In the

culture he holds high with pride, it is customary for children to identify with the identity of their father. He explains it as:

> Sometimes I identify as Ethiopian because a lot of people don't know what Eritrea is. It makes things easier, but in our culture it is preferred that you go by your dad. If your dad is Jamaican, and your mom is, let's say, Haitian, you go by your dad. That's our culture.

Dawit's mother is Ethiopian, and his father is Eritrean. During the time that he was born, it was virtually impossible for his parents to be together freely because of the divide between the two countries.

From the time of his birth, Dawit remembers a childhood consisting of life in a refugee camp. He said, "My childhood *is* a refugee camp. It's not like riding bicycles or going to the park." He and his family went into the camp soon after he was born.

In 2005, an eight-year-old Dawit, his father, mother, and older sister migrated to the United States. They came to the U.S. as refugees, and now Dawit has American citizenship. The four of them originally were in Stone Mountain, Georgia. They did not have any choice in their move to Georgia. After two years, Dawit, his mother, and his sister moved to Clarkston - without his father. Dawit's four younger siblings were born at various times after the move. Dawit does not have any other extended family members who live in Clarkston.

Currently, Dawit is a student studying a bachelor's in Film and African-American Studies. He works as a soccer coach and a student assistant as well. At his core, Dawit is passionate about learning and meeting new people.

Tesha

Tesha is a nineteen-year-old Eritrean student, sister and daughter. In 2004 she was born in the city of Keren. Not even a year after her birth, Tesha, her mother, father, and older sister left Eritrea for the U.S.

Upon arrival in the United States, the family lived in Clarkston. Tesha describes her childhood in Clarkston as not out of the ordinary for growing up there. The small city is filled with many different apartment complexes where migrants can secure housing, and Tesha's family did the same.

Tigrinya, one of the national languages of Eritrea, is Tesha's native, home language, but she was socialized in the U.S. learning English as well. On that, she says:

> I understand Tigrinya just as much as I understand English. I came here when I was a baby - so as a kid when I was learning to speak, I was learning and using both at the same time.

Tesha is of the Orthodox Christian religion, or simply Orthodox for short. The Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church accounts for two-fifths of the country's total Christian population. She describes her faith as being a source of "her peace."

The summer before she started high school, she and her family went back to Ethiopia, to Keren, and stayed for a month. That was the only time Tesha has been back to her home country. When asked if she has any plans of going back, she said:

> Yes, I want to go back soon, I just don't know when that'll be. I really want to see what it'll be like going as an adult. Last time I was still just a kid.

Today, Tesha is a first-year student studying Political Science with aspirations of going into law in the future.

Menelik

Menelik is a twenty-one-year-old student, son, and brother from Ethiopia. He was born in the country's capital of Addis Ababa, but he spent his life in Ethiopia living in the nearby town of Alem Gena. One of Menelik's favorite parts about his childhood in Ethiopia was growing up with his cousins.

In December of 2017, Menelik immigrated to the U.S. with his father, mother, and sister. His father sought the opportunity to obtain a "family visa" and moved them here. Clarkston is where they originally migrated to and remain today. Amharic is his first language, and upon arrival to the U.S., Menelik's English abilities were self-described as "not that good."

Menelik identifies as Christian, and notes attending fellowship as being part of his normal routine living in Clarkston. Right now, Menelik works, but he is also in school studying Computer Science and figuring out what he would like to do with that in the future.

Noab

Noab is a twenty-year-old student, brother, and son from Ethiopia. In 2002, he was born to his mother, father, and older brother. He has a sister who was born after him as well. Noab grew up in Addis Ababa. He had a self-described fun childhood growing up in Ethiopia. On that, he says:

> It was really fun. All we do is go to school, play football, have fun with friends, watch movies. Back home, I think the Western has a lot of influence, so we mostly watch, like, American movies.

Watching American movies in Ethiopia is also how Noab learned to speak English. He says that from movies he was able to learn "the basic things." His native language is Amharic - the official

government language of Ethiopia. Noab attended school in Ethiopia through what is considered seventh grade in America.

In 2015, Noab left Ethiopia and migrated to the U.S. by himself. He had left his parents and two siblings. When Noab came to the U.S., it was his first time being on a plane. Doing this all by himself, at only thirteen years old, he was nervous but excited at the same time. He describes his departure saying:

> "It was a sad day for my parents, but I was excited 'cause I was a kid, you know? You hear a lot of things about America, and you just wanna come.

His parents sent him to America for "better opportunities and way of living." When he first arrived in the U.S., he came to Denver, Colorado to live with his aunt.

Noab and his aunt lived together in Denver for over three years. However, in 2019, the two relocated to Clarkston and still live together today. Noab has residence in the U.S. by way of a visa.

Currently, Noab is working towards a Computer Science degree. He is committed to his goal of transferring to a four-year university, so he does not work and is strictly focused on school.

Ibrahim

Ibrahim is a twenty-four-year-old man from Sudan. In 1999, he was born to his mother and father and two older siblings in the capital city Khartoum. He is the middle of five children as two more of his siblings were later born in the United States. Shortly after his birth, Ibrahim, his parents, and two older siblings moved to Egypt to seek asylum during Sudan's second civil war.

In 2003, after three years of asylum in Egypt, Ibrahim and his four other family members migrated to the U.S. as refugees of war. Specifically, they were granted entry through refugee visas. The family first resided in New York; for a short period of time. Then, the family came to Atlanta, Georgia, and, subsequently, planted roots in the community of Clarkston. Ibrahim's aunt was in Clarkston, so a sense of familial security was present in their decision making. She even lived across the street from his family.

While Ibrahim was born in Khartoum, in northern Sudan, his family has roots in the city of Wau in southern Sudan - what is now South Sudan. He was only born in Khartoum because of instability from the war. He and his family migrated years before South Sudan formally became an independent nation-state in 2011. So, because of where his family is from coupled with them migrating while Sudan was one nation, Ibrahim self-identifies as South Sudanese, Sudanese, and Sudanese-American. He said:

> I think a lot of it is political. So, I just say I'm from Sudan. I don't really care. *But* I am from South Sudan.

Ibrahim was asked if he had been back to South Sudan since his family left in 1999 after his birth, and his response was "Yes. Once in 2018."

Ibrahim and his family lived in Clarkston up until he was in 7th grade. Then, his family moved to the north-Atlanta area in Gwinnett County. After graduating high school, Ibrahim went to a university, and was influenced by his background as a migrant in deciding what he would major in and aspired to do after college. He first majored in Computer Science and was motivated by a sense of financial and social freedom that could come with that degree. He says that is a common motivation in how people who have been displaced choose what to study. On that, he said:

Clarkston is a lot different now than what it was when I was growing up. Granted, I'm not even that old … When I grew up in Clarkston, I remember you couldn't go to certain sides of the city without certain people. People used to walk up to a random person and hit them in the face. Clarkston isn't the same what it is now compared to what I grew up in. So, growing up you're like 'Oh, I want to be able to get that. Oh, I want to provide for my family. Oh, I want to get these different things.'

Ultimately, after some decision making, Ibrahim graduated with a degree in Global Studies with goals of becoming an overseas government ambassador.

Ibrahim has become a devout Christian in recent years. And, guided by his faith, Ibrahim decided that government and policy work is not his calling. Currently, Ibrahim is doing work to break into commercial real estate. He recently earned a license to practice real estate in the state of Georgia and looks forward to a prosperous future.

Abdi

Abdi is a husband, father, and businessman from Somalia. He was born in the town of Wanlaweyn - about fifty miles outside of the capital city Mogadishu. Twenty-one years ago, in 2002, Abdi left Somalia and migrated to the U.S. He and his wife migrated together.

When the couple first came to America in 2002, they settled in Nashville, Tennessee. Years later, Abdi, his wife, and their, at the time, two small children moved to Georgia in the Dekalb County/Clarkston area. Their youngest daughter was later born in Georgia.

Conflict and unrest in Somalia was what brought Abdi and his wife to the U.S. He does not talk about that time of his life often but loves thinking about how things were "before the war." Now, much of his family lives in the neighboring country of Kenya in its capital Nairobi. Abdi's family left Somalia for the same reason as him - war. And the times he has gone back to

East Africa have all been spent in Kenya. However, he jokes about how he needs to take his three children, a son and two daughters, to Somalia to keep their culture alive.

Abdi is a practicing Muslim and has found community in the area in part through religion. He says:

> When you're in a community with a bunch of foreigners, people from different places, we connect through our belief, but it is also having people like 'I was in your place. I know what it is like.'

Abdi has speaking, reading, and/or writing fluency in five different languages, including English, Somali, the Somali dialect Raxanweyn, Arabic, and Swahili. For almost ten years he worked in a local school system doing translation work. Currently, Abdi owns his own business in the retail sector. Upon initially meeting, he offered information, as this study reflects, on how the number of East African migrants outside of countries like Ethiopia and Eritrea might be a challenge for me. He is a man steeped in his community, able to provide a thorough breakdown of certain surrounding shops and restaurants, the owners and their ethnic backgrounds, what type of business he sees, and more.

Miriam

Miriam is a thirty-two-year-old mother and daughter from Burundi. Miriam, an only child, migrated to the U.S. with her mother and father in 1997 at the age of six.

The family first came to the U.S. in search of different work opportunities. Atlanta is where the family first settled. Miriam's father worked in a local hospital and allowed the family to plant stable roots. Miriam's mother worked many odd jobs as well. She situates memories of her childhood more in her upbringing in Georgia.

In 2006, Miriam's father repatriated back to Burundi. She was two years into her high school career, and she and her mother stayed in Georgia. At the time that her father left, Miriam and her mother had gained American citizenship. On what she thought at the time about her father leaving and her staying, she said:

> I can remember, from like first grade all the way up until where I was in high school all of the schooling I had, and just growing up and being raised here. All of my views on certain things were shaped by a lot of, you know, what we experienced here in the U.S. Living here. Growing up here. I felt a lot more comfortable with just staying in the States.

Not long after her father left, Miriam and her mother moved a few miles northeast to Clarkston. There, they lived with Miriam's aunt, her father's sister, who had already been in Georgia for a few years. Miriam finished high school and earned her associate degree all while living in Clarkston.

Miriam's time in Clarkston was brief in comparison to other participants, but she experienced living in the community, nevertheless. She does not live in Clarkston anymore.

Miriam left Clarkston in 2011 to further her education in Washington state. She has a master's degree in Biology. Currently, Miriam works in the medical technology field. She is a wife and mother to two sons, noting her own upbringing as an only child.

Umar

Umar is a twenty-one-year-old student, son, and friend from Sudan. In 2001, he was born to his mother, father, and older siblings. He is the youngest. Right after Umar was born, he and his family moved to the United States as refugees.

When they arrived in America, they were placed in Clarkston without any choice. Umar says they do not have any family members who live in Clarkston, but some people they knew relocated there as well.

Umar does not live in Clarkston anymore, but he resides in the metro-Atlanta area. He spent roughly seven years of his childhood in Clarkston. Then he and his family moved to Nebraska for a few years, and then they returned to the Atlanta area after.

The last time Umar was in Sudan was when he was in the second grade for Christmas break. During that time, they stayed there with his aunt, and the rest of his extended family is still in Khartoum.

Currently, Umar is in his first year of college studying to be a scientist. He also just became very interested in powerlifting. He enjoys reading - very much - fitness, being in nature, and creative outlets such as theater and art.

4.2   Major Cross-Case Themes

Eight interviews were conducted based on the following research questions: *1. What are experiences with U.S. immigration and citizenship processes that East African migrants hold? 2. How does the intersection of race, class, nationality, and citizenship status affect and influence East African immigrant's migration and lived experiences in the United States?* Across each of the participants' interviews, four major cross-case themes were found. They are:

1.   Tradition and Culture

2.   Emphasis on Difference Here and There

3.   Going Back Home

4.   "Keeping Your Head to the Ground"

These major themes are derived from the second, and final round of coding, pattern coding, to attribute meaning and cohesion to the original, first cycle codes. The first cycle of coding included holistic coding and versus coding. Holistic codes that were found are: "Family,"

"Education," "Change," "Socialization," and "Remembering." Versus codes that were found are: "Parents vs. Children," "Opportunity in the U.S. vs. Opportunity Abroad," and "Culture vs. Culture." The holistic and versus codes were synthesized with each other to create the four major pattern codes.

4.2.1 Theme One: Tradition and Culture

Ideas and thoughts on tradition and culture appeared in every interview in varying, nuanced ways. There were thoughts on preservation of tradition while living in America, things that are found in the culture of participants' home country that the U.S. could benefit from embracing, navigating feelings towards certain set traditions in the twenty-first century, and more. This theme was developed largely in response to the second research question's examination of lived experiences.

A facet of culture that appeared in the interviews is a sort of dissonance between being from East Africa but being raised in the U.S. *"Third culture kids"* is a term that describes the experiences of two participants as not only East African migrants living in the U.S., but the position of being children of migrants as well. Explicitly introduced in Ibrahim's interview, a third culture kid is essentially an immigrant, specifically one who migrated during childhood, who have maintained a relationship with the culture of their home country, but, in the American context, are able to identify with, in some ways more, with American culture. This idea was interpreted differently amongst participants who touched on it. Again, Ibrahim was the one who introduced the term. He says:

> When I go there (South Sudan), I'm American, but when I go to certain places here I'm Sudanese. I would say I identify more with American culture. Not saying that I have let go of my Sudanese culture, because I haven't. That's still a part of who I am. But even as

I'm speaking, or when I introduce myself, most people are just like 'Oh this guy doesn't have an accent. Are you sure you're not-' and I'm just like 'Yeah. I'm not from here.'

There is, essentially, an area of "in between" that makes up what it means to be "third culture." The sort of conflict and demarcation of not fitting could be internal or external, but for Ibrahim it is felt more externally.

It is a common thread for immigrant parents to not want their children to become too steeped in "American culture" out of fear they will forget where they come from. For Ibrahim, the embrace of American culture does not have to be something negative - especially when it is what someone has known most of their life. He does stress that he is still very connected to Sudanese culture, and through programs and family practices, the culture that comes from "home" can be maintained.

Tesha presents a different perspective on being a "third culture kid." She had her own feelings which were more rooted in internal contention between Eritrean tradition and her own feelings on what being Eritrean means to her in a gendered sense. She said:

> I know that our culture puts a lot of spotlight on what we get passed down from our father. Everything that I understand and relate to in my Eritrean culture is because of my Eritrean *mother*. So, there is back and forth on how I see things and the way I am 'supposed to.'

Tesha's experience, differing from Ibrahim's, seems to be more internal. Even with those feelings, again, Tesha self-identifies as "I'm Eritrean, living in America." Third culture is not about negating their culture by any means.

The United States being just "different," in a sense of living, from their home countries undergirds these feelings in both Ibrahim and Tesha. As in Abdi's case, he related the concept

more to his children, who were born in the U.S. He does not want his children to become disconnected and believes there is a "right" way to go about that.

Ultimately, even with various feelings on culture and tradition, none of the participants shied away from pride in their countries and the cultures of them. Noab expressed how his pride is sourced largely in part because of the sense of togetherness he has seen while has been living in Clarkston. He said:

> We have a lot of religions, you know? Muslim, Christian, Orthodox. We're all still here together.

Specifically, the "we" Noab uses is in reference to the Ethiopian population in Clarkston. Dawit reflected on his own pride in Ethiopia specifically pointing to the country outside of its reputation in the West related to war:

> I don't know what other people might think of Ethiopia, but [besides] the war, they have hospitality. They're so respectful if somebody is older than them. They're so respectful. I like that. I'm not saying everybody is good, but here is so different.

When discussing their home cultures, the participants never responded with overt negativity, even in their critiques. In a space, as detailed in the literature review, with racism etched into its structure, even if not intentionally, it was notable to witness the participants not internalize negative Western, American attitudes towards Africa and East Africa.

4.2.2   Theme Two: Emphasis on Difference Here and There

Difference was a prevalent point of discussion in participant interviews. Some discussed the implications of "difference" that led them to become migrants and refugees in the first place. Difference was also situated in what it means to be an African and/or Black person in the U.S. versus not. The difference between idyllic perceptions of America and what the country was in

reality mentioned in Noab and Menelik's interviews as they had previously thought that America was going to be "like the movies." This theme was developed largely in response to the second research question's examination of the influence that, specifically, race, class, and nationality have on lived experiences.

Several of the participants migrated to the U.S. as refugees of war. Most pertinent to this study are the Second Sudanese Civil War, the Eritrean-Ethiopian War, and unremitting war in Somalia. The Second Sudanese Civil War lasted over two decades between 1983-2005. The war displaced four million people within the country and about 500,000 were displaced outside of Sudan (UNHCR, 2019). The war led to the eventual formation of South Sudan as an independent nation-state in 2011. The Eritrean-Ethiopian War lasted for two years between 1998-2000 and was an issue of territoriality (Mersie, et. al, 2021). The war displaced over one million people between both countries with Tigray being one of the regions with the highest displacement (Akresh et. al, 2012). War in Somalia has had major lasting effects since the late twentieth century with the Somali Civil War starting in 1991. There are over 800,000 Somali refugees that have been displaced worldwide (UNHCR, 2020).

Interview question #5 asked participants "Are you familiar with the terms: racism, classism, or xenophobia? If yes, did that/those mean anything to you in your home country?" In answering that question, with attention to xenophobia specifically, after clarification on what the term means, Dawit, Menelik, and Ibrahim all mentioned conflict amongst tribes and different groups. Abdi even noted the same thing as "conflict amongst each other." The wars detailed in the previous paragraph are what displaced three of the men and led them to the U.S. Dawit was displaced because of how Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict was so personal to his family; his parents were an Eritrean-Ethiopian couple, and could not live peacefully on either side, so they became

refugees. Ibrahim's family had ties in northern and southern Sudan, with conflict in both regions, they became displace. This specific tenet of difference focuses on the part of their lived experiences primarily outside of the U.S., but the participants explored manifestations in the U.S. as well.

Interview question #6 asked participants, "What are some immediate thoughts you have when thinking about the United States?" Words such as opportunity, freedom, division, access, and racism, among others, were mentioned in responses. There is a striking dichotomy between phrases such as "opportunity, freedom, access" and "division and racism" being used to answer the same question. For example, racism is a factor that can diminish access, but the participants exist in a particular space where even with the existing racism in the U.S., they believe there is still more access than what they would be afforded in their home countries.

Dawit's answer shed light on how he conceptualizes differences in America. He initially responded with three words, opportunity, divided, and racism, and raised the question: With there being opportunity, who is given that opportunity, and what, if any, dividing factors are used to decide? Dawit decided to talk more about racial and ethnic division in the U.S. and where that has positioned migrants entering the country. He said:

> One thing I will say is I give so much respect for African-Americans. It's so hard for them in this country. That's just my opinion, you know? It's racism here, I believe. I think African-Americans took so much sacrifice for other minorities to come here and have good opportunities.

When asked if he identifies as American, Menelik answered that he identifies as "Black American."

The participants also explored how the idea of difference materialized in socialization in Georgia. Two who migrated as children reflected on how it showed in that time of their life.

Miriam, while her education was mainly done in the Atlanta Public School (APS) and not in Clarkston, she mentioned feeling different there by simply being from Burundi. Ibrahim talked about the idea of "facecard" that was around when he was a kid in Clarkston. Essentially, it is that certain people in Clarkston could not go to certain places without people being like "Who are you?" "What are you doing here?" He said you would "need facecard" in certain areas to go to them. Dawit spoke more to the existence of these socio-locational understandings not necessarily bound in his memories of childhood:

> Division. There's nothing wrong with it, but I feel like there is a lot of people only helping people from their own country. In Clarkston, you help, like, your own kind … The thing is, in Clarkston, we all have the same struggle. You know, we're refugees. You know, we don't speak the same language. So, I feel like we could be more together.

Difference is not something taboo or something that is wrong - it just is. But from there, consequences, negative, positive, or neutral, exist at the hands of the human idea that difference needs to be acted upon. The participants in this study articulated the layers and levels in which difference shapes their migrant experiences inside and out of the U.S.

4.2.3   Theme Three: Going Back Home

The term home can hold a convoluted meaning for many people. To add in the factor of being a migrant, refugee, or displaced person, it can become even more complex. For some, it can be as simple as "My house is my home," as Menelik stated during his interview. This study, when using the phrase "home," is pointing toward the ideas of home country and feeling "at home" in the U.S. or even abroad.

Ibrahim, Miriam, Tesha, Noab, and Abdi all stated that they have traveled back to their home countries. As recent as January 2023, and all at various points in their lives, going home has looked and felt different across the participants.

Noab went back to Ethiopia in the summer of 2021. Abdi has taken multiple trips to see his family in Kenya. Tesha last went back to Eritrea in 2018, right before she started high school, and longs to return.

Ibrahim went back in 2018 as well. He detailed his experience as:

When I went to South Sudan in 2018 as soon as I got off the plane they smelled American all on me. I don't know how. I don't know how to explain it, they just knew. At the time I had dreads, and a lot of people in South Sudan have dreads, but I don't know. They smelled American all up on me. Even though I speak the language. I speak Arabic pretty well. They were like 'Oh yeah, this guy's American.' And once they saw the passport it confirmed.

Miriam just went back to Burundi to visit her father and extended family across two weeks in December 2022 and January 2023. Her experiences are:

It is so emotional for me going back because I miss my daddy. Before this last time, I went, it had been five years since we had seen each other. Covid and everything made the wait even longer, but, even then, it was still too long. For me, my connection is about being back in my country, but most of all, it is about being with my dad and my other family.

Dawit has not been able to go back home. Menelik has not gone home either. When talking about going home, Dawit talked about contemporary issues that he knows have affected East African migrants going home. Conflict going on in Ethiopia's Tigray region and the travel ban, discussed in the literature review, that was put into place by former president Donald Trump are what he touched on. He said:

If you see the news right now, they're having a conflict between the Tigray, Eritrea, and the Amhara. That's a lot to think about for someone like me, my family, who comes from Tigray. And then I used to not think laws affect East Africa differently, buy you know

when Donald Trump was like Sudan, or South Sudan, you cannot go there? I feel like that can affect you because you want to visit your family there.

Each participant is different, and has a different relationship with their home country, and how they conceptualize home in general. The discussion of home revealed that wanting to go back home and actually doing so are not mutually exclusive.

4.2.4   Theme Four: "Keeping Your Head to the Ground"

Success does not have a definitive meaning when considering everyone's varying lives. A "successful migrant story" is not monolithic, and there is not a singular pathway. The participants in this study did, however, place emphasis on not losing sight of the opportunities they have being here and, for those who came with their parents, sacrifices their parents made in hopes of a successful future for their children. This theme was developed in response to both research questions but placed emphasis on identity as an immigrant navigating American systems and spaces.

When answering interview question #15, "Is there anything unique about experiencing America as an African immigrant?" Ibrahim talked about the idea of "keeping your head to the ground." That is the way he sees making success from being a migrant in America. Essentially, this phrase emphasizes the importance of not being distracted and remaining focused on goals you are trying to achieve, especially in a place that historically is unfavorable for those living in the margins. It is about doing what needs to be done to not deviate from your path and can even be used as a word of advice - "keep your head to the ground."

Three of the young adult male participants mentioned pursuing a degree in Computer Science. Menelik and Noab are currently majoring in it, and it was Ibrahim's first choice when he went into college - although he changed majors after. Being driven by thoughts of

"guaranteed success" was not a surprising revelation from the participants and is completely valid. As Ibrahim states, "There's nothing wrong with wanting certain things we didn't have growing up." Miriam, on African culture in general, discussed how even at times where Americans are starting to be considered as and looked at as adults, Africans and children of African migrants are still considered children. That bleeds into how the decision on what to study in college or what career path to take are made. "Even if, let's say, science or biology is something you want to do, there is always a part of it that is done for your parents," she says.

Umar grounded his definition of what it means to be Sudanese in America in the idea of considering the sacrifices that were made so he could be here as well. He said:

> Being Sudanese in America meant leaving your home. So, when [my parents] left their home for a better opportunity for me, that means that I need to be serious about anything that I'm taking. I need to be as successful as possible. Basically, that's what they instilled in me. that means being the best version of you - while being Sudanese.

I do think it is also important to consider choices rooted in "guaranteed success" or pressure from African parents as maybe being in response to the life changing experience of, and what could be traumatizing, migrating to a new country.

4.3   Addressing the Research Questions

The previous section "Major Cross-Case Themes," was an analysis of themes that arose amongst participant responses. In this section, an analysis of how the data engages with the two research questions occurs.

Two research questions were used to explore the experiences of East African migrants in Clarkston, Georgia. Eight participants addressed the research questions - via interview questions - in various ways.

The first research question in this study asks, "What are experiences with U.S. immigration and citizenship processes that East African migrants hold?" During the interview process, questions 9, 16, and 19 that were asked to participants were most reflective of the first research question. They are:

> 9. What was your experience like emigrating to the U.S.? How did you get here? What visa did you receive, if applicable? What feelings did you have?
> 16. How do American laws apply to immigrants? What does that look like in your experience?
> 19. What suggestions, if any, would you offer to American governing bodies to help immigrants have the best migrant experience in the future?

Participants' responses to these interview questions were a mixed bag. There were negative responses, positive responses, neither negative nor positive recollections, or no remembrance of the process. Each, however, grounded their feelings in further explanations. Abdi's feelings on migrating are rooted in what has come after. He said:

> I don't think about what I went through to get here. I like to think about what came after for my family.

Umar, who migrated very young and does not have memory of the process, says his feelings on the process come from his parents' lessons that they were "taken here for a better opportunity."

The second research question in this study asks, "How does the intersection of race, class, nationality, and citizenship status affect and influence East African immigrant's migration and

lived experiences in the United States?" During the interviews, questions 7, 10, 13, 14, 15 most specifically reflected the second research question. They are:

> 7. What brought you to the United States?
>
> 10. What brought you to Clarkston, specifically?
>
> 13. Does racism, classism, or xenophobia mean anything to you in the United States? Have you ever been treated unfairly here?
>
> 14. How do you think being an East African immigrant shaped your experience living in Clarkston/Atlanta?
>
> 15. Is there anything unique about experiencing America as an African immigrant?

Participants' responses were steeped in anecdotes and personal memories.

Matters of opportunity treatment seemingly to be unique to migrants - drawing upon the earlier explored idea of the American Dream - and different facets of community undergirded these responses.

4.3.1   Where the American Dream Fits in This

The American Dream is a concept introduced earlier in the literature review. It is the idea that America can be a prosperous land for anyone, regardless of any societal circumstances (Barone, 2022). Each participant agreed that coming to America as an outsider, there is a promise of opportunity. And for them, the promise has not necessarily failed, it is just not what it seemed to be on the outside.

I think when coupling the idea of the American Dream with the participants' responses, it is best to situate that dream as starting even before arriving in America, in the immigration process. That, alone, can alter someone's perception. When asked about getting here and going through the immigration process, Menelik said, "At first, it was negative, but when the process was done, it was positive. At the end I felt more of the positive." He did not dive deeper into

what was negative and positive. Noab rated his experience a seven out of ten. He explained this as "It's good. It just takes long. For some people, it takes longer than it should." He also discussed how intimidating and scary it can be upon arrival still in the airport. For Abdi, taking longer than it should was his reality. He says:

> "Looking back, it doesn't seem that long now. But at that time I felt like it was never going to happen. Over and over going to different places, room to room, talking to a different American person. It felt like a game."

Dawit, in particular, grounds himself in what he has seen his parents go through, and what adult migrants face and gets at both research questions. He said:

> "You don't know certain words and you might say something that you don't know - and you can fail the test. You will either get denied forever, or you have to wait a few years … Think about your mom and dad. If your mom and dad never went to school it's hard. If your mom and dad are just farmers and they ask you questions you've never heard of like "Are you going to be a terrorist?" That's the first question they ask - I remember *that*." - Dawit

I cannot say that questions such as the ones Dawit mentioned are a reality for all migrants. This may be singular, but, ultimately, it was a reality that Dawit witnessed. What this does do is lean into the way nationality affects the experiences of East African migrants, should such questions be isolated to refugees and migrants from Ethiopia, East Africa, or simply countries experiencing war. "Everybody wants to come here, but it's not easy as just saying "Oh I want to come," Tesha says.

Then there is the point of continuing that dream or working toward materializing it once actually in America. The spatial and social location in which East African migrants exist here is important to consider. They get to make it to America, then what's next?

When Dawit's father moved out of Georgia, Clarkston was the most fiscally sound place for the family to relocate. He said:

> My dad left, he went to a different state. So it was just my mom. We needed a different - I was like ten, and we needed something cheap. So we went to [complex name]. We went to the hood. It's not everybody's choice, you know?

He then went on to talk about predatory practices and how migrants, especially those who do not have the best English, cannot advocate for themselves, and fear displacement from the homes they have made may be challenged with:

> I don't know if it's a law, but the rent - 'cause you know most people in Clarkston, East Africans included, you know, they're not educated like that. So the apartment will send letters and put up the price higher on electricity or gas. And they know, most people can't read, like my mom. And I feel like *that's* where they get affected the most.

This is a reflection of the class component of the second research question.

While talking about any unique experiences African migrants may have with U.S. laws or practices, Umar recounted a story of something that he had seen in his childhood. He shared:

> One day I came home - I was young - and I was getting taken care of by the babysitter in my neighborhood. Her brother came home, he was beaten. And they stole his clothes, and he came home. They (those in the home) called the police, and when they called the police they said they couldn't really help them like that. They couldn't do anything for him. 'They got away- can't really do anything for you- blah blah blah.' You know, the regular police thing. And he came home, like, bad, like, in his underwear. It was not good to see, but it was like, man, that's what happens in Clarkston. You can get beat like that and nothing can happen. You wouldn't even get the justice you need.

Umar did not detail who the "they" is that inflicted this violence, but the response that came after help was needed exists as a possible matter of nationality influencing these migrant's lived

experiences. Inactivity at the hands of the police for an emergency in a community with a large migrant population makes this happening seen as a possible matter of nationality. There was not even the simple gesture of sending an officer out to check on the family, which can be seen as an assumption, on the part of the officers, placed onto the community. Happenings like that, with no effort from entities meant to serve the public, should not be accepted as "that's what happens in Clarkston." It is disadvantageous that a community of migrants is subjected to that, and, even greater, seems exploitative of the fact that many cannot advocate for themselves as discussed earlier with Dawit.

There were other discussions on how there are challenges, but, overall, the good outweighs the bad. For Ibrahim, for example, an outlook steeped in faith, regardless of certain circumstances, has been how he looks at his opportunity of being here. His discussion on faith and religion goes into another characteristic, community, that participant answers to the research question are founded in.

4.3.2   Where Community is Found and Where Community is Made

Community is largely at the core of participants' answers to the second research question. The participants define and talk about the idea of community in Clarkston largely through the people they live around their religious practices and spaces.

Umar said Clarkston was like "a village" and related it to the time he spent in Sudan in second grade, being in a space where adults look out for children who are not even their own. On how this showed during his childhood in Clarkston, he said:

> Let's say my mom needed to go work overtime, the neighbors could've took care of me, you know? Or I needed to walk home, my mom usually picked me up from the school bus, but somebody else's parent in the neighborhood could've walked me home instead

of my mother. You know, things like that. Anything - a neighbor would do. It was a tight knit community.

Ibrahim, Menelik, and Miriam identify as Christians. Noab and Tesha are Orthodox Christian. Abdi is Muslim. Each of these participants have been able to find and make community in Clarkston, in part, through religion. Umar did not detail any personal religious or spiritual affiliation, but based on his interview, he is not Muslim. Dawit did not detail any personal religious or spiritual affiliation.

Ibrahim shared:

I think community is, you know, people coming together and surrounding themselves and supporting one another and serving one another and helping one another. And we see that in Clarkston. I would say I define community a little bit different than your average, typical person because my faith plays a big part in my community. So, it is hard for me to separate those two. My community consists of the Christians here.

Mentioned earlier, Tesha is part of the Eritrean Orthodox Church, but Noab comes from the Ethiopian denomination. The country has the second greatest number of Orthodox Christians in the world, at over 36 million (Diamant, 2017). But, regardless of their country of origin, Orthodox spaces have been a place of community for them in Clarkston. This is an implication speaking to how nationality affects their lived experiences as well. Again, fellowship is something Menelik mentioned as being part of his normal routine.

Miriam talked about the sense of community that was felt from the neighborhood she lived in. On this, she said:

I remember at one time crime had started to go up. There were shootings, stealing, and different things going on all around us. The neighborhood came together to have

someone walking around, patrolling 24/7. Things like that is what community looked like.

A casual drive through the town is likely to include passing by a Masjid, church, community center, women's center, and other places of gathering. While the city is not perfect, as participants have detailed, it is not hard to see that Clarkston is a place with an overwhelming sense of belonging in various ways for various people.

Intersecting identities, certain systems and practices, and matters out of the control of individuals who are affected add complexity to the experiences that East African migrants face dealing with U.S. immigration practices and in their lived experiences here. The participants in this study have meaningfully shared their experiences on these matters. Each participant is examined in their study as a case, bounded and individualized by the origins that have brought them to the U.S. and Clarkston. Four identified major themes and an existing body of literature have built upon and worked in conjunction with each other in this study to understand tailored aspects of these experiences.

4.4   Summary

In this chapter, three previous sections were presented to detail the results of this study. The first was a presentation of the cases detailing participant profiles. All identifying information is removed, and participants are named with pseudonyms. The second wass an analysis of cross-case themes found amongst participant responses. Four major cross-case themes were identified. They are Tradition and Culture, Emphasis on Difference Here and There, Going Back Home, and "Keeping Your Head to the Ground." The third was an analysis to address how both of the study's research questions were answered.

The following chapter, Conclusion, will include a discussion on this study, the research process, and major takeaways. There is also discussion on limitations found and suggestions for research to further this work in the future.

5   CONCLUSION

This study has identified and analyzed the experiences of eight East African migrants who have all had experiences living in the community of Clarkston, Georgia. These participants have provided valuable accounts of their experiences and have contributed to the study of East African migrants, African migrants, and what migration looks like in the United States in general. This study was grounded in two research questions:

1.   What are the experiences with U.S. immigration and citizenship processes that East African migrants hold?

2.   How does the intersection of race, class, nationality, and citizenship status affect and influence East African immigrant's migration and lived experiences in the United States?

This exploratory case study bounded participants in the origins that brought them to the U.S. and to Clarkston. Interviewing was the research method used for data collection, and this collection process proved to be successful in individualizing each participant as their own case. However, participant responses did provide more insight on answering the second research question than the first. In the following Implications for Future Research section, I will discuss collection methods beyond interviewing, theoretical framework considerations, and sampling execution that I believe will garner a more rounded response for the first research question.

Derrick Bell's Critical Race Theory (CRT) was the primary theoretical framework in which this study is grounded in, but it also worked alongside Kimberle Crenshaw's Intersectionality. After data collection, CRT's fourth tenet, "the idea of storytelling and counter-storytelling," showed to be at the forefront of ideas reflected in the data, but intersectionality seemed to be more steeped in participant responses than CRT's other tenets.

The literature review was structured to explore the large question of "Why Clarkston?" From that question, the review emphasized the importance of examining history regarding East Africa and the U.S. from various angles and working systems and thought that make up the experiences East African migrants may face there today.

As discussed in the Introduction, specifically *1.3.1 Positionality,* my connection to this work does not come from any matters of lineage. To my knowledge, I do not have East African heritage. Beyond the violence of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, I do not have any familial ties to experience of migration to the U.S. – voluntary nor involuntary. Because of that, I have been careful throughout this process to not impose my own feelings onto this research protocol and have let the data speak for itself. I hope to have interpreted the experiences of these participants with their utmost reverence and satisfaction.

5.1   Discussion

Before starting this study, I had a kind of hyper-awareness of my position as an "outsider" to those who I would have participate. Even as I began working on the Introduction chapter, I had to figure out how to navigate my position once again. This was most evident to me as I thought about how to use Black and African in this study. What I have found in this process of doing research that centers communities that I do not belong to, is how important it is to not just take from these communities.

Spending money, spending time, and doing some relationship building in Clarkston has made this work even more meaningful and has curbed my concerns of doing a type of one-sided research that work involving human subjects can become without certain considerations. In the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process that green-lights researcher' ability to collect data,

there is emphasis on and attention to ethics regarding research protocol. These are important procedures that are in place. However, doing this work, especially with marginalized communities, has a meaning of ethical research that goes beyond the minimal requirements for institution approval.

It has been gratifying how much this study presented to be learned outside of the bounded focus of this case study. When conducting interviews, it is, of course, encouraged for participants to expand upon initial answers to the questions, but knowledge on things that were not even in my original purview have been emphasized here. Participants have even more shown how African-ness, East African-ness is not monolithic, gender dynamics across different East African cultures exist in distinct ways, and ways in which identity can be dynamic for migrants. What can be taken away from this research is that migrants must be given room to speak on their experiences for themselves, and these migrants should not be projected upon. There are social and cultural supports that exist amongst groups, and while being in the United States is viewed as an unmatched opportunity, there is still work to be done especially as the pitfalls of the existing structure permeates various parts of identity in various ways.

This study was guided by two research questions. Participants responded to the research questions in different ways. The first research question is concerning experiences with U.S. immigration practices. Some of the participants were able to say if they had a negative or positive experience but recalling the specific process of arriving to the U.S., interactions with immigration coordinators, and what happened next seemed to be a challenge. This could heavily be attributed to the fact that most of the participants migrated during childhood – which is discussed later in 5.3 Implications for Future Research.

Pursuit of answers for the first research question, and, in turn, the responses I received is where I think my biases as a researcher were most evident to myself. A timeline of U.S. immigration laws and practices, and attention to some of the exclusionary and harmful aspects of them was presented in the Introduction and expanded upon in the Literature Review. I had the expectation that participant responses would reflect attention to the pitfalls of these immigration practices in the same way, but they did not.

The second research question emphasized the intersection of race, class, nationality, and citizenship status on the experiences of East African migrants. Answers to this research question were more developed than answers to the first research question. The participants' accounts tackled each of those four listed factors, but some were underlined more than others.

Citizenship status was a large point of awareness when deciding how to create recruitment content and how to structure the interview questions. Participants were not required to disclose their citizenship status, out of caution of risks for undocumented/under–documented migrants. However, the participants in this study offered information on their citizenship status and or what pathways they took to be in the U.S. voluntarily. I do think the caution for risks is a valid concern, but there also seems to be a way to incorporate the question of citizenship status in a way that reduces harm.

Issues of class were interestingly addressed by the participants. At one point Clarkston was denoted as "moving to the hood," and the participants who are in school discussed working towards a better life. Participants did not explicitly discuss socioeconomic status, but there was a present underlying idea of wanting more.

Nationality was expressed mainly though how the participants see Clarkston. This was presented particularly in two ways. The factor of nationality was in how some participants

conceptualized the internal makeup of Clarkston by making note of what areas people from certain countries reside in, distinction of businesses by national origin, or even where people certain national groups spend leisure time – as Noab described with the soccer field he enjoys playing at. Abdi talked about a small strip near the center of community with small businesses, primarily restaurants, owned by African men. On the other hand, some participants used nationality to conceptualize how Clarkston is perceived externally. It is "A whole city of immigrants" as Umar said, and Dawit noted how Clarkston can be used to help people have a better understanding of African people, not fueled by stereotypes, just in the same way he grew in his own understanding.

In the literature review, the discussion of race is anchored in the theoretical framework Critical Race Theory. Race was found to be the least discussed out of the four aspects of race, class, nationality, and citizenship status. Race was most discussed with Dawit, and he did not even relate race to himself, but his thoughts on the treatment of African-Americans. And while Dawit was the only participant who reflected upon how African-Americans shaped his views of race in the U.S., I believe his views from an African migrant lens would be interesting to build upon and would be valuable to the field of Africana Studies. Inquiries such as how do African migrants in the U.S. relate their experiences to those of African-Americans or how do African migrants in the U.S. actively see themselves in relation to African-Americans are possible.

5.2   Limitations

There were multiple limiting factors that affected the potential of this study. For me, the most fundamental ones are issues of representation, language exclusivity, and the shortcomings of the focus group that did not occur.

5.2.1   *Representation*

The greatest limitation that occurred in this study is that participant demographics do not equitably represent the total demographics of what makes up East Africa. Fundamentally, this study only looking at the experiences of eight participants cannot be generalized onto the experiences of all East African migrants in Clarkston. The makeup of participant identities stresses that even further. Five participants hailed from the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia), while the three others were from Sudan, South Sudan, and Burundi. That is only six countries in comparison to the eleven countries that this study considers to be East Africa. I believe this is linked to the site in which participants were sampled from – especially as Clarkston is not a large community to begin with. Falling at a little over fifty-percent representation are not bad odds, but, ultimately, it is not totally representative.

The intersections of identity that affect how people exist in the United States come in many forms, and that is also where a limitation is found in this study. This study emphasized the intersection of race, class, nationality, and citizenship status on the experiences of East African migrants, but there are many other parts of identity-making that influence lived experiences as well. An emphasis on those four specific identity markers do reflect in the issues, topics, and experiences that were discussed by participants and were reflected in the data. However, there are other identity markers that showed to be worthy of consideration.

Representation of age groups is a large factor that should have been considered more. Participants in this study were only required to be at least eighteen years old. And participants were not recruited with age rations in mind. From there, most participants were around the early twenties age range, and only one was in her thirties, and one was in his forties. For me, one of the greatest fallouts of the lack of diverse age representation was that there was not a participant

who was able to share the experience migrating as a mother. Many of the participants recalled the experiences of their mothers, so it would have been valuable to have first-person perspectives on that.

Lack of emphasis on gender identity was also another way this study is limited in regard to representation. This research is a valuable contribution to the field of Africana Studies. However, there is greater potential for more ways this study relates to the field in ways beyond how it currently does, and a through a gendered lens is one of them. Tesha's story, for example, could be used to understand Black feminist theory outside of Crenshaw's intersectionality, and her story could be examined through that theoretical lens had that part of her identity been emphasized in this study's examination of her experiences. How she discussed the role of her mother in her own identity formation and relationship with her culture is relevant to ideas on Black/African mothering.

Sexuality and occupation are some other large representational identity markers that, from participant interviews, would have been valuable to build upon, regarding how they shape migrant experiences. The data likely would have varied had there been consideration of more factors.

5.2.2 Inclusivity with Language

The language requirement to participate in this study posed another limitation. Participants were required to be fluent in English. However, when dealing with immigrants and refugees, that reduces the number of potential participants.

One of the participants, Dawit, discussed his mother not being able to read or speak English very well. I am confident that she would have been a valuable case to this study, but she

could not participate in the study. With the assistance of a translator, she, and other potential participants alike, could have been involved.

I see this limitation being intricately tied to the issue of representation as well.

5.2.3 *Commitment to Both Parts of Data Collection*

Originally, this study aimed to conduct a focus group along with the individual interviews. Participants were not required to participate in the subsequent focus groups – interviews were a primary focus. Logistically, for me, early on, it proved to be much easier to interview eight people on several occasions, at various times, through different modes of communication (in person versus virtually) than it would be to have enough participants discuss their experiences once again but in the same space as each other. Most of the participants did not show interest in being part of the focus group, especially with plans of it being held in person. The two participants who showed some interest did have concerns about scheduling conflicts.

There is so much potential in what could have been discussed should the participants have been in conversation with each other, rather than telling their experiences to me who is, one, there to just listen and, two, does not relate to them regarding what would be discussed.

5.3 Implications for Future Research

In my reflection on this research and its outcomes, I have several suggestions and considerations that I believe should be taken into account for future research that centers East African migrants. There is more of the story of these migrants to be told, and that can possibly be brought to fruition through research methods that vary from the ones used in this study, inclusion of other frameworks to interpret the data that pull from a wider range of academic disciplines,

and further consideration on how age, gender, sexuality, and occupation all factor into the content of the shared stories.

First, as mentioned, interviews were conducted to collect data and focus groups were originally going to be used for data collection, too. Beyond those two methods though, an examination of migrants, who specifically land in the United States, could be even more informed through collection of data beyond interviews and focus groups. Specifically, I think the utilization of artifacts could be very informative. By artifacts, this could include anything from pieces of personal immigration files, photographs, any journal or diary entries that were written, and more. A look into immigration achieves would also be a useful tool. Multiple participants mentioned having no choice in being moved to Clarkston. Inclusion of artifacts could give insight onto why, or even just their feelings at the time of having no choice. Of course, all sensitive and identifying information would be removed and not linked to participants should they volunteer personal artifacts and if archival information is used.

Also, this study was a qualitative exploratory case study. While I believe this subject matter overall aligns with a qualitative approach, it can be carried out through other qualitative approaches beyond case study. The stories of the participants could without any doubt be interpreted through a narrative approach. In Narratives in Social Science Research, Barbara Czarniawska defines narrative research as, "spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected" (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 17). John W. Creswell, referenced earlier in the Methods chapter, builds upon Czarniawska, and says, "The procedures for implementing this research consist of focusing on studying one or two individuals, gathering data through the collection of their stories, reporting individual experiences, and chronologically ordering the meaning of those experiences (or using life course

stages)" (Creswell, 2013, p. 70). I believe it would be very substantive to conduct future research on this through an ethnographic approach.

Creswell defines ethnographic research as, "a qualitative design in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group" (Creswell, 2013, p. 90). Ethnography would look at values, behaviors, beliefs, and language as variables rather than bounds in which the cases exist. The emphasis on shared culture in ethnography also proposes a new perspective, while, as done with this case study, there was more focus on nationality-based identity. The participants shared experiences relating to their cultures during the interviews, so an ethnographic approach allows for that to be a key factor in the study. Interpretation of values and beliefs would also make ethnographic study useful when working towards the core of why feel how they do regarding their experiences migrating. Participants in this case study stated what they felt, but there was no linkage between that and their values and beliefs.

The disciplines of Sociology and Linguistics could relevantly be applied to this study in different ways as well. For Sociology, the study of the sociology of immigration and migration could be used for theories in which to ground the work. Further, CRT could be used to even explore the Sociology of Immigration as researchers Gabriella Sanchez and Mary Romero do in "Critical Race Theory in the US Sociology of Immigration (2010)." And an examination on East African migrants could be grounded in that. Regarding Linguistics, the field could be used for analysis of how participants recall being talked to (or at) during the immigration process. I see this potentially being done through the lens of linguistics' animacy hierarchy. Specifically, the lens of scholar and critical linguist Mel Chen would be useful. The animacy hierarchy refers to how humans are placed in a grammatical order that factors in things such as able-bodied-ness,

sexuality, and race (Chen, 2012). Going down the hierarchy, identities are found to be moved further and further away from being seen as animate. For example, if participants have any feelings of less than humanness during their experiences, words used towards them to garner those feelings could be analyzed through the hierarchy.

CRT was the primary theoretical framework in which this study was grounded in, however, participant responses did not point toward race as much as they did as nationality, and, in turn, intersectionality. CRT seems to have been more useful if the study centered actors on the other side of these experiences, those who were players in the migrants' migrations processes from the American side, with the consideration of how America's permanence of racism affects their interactions with migrants who come from Africa.

Lastly, how age influenced the cases in this study should be considered in future research. All the participants, with the exception of Abdi, migrated to the U.S. before they were adults. In that, many of them did not get to live substantial amounts of times in their home countries. So, when asked specific interview questions about their home countries, some of them did not have much to pull from. Also, as many of the participants migrated as refugees of conflict, coupled with migrating at a young age, that is the only point of reference they have when thinking about being in their country before migration. Should future research include older participants from the countries experiencing conflict, there is greater chance that the older participants can speak to time lived in their home country with memories not just filled with conflict. Also, older participants from East African countries that were not included in this study would propose an even more diversified perspective.

Steeped in the tradition of Africana Studies, this study was conducted to explore the experiences of East African migrants living in Clarkston, Georgia. Clarkston has a rich,

established history for being the entry point for many refugees and migrants in the American South. Eight participants shared their experiences, worked toward answering the two research questions, and highlighted that there is room for stories like their own to be explored even more deeply.

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7   APPENDICES

Appendix A: Recruitment Flyers

OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY

Hello! My name is Lyric Hathaway. I am a Master's student at Georgia State University in the Department of Africana Studies. I would greatly appreciate your participation in my study, Points of Entry and Existence: A Case Study Examination of East African Migrants in Clarkston, Georgia. The objective of this study is to examine the experiences of East African immigrants in the Southern United States, specifically the Clarkston/Atlanta, Georgia area. This research is significant, because it will contribute to a growing body of literature on East African immigrants in the U.S., but with a specific focus on the population in the Southern U.S. that is commonly not privileged within research.

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

- Self-identify as an East African immigrant.
- Must have been born in one of the following countries: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, South Sudan, or Djibouti.
- Be over 18 years of age.
- Have emigrated to Clarkston, Georgia.
- Willing to speak freely about their migrant experiences.
- Available for further contact after interview/focus group for follow-up inquiry if necessary.

If you are interested in participating in this study and anonymity is **NOT** a concern:
- Email me at lhathaway1@student.gsu.edu
- **OR** call me at (615) 294-3568.
- Please include your name, the best number to reach you, your best availability, and your email address.
- **Your identity will not be revealed in the study.**

If you are interested in participating in this study and anonymity is **IS** a concern:
- Please choose a pseudonym (fake) name for the study.
- Call me at (615) 294-3568.
- Identify yourself with the name you have chosen.
- Please include the best number to reach you and your best availability.

POINTS OF ENTRY AND EXISTENCE: A CASE STUDY EXAMINATION OF EAST AFRICAN MIGRANTS IN CLARKSTON, GEORGIA

Participate in a research study by doing a focus group and an interview! Our goal is to learn more about the experiences of East African migrants in the United States.

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF AFRICANA STUDIES

HOW TO SIGN UP:

Call or text
(615) 294-3568
or email
lhathaway1@student.gsu.edu

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Any self-identified East African migrant, who is 18 years or older, and is willing to speak freely about their experiences.

EVERY PARTICIPANT'S IDENTITY WILL REMAIN ANONYMOUS.

Appendix B: Informed Consent

Title: Points of Entry and Existence: A Case Study Examination of East African Migrants in

Clarkston, Georgia

Georgia State University

Department of Africana Studies

Principal Investigator: Lyric Hathaway

Purpose: This study looks at the experiences of 10 East African immigrants in Clarkston,

Georgia. The hope is to find data about the experiences of East African people who move to the

United States. You can be in the study because you meet the following:

- · Be an East African immigrant.

- · Must have been born in one of these countries: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia,

  Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, South Sudan, or

  Djibouti.

- · Be over 18 years old.

- · Has lived in Clarkston, Georgia.

- · Ready to talk freely about your experiences.

- · Free for follow-up contact after the interview if needed.

Procedures: 10 people will be part of this study. They will be part of a focus group and

individual interviews. The interview will happen on the phone, online on Zoom, or in person at a

public place. The focus group will happen at a central, public place.

All interviews will be recorded using a sound recording device. The focus group will be recorded using a sound recording device too. Recordings will be uploaded and kept in a password-safe cloud software. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Future Research: The researcher will take away details that may identify you. Your data may be used for future research. This form is asking permission now for any future use of your story. You may take away your permission by contacting the researcher in writing up until April 28, 2023.

Risks: Possible risks, such as re-traumatization, may come up if you share details of past traumatic experiences from the interview(s) and focus group. If this happens, resources can be given to you. You will also be given the GA Crisis Hotline phone number.

Benefits: There are no personal benefits to this study. However, the results of this study may be important existing research, and it may help to put into effect better services to support East African immigrants.

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

Compensation: You will receive $20 upon completion of the focus group, and another $25 upon completion of the interview.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Taking part in the research study is completely voluntary. Please understand that you are not required to be in this study. If you join the study and change your mind, you are free to drop out at any time. If any part of the process makes you uncomfortable, you are free to make changes that give space to your needs, or not participate at all. You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled based on these choices.

Confidentiality: All your records will be kept private. The 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 give. You will not be identified from the information you

give. Written data will be saved on the researcher's password protected laptop under a fake

name.

Recordings from all interviews and the focus group will be stored on a device that will be locked

and stored indefinitely. Recordings will be uploaded and filed into a password protected cloud

software as well. Only the researcher will have access to these recording files.

Information like your name, or anything that can be used to identify you, will not be used when

presenting or publishing this work.

Contact Person: If you have any questions, you can contact Lyric Hathaway at (615)-294-3568

or lhathaway1@student.gsu.edu. The IRB at Georgia State University looks at all research that

involves humans. You also can contact the IRB if you want to talk to someone who is not

directly involved in this study. You can contact the IRB for questions, concerns, problems,

information, or input about your rights as a participant. Contact the IRB at (404) 413-3500 or

irb@gsu.edu.

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

Do you agree to take part in this study? Please say yes or no.

If you want to participate in this study, please sign below.

_____ _____

Participant **Date**

_____ _____

Appendix C: Interview Guide

I am going to ask you a few demographic questions, and then we will get into the interview questions.

What is your age?

Were you born in the United States?

If you answered "No," what country did you emigrate from?

How old were you when you came to the United States?

What city did you come to when you first moved to the United States?

What is your ethnic identity?

1. Tell me about yourself, I want you to be as comfortable as possible.

2. What are some immediate thoughts you have when thinking about your home country?

3. Can you describe your neighborhood in your home country?

4. Do you have pride in your home country? If so, what is the source of your pride?

5. Are you familiar with the terms: racism, classism, or xenophobia? If yes, did that/those mean anything to you in your home country?

6. What are some immediate thoughts you have when thinking about the United States?

7. What brought you to the United States?

8. What was your experience like emigrating to the U.S.? How did you get here? What visa did you receive, if applicable? What feelings did you have?

9. What brought you to Clarkston, specifically?

10. What places make you feel at home in the U.S?

11. Do you personally identify as an American? Why or why not?

12. Does racism, classism, or xenophobia mean anything to you in the United States? Have you ever been treated unfairly here?

13. How do you think being an East African immigrant shaped your experience living in Clarkston/Atlanta?

14. Is there anything unique about experiencing America as an African immigrant?

15. How do American laws apply to immigrants? What does that look like in your experience?

16. What is similar and/or dissimilar between American laws and the laws of your home country?

17. How familiar are you with the historical relationship between the U.S. and Africa/African people? Do you think that has impacted your experience in any way? How so?

18. What suggestions, if any, would you offer to American governing bodies to help immigrants have the best migrant experience in the future?

Probes

How old are you?

What is your home life like?

Are you in school right now?

Can you describe a typical day in your life?

Do certain people make the U.S. feel like home?

Any main positive or negative pinpoints in your migrant experience?

Are you satisfied with your relationship with home?

Are you satisfied with your experience in the U.S.?

What does it mean to be an American?

Appendix D: Proposed Focus Group Guide

1. What are some reasons people from East Africa come to the U.S.?

2. Why do they come to Clarkston?

3. How do you make a community?

4. What does the word "community" mean in Clarkston?

5. What/who here makes Clarkston a community?

6. Is there any benefit to living amongst people with common identities while in the U.S.?

7. What are some common things that are mentioned when people coming from East Africa discuss their experience immigrating to the U.S.?

8. What are some common things that are mentioned when people from East Africa discuss their experience with U.S. immigration rules/laws/practices?

9. Are there any challenges that East African migrants specifically face when coming to the U.S.?

10. What does it mean to be an immigrant in Clarkston? Does being East African, specifically, shape that?

11. What suggestions, if any, would you offer to American governing bodies to help immigrants have the best migrant experience in the future?