

POST MIGRATION EXPERIENCE OF SOMALI FEMALE REFUGEES IN THE UNITED
STATES: A CASE STUDY OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA

By

BETTY ANNE LININGER

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To my children, Joe, Kaz, and Kyoko,
and my mother, Carol.

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By

Betty Anne Lininger

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My study explored the post migration experience of Somali female refugees located in Atlanta, Georgia. Somali refugees began arriving in the United States since a civil war broke out in Somalia in 1991 and during the early and mid 2000s Somalis became the largest refugee group entering the US. Because women make up nearly 50% of this incoming group, and because gender is an important factor in how migration and resettlement are experienced, this paper examines the post migration experience from a woman's perspective. The Somali community in Atlanta, Georgia is used as case study site because it is one of the oldest Somali communities in America and has a relatively large and stable Somali population. My study provides a comprehensive overview of basically three components of the post migration experience of fifty-eight Somali women. Data were gained through the use of a questionnaire survey, and both qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied. First the initial migration history of the respondents was explored. Second their adaptation and adjustment strategies as well as spatial preferences in the United States were examined. The third point of analysis contrasts the post migration experience of Somali Bantu respondents, a sub-ethnic group, with their mainstream Somali counterparts.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

During the past two decades, the United States experienced an increase in the number of African immigrants entering under refugee or asylum status. One group, the Somalis, stands out in this distinction, and during the mid 2000s was the largest refugee group arriving in the United States. This migration flow began in the early 1990s when a full-scale civil war erupted in Somalia. The disruption caused by the war displaced many civilians, and threw the country into a state of anarchy and famine. Somalia has not yet achieved restructuring and this condition continues to produce refugee situations. Many of the population in the worst hit areas, simply escaped to the nearest neighboring countries that would accept them. Primary locations include Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Kenya, Egypt, and Yemen, and are what Koser and Van Hear (2003) call the 'near diaspora', foreign countries that are geographically close to their homeland. The wealthier and more globally-affiliated of this displaced population were, at the initial onset of the war, able to make their way to various Western nations, with popular destinations being the United Kingdom, Italy, Finland, Denmark, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. Yet since the mid 1990s, most Somalis arriving in the US did so under resettlement programs granting them refugee status.

The United States, which did not have a previously significant migration history with Somalia, became a destination that was likely, in part, a result of military involvement in 1992. This intervention occurring under the directive of the Clinton administration failed and resulted in the deaths of eighteen US soldiers and seventy-eight wounded. The infamous incident was popularized by the media in the film *Black Hawk Down*, creating a general feeling of hostility and distrust towards Somalia by the American public. Yet this military involvement essentially established a relationship with Somalia, providing conduits for migration into the US to begin.

This displayed itself in four ways: first, in the late 1980s Somali military personnel were sent to the United States for training, and many did not return due to the unstable politics back in their homeland (interview with Asli Hassan Parker, July, 2005); second with failed military interventions relationships are established such as providing asylee or refugee status to individuals that participated in support of the US (Hein, 2006); third, marriages occurred between US military personnel and Somali civilians, and these spouses were brought back to the US; and fourth, the United Nations has increasingly pressured Western nations, including the US, to provide greater resettlement opportunities to refugees that have little or no hope of repatriation. Once these initial migration links were established, a migration flow began to develop through sponsorship by Somali immigrants residing in the US, and through the Family Reunification Policy.

In America today, there are many thriving Somali communities located in both large diverse metropolitan areas and smaller mono-ethnic cities. Little research has been conducted upon this group noting their adaptation and adjustment strategies in spite of the fact Somalis display extreme cultural ‘distance’ from mainstream America. The most notable difference is their adherence to the Muslim faith and the traditional practices that this embodies. Somali women are especially ‘visible’ because of the special religious attire (hijab) that they wear. These factors create the potential for greater adjustment problems.

Overview of Study

Today growing numbers of refugees are recorded by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and there is increasing pressure upon the developed nations to provide resettlement opportunities for displaced populations languishing in over crowded refugee camps in Third World nations. By the end of 2007 the UNHCR claimed responsibility for approximately 11.4 million refugees worldwide. Yet the estimated worldwide

total for persons falling under UNHCR responsibility is approximated at 67 million. Persons considered at risk included: refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returned refugees, returned IDPs, stateless persons, and others of concern. The United States (US) participates in resettlement programs and accepts some of the largest number of refugees within the Western World (with an annual quota of 70,000), averaging approximately 54,000 per year (Jacobsen, 2005; United States Department of Homeland Security, 2007).

The UNHCR reported that from 2006 to 2007 the number of refugees, asylum seekers, and IDPs have increased, notably resulting from armed conflicts in various parts of the world. The number of conflict induced IDPs alone has risen from 24.4 million persons to 26 million. This has been the case in Somalia and the number of IDPs has increased because of renewed fighting between fundamentalist Islamic factions and other military groups. By the end of 2007 an additional 600,000 people had been displaced within Somalia, bringing the total to one million.

The 2007 US Homeland Security Annual Report notes that Somalis accounted for 25% or greater, of incoming refugee groups, being resettled in the US from 2003 to 2006 (Table 1-1 and Figure 1-1). This was the largest refugee group arriving and in 2007 Somalis still comprised the second largest group. The number reported in the 2000 US Census for “People born in Somalia” entering as non-US citizens for the years 1990 to 2000 is 29,165 persons. For the previous decade, only 1,230 Somalis entered the US, and before 1980, 240 persons were reported. Since 2001, the total number of Somali refugees and asylees entering the US, as reported by the US Homeland Security Department, is 50,378.

According to the UNHCR the greater percentage of refugees worldwide are composed of women and children, yet little has been written about their migration experiences or their adaptation strategies/processes into new Western World locations. Female refugees are often

resettled with no significant male companion, yet with several children in tow. Once established in their new environment, these refugees become providers of important resources for not only their dependents that reside with them, but extended family members left behind in their homeland and camps. Resources provided include remittances, sponsorship, also networking, knowledge, and assistance for negotiating complicated bureaucratic systems. Interestingly, although this is a highly marginalized group, they appear to strategize and gain economic and social capabilities that enable them to make these contributions.

Many of the geographic regions from which increasing proportions of refugees originate today are primarily Islamic practicing societies therefore displaying notably different cultural characteristics in contrast to the Judeo-Christian West. Somali refugees carry this distinction, as well their racial and ethnic contrasts to mainstream Anglo-America (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Although some research is beginning to emerge about this particular migrant group, most of it is focused upon Somalis in other Western nations, such as the United Kingdom, Scandinavian countries, Australia, and Canada. This literature primarily deals with the psychological or physical problems that they either display upon arrival or develop in their host country, as well as religious factors, second step migration, and networking patterns.

Little research has been done on the Somalis' post migration experience in the United States, in spite of the fact that Somalis have composed the largest refugee group arriving in recent years. Specifically lacking is research focusing upon women's perspectives, although according to 2007 US Homeland Security Department statistics females continue to comprise nearly half (48%) of all incoming refugees. Because Somali migrants exhibit characteristics that are pertinent to immigration issues today, notably, racial, ethnic, and cultural differences that are in stark contrast to mainstream America, as well as being composed of high numbers of females,

they provide a representative study group to enhance our knowledge about the post-migration experience of today's forced migrants. As Portes and Zhou (1993) explain, incoming refugees from the late 1970s are less advantaged to blend into the White American mainstream than their earlier predecessors due to their racial and ethnic origins.

Another notable characteristic about incoming Somali refugees are ethnic differences that exist. Although Somalis are commonly identified by clan affiliation (six major clans), Somali Bantu are an ethnic sub-group of the mainstream population. The Bantu reputedly were brought into the southern riverine region as slaves from East and Southern Africa during the nineteenth century to develop Somali-owned grain and cotton plantations (Besteman, 1999; Cassanelli, 1982). Although they have been assimilated linguistically by Somalis, and generally adhere to Islam, their physical appearance is strikingly different even today (Besteman, 1999; Cassanelli, 1982). Somali Bantu populations have been marginalized in Somali society and were particularly impacted by the ongoing civil war in Somalia (Besteman, 1996a). As a result of this the US has given major resettlement advantages to Somali Bantu refugees.

Definition of Terms and Conditions in Study

The following section provides an explanation or definition of pertinent terms, conditions or status as applied to the migration process. This list includes: immigrant, refugee, asylee, legal permanent resident, naturalization, acculturation, adaptation, adjustment, and assimilation.

The United States Department of Justice, Homeland Security, and Immigration Services defines the following terms: 1) immigrants, are defined as persons lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States; 2) a refugee is any person who is outside his or her country of nationality and is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution; 3) an asylee is a person seeking the *right of asylum*, or the right of one state to receive, shelter, and protect those accused of offenses in another; 4) a legal

permanent residents (LPR) are foreign nationals who have been granted the right to reside permanently in the United States. LPRs are often referred to simply as "immigrants," but they are also known as "permanent resident aliens" and 'green card holders'; 5) naturalization is the process by which U.S. citizenship is conferred upon a foreign citizen or national after he or she fulfills the requirements established by Congress in the Immigration and Nationality Act.

The following terms are defined as related to migration: 1) acculturation – cultural modification or change that results when one *culture* group or individual adopts traits of a dominant or *host society*; cultural development or change through “borrowing.”; 2) adaptation – in immigration, the term summarizes how individuals, households, and communities respond and adjust to new experiences and social and cultural surroundings; 3) assimilation – a two-part *behavioral* and *structural* process by which a minority population reduces or loses completely its identifying cultural characteristics and blends into the *host society* (Fellmann, Getis, & Getis, 2007: 503).

According to Webster’s Dictionary (1983: 21) the word *adapt* means (in reference to one’s actions) “(2) to change (oneself) so that one’s behavior, attitudes, etc. will conform to new or changed circumstances.” The following definition for *adaptation* as it applies to migration: “(2) in immigration, the term summarizes how individuals, households, and communities respond and adjust to new experiences and social and cultural surroundings.” (Fellmann, et al., 2007: 503). Ying and Drbohlav (2004) identify adaptation as the most important stage of the entire immigration process.

A brief review of the policy for immigration gives some insight into the processes that individuals must go through to gain entry into the United States. United States law places persons with a close family relationship to a United States citizen or lawful resident, persons

with needed job skills, or persons who qualify as refugees with preferential immigration status (Department of Homeland Security). Worldwide immigration is subject to numerical limits as defined by the Immigration Act of 1990. This number is calculated by admissions from the previous year and is done within three categories: family-sponsored preferences (226,000 to 480,000), employment-based preferences (140,000), and diversity immigrants (55,000). Other categories of immigrants, such as refugees and asylees, are also prescribed numerical limits, yet are placed under other sections of immigration law. These numbers are adjusted according to various different criteria. Some immigration is exempt from worldwide numerical limits, with adjustments allowed, and for the purpose of this study, two are of particular importance: immediate relatives of U.S. citizens; and refugees and asylees.

Family reunification comprises the largest group of immigrants and consists of four categories: unmarried sons and daughters of U.S. citizens and their children; spouses, children, and unmarried sons and daughters of lawful permanent residents; married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens and their spouses and children; and brothers and sisters, including spouses and children, of U.S. citizens ages 21 and over (Department of Homeland Security). The employment-based preferences are listed by five categories: priority workers; professionals with advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability; skilled workers, professionals (without advanced degrees), and needed unskilled workers, special immigrants (*e.g.*, ministers, religious workers, and employees of the U.S. government abroad; and employment creation immigrants or “investors”); spouses and children are also included in the employment preference limit (Department of Homeland Security).

Although adjustments can legally be made, numerical limits are placed on refugee admissions and were 80,000 in 2001, 70,000 in 2002, and 70,000 in 2003. Once a refugee has

gained entry to the United States he/she is eligible to become a permanent legal resident (without numerical restrictions) within one year after U.S. residence. Asylees can gain permanent residence status after a waiting period of one year after they are granted asylum.

Contributions of Study

As a result of the rising tensions surrounding homeland security since the 2001 September 11 Twin Tower attacks this study presents a well-timed and important examination of issues specific to Somalis and closely related groups. The cultural characteristics of many incoming refugee and migrant groups today are very foreign to mainstream American society and the Somalis display this cultural “distance”. In recent years and until 2008 Somalis have represented the largest refugee group (25%) being resettled in the United States. This population is primarily black and Islamic, arriving from a region of the world that is allegedly affiliated with Islamic terrorist groups.

Often Muslim women are more “visible” in the predominately Anglo-Christian American society due to their attire, thus making their adaptation/assimilation process potentially even more complex. Wearing either a head scarf or Islamic dress women can be quickly identified as “outsiders”. This can lead to such problems as an inability to gain employment, exclusion from mainstream society due to perceived “differences”, or to becoming the recipient of outright hostility in the public sphere.

Adding another dimension to these challenges of integration is the fact that Somalis, due to their dark skin tone, are frequently identified with African Americans. This creates the potential for continued marginalization stemming from the historic racism that black populations have suffered in America.

Notably refugee women face many obstacles in their integration process that differ significantly from their male counterparts. This includes such concerns as employment, childcare responsibilities, and health care issues.

Often Somali female refugees enter the United States with little or no formal education and with no previous formal employment experience. Many lack English fluency, are accompanied by several dependents, and are often suffering from emotional and physical ailments as well as post traumatic stress syndrome. Yet out of necessity to survive in their new host country they must become one of the household wage earners, decision-makers, and in some cases the single household head. The consequence of these factors is it places many female Somali refugees in the position to suffer further marginalization beyond the hardships faced by being newcomers in a foreign country. Additional hardships that often confront these women include: the gender disparity in wages in the US, being identified as 'black', and through visual indicators (head covering, dress) identified as Islamic. These factors can have the effect of reducing a female migrant's opportunity for employment, fair wages (being identified as female, black, and foreign), as well as inadvertently inviting open hostilities from the public due to the visibility of dress as an identifier.

Noting the importance of immigrant women's roles as leading and principle actors in the family's adaptation process, providing cultural reproduction in the new host country, and being the primary decision makers guiding the development of the first generation Americans (Gabaccia, 1994; Ortner, 1974) it appears vital to apply a gendered vision to policy development. Research conducted by Van Hook, Brown, and Kwenda (2004) supports this need. Their research found poverty levels were increasing among the children of immigrants, and that this has deeper implications for the social structure of America today due to the fact that immigrant

children constitute 20% of the school-aged population and compose the fastest growing segment of the US population under the age of 18 (Van Hook, et al., 2004:649). Providing an environment that promotes successful adaptation for a new generation of Americans is important for the larger community and society as well. By creating more effective policy, investigating not only the default “male” perspective, but the female post-migration experience as well, the “downward spiral into poverty” reported by Portes and Zhou (1993), could likely be diminished or prevented, as well as perhaps retarding the “othering” process leading to segregated communities and hostilities between newcomers and host populations.

Importantly these women have the strength and fortitude to take charge of their families and attempt to rebuild their lives abroad when given the chance. Once placed in a new environment such as the US, the services needed to hasten and enhance their adjustment process are not always in place. Most likely this is due to the lack of gendered research to provide guidance and information for policy development. Reflecting upon the heavily weighted female composition of both refugee and immigrant flows into the US today, it is vital to expand knowledge of the gendered components involved in this process. Because there are specific issues and needs that affect women more profoundly and differently than their male counterparts in the post-migration experience, research upon the female perspective of this topic is essential for effective policy development (Bariagaber, 2006; Hein, 2006; Nolin, 2006).

Study Assumptions and Hypotheses

Observing that women play a leading role in both the initial and eventual adaptation and assimilation of immigrant groups (Gabaccia, 1994), this research will explore the post migration experience of Somali females residing in the suburbs of a large American city, Atlanta, Georgia, specifically, Decatur, Clarkston, and Stone Mountain. As a case study, this location and study group, meet important criteria and therefore maybe representative of other major Somali

communities in the United States. The Atlanta metropolitan region has been a host community for Somali refugees since the late 1980s (personal interview, Ali Omar, August, 2007). During this time a thriving Somali community has grown through the refugee resettlement process as well as some second step migration from other cities. This city is one of the earliest resettlement sites for Somali refugees in the US, and today this population is approximately 5,000 people. Therefore, due to its long history as a growing community, as well as having a significant and stable population this study site was considered suitable.

Another major factor giving this community preference as a study site was because of the eagerness and assistance offered by the Somali community leaders. Without their support and guidance, such a study would have been extremely hard to accomplish due to the secluded nature of the culture, and particularly when dealing with female respondents.

Through the guidance and knowledge of the community leaders specific topics, including clan affiliation, war traumas that were suffered, and identity with sub-ethnicities beyond Somali Bantu, were omitted from this study. Because of the sensitivity that surrounds clan identity in the Somali diaspora, and according to Bjork's (2007) research on this topic, Somali diasporic communities have tended, or rather pretended to "ignore" clan identities due to a common need to collectively bond and help each other. Bjork notes that "Somalis who live abroad are embarrassed by clan." (2007: 136). This is largely due to the association that the international community makes with Somalia and "warlords, clans, and violence" (Bjork, 2007: 136). Community leaders acknowledged that clan identity is still present in Somali communities in the US, but due to the complexity and secretive nature of this topic, as well as the need to devote an entire study to it alone, it has been omitted.

Many of the respondents of the study had suffered significant traumas or losses from the war in Somalia. It was through the advisement of the Somali community leaders that questions concerning these events not be asked. Although this can be the source of great mental and physical impairment in the post migration process, it is such a delicate and personal subject that it is difficult to be undertaken as an outsider to the experience. Again due to the nature of the topic, this has also been purposely left out. Limited time in the field was also a prohibiting factor.

The final omission made in this study involved limiting the sub-ethnicities investigated. Only one, the Somali Bantu ethnic group, was identified and studied as a separate group. Although other groups do exist and are increasingly described (Horst, 2007; McGown, 2007), such as the highly educated and secular merchant class, the Benadirs of the southern coastal urban centers and the Barrawa of the northeastern region, they were not numerous in the study group and therefore did not provide a large enough sample size to examine with any validity.

Assumptions gained through initial fieldwork, and literature reviews indicated that Somali female refugees arrive in the US with little education, frequently coming from rural backgrounds. Consequently they lack significant knowledge and skills for surviving in modern Western cities. Somalis tend to have large families, observe early marriage for women, adhere to Islam, and patriarchal family structure is traditional.

The study addresses the question: What are the post migration experiences of Somali female refugees/migrants in the Atlanta, Georgia metropolitan area? By conducting a thorough literature review and in depth interviews with Somali community leaders it was hypothesized that Somali women participate in their adaptation process as actors with leading roles and, with migration, changes in traditional behavior will occur as adaptation is made to their new host

environment. To make this determination a broad range of information was gathered from the study group to create a general picture of their adaptation to life in Atlanta. The major observations of this study relate to basic migrant characteristics, adaptation strategies, spatial preferences, as well as migration history and the relationship of Somali female refugees to their homeland. An additional component of this study includes an examination of potential differences in the characteristics and migration experiences of Somali Bantu women contrasted to mainstream Somali women.

The study provides a comprehensive analysis of the Somali female refugee experience and therefore is described in several subset hypotheses as follows:

Related to the Sample Itself

H1a. Somali female refugees (notably Somali Bantu) tend to be from rural societies and often lack the social skills, language ability, and educational or technical knowledge needed to adapt to modern Western cities.

H1b. Frequently Somali females arrive as single household heads, and are responsible for several dependents.

H1c. Many have experienced war atrocities (such as witnessing the deaths of family members, or being raped), languished in refugee camps for years, thus arriving in the US in a highly stressed and marginalized emotional and physical state.

H1d. One sub-group, the Somali Bantu, is an ethnic minority in Somalia. As a consequence of enduring particularly harsh treatment during the early war years, being highly marginalized in Somalia society, and being given special resettlement status by the US government, are likely to have more difficult adaptation challenges than mainstream Somalis.

Related to Migration History and Future

H2a. Most of the migrants are refugees, but an increasing number today are entering under the Family Re-Unification Act of 1965, and sponsored by earlier family members that have become naturalized citizens.

H2b. Most refugees have been uprooted from their homeland due to the prolonged civil war that is ongoing in Somalia. Most migrants have arrived in the US through a step migration process, first being located in a refugee camp, neighboring country, or another Western nation (or succession of these). Relatives and friends often provide a conduit for migration (social network theory, migration flows), making migration into the US desirable and possible. Strong economic and political motives function as “push” factors, while perceived economic opportunities, social services benefits, and reunification with family members in the US/Atlanta area operate as ‘pull’ factors.

H2c. Despite the many hardships and marginalized status encountered by new Somali refugees, they appear to have a strong positive spirit about their move to the United States. They usually tend to become naturalized citizens as quickly as possible and seem to hold little hope of returning to their homeland.

Related to Relationship towards the Mother Country

H3a. Due to the extremely dangerous conditions and marginal political state in Somalia since 1991, most migrants’ only contact with their homeland is through regular phone calls and remittance sending. Few seem to feel that there will be an opportunity to return home to a stable and productive life, therefore due to many years of displacement, most seem to accept the idea of a permanent residence here in the United States.

H3b. Remittance sending is a vital part of Somali females’ commitment to maintaining relations with family members remaining in Somalia. The necessity of receiving remittances

from the US tends to elevate the status and decision-making power of Somali women within both the family and broader community.

Related to Spatial Preferences

H4a. Initially Somali immigrants have little ability to select either their city or neighborhood in which to reside due to sponsorship programs. Yet the development of ethnic enclaves has occurred in many American cities, and Atlanta displays this characteristic.

H4b. Second-step migrations in the US appear to be motivated by the perception of better social benefits or economic opportunities (such as the migration to Lewiston, Maine and into the more rural areas of Minnesota and Wisconsin) as well as the desire to be located near relatives. Because of the “push” factors of the high cost of living expenses and competition for social services in the Atlanta area, some Somali females desire to relocate.

Related to Place of Residence

H5a. Somali immigrants tend to cluster within urban enclaves. This provides them with access to the special ethnic foods and products (i.e. halal foods, special religious/cultural attire) as well as religious and social activities with which they are familiar.

H5b. Somali refugees are clustered in the northeastern region of the Atlanta metropolitan area. This enclave includes primarily three cities, Clarkston, Stone Mountain, and Decatur.

Related to Work

H6a. Somali female refugees are most likely to be engaged in minimum wage, entry-level employment, with no language or skill requirements. Frequently this involves work in airport security, sanitation, and restaurant jobs within the Atlanta metropolitan area. These jobs do not have any relationship to the employment activities previously undertaken in Somalia (human capital theory).

H6b. Somali females are often limited in their employment opportunities due to their reliance on either public transportation or car pools within their ethnic community, as well as childcare responsibilities. Length of residence plays a part in their residential and mobility limitations (either relocating or attaining a driver's license). A marital partner enhances the potential for "double-shift" employment (each person participating in daily childcare), as well as providing a dual household income.

H6c. The domestic service industry, which has historically been a kind of "passport" employment opportunity for unskilled immigrant women arriving in large American cities, has not been readily available for Somali female refugees. This is due to the extreme 'cultural distance' of Somalis as perceived by the American mainstream ('othering' theory).

H6d. Somali females' use of social networks (social network theory) is likely the most useful method to find employment or better employment opportunities.

H6e. Somali women are willing to make human capital investments (ESL, educational, and vocational classes) to gain promotions or better jobs. Age is likely to be a factor affecting such an undertaking, with younger migrant women more likely to engage in such activities. Somali females also display entrepreneurial characteristics and this is most likely to be expressed in engagement of ethnic enterprises (concept of "ethnic economy", segmented assimilation theory).

H6f. Participation in formal employment activities and investments in human capital are likely to enhance a Somali woman's sense of empowerment (decision-making) and status within the household and broader community.

H6g. Somali females face potential discrimination if adhering to Islamic dress codes (head covering, hijab). This attire could either prevent her from gaining employment or restrict her

employment opportunities due to feeling of extreme “cultural distance” by potential employers (“othering” theory).

Related to Religious Activities and Practice

H7a. Somali female migrants use religious activities to reproduce and reinterpret Somali culture/traditions in the US/Atlanta area. Religious activities are used as an important networking time (social network theory), as well as for gaining emotional support from other women.

H7b. A more strict interpretation of Islamic dress codes and practice, as compared to previous practices in Somalia, provides Somali women in the US/Atlanta area with an identity (“othering” theory) in a foreign environment. Intensified practice provides an emotional anchor in a time of change and hardship (modernization theory).

Related to Mutual Relationships

H8a. There appear to be generational tensions surrounding the immigrant’s family over the adaptation process in the United States. The lack of English ability and general mainstream American cultural knowledge can lead to the loss of control over status with children.

H8b. The loneliness of separation from both immediate and extended family members appears to be common among the immigrants. Also the feeling of alienation by the American mainstream presents itself, accompanied by difficulties in adjusting to American lifestyles.

Certain characteristics about the study group were omitted by intention. These include identification of clan group, as well as describing specific circumstances under which the initial migration out of Somalia were undertaken.

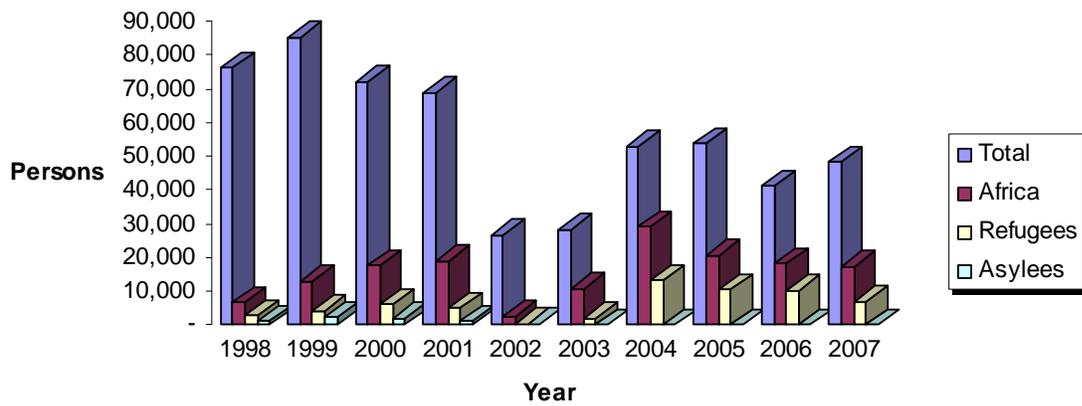


Figure 1-1. Somali refugees and asylees entering the US from 1998 to 2007. Data from the US Department of Homeland Security

Table 1-1. Somali refugees and asylees entering the US from 1998 to 2007. Data from the US Department of Homeland Security

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total	76,181	85,076	72,143	68,925	26,773	28,304	52,837	53,738	41,150	48,217
Africa	6,665	13,048	17,624	19,070	2,550	10,719	29,110	20,746	18,185	17,485
Refugees	2,951	4,320	6,026	4,951	237	1,994	13,331	10,405	10,357	6,969
Asylees	1,310	2,312	1,982	1,258	430	139	132	72	41	62

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The following chapter provides an overview of major migration theories that are relevant to the study, focusing first on forced migration and various effects and drivers behind this such as resettlement, transnationalism and diaspora. Building on the general theories and concepts, more specific literature is then reviewed detailing the special circumstances that influence and describe this study group, being female, black, and Islamic and their post migration experience in the United States.

Migration Concepts and Theories Related to Study

Traditional migration literature and theory has focused upon the “push” “pull” factors that precipitate the desire to migrate, including both voluntary and involuntary motives. The greater focus has been dedicated to economic migrants, with less directed towards developing concepts and theory concerning forced migration. Since the mid 20th century some attempts have been made to recognize this need (Akcapar, 2006; Kunz, 1973, 1981; Lee, 1966; Massey, et al., 1993, 1994; Petersen, 1958; Wood, 1994; Zolberg, 1989), yet due to the variety of situations that encompass forced migrations theory it is difficult to develop. Ogbu (1982) expounds on the terms voluntary (economically motivated) and involuntary migrants (no freewill, such as humans moved out of Africa during the slave trade), but defines refugees as falling between these two categories and calls them semi-voluntary migrants. This type of ambiguity between classifications also arises when assessing characteristics of particular immigrant groups such as the Somali migrants that have been arriving in the US from the early 1980s. Migrants arriving during the 1980s were more heavily comprising of economic migrants, students, and military personnel (that came for training) and did not return due to political instability in Somalia. After the civil war arose in 1991 the greater proportion of Somali migrants arriving were (and continue

to be) refugees and asylum seekers. Additionally due to the time that has elapsed since the early arrivals, and through the process of naturalized citizenship, Somali migrants are also entering the US under the family reunification policy.

More recent theory development has been directed towards the topic of forced migrants and involves the processes of assimilation and adaptation in host countries. Most notable are the social capital theory (strategies undertaken by migrants to adapt to the host culture), “othering” theory (a process that is used to denote persons perceived to be different from oneself {Grove & Zwi, 2006}), and structuration theory (interchange between human agency and the structure of the host society {Healey, 2006}). The theory of segmented assimilation was established by Portes and Zhou in 1993 and was used to describe both voluntary and involuntary migrants (McBrien, 2005). This theory included three patterns of assimilation: “the ‘straight line theory’ of upward mobility (newcomers assimilating into the mainstream Anglo-American society), the second pattern displaying upward social mobility but with ethnic solidarity, and the third pattern resulting in a negative, downward spiral with migrants assimilating into the host poverty culture (McBrien, 2005).

Earlier Portes and Borocz (1989) noted the problems involved with lagging theory evolution in the field of international immigration studies. Their analysis confirms that often it is inappropriate to base international immigration research on theories developed during the early 20th century due to the dynamic nature of this process. Because of rapid transformations that have resulted from improved transportation and communication networks in the global perspective, many time-honored theories have become more of a historical record than current applicable theories for immigration processes of the mid to late 20th century. This is particularly relevant when observing the transnational characteristics of many migrant groups today.

Basch, Schiller, and Blanc (1994) identified many notable characteristics of this new transnationalism in their seminal work, *Nations Unbound*. They examine the meanings of “immigrant” and “migrant” as identified during the previous historical migrations and contrast this to current migration characteristics. Findings indicated that unlike previous migration experiences in which a “migrant” returned to their homeland eventually and an “immigrant” cut ties both emotionally and physically with their homeland, the new transmigrants maintained ties to both. “Rather than fragmented social and political experiences, these activities, spread across state boundaries, seemed to constitute a single field of social relations.” (Basch, Schiller, & Blanc, 1994: 5). Within the context this new dual immigrant identity, situated between two nations, more analysis of today’s refugee identity needs to be examined in relation to their new host country and their homeland from which they have been forced to depart.

Addressing the changing configurations of migration, Katharyne Mitchell’s research (1997) contributes to the exploration of definitions applied to frequently used terms related to the late 20th century migrant experience. In relationship to the international migration process and the transnational characteristics, she proposes that today the term *diaspora* refers to “broader conceptualizations of travel, displacement, dislocation, and divided loyalties” (1997a: 532) rather than the historical reference to the Jewish dispersal throughout Europe, or the forced migration of Africans through the slave trade. By including geography in this discussion Mitchell (1997b) effectively displays the multiple levels with which to view transnational concepts and their involvement with the process of globalization, from the concern with cultural and local spaces/places, the technological advances and their resulting globalizing effects, and international migration. In reference to the assimilation process of migrants she describes the

term, *hybridity*, or reinterpretation, mixing and exchange of cultures as “a process rather than a thing” (1997a: 538).

All of the phenomena the concepts reference play a part of the post migration experience that Somali refugee women undergo during their resettlement process in the US, being a part of the greater Somali Diaspora, integrating and making adjustments to fit into their new communities, as well maintaining relationships with their homeland via modern communication and transportation systems.

Adaptation and Adjustment Characteristics

Reviewing empirical research about migrants’ assimilation/adaptation process (both voluntary and involuntary) can provide some insight about components that enhance or detract from their post migration experience. Drbohlav and Ying (2003) used descriptive variables such as English proficiency, educational levels, US citizenship, perceptions of social status, and settlement dimensions to examine the adaptation and adjustment of Post-Soviet immigrants in West Hollywood, California. In a following publication (Ying & Drbohlav, 2004) gender differences were noted between couples participating in the study. Specific differences between genders concerned reasons for settlement location, women being highly desirous of a “waiting” and “available” place, as well as women being more concerned with escaping religious persecution and environmental pollution. They note that adaptation is the most important stage of the whole immigration process, and old age and new arrival being the biggest stressors for both male and female immigrants. This factor, advanced or advancing age, was a notable indicator for adaptation or lack of, in the case of female Somali refugees.

Montgomery (1996) conducted a quantitative study of Canadian refugees that had been resettled from Third World countries and attempted to measure their adjustment (using psychological and family dynamics variables) and adaptation (using sociocultural-economic

measures) into Canadian society. His research utilizes a variety of variables to explain the migrants' adjustment and adaptation, including: education, gender, age, size of municipality of residence, ethnicity, ethnic network, sponsorship, voyage trauma, marital status, length of residence, and English skill (Montgomery, 1996). The research outcome highlights differences of gender in both economic outcomes (males were more advantaged) and adjustments (females more often reported higher self-concepts), as well as the significance of marital status as an enhancer for both economic advantages and emotional support (Montgomery, 1996). English language skills did not describe economic advancements as much as expected, yet this was likely influenced by geographic locations (Montgomery, 1996). In reviewing the size of municipality of residence Montgomery (1996) discovered that refugees reported higher levels of emotional and job satisfaction while residing in smaller towns and cities. Also as expected, older aged migrants experienced greater emotional and economic challenges with assimilation, while ethnic networking helped to offset disadvantages (Montgomery, 1996).

Hein (2006) contrasts migrant adaptation in differing urban settings in his study examining Cambodian and Hmong refugees in four American cities. Both groups have a representation in a large and smaller city. Although his study is conducted to examine racial and ethnic adaptation in the contrasting settings, Hein applies structural, local, and historical, notably the "common migration history being rooted in failed U.S. foreign policy", considerations to his work (2006: xix). Schaid and Grossman (2007) also conduct a study contrasting Somali refugees' experiences in both large and small urban settings, including a focus upon racial and cultural differences that present themselves to migrants in mono-ethnic rural towns. Also noted in their study is the second step migration pattern of Somalis' in the Minnesota and Wisconsin regions,

as well as the racial, cultural, and religious challenges that face this migrant group as expressed in hostility and suspicions by the host communities.

Cortes (2004) makes an important contribution to this literature as she illuminates striking differences in the outcomes between economic migrants and refugees in their ability or desire to assimilate and integrate into their host countries. Her research focuses upon variables that have emerged as “describing” efforts made by migrants to adapt and assimilate (Akcapar, 2006; Cortes, 2004; McBrien, 2005), most notably, the attainment of English language proficiency and human capital investments. Cortes’ (2004) study reflects greater English language improvement through time by refugees than for economic immigrants, as well as greater wage increases. Forced migrants appeared to have a greater determination to attend training programs, ESL classes, enrollment in the host country’s educational system, as well as becoming naturalized citizens than did voluntary migrants (Cortes, 2004). Cortes (2004) describes key points that contribute to these motivations as a product of the refugee migrants’ inability or unwillingness to return to their mother country, the refugees’ lessening social contacts with their home country due to this inability to make return visits, and their expectancy to have an undetermined, but lengthy stay (even perhaps having little or no hope of returning to homeland) in the host country.

Tayki (2002) and Dodoo’s (1997, 2002) research focuses upon the educational levels of African immigrants and comparison with both the general population and the African American population to see if they gain earning advantage. Dodoo (1997) found in his research that not only were Africans portrayed by the Census data as one of, or perhaps the most highly educated of all immigrant groups, but were unable to put this characteristic to their advantage in the market place. This was due to primarily two reasons: once in the United States black Africans will immediately be identified as part of the African American population although they will not

necessarily share basic cultural similarities with this group; and second, they will begin to experience the same prejudices and discriminatory practices directed towards the African American community from the general population due to this misperception of nationality. This can lead to even greater adjustment problems. Dodoo's (1997) expected that due to the changes of the immigration laws in 1965 that focused on family-base and refugee migrations, this would result in a less positively selected pool of migrants. Yet he found that this did not appear to be the case with African immigrants, and they had relatively high levels of education. However in the case of the female Somali refugees in the study group, the majority arrived with little or no educational background. This is likely related to gender, with females not be selected to receive education, or in addition to the particular characteristics of the immigrant group, being a predominately rural population that had little access or need for education and skills for urban living.

Gender and Migration

Gender, and its use as a tool to illuminate perspectives on the migration process, is emphasized by Pedraza (1991). Attempting to gain a broader view of the intersection of gender and migration Pedraza (1991) reviews theories and trends that describe both past and current migration flows, decisions to migrate, as well as the development of migration streams using macro to micro concepts. As noted previously, with greater proportions of female migrants arriving since the 1930s and even earlier (the migration of poor Irish women beginning in the mid 1800s, increasingly feminized the migration flow into the United States), as well as refugee resettlement that is composed largely of women, the need for gender analysis becomes highly relevant to immigration research (Castles & Miller, 2003; Pedraza, 1991; Pessar, 1999; Tastsoglou & Dobrosolsky, 2006; Willis & Yoeh, 2000).

Decimo (2007) found in her research on Somali refugees migrating to Italy, it was composed primarily of females gaining employment in nursing homes for the elderly. This flow is generated by the opportunities of work in this industry, and is maintained through social networks enabling newcomers to be both supported while seeking employment and being connected to potential employers by their peers. Her work also notes the importance of Somali woman and devotion to remittance sending, as well as the deeper commitment displayed by women to families left behind. Heather Merrill (2006) also examines the influx of African immigrants arriving in Italy, focusing upon women and their engagement with politics, Somali immigrants included.

Decimo's findings are particularly relevant to this study of Somali women in the US, because it contrasts the differences of employment opportunities such as domestic service jobs being available for Somali immigrant women in Italy, unlike this lack of opportunity in the US. Also notably different in the migration process is the predominance of single female immigrants into Italy, unlike in the resettlement of Somalis in the US, in which the majority of females in the study group are married and frequently accompanied by spouses. However, there are deep similarities in the commitments observed for remittance sending by both the Somali women observed in Italy and those of the study group in Atlanta.

Rachel Silvey's research provides the political and social construction of power and its influence on mobility and space, specifically as related to gender in the migration process. Her work provides a focus upon the politics of scale, and from a feminist perspective how research is conducted at differing scales. Silvey states in her paper *Power, Difference and Mobility: Feminist Advances in Migration Studies* (2004):

Feminist migration research investigates the construction and operation of scales – including the body, the household, the region, the nation and supranational organizations – as processes tied to the politics of gender and difference. (p.3)

She expounds upon the importance of this topic as it relates to the production of defining research questions, producing a body of knowledge, and as a result having a profound influence upon government policies that are developed and implemented, and also generating a framework that can commonly be referenced and applied to continuing research. Through Silvey's interpretive analysis of the components of gender in the migration process, she points out critical issues at odd with the general idea of the economic "push" "pull" theory of migration. She explores the various aspects of the migration experience as increasingly reported from the feminine view, including such concerns as to the gendered migration possibilities (who in the household can migrate and subsequent geographic locations selected), how immigration policies and marriage affect migration decisions (often better understood as interlinked processes), and the construction of space and place in the migration experience from a gender perspective. Earlier work focused upon the concept of the migration experience from a gendered view of identity, mobility, space, and place. Silvey and Lawson (1999) note that recent feminist scholars' work has focused upon the migrant and "intersections of class, ethnic, racial, and sexual dimensions of migrants' identities and their centrality in shaping mobility patterns and experiences." (p. 127).

Much discussion has involved the decision-making process of migration, ranging from micro to macro levels. Lee's (1966) theory for these individual motives include the usual "push" "pull" factors that attract or detract (economic or political), also obstacles (including both physical, such as distance, as well as structural, such as policy or costs), personal networks, traits (stage in life), and the effect of transitions such as a marriage or retirement. Increasingly important in explaining migration movements is that often both micro and macro level agents are

at work in developing the flow (policy and political formats, perceived opportunity to fulfill personal needs, personal networks and linkages to expedite the move, family needs).

Interestingly in the case of Somali immigrants in the US, desired second step migration possibilities of the study group frequently involved one or several of these factors as motivations.

An important impetus that can initiate a migration chain that is significantly composed of females is the presence of military personnel in foreign countries (Cortes, 2004; Hein, 2006; Pedraza, 1991). Once begun military conflicts or presence can generate a stream of migrants that attain political asylum, refugee status, or green cards gained through marital union ('war brides'), and this in turn triggers the family reunification migration chain (Pedraza, 1991; Gabaccia, 1994; Narayan, 1995). Although marriage of Somali females to American military personnel present in Somalia during the early 1990s has not described migration motives for the study group, US military involvement in Somalia has resulted in developing a migration flow from Somalia to the US.

The process of family reunification provides statistical evidence of a heavily weighted female migration flow into the United States in recent decades (Donato & Tyree, 1986). In the case of Somali immigrants arriving in America today family reunification has a definite impact on migration flows. Somali females are an important part of this process, and as they gain naturalization status in the US they begin sponsorship for relatives, including husbands and children.

Gender and Transnationalism

With increasing literature documenting the importance of the migration process as a gendered experience, transnational trends also need to be viewed from a woman's perspective, and Pedraza (1991) notes that historically this has not been the case. The migration experience, if noted from a structural approach that emphasizes linkages, can be influenced from a macro

perspective (policy), to micro perspectives such as social relations (community, extended family networks), and finally to the household (Boyd, 1989). Nolin (2006: 32) notes that the migration experience evolves from the decision to migrate, the migration journey, the settlement experience, and can often end being situated in a transnational context that women experience differently than their male counterparts. Research is documenting that immigrant women experience lifestyle changes that encompass a broad spectrum of venues including both their private and public spheres (Willis & Yeoh, 2000). Not only do they frequently assume greater responsibility for the household and their communities (Decimo, 2007), but often women become responsible for managing transnational familial affairs (sending remittances, assisting family members in reunification, navigating complicated international bureaucratic systems) as well (Al-Sharmani, 2006; Decimo, 2007; Pessar, 1999; Tastsoglou & Dobrosolsky, 2006). Women's participation can often extend to transnational activities that involve political or social movements related to their homelands (Al-Sharmani, 2006; Jacobson, 2005; Pessar, 1999; Asli Parker, personal interview, July, 2005).

A variety of topics that need more illumination concerning transnationalism and gender are demonstrated in A Companion to Feminist Geography (2005) edited by Lise Nelson and Joni Seager. The compilation of articles includes topics such as Geraldine Pratt and Brenda Yeoh's on gender and labor migration, remittances and proportions sent home (females are documented as sending more money home and consequently becoming more firmly settled in the host country), Rachel Silvey's research on feminine mobility and power relationships across space, as well as Raju, Cravey, Eraydin and Turkun-Erendil's research on gender, empowerment, agency, and changing roles within the household. Much of this research builds on the "modern practice

theory” as described by Sherry Ortner as an approach that places human agency and everyday practices at the center of social analysis (Ong, 1999:5).

An earlier compilation done by editors Willis and Yeoh, Gender and Migration (2000), highlights such authors as Pessar (women’s private and public domains, agency, power, and change), Yeoh and May Khoo, Alicea, Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (transnational mothering, and cultural reproduction, marital relations), and Stasiulis and Bakan (gender, migration, and citizenship). All of these authors contribute to the emerging discussions of transnationalism and the gendered components describing the experience. The themes central to this discussion are women and their contributions to cultural adaptations and assimilation into the host country as well as their changing power and agency within the household, community, and the diaspora.

In transnational studies remittance sending commands a central arena for discussion. Somalia has remained suspended without any formal political structure since the civil war erupted in 1991 and remittance sending has not only continued, but also grown in importance. Because of this unique situation Somalia is the focus of several studies investigating the informal structures that accommodate this complex monetary flow. Ahmed (2000), Horst (2004), and Lindley (2007) provide in depth analysis of this phenomenon, noting remittance values, exchange structures, geographic characteristics (global structure of this remittance sending), contrast between refugee and economic migrants’ remittance participation (refugees send less money), as well as fluctuations in amounts that correspond with increasing conflict or droughts.

Resettlement Challenges

Refugees, in contrast to economic immigrants, often arrive in resettlement destinations with significant problems developed either before undertaking or during their migration journey. Frequently refugees suffer from either physical injuries or mental illnesses, notably Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), that can potentially delay or retard their adaptation process.

One clinical study undertaken at the Oregon Health and Science University found that refugees suffering from PTSD experienced a reactivation of this disorder when the 9/11 Twin Tower attacks occurred (Kinzie, Boehnlein, Riely, & Sparr, 2002). According to the UNHCR the case of Somali female refugees, rape was a common threat not only in conflict regions, but in refugee camps as well. Traumas suffered began with initially being forced to flee from their homes (Gundel, 2002), and continued with events such as rape, torture, famine, loss or separation of loved ones. All of these experiences accompany the refugee, yet these troubles are often given little attention due to the necessity that the migrant focus upon adjustment to a new host environment (Gueirn, Guerin, Diiriye, & Abid, 2002).

For the case of African refugees very little research has been done to document their post migration experience in the United States (Kamya, 1997). According to *Women's Health Weekly* (1997), throughout the 1990s the US accepted more than 30,000 African immigrants, and of this number 93% came from Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia. There are three major factors to note about the nature of these populations. First they often arrive having no previous experience with urban living, such as using amenities of electricity, indoor plumbing, telephones, and computers (A Home at Last, 2003). Often these displaced populations come from a pastoral or nomadic lifestyle in their homeland. Second these populations are primarily from regions that have strong tribal affiliations and histories, therefore enhancing the importance of their ancestral traditions (Ortiz, 1998). And third, these immigrants are often placed in communities that have little experience with integrating a foreign population (McSpadden, 1987; Akokopari, 1998).

As previously mentioned, discrimination by white Americans directed towards African immigrants can present a problem for adaptation and adjustment in the US for African immigrants because of America's history of racism. Due to most Americans' lack of interaction

with African immigrants, these populations are often simply assumed to be African Americans because of skin color and also the broad differences existing between African immigrant groups are ignored (Apraku,1991, 1996; Briggs,1984; Daniels, 1990; Djamba,1999; Dodoo,1997; Dodoo &.Takyi, 2002; Kanya, 1997; Kposowa, 2002; McSpadden, 1987; Takyi, 2002). As a result much of Americans' perceptions of Africans comes from their portrayal in the media. Researchers, Fair (1996), Fursich and Robins (2004), and Sreberny (2001), have found that a well-developed American stereotype of Africans is that of an ineffective, international agency-dependent, emaciated AIDS or famine victim, and always a female. The steady stream of Ethiopian refugees arriving in the US beginning in the 1970s and later the Somali refugees beginning to arrive in the 1990s contributed to this stereotype (Roberts, 2005). Dodoo (1997) also describes this negative stereotyping of Africans that has resulted from the media that portrays Africa as an impoverished and backward continent. This is disadvantageous particularly for African women because they are the ones most frequently equated visually with famine and upheaval. The children of African immigrants also suffer from discrimination as Darboe's (2003) research documents Somali immigrant children experiencing racial tensions while attending white majority high schools in Minneapolis suburbs.

Research has been conducted upon the effect that religious adherence manifests itself in the migration process. Some supporting literature has been generated about Somali women in the diaspora in this area of study. It has been noted by numerous researchers that the Somali woman in exile feels that her Islamic identity is stronger than during residence in her homeland due to the need to maintain a sense of identity and belonging within one's own community while being marginalized or dwarfed in the dominate host culture (Guerin et al., 2002; McGown, 1999; Mohamed, 2003; Tiilikainen, 2007). This move toward to more fundamental religious

adherence appears to be present in other Islamic groups, as well as immigrant women in general (Ahmed, 1992; Ahmed, 1999; Gabbacia, 1994). When confronted with a completely foreign culture and strange surroundings, as the secular Judaeo-Christian West may appear to a Muslim woman, it seems likely that comfort and strength would be found in long-held cultural and religious traditions. Somali women, with their dark skin color and vibrant, flowing dress are distinguished visibly from this mainstream, commonly drawing attention to their “foreignness”, and often generating negative and hostile comments (Guerin et al., 2002; McGown, 1999).

It is often cited by Somali immigrant women that through this confrontation of Western values and culture that they became motivated to return to actively practicing Islam and specifically to redefine it (McGown, 1999). McGown’s interviews with Somali women in both London and Toronto revealed that the central element of their practice was *ijtihad*, or independent judgment (1999: 14). This trend was noted by many researchers working in various locations of the Somali diaspora (Guerin et al., 2002; Johnsdotter, 2003; Mohamed, 2003; Tiilikainen, 2007). Notable changes have come about due to Somali women actually reading the Qur’an for the first time and determining a reinterpretation of its meaning (Johnsdotter, 2003; McGown, 1999; Tiilikainen, 2007). Helander describes that “For many Somalis, Islam also provides a means of positioning themselves in the world and in history.” (1999:39).

Interestingly enough this process of reinterpretation often leads to some surprising results. For instance, across the diaspora, it has been noted through interviews with Somali women that they often begin to wear the *jilbab* (female covering in various forms) and the *niqab* (face-veil) in their adopted country while they did not previously wear this attire in Somalia (Haga, 2005; McGown, 1999, 2007; Tiilikainen, 2007). This appears to be a relatively common occurrence and one that has been reported by researchers in the United Kingdom (McGown, 1999), Canada

(McGown, 1999), Finland (Mohamed, 2003; Tiilikainen, 2007), also Australia and New Zealand (Guerin et al., 2002).

Unfortunately wearing such distinctive and non-Western attire also tends to place a barrier between the wearer and the non-Islamic mainstream population (Guerin et al., 2002; McGown, 1999, 2007; Tiilikainen, 2007). Often this can lead to hostile remarks while riding on rapid transit systems or walking in public, as well as reducing one's chance for employment opportunities (McGown, 1999). Many employers will not hire women wearing the *jilbab* due to the stigma of Islam in the West as well as the differentiation of the dress from Western standards (McGown, 1999, 2007). The need for employment caused some women to modify their attire, or simply to conform to work requirements, while others refused to do so (McGown, 1999, 2007; Tiilikainen, 2007).

Settlement Dimensions

In the United States much research is devoted to determining the residential segregation that occurs in urban areas as a result of race and ethnicity. This is of importance when dealing with immigration matters because often immigrants find themselves residing in low-rent districts that are defined by certain racial or ethnic groups. This is particularly true for African immigrants because they are identified more by skin color than culture (Bashi & McDaniels, 1997). Little research has been conducted upon the development of Somali communities across the US. Horst (2007) briefly discusses demographic and spatial characteristics of the Minneapolis / St. Paul / Twin Cities area, and relates this to other cities in America that display Somali settlement. Goza (2007) and Schaid and Grossman (2007) contribute to literature on the Somali Diaspora in the Minneapolis metropolitan area and secondary migration from this area to small Midwestern cities in nearby regions. McGown (2007) provides an intimate description of Somalis residing in a Somali enclave of Toronto, Canada. Yet descriptions of settlement patterns

beyond this have not been done in North America. The following studies provide some insight into the spatial observations done in the US and Canada involving black immigrant groups.

Crowder (1999) found in his study of the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area that race and ethnicity had a large role in shaping patterns of residential segregation. Two important characteristics emerged from the study: first, predominant numbers of West Indian populations reside within the African-American neighborhoods of the greater New York area, and second within this region, West Indian blacks developed their own ethnic enclaves. Owusu (1999) provides an analysis of the residential patterns, concentrations, and housing choices of Ghanaian immigrants in Toronto, Canada in the late 1990s.

Allen and Turner (2004) identified the emergence of a quilt-like pattern of ethnicity in the Boston metropolitan region. Using 2000 tract-level census data they identified nine major ethnic enclaves located inside larger aggregations of White, Black, Latino, and Asian neighborhoods. The interpretations of the distribution and locations selected by the immigrant groups were based primarily on immigrant spatial assimilation theory as follows: (1) areal variations in the price of housing; (2) group differences in economic resources; (3) the desire of many immigrants to live near others of their group; and (4) the desire of most people to distance themselves from poorer neighborhoods and, in some cases, from people of other groups (Allen & Turner, 2004; 2). Earlier work in Los Angeles involving twelve ethnic groups provided insight into their assimilation over time, portraying the zones of concentrated, dispersed, and highly dispersed settlement of these groups

CHAPTER 3 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This study examines the post migration experiences of Somali refugee women residing in United States, using a case study approach with a study group located in Atlanta, Georgia. There is vulnerability in a case studies approach due to the fact that each American city will be defined by different parameters of social, political, and economic opportunities or disadvantages for refugees in the resettlement process. Yet in spite of the microscopic view it has some advantages. First it will provide vital information about the adaptation process experienced by one group of Somali women in the US, and therefore will serve as a contrasting perspective for later studies that include additional Somali communities. Second by using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, which this study does, the research findings can essentially be “cross” examined providing greater validity of research findings (Silverman, 2000). Third, although very little research has been conducted on this group in the US, studies done abroad in various locations of the Somali Diaspora are useful as a third measure for contrast and comparison.

By developing a targeted questionnaire, information was gained on the strategies used by these refugee women to adapt and adjust to their new lives in a large American city. The information collected includes migration history, socio-economic information, perceptions of migrants’ new environment, settlement patterns, and spatial preferences. By compiling this information into both a textual document for each questionnaire respondent and by creating a data file with individual variables of the questionnaire entered, both qualitative and quantitative analysis could be conducted.

Notably this study involved gaining the trust and acceptance of a relatively new minority ethnic group that experiences racial, political, and religious discrimination in America. The

process of developing trust and being introduced “correctly” was at times a tedious exercise of patience and involved revisiting the same community center several times before the desired results began to occur. It also involved specific strategies on the part of the researcher to overcome cultural barriers in order to create a connection based on commonalities of the human experience. Specifically this involved visiting the community center in Clarkston, Georgia with a daughter, thus being perceived as a “mother” and not just an impersonal researcher.

The following chapter sections include discussions on selecting the study group and site, data sources, data collection, and data analysis.

Selection of Study Group and Site

Selecting a Somali community that was appropriate for a case study required that there be a sizable Somali population, consisting of at least 2,000 or 3,000 individuals, and that this community have a relatively long history in the US, dating from the mid 1990s when large numbers of Somali refugees began to arrive in the US or earlier. Given the lack of information regarding this ethnic group, it was difficult to assess, even from 2000 census data what communities would be appropriate, therefore this selection stage required much fieldwork.

Initially it was very difficult to even make contact with Somali community leaders, as most community center offices are understaffed and communication is difficult. The second challenge was to find a mutually acceptable time to meet because of significant geographic differences. Due to the researcher’s limited time and funds to travel to various cities, the first meetings were made simply by closest geographic proximity. Consequently community leaders in San Diego, Dallas, and Houston were visited in the summer of 2005. The result of these visits produced some primary and secondary contacts and also importantly provided a link to Atlanta, Georgia which was geographically more desirable. Due to the researcher being located in Florida, and the need for repeated visits to conduct fieldwork, a southern city was preferred because of

accessibility and time and cost restraints. With further investigation, including an initial visit and meetings with community leaders, Atlanta was at last determined to be an appropriate study site. Atlanta has a well established Somali community that has been in existence since the late 1980s, was one of the earliest Somali communities in the United States, has a Somali population estimated by community leaders at approximately 5,000 to 8,000 persons, and importantly had community leaders that were eager to participate and assist in the study.

These preliminary visits provided much background information about Somali migration and resettlement history in the United States. Also primary contacts provided additional contacts, and initially one Somali woman, the Somali community leader in the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan area made vital introductions to female leaders in Atlanta, Georgia, the targeted study site. Once introduced, the second most important link was a Somali woman that worked as an educator at the Refugee Family Services in Stone Mountain, Georgia. This woman provided introductions, translations, and general assistance during the entire study period.

Data Sources

Somali Community Leaders and Related Organizational Leaders

Very little background literature is available about Somali refugees that are being resettled in the United States beginning from the late 1980s and more intensely since the early 1990s. As a consequence it was necessary to contact a number of community and organizational leaders that have specific knowledge of this group. Initial contacts were obtained simply by doing Internet searches and calling all numbers available, or emailing. Unfortunately due to the small budgets of many of these non-profit organizations, there was little response because of the lack of secretarial assistance. Exercising persistence, initial and secondary contacts were finally made with several individuals in a variety of cities. Through formal and informal interviews, these community leaders and directors offered a wealth of background information, with many of them

being the earliest arrivals in their community. This provided a history of each community visited and also confirmed general information about Somali immigrants and community development in the United States today. The following is a list of organizations contacted.

- Somali Bantu Community Organization, Clarkston, Georgia
- Georgia Somali Community Inc., Clarkston, Georgia
- Center for Torture & Trauma Survivors, Dekalb County Board of Health, Decatur, Georgia
- Refugee Family Services, Stone Mountain, Georgia
- Somali Community, Fort Worth, Texas
- Somali Family Care Network, 2724 Dorr Avenue Suite 102, Fairfax, VA 22031
- Somali Community, Houston, Texas
- Horn of Africa Community in North America, San Diego, California
- Somali School, Stone Mountain, Georgia

Questionnaire Survey and Respondents

A targeted survey questionnaire was designed to illuminate specific personal information of the study respondents. The questions were formulated in relation to theoretical studies as well as drawn from empirical studies that were designed to evaluate aspects of the adaptation and adjustment process of migration. Questions were composed to gain information on respondents' migration history, socio-economic information, study respondents' perspectives of their new environment, as well as spatial patterns of settlement and preferences of the study sample. The survey questionnaire consisted of 161 questions, including 'yes'/'no' responses, as well as ordinal and categorical questions. However some questions were "expanding" which provided an opportunity for respondents to give more information on particular topics. Also at the stage of analysis, this initial data set of 161 questions and responses was trimmed to 104 questions and responses due to various reasons discussed further in the section on data collection.

The informal estimates of the Somali community in Atlanta, Georgia are approximately 5,000 to 8,000 (personal interview with Eric Robinson and Ali Yusuf Omar, August 14, 2007), and an estimate of 1,250 to 2,500 females within this population. Due to cost and time restraints

a sample size of sixty was determined to be appropriate for this study. Sixty questionnaire surveys were conducted, however two surveys had to be removed from the data set due to one respondent having resided in the United States for thirty years, arriving before the refugee resettlement began. The other respondent had only resided in the United States for one year and therefore had migrated too recently and did not meet the two year Atlanta residency requirement of the study.

Sampling Method

By enlisting the help of four community leaders to make selections through the snowball method, a varied sample of the Somali female population in the Atlanta metropolitan region was gained. With each leader providing fifteen respondents, sixty questionnaires were conducted.

To qualify as a respondent in this survey questionnaire, a Somali migrant had to meet the following conditions:

- be a female, aged 18 or older at the time of migration into the United States
- have immigrated to the US during or after 1988 (population displacement beginning in Somalia)
- must have resided in the Atlanta metropolitan region for 2 years or longer

Data Sources for Maps

Due to the lack of information on the settlement locations of incoming Somali refugees a map (Figure 5.4) was generated using data obtained from the 2000 United States Census. To accomplish this task a search was conducted to find appropriate data that would identify Somali residents living in the United States. First Ancestry Reported Census 2000, Summary File 3 holds this information. This information is reported by county, so by downloading county data a map could be constructed that identified the location of counties in which residents identifying their first ancestry reported as Somali were located.

Creating a map of the study respondents' hometowns in Somalia (Figure 4.1) was done by first identifying each respondent's city or town. Due to the nature of the translation, and because many respondents do not read or write, it was at times difficult to determine which town or city was indicated. Therefore hometown names were simply recorded phonetically during the questionnaire survey and later a linguist was consulted to provide an accurate translation. Another challenge in identifying the hometowns of respondents is that many Somali towns and cities have more than one name and several spellings. To locate each hometown, a detailed United Nations map of Somalia was used as this map had all known names and spellings listed for each city.

To create the map the following steps were undertaken. First, because a shape file for Somalia (country boundary) and its neighboring countries, Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti, was needed, it was extracted from the ESRIDATA (from a world map of countries in shapefile format) accompanying the ArcGIS software. For the individual towns in Somalia where the survey respondents originally migrated from, there were no shapefiles readily available, therefore their respective geographic coordinates were extracted from an internet source ("East View Cartographic, Inc."). A text file was then created with the data obtained in the form of X, Y data (longitude, latitude) format which would subsequently be brought into ArcMap. Once this information was obtained and formulated a detailed map depicting the hometown locations of respondents could be developed. The map identifying the Somali Bantu respondents' hometown (Figure 6.1) was done using this same map, but displaying only their locations.

A map (Figure 5.2) was created to show the zip code areas in the Atlanta metropolitan region in which respondents lived at the time of the study. This map was created by first obtaining country (ESRI data) and city layers (US Census Bureau data) for the US. The Georgia

county layers were found at GA GIS Data Clearinghouse (<https://gis1.state.ga.us//login.asp?CookieTest=2>) and counties that were in the Atlanta metropolitan area were exported out. Next a hard copy of zip codes from Fulton County was obtained and the zip codes were digitized in GIS to create a polygon layer of zip codes identified by respondents. Main highways and interstates layers were obtained from US Census Bureau and then all layers were compiled to create the final map.

A map (Figure 5.5) was created to illustrate the first, second, and third preference American cities identified by respondents. Three different data layers were needed with each group of cities identified. The country data layer was obtained from ESRI data, and the cities data layer was obtained from US Census data. Once cities were identified and selected for each layer, graduated symbols were used to show the three categories. This same method and data sources for each layer was used to compile the map (Figure 5.6) which identified the first and second most frequently identified cities by respondents.

Data Collection

Before the questionnaire survey data collection could begin approval for the questions asked in the survey was needed from the International Review Board (IRB) at the University of Florida. This was accomplished by submitting the survey questions in the correct protocol, and creating a consent form for the study respondents for approval from the review board. Also any changes to the questionnaire required an additional revision form to be submitted to the review board for approval. Final approval was granted in December 2007.

After obtaining IRB approval for the questionnaire, fieldwork began in Atlanta (GA) in January 2008 and continued into April 2008. Primarily Friday evenings and weekend days were used to conduct the fieldwork, with these times being more convenient for respondents who had outside employment and restricted free time during week days.

The questionnaire surveys were initially planned to be conducted at the Georgia Somali Community Center in Clarkston (GA) in the format of interviews, but unfortunately this center was closed in December 2007 due to governmental budget cuts. An appropriate alternate community location could not be found, therefore it was determined that the questionnaire survey interviews would be administered in each respondent's home, provided there was a quiet room available and interruptions would not be a problem. Although many respondents had very large families with many small children in residing in small apartments or condominiums, it was surprising how seriously each respondent took her involvement with the study and made previous provisions to create a quiet space with no interruptions occurring during the interviews.

Each questionnaire survey took approximately forth-five minutes to one hour to conduct and each respondent was assigned a confidential identification number, no names were recorded. Consequently during surveys the respondents were functioning only as "a number" and confidentiality was fully maintained with the researcher. During each survey the respondent had access to translation, and notably this single translator provided the translation for all questionnaire surveys. This was a tremendous advantage for the study because it gave consistency and reliability of interpretation throughout the entire sixty surveys collected. Hammersley (1992: 67) describes reliability as "The degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions." In this case, having the same translator present for all 60 questionnaire surveys provided this consistency of interpretation and an additional advantage was that the translator had done previous interviewing and translating work for Clark Atlanta University and was familiar with the formal interviewing process.

During the interviewing process, either the researcher or the translator took notes on additional comments made by respondents or made special notations of specific details about the respondent and her circumstances. These notes were used later by the researcher to construct a detailed textual document for each study respondent.

A budget was created to compensate each respondent \$10 for their participation in the study and the translator was paid \$20 for each questionnaire survey assisted. Due to higher costs than anticipated for each survey, and working with a small budget of only \$2,000, the number of surveys conducted had to be limited to sixty. Additional restrictions of time and money available for travel to the research site by the researcher placed some constraints upon the study.

Community leaders often neglected to mention the \$10 compensation to potential respondents and only upon completion of the questionnaire survey did many respondents realize that they were entitled to receive \$10. Due to the community leaders' strong desire to support the study it appears that their enthusiasm and endorsement of the study was the great motivating factor in gaining eager respondents, not the payment for participation in the study. Notably respondents had great trust in their community leaders, particularly the translator, and respondents appeared to be highly motivated on a personal level to engage in the study.

Somali migrants have experienced discrimination from the American mainstream and are therefore often cautious about interacting intimately with people outside their group. Allowing an unknown researcher into their homes and sharing detailed personal information requires a high level of trust and this was gained only because the community leaders and ultimately the translator endorsed the study. It was under these circumstances that respondents shared their migration and post migration experiences voluntarily and with high level of personal commitment to the study. This underlying motivation of respondents created an atmosphere of

professionalism to each questionnaire survey, as they attempted to answer all questions accurately and to expound upon them if there were varying circumstances.

Because so little is documented about this immigrant group it was difficult to construct an entirely appropriate and relevant survey questionnaire. Consequently while conducting the survey questionnaires it quickly became apparent that certain questions were not useful because of wording and possible misinterpretation, inappropriate due to cultural differences, or too few respondents answered certain questions. These were later discarded before data analysis began. As a result of the 161 original variables only 104 variables available were used for analysis.

Data Analysis

The study used the commercial software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 10.0. At the completion of data collection all respondents answers in the survey questionnaires were compiled in a SPSS data file. Next descriptive statistics were run for all 161 variables that were identified as “usable”, meaning the question was felt to have been interpreted as intended during the interviews, and enough respondents had provided an answer. Once this was completed, all variables were examined to determine if they could contribute or were relevant to the study, and if not were put into an ‘archive’ file. Finally individual files were created placing variables that were to be used for each separate portion of the analysis, such as a file for ‘employment characteristics’, was created. These files were used to run quantitative analysis. Quantitative research was conducted using these files to test study hypotheses using appropriate variables.

At the completion of each questionnaire survey, a text file was created with a full description of the respondent and all additional comments or information provided by the respondent. This provided the basis for qualitative data needed to support the findings of the quantitative analysis.

Quantitative Tests

In this study non-parametric statistical tests were used because the data is distribution free and categorical (nominal and ordinal), as well as having a small sample size (under 30) of Somali Bantu respondents (16) which was relevant when testing the comparison of specific attributes of mainstream Somali respondents to Somali Bantu respondents. Three non-parametric tests were used in this study and are described as follows.

The Mann-Whitney non-parametric test is used to “test differences between two conditions and different participants have been used in each condition” (Field, 2005: 522). Field provides the following definition for the appropriate use of this test:

A non-parametric test that looks for differences between two independent samples. That is, it tests whether the populations from which two samples are drawn have the same location. It is functionally the same as Wilcoxon’s rank-sum test, and both tests are non-parametric equivalents of the independent t-test. (Field, 2005: 737).

This two-sample test is designed to test the null hypothesis with the probability that an observation from one sample population exceeding an observation from the second sample population is 0.05% significant (Field, 2005: Sanders, 1995). This test requires that the two samples to be independent and the observations measured must be ordinal or continuous data. Observations are each given a ranking number in the order of its value from lowest to highest, and then the rank value of each observation is totaled for each independent group. This then provides the mean sum of ranks value for each group that is evaluated in this test. If the outcome is equal to or less than 0.05 (p value), the result then indicates this significant. By analyzing the ranking for each group an evaluation can be determined if it validates the hypothesis. The following example provides an illustration of interpreting the Mann-Whitney test when examining relationships and associations between certain variables in this study.

Hypothesizing that the older the respondents are the less they the less they would likely desire to seek more education after arriving in the United States, two independent variables, “age” and “the desire to seek more education”, are being tested to find if there is a statistically significant relationship. In this example (Table 3-1) age is continuous data and the response “yes/no” is the grouping variable. After respondents identify if they desire to seek more education (yes or no) data is ranked from 1 to 54 (N = 54). All ‘yes’ observations (31, sum of ranks = 684.50) and ‘no’ observations (23, sum of ranks = 800.50) are totaled. The mean rank value for each group is the obtained (‘yes’ = 22.08, and ‘no’ = 34.80). The test statistic generated is 0.003, less than the needed 0.05, indicating that this outcome is highly significant. By using a 0.05 confidence interval (95%), it is highly unlikely to commit a Type 1 error, rejecting the null hypothesis, when in fact it should not be rejected. A “p” value (probability) of 0.05 or under indicates that the experimental hypothesis is highly significant (Field, 2005). In this example, observing that the “yes” respondents have a lower mean rank value (22.08) than the “no respondents (34.80), it can be concluded that the “yes” respondents are significantly younger than the “no” respondents. Therefore it has been determined that for this study sample, if the respondent is younger she will more likely desire to seek more education in the United States.

The Kruskal-Wallis test is a non-parametric test that is used for testing if two or more independent groups differ and is the non-parametric version of one-way independent ANOVA (Field, 2005: 736; Sanders, 1995: 587). The theory behind this test is very similar to the Mann-Whitney test, and is based on ranking the observation data. Each observation is simply ranked according to its value from lowest to highest, ignoring the groups to which each observation belongs. After ranking values are assigned to each observation, rank values for each group are

then totaled for each independent group, and this determines the sum of ranks value. A final mean rank value is determined for each of the independent groups and in this manner if a significant outcome of 0.05 (probability value) or less is observed it indicates that there is a difference in the equality of population medians among the groups (Field, 2005; Sanders, 1995). In other words the null hypothesis can be safely rejected without the fear of committing a Type 1 error. The following example is provided.

By applying the Kuskal-Wallis test to two variables, levels of self-identified English skills by respondents, each level has been identified from 1 to 5, with 5 identifying 'perfectly fluent', and each respondent's age, a mean rank value is evaluated for each group (Table 3-2). The variable 'age' determines the ranking and then when reinserted into their respective level of English skill grouping, and mean rank value is determined. The differences between the groups are then evaluated to see if there is a significant association between these two variables, which in this case there is, with a highly significant outcome of .001. This indicates that these two variables are highly associated, and by observing the mean rank values, it can be seen that the higher ranking numbers, such as 46.20 and 35.46 are identified with "I do not know English at all" and "I know very little English." Therefore, because these mean rank values are the highest, it indicates that these were the older respondents since their ages would have been assigned the higher ranking values. Therefore it can be observed that age and English language skills are closely associated and the older a respondent is the less English skills she is likely to have.

The McNemar non-parametric test is described by Fields as follows:

This tests differences between two related groups when you have *nominal data*. It's typically used when you're looking for changes in people's scores and it compares the proportion of people who changed their response in one direction (i.e. scores increased) to

those who changed in the opposite direction (scores decreased). So, this test needs to be used when you've got two related dichotomous variables. (Fields, 2005: 737).

The McNemar test uses a 2×2 contingency table to record the relationship between two variables, and also provides a visual output in which to analyze the relationship. This test outcome is based on the Chi-square test statistic, and if a probability of 0.05 or less is the outcome between the two variables, it is interpreted as justification for rejecting the null hypothesis that the row variable of the contingency table is unrelated (more specifically, only randomly related) to the column variable (Field, 2005; Sanders, 1995). Basically the test determines if two categorical variables which form a contingency table are associated (Field, 2005: 725).

Table 3-3 shows that 11 respondents identified that they have a driver's license and that they had English skills before arriving in the US, and 0 respondents that had English skills before arriving in the US did not have a driver's license. For those respondents that did not have English skills before arriving in the US (total of 43), only 26 had obtained driver's licenses. By applying the McNemar test and finding a highly significant of outcome 0.00, less than the needed value of 0.05 to have confidence in this association, it can be determined that these two variables, 'having English skills before arriving in the US' and 'having a driver's license' are closely associated.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis was based on respondent information gained through the survey questionnaire. The textual file for each respondent contained detailed notes obtained while the survey questionnaire was being conducted as respondents expounded upon open-ended answers to certain questions, making additional comments by providing descriptions of their feelings, experiences, or circumstances. This provided the basis for deeper illumination of the lives and

experiences of the study group respondents beyond survey questionnaire answers that provided data needed to support quantitative analysis (Silverman, 2000; Wolcott, 1999). To test each hypothesis observation of the qualitative data was reviewed, contrasted to theoretical frameworks and empirical studies, and was further evaluated by using statistical analysis on quantitative data when possible. Through this manner the validity of each observation was analyzed.

Hammersley defines the validity of qualitative research as “The extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers.” (1990: 57).

In this study the use of qualitative analysis is employed to enhance the depth and quality of the research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005):

“Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researcher study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:3)

The use of a case study is one of a multitude of empirical materials that can be employed in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This provides a better understanding of one specific case or example of the phenomenon studied, and when contrasted with quantitative findings outcomes can be thoroughly understood. Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 7) note that qualitative research does not have a distinct set of methods or practices, and qualitative researchers may use a large variety of investigative tools that can include, beyond interviews, narratives, and such, statistics, numbers, and can employ survey research. Harrison (2007: 27) notes “there is ample room for both survey research and qualitative investigations such as historical and ethnographic case studies.” Harrison (2007: 28) also emphasizes that often the complementary nature of combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods are

frequently “discounted in research and policy-making arenas in which numerical data and statistical calculations are presumed to be more accurate, reliable, and useful than the “anecdotes: and “stories” accumulated through intensive ethnographic fieldwork.”

By using a detailed survey questionnaire as a tool of investigation important descriptions of respondents’ lives and experiences emerged that provided a complementary and vital component to the numerical outcomes and statistical tests.

Table 3-1. Age of respondents and their desire to seek education (Mann-Whitney Test)

	Seek education	N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
Age	Yes	31	22.08	684.50
	No	23	34.80	800.50
	Total	54		

Test Statistic: $p = .003$

Table 3-2. English language fluency skills and age (Kruskal Wallis Test)

	Current English fluency	N	Mean rank
Current English fluency	I do not know English at all	5	46.20
	I know very little English	26	35.46
	I am able to read and to translate a text with dictionary	9	26.56
	Very good, seldom need dictionary	9	15.33
	Perfectly fluent	9	20.11
	Total	58	

Test Statistic: $p = .001$

Table 3-3. Previous English skill and obtaining a driver's license (McNemar Test)

	Drivers license	
English	Yes	No
Yes	11	0
No	26	17

Test Statistics: $N = 54$; $p = .000$

CHAPTER 4 MIGRATION HISTORY

Introduction

Understanding the dimensions of the refugee experience is increasingly a topic of refugee studies. Bariagaber (2006: 9) describes ‘refugeehood’ as a process in which initial stages affect succeeding stages. Therefore determining this process is extremely important when examining the migration experience of refugees arriving from Third World countries that have been impacted by war and consequential prolonged stays in refugee camps before being resettled in Western nations. Frequently their lives have been interrupted at critical stages, such as during childbearing years or during old age when the ability to adapt to a new environment is impaired (Drbohlav & Ying, 2003). Because of this their resettlement process can be retarded by handicaps such as an inability or hesitance to learn a new language or marketable skills, or having responsibility for several young dependents. Often refugees suffer from both physical and emotional traumas that have occurred either before or during their migration. These factors can further marginalize these new immigrants in their new environments.

When languishing in camps for years with no hope of repatriation, dreams of a new life in a Western nation appear to be the most viable solution. Kroner (2007: 58) describes this phenomenon of Somali culture as being called, *buufis*, meaning “the incessant urge to flee west” and has significance today because of the protracted civil war in Somalia and the view that the only salvation is resettlement abroad. Although refugees that are selected for resettlement are considered “lucky” by fellow camp residents, many challenges face them in their new environment. By collecting critical details of refugee women’s arduous exodus out of Somalia into camps and their dreams of a “good” life in the West, a broader understanding can be gained of strategies used to facilitate their adaptation and adjustment. The following three chapters

attempt to illuminate the “real” migration experience of Somali females refugees living here in America, by analyzing data collected through a targeted questionnaire detailing their journey out of Somalia into everyday American life.

This chapter is divided into three sections focusing upon different aspects of the migration experience. The first section describes the migration history and geography of respondents, providing an in depth background description of the study group’s initial migration out of Somalia and into refugee camps along border areas of neighboring countries, and their resettlement process. The second section describes migrant characteristics, and the third discusses the relationship of the respondents with their motherland.

Migration History and Geography

Hometowns of Respondents

The sample contains 58 Somali female respondents ranging in age at the time of the study from 19 to 84 years old. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents (33) are in their thirties and forties; the mean age is 39.52 (with a standard deviation of 12.93), and the mode is 30. The majority of the respondents (41) are from southern coastal areas and cities, with the most notably being the capital city of Mogadishu with 20 respondents identifying it as their hometown (Table 4-1 and Figure 4-1) All 58 of the respondents were refugees, with only two entering the US from other Western nations (Canada and Italy).

Two important conflicts have occurred in Somalia during the past three decades. The earliest, an intermittent western border conflict with Ethiopia, resurfaced during the late 1970s continuing into the 1980s producing the first stream of refugees, with a second refugee flow flowing in the early 1990s as the Somalia civil war began. The region impacted by this fighting was the northern border area, which includes three cities: Hargeysa (4 respondents hometown), Jijiga (4), and Laascaanood (5). This is reflected in the study group by observing the relatively

large number of respondents coming from these areas and the relatively early departure dates of respondents from this region (17 to 23 years ago) that did not extend into later years.

Although Jijiga is a city that is located inside Ethiopian territory, it is in the contested Ogadeen region (Figure 4-2), as most of the western Somalia / Ethiopian border region is identified. People residing along this border are often closely affiliated with each other regardless if they are technically identified as Somali or Ethiopian by political boundaries. As a consequence cities such as Jijiga and Hargeysa are intensely intermingled through trade and social relations making the border “blurred”. It is only with the magnification of conflict that begins to “identify” populations creating the need to flee from one side of the border to the other as necessary. The following respondents’ experience in this region is descriptive.

Respondent 1, a fifty-six year old Somali woman, originally left the contested Ogadeen region occupied by both Ethiopians and Somalis in 1977, as military conflicts arose in her home area of Jijiga. Her first forced migration, fleeing fighting in the Ethiopian Ogadeen region, was made into Somalia and accomplished entirely on foot. In 1988 as conflicts began encroaching upon the Somali Ogadeen region, Respondent 1 escaped back to the Ethiopian territory of the Ogadeen and resided in a refugee camp. This migration was accomplished in seven days by continuous walking both day and night. Today she has visible scarring on the bottoms of her feet from injuries acquired during these two strenuous journeys. She resided in a refugee camp in Ethiopia until October 1992 when she received sponsorship by her son who was living in the United States, and moved to the Atlanta metropolitan area. (Personal interview January 19, 2008)

Respondent 14 is a forty-seven year old married woman who lives with nine of her ten children, and her husband. She and her family arrived in Atlanta in 2000 after a long and arduous journey out of the Jijiga, Ogadeen region of western Somalia in 1990. They were in several locations including Ethiopia, Iran, and Senegal, until coming to the United States and applying for asylee status. (Personal interview January 28, 2008)

The migration history of all four respondents from Jijiga indicates they left the region at the earliest reported times of all respondents. Respondent 1 above reported leaving Jijiga 20 years ago (1988), another departed even earlier at 23 years (1985), and the two remaining respondents identifying Jijiga as their hometown residence left 18 years ago (1990). The two earliest departure dates (1985, 1988) clearly support this first exodus out of Somalia, and

subsequently identifies the Atlanta Somali community as being composed of resettled refugees from both conflicts. The Ogadeen region is an inland desert terrain that has low populations, in contrast to the civil war that radiated out from Mogadishu into the southern coastal cities and riverine regions that are much more populous. Essentially the larger refugee flow generated by the Somalia civil war followed on the tail end of the border conflict creating a somewhat continuous migration stream out of Somalia.

The impacts of the Somalia civil war on the study group sample become visible by comparing the departure dates and locations of the Somali female refugees' hometown city. The most frequently reported departure was 17 years ago, at the onset of the civil war beginning in 1991, with 28 respondents leaving at that time. Mogadishu is the most highly represented city with 10 respondents departing in 1991, and Kismaayo is second with 4. Mogadishu is the national capital, Kismaayo is a regional capital, and both are major port cities.

The largest number of respondents leaving Somalia clustered at 16, 17, and 18 years ago, resulting in a mean value of 16.19 years (Figure 4-3). Mogadishu again is highly represented, beyond the 10 women departing in 1991, with 3 respondents as reported leaving the city 18 years ago (1990) and 4 women reporting departing 16 years earlier (1992) for a combined total of 17 women leaving during those early years of the civil war. Other cities identified with high numbers during these years are Kismaayo (5) and Baraawe (4). Baraawe is a coastal town located between Mogadishu and Kismaayo.

Refugee Camps

The majority of the study sample, 47 women, arrived in the US from refugee camps located in Kenya (Table 4-2). The data set is missing 5 respondents' answers due to simple omission, plus one respondent that was located in Rome, Italy before arriving in the US with refugee status. Of the remaining 52, 10 responses name Kenya as the refuge location, but do not

identify the actual camp of residence. Other respondents that identified Kenyan refugee camps came from primarily the Dadaab, Kakuma, and the Utanga camps. In 1991 the Utanga camp had the largest number (10) of respondents arriving, but this camp was closed in 1995 by the Kenyan government (US Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2000). Beginning in 1994 Kakuma began to receive a larger number of study sample respondents the number of study sample respondents with 7 arriving between 1994 and 1998.

Some respondents were located in more than one camp, or identified a specific sub-section of a main camp. It became clear through the interviewing process that not all camps were the same, and that it sometimes became advantageous to move to a different camp. The following respondents describe this situation.

Respondent 8 is a thirty year old, married Somali Bantu woman who has seven children and arrived in the United States on January 27th, 2005. Respondent 8 and her family came from Kismaayo, a southern coastal city in Somalia. They left Somalia in 1992 and first went to the Dadaab Refugee camp in Kenya, but later moved to the Kakuma Refugee camp. They remained there until resettlement to the US in 2005. (Personal interview, January 9, 2008)

Respondent 11 is a thirty year old Baraawe woman. She arrived in Atlanta in 1996 from a Benadir refugee camp in Kenya. Respondent 11 left Mogadishu, Somalia with her family when she was only nine years old. She acquired American citizenship in October 2006, married a Somali man in Atlanta, and has two children that were born in the US. (Personal interview, February 10, 2008)

Respondent 20 is a fifty-six year old wife and mother of four children, two of whom are married. The entire family arrived together from the Ifo refugee camp in Kenya in 1996. They resided in the camp for five years after escaping the violence in their southern coastal home city, Kismaayo in Juba Hoose state Ifo camp is part of the larger Dadaab Refugee Camp that also includes Hagadera and Dagahaley. (Personal interview, February 10, 2008)

Respondents that were displaced by the earlier border conflict reflect this in their exodus locations from neighboring countries. Both of the two earliest to leave from Jijiga (20 and 23 years ago) went to refugee camps in Ethiopia, while the other two from Jijiga (departing 18 years ago) went to Rome, Italy and Kenya. Of the three study sample respondents that reported

Djibouti as their refuge location, two were from Hargeysa. Geography explains this because both Ethiopia and Djibouti are much nearer locations to this northern border conflict region than Kenya, which is along the southern border of Somalia. The impact of the “friction of distance” supports this migration pattern, and as the testimonial by Respondent 1 indicates, these journeys were frequently undertaken on foot, making more distant locations impossible without the advantage of vehicular transit.

Of the sample group only two women experienced a second-step migration process involving a first move to some other Western nation before arriving in the US. One Somali Bantu woman arrived from Canada via marriage to an American citizen, and the other, a mainstream Somali, came from Rome Italy, yet both identified themselves as refugees.

Respondents spent an average of approximately 6.5 years (6.54) in refugee camps (Figure 4-4). The longest residence in camp was reportedly 15 years and the shortest was 1 year. Thirty-six of the respondents spent less than 6.5 years in camps, and 21 spent longer. Of this latter group, 8 women reported spending 13 years or longer in camp. Notably of these 8 respondents, 6 were under ten years old when entering a camp (ages: 7, 8, and 9), and basically spent all their formative years in a refugee camp before being resettled in the US. The oldest respondent, an 84 year old woman, spent 15 years in the Kakuma camp, leaving Somalia when she was 67, and finally being resettled in the US in 2006.

The age of respondents at the time of entry to refugee camps varied from 2 years old to 67. The mean age is 23.33, as can be observed in Figure 4-5. Considering that the average stay in a refugee camp for the respondents is 6.5 years it can be surmised that this transitional living arrangement impacted them during either the formative years of their lives or during the prime years of childbearing and motherhood. These women have experienced a loss of some of the

most productive years of their lives and continue to feel the impact even after resettlement. They have little or no means in refugee camps to invest in meaningful pursuits for their lives, such as in creating a stable home and family life, a business, or investing in additional human capital gains such as education or training. After resettlement in the US they continue to experience marginalization, lacking English and employment skills, as will be examined in the following chapter. This long “suspension” time in camp is frequently just time spent in limbo with few opportunities to either invest in skills needed for relocation to a Western nation, or due to the protracted fighting in Somalia, make plans to return home. The following interview conducted through a translator describes how this has impacted the oldest study group respondent.

Respondent 4 is eighty-four years old and arrived in Minneapolis at her son’s home in 2006. She speaks no English, and feels that this move to the US is very difficult for her. She was widowed thirty years ago and has never remarried. She left Somalia in 1991 when she was sixty-seven years old, and has been living in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya during the intervening years. Respondent 4 plans to apply for US citizenship after she gets her green card. She currently lives with one of her daughters and a gentleman roommate in Clarkston, Georgia, a suburb of Atlanta.

She currently receives a social security pension now, but in Somalia she was a businesswoman. Now however due to her advanced age employment, and particularly in a new Western country, this is not an option. She describes herself as “too old” to pursue English skills and education here in the US. Also, when asked if the quality of her life had improved since arriving in the US, she responded in Somali “No, I’m eighty-four years old.” Unfortunately most of her twelve children are back in either Somalia or Kenya, so with only a son in Minneapolis and a daughter in Atlanta, it is difficult. All of her daughter’s children are also still back in the Kakuma camp, so even the joys of being a grandmother are denied her at this time. It is obvious that this gives her great sadness.

While talking during the interview it became very clear that this move has been extremely painful for her. Although she seemed grateful that her family has had the opportunity to build a new life in America, after being displaced in a refugee camp for years, because of her advanced age this was not an advantage for her. The ongoing conflict in Somalia has made repatriation impossible, and consequently she has been deprived of the comforts afforded by extended family while growing old. All the cultural delights of Somali socialization have been diminished for her. Her roommate, who spoke excellent English, explained to me that Somalis love to have guests frequently, and this was not possible in Atlanta. He explained that even having the translator and researcher come over to conduct interviews made her happy and this was often missing from their lives in America. (Personal interview, February 8, 2008)

Migrants Characteristics

The year with the highest frequency for respondents to be resettled into the US was 1996, with 10 respondents identifying this year as their time of migration (Table 4-3). The second and third years with the highest numbers of respondents entering the US were 1997 (7 women arriving), and 1993 (6). By observing the years that respondents reported leaving Somalia for refugee camps (Table 4-4) and by adding approximately 6.5 years, which was the mean value for years spent in refugee camps for respondents, it would be expected that a large number of the women would be resettled in 1998, the mean value year (1998.35). However, from the chart it can be seen that most of the study sample came in 1996 (10) as stated above, with a high number (7) the following year as well, falling within one standard deviation (4.55 years) from the norm. This is validated by the clustering of study migrants arriving in the US from 1996 through 1998 (a total of 21), and the clustering of respondents exiting Somalia in 1990 (7), 1991 (28), and 1992 (8) for a total of 43 respondents escaping from Somalia to refugee camps along the border regions.

The average length of residence in the US by respondents is 9.7 years (Figure 4-6). The highest number of women (10) in the study sample have been in the US for 12 years, and the next largest number, 7 women, have been in the US for 11 years. The longest period of residency by a respondent was 22 years.

Fifty-one respondents identified the Atlanta (GA) metropolitan area as their first destination resettlement location in the United States (Table 4-5). Three of the 7 respondents that were not initially resettled in Atlanta, identified Minneapolis / St. Paul (MN) as their first US residence, and the other 4 respondents identified, Boston (MA), St. Louis (MO), San Diego (CA) via Silver Springs (MO), and the state of Kentucky with no city named. Consequently, a second step migration pattern in the US was not a major characteristic of the study sample at this time.

The average age at the time of entry into the US for respondents was 29.9 years old, with the mode being 21 (Figure 4-7). As previously mentioned this reluctant migration experience has impacted much of the study group during the childbearing years as can be observed by this average age upon entry to the US and understanding that these women have likely been living in refugee camps for a significant number of years (mean: 6.5 years).

English, Education, and Urban Living Skills

Although many of the study group respondents are from cities or towns, many are also from the rural regions surrounding these urban areas. Almost half (48.3%) reported having little or no knowledge of the skills needed to live and navigate successfully in a sophisticated Western urban environment. This includes knowledge about such basic skills as using indoor plumbing facilities, riding modern rapid transit systems, and negotiating complex bureaucratic systems to obtain needed services or documentation. The following description from a 2002 report from the UNHCR provides insight into the challenges that present themselves to many Somali refugees being resettled in America.

KAKUMA, Kenya (UNHCR) – Hawiya Abdi Aden does not speak a word of English. She has never ever seen a washing machine, nor a flush toilet, nor a commercial airliner. But in a few months' time, this 37-year-old mother of seven, who has known little else but conflict and hardship throughout her life, will start afresh somewhere in the United States... "Resettlement is a very sensitive issue, everyone in the camp would like to go America. It is a dream," explained one UNHCR worker. (Story date: 1 August 2002 UNHCR News Stories: <http://www.unhcr.org/news/NEWS/3d493a2f5.html>)

Interestingly, the 20 responses given by women claiming Mogadishu as their hometown, were split into 10 “yes” responses and 10 “no”, indicating that living within or nearby Somalia’s capital city did not necessarily expose the respondents to modernization as experienced in the Western World .

Fifty-six respondents answered the question “Did you have some English speaking ability when arriving in the United States?”, 2 respondents failed to answer this question. Of the 56

respondent sample size only 21.4% of the respondents (12 respondents) reported having English speaking ability when arriving in the United States (Table 4-6). Seventy-nine percent of the respondents indicated that they had no English speaking abilities.

Testing the hypothesis, if respondents had English language skills upon arriving in the US, they likely had knowledge of urban living skills, a McNemar test was used with two variables, “Did you have knowledge of urban life-styles before arriving in the US?” and “Did you speak English when you arrived in the US?” (Table 4-7). Again the sample size is 56 respondents with two respondents not answering. The outcome shows that having urban knowledge and English skills are highly associated with each other. Because the p value, .000, is less than the needed confidence level of 0.05, or 95% or greater, needed to reject the null hypothesis without making a Type 1 error (see Chapter 3, Data Analysis for a more thorough description). This result indicates that if a respondent had urban knowledge she was more likely to have English skills and vice versa. The following respondents display this characteristic.

Respondent 6 is twenty-five years old and only recently arrived in Atlanta in 2006. She speaks excellent English, learned in Kenya at the Nairobi refugee camp. Because of her language skills she worked as an English/Swahili translator there. Respondent 6 was only eight years old when she left Bu’alle, Somalia, basically growing up in the refugee camp in Kenya. She has attained a high school degree and plans to get more education in the United States and will apply for American citizenship in 2011. (Personal interview, February 9, 2008)

Respondent 7 is a twenty-six year old woman that arrived in Atlanta in 2004. Her family left Mogudishu when she was only nine years old. They took refuge in the Utanga Refugee Camp in Kenya. She has a sister and aunt who preceded her to the United States. She now shares an apartment with two brothers. She speaks excellent English, learned in Kenya, drives and owns a car. Respondent 7 appears to be very confident and capable of handling her life in Atlanta. She will apply for American citizenship in June 2009. (Personal interview, February 9, 2008)

Respondent 14 is a forty-one year old married woman that appears to be quite well-adjusted to life in America. Her English is excellent, which she says she learned to speak while living in Iran. Her husband, although currently sick and not able to work, was previously an ambassador for the Somalia government. Due to these circumstances

Respondent 14 had much knowledge about urban life in modern large cities before her resettlement in the United States. (Personal interview, January 28, 2008)

In response to the educational level achieved by respondents before entering the United States 54 respondents identified their education history and 4 did not. Almost half of these study group respondents (46.6%) had no formal schooling when entering the United States (Table 4-8). Approximately a quarter (25.9%) had an elementary education, while only a fifth of the respondents (20.7%) had attended secondary school. None of the respondents entered the United States with a college degree.

Family Status

Over half (60%) of the respondents were married at the time of their resettlement in the United States (Table 4-9). Given that the average age of respondents upon entry was nearly 30 (29.9) years old, this is to be expected due to Somali cultural traditions of early marriage (in the teen years) for females (McGown, 2007). Some respondents had married in camp after leaving Somalia, and before their migration to the US. These marriages occurred due to the lengthy sojourn in refugee camps during teen and young adult years. Of all respondents only 9 were under 18 years of age when entering the United States.

An important factor of the migration experience for respondents concerned if the resettlement into the United States was made with their spouse and children, or if a family member(s) preceded them. Twenty-seven of the 35 respondents who were married at the time of resettlement indicated that they migrated to the United States with their spouse, 7 married respondents did not, and one respondent failed to answer this question (Table 4-10). From this information it can be observed that the majority of respondents that were married before resettlement, nearly 80%, immigrated to the United States with their husband. This factor has

important impacts on respondents' adaptation and adjustment process that will be more thoroughly examined in the following chapter.

Forty-three respondents answered the question, "Were you accompanied to the US by your children?" Of this sample 37 respondents reported that when they were resettled in the US, they were accompanied by their children (Table 4-11). However because of the broadness of the question fine details of this migration factor were not captured. It must be noted that Somali families can easily consist of 6 or more children, and due to this large size, the range in ages can vary tremendously with some children being toddlers, while older children may already be married. Because of the early age for girls to marry, there can frequently be an older daughter that has a baby or child the age of one of her younger siblings. During the resettlement process, a respondent may have answered "yes" to the question, yet in reality she did not bring all of her children with her into the US, and may have a remaining older child (or children) in either a refugee camp or Somalia. Therefore although the respondents may have been accompanied by some of their children, they may not have all their children residing in the United States with them. The following interview excerpts demonstrate such various circumstances.

Respondent 5 is thirty-nine years old, married and has eight living children. She arrived in the United States in 1997 with her husband and four children. She and her family left the coastal city Baraawe, Somalia in 1991, at the onset of the civil war and took refuge in Kenya at the Utanga camp. Two of her ten children died back in Somalia, but it was unclear whether this was related to the war or other causes. Respondent 5 had four more children after arriving in Atlanta.

Respondent 5 has never worked outside the home in the United States. Her husband is a full-time taxi driver, and although he made a comment about wishing she could work, she shook her head indicating that this was not an option. She has a full household of eight children to look and care after, plus two new grandchildren. Her oldest daughter, who is eighteen and a high school student, is married and has a one year old daughter, and new born son. It appears that Respondent 5 is responsible for watching after the grandchildren due to the daughter's high school attendance. The daughter's husband is in Canada, but is trying to get immigration approval to join her in the US. (Personal interview, February 9, 2008)

The majority of respondents were resettled with their children or their minor children, yet a few were not and this was a big source of emotional pain and anxiety for them. One respondent describes her life without her children here in the United States.

Respondent 3 is a fifty-nine year old, divorced woman that arrived in Atlanta on July 4th, 2004. She has one son that preceded her in the United States and eleven other children at the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. Respondent 3 rents an apartment with her elderly mother and a gentleman roommate in a complex that the translator described as “not good”. The other residents were primarily African Americans and it appeared that perhaps drug deals were taking place in the parking lot as we arrived. It was nearly eight in the evening, already dark, and the translator was concerned that we hurry inside.

Despite the sadness of being separated from her children somehow Respondent 3 seems to maintain a positive spirit working long hours at a warehouse job in order to be able to send remittances to them. When asked about the amount of remittances she took out her pay check stubs and laid them on the table, saying that almost everything went to Somalia or Kenya for her children. In one year she estimated her remittances as totaling \$20,000 to \$24,000, frequently more if illnesses or other expenses arose. (Personal interview, February 8, 2008)

When asked about the number of children that respondents have today, large family sizes can be observed, in spite of the strenuous migration experience that these women have undergone. Only one respondent failed to provide the number of children that she has, 57 respondents answered this question. The average number of children that respondents had is 4.47, with a mode value of 3 children (Figure 4-8). Yet as can be observed in Table 4.12, 8 women have 10 or 12 children, and 17 women reported having 5 to 7 children. By American standards these are very large families. Yet cultural and religious influences continue to play an important part in family-size decision making, as many of the study group had more children upon their arrival in the United States despite the monetary disadvantages. The following interview is descriptive.

Respondent 2 is thirty-nine years old and lives with her husband, a taxi driver, and ten children of her twelve children. She was resettled in the United States thirteen years ago with her husband and four children, arriving from the Utanga Refugee Camp in Kenya. After initially fleeing from Mogadishu in 1992, as conflict erupted in Somalia, she spent three years in the camp and was finally sponsored by the World Relief for resettlement in

the US. Respondent 2's mother preceded her, and her only residence has been in Atlanta, Georgia. Although she expressed a loss and sadness about the state her homeland is currently in, she became an American citizen in 2001, and does not think of returning to Somalia. She has two older daughters that are already attending a nearby college.

She does not work outside the home due to the large number of children requiring her care. Respondent 2 has two other children that were left behind in Somalia, arrived in the US with four, and had six more children that were all born in Atlanta.. Her youngest child is only 1½ years old. She and her husband were forced to purchase a home because of problems trying to rent with so many children and renters begin unwilling to accommodate them. They were able to do this in 2003, paying \$147,000 for a moderate size home in Clarkston. (Personal interview, January 19, 2008)

Exactly half of the sample group, 29 respondents, had family members that preceded them to the United States. Of this group, 18 respondents reported that this relative provided sponsorship for their immigration to the United States.

Relationship with Mother Country

Investigating the relationship that respondents have with their homeland, 57 respondents identified if they still had relatives residing in Somalia or refugee camps. One respondent of the study group did not answer this question. Of the sample, 44 respondents (82.20%) had relatives back in either Somalia or refugee camps along the border regions (Table 4-13). While some of the respondents had only distant relatives, many had parents, siblings, or children left behind. Consequently there is much contact with these relatives, both in providing emotional support via frequent telephone calls or email correspondence, and through monetary support via remittances. Almost every survey respondent had a cell phone and knew how to purchase the very best bargain for overseas calls. Calls from these relatives appeared to be a vital part of their lives and often interviews were interrupted by a call from Somalia.

Fifty-five respondents provided an average number of contacts made per month with these relatives. The greatest percentage of respondents of this sample, 53.4%, reported "often" or "very frequent" contact with their family back home (Table 4-14). Only 17.2% reported having

no contact at all. The mean value for the number of times that respondents phoned Somalia each month was 2.27, with 24 women in the study group reporting either 1 or 2 calls, and 16 reporting 3 or 4 calls. The most common value, 1 call, was reported by 15 women.

Remittances

Perhaps the most descriptive action helping to illuminate the relationship that respondents have with their mother country is the act of sending remittance money. In the case of refugees they frequently have left behind family members that remain in dire circumstances and desperately require assistance from relatives abroad. This resulting financial relationship represents perhaps the deepest type of commitment that can be expressed by relatives that emigrated to other countries. Often this remittance-sending/receiving relationship lasts indefinitely, as is the case with Somalia because no formal internationally recognized government has been established following the onset of the civil war in 1991 (Ahmed, 2000).

Women are recognized as being faithful remittance senders, and in the case of the respondents although they receive low paying employment, the amount they remit annually is comparatively large. The following analysis illuminates the depth of this relationship as expressed in both dollar amounts sent to both Somalia and refugee camps and the emotional investment and commitment felt by respondents.

Of 58 respondents 43 replied that they had sent remittances during the year of the time of the study. The total estimated amount of remittances sent annually to Somalia or refugee camps by the respondents at the time of the study is \$116,325. Of this amount, \$89,825 went to Somalia, and \$26,500 was sent to refugee camps. The average annual reported remittance sent by respondents is \$2005.60. The most frequently reported figures were 13 women who sent no money, 7 that estimated they sent \$1,200 annually, and 9 who sent approximately \$400 to \$600

each year. The following excerpts from interviews illuminate the emotions and commitment by respondents about their remittance obligations.

Respondent 1 stressed her motivation to send remittance money each month to relatives in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya. She reported sending an average per month of \$800 to Somalia and another \$50 or so to Kenya and Ethiopia. Respondent 1 also noted that periodically she sends larger sums of money to various relatives depending upon unusual circumstances, such a wedding, funeral, or illness occurring. She estimated that these periodic monetary expenditures amounted to about \$3,000 annually beyond the monthly remittances sent.

This respondent has a deep commitment to her work due to her desire to assist her family in Somalia and abroad. She spoke of the absolute necessity of her income in making life bearable for her relatives overseas, and this appeared to be a very important component of a newfound identity in America. Her daughter-in-law spoke of how Respondent 1 has a sterling work history with her employer, and how she is a highly valued employee. Again this reflects the commitment that Respondent 1 holds towards maintaining high levels of remittance money, devoting most of her paycheck towards this goal. (Personal interview, January 19, 2008)

Respondent 3 explained that despite the sadness of being separated from her children somehow she maintained a positive spirit working long hours at a warehouse job in order to be able to send remittances to them. When asked about the amount of remittances she took out her pay check stubs and laid them on the table, saying that almost everything went to Somalia or Kenya for her children. In one year she estimated her remittances as totaling \$20,000 to \$24,000, possibly even more if illnesses or other expenses arose. (Personal interview, February 8, 2008)

Respondent 7 was employed until late January 2008 as a warehouse worker, but due to a conflict with her employer over not being allowed a break for prayer time, she has lost her job. Each month she sends remittance money to both Somalia and Kenya, helping to support family members. She estimates that her total remittances per month total about \$600 (approximately \$7,200 annually). Now with the unemployment situation she will not be able to do this, which is highly stressful. (Personal interview, February 9, 2008)

When asking respondents about the decision-making process for sending remittances, 45 respondents answered and over half of this sample (53.4%) said that they made the decision alone, while only 2 respondents (3.4%) indicated that their husbands singularly made the decision (Table 4.15). Twelve women in the study reported that both she and her husband made the decision about remittances together. This indicates that the majority of women, 74.2% of respondents (43), actively participate in this process determining the amount of a significant

household expense. Notably only 30 respondents (51.7%) said that they are currently employed, and 24 (41.4%) are not working outside the home. 44 respondents (75.9%) are married, and the remaining 14 respondents are single (4), divorced (4), separated (1), or widowed (5). It appears that remittance decision-making in a household is not simply related to a woman's working or marital status. Therefore it appears that cultural factors are a likely consideration, such as attitudes concerning a female household head's authority for handling monetary decisions about household matters.

Interestingly during interviews when the question about decision making came up, it often needed expounding upon by the translator. Inquiring why this was, the translator explained that "...of course the women make the decision, so they don't understand why the question is asked." The following interview excerpt demonstrates this point.

Respondent 2 said that she maintained contact with close relatives in Somalia about two to three times a month and sends about \$400 per year to these relatives. Due to her large family size and responsibilities here in the United States it seems that there is little available extra cash for such expenditures. When asked about whose decision making was responsible for allocating this money to relatives abroad, she was adamant that although it was money earned by her husband, she made this decision herself. Again it appeared that decisions concerning the running-of-the-household were her singular domain, despite who brought the money in. (Personal interview, January 19, 2008)

Emotional Ties to Somalia

Of the study group, 12 women answered "yes" to the question, "During the last two years did you or somebody of your family visit your former mother country?" (Table 4-16). Almost 80% (43 respondents) answered "no" and such a response is anticipated due to the insecure and dangerous conditions with continued fighting and the lack of an official government in Somalia. Other factors retard this ability to visit home, such as having limited resources for such an expensive journey, as well as many of the women in the study group having several young dependents that require their daily care. Ill health of a close relative back in Somali appeared to

be a common motivating factor for respondents that did return, as well as having a spouse that is still residing there. The following interview excerpts describe these circumstances.

Respondent 17 is a forty-three year old married woman with five children, who received her citizenship in 2001. Her mother traveled to Somalia to visit the respondent's father, but her mother returned to Atlanta. The respondent's father lived in Mogadishu, but passed away in 2006. (Personal interview, January 28, 2008)

Respondent 21, a thirty-one year old, has had the unusual experience of having a sibling return to Somalia. Last summer (2007) her sister made the decision to return to their homeland. It was difficult to understand if there were specific circumstances influencing her decision or if she simply missed her homeland too much and found life in America less rewarding than anticipated. (Personal interview, January 28, 2008)

Respondent 27, a seventy year old widow, arrived in the US in 1997 and currently lives with her forty three year old daughter. Her husband remained in Somalia and last year she was able to visit him before he passed away. Her daughter was sending \$100 per month remittances to her father, and they maintained frequent contact with him as well, calling once a week. Now however, those responsibilities have ended. She appears nostalgic about her homeland stating, "it is very good country, but it is dangerous to live at current time..." (Personal interview, January 28, 2008)

Respondent 28 is a fifty year old woman that arrived in the US in 1991 with three children, and gained her citizenship in 2002. Her husband eventually joined her in the United States, but just recently returned to Mogadishu, Somalia. She does not have strong English speaking abilities, but has managed to obtain a driver's license and has had her current job at a warehouse for nine years. The respondent reports that the quality of her life improved in the US, yet at the moment she is having a major setback in her household due to her husband's decision to return to Somalia. (Personal interview, January 25, 2008)

Migration Motivation

Many of the respondents acknowledged the hardships of immigrating to America, yet they generally expressed their happiness and enthusiasm for being resettled here. 55 respondents provided an answer when asked if they recommended migration to the United States to relatives overseas, and of this sample slightly over 50% recommended migration (Table 4-17). When asked if relatives wanted to migrate to the United States, 54 respondents replied and of this sample over 60% (35 respondents) of respondents noted that relatives in Somalia or refugee camps wanted to migrate to the US and requested their help in accomplishing this (Table 4-18).

Most respondents in the study described their desire to help relatives migrate, but felt they could do very little because of the expenses and personal support such a sponsorship required. The following respondents describe their experience.

Respondent 6 is a twenty-five year old newlywed. Remittance sending is an important obligation that she takes very seriously, sending approximately \$300 to Somalia and \$100 to Kenya per month helping to provide support for remaining family and close relatives. Asked if they wish to join her in the United States, she replied that “Yes, but mostly just younger relatives.” (Personal interview, February 9, 2008)

Respondent 20 is a fifty-six year old married woman who gained her citizenship in 2007 and appears very enthusiastic about living in Atlanta. She expressed some desire to move to perhaps Seattle, hoping to gain better education and housing for her children. She says the quality of her life is much better in America and has a gracious attitude saying, “I learned a lot of knowledge, thank you USA.” She encouraged her two sisters to join her in the United States, but “...they choice to stay in Somalia..” (Personal interview, January 27, 2008)

The overwhelming majority of respondents reported having “no interest” in news of their motherland. Only 4 expressed “yes, intensely” as their interest in news of Somalia today (Table 4-19). Cortes (2004) describes in her research, that refugees frequently have little hope to return to their homeland, and consequently their everyday lives involve more of the tasks at hand needed to facilitate successful adaptation into American life. When asked how they felt about their homeland, most respondents gave responses such as “very sad”, “not safe at all”, “no hope”, “people getting killed everyday”, and “civil war happening”. The general feeling given was one of hopelessness about their homeland, hence their lack of interest.

Conclusion

The previous analysis has shown that the 58 survey respondents vary in many ways that affect their migration experience. They range in age, and consequently, several have spent their childhood growing up in refugee camps. Many entered the camps as young adults and as a result got married and had children before being resettled into the United States. A few women have had their elderly years, which would have traditionally been spent watching grandchildren grow

up, interrupted by war and found themselves first languishing in refugee camps and later being resettled in a foreign Western nation. This change coming at such a late age, greatly disadvantages them with the myriad of new skills needed to adapt in their new homeland. All of the circumstances which these migrants have undergone before resettlement play a vital role in their ability to adapt and adjust to a new environment.

Respondents have displayed a deep devotion to relatives left behind through their remittance sending, providing a vital resource despite their own limited incomes in the United States. These women also have a continuing relationship with relatives through numerous phone calls and other communication conduits. Although respondents appear to have a strong connection to their homeland, they showed relatively little interest in news and the state of affairs in Somalia, expressing mostly sorrow and hopelessness about the conditions in their homeland today.

Table 4-1. Hometown of respondents

Hometown	Frequency	Percent
Afgooye, Shabelle Hoose	4	6.9
Baraawe, Shabelle Hoose	5	8.6
Beledweyne, Hiraan	1	1.7
Bu'aale, Juba Dhexe	1	1.7
Ceerigaabo, Sanaag	2	3.4
Gaalkacyo, Mudug	1	1.7
Hargeysa, Woqooyi Galbeed	4	6.9
Jamaame, Juba Hoose	1	1.7
Jijiga, Ogadeen	4	6.9
Jilib, Juba Dhexe	3	5.2
Kismaayo, Juba Hoose	6	10.3
Laascaanood, Sool	5	8.6
Marka, Shabelle Hoose	1	1.7
Mogadishu, Banadir	20	34.5

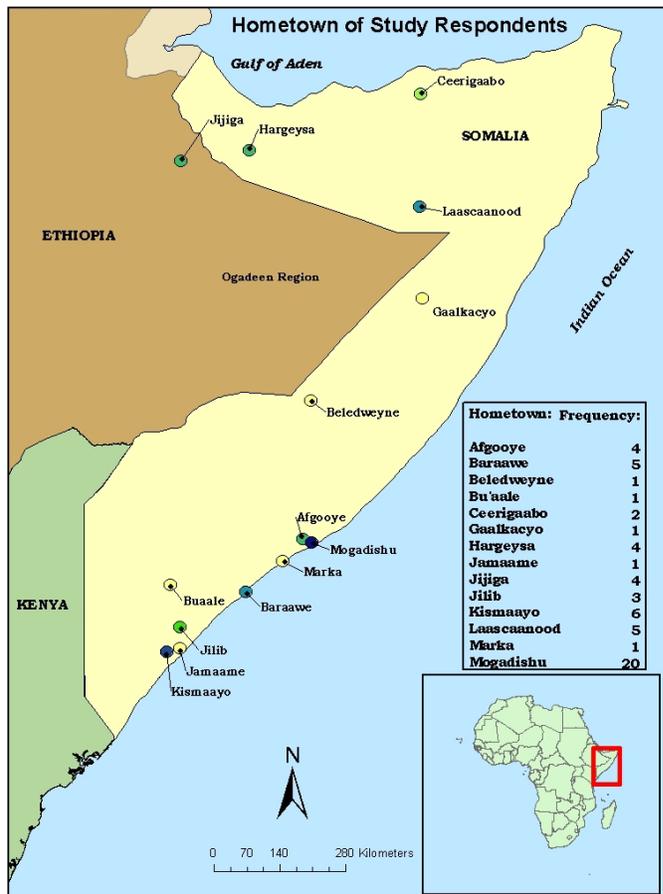


Figure 4-1. Hometown of respondents



Figure 4-2. Map of Ogadeen region

Source: http://www.somalilandtimes.net/sl/2007/290/ogaden_region_map.jpg

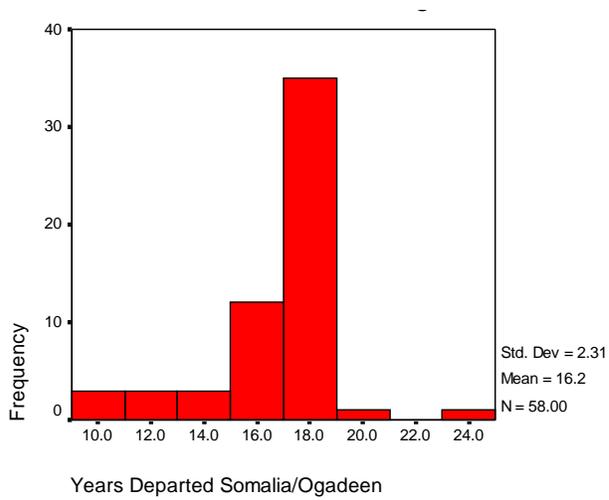


Figure 4-3. Number of years ago respondents departed Somalia/Ogadeen

Table 4-2. Refugee camps

	Frequency	Percent
Kenya	10	19.2
Dadaab, Kenya	6	11.5
Kakuma, Kenya	13	25.0
Nairobi, Kenya	4	7.7
Utanga, Kenya	14	26.9
Djibouti	3	5.8
Ethiopia	2	3.9
Total	52	100.0

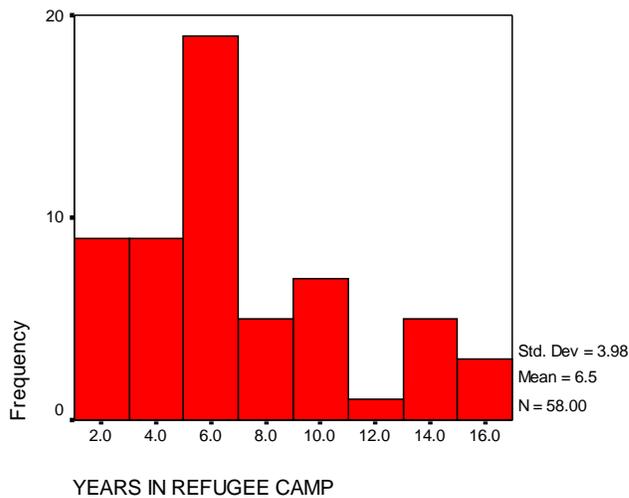


Figure 4-4: Years spent in refugee camps

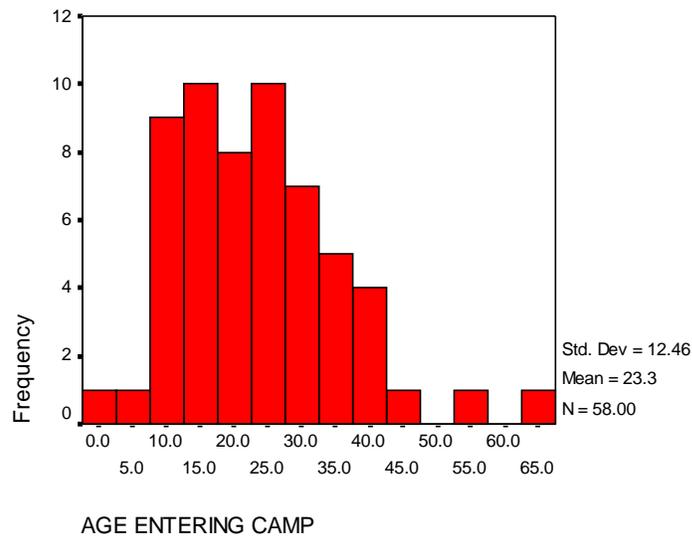


Figure 4-5. Respondent's age entering camp

Table 4-3. Year immigrated to US

Year	Frequency	Percent
1986	1	1.7
1992	1	1.7
1993	6	10.3
1994	3	5.2
1995	3	5.2
1996	10	17.2
1997	7	12.1
1998	1	1.7
1998	3	5.2
1999	3	5.2
2000	3	5.2
2001	2	3.4
2003	1	1.7
2004	4	6.9
2004	1	1.7
2005	1	1.7
2005	4	6.9
2006	4	6.9
Total	58	100.0

Table 4-4. Year left Somalia

	Frequency	Percent
1985	1	1.7
1988	1	1.7
1990	7	12.1
1991	28	48.3
1992	8	13.8
1993	4	6.9
1994	2	3.4
1995	1	1.7
1996	2	3.4
1997	1	1.7
1998	3	5.2
Total	58	100.0

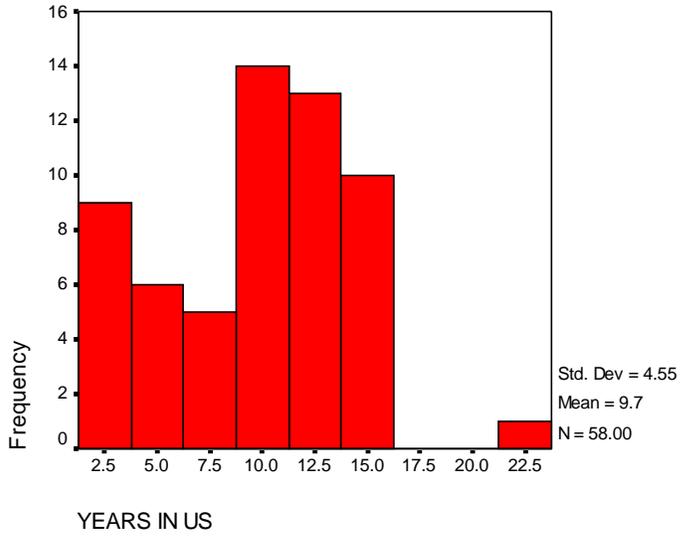


Figure 4-6. Years in the US

Table 4-5. Atlanta as first US residency

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	51	87.9
No	7	12.3
Total	58	100.0

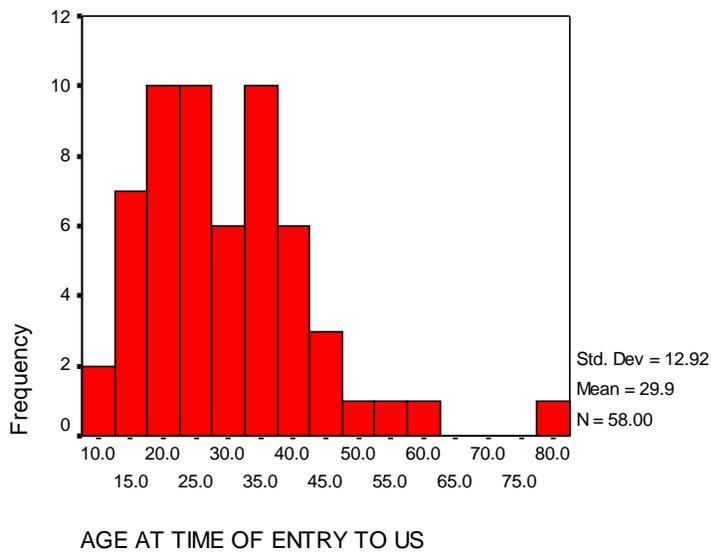


Figure 4-7: Age at time of entry to the US

Table 4-6. Respondents: Did you have some English speaking ability when arriving in the United States?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	12	21.4
No	44	78.6
Total	56	100.0

Table 4-7. Urban knowledge and English language skills (McNemar Test)

Urban knowledge	English fluency	
	Yes	No
Yes	10	18
No	2	26

Test Statistics: N = 56; p = .000

Table 4-8. Education level

Education level	Frequency	Percent
No formal schooling	27	50.0
Elementary	15	27.8
Secondary	12	22.2
Total	54	100.0

Table 4-9. Marital status upon arrival in the US

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Single	17	30.9
Married	35	60.0
Divorced	3	5.5
Widowed	2	3.6
Total	58	100.0

Table 4-10. Respondents: Did you migrate to the US with your spouse?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	27	79.4
No	7	20.6
Total	34	100.0

Table 4-11. Respondents: Were you accompanied to the US by your children?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	37	86.0
No	6	14.0
Total	43	100.0

Table 4-12. Number of children

	Frequency	Percent
0	5	8.8
1	6	10.5
2	4	7.0
3	12	21.1
4	5	8.8
5	9	15.8
6	4	7.0
7	4	7.0
10	4	7.0
12	4	7.0
Total	57	100.0

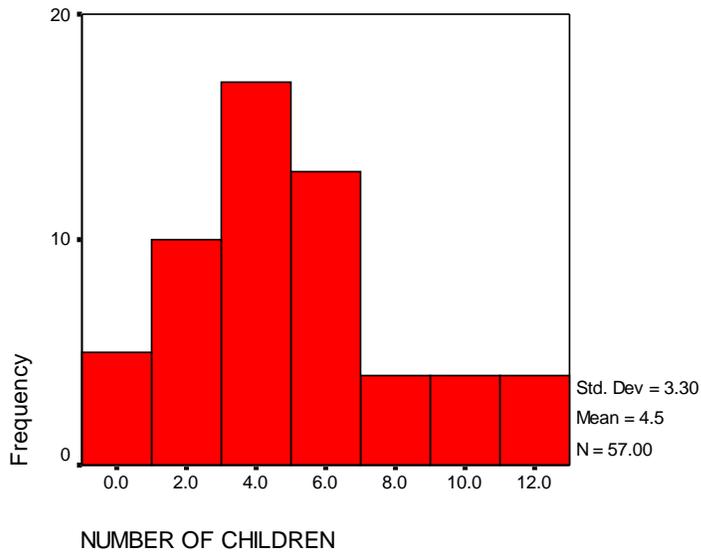


Figure 4-8. Number of children

Table 4-13. Respondents: Do you have relatives in Somalia and/or refugee camps?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	48	84.2
No	9	15.8
Total	57	100.0

Table 4-14. Contact with relatives in Somalia and camps

	Frequency	Percent
No	10	18.2
Rarely	14	25.5
Often	10	18.2
Very frequent	21	38.2
Total	55	100.0

Table 4-15. Remittance decision

	Frequency	Percent
Male household head	2	4.4
Female household head	31	68.9
Both male and female	12	26.7
Total	45	100.0

Table 4-16. Respondent: Did you or a relative visit Somalia since migration to the US?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	12	20.7
No	46	79.3
Total	58	100.0

Table 4-17. Respondent: Have you recommended relatives to migrate to the US?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	30	54.5
No	25	45.5
Total	55	100.0

Table 4-18. Respondent: Have relatives requested migration to the US?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	35	64.8
No	19	35.2
Total	54	100.0

Table 4-19. Respondent: Are you interested in news of Somalia?

	Frequency	Percent
No interest	40	69.0
Yes, rarely	2	3.4
Yes, regularly	12	20.7
Yes, intensely	4	6.9
Total	58	100.0

CHAPTER 5 ADAPTATION

Introduction

Adaptation is identified by Ying and Drbohlav (2004) as the most important stage of the entire immigration process and Bryan Baker of US Homeland Security Department states in the 2007 Trends in Naturalization Rates report “The naturalization rates of legal permanent residents (LPR) may be considered a measure of assimilation and adaptation in the United States.” To perform an analysis of a group’s adaptation characteristics must be identified as a measure of adaptation. This chapter is devoted to illuminate such characteristics.

For refugees conditions during the early stages of the migration process holds the potential to either enhance or detract from a migrant’s ability to achieve repatriation or resettlement. In the case of resettlement, it is often difficult for refugees to navigate complex bureaucratic systems to gain this opportunity, and some groups are better equipped to accomplish this than others. Also while residing in camps refugees need such resources as language classes or job training, and medical or nutritional care that can help them recover from a harrowing exodus out of the homeland and help prepare them for resettlement in a new environment. Experiencing a long sojourn in a refugee camp is physically and emotionally defeating and can further disadvantage a refugee when they are finally resettled.

In the previous chapter characteristics about the study group’s migration history and about the migrants themselves were identified. This chapter builds on these concepts and examines the actual adaptation and resettlement stage in the host country, and in the case of this study group, in the United States. Three key areas of adaptation will be examined. The first section observes three basic factors that influence a migrant’s ability to function within the political and economic configurations of their new environment. These include citizenship, investments in human

capital, and employment. The second part addresses family and community relationships of respondents, as well as their relationship with their religion as expressed in a new and foreign community. The final section of the chapter identifies residential characteristics and spatial preferences of the respondents.

Citizenship, Human Capital Investments, and Employment

Citizenship

Attaining citizenship in a host country is perhaps the most extreme adaptation strategy that an immigrant can initiate. Cortes (2006) found in her study that refugees arriving in the United States were more motivated to gain citizenship, English language proficiency, and invest in educational pursuits, in contrast to economic migrants who may be less motivated because of the dream of returning to their homeland upon attainment of financial goals. In the case of Somali refugees, as has been previously mentioned, the dreams of repatriation are minimal or all together abandoned due to the continued conflict in their homeland. Consequently, becoming a naturalized citizen is considered a desirable outcome to the migration experience.

The process of naturalization requires a minimum residency of 5 years in the United States, and for refugees they must first obtain a permanent resident visa (green card), becoming what is called a Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR). According to the guidelines of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) “A refugee or asylee may apply for permanent resident status in the United States (U.S) one year after being granted asylum or refugee status. If you are a refugee, you are required by law to apply for permanent resident status one year after being granted/entering the U.S. in refugee status.” (www.uscis.gov). Once permanent residency requirements are established a refugee can apply for US citizenship providing they can meet the following USCIS guidelines (www.uscis.gov):

- a period of continuous residence and physical presence in the United States;

- residence in a particular USCIS District prior to filing;
- an ability to read, write, and speak English;
- a knowledge and understanding of U.S. history and government;
- good moral character;
- attachment to the principles of the U.S. Constitution; and,
- favorable disposition toward the United States

Of the 58 respondents 27 have become US citizens. Referring to Table 5-1 the shortest number of years respondents resided in the US before gaining citizenship is 9 years (2 respondents), with the longest being 22 years (1). There is a clustering of respondents receiving their citizenship at 11 and 12 years, making a total of 14 of the 27 attaining citizenship during this length of US residency. For the majority of the study group (24 respondents) that had gained citizenship, it took longer than a decade of residence to achieve this goal while residing in the Atlanta (GA) metropolitan area.

Of the remaining 31 respondents that do not have US citizenship, 29 answered “yes” to the survey question “Will you apply for US citizenship?” (Table 5-2). Only one respondent answered “no”, with one additional respondent not providing an answer.

When questioned about the anticipated year of application for naturalization 15 respondents answered, with the most frequent year identified as 2009 (Table 5-3). Most of the study group expressed the desire to obtain citizenship as quickly as possible, but explained that they would have to progress slowly due to the associated cost and time requirements. The following comments by respondents are descriptive.

Respondent 36 is thirty-three years old, and has resided in the United States for fourteen years. She was preceded here by a sister and brother. She desires to get her citizenship “When I got enough money to pay application fee.” Atlanta is her first and only residence in the US, although she is hoping to move to another city, such as Minneapolis or Seattle, due to the perceived opportunity of better housing and social services offered. She married a Somali man after coming to the United States and they have four children, one of which is a new baby girl. Respondent 36 previously worked, but is now a stay-at-home-mom. (Personal interview, February 20, 2008)

Respondent 37 is a fifty year old married woman who plans to apply for citizenship when she gets enough money. Her husband preceded her to the United States and sponsored her and their five children. She has been in the US 12 years, arriving from Djibouti. She feels that her English speaking ability is limited, although she does desire to improve it by attending ESL classes. Respondent 37 does not drive and currently uses city transit to travel to and from work. (Personal interview, February 22, 2008)

Due to the added costs associated with acquiring citizenship, it seems unlikely that most single female household heads would be able to invest in this expenditure very quickly while trying to establish themselves and their families in a new environment. If a household had two incomes, or a team partnership enabling one to work while the other provides household and childcare, this could likely be accomplished more quickly. This hypothesis was tested with a McNemar test using the two variables, “Are you a citizen?” and “Did your husband accompany you to the US?” The outcome shows that these variables are closely associated with each other (Table 5-4) with highly significant outcome of .049. Because the p value is below the confidence level of 0.05, this indicates a 95 % confidence level or greater to reject the null hypothesis (see Chapter 3, Data Analysis for a more thorough description). This result indicates that if a respondent has citizenship she is more likely to have been accompanied to the United States by her husband and vice versa.

English Language Skills

In the United States to interact within society successfully and independently on a daily basis, a moderate level of English proficiency is vital. This includes reading and writing, as well as speaking. Simple everyday life demands this knowledge for such frequent events as reading signs for navigating through city streets, forms that must be filled to obtain employment, receiving medical care, or to enroll your children in school, and this list goes on and on. Notably even to obtain citizenship one must have “an ability to read, write, and speak English” as stated by the USCIS, as well as obtaining needed licenses such as a driver’s license, an exam must be

taken. To have agency and independence in American society English is a necessity, yet many immigrants lack this ability when they arrive, and some will be unable to achieve even moderate proficiency levels regardless of increasing years of residency.

The respondents were asked to self-identify their English proficiency and almost 45% (26 respondents) said that they “knew very little English”, and of this group only one respondent is under the age of 30 years old (Table 5-5). In the top proficiency group, which identified their English-speaking ability as “perfectly fluent”, 6 of the 9 respondents were 30 years old or younger. All respondents 50 years or older (11 respondents) reported their English ability as either “I know very little English” or “I do not know English at all.” Again it must be noted that respondents identified their English ability, and this was not done by applying any type of English test, it is based only upon their perception.

This decreasing ability to gain language fluency with advancing age in the study group is further validated by testing this hypothesis with a Kruskal Wallis test with highly significant results (Table 5-6). The outcome shows that these variables are closely associated with each other with highly significant outcome of .001. Because the p value is below the confidence level of 0.05, this indicates a 95% confidence level or greater to reject the null hypothesis (see Chapter 3, Data Analysis for more thorough description). Observing the mean rank values, it can be seen that the group with the lowest self evaluated English-speaking abilities have the highest mean rank, and the two highest level self evaluated English-speaking abilities have the lowest mean rank. This identifies through the sum of ranking values assigned to observations of ages, and totaled and averaged for each different group of English-speaking level achievement, that higher mean rank value indicates an older group of respondents, while the lower mean rank values

indicate younger respondents. Therefore it validates that with the advancing age of a respondent, the respondent's English-speaking abilities will likely decrease.

Inquiring about the importance of English fluency and the desire of respondents to invest in this skill, 47 respondents provided this information and 11 omitted answering the question in the questionnaire. Nearly 50% (23 respondents) of a sample either attend ESL classes, or attend intermittently when their schedule permits (Table 5-7). Although 24 respondents indicated that they did not intend to improve their English, most expressed this with regret, wishing their schedule would permit such a "luxury". However, with both fulltime outside employment and home responsibilities their decision to eliminate ESL classes was one of practicality. The following respondent explains this situation.

Respondent 57 is a thirty year old Somali Bantu woman who arrived in the United States in 1997, at the age of nineteen. Although young, she was already married and had children. In spite of the fact that Respondent 57 stays home caring for the family and thereby having a reduced need for English fluency, she does attempt to improve her English language skills. Earlier she attended ESL classes at the Clarkson Baptist Church, but is currently not able to do so because of lack of childcare. She notes that her lack of English-speaking ability prevents her from interacting with the greater Atlanta community, "...but how I can communicate with not knowing English.." At home her family speaks both Somali and a Baraawe dialect (Somali dialect). (Personal interview, April 29, 2008)

Human Capital Investments

Another factor that can enhance an immigrant's ability to interact more effectively with their new environment is by gaining human capital investments relevant to their surroundings. Two important investments, beyond improving their English fluency, can include attending technical schools or college to increase their employment opportunities, as well as increasing one's mobility by learning to drive and getting a driver's license.

Fifty-four respondents replied to the survey question "Do you plan to seek more education in the United States?" and four did not provide an answer. Over half of the study sample, 31 respondents (57.4 %), said that they planned to seek more education in the United States (Table

5-8). Many respondents did not know when or how they could pursue this goal, yet it was their dream. The following two respondents' educational pursuits are representative of this.

Respondent 7 is a twenty-six year old single woman. In Somalia she did not attend school, but in Kenya she eventually was able to gain a high school education. Although her English is very good, she currently attends ESL classes and plans to seek more education. This seems a likely possibility because Respondent 7 appears to be very capable, independent, and proactive. When asked if she feels accepted by Americans in general, she acknowledged that she did not have problems beyond her current work related issue. Asking about future goals, most important was a move to Los Angeles that she was planning for the following year. Her primary motivation for this move was for educational purposes. (Personal interview, February 9, 2008)

Respondent 42 is a nineteen year old full time college student. She was just a two year old baby when her family left Somalia. She gained her citizenship in 2007, after residing in Atlanta for eleven years. She currently lives with her parents and other siblings, with her grandmother preceding her family in the move to the United States. Respondent 42 appears to be a well-rounded young adult, with many interests and a vibrant respondent in both her Somali community and the general population. She speaks fluent English, graduated from high school, and has many friends of all nationalities. (Personal interview, January 20, 2008)

It is expected the younger women of the study group will be more optimistic about gaining more education than the older respondents and this hypothesis is tested with a Mann-Whitney test and validated by a highly significant outcome (Table 5-9). The two variables used in this test are: respondents' age, and if they planned to seek more education in the United States. The results show that the younger a respondent is the more likely that she will engage in seeking higher education in the United States. Although most respondents who were 30 years or older indicated by their comments that they tended to feel disadvantaged about receiving more education due to both their heavy work and household commitments and relatively advanced age, they were very adamant about their children receiving university degrees. One respondent, in spite of the heavy financial burdens of raising 10 children, and relying only upon her husband's income as a taxi driver, still had her two older daughters attending a nearby college. Although she did not explain how their education was funded, she implied that they had received

scholarships by comments made about the daughters being excellent students and the US providing many opportunities for good students.

Mobility is a big component of adaptation, because unless a migrant is able to move about successfully and independently in a new environment, it will be impossible to take advantage of potential opportunities. Although public rapid transit is available in Atlanta, both the metro rail (MARTA) and the bus system, it is a sprawling city and could be more closely compared with an auto culture city such as Los Angeles than a public transit city such as New York City. Consequently it appeared that most respondents spoke of having a car and a job as “freedom”, and obtaining a driver’s license and a car was something they seemed to accomplish in spite of English or monetary limitations.

This high priority for mobility is reflected in the 67.9% (38 respondents) of respondents who indicated they have obtained driver’s licenses, out of a sample size of 56 (Table 5-10). This number seems surprising because a requirement to obtain a license is to pass an exam that is in English. The hypothesis that study group respondents that had English language abilities when entering the United States would more easily obtain licenses was validated when applying a McNemar test. Applying the test to the 54 survey responses that were obtained for these two variables, it can be seen that the outcome is highly significant (Table 5-11). Therefore if a respondent speaks English she will likely have obtained a driver’s license and vice versa. All 11 respondents who entered the US with English language skills have obtained driver’s licenses, however of the 43 respondents that did not have English ability, 26 obtained licenses.

Only 46.5% of respondents describe their English as moderate (with use of a dictionary) or better, yet contrasting this number with the 67.9% that have driver’s licenses indicates that these immigrants are highly motivated to overcome English language barriers to obtain a license.

When inquiring about this phenomenon during interviews there was no clear response, just general comments indicating that when there is a great enough need to acquire something a person will do what they must to obtain it.

Another indication that respondents place a high priority on mobility is through the observation that 38 respondents either have their own personal vehicle, or a family car that is available for their regular use (Table 5-12). Two respondents failed to answer this question in the survey, and 55 provided information. The following questionnaire excerpts describe two respondents' daily mobility.

Respondent 9 is thirty-two years old, and married with five children. Her family was resettled in Atlanta, where her husband now works as full time taxi driver. She has never worked in the US, but manages the household. Also the family has grown and Respondent 9 has had two more children after migrating to the US. To advance her English fluency she devotes time to attend ESL classes. The children attend the nearby mosque for religious classes each week at a cost of \$300 per month. Because Respondent 9 has obtained a driver's license and owns a car she can independently take her children to their various activities. Also she is active in the PTA and says she feels accepted by Americans in general. In this sense she appears very much like other suburban housewives in Atlanta. (Personal interview, February 9, 2008)

Respondent 59 is forty-six years old, married and has seven children, all of whom were resettled together. Her English skills are minimal, and she currently has no plans to attend ESL classes. This decision is likely influenced by the fact that she has not had formal employment outside the home since arriving in the United States, and therefore would not be as motivated to gain English fluency. Generally Respondent 59 appears to be relatively well adjusted to life in America. She gained citizenship in 2005 and also has her driver's license and owns a car. (Personal interview, April, 30, 2008)

Employment

Most group respondents arrive in America with few of the skills needed to participate and advance in the labor market of America. As previously observed, almost 50% of the respondents' English speaking abilities are limited or non-existent, and although a few have completed a high school education level, most have little or no education. A few of the older study group respondents had worked in Somalia as successful businesswomen selling jewelry,

imported products, or artwork, yet these have not been transferable occupations. At the time of this study slightly over half of the study group worked, and of these 30 respondents that indicated they worked outside the home, 29 were employed, and one respondent owned her own business (Table 5-13).

Domestic labor has been a traditional employment opportunity available for uneducated or unskilled immigrant women both historically and presently. And although household labor is a common form of employment for Somali female immigrants in such locations as Egypt or Italy (Al-Sharmani, 2007; Kroner, 2007; Merrill, 2006), it has not been the case for Somali women arriving in America. This most likely is due to the perception of an extreme cultural distance between Christian-influenced American culture and Islamic-influenced Somali culture. Americans perhaps “feel” comfortable with Mexican or Central American household labor because of the familiarity resulting from geographical proximity and also because of Latin cultures are Christian-based. Consequently most employed women in the study group are working at warehouses, bakeries, or meat packing plants, all jobs that require little or no previous training, or English ability and pay low wages. The majority of respondents reported finding their jobs through networking with friends, and occasionally through an employment agency.

Fifty percent (29) of the study group identified their occupational status as “employee”, or working for wages in a formal employment position outside the home (Table 5-14). Twenty respondents (34.4%) reported either being homemakers or on maternity leave. Of the 4 respondents that responded “unemployed”, 2 were young women that had just been terminated from their job due to conflicts with the employer over prayer breaks. A 28 year old woman reported owning a business, and a nineteen year old woman was a student. The following interview excerpt provides insight into the migration experience of the singular business owner.

Respondent 25 is a twenty-eight year old married woman, currently living in Atlanta. She arrived in San Diego, California in 1994 and became a citizen in 2004. She is married to a Somali man and they have three children, one of which is a new baby. Respondent 25 graduated from college with a BA Marketing degree in 2006 and owns a business. She and her husband are homeowners and appear to be well established within both the Atlanta and Somali community. Because she came to the United States at a young age (14) her English is fluent, and she can function well within the mainstream society. (Personal interview, January 27, 2008)

Income and Occupation

Over 70% (22 respondents) of the respondents that are currently employed (30) have jobs in warehouses that handle merchandise for discount stores such as TJ Max, Ross for Less, Marshall's, and Target (Table 5-15). The average monthly income for the study group is \$1,643.33 (Table 5-16 and Figure 5-1). The warehouse workers incomes range between \$1,200 and \$2,500, with most making \$1,300 (10 respondents) and \$1,500 (8). The warehouse workers that reported higher incomes than \$1,500 said they were motivated to work as much overtime as they could enabling them to send more remittance money abroad, notably to their children. The highest paid respondent was a nurse making \$4,000 per month, followed by a bakery worker at \$2,500, and a business owner at \$2,300. Interestingly the other two bakery workers also had a relatively good income, one receiving \$2,000 and the other \$1,700. The social worker reported making \$2,100. The following excerpt describes the respondent identifying herself as a nurse.

Respondent 43 is a twenty-seven year old single professional woman, who lives alone. She arrived in Atlanta twelve years ago, after living in Djibouti (French Somaliland) for five years after leaving Somalia. She gained her citizenship in 2002 and has successfully completed her nursing training. She now enjoys a relatively robust income compared to her compatriots. Respondent 43 appears to lead a rather "typical" lifestyle of a young single professional American.

From the previous analysis of the monthly income earned by respondents, and the fact that most respondents making the highest incomes were those with college degrees, it appears likely that the respondents who have also gained citizenship would be more advantaged to receive higher paying jobs. To test this hypothesis a Mann-Whitney test is used, resulting in a highly

significant outcome (Table 5-17). This indicates that respondents that have become US citizens have a significantly higher monthly income than non-citizen respondents. With further investigation it may be found that gaining citizenship could be influenced by factors such as English-speaking ability, years of residence in the US during which time the immigrant has time to adjust to their new environment, income and family size, or if immigrant was preceded by other relatives. These characteristics all provide advantages for an immigrant and her ability to adapt to the host community.

As previously discussed, 38 of the study group had both driver's licenses and a vehicle that was available for their use. When respondents were asked how they traveled to work each day, out of 30 respondents employed 19 indicated that they drove their own car (Table 5-18). Six carpooled, and 4 used both carpools and public transportation when necessary. Only one of the 30 respondents relied upon public transportation for their regular commute to work.

Employment and Empowerment

Somalia is a patriarchal society and traditionally a woman's role in the family is to be a wife and mother. This concept of family life was expressed over and over during interviews, yet in spite of this many women expressed their desire to work if they currently were not, and happiness at being employed if they were. Inquiring about this desire to work, most respondents responded with comments about being "free", yet perhaps my translator described it best with an enthusiastic "To have a job and a car, that is everything!" It appeared that gaining access to a steady income as well as obtaining a driver's license and a car provided the respondents with an increased sense of empowerment and control over their lives.

When respondents were asked if having steady employment increased their ability to make decisions within the household 36 respondents replied to this question even if not currently employed. Their previous perspective gained while working motivated their reply. Of this

sample all respondents except one answered “yes”, making the response nearly unanimous (Table 5-19). Interestingly this single “no” response came from the business owner, so perhaps she held decision-making power within her family regardless of her contribution to the household income. In support of her response it did appear during the interviewing process that often respondents became somewhat perplexed over this topic of “control” within the household, or the handling of family finances. It seemed that they frequently thought it a pointless question because “obviously” they singularly made many of the major family decisions, as was previously mentioned in Chapter 4 concerning decisions for sending remittances. Yet this overwhelming consensus does indicate that employment does enhance the respondents’ sense of household decision making authority. Following is one respondent’s experience.

Respondent 49 is a forty year old Somali Bantu woman. She has five children and shares childcare with her husband. She is employed and notably she earns more than he does. This income has increased her decision-making power within her household “big time” she says. Remittances that are sent abroad are determined by her discretion, not her husband’s. She did not work outside the home in Somalia, and has no formal education, therefore being formally employed has changed the traditional power relationship within her marriage. Also having been here only four years, Respondent 49 has yet to attain her driver’s license, perhaps the next step of independence in her new country.

Interestingly many of the study group reported that their husbands wanted them to work (Table 5-20). Out of 42 collected responses, 34 respondents answered “yes”, with only 8 replying “no”. Of this 8, several explained that their husbands preferred for them to remain home to handle the household due to the large number of children. A few did explain that their husbands felt a “wife should stay home”. The following interview excerpts are descriptive.

Respondent 18 is a thirty-two year old Somali Bantu woman. She arrived in Atlanta when she was seventeen years old, in November 1993 after living in the Utanga refugee camp in Kenya for two years (she left Mogadishu, Somalia in 1991). She is now married to a Somali Bantu man and they have one child. She is not yet an American citizen, but plans to apply for citizenship “...when I get money..”.

She is not currently working, but was employed in a warehouse for five years until two years ago when her daughter was born. She and her husband own their home, which they

purchased in 2005 for \$120,000. Respondent 18 owns and drives a car. She describes herself as speaking some English, and although she wishes she could gain better language skills, she can't attend ESL classes because "...I don't have a childcare...". This also prevents her from having outside employment, even though her husband would not mind having her additional financial assistance to provide for the household. Respondent 18 also notes that having a paycheck does give increased self-esteem and decision-making power within the household. (Personal interview, January 26, 2008)

Respondent 56 is a forty year old Somali Bantu woman. She left Jilib, Somalia in 1995, residing in the Kakuma Refugee camp until just four years ago. She feels that her resettlement into the United States has improved the quality of her life "big time". The respondent arrived here accompanied by her husband and five children. They currently rent an apartment for \$675 a month, with her husband singularly supporting the family.

When arriving in the United States Respondent 56 did not speak English, but she is currently attending ESL classes at a nearby church. Her ESL classes appear to be her only goal for furthering her education, having received no formal education in Somalia or camp. When asked about future education possibilities she explained, "...but it too hard for me now at this age..." Although it would be helpful to have a second income, her household and childcare responsibilities come first. Inquiring about her husband's desires concerning outside employment for her, she replied, "He don't mind (her working), but I want stay home with my children. He works full-time and I take care of children." (Personal interview April 18, 2008)

Within the households of the study group only 5 respondents said their husbands did not work. This was primarily due to a husband having some sort of disability or elderly. Because respondents have arrived from refugee camps they come with few or no resources and frequently remain economically marginalized even after they have resided in the US for several years (Al-Sharmani, 2007). As a consequence most households must have at least one spouse employed. To test the association of the variables "husband employed" and "wife employed" a McNemar test was used, with results showing a highly significant outcome. Referring to Table 5-21 it can be seen that there were no households in which both the husband or the wife did not work simultaneously (0). This indicates that these two variables are highly associated, therefore within this study group there was not a circumstance in which both a husband or a wife were unemployed at the same time. At least one spouse or both were always employed within a household.

Respondents were asked about self perceptions of their socioeconomic standing both within their Somali community and in the greater Atlanta community. Observing Table 5-22, the contrast in self perception between communities does not appear dramatically different. Fifty-seven respondents identified their self perceptions; however one respondent did answer these questions. Most respondents felt that they fit into the middle class category of both the Somali community (36.8%) and the Atlanta community (42.1%). Only two respondents identified their status as “upper middle class”. One respondent (employed at a bakery) viewed herself as “upper middle” in the greater Atlanta community, while the other (a social worker) identified herself as “upper middle” within the Somali community. The one business owner and nurse (who had the highest income in the study group) identified themselves as “middle class” within both communities. Obvious factors that could likely influence a respondent’s perceptions would be the amount of interaction they had with individual Americans and interaction within the broader Atlanta metropolitan population.

Family and Community Relationships, and Religion

Of the study group 44 women are currently married, 4 are single, 4 are divorced, 1 is separated, and 5 are widowed (Table 5-23). All the married women except one have Somali husbands even if they married after arriving in the United States. Only one woman in the study group, currently separated, has an African American husband. Most of the respondents live with their husband (40), but 5 do not (4 married and one separated), and the 13 respondents that did not answer this question are accounted for by the single, divorced and widowed women (Table 5-24). The wives not living with their husbands are either waiting for them to be resettled from Somalia or refugee camps, or to move to Atlanta from another American city or Canada. The following interviews describe such situations.

Respondent 6 is twenty-five years old and only recently arrived in Atlanta in 2006. She was married in December 2007, but is not yet living with her husband. He is a medical technician and works in Columbus, Ohio. She currently shares an apartment with a roommate and close friend. (Personal interview, February 9, 2008)

Respondent 16, a forty-seven year old woman, arrived in Boston from the Nairobi Refugee camp with her three children in 1999. Her husband is still back in the camp, but in the process of joining his family in America. She currently rents an apartment and lives with her father and three children. (Personal interview, January 26, 2008)

Quality of Life

Of the 58 respondents 55 reported feeling that the quality of their life has improved since immigrating to the United States (Table 5-25). Only 2 responded “no” to this question. One of these respondents is the oldest of the group, 84 years old, and she describes the challenges of growing old and being separated from her remaining children in Somalia and the camps, as well as missing her culture. The other respondent is 47 years old and although she appears to be well adjusted having a relatively good income (\$2,500 per month) and owns a condo, when describing life with her children it becomes apparent that the influences of American culture are producing troubling effects. Also making life difficult for this respondent is the contrast from her earlier life as a diplomat’s wife, and now her husband has become ill and cannot work. The following two interview excerpts express the sentiments of these two respondents.

Respondent 4, an eighty-four year old woman, receives a social security pension in the US, but in Somalia she was a businesswoman. Now however due to her advanced age employment, and particularly in a new country, is not an option. She describes herself as “too old” to pursue English skills and education here in the United States. Also, when asked if the quality of her life had improved since arriving in the US, she responded in Somali “No, I’m eighty-four years old.” Unfortunately most of her twelve children are back in either Somalia or Kenya, so with only a son in Minneapolis and a daughter in Atlanta, it is difficult. All of her daughter’s children are also still back in the Kakuma camp, so even the joys of being a grandmother are denied her at this time. It is obvious that this gives her great sadness. (Personal interview, February 8, 2008)

Respondent 14 is a forty-seven year old married woman who lives with nine of her ten children, and her husband. She and her family arrived in Atlanta in 2000 after a long and arduous journey out of Jijiga, Ogadeen region of western Somalia in 1990. They were in several locations including Ethiopia, Iran, and Senegal, until coming to the US and

applying for asylee status. She appears to be quite well-adjusted to life in America. Her English is excellent, which she says she learned to speak while living in Iran. Her husband, although currently sick and not able to work, was previously an ambassador for the Somalia government. Due to these circumstances Respondent 14 has much urban life experience living in modern large cities. Respondent 14 describes having problems with her children since coming to the US. Her ten children are all in school, ranging from elementary to college. She says, "...they change when they came in the USA...have a hard time (with) my children ...". She felt that in Somalia her relationship with her children was "...way better, but when they got here they think they can do any thing they wish to.." (Personal interview, January 28, 2008)

Several respondents expressed happiness with their lives here in the US, describing their feelings of security and opportunities, despite the challenges of language and lack of skills for employment. Two respondents describe their feelings about the quality of their lives in America in the following statements.

Respondent 15 is a fifty year old woman who arrived in the US with her husband from the Nairobi Refugee camp in 1998. She is originally from Ceerigaabo, Sanaag in Somaliland (northern Somalia). Her two children that are currently twenty-five and twenty-three years old preceded her to the US. Respondent 27 came to Atlanta as her first and only destination in America and says, "I love Atlanta!" She currently resides in an apartment with her husband and brother-in-law. Both of her children have married and now she has become a grandmother, because of which she describes her life as "improved".

In Somalia Respondent 15 was a business woman, but in Atlanta she has worked in a warehouse for the past eight years. She describes herself as not knowing English at all, and has no time to devote to ESL classes with her current schedule of "working and housemaking". She does however enjoy the freedom of driving and has a license and a car. She also describes herself as having knowledge of urban lifestyles before arriving in the US. (Personal interview, January 27, 2008)

Respondent 17 is a forty-three year old married woman, who arrived in Atlanta in 2001 accompanied by her husband and children. She came from the Utanga Benadir refugee camp in Kenya, and was most likely resettled under the special Benadir resettlement to the US in 1996. She became a citizen in 2001 and speaks English with some ability as well as owns and drives a car. She attained a high school education before arriving in the US and it was during these years that she learned to speak English. Respondent 17 describes the quality of her life as having improved "...big time" since arriving in the US. (Personal interview, January 28, 2008)

As can be seen by Respondent 14's comment about the problems with her children, life in a new environment can be difficult because of the complicating effects of acculturation. Many

of the respondents' children were taken out of Somalia at a very early age, born in refugee camps or in the United States, and consequently they have little or no memory of Somalia. Due to their youth and adaptability they rapidly adjust and assimilate into the mainstream society. They learn English quickly after being enrolled in public schools, and through this daily exposure to American students become influenced by the values of the mainstream culture. For example, the translator's children spoke perfect English with a strong southern drawl typical of Atlanta natives, and their speech pattern and accent sounded more closely related to third or fourth generation Southerners not first generation Americans, children of immigrants.

The result of this disparity of cultural influences between generations is that it conflicts with the traditional cultural norms of Somali culture, which is Islamic-based and has a dramatically different family structure, creating a generation gap (Hautaniemi, 2007). Somali parents are often faced with the challenge of trying to maintain an authoritative position with their children, while having to "rely" upon their children's more well-developed language and cultural competence. Respondents described the need to have children accompany them to their (respondents) own doctor's appointment so that the child could provide translation, creating role reversal situations. Many mothers explained that their children often "tricked" them about school schedules or rules, knowing the parent cannot find out the true facts due to language and cultural barriers. This develops into problems making it difficult for parents to maintain authority and their children's respect for them as the head of the household.

Forty-five respondents provided a response when asked if they could communicate well with their children here in the United States. Only 13 respondents did not answer and this is primarily due to the question not being relevant to their situation, such as being single or perhaps not living with their children. Of the responses given, 33 respondents reported feeling secure

with their communication with their children, however 9 said that they did not, and 3 noted they felt that in many ways they could communicate, but there were existing cultural gaps with their children (Table 5-26). These descriptions by respondents are illustrative.

Respondent 34 is a forty-two year old married woman, with six children that arrived in Atlanta in 2000. Although she expressed the feeling that her overall quality of her life improved since arriving in the US, cultural challenges do present themselves. She described generally positive attitudes by Americans towards the Somali community in both the workplace and broader community, yet when asked about feeling any hostility from Americans she felt that “..no....but sometimes may happen...”. Also she describes her children as feeling accepted at school, but that she has some issues with the culture gap that has occurred due their exposure to American culture. Respondent 34 seemed to feel that her communication and general authority with her children has decreased in the United States. She commented, “In the USA they tell me what to do... much better back in Somalia..” The effect of children in the household having much exposure to American culture is reflected in language as well. According to her, Somali is the primary language spoken at home, however she notes “...but the children they speak English at home and anywhere..”. She describes her English speaking ability as “very good”, yet apparently felt the encroachment of American culture in her home via the language comfort and familiarity of her children with English. She also experienced having her son go to jail because of a domestic conflict. He wanted to use the respondent’s car to ‘hang out’ with friends, yet when she refused to allow this, he began to damage the car. Respondent 34 called the police and had her own son arrested. Although he is out now, the cultural impacts of her new environment are vivid. (Personal interview, March 16, 2008)

Respondent 37 is a fifty year old married woman who has five children. She feels cultural barriers with the American mainstream population, identifying possible hostilities as a result of language, religious practices (different daily attire), and general cultural differences. Although she related that her children feel accepted at school, she stated that she cannot communicate and get along as well with her children due their exposure to the American culture. Her relationship with them was better in Somalia. (Personal interview, February 22, 2008)

Respondent 44 is fifty years old, married, and has seven children. She feels the culture gap with her children that are growing up attending American schools. She said through a translator that they felt unaccepted, “...but when they learn English they feel accepted...” She commented that she had problems communicating with her children here in the United States and that it was easier when back home in Somalia. This is perhaps reflected by problems that she faced with one son that was jailed briefly due to drug charges. The Somali community collectively came together and helped her bail him out. She seems to feel somewhat back on track since now one of her sons just graduated from high school. (Personal interview, February 18, 2008)

Respondent 49 is forty years old, married, and arrived in Atlanta in November 2004 with her husband and five children. She seems to be very thankful to be in the US, but there are

sacrifices. She notes that at times she feels unwelcome, "...some place(s) and some others don't want see us (Somalis)..." Also her children did not feel accepted when first attending school, "Not when they were new to the country, but when they learn English (everything was then) ok.", and now "They acting like American kids." At home although Somali is primarily spoken, "...but my children they started speaking English among them, when they at home." (Personal interview, April 27, 2008)

Respondent 47 is a forty-seven year old married Somali Bantu woman, who arrived in Atlanta eleven years ago with her husband and six children. She has experienced problems with two of her children, "I have two kids who's out of order...", and felt that this was a culture gap resulting from her children being associated with mainstream American society. (Personal interview, February 28, 2008)

Respondent 57 is a thirty year old Somali Bantu woman who arrived in the United States in 1997, at the age of nineteen. Although young at the time, she was already married and had children (she currently has five children). Although she speaks well about her move to the US, she has had difficulties with her children's adjustment. This has cast a shadow on her family's life here, and appears to have created a nostalgic memory of previous times in reference to the children and their behavior. She describes her children as "They became out of order very bad...one of my daughter is out of order." In reflection to times back in Somalia or the refugee camp in Kenya she says her relationship and communication went "very well" with them. Now, however, with her children attending American schools, the resulting influences and effects of conflicting cultural values is creating a divide in the family. The respondent's daughter recently had a baby and, although early marriage and childbearing is common among Somali culture, it seemed as though in this case it was perhaps out of wedlock. This was not confirmed, but judging by her strained comments, it appeared that strong cultural norms had been broken in some manner regarding the daughter. She stated, "If I get enough money I will go home because my family safety...my children out of order.", indicating a common problem that immigrant parents face as their children, exposed to a new culture, begin rejecting the traditional values and practices of their parents.

Often the problems respondents faced with their children involved the difficulties of children not feeling accepted at school. These problems most frequently concerned some aspect of their religious practice such as wearing a scarf, or taking time for prayers during school hours. Of the 46 respondents that provided an answer to this survey question, the majority, 37 respondents, said that their children felt accepted, however 5 responded that their children did not feel accepted, and 4 mothers said their children had both good and bad experiences with their mainstream peer group (Table 5-27). Most respondents indicated that as their children became

knowledgeable of English and American culture they were accepted by their American peer group. The following respondent describes one circumstance.

Respondent 5 is a married thirty-nine year old woman, with eight children. When asked about her children's adjustment to America she responded that her eleven year old experienced problems at middle school. During Ramadan last year other students asked her why she was fasting, and they also questioned the daughter's desire to have prayer time during school hours. This problem seemed to be a passing one as it was referred to only in past tense. (Personal interview, February 9, 2008)

The quality of life for Somali immigrants can be impacted by the feelings of acceptance or lack of it by the host community. Al-Sharmani (2007) notes that many Somali migrants eventually leave Western countries and relocate in places such as Cairo, Egypt, after becoming naturalized citizens because of racial prejudices and marginalization they experience there. Egypt is an Islamic country, and although Somalis are still identified unfavorably as black, the cultural distance is not so great as in the Western Christian oriented societies (Al-Sharmani, 2007).

When asked about their feelings of acceptance or closeness with the mainstream population of the Atlanta metropolitan area the majority, 55 respondents answered, and three omitted the question. Of this sample 74.1% (43 respondents) responded that they felt accepted by Americans, 7 indicated that they did not, and 5 had mixed feelings (Table 5-28). Frequently the feelings of lack of acceptance were cited as due to religious and culture differences and language barriers.

When asked if they had close friends in Atlanta that were not Somali, many gave a positive response. Due to the multitude of experiences of the study group, the number of responses for each ethnicity varied. Some respondents had much exposure and experience with many ethnic groups and others had little or no experience. Notably the respondents that held outside employment had the most exposure and consequently most of these "outside" friends were made

in the workplace environment. Of the study group 22 respondents identified that they only had Somali friends. Noting Table 5-29, when asked to rank their feelings of closeness (“not close”, “comfortable”, and “very close”) to various ethnicities it can be observed that the two highest rated groups for “very close” were African Americans (29 respondents) and second is White Americans (27). The highest responses by the sample were in the categories of “comfortable” and “very close”, very few respondents seemed to feel totally ill at ease with other ethnic groups. The following respondents are indicative of this observation.

Respondent 8 is a thirty year old married Somali Bantu woman. She appeared to feel quite comfortable with white Americans, and it quickly became apparent why this was so. When the family had first arrived they became friends with a white neighbor woman that had some type of contacts within the city government. This neighbor lady managed to arrange for the husband to be hired as a city sanitation worker, gaining a significant advantage earning decent wages and benefits. Respondent 8 and her husband still visit this lady. (Personal interview, February 9, 2008)

Respondent 23 is a forty-seven year old married woman. She is very social, typical of Somali culture, speaking on the phone frequently, visiting often with her friends and neighbors. She goes to weddings, funerals, and other social events, which are important for her cultural nourishment. She feels that her community has fairly good relations with the American mainstream community, but that “sometimes police made a mistake”. She noted her ‘outside’ friends as being African Americans, and this is likely due to the closeness of residence with African Americans, and also the likelihood of working with other groups that have low-wage work. (Personal interview, February 1, 2008)

Respondent 45 is a twenty-seven year old woman who gained her citizenship in 2003. She appears to be well adjusted with other ethnicities residing in the Atlanta metropolitan region and does not express any disturbance as occurring with them. She reports having a variety of friends, and only mentioned that occasionally Americans can have a somewhat negative reaction to her religious practices, “...some places not everywhere...” (Personal interview, March, 16, 2008)

Religion

The study group unanimously identified themselves as Islamic, and this is to be expected as the culture is described as being homogeneous in sharing both the same religion and language regardless of being mainstream Somali or a sub-ethnic group, such as the Somali Bantu (Cassanelli, 1982; Helander, 1999). However, as Besteman (1996a) and McGown (2007) point

out, this is an oversimplification of Somali society and many differences do exist, yet this common adherence to Islam is pervasive. Therefore more relevant to the discussion of religious adherence in the case of Somali migrants is identifying the degree of faith that respondents feel, how this is acted out in their daily lives in America, and if their degree of faith has changed since their migration out of Somalia.

Respondents were asked to rank their degree of faith, and in doing so they made descriptive comments about their religious practice. Several identifying themselves as having “weak faith” (8 respondents), explained that this was because they do not do their five daily prayer requirements with absolute devotion, often times due to work conditions. Other respondents explained their “weak faith” was because they do not strictly adhere to Islamic dress codes for covering, wearing only moderate head covering, but not long skirts or shawls (Table 5-30). Women responding adamantly that they have “strong faith” (24 respondents) described this primarily as never skipping prayer times and adhering strictly to Islamic dress codes. The overwhelming majority of respondents 81.1% (47) identified their degree of faith as either “have faith” or “strong faith”.

According to Inglehart and Welzel’s (2005: 44) modernization theory, post industrialization brings increasing individual freedom and offers opportunities for self-actualization. These postindustrial societies are based on knowledge and socioeconomic development brings about rising levels of existential security, essentially “freeing” the individual from the normal worries for sheer everyday survival. With this comes the space to think for oneself and re-evaluate traditional values and behaviors. In the case of religion, postindustrial societies have seen a rise of secularism, yet it does not indicate human spirituality is dying, but

rather it is being reinvented in a more autonomous fashion and less is expressed in traditional ways.

According to this theory, just as the increase of security can cause humans to release their traditional grip on religious traditions and behaviors, a reverse in economic prosperity can reverse human behavior. In the case of a war or other tragedy, when life demands an everyday struggle for existence, humans will revert to their former behavior in an attempt to provide themselves with the hope necessary to survive. It seems that Somali refugees are an example of this phenomenon, before the war many respondents described Somali society as Islamic, but not under strict adherence to Islamic dress codes and other precepts. However, after the war began and people lost their security and hope for safety and peace, increasing reliance upon religious faith became a tool to keep hope alive. This is reflected in respondents' description of their religious faith as providing them with emotional support needed to persevere through the trials and tribulations of their migration journey. Strong devotion to respondents' religion was apparent because frequently while doing an interview a small break was taken to observe prayer time. The deep commitment that respondents had for their religious beliefs was apparent from these daily actions and their religious attire.

This can be observed from 57 respondents' self perception of the degree of their religious faith (Table 5-31). One respondent failed to answer this question. The overwhelming majority, 78.9% (45 respondents) of the sample described their faith as "very important", and another 8 respondents said their faith was "quite important". Therefore a total of 53 respondents identified religious faith is a vital part of their life.

This strong devotion to Islam is also reflected in some respondents' return to a more conservative practice of Islam, expressed in such behaviors as wearing more covering and

observing prayer times faithfully. Of this same sample size, 57 with one respondent not providing a response, 54 respondents (94.7%) said they currently wear a head scarf and long clothing (Table 5-32). When asked if there had been a change to this since arriving in refugee camps or the United States (not due to simply growing older and this being a requirement for teenage girls), 17 replied “yes” (Table 5-33). The following comments by respondents illuminate this change.

Respondent 29, a thirty-eight year old woman, describes her religious commitment as “weak”, yet she started covering and wearing long clothing after arriving here in the US. She did not wear this in Somalia. She also notes that sometimes she doesn’t get time to pray. However, regardless of her “lack” of religious activities she has her children enrolled in religious classes. (Personal interview, January 27, 2008)

Respondent 34 is forty-two years old and arrived in the US in 2000. She describes her commitment to Islam as increasing since the war occurred in Somalia, “I got better because the war change me a lot seeing dying people (in) front of me.” As a result she practices stricter adherence to Islamic principles of clothing (more covering than previously) and prayer. She feels that Americans don’t entirely accept her (most likely because of her visibility resulting from her scarf and long clothing), and although this is apparently not from outright hostility, “but they don’t show us but we knew...” She expressed her commitment to her religion in spite of the perceived disapproval from the American mainstream, saying “No matter what we do it (practice).” (Personal interview, March 16, 2008).

Respondent 37, a fifty year old woman, stated that her religious practice is quite important to her in providing emotional support, yet she describes her religious commitment as “weak”. She said she does not attend religious services. (Personal interview, February 22, 2008).

Respondent 40, a twenty-six year old divorcee, describes her relationship towards her religion as “weak”, and she does not conform to the practice of covering. However, she does note that her religion is “quite important” in providing her with emotional support. (Personal interview, February 19, 2008)

Respondent 53, a thirty year old, notes that her religious practice is “very important” and that she has become more observant of Islamic practices here in America. Although in Somalia and Kenya she wore Islamic attire, currently she started wearing more covering. (Personal interview, April 18, 2008)

Most of the respondents, of a sample size of 55 respondents providing information, lived very close to a mosque and many made frequent visits (Table 5-34). When asked to identify the

location of the mosque 36 respondents (65.5%) said the mosque they attend was in the “immediate neighborhood”, which was described to them as being within a 5 minute drive or within a 5 mile distance. 18 respondents identified their mosque as being “nearby”, and this was described as within a 10 to 15 minute drive or a 10 or 15 mile distance. Only one respondent described their mosque as being “distant”, or further than 15 miles or a 15 minute drive.

When asked about attending the mosque for religious services or activities it was difficult to determine the response of respondents. Many seemed to view even dropping their children off for religious classes as personally “attending” mosque, and they would therefore say they went to the mosque every week. However, other respondents reported their mosque attendance as once or twice a year for specific religious ceremonies, yet they did not “count” other events that they attended mosque for. As a consequence it was impossible to determine the number of visits respondents made to the mosque. It seemed that many religious events occurred outside the formal religious structure. The constant reference to “weddings” which seemed to have both strong religious and social connotations, made it appear that much of Somali culture is expressed through religious events and these traditional activities have the components of Somali culture intertwined intimately with their Muslim faith.

Also important, because Islam is not a religion that most mainstream Americans have much familiarity with and due to the 9/11 Twin Towers attack with the resultant blame on Islamic fundamentalists and heightened sense of caution by Americans towards all Muslims, many Somali immigrants feel a prejudice from Americans simply because they are Muslims. A study of post traumatic stress victims in Portland, Oregon many of whom were Somali, found that after the 9/11 attacks many of the study group experienced elevated anxiety levels due to this association by the American public (Kinzie et al., 2002). As a consequence, expressions of

religious practice by Somali women such as wearing a head scarf and long clothing, immediately identifies them as Islamic. This sets them apart from mainstream America and become identified as outsiders, or “others”.

Because of this visibility, they can easily become the targets of hostility by the American community or their employers. When respondents were asked if they had experienced hostility from the mainstream American population or their employers, slightly over half, 53.6% (30 respondents), said “no”, 18 respondents (32.1%) reported that they had experienced hostility, and 8 respondents described experiencing some “mild” hostility or discomfort with the respondent, but no outright verbal or physical actions of hostility (Table 5-35). Two respondents did not reply to this question. Some respondents expressed their sentiments about this topic in the following interviews.

Respondent 15, a fifty year old married woman, has experienced some adjustment and integration problems with Americans at her job. She says “...but (they) gave us hard time when I start working, but fought back (for) my rights, ...now they do... After fighting they gave me my rights.” She also noted that her children had problems when initially starting school in Atlanta, “When they start school American kids were mean to them, but now they okay.” She felt that these problems came from language barriers, differences of attire, religious practices, and just general cultural differences. (Personal interview, January 27, 2008)

Respondent 19, a forty-seven year old widow, is currently working at Hertz Car Rental and has been there now for two years, after finding the job through a friend. In her previous employment she experienced problems saying, “I lost my job because lack of English and being Muslim.” She described her problems with her employer as stemming from language barriers, differences of attire and religious practices. Respondent 19 also mentioned hostilities from mainstream Americans saying, “...some Americans are sick and they don’t like us at all...” (Personal interview, January 26, 2008)

Because of the visibility of special religious attire, Somali women frequently have problems with employment. The problems come from both appearance and religious practices. Employers are naturally concerned with how their employees appear to the public, and there are often dress codes for the workplace. Islamic attire is often a problem for employers, either if the

worker is dealing directly with customers, or if in the back offices or warehouses. This appears to stem from primarily two factors; first an employer will naturally want workers to have a normal and appealing appearance to attract clientele, and second safety standards may be violated by having long flowing skirts or scarves that could become entangled in machinery resulting in injuries and law suits. This creates a conflict because Muslim women may feel compelled to wear their attire with the desire to follow their religious precepts, and that it violates their rights not to be able to do so. This problem in the workplace has the potential to further marginalize Somali women.

Respondents were asked if they felt that their current or previous employers and mainstream Americans accepted their attire (Tables 5-36 and 5-37). Out of 40 responses, 35 respondents said they felt accepted by their employer and of the remaining 5 respondents, 2 women could not wear loose clothing due to safety hazards. Of 56 responses to “Do Americans accept your attire?”, 45 (80.4%) respondents said Americans did accept their attire, 7 respondents experienced negative reactions from Americans, and 4 women had uncomfortable experiences with the public staring and watching them, but not outright hostility.

Two of the respondents had lost their jobs just two weeks before their interviews and this was due to their employer not allowing break time for them to do prayers. Many times respondents expressed this problem of being allowed a break for prayer at their workplace. The following respondents describe their experiences with both employment problems and with the community.

Respondent 6 is twenty-five years old and only recently arrived in Atlanta in 2006. Unfortunately, just a couple of weeks before the interview she had lost her relatively good job at the warehouse. She explained that this was due to her employer’s unwillingness to allow her time for a prayer break during her shift. This violates her religious beliefs and consequently she is now unemployed. Asked about her religious practice, Respondent 6 explained that since arriving in the US she has made some changes regarding her dress

habits. Today she does not wear as much covering as previously, moderating her head scarf and reducing the length and amount of clothing she wears. For safety reasons at her previous place of employment, she wore very little head covering. She noted that although she had problems with prayer time leading to dismissal from her job, she did not feel any issues regarding her dress except from the safety perspective. (Personal interview, February 9, 2008)

Respondent 14 is forty-seven years old and works full-time at a bakery, where she has been employed for the past five years. She sometimes works up to sixty hours a week. She works with Americans which she describes as "...they are wonderful people..." She said that her employer and fellow employees accept her, although she is "...force to wear pants..." She went to the eighth grade in Somalia, and although she has interest in attaining more education she cannot do so now due to the responsibilities of earning a living. She currently makes about \$2,500 a month. (Personal interview, January 28, 2008)

Residential Characteristics and Preferences

Respondents resided primarily in four cities in the Atlanta metropolitan region (Table 5-38), Clarkston (27 respondents), Decatur (8), Scottsdale (8), Stone Mountain (13), and Tucker (2). These cities are all located to the northeast of downtown Atlanta along the Interstate 85 and 285 freeways and are adjacent to each other (Figure 5-2). Two areas have the largest number of respondents in residence, Clarkston and Stone Mountain. Notably Clarkston has by far the largest number with 46.6% of the study group residing there, and of this group 7 respondents own homes and 20 are renters (Table 5-39). These respondents primarily live in either apartments or condos, while many of the respondents living in Stone Mountain reside in single family homes on large wooded lots. Respondents residing in Stone Mountain are almost equally home owners (6) and renters (7).

Household Size

Many of the respondents' households include not only the immediate family, parents and children, but extended family members as well and this is typical of Somali households in general (Hautaniemi, 2007). Frequently an aging parent of one of the household heads will reside with the family, and also common is to have a more distant relative such as an aunt,

cousin, or nephew in residence. Somali households appear to have a large degree of flexibility to them, accommodating various relatives as the needs arise (Hautaniemi, 2007).

The mean household size of the study group is 5.9 people, with the largest household consisting of 12 people, and the smallest with only one person (Figure 5-3). The most common household size in the study group has 5 family members, with 9 respondents' families that are this size. As described in Chapter 4, the average number of children for the study group is 4.47 (Chapter 4, Table 4-13) and the most frequently reported number is 3 children.

Approximately 42 respondents lived with only their husbands and children or just children. It was difficult to understand the responses in some cases and this is most likely due to the flexible nature of Somali households, with various relatives coming and going for a few months at a time. It appeared to be a common practice for an aging or widowed parent to move between children's household, either in the same city or a different city. Following are two respondents that provide an example of such living arrangements

Respondent 1 is fifty-six years old and was just widowed last year. She had previously resided with her husband, but since his death has moved in with her son's family. Overall Respondent 1 appeared to be well adjusted in her son's household, involving herself with the child care and household duties on her days off. She maintains a very busy work schedule and appeared to be in good health despite a recent car accident. It seems that she spends much of her time off from a Marshall's warehouse job playing with her grandchildren. (Personal interview, January 19, 2008)

Respondent 4 is an eighty-four year old widow. When first arriving in the United States she lived with her son in Minneapolis, however she now lives her daughter in Atlanta. Through the translator it was learned that she is welcome in either household. (Personal interview, February 8, 2008)

Some respondents in the study group had much trouble finding a house or apartment to rent due to the large number of children they had. Because of this difficulty they were forced to purchase a home. The following respondent provides insight into this problem.

Respondent 2 is thirty-nine years old and lives with her husband, a taxi driver, and ten children. She does not work outside the home due to the large number of children

requiring her care. She and her husband were forced to purchase a home because of problems trying to rent with so many children and renters begin unwilling to accommodate them. They were able to do this in 2003, paying \$147,000 for a home in Clarkston. (Personal interview, February 19, 2008)

When visiting the homes of respondents, although often there would be several children in the household giving all space a premium value, the living rooms were empty except for a sofa, coffee table, and perhaps a chair or television set. This area, in every home or apartment, appeared very neat and clean having no clutter. When occasionally going into other areas of the residences beyond the front room, although the furniture and interior often had a worn look everything appeared orderly and clean. With a sometimes small space that seemingly could not accommodate 7, 8, or 12 people, households appeared to be extremely well managed to handle these large families.

When the topic of household management was mentioned frequently respondents described their challenge with this in America. Respondents described their confusion when first confronted with daily life in the US because many daily household chores such as cooking or cleaning, which would traditionally be done by a servant in Somalia, were now their jobs to handle alone. With such large families household help is vital even if not working outside the home. Respondents described life in Somalia as always including household help, even if a family was very poor. The distinction of wealth between households would be noted by the number of servants employed. Many respondents expressed their feelings that this made life very tough plus the added burden of formal employment as well. One strategy that was employed to handle this situation was to have a niece or much younger and unmarried sister reside with the family to provide assistance. However, this was difficult to accomplish in the United States because many respondents did not have close relatives. Most respondents did

comment however that the conveniences of such household items as washing machines and dish washers were a luxury that they truly enjoyed.

Home Ownership

The study group consists of 16 women that own homes or condos, but the majority, 72.4% (42 respondents) are renters (Table 5-40). Forty-two respondents were renting at the time of the study, and to calculate the average rent paid by this group, one respondent was removed from the analysis. This respondent paid only \$50, so was considered an outlier and removed. The average rent paid by the remaining 41 renters was \$650 per month, with a range from \$300 to \$1,000, with the mode being \$700 (Table 5-41)

The purchase price of properties owned by the 16 homeowners falls into basically three cost ranges: \$17,000 to \$30,000, \$90,000 to \$120,000, and the highest range \$147,000 to \$198,000 (Table 5-42). The largest group of homeowners fell into the lowest house price range, with 8 respondents. Of this group 7 respondents purchased condos located in Clarkston (zip code 30021), and one purchased a property in Decatur (zip code 30030).

The most popular and affordable condominium complex in Clarkston had previously been a very marginal property due to high numbers of drug dealers either in residence or simply hanging out on the property. Providing some background about the development of this Somali enclave one community leader, explained that as the first Somali families moved into the complex they were not welcomed by the African American residents that were the primary occupants of the condos. With time however it has turned into a Somali enclave, with few other residents of different nationalities. Interestingly the community leader also pointed out that the complex is somewhat divided, one area being heavily composed of mainstream Somalis, and another having primarily Somali Bantu families in residence. Within this complex many Somali families are renters as well.

Stone Mountain (zip code 30083) had the second highest number of homeowners, 6 respondents, and of these, 4 respondents had homes purchased in the highest price range. The other 2 respondents' home price fell into the middle category.

The range of years in which homes were purchased was from 1994 to 2005, with the mean year value being 2001.44, and the most frequent year being 2003 with 6 homes purchased by respondents. It would be expected that as the length of residence by respondents increased, their ability to purchase a home would increase. Observing Table 5-43 after residing in the United States for at least 8 years respondents began to purchase homes.

Settlement History

Somali refugees have little ability to select either their city or neighborhood at the time of their initial resettlement in the US, as this is determined by resettlement agencies such as the Catholic Charities, or World Relief. Locations selected by these agencies are evaluated by the availability of jobs that do not require special labor skills or English proficiency, and low-cost housing. To gain insights to the location of Somali residents in the US a simple map was generated using 2000 US Census data and Somali Ancestry recorded to identify specific cities (Figure 5-4).

Franklin Goza (2007) provides an in depth analysis of the location of Somali communities in the United States also using 2000 US Census data and identifying the cities with the highest numbers of "Born in Somalia", "Somali Ancestry", and "Somali Speaker" residents. He found that Minneapolis/St. Paul (MN) ranked first, followed by Atlanta (GA), and Columbus (OH) was third. Both Seattle (WA), and Washington D.C. had significant numbers as well. Goza notes, however, due to secondary and tertiary migration it is likely that these numbers are quite different today. The result of both initial settlement and second or third step migration is the development of thriving ethnic enclaves in many American cities.

As previously discussed Somali refugees began arriving in the US at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s. Many of these migrants have become naturalized citizens and have begun the process of family reunification. Once this process is established growth within a community gains an additional momentum beyond the refugee resettlement process. Using 2000 US Census data, Goza (2007) identified the states that had the highest number of Somali residents. He found that Minnesota had the highest population of both “Born in Somalia” (10,024 persons) and “Somali Ancestry” (2,058), with Georgia second recording respectively 3,668 and 820 persons. The states following closely in number with Georgia are Ohio and Washington, and immediately ranked below are California and Virginia.

Using data from the questionnaire it can be seen that the likelihood for this migration stream to continue is high. By running a McNemar test on two variables, “Do you have citizenship?” and “Do you have relatives in Somalia?” the outcome shows that not having citizenship and having relatives in Somalia are highly associated with each other, with a highly significant outcome (Table 5-44). This result suggests that if a respondent does not have citizenship she is more likely to have relatives in Somalia and vice versa. Therefore, it seems likely that as these migrants become naturalized citizens they will begin sponsoring close relatives, initiating the family reunification process (Goza, 2007). Because respondents report having relatives this will likely contribute to a continuing stream of Somali immigrants into the US as they gain naturalized status.

In the case of Somali refugees second step migration appears to be primarily motivated by the perception of receiving better social benefits or economic opportunities, as well as the desire to relocate near relatives. Atlanta has the reputation among the Somali community to be a challenging city for refugees because of the competition for federal and state resources from

other minority groups, including other resettled refugee groups and low-income Americans (Personal Interview with Ali Omar, August 14, 2007). The following respondent describes her feelings about life in Atlanta.

Respondent 49 is forty years old, married, arriving in Atlanta in November 2004 with her husband and five children. They arrived from the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya as part of a large resettlement program for Somali Bantu refugees. The family escaped the fighting in Somalia in 1994 from the southern city of Jamaame. She noted that she learned some English in the camp, but gained most of her urban knowledge after her arrival in Atlanta. She feels life has improved since arriving in the United States, but still Atlanta is a tough city for refugees, due to the lack of social services, and she would prefer to try living in a different location such as Seattle (WA) or Portland (OR). Both are cities with growing large Somali communities. The respondent feels that "...housing here (Atlanta), rent very high and life getting really tough..." When asked about recommending migration to the US as an option for her relatives back home she acknowledges that "...but it may never happen because of money, it will cost me a lot of money (to assist her relatives)...." (Personal interview, April 27, 2008)

Much media attention has been given to one such second-step migration of at least 1,000 Somalis that relocated from Atlanta to Lewiston, Maine. According to Franklin Goza (2007) before 2000 no Somalis were living in this small northern town; however once it became known to Somalis living in Atlanta that excellent social services were available a second-step migration flow began. Because of the lack of services in Atlanta, Somali refugees were eager to move to a more hospitable city. Lewiston's services were impacted with the sudden and growing demand as refugees moved in, and the community was ill prepared to accommodate such a culturally distant immigrant group. This case in point reveals that understanding refugee circumstances during the resettlement process is vital to avoid dramatic social and financial impacts on communities that are not prepared to handle these incoming groups that have distinct and special needs.

In the study sample only seven respondents had relocated to Atlanta from another city. Three came from the Minneapolis/St. Paul (MN) area, one each from Boston (MA), San Diego (CA), St. Louis (MO), and Louisville, Kentucky.

Spatial Preferences

Anticipating that respondents will eventually make second or third moves in the US they were questioned about their preferences of American cities in the order of first, second, and third favorite choices (see Table 5.45 and Figure 5.5). Many respondents did not have opinions on this topic, yet many did and either planned to move or dreamed of moving in the future. Atlanta was identified as the first favorite city by 38 respondents, followed by Minneapolis/St. Paul (3 respondents) and Seattle (2 respondents). Other cities identified as a first choice by one person only were: Arlington (VA), Denver (CO), Lewiston (ME), Miami (FL), and Phoenix (AZ), San Diego (CA).

The second most popular cities were Columbus (OH) and Seattle (WA), both with 6 positive responses. Closely following these two cities was Minneapolis/St. Paul (5 respondents), Lewiston (ME) (4), San Diego (CA) (3), Atlanta (GA) (2), and Los Angeles (2). The following cities having only one response were identified as Kansas City (MO), Phoenix (AZ), New York City (NY), San Francisco (CA), and Washington D.C.

Seattle (WA) was the highest ranking third favorite city for respondents, with 6 responses. Closely following was Columbus (OH) with 4 responses, San Diego (CA) with 3, and Arlington (VA), Atlanta (GA), Minneapolis/St. Paul (MN), and Phoenix (AZ) all having 2 responses. The following cities were each named by 1 respondent: Denver (CO), Lewiston (ME), Louisville (KY), Manchester (NH), New York City (NY), Portland (ME), Portland (OR), and Washington D.C.

For this study group, although traditional gateway immigrant cities such as New York City, Los Angeles, or Miami were named as desired second-step destination cities, they were not the most frequently named favorites (Figure 5-6). The most popular locations, Atlanta,

Minneapolis/St. Paul, and Seattle all have relatively large and growing Somali communities and this is reflected in their popularity as cities named by respondents.

When asked what motivations would be for moving respondents' most frequent response was for perceived better housing and jobs, as well as educational opportunities. This response indicates that some cities offer better social service benefits allowing refugee status immigrants to receive more financial support. It is reported by respondents that these "popular" cities have a shorter waiting list for subsidized government housing, as well as more liberal social service benefits. Once the knowledge of these benefits is gained, mostly through social networks, the city becomes a "hotspot" as a second step migration location, as the case of Lewiston, Maine. Also the "pull" of economic opportunity, the desire to be near friends and relatives, as well as located in a vibrant Somali community undoubtedly plays a major part in the second step migration decision-making process (Goza, 2007).

As mentioned previously, through this second or third step migration process certain cities have developed large Somali communities. The largest Somali community in the United States today, according to Goza (2007) and Horst (2007) as well as Somali community leaders, is the Minneapolis metropolitan area. Other cities with significant concentrations are Columbus (OH), Seattle, and San Diego. Insights gained during the interviewing process as well as by second choice destination cities, shows that Seattle (WA) is rapidly emerging as another major destination preference.

Conclusion

Although there were many different levels of adaptation and adjustment within the study group many shared characteristics of commonality of the resettlement experience as well. Almost all respondents of a marriageable age were married, and all but one respondent were married to Somali men. Notably this includes the recent marriages occurring after migration into

the United States. Only a couple of the respondents lived alone, indicative of the prevalence of Somali culture with its propensity for large and extended families. Many of the study group had obtained driver's licenses even when they professed to having little capabilities of English, displaying their desire to become mobile and independent in a society that is reliant upon automobile transit. The majority, regardless of their age, sent significant amounts of remittance money to Somalia or refugee camps that they had departed. Perhaps most notable of all, every respondent identified herself as being Muslim, and defining her practice, whether 'weak' or 'strong', as a pillar for emotional security.

In spite of the variance of adaptation in the group, particularly notable by age, when observing the geography of the residential preferences and possible future trends it is obvious that the Somali community is woven very tightly. Respondents did not appear to be moving out into new areas of Atlanta, or into 'new' American cities that did not have established Somali communities. Although a few adventuresome and younger women identified cities such as San Francisco or Miami as possible residences, most overwhelmingly chose cities that had established or emerging Somali communities, such as Minneapolis and Seattle. This suggests that although many of the study group left Somalia during childhood or teen years, Somali culture is being reinterpreted or reproduced in the United States, creating a sense of identity resulting in the development of significant Somali enclaves across America.

Table 5-1. Years of residency in the US and year of citizenship

	Years in US									Total
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	22	Resp.
Citizenship 1998								1		1
2000							1			1
2001				1	1					2
2002				3						3
2003		1		1						2
2004		1	1	1	1	1				5
2005			1	1						2
2006			1	1		1				3
2007	1		2	1			2		1	7
2008	1									1
Total	2	2	5	9	2	2	3	1	1	27

Table 5-2. Respondent: Will you apply for US citizenship, if not yet a citizen?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	29	96.7
No	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

Table 5-3. Year respondents who are not citizens plan to apply for US citizenship

	Frequency	Percent
2008	3	20.0
2009	5	33.3
2010	3	20.0
2011	4	26.7
Total	15	100.0

Table 5-4. US citizen at time of study and accompanied by spouse (McNemar Test)

US citizen	Spouse accompanied	
	Yes	No
Yes	14	4
No	13	6

Test Statistics: N = 37; p = .049

Table 5-5. Self identified English skills of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
No English at all	5	8.6
Very little English	26	44.8
Read and translate a text with dictionary	9	15.5
Very good, seldom need dictionary	9	15.5
Perfectly fluent	9	15.5
Total	58	100.0

Table 5-6. English language fluency skills and age (Kruskal Wallis Test)

Current English fluency		N	Mean rank
Current English fluency	I do not know English at all	5	46.20
	I know very little English	26	35.46
	I am able to read and to translate a text with dictionary	9	26.56
	Very good, seldom need dictionary	9	15.33
	Perfectly fluent	9	20.11
	Total	58	

Test Statistic: $p = .001$

Table 5-7. Respondent: Do you want to improve your English skills?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	23	48.9
No	24	51.1
Total	47	100.0

Table 5-8. Respondent: Will you will seek more education in the US?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	31	57.4
No	23	42.6
Total	54	100.0

Table 5-9. Age of respondents and their desire to seek education (Mann-Whitney Test)

Seek education		N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
Age	Yes	31	22.08	684.50
	No	23	34.80	800.50
	Total	54		

Test Statistic: $p = .003$

Table 5-10. Number of respondents that have a driver's license

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	38	67.9
No	18	32.1
Total	56	100.0

Table 5-11. Previous English skill and obtaining a driver's license (McNemar Test)

	Drivers license	
English	Yes	No
Yes	11	0
No	26	17

Test Statistics: N = 54; p = .000

Table 5-12. Respondents who own a car

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	38	69.1
No	17	30.9
Total	55	100.0

Table 5-13. Respondents currently employed

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	30	51.7
No	28	48.3
Total	58	100.0

Table 5-14. Employment status

	Frequency	Percent
At-home-housekeeping	18	31.0
On maternity leave	2	3.4
Employee	29	50.0
Business owner	1	1.7
Unemployed	4	6.9
Not working pensioner	3	5.2
Student	1	1.7
Total	58	100.0

Table 5-15. Occupation

	Frequency	Percent
Bakery worker	3	5.2
Business owner	1	1.7
Meat packaging	2	3.4
Car rental worker	2	3.4
Nurse	1	1.7
Social worker	1	1.7
Warehouse worker	20	34.5
Not employed	28	48.4
Total	58	100.0

Table 5-16. Monthly income of respondents currently employed

	Frequency	Percent
\$1,200	2	6.7
\$1,300	10	33.3
\$1,400	2	6.7
\$1,500	8	26.7
\$1,700	1	3.3
\$2,000	2	6.7
\$2,100	1	3.3
\$2,300	1	3.3
\$2,500	2	6.7
\$4,000	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

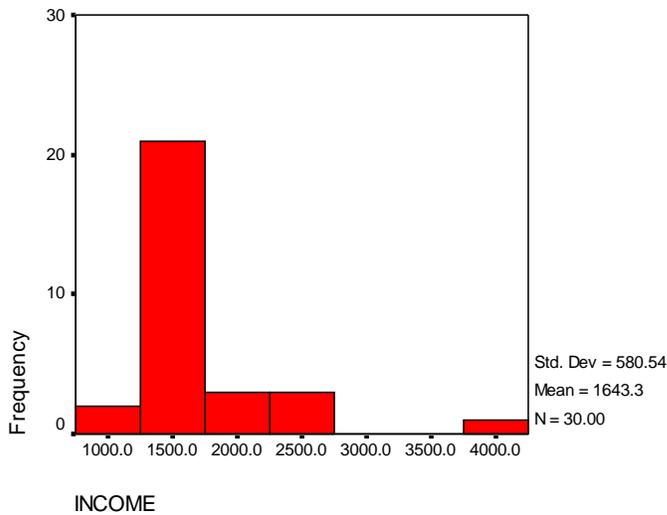


Figure 5-1. Monthly income of respondents currently employed

Table 5-17. US citizenship and average income (Mann-Whitney Test)

	US citizen	N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
Average monthly income	Yes	13	21.12	274.50
	No	20	14.32	286.50
	Total	33		

Test Statistic: $p = .043$

Table 5-18. Travel to work

	Frequency	Percent
Drive your own car	19	63.3
Carpool	6	20.0
Public transit	1	3.3
Carpool & public transit	4	13.3
Total	30	100.0

Table 5-19. Respondent: Has employment and given you greater decision-making authority within the household?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	35	97.2
No	1	2.8
Total	36	100.0

Table 5-20. Respondent: Does your husband desire you to work?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	34	81.0
No	8	19.0
Total	42	100.0

Table 5-21. Husband and wife employment (McNemar Test)

		Wife employed	
Husband employed	Yes	No	
Yes	16	18	
No	5	0	

Test Statistics: $N = 39$; $p = .011$

Table 5-22. Self perception of socio-economic status perception in Somali community and Atlanta

	Self perception in Somali community	Percent	Self perception in Atlanta community	Percent
Poor	15	26.3	13	22.8
Lower middle class	20	35.1	19	33.3
Middle class	21	36.8	24	42.1
Upper middle class	1	1.8	1	1.8
Total	57	100.0	57	100.0

Table 5-23. Current marital status

	Frequency	Percent
Single	4	6.9
Married	44	75.9
Divorced	4	6.9
Separated	1	1.7
Widowed	5	8.6
Total	58	100.0

Table 5-24. Currently living with husband

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	40	88.9
No	5	11.1
Total	45	100.0

Table 5-25. Respondent: Has the quality of your life improved since migrating to the US?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	55	96.5
No	2	3.5
Total	57	100.0

Table 5-26. Respondent: Can you communicate and get along well with your children in the US without cultural conflicts?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	33	73.3
No	9	20.0
With difficulty	3	6.7
Total	45	100.0

Table 5-27. Respondent: Do your children feel accepted at school?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	37	80.4
No	5	10.9
Mixed feelings	4	8.7
Total	46	100.0

Table 5-28. Respondent: Do you feel accepted by mainstream Americans?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	43	78.2
No	7	12.7
Mixed feelings	5	9.1
Total	55	100.0

Table 5-29. Feelings of closeness to specific ethnicities in Atlanta

	White Americans	African Americans	Latin Americans	Asian Americans	All ethnic groups
Not close	4	3	4	4	4
Comfortable	18	20	10	12	14
Very close	27	29	13	14	18
Total	49	52	27	30	36

Table 5-30. Self identified degree of religious faith

	Frequency	Percent
Weak faith	8	14.5
Moderate faith	23	41.8
Strong faith	24	43.6
Total	55	100.0

Table 5-31. Religious faith providing emotional support

	Frequency	Percent
Not important at all	1	1.8
Not too important	1	1.8
Neutral	2	3.5
Quite important	8	14.0
Very important	45	78.9
Total	57	100.0

Table 5-32. Wear religious attire in the US

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	54	94.7
No	3	5.3
Total	57	100.0

Table 5-33. Change of religious attire after migration

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	17	36.2
No	30	63.8
Total	47	100.0

Table 5-34. Mosque location

	Frequency	Percent
Immediate neighborhood	36	65.5
Nearby location	18	32.7
Distant location	1	1.8
Total	55	100.0

Table 5-35. Respondent: Do you feel hostility from Americans or employers?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	18	32.1
No	30	53.6
Mixed feelings	8	14.3
Total	56	100.0

Table 5-36. Respondent: Does your employer accept your religious attire?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	35	87.5
No	3	7.5
No for safety	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

Table 5-37. Respondent: Do you feel that Americans accept your religious attire?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	45	80.4
No	7	12.5
Mixed feelings	4	7.1
Total	56	100.0

Table 5-38. Current home zip codes

Cities	Zip codes	Frequency	Percent
Clarkston	30021	27	46.6
Decatur	30030	6	10.3
Decatur	30032	2	3.4
Scottdale	30079	8	13.8
Stone Mt.	30083	11	19.0
Stone Mt.	30088	2	3.4
Tucker	30084	2	3.4
	Total	58	100.0

Table 5-39. Homeownership/renter and current home zip code

Zip code		30021	30030	30032	30079	30083	30084	30088	Total
	own	7	1	0	1	6	1	0	16
	rent	20	5	2	7	5	1	2	42
Total		27	6	2	8	11	2	2	58

Respondents Residency Identified by Zip Code in the Atlanta Metropolitan Areas

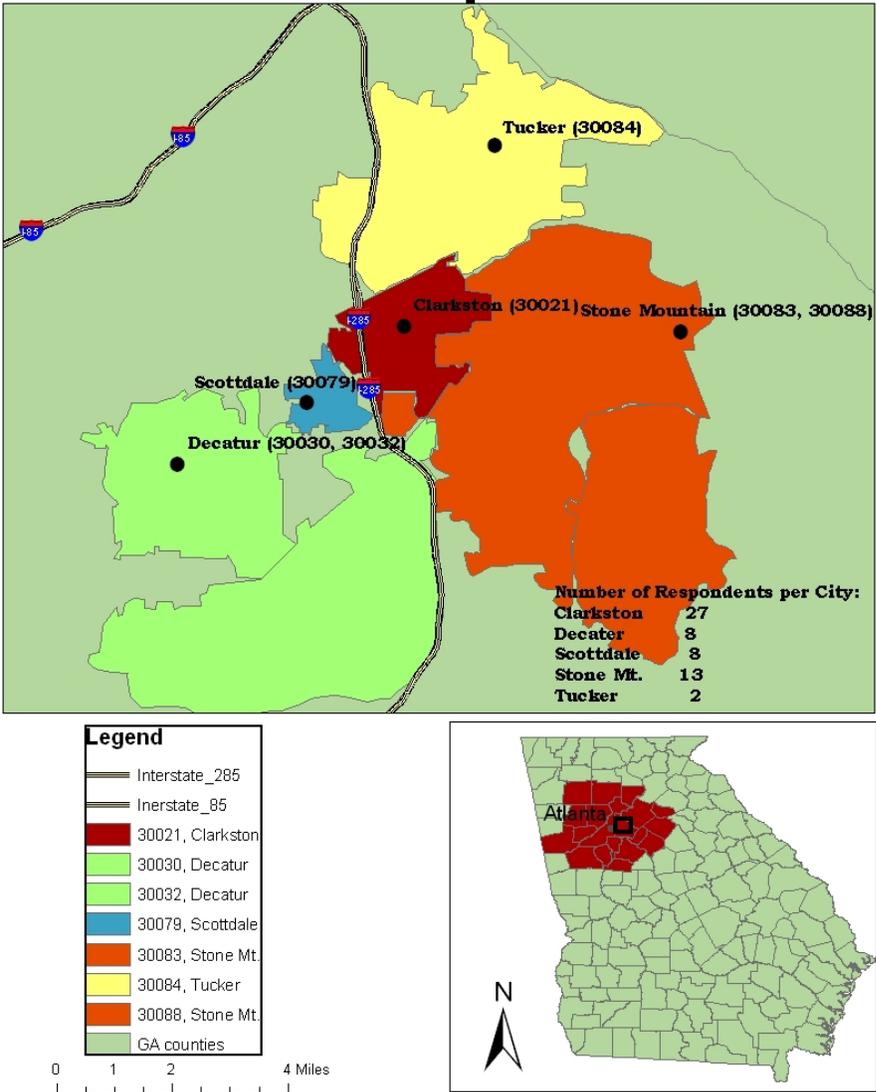


Figure 5-2. Respondents residency identified by zip code

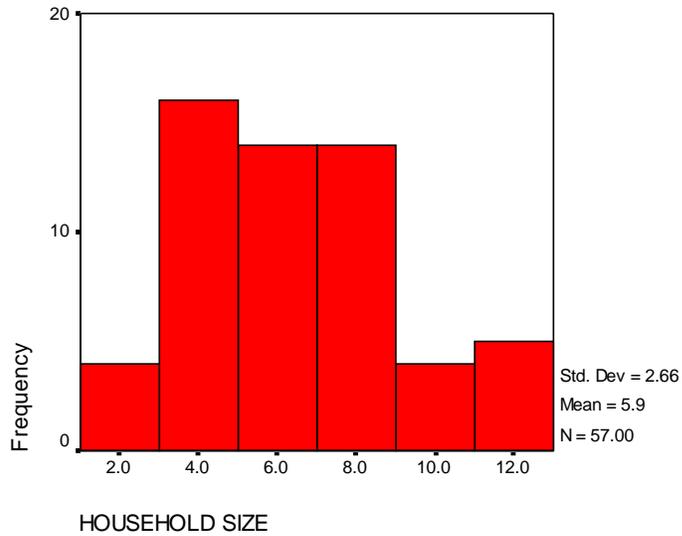


Figure 5-3. Household Size

Table 5-40. Homeownership or renter

	Frequency	Percent
Own	16	27.6
Rent	42	72.4
Total	58	100.0

Table 5-41. Rent

Mean	\$615.05
Median	\$650.00
Mode	\$700
Standard deviation	\$199.46

Table 5-42: Cost of home

Cost of home	Frequency
\$17,000 - \$30,000	8
\$90,000 - \$120,000	4
\$147,000 - \$198,000	4
Total	16

Table 5-43. Years residing in United States and Year of Home Purchase

	Year purchased	Year purchased						Total
		1994	1995	2000	2002	2003	2004	
Years in US	8.0				1		1	2
	9.0						1	1
	10.0				1	1		2
	11.0					1		1
	12.0					3		3
	13.0			1		1		2
	14.0						1	1
	15.0		1					2
	16.0		1					1
	22.0	1						1
Total		1	2	1	2	6	3	16

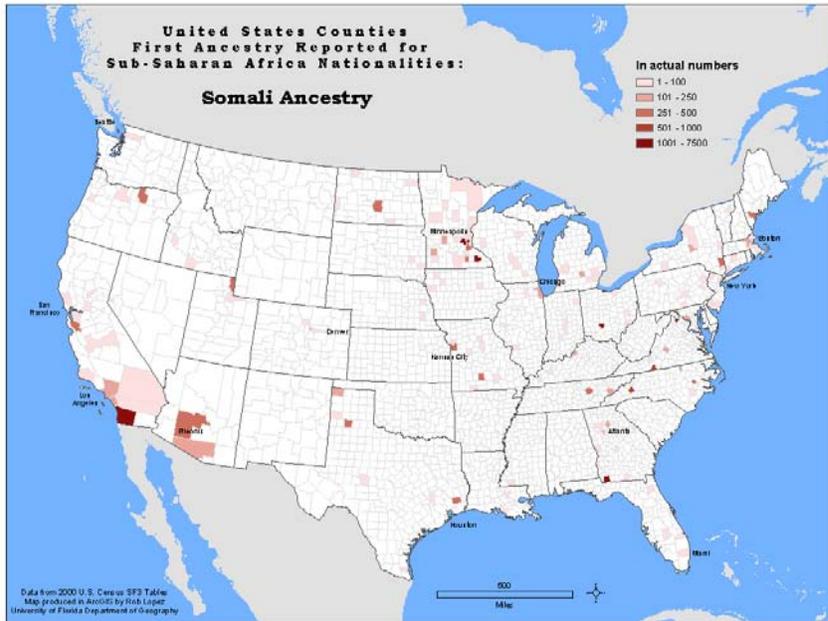


Figure 5-4. Somali Ancestry identified by US county residency

Table 5-44. Relatives in Somalia and United States citizen (McNemar Test)

Relatives in Somalia	US citizen	
	Yes	No
Yes	22	26
No	6	3

Test Statistics: N = 57; p = .001

Table 5-45. Favorite Cities in the United States

1 st favorite	Frequency	2 nd favorite	Frequency	3 rd favorite	Frequency
Arlington VA	2	Atlanta	2	Arlington VA	2
Atlanta	38	Columbus OH	6	Atlanta	2
Denver	1	Kansas City MO	1	Columbus OH	4
Lewiston ME	1	Lewiston ME	4	Denver	1
Miami	1	Los Angeles	2	Lewiston, ME	1
Minneapolis	3	Minneapolis	5	Louisville, KY	1
Phoenix	1	New York City	1	Manchester, NH	1
San Diego	1	Phoenix	1	Minneapolis	2
Seattle	2	San Diego	3	New York City	1
		San Francisco	1	Phoenix	2
		Seattle	6	Portland ME	1
		Washington D.C.	1	Portland OR	1
				San Diego	3
				Seattle	6
				Washington D.C.	1
Total	50		33		29

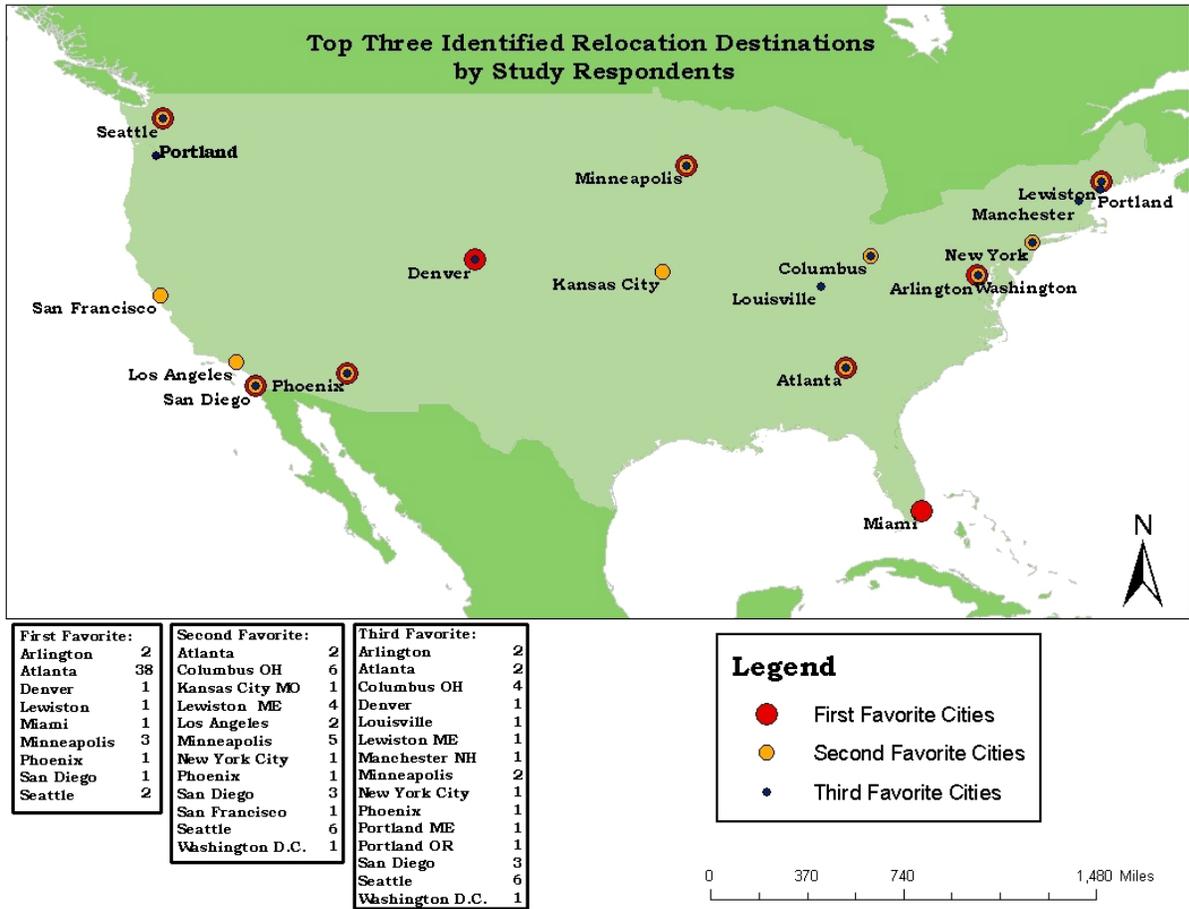


Figure 5-5. The top three identified relocation destinations by study respondents

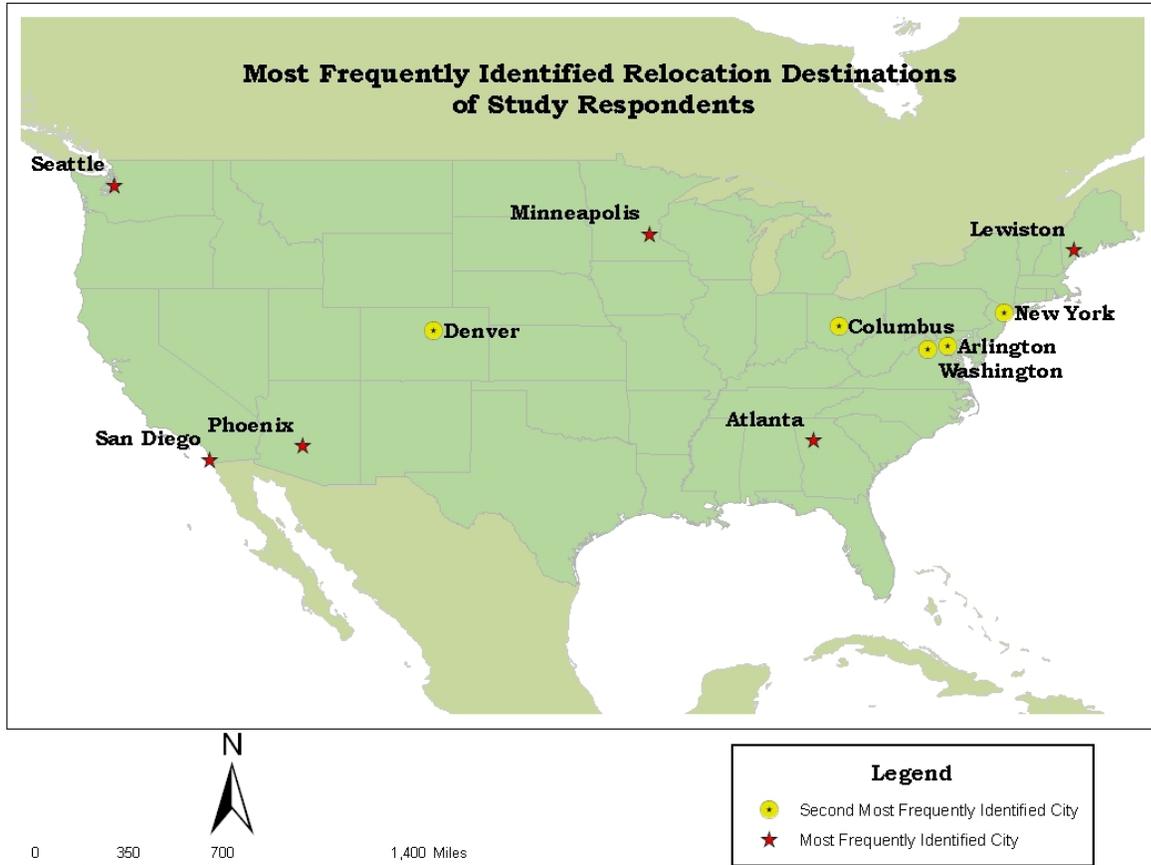


Figure 5-6. Most frequently identified relocation destinations of study respondents

CHAPTER 6 SOMALI BANTU

Introduction

The United States is a nation of immigrants, and our history reflects this. We often refer to various incoming waves of migrants during the past centuries, noting their geographical origin, yet do not distinguish between the cultural or socio-economic characteristics that may have defined differences among these groups. Yet differences between immigrants arriving from the same geographical location do exist and likely influence how they make adjustments to a new environment (Hein, 2006; McGown, 2007). When examining refugees' migration experience, noting differences within a group is especially important to identify because refugees are often marginalized due to the trauma of events leading up and during a frantic exit from their homeland as well as the consequent and frequently lengthy, displacement in refugee camps. In the case of Somali refugees that are arriving in the US today, there are definitely socio-economic and cultural distinctions that exist between mainstream Somalis and Somali Bantu, the ethnic subgroup.

As described briefly in Chapter One, Somali Bantu are an ethnic subgroup that has suffered discriminatory treatment in Somalia since they were brought in as enslaved laborers during the late 19th century (Besteman 1996a; Cassanelli 1982; Eno & Eno, 2007). These enslaved laborers were imported from Tanzania by Arab/Swahili commercial planters to work on plantations in the southern riverine region of Somalia. As a result the Somali Bantu population became firmly established in the Shabelle River region, and the southern coastal cities of Brava, Kismayo, Marka, and Mogadishu.

Although they have been assimilated linguistically by Somalis, and generally adhere to Islam, their physical appearance is strikingly different even today (Besteman, 1999; Cassanelli,

1982). Socially they have been regarded as an inferior class due to this stigma as well as their identity with an agricultural lifestyle. During the early 20th century, while under Italian colonial rule, the class distinctions between the nomadic or mainstream Somali population and the slave class or Somali Bantu became more pronounced, resulting in the latter becoming further marginalized and discriminated against within Somali society (Eno & Eno, 2007). Distinctions between nomadic clans and those associated with agriculture and a sedentary lifestyle became more pronounced, as well as the notable differences of skin tones and facial features of the enslaved laborers brought in from other regions of Africa (Bestemen, 1999; Eno & Eno, 2007). Skin tone distinctions were likely influenced by the Italian, French, and English colonists.

As the civil war began in earnest some regions suffered disproportionately, and in particular the inter-riverine populations were heavily impacted by warring factions. As fighting radiated out from Mogadishu, many of the Somali Bantu settlement areas were hit especially hard by fighting and as a result this population experienced much trauma and displacement. Initially their food was either stolen or destroyed, farms were burned, residents were killed, raped, and kidnapped, and later their valuable agricultural land was confiscated by emerging wealthy and powerful urbanites (Besteman, 1996a, 1996b, 1999; Shay 2005; Thomashausen, 2002; World Bank 2003). This region, due to its “loose” clan system, was least able to defend itself against the warring factions that came thundering into the area, initially from militant groups attempting to take control and later government military sent in pursuit (Bestemen, 1996b, Shay, 2005). With warring groups attempting to gain control of this important agricultural region it became known as the “triangle of death”, the region radiating out from Mogadishu between two rivers, the Jubba and Shebelle (Besteman, 1996b). Somali Bantu populations had few arms and were unable to defend themselves, and as a result they fled to

refugee camps along the Kenya border region. In camps, they continued to experience discrimination as well as suffering disadvantages in obtaining resettlement opportunities from government agencies. Because of their lack of lack education and knowledge of complex bureaucratic systems, were unable to grasp the opportunities or resources needed to initiate the resettlement process.

It is within this context that the United States Immigration Services designated special status to Somali Bantu refugees, and a large group resettlement program was initiated, authorizing 12,000 Somali Bantu refugee status and resettlement in the US beginning in 2003. According to Church World Service Executive Director John L. McCullough, "The Bantu represent one of the most under-served peoples on earth. They've been historically denied access to education, land or home ownership, and acceptance as equals due to their heritage and physical differences." (June 3, 2003, National Somali Bantu Organization, <http://www.somalibantu.com>). The following excerpt from *Newsweek* magazine also describes special circumstances that confront this group during the resettlement process.

In 1999, the United States designated this group of exiled Somali Bantus a persecuted class of people who deserved to be resettled in America. During the next two years, as many as 11,800 Bantus could be approved by the INS. Yet the journey to the New World won't be smooth, or quick. Concerned that Islamist terrorist might try to use the visa program to gain entry to the United States, Immigration officials must get to greater than usual efforts to verify the identity of each refugee-an especially painstaking task, since most have no birth certificates or official documents of any kind. New security regulations require refugees to be fingerprinted, and men arriving from predominantly Muslim countries must be screened by the FBI. But when the United States announced its decision to take in the Bantus, hundreds of other exiled Somalis suddenly declared themselves part of the underclass, Somali refugees as far away as Nairobi boarded buses to try to buy their way into Bantu families. Some threatened Bantus with retaliation from the large Somali community in the United States unless they helped them. (*Newsweek*, 9/2/2002)

In the following chapter both statistical and qualitative analysis suggests this marginalization continued during displacement in refugee camps and was therefore present at the time of migration into the US and as a result is observable during the initial resettlement period.

The analysis is based on contrasting mainstream Somali respondents' characteristics or experience to those of the Somali Bantu of the study group. The chapter is divided into three sections with the first examining the migration history specific to the Somali Bantu women in the study group. The second identifies characteristics of the Somali Bantu study group, and the third investigates the actual settlement location of these women after arriving in the United States.

Migration History

All 16 Somali Bantu women in the study group except one identified their hometown as being either in the southern riverine region or along the southern Somali coast. These cities are the traditional areas in which Somali Bantu populations have resided since being brought into Somalia as enslaved labor. The distribution of the Somali Bantu respondents is as follows: Mogadishu (3 respondents), Baraawe (2), and Kismaayo (2) are all southern coastal cities and Afgooye (4), Jilib (3), and Jamaame (1) are cities located slightly inland along rivers in this same southern region and named as hometown by respondents (Figure 6-1). Only one respondent identified a northern city, Ceerigaabo, as her hometown.

Hypothesizing that due to the problems experienced by Somali Bantu during the war and the years of displacement, it is likely that Somali Bantu respondents exited their country during the early years of the war yet continued to suffer from discrimination in refugee camps and therefore remained for longer periods of time than mainstream Somali respondents. This hypothesis can be validated by running a Mann-Whitney test using two variables "Are you a Somali Bantu?" and "Assumed years in refugee camps" (Table 6-1). This second variable was obtained by subtracting the variable "Year left Somalia" and "Year entering the US". The outcome of this test is highly significant, with a .005 (less than the needed .05 to reject the null hypothesis) indicating that there is a difference between the length of time spent in camp by the two groups. Observations of the mean rank value given for Somali Bantu is 39.59, a higher rank

than for mainstream Somalis, with a mean rank of 25.65, indicating that Somali Bantu respondents spent longer in camps. The highly significant outcome of .005 validates the hypothesis.

Calculating the mean value of years spent living in camp for each group separately, it is found that the 16 Somali Bantu respondents have spent 8.95 years in camp and the 42 mainstream Somali respondents have a mean value of 5.62 years. Somali Bantu respondents have spent on average 3.33 years longer in refugee camps than mainstream Somali respondents.

As a consequence of the intense fighting and displacement in the southern riverine region, much of the Somali Bantu population was uprooted and forced to seek refuge in camps along the Kenyan border, thereby creating situations where entire communities were displaced (Besteman, 1996b). Additionally because much of the farmland was confiscated by incoming military, repatriation would be difficult to achieve for this population as they have no home to return to (Besteman, 1996b). Due to these circumstances it is most likely that many Somali Bantu refugees would not have close relatives and extended family remaining in Somalia.

To test this hypothesis a McNemar test was applied using two variables, “Are you Somali Bantu?” and “Do you still have relatives in Somalia?” (Table 6-2). Observing the numbers in Table 6.2, it can be seen that out of 16 responses from Somali Bantu respondents, 11 (68.8%) respondents reported still having relatives back home. Of the 41 mainstream Somali respondents that answered this question, 37 (90.2%) reported having relatives currently living in Somalia. The outcome of the test indicates that these two variables are highly associated with each other, observing the value .000 (less than the needed .05 to reject the null hypothesis), therefore if a respondent is Somali Bantu it is more likely that she does not have relatives back home and the reverse.

An additional validation of the hypothesis that Somali Bantu respondents have fewer relatives left back home, is the highly significant outcome when applying a McNemar test to the variables, “Are you Somali Bantu?” and “Did you send remittance money to Somalia this year?”. This latter question provides illumination about the respondent’s relationship with her homeland today. Observing Table 6-3, 10 (62.5%) of 16 Somali Bantu respondents sent remittances home, contrasted to 33 mainstream remittance-senders (78.6 %) out of a total of 42 mainstream Somali respondents. Consequently it can be assumed that there is a strong association between being a Somali Bantu respondent and being less likely to send remittance money back to Somalia and vice versa. This implies that perhaps the effects of the war and resultant displacement left this population virtually homeless with fewer possibilities to return.

This study did not attempt to determine if perhaps there was a higher association for Somali Bantu respondents to send remittances to refugee camps outside of Somalia. It seems that this may be a possibility; however because many of the Somali Bantu families were resettled together this may not be the case and would require further study.

Considering that Somali Bantu have endured a long history of discrimination in their homeland, they may therefore have a greater motivation to resettle abroad hoping for better opportunities and circumstances than experienced in Somalia.

Somali Bantu Migrant Characteristics

Of the 16 Somali Bantu study group, the age group ranged from 24 to 47 years old. Within this group 11 respondents (68.7%) are between 30 and 40 years old. The most common age is 30 years old (4 respondents) and 3 respondents are 40 years old.

The majority of the women are currently married (13 respondents), and one each is divorced, separated, and widowed (Table 6-4). Only one Somali Bantu woman was not married to a Somali man, and this woman previously mentioned (in Chapter 4), is married to (but

currently separated from) an African American man. During interviews it was not determined if Somali Bantu respondents' husbands were Somali Bantu or mainstream Somali, it was only indicated that they were Somali.

All Somali Bantu respondents have children (Table 6-5), and when testing the variables "Are you Somali Bantu?" and "Do you have children?" using a McNemar test the association between these characteristics is shown to be highly significant. This result indicates that if a respondent is Somali Bantu she is more likely to have children and vice versa. At first glance it seemed that this outcome could be compromised due to the fact that the youngest Somali Bantu respondent at the time of the study was 24, an age that would be considered "old" to still be single with no children in Somali culture. However, when contrasting the ages of mainstream respondents that identified themselves as "single" at the time of the study, their ages were found to be 19, 26, 27, and 28. This suggests that it is less likely that Somali Bantu women will remain single after late teen years or early adulthood than mainstream Somali women. *Newsweek* magazine (9/2/2002) journalist, Donatella Lorch, describes such cultural characteristics in these terms: "Most Bantu marry in their teens, and almost all women and teenage girls are pregnant or have newborns (when arriving in the US)."

Obviously the younger a respondent was at the time of arrival in the United States, the greater likelihood that she could easily pick up cultural traits and norms of the host society. As a consequence it seems likely that many of the youngest respondents at arrival likely adapted to American culture and perhaps delayed marriage to continue their education. Observing the ages that respondents were at the time of resettlement in the US, the youngest Somali Bantu women were 17, 19, and 21 (2 respondents) and the oldest was 37. In contrast the youngest mainstream respondents at the time of resettlement were 8, 11, and 14. Because the Somali Bantu

respondents arrived in the United States at a much older age and with established families, their opportunities for attending school and gaining English language skills as well as cultural knowledge were greatly reduced.

This has the potential to keep them more disadvantaged than some of their mainstream Somali counterparts in a new environment where secondary and higher education generates higher earning capabilities. The following description of a respondent's life in the United States provides such a perspective.

Respondent 8 is a thirty year old Somali Bantu woman that arrived with her family in Atlanta on January 27th 2005. She spoke almost no English and communicated through a translator. Respondent 8 lives with her husband and seven children, all resettled together. The oldest son is nineteen, and the youngest is a newborn baby boy, just two months old. The family lives in a condo complex that is predominately inhabited by both Somali Bantu families and mainstream Somalis. She and her family came from Kismaayo, a southern coastal city in Somalia. They left Somalia in 1992 and first went to the Dadaab Refugee camp in Kenya, but later moved to the Kakuma Refugee camp. They remained there until resettlement to the US in 2005. Due to the large number of older-aged children and her relatively young age, it appeared that perhaps the oldest children were her husband's from a previous marriage, yet this was not confirmed. However, Respondent 8 had a very tired and worn appearance. Perhaps this was due to the lengthy and stressful migration experience, plus the added responsibilities of childcare at such a young age, as well as being overworked with such a large household and having a newborn baby. (Personal interview, February 9, 2008)

Somali Bantu, as stated earlier, were identified as a persecuted minority group and were therefore given a group resettlement by the U.S. Immigration Services. Due to problems of discrimination and lack of ability to navigate complex bureaucratic systems in camp environments, field and government workers determined that Somali Bantu refugees were not being given resettlement opportunities equally. As noted earlier Somali Bantu women in the study group remained longer in refugee camps than their mainstream Somali counterparts and a consequence of this is that Somali Bantu respondents have been in the United States for a shorter length of residency.

When attempting to evaluate an immigrant's adjustment in their host environment observations of such factors as English-speaking ability, employment, income, and mobility are important as tools of measurement, and length of residency in a new location impacts these levels of adaptation. With longer residency in a host city an immigrant gains knowledge and networks needed to adapt and survive.

To gain further insights into the Somali Bantu respondents' migration experience in Atlanta, it was necessary to identify how long their residency in the United States had been in comparison to mainstream Somali respondents. The mean value for Somali Bantu respondents is 5.86 years residency in the United States, and for mainstream Somali respondents it is 11.08 years residency. Mainstream Somali respondents had been in the US nearly twice as long as Somali Bantu respondents. A Mann-Whitney test validated that this difference was highly significant (Table 6-6). Collectively Somali Bantu have been resettled into the US later than mainstream Somalis. Most likely due to the Somali Bantu respondents much shorter US residency, many strategies needed for successful adaptation to life in America are affected by this, such as developing English proficiency, gaining citizenship, education, mobility, and homeownership.

Important to the migration experience is whether a family member(s) has preceded the migrant and become established at the host destination. The study translator, a resident of the United States since the mid 1980s, described this as a major factor determining the successful integration of migrants, including ability to gain employment, housing, and education. Previous migrants have already traversed and accessed the necessary conduits of information and networks needed to obtain vital resources in the host location, thereby giving a distinct advantage to incoming migrant relatives.

In the case of Somali Bantu respondents, because they have arrived in the US later, and are disadvantaged by length of residency, as contrasted to mainstream Somali respondents, it is also important to investigate if they also suffer a disadvantage in having vital networks available upon arrival. To evaluate this hypothesis a McNemar test was conducted using two variables, “Did family members precede you to the US?” and “Are you Somali Bantu?” (Table 6-7). The result, a .055 significance value, determined that this finding is inconclusive (a .05 value is needed for significance), however the outcome does suggest a possible association between these two variables. Examining the numbers closely it can be observed that only 3 Somali Bantu respondents (18.8%) had family members that preceded them to the United States, while 26 mainstream Somali members (62%) had relatives already in the US at their time of arrival. Having relatives already in the US undoubtedly is a major advantage that provides an incoming migrant with a great source of knowledge increasing her ability to network and navigate in new bureaucratic, economic, and social systems. Therefore because many incoming Somali Bantu respondents have not had this advantage it is likely that they have suffered further marginalization in the adaptation process.

Citizenship and Human Capital Investments

Out of the 16 Somali Bantu respondents only 2 had received their citizenship (Table 6-8); however this seems most likely due to the fact that most Somali Bantu respondents had arrived, on average, later than mainstream Somali respondents. Of the 16 Somali Bantu respondents 11 had arrived in the United States only 5 years ago or less, and the two respondents that had received citizenship had arrived 11 and 12 years ago. Referring to Chapter 5, it was noted that the highest number respondents becoming naturalized citizens occurred at a US residency length of 11 or 12 years.

The English speaking ability of Somali Bantu respondents when arriving in the United States corresponds closely with that of the mainstream population (Table 6-9), showing that only 3 Somali Bantu respondents spoke English, 12 did not, and 1 respondent did not answer the question. One mainstream respondent also failed to answer this question, therefore the total sample size for this variable is 56. When applying a McNemar test there was no significant association between these variables; however the International Rescue Committee (see website: http://www.somalibantu.com/refugee_camp_courses_orient_soma.htm) states: “Among the Somali Bantus, one percent of adults are estimated to have any functional literacy in English, and only an additional 35 percent are classified as semi-literate in any language.” Therefore perhaps this literacy and English disadvantage may be somewhat compensated for in camp before arriving in the US because of classes such as the eight-month “survival literacy” course in English and math offered by the IRC and various organizations to Somali Bantu refugees in Kenya before resettlement.

The educational level of Somali Bantu respondents when arriving in the US is not significantly different from the mainstream respondents upon arrival (Table 6-10). Four respondents, one Somali Bantu and 3 mainstream, did not answer this question, therefore the sample size is 54 total. Approximately 67% of Somali Bantu respondents (10 respondents) indicated that they had received no formal education compared to 43.58% of the mainstream Somalis (17). A Mann-Whitney test was applied to these variables, but the outcome was not significant.

Urban Knowledge and Resettlement

Although many of the Somali Bantu are from southern coastal cities, and the capital city, Mogadishu, it does not necessarily indicate that they will be familiar with or have knowledge of Western urban lifestyles and the modern conveniences used in such an environment. Because of

their marginalized status within Somali society and the resultant socio-economic disparities, hypothetically it seems that they will have less knowledge of skills needed in urban environments. To test this hypothesis the variables “Are you Somali Bantu?” and “Did you have urban knowledge before arriving in the US?” were analyzed using the McNemar test (Table 6-11) with an outcome value of .052. For this particular hypothesis, because the outcome value is extremely close to being significant (.05), the finding is inconclusive; however this outcome does suggest a possible association between these two variables. Examining the numbers closely it can be seen that of 16 Somali Bantu respondents 10 (60%) did not have urban knowledge (more than half), and of 42 mainstream Somali respondents 20 (47.6%) did not have urban knowledge (less than half). To more thoroughly investigate the possibility that being Somali Bantu is closely associated with not having urban knowledge (and vice versa), a larger sample size is needed.

According to many reports from the United States Immigration Services, newspaper articles, and community workers much education about urban living is needed in order to facilitate the successful relocation of Somali Bantu refugees. Classes are conducted in camps before refugees are resettled, but also once arriving in the United States additional orientation classes are given to incoming refugees (Personal interview with Ali Omar, August 14, 2008).

The following excerpt taken from The National Somali Bantu website illustrates this need.

Refugee Camp Courses Orient Somali Bantu to U.S. Life

In Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, Somali Bantus receive cultural orientation classes to prepare them for their new lives in the United States. Lessons include practical skills – how to turn a doorknob, use a store, flush a toilet, fill a bathtub and set an alarm – as well as U.S. geography, weather, people, history and government, community services available in the U.S., rights and responsibilities of refugees, U.S. laws, housing, transportation, education, health care, employment and money management. (website accessed July 21, 2008) (http://www.somalibantu.com/refugee_camp_courses_orient_soma.htm)

Mobility

In geographical studies the mobility of an individual or group is an important consideration when attempting to evaluate their ability to take full advantage of available opportunities.

Limited mobility is a frequent liability especially for women with children (Domosh and Seager, 2001). As previously mentioned in Chapter 5, the Atlanta metropolitan area can be considered an auto culture, and although it has a metro system, MARTA, and a public bus system, it is a sprawling city and perhaps it is easiest and safest to travel about by car. This is especially important if a woman is working evening or night shifts in industrial areas of the city, which can often be the case for Somali refugee women.

To identify if Somali Bantu women are handicapped in this regard, suspecting that they do not have as much access to personal auto transit as mainstream Somali women, two variables, “Are you Somali Bantu?” and “Do you have a driver’s license?” were used to test this hypothesis. Two respondents failed to answer this question, therefore the sample size is 56, one Somali Bantu respondent is missing and one mainstream Somali. Applying a McNemar test the outcome is highly significant, indicating that these two variables are closely associated (see Table 6-12). Therefore being a Somali Bantu respondent is closely associated with not having a driver’s license and the reverse. Only 6 Somali Bantu women in the study group had driver’s licenses, yet 32 mainstream Somali women had licenses.

Observing that only 6 out of 15 Somali Bantu respondents (40%) had a driver’s license contrasted to 32 out of 41 mainstream Somali respondents (78%) holding licenses, it appears that Somali Bantu respondents are highly disadvantaged in their mobility at this stage in their US residency. Again this could be a result of Somali Bantu respondents arriving more recently in the US, and therefore not having enough adjustment time to gain access to appropriate resources (such as ESL classes) needed to obtain licenses.

Settlement Experience

In the previous chapter it was observed that all but 2 respondents, both mainstream Somali women, felt that their quality of life had improved since coming to the United States. Therefore, because all of the 16 Somali Bantu respondents identified the quality of their life as improving with resettlement to the US, the hypothesis that Somali Bantu respondents experience their migration being very positive was analyzed using a McNemar test (Table 6-13). All 16 Somali Bantu respondents answered this question, one mainstream Somali respondent failed to so, therefore the sample size is 57. The two variables “Are you Somali Bantu?” and “Has life quality improved in the US?” tested 99.9% significant indicating that if a respondent is Somali Bantu their perceptions of life improving with migration to the United States is closely associated and vice versa.

This outcome seems likely if respondents had experienced discrimination in their homeland and refugee camps. According to Kroner’s (2007) research, the predominant thought of *buufis*, a constant desire to escape to the West, within the Somali refugee camp communities would likely become even stronger if greater feelings of persecution existed. Cindy Horst (2007) describes *buufis* as providing hope in a hopeless situation, a dream for the future. Therefore although the resettlement experience may be extremely challenging, perhaps within the context of this hope for the future with resettlement in the West, plus the high levels of discrimination experienced by Somali Bantu in their homeland and refugee camps, Somali Bantu respondents may feel their lives have improved in the US. The following Somali Bantu respondents have described their life in the United States. Their interview excerpts provide insights of their migration experience.

Respondent 13, a Somali Bantu woman, is twenty-five years old, married with three children, one of which is a newborn daughter. She got married to a Somali Bantu man in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. They came to the US together arriving in Atlanta

where they rent an apartment. Respondent 13 has never worked in America, and is a full-time homemaker. Her husband has full-time work in a meat packing plant and is a team leader. This respondent does not have much English speaking ability, and although she would like to work and attend English classes, she has three young children to care for.

Unfortunately Respondent 13 had a very sad problem with the Department of Family and Children Services when she had her last child, a premature baby girl. At the time that the new baby was able to go home, follow-up visits were scheduled for the baby. Unfortunately she was unable to keep the appointments due to either not having a ride to the doctor's office, or was unable to find a translator to accompany her to the appointment. By missing follow-up care the baby somehow became ill and the parents had to have her rushed to the emergency room one day. At that time the doctor called in the DFCS because of suspected neglect. The baby was removed from the household, but fortunately a community member acting as a translator accompanied the family to court and was able to present the problems facing the family in the logistics of handling the follow-up care. The infant was then released back to the family, but it was a very stressful and unfortunate incident that is typical of some difficulties that can occur due to communication and transportation problems. In spite of this problem she feels her life has improved since resettlement in the United States. (Personal interview, January 26, 2008)

Respondent 41 is a twenty-four year old Somali Bantu woman, arriving in the US only three years ago, after living in the Kakuma Refugee Camp for fourteen years. She was only eight years old when her family left Somalia. Today Respondent 41 is married and has two children, one of which is a new baby. She currently works at a bakery and has been employed there for two years. She has strong English speaking ability that she learned while residing in the refugee camp. Respondent 41 attended school at Kakuma, completing middle school. She appears to have adapted well to her new surroundings, having steady employment, mobility, language fluency, and a stable family life. (Personal interview, February 19, 2008)

Respondent 52 is a twenty-five year old divorcee who arrived in Atlanta in 2006 as part of a resettlement program for Somali Bantu. She came with only her daughter from the Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya. She left Afgooye, Somalia when she was fifteen years old and still maintains contact with close relatives in Somalia and Kenya. She wishes that they could join her in America, however due to the costs involved she describes the situation as "I want to have them, but no way possible." Respondent 52 describes herself as having no English skills and no education. One year ago she was employed at a warehouse. Before this she had problems and could not pay her rent, at that time she obtained help from the Refugee Family Services. Now she is employed and she explains her happiness with this, "Money talks, money is everythings." Respondent 52 also describes her situation, "I'm here by myself and my daughter, I do everythings on my own." She has her daughter in daycare and lives alone. (Personal interview, March 18, 2008)

Respondent 57 is a thirty year old Somali Bantu woman who arrived in the United States in 1997, at the age of nineteen. Although young at the time, she was already married and had children. The family was resettled in Atlanta, and she states that the quality of her life

improved. Respondent 57 has never worked outside the home, providing full-time household care while her husband is responsible for obtaining financial provisions. She says, “I do everythings at home and my husband work fulltime.” Her family lives in an apartment in public housing, paying \$500 a month for rent. In spite of the fact that Respondent 57 stays home caring for the family and thereby having a reduced need for English fluency, she does attempt to improve her English language skills. Earlier she attended ESL classes at the Clarkson Baptist Church, but is currently not able to do so because of lack of childcare. She notes that her lack of English-speaking ability prevents her from interacting with the greater Atlanta community, “...but how I can communicate with not knowing English.” (Personal interview, April 29, 2008)

Respondent 58 is a thirty year old Somali Bantu woman that was recently resettled in Atlanta with her young daughter. She arrived without her husband in 2005, and is waiting for him to join her “when they approve his visa”. It has been a hard move to accomplish on her own and she describes it as “...but very hardship the life in here...not what I thought before I came in the USA.” She has however made significant progress in the last year, finally obtaining employment in a warehouse, in spite of her lack of English proficiency. Her comment, “...but I found job without not knowing English.”. This was accomplished through the help the Somali community in Atlanta. Although she is Somali Bantu she feels support from the general Somali community saying, “They are the only one who helped me.”, referring to her inability to obtain employment for a prolonged period of time upon arrival in the US. Despite the significant challenges Respondent 58 faces each day, she manages to send about \$1,500 in remittances to Somalia, and \$500 to Kenya annually since obtaining employment. It is obvious that she feels a tremendous responsibility to provide some financial support for her extensive family back home. She is very happy about gaining employment, yet this too presents some hurtles. Respondent 58 expressed her feelings of acceptance by her employer and Americans in general, “..but sometimes they too tough for me... sometimes not accept..” When asked about her transportation to work she tries to find a friend or fellow worker first and if this fails she takes city buses. (Personal interview, April 17, 2008)

A question in the survey attempted to extract information on Somali Bantu respondents’ feelings about the relationship they have within their greater Somali communities and if the discrimination previously experienced in Somalia and the camps may still exist in the US. However, this question became compromised due to the translator being a mainstream Somali, therefore the Somali Bantu respondents may not have felt comfortable to report a negative perspective of the mainstream Somali community and this point of inquiry had to be abandoned.

Observing Table 6-14 only 2 Somali Bantu respondents (12.5%) identified themselves as “single”, meaning not previously married (2 respondents replied “divorced” and “separated”), at

the time they arrived in the US, while 15 mainstream Somalis (38.5%) reported themselves as “single” at the time of arrival. Somali Bantu respondents were arriving in the US at older ages, making it a greater likelihood that they would already be married, and because Somali Bantu refugees were granted a special group resettlement by the US Immigration Service this involved the resettlement of entire families. Many mainstream Somali respondents were sponsored individually by preceding relatives.

Because arriving with a spouse provides the potential for greater emotional and financial support as well as the possibility of sharing childcare and household responsibilities, it is likely that arriving together is an advantage for adapting to a new environment. However if a group has experienced high levels of discrimination before arriving it is also likely that it will be hard to determine if this possible advantage displays itself over time.

To test the hypothesis that Somali Bantu respondents frequently arrived in the US accompanied by their spouse a McNemar test was used. Two variables “Are you Somali Bantu?” and “Did you arrive in the US with your husband?” were analyzed with a sample size of 37, with 13 Somali Bantu respondents and 24 mainstream respondents (Table 6-15). Some respondents did not answer this question because either they were not married at the time of migration or perhaps omitted it. The outcome is significant with a value of .001, showing that these two characteristics are highly associated with each other. If a respondent is Somali Bantu it is more likely that she arrived in the US with her husband, or reverse.

Resettlement Locations

Observing migration characteristics of the Somali Bantu respondents, of the 16 group total, only one Somali Bantu woman did not arrive in the Atlanta metropolitan area as her initial destination city in the US. The other 15 respondents arrived in the Atlanta area as their initial host destination city. Hypothesizing that Somali Bantu respondents currently residing in the

Atlanta region are likely experiencing Atlanta as their first residence location in the US, in contrast to mainstream Somali respondents that are perhaps in a second-step migration location in Atlanta, a McNemar test was applied with a highly significant outcome (Table 6-16). Through this analysis it is determined that if a respondent is Somali Bantu it is highly likely that Atlanta is her first place of residence in the United States, and given that Somali Bantu respondents have on average arrived later, this is to be expected.

When observing home residency zip code identifications for Somali Bantu respondents, the majority of respondents lived in Clarkston (10) and Decatur (4). This corresponds closely with the mainstream residential characteristics. However, there are distinct sections of condominium complexes that house primarily Somali Bantu families. The community leaders frequently pointed this out while driving through predominately Somali residential areas.

Providing insight into homeownership of Somali Bantu respondents, Table 6-17 shows that of the 16 Somali Bantu respondents only 2 (12.5%) are homeowners, whereas of 42 mainstream respondents, 14 (33.3%) are homeowners. With increasing length of residency in the United States it seems likely that this may change.

To identify the spatial distribution of Somali Bantu across the United States the best tool, beyond information from community leaders, is by accessing Somali Bantu websites. US Census data does not request a distinction between mainstream and minority groups so other methods must be applied. Also because Somali Bantu have been granted resettlement under a large program, it is likely that specific enclaves of this minority group would develop because of group resettlement in cities that have available jobs requiring no English or special skills, as well as low-cost housing. As a result Somali Bantu communities are developing in many small American cities that previously have not hosted immigrants. Headquarter locations provided on

the website of the National Somali Bantu Organization (<http://www.somalibantu.com/>) include: Atlanta (GA) – main office, Columbus (OH), Charlotte (NC), Erie (PA), Louisville (KY), Memphis (TN), Minnesota (MN), Orange County (CA), Rochester (MN), St. Louis (MI), San Diego (CA), Springfield (MA), Tucson (AZ), and Dallas (TX).

Observing the responses of Somali Bantu respondents about spatial preferences, the most frequently identified American cities for second step migration destinations are Columbus (OH), and Lewiston (ME), and Seattle (WA). Somali Bantu respondents have identified some different locations that have not been noted by mainstream respondents. These include Los Angeles, New York City, and Portland (OR) as either second or third favorite city choices. This may indicate some new emerging patterns of settlement for Somali Bantu that differs from mainstream Somalis.

Conclusion

Many factors can detract from or enhance a migrant's ability to adapt to a new host environment, and this include such variables as language ability, educational level, marital and family status, networks, and mobility. According to researchers Dyck and McLaren (2004) and Hein (2006) an immigrant's previous status in the homeland can affect their ability to adapt in a host country.

In the case of Somali Bantu refugees that are arriving in the United States today, it is likely that due to many factors this group continues to suffer from disadvantages that begin in Somalia, extend through the years spent in refugee camps, and are consequently played out during the resettlement process. By observing the contrasts between Somali Bantu respondents and mainstream respondents, it is apparent that some differences exist. Notably the impetus for migration for the Somali Bantu population, as documented by Catherine Besteman (1999), is particularly violent due to being a targeted during military skirmishes in the riverine region , or

the “triangle of death”. Second, during the years of displacement, Somali Bantu were disadvantaged in gaining resettlement opportunities, thus residing in camps longer, and finally as a result were granted a special group resettlement by US Immigration Services. Due to these various events, upon arrival in the US, Somali Bantu are displaying significant differences in their advantages for adaptation, such as having a preceding relative to provide knowledge and support, knowledge of Western urban environments, and mobility.

Not all outcomes of the analysis provided a negative perspective for the Somali Bantu respondents’ migration experience. Two important significant differences that existed, Somali Bantu respondents frequently migrated with spouses and family, as well as all Somali Bantu respondents expressed their feelings that the quality of their lives had improved since migration to the United States.

These outcomes suggest that although Somali Bantu respondents may experience several disadvantages in the adaptation process in the United States today, they also have some potentially positive advantages as well, notably often being resettled with their entire family. Although this is an extra financial burden in the US, it has the effect of reducing both the amount of remittances sent as well as the worry and loneliness if mothers were separated from their husbands or children. Interestingly, because Somali Bantu respondents unanimously gave positive responses about their quality of life in the US, it implies that perhaps due to the discrimination suffered in Somalia and camp, they are more satisfied with the potential they feel that life in America offers them.

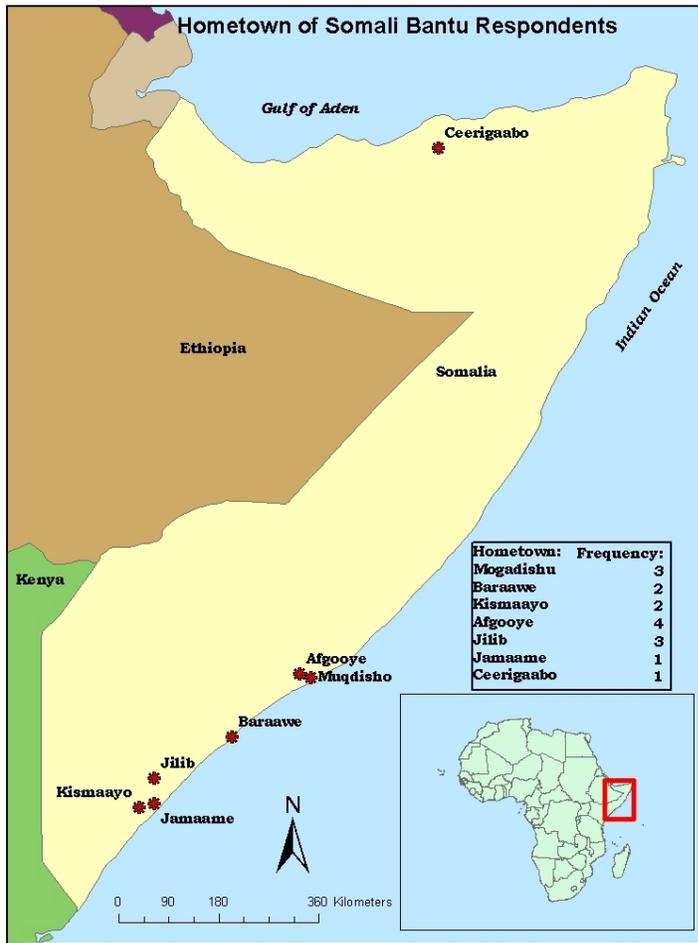


Figure 6-1. Hometowns identified by Somali Bantu respondents

Table 6-1. Years spent in camp by respondents (Mann-Whitney Test)

		N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
Somali Bantu	Yes	16	39.59	633.50
	No	42	25.65	1077.50
	Total	58		

Test Statistic: $p = .005$

Table 6-2. Relatives in Somalia and Somali Bantu (McNemar Test)

		Relatives in Somalia	
Somali Bantu		Yes	No
Yes		11	5
No		37	4

Test Statistics: N = 57; p = .000

Table 6-3. Remittances sent by Somali Bantu respondents (McNemar Test)

		Remittances	
Somali Bantu		Yes	No
Yes		10	6
No		33	9

Test Statistics: N = 58; p = .000

Table 6-4. Marital status of Somali Bantu respondents

		Single	Married	Divorced	Separated	Widowed	Total
Somali Bantu	Yes		13	1	1	1	16
	No	4	31	3		4	42
Total		4	44	4	1	5	58

Table 6-5. Somali Bantu respondents and children (McNemar Test)

		Children	
Somali Bantu		Yes	No
Yes		16	0
No		37	5

Test Statistics: N = 58; p = .000

Table 6-6. Somali Bantu respondents and years of US residency (Mann-Whitney Test)

		N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
Somali Bantu	Yes	16	16.72	267.50
	No	42	34.37	1443.50
Total		58		

Test Statistic: p = .000

Table 6-7. Somali Bantu respondents with family preceded in the US (McNemar Test)

Somali Bantu	Family preceded	
	Yes	No
Yes	3	13
No	26	16

Test Statistics: N = 58; p = .055

Table 6-8. US Citizenship status of Somali Bantu respondents

		US citizenship		Total
		Yes	No	
Somali Bantu	Yes	2	14	16
	No	26	16	42
Total		28	30	58

Table 6-9. Somali Bantu respondents' English skills at time of arrival in the US

		English skills		Total
		Yes	No	
Somali Bantu	Yes	3	12	15
	No	9	32	41
Total		12	44	56

Table 6-10. Education level and Somali Bantu respondents

	Somali Bantu		Total
	Yes	No	
No formal schooling	10	17	27
Elementary	3	12	15
Secondary	2	10	12
Total	15	39	54

Table 6-11. Somali Bantu respondents' knowledge of urban living skills at the time of arrival in the US (McNemar Test)

Urban knowledge		
Somali Bantu	Yes	No
Yes	6	10
No	22	20

Test Statistics: N = 58; p = .052

Table 6-12. Somali Bantu respondents that have driver's licenses (McNemar Test)

Driver's license		
Somali Bantu	Yes	No
Yes	6	9
No	32	9

Test Statistics: N = 56; p = .001

Table 6-13. Somali Bantu respondent's self perception of life quality improvement after migration to the US (McNemar Test)

Quality of life improvement		
Somali Bantu	Yes	No
Yes	16	0
No	39	2

Test Statistics: N = 57; p = .000

Table 6-14. Somali Bantu respondents' marital status upon arrival in the US

Marital status upon arrival						Total
		Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed	
Somali Bantu	Yes	2	12	1	1	16
	No	15	23	2	1	41
Total		17	35	3	2	58

Table 6-15. Somali Bantu respondents migrating with spouse (McNemar Test)

Arrived together with spouse		
Somali Bantu	Yes	No
Yes	11	2
No	16	8

Test Statistics: N = 37; p = .001

Table 6-16. Atlanta as first residence for Somali Bantu respondents (McNemar Test)

Atlanta as first residence		
Somali Bantu	Yes	No
Yes	15	1
No	36	6

Test Statistics: N = 58; p = .000

Table 6-17. Somali Bantu respondents and homeownership

Somali Bantu	Homeownership		Total
	Yes	No	
	2	14	16
	14	28	42
Total	16	42	58

CHAPTER 7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of Somali refugee women and their adaptation process during the post migration process in Atlanta, Georgia. Therefore basically three points of analysis have been focused upon, first the background experience from which these women arrive, second the adaptation strategies and changes that have occurred as coping mechanisms, as well as spatial preferences in their new host environment, and the final point of analysis contrasts the post migration experience of Somali Bantu respondents with their mainstream Somali counterparts.

This chapter provides a listing of the findings as related to each initial hypothesis, followed by a discussion of the limitations of the study, and future research.

Hypotheses and Findings

Related to the Sample Itself

H1a: Somali female refugees (notably Somali Bantu) tend to be from rural societies and often lack the social skills, language ability, and educational or technical knowledge needed to adapt to modern Western cities.

Almost half of the respondents (27) had no formal schooling at the time they entered the US, and nearly 50 % of the respondents described themselves as having little or no knowledge of the skills needed to live in a modern and sophisticated urban environment. The great majority of the respondents, 75%, reported that they had no English speaking ability when arriving in the US. There was a statistically validated relationship between those that had some previous English language ability and those that had the skills needed for living in Western cities.

H1b. Frequently Somali females arrive as single household heads, and are responsible for several dependents.

Over half of the respondents (33) were married at the time of resettlement into the US. Many of the respondents that had married in camp already had children by the time of resettlement. Of these 33 married respondents, 27 were accompanied by their spouse during the resettlement process.

Most of the study group respondents were married at the time of the study (44 respondents), and all were married to Somali men except one, regardless of if they were married before entering the US or after resettlement.

Thirty-seven respondents reported being resettled with some or all of their children. At the time of the study, 57 respondents reported having children, with the average number of children being 4.47, and the range being from 1 to 12 children.

H1c. Many have experienced war atrocities (such as witnessing the deaths of family members, or being raped), languished in refugee camps for years, thus arriving in the US in a highly stressed and marginalized emotional and physical state.

Most of the study group had experienced some sort of war trauma, but as the study was undertaken this direction of inquiry had to be omitted due to the sensitivity of the topic.

H1d. One sub-group, the Somali Bantu, is an ethnic minority in Somalia. As a consequence of enduring particularly harsh treatment during the early war years, being highly marginalized in Somalia society, and being given special resettlement status by the US government, are likely to have more difficult adaptation and assimilation challenges than mainstream Somalis.

All Somali Bantu respondents described the quality of their life as “improving” since being resettled in the US. This was significantly different from mainstream Somalis, and it likely related to two factors: first, they have remained longer in refugee camps, and second this population experienced discrimination in their homeland. The youngest Somali Bantu women when arriving in the US were 17, 19 and 21, while the youngest mainstream respondents were 8, 11, and 14. Therefore, the Somali Bantu respondents were more likely to already have families and obligations, and if not, they were less likely to attend public schools and advance through the American educational system. Notably all Somali Bantu respondents that were married at the time of resettlement (12), except one, were accompanied by their spouse.

Related to Migration History and Future

H2a. Most of the migrants are refugees, but an increasing number today are entering under the Family Re-Unification Act of 1965, and sponsored by earlier family members that have become naturalized citizens.

All of the study respondents entered the US under refugee status, and most were sponsored either by the International Rescue Committee, or charities such as the Catholic Services or Church World Service. Exactly half of the study sample had family members that had preceded them to the US. Although many had family members that preceded them, not all could provide sponsorship for them through the *Affidavit of Relationship* (proving evidence of a legal relationship between a refugee applicant overseas and an anchor relative in the US), yet regardless this relative provided much knowledge and a greater sense of security.

H2b. Most refugees have been uprooted from their homeland due to the prolonged civil war that is ongoing in Somalia. Most migrants have arrived in the US through a step migration process, first being located in a refugee camp, neighboring country, or another Western nation (or succession of these). Relatives and friends often provide a conduit for migration, assisting newcomers with both information and resources, making migration into the US desirable and possible. Strong economic and political motives function as “push” factors, while perceived economic opportunities, social services benefits, and reunification with family members in the US/Atlanta area operate as ‘pull’ factors.

The greatest majority of the respondents (81%) fled to refugee camps along the Kenyan border, with most respondents spending an average of 6.5 years in camp, with the longest residence being 15 years in camp and the shortest was only 1 year. At the time respondents arrived in camp, their ages ranged from 2 to 67 years old, and the mean age was 23.3 years old.

H2c. Despite the many hardships and marginalized status encountered by new Somali refugees, they appear to have a strong positive spirit about their move to the United States. They usually tend to become naturalized citizens as quickly as possible and seem to hold little hope of returning to their homeland.

The overwhelming majority (55 respondents) described the quality of their life in the US, as improving from previous circumstances.

Nearly half of the study respondents (27) have become naturalized citizens. Of the remaining 31 respondents, 29 indicated that they desired and planned for obtaining citizenship at the earliest possible time with regards to required length of residency and the money needed to initiate the process. The shortest length of residency by the study group before attaining US citizenship was 9 years, but the greatest proportion (14 respondents) became naturalized citizens after living in the US 11 or 12 years.

Related to Relationship towards the Mother Country

H3a. Due to the extremely dangerous conditions and marginal political state in Somalia since 1991, most migrants' only contact with their homeland is through regular phone calls and remittance sending. Few seem to feel that there will be an opportunity to return home to a stable and productive life, therefore due to many years of displacement, most seem to accept the idea of a permanent residence here in the United States.

Very few of the respondents, only 12, had actually returned for a visit to Somalia or had a family member that had done so.

H3b. Remittance sending is a vital part of Somali females' commitment to maintaining relations with family members remaining in Somalia. The necessity of receiving remittances from the US tends to elevate the status and decision-making power of Somali women within both the family and broader community.

The majority of respondents, 43 (74%) sent remittances back to Somalia indicating that there is a continuing tie to their mother country. Only about a quarter reported sending remittances to refugee camps and this is reflected in the total annual amounts reported by respondents. Almost \$90,000 was the total estimated remittances sent by respondents annually to Somalia, while the estimated annual total to camps was \$26,500, with a combined annual estimated total of \$116,325. Over half of the respondents indicated that they singularly made the decision to send remittances back home or to camps.

Related to Spatial Preferences

H4a. Initially Somali immigrants have little ability to select either their city or neighborhood in which to reside due to sponsorship programs. Yet the development of ethnic enclaves has occurred in many American cities, and Atlanta displays this characteristic.

The majority of respondents, 88% (51), were initially resettled in the Atlanta metropolitan region. Thirty-eight respondents identified Atlanta as their first favorite American city to reside in.

H4b. Second-step migrations in the US appear to be motivated by the perception of better social benefits or economic opportunities (such as the migration to Lewistown, Maine and into

the more rural areas of Minnesota and Wisconsin) as well as the desire to be located near relatives. Because of the ‘push’ factors of the high cost of living expenses and competition for social services in the Atlanta area, some Somali females desire to relocate.

Only 7 respondents have relocated to Atlanta in a second-step migration process. Many of these have indicated they relocated because of having a sibling, parent or relative in Atlanta, or due to marriage. Notably this motivation for relocation to be near family will likely continue to cause the Somali community in Atlanta to grow as many of the current Somali residents gain their citizenship and can sponsor relatives abroad to join them in the US. Although Atlanta is reputedly a “tough” city in which to make a livelihood, as described by respondents, the “pull” of family is strong for immigrants. Also, as indicated by 66% of the study group identifying Atlanta as their first favorite American city, familiarity with an environment tends to make it preferable to the unknown.

Related to Place of Residence

H5a. Somali immigrants tend to cluster within urban enclaves. This provides them with access to the special ethnic foods and products (i.e. halal foods, special religious/cultural attire) as well as religious and social activities with which they are familiar.

Study respondents resided in seven zip code areas of the northeastern Atlanta metropolitan area.

H5b. Somali refugees are clustered in the northeastern region of the Atlanta metropolitan area. This enclave includes primarily three cities, Clarkston, Stone Mountain, and Decatur.

The zip codes of study respondents were located in Clarkston, Decatur, Scottdale, Stone Mountain, and Tucker, all cities that are adjacent to each other.

Related to Work

H6a. Somali female refugees are most likely to be engaged in minimum wage, entry-level employment, with no language or skill requirements. Frequently this involves work in airport security, sanitation, and restaurant jobs within the Atlanta metropolitan area. These jobs do not have any relationship to the employment activities previously undertaken in Somalia (human capital theory).

Exactly half of the study group was employed at the time of the study. Although few had any formal education, 67% of those employed (20 of 30 respondents) held jobs at warehouses.

H6b. Somali females are often limited in their employment opportunities due to their reliance on either public transportation or car pools within their ethnic community, as well as childcare responsibilities. Length of residence naturally plays a part in their residential and mobility limitations (either relocating or attaining a driver's license). A marital partner enhances the potential for 'double-shift' employment (each person participating in daily childcare), as well as providing a dual household income.

Although many of the study group did not have adequate English speaking abilities, 66% (38 respondents) had obtained driver's licenses. So although respondents had to pass an English exam to qualify for a license, they somehow managed this. Also noteworthy, is the fact that all 38 that held a license also either personally owned a car, or they mutually owned a vehicle with their spouse.

Many respondents, 34 out of a sample size of 42, indicated that their husbands desired them to have formal employment. Respondents noted that although it is not traditional Somali culture to have a wife contributing to a household income, in the US it is often a necessity.

H6c. The domestic service industry, which has historically been a kind of 'passport' employment opportunity for unskilled immigrant women arriving in large American cities, has not been readily available for Somali female refugees. This is due to the extreme 'cultural distance' of Somalis as perceived by the American mainstream ('othering' theory).

None of the respondents worked in the domestic labor industry which has been a traditional employment option for immigrant women.

H6d. Somali females' use of social networks (social network theory) is likely the most useful method to find employment or better employment opportunities.

Most respondents reported finding employment through social networks. Very few used employment agencies, although a few used agencies that catered specifically to refugee groups.

H6e. Somali women are willing to make human capital investments (ESL, educational, and vocational classes) to gain promotions or better jobs. Age is likely to be a factor affecting such an undertaking, with younger migrant women more likely to engage in such activities. Somali females also display entrepreneurial characteristics and this is most likely to be expressed in engagement of ethnic enterprises (concept of ‘ethnic economy’, segmented assimilation theory).

It was found that the younger the respondent, the more desire and optimism was expressed about gaining more education.

Only 3 respondents had college degrees and held the following jobs, nurse, social worker, and business owner. The one respondent that was a business owner sold special clothing catering to the Somali community.

H6f. Participation in formal employment activities and investments in human capital are likely to enhance a Somali woman’s sense of empowerment (decision-making) and status within the household and broader community.

Thirty-five respondents indicated they felt formal employment increased their decision making authority within the household. Some respondents who had been employed previously, but were not employed at the time of the study, expressed a positive affirmation of this as well.

H6g. Somali females face potential discrimination if adhering to Islamic dress codes (head covering, hajib). This attire could either prevent her from gaining employment or restrict her employment opportunities due to feeling of extreme ‘cultural distance’ by potential employers (‘othering’ theory).

Respondents that had experienced some problem at the workplace (18) described this as being related to basically two things, either their attire being unacceptable for safety reasons, or the inability of the employer to provide a break for prayer time. Two respondents had lost their job just two weeks before participating in this study, and this was due to the employer denying them break time for prayer.

Related to Religious Activities and Practice

H7a. Somali female migrants use religious activities to reproduce and reinterpret Somali culture/traditions in the US/Atlanta area. Religious activities are used as an important

networking time (social network theory), as well as for gaining emotional support from other women.

All respondents identified their religious activities as vital to their sense of identity and community.

H7b. A more strict interpretation of Islamic dress codes and practice, as compared to previous practices in Somalia, provides Somali women in the US/Atlanta area with an identity ('othering' theory) in a cultural foreign environment. Intensified practice provides an emotional anchor in a time of change and hardship (modernization theory).

Many described their religious experience as becoming deeper due the traumas that they had suffered and in some cases continue to suffer. As a result their religious practice has become more pronounced and although 54 respondents said they wore head coverings and long clothing at the time of the study, 17 respondents described having begun wearing more covering since leaving Somalia.

Related to Mutual Relationships

H8a. There appear to be generational tensions surrounding the immigrant's family over the adaptation process in the United States. The lack of English ability and general mainstream American cultural knowledge can lead to the loss of control or status with children.

Although they faced challenges such as coping with financial constraints and dealing with their children who are adopting American culture, this was preferable to remaining in refugee camps hoping for repatriation that may never become a reality. Most felt that their children had adjusted well after the initial language barrier was broken. Some expressed concern that they would fall into the "wrong" crowd, and a few had experienced this situation.

H8b. The loneliness of separation from both immediate and extended family members appears to be common among the immigrants. Also the feeling of alienation by the American mainstream presents itself, accompanied by difficulties in adjusting to American lifestyles.

Respondents had a strong relationship with family left behind in either Somalia or refugee camps, 83% had remaining relatives. As a result over 50% of the respondents said they maintained very frequent contact or often had contact with these family members, primarily by phone calls or email. They also exchanged videos of important family events.

The majority, 74%, expressed their feelings of acceptance by the mainstream American community in Atlanta, yet some had mixed feelings based primarily on rude comments from the public, or stares primarily directed towards their Islamic attire. The respondents who were or had been employed reported feeling the most comfortable with other ethnic groups

Limitations of Study and Future Research

The limitations of this study include basically seven different factors: 1) it has a relatively small sample size of 58 respondents; 2) the study has focused only upon the female perspective of the post migration experience of Somali refugees; 3) this study examines only one sub-ethnic group, the Somali Bantu and interview questions were limited due to the translator being a mainstream Somali; 4) due to sensitivity surrounding clan affiliation among Somali refugees, this subject has been omitted; 5) the information gathered from the survey questionnaire has purposely omitted inquiry about traumas suffered in the war; 6) the study has been limited to one geographic location; and 7) this study has been conducted with limited funds and time constraints. The following explanations are provided for each circumstance as well as the potential for directions of future research.

The relatively small sample size has the potential to limit observations that could include different post migration experiences of the Somali female community in Atlanta. Having a larger sample is always desirable because it allows less chance to “miss” possible perspectives and conditions affecting a particular population. However due to the relatively small community size (approximately 5,000), this sample was reasonable. Future projects could perhaps be enhanced with large study samples if funds and time permit.

This study was undertaken to include only a feminine perspective of the post migration experience and it purposely omitted the male experience. However, although much literature is needed to enhance knowledge about the feminine experience and this study provides such a contribution, it is important to have gendered analysis to provide a broader view of the study

group. Therefore one of the directions for future research in this area of analysis would be to conduct additional studies using a gendered approach.

The undertaking of analysis of a sub-ethnic group, the Somali Bantu, is an initial attempt to identify differences among the greater Somali population in the US today. The Somali Bantu are the most notable group likely due to their large numbers and previous history of discrimination in their homeland. Therefore, because of their visibility and larger numbers, this study provides a contrasting analysis to the mainstream Somali respondents. However, in this area of analysis the study is limited because other sub-ethnicities do exist within the broader Somali community. Two additional groups identified during the study by Somali community leaders are the Benadir and Baraawe groups. Also an occasional reference in literature is made to the Benadir sub-group because of discrimination suffered during the early years of the civil war and consequential special US resettlement program provided for them in 1996. Due to small numbers of such groups in the Atlanta community, this study has not included this focus, however in future research this would be a likely point for exploration. One important point to address when conducting such research is to have appropriate translators and interviews that provide a neutral environment for respondents.

Media reports and research is often focused upon the role clanship and clan affiliation play in Somali society and the conflicts that have arisen between clans directly relating to the civil war. Yet this is a very complex topic that demands much careful examination to attempt an understanding from an “outsider’s” perspective. Therefore due to the sensitivity of this topic and the likelihood that respondents could be offended by questions regarding clan affiliation, most likely resulting in compromised data, this topic has been omitted from the study. To undertake this type of research a very carefully constructed study would need to be undertaken.

Almost equally difficult to investigate are the war traumas that the study group has endured. Although many respondents voluntarily spoke about their experiences either in conflict zones, during the exodus journey out of Somalia, or during their years residing in refugee camps this was not an inquiry topic for the study. It was also omitted due to the sensitivity of the topic and out of respect for the pain and suffering that respondents have endured. This is a vital topic however, and needs more investigation to determine both the short and long-term emotional and physical effects that impact migrants during their post migration process. This is especially important in studies about women because so few studies have been conducted to identify the traumas that women specifically suffer during conflict and its' manifestations on their future well-being as individuals, wives, and mothers.

One of the most important limitations of this study is its geographical constraints. Although Atlanta represents an older, stable Somali community in the US that has a sizable Somali population, and therefore provides a fairly typical portrait of the resettlement experience for Somali refugees, it is only one location in the US. To advance this study, additional locations could be considered to enhance the data collected in Atlanta and compare and contrast the results. Including perhaps a much larger established Somali community such as Minneapolis, and a community located in a smaller, American city such as Tucson could provide additional insights. Also because the US is territorially large this would also illuminate possible regional differences between, a southern, northern, and western city. Such geographical objectives can be utilized in future research.

The funding and time constraints of this study have made only initial research possible, and has limited the study sample to a relatively small number of respondents. To effectively participate in a community it is necessary to have regular visitation to gain knowledge and

develop relationships. Unfortunately for this study such conditions were limited because of both lack of funding, and the lengthy travel involved to the study site. However, with the knowledge and contacts gained from this initial research a more defined and appropriately constructed study can be developed for the future.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Betty Anne Lininger is a native of Montana, but resided in Los Angeles, California for most of her adult life. She began her college education when her children were teenagers, gaining first a B.A. in Geography, then continuing to receive an M.A. in Geography as well, at California State University, Los Angeles. Immediately upon completion of these degrees she was accepted into the Geography doctoral program at the University of Florida in 2004. Upon completion of her Ph.D. program, Betty will return to Los Angeles to pursue an academic career.