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The Forgotten Minority—the Experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu Students in Higher Education: “I Don’t Even Exist at This Institution. I’m Barely Recognized as a Human Being”.

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

THE FORGOTTEN MINORITY— THE EXPERIENCES OF SOMALI-JAREER BANTU
STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: “I don’t even exist at this institution. I’m barely
recognized as a human being”.

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

BY
ARLI Y. MOHAMED

CHICAGO, IL

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine how students of Somali-Jareer Bantu descent experience education, particularly how they navigate higher education in the United States and how they make meaning of their experiences. Grounded in a descriptive phenomenological approach, the design method includes semi-structured individual and focus group interviews, with a holistic interpretative phenomenological analysis as a method of data analysis. This study utilizes descriptive phenomenology to investigate how Somali-Jareer Bantu students experience higher education in the U.S. and make meaning of their multiple identities as they navigate higher education environments. Using this methodological approach, the following questions guide this study's review of the literature and framing of its research questions: (1) What is the experience of Black immigrants in U.S. higher education? (2) What is the known status of Somali-Jareer Bantus, particularly regarding their immigration status, background, and relationship to the major Somali ethnic groups? (3) What is the experience of Somali-Jareer Bantus in the educational systems of Somalia and the U.S.?

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Higher education dynamics have continued to fluctuate with the varying degrees of globalization. As the world evolves, so will the nature of education and its recipients. Access to education has now more than ever become fluid. Higher education institutions have become a hub for many students from various racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. Therefore, higher education institutions must align their goals and services to meet the learning needs of students from diverse backgrounds. Considering persistent disparities in higher education attainment by demographic background, higher education institutions need to draw their attention to the unique experiences of students from historically marginalized populations. Such a population includes students identifying as Somali Bantu (Somali-Jareer Bantu) refugee students from Somalia. Due to their marginalization within their respective ethnic minority group in Somalia, the literature often lumps this population with dominant Somali ethnic groups, thereby negating their presence and generalizing their needs in higher education with those of students from dominant Somali ethnic groups and other minority students alike.

The discussion of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education and the realm of education, in general, could be more extensive. Because individual attainment of higher education benefits the general society's upward mobility, improving Somali-Jareer Bantu students' college experience calls for much-needed attention within the higher education realm. Therefore, improving the college experience of this highly marginalized student population requires a comprehensive scan into the literature as well as a commitment within the higher

education community (Baber, 2018; Chen & Carroll, 2005; Perna, 2015; Redford & Hoyer, 2017; Shupp, 2009; Petty, 2014; Toutkoushian, May-Trifiletti, & Clayton, 2021). As such, higher education institutions must be knowledgeable about the ethnic minority backgrounds of Somali-Jareer Bantu students to begin understanding their unique experiences in the education system and beyond. With this approach, higher education institutions can embark on a journey to recognize the presence of Somali-Jareer Bantu students on their campuses in the United States and address the countless barriers limiting their access to a meaningful educational experience like their counterparts. Only then can we hope for higher education institutions to begin implementing strategies that include efforts better to serve the educational needs of Somali-Jareer Bantu students. This effort will then serve as a step forward to raise global awareness of their presence on college campuses and further improve their educational journeys.

Examining sources regarding the general Somali-Jareer Bantu population reveals that the literature has historically situated this ethnic minority group incorporation with dominant Somali ethnic groups. In doing so, most literature has grouped Somalia as a homogenous nation. This notion of homogeneity of the Somali state indicates that all Somalians are of the same nomadic culture while directly or indirectly continuing to erase a non-nomadic version of Somalia's literature practiced by a portion of other ethnic minority communities in Somalia, including the Somali-Jareer Bantu ethnic minority group (Lehman & Eno, 2003; Ingiriis, 2012; Eno & Eno, 2014). As an ethnic description, some of the literature uses the term 'Jareer' to refer to the Somali Bantu minority population. While some scholars associate Jareer with the Somali Bantus' ethnicity, it is politically derogative depending on the context of its use. Using Jareer to identify the wholeness of the Somali Bantu population does not legitimize a unified identification of this ethnic identity among all members of this community, as some members'

interpretation of the term differs from others. Despite the over-normalization of the term, among other factors such as an unspoken unity of tribal marginalization of the Somali Bantu community among other Somalians from dominant ethnic groups, some Somali Bantus proudly communicate their interpretation of and identification with the term as part of their ethnicity while others may be comfortable with identifying with just Somali Bantu. As such, both Somali Bantu and Somali-Jareer Bantu may be used interchangeably throughout this study, not to give preference to one over the other. Some of the literature that may distinguish the Somali-Jareer Bantu community as an ethnic minority group from dominant Somali ethnic groups include the works of the following scholars (Besteman, 2012, 2016; Birman & Tran, 2015, 2017; Eno, 2008; Eno & Eno, 2008, 2014; Frounfelker, Tahir, Abdirahman & Betancourt, 2017, 2020; Giliomee, 2009; Gundel, 2009; Ingiriis, 2012; Jarratt, 2020; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003; Roxas, 2008, 2010; Roy & Roxas, 2011; Roxas & Roy, 2012; Smith, 2013; Springer, Black, Martz, Deckys & Soelberg, 2010).

As an ethnic minority group, the Somali-Jareer Bantu is a marginalized population in Somalia due to various racial and ethnic narratives negatively associated with their alleged origins (Eno & Eno, 2008, 2014). Such negative descriptions of the Somali-Jareer Bantu ethnic minority group in Somalia include their physical appearance, claiming that they display more prominent African-like features than those identifying with dominant Somali ethnic groups (Besteman, 2012; Gundel, 2009; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003). In terms of the origins of Somali-Jareer Bantus, some of the literature claims them as descendants of African countries, including Mozambique, Mali, West Africa, and Tanzania, brought to Somalia as part of the Arab slave trade (Besteman, 2016; Eno & Eno, 2008; Ingiriis, 2012; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Springer, Black, Martz, Deckys, & Soelberg, 2010).

Although literature surrounding the Somali-Jareer Bantu community often places their origin outside of Somalia, it is worth considering the groups of this community who maintain a clear understanding of their origins, whether linked to Somalia or not. Others may need more knowledge due to a lack of information and exclusion from Somalia's scholarship. While some groups in the Somali-Jareer Bantu community place their original roots in Somalia, their marginalization restricted them from claiming faithful citizenship and ownership of any part of the country (Eno & Eno, 2008). The literature surrounding the overall experiences of the Somali-Jareer Bantu population is either limited, merged with dominant Somali ethnic groups, or almost nonexistent in some contexts, such as higher education. Thus, the literature scan in this dissertation will also include an overview of black immigrants in higher education to provide an understanding of the limitation in research within other minority groups like the Somali-Jareer Bantu.

Regarding the flow of Black migration to the United States, the literature often focuses on Anglophone countries such as Ghana and Nigeria, limiting the discussion about the less globally integrated, educated, and well-off countries like Somalia (Capps et al., 2012; De Bruijn, Van Dijk, & Foeken, 2001; Flahaux & De Haas, 2016). While some scholars may touch base on Somalia in their discussion concerning black migration to the U.S., the discussion still heavily emphasizes anglophone African countries like Ghana and Nigeria, whose citizens do not generally enter the U.S. as refugees (Bakewell & Jonson, 2011; Berriane & De Haas, 2012; Bilger & Kraler, 2005; Bredeloup & Pliez, 2005; Capps, McCabe & Fix, 2012 & Foeken, 2001; Gordon, 1998). Somali ethnic minority populations entering the U.S. as refugees include the Somali-Jareer Bantu community. When the literature emphasizes anglophone countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, and other west African countries with experience in global integration and

education, to account for the discussion surrounding Black African migration to the U.S., it excludes underprivileged countries like Somalia from joining the global conversation of Black African migration flow to the U.S. While the majority of individuals from anglophone countries enter the U.S. through employment visas, individuals from Somalia access the U.S. as refugees and immigrants. Further, a brief review of the limited experiences of black refugees and immigrants in higher education will shed light on the almost nonexistent experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantus broadly.

Black immigrants' experiences in higher education are comparable to that of Somali-Jareer Bantu students. Both populations experience higher education differently than other immigrant and refugee student groups and U.S. native-born students. As individuals from immigrant and refugee backgrounds, such as Black immigrants and Somali-Jareer Bantu refugees, their educational journey is complex as they encounter unique challenges that drastically impact how they experience higher education (Stebleton, Rost-Banik, Greene, & DeAngelo, 2017). An aspect regarding the experiences of Black immigrants and refugees worth exploring is students' sense of belonging. Generally, educators have a significant influence on students' educational experiences. Intentional interaction between students and faculty is one strategy to enhance students' sense of belonging on college campuses, such as navigating the U.S. education system itself (Baber, 2012; Stebleton, Rost-Banik, Greene, & DeAngelo, 2017). Observing interactions with faculty and staff (i.e., academic advisors, counselors, etc.) can allow educators and practitioners to establish a space to understand how foreign-born, refugee, and immigrant college students interpret their surroundings and make meaning of their educational experiences. Further, higher education practitioners can align support services to meet Black

immigrant and refugee students' personal and educational needs to enhance their sense of belonging and educational journeys. The following section offers a rationale for the study.

Rationale for the Study

Research concerning the educational experiences of underrepresented student populations is broad in scope because it is not inclusive of all minority groups. While there is research about minority student populations, this information is a mere generalization for minority groups such as refugees with double minority status. Such disadvantaged double minority populations include Somali-Jareer Bantu students who often enter the U.S. as refugees (Besteman, 2016). As the research on Somalia is generally limited in scope, scholarship concerning the Somali-Jareer Bantu population is almost nonexistent in Somalia's research and U.S. higher education (Eno & Eno, 2008; Ingiriis, 2012; Lehman & Eno, 2003). Research concerning the educational experience of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in the U.S. is not only limited, but it often focuses on pre-postsecondary education from a male perspective, excluding the experiences of this student population beyond high school (Ingiriis, 2012; Roxas, 2010; Roy & Roxas, 2011; Roxas & Roy, 2012; Smith, 2013). Research has shown that the educational journeys of Somali-Jareer Bantu students are complex as they experience education differently than other marginalized populations (Besteman, 2012; Capps et al., 2012; De Bruijn, Van Dijk, & Foeken, 2001; Flahaux & De Haas, 2016; Menkhaus, 2003; Stebleton et al., 2017; Van Dijk). In the context of higher education, Somali-Jareer Bantu students may often experience a loss of belonging on campus. Thus, the sense of loss and lack of belonging within their college campus environment may be due to a lack of support, which may hinder their ability to persist in their educational pursuits (Birman & Tran, 2017; Frounfelker, Tahir, Abdirahman & Betancourt, 2017).

As the state of higher education continues to change, it is crucial to understand the needs of students, especially those from marginalized backgrounds, and how they navigate their collegiate environments and make meaning of their experiences. Acknowledging the presence of Somali-Jareer Bantu students on U.S. college campuses is essential to understanding their needs to persist in higher education and successfully navigate their educational experiences. Thus, this research study hopes to contribute to the body of literature concerning the experiences of marginalized student populations, especially Somali-Jareer Bantu students whose experience in education is extremely limited and almost nonexistent in research and beyond. With this study, I aim to raise awareness of the presence of Somali-Jareer Bantu students on college campuses by exploring the challenges they endure due to their experiences as marginalized individuals. In the next section is the statement of the problem, highlighting the importance of addressing how Somali-Jareer Bantu students experience higher education in the U.S., particularly within the context of navigating higher education environments.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to address the need for more research surrounding the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students on college campuses and their general presence beyond pre-postsecondary education. The Somali-Jareer Bantu community is an ethnically marginalized population whose scholarship has been deemed unworthy by Somalia's government, thus almost erasing their existence from Somalia's history (Eno & Eno, 2008, 2014; Lehman & Eno, 2003). The existing insubstantial literature which attempts to explore this student population focuses on pre-postsecondary education, which heavily relies on a male perspective and ultimately needs a female perspective. The experience of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education is almost nonexistent. Thus, the need for the exploration of this topic. While the educational

history of Somali-Jareer Bantus in Somalia is restrictive due to their lack of access to educational pursuits and other participation in Somalia's mainstream society, their history in education in the U.S. is different as this population has been pursuing higher education in great numbers. However, due to their marginalization and unique experiences, they face many challenges, making their presence unknown and further intensifying the complexity of their collegiate journey. Due to the insufficient data on this student population, there needs to be more awareness regarding their presence in higher education which leaves them even more vulnerable. As mentioned, these students come from a marginalized background with limited experience in formal schooling. The U.S. classroom often serves as the first introduction to formal schooling for many Somali Bantus. Therefore, exploring their process of navigating higher education environments is critical to encourage their persistence and success in higher education.

Raising awareness of the presence of Somali-Jareer Bantu students beyond pre-postsecondary education is one way to support these students with their experience in higher education. Most Somali-Jareer Bantu student population research guides from a newcomer perspective, which often relies on their refugee experiences in the U.S. (Ingiriis, 2012; Roxas, 2011; Smith, 2013). Research regarding Somali-Jareer Bantu students in the U.S. education system also leads from a male perspective in a pre-postsecondary education setting. Scholarship about the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education is almost nonexistent. As students navigate challenging campus settings, it is vital to address the complexities of their unique experiences (Birman & Tran, 2017; Smith et al., 2019). This study addresses how Somali-Jareer Bantu students experience higher education in the U.S. and how they navigate their multiple identities, interpret their worlds, and make meaning of their experiences. This study also alludes to a larger context of raising awareness of their presence in higher education

institutions and beyond. The following sections highlight the research questions guiding this study, the study's significance, an overview of this study, and some key terminology mentioned throughout the study.

Research Questions

Due to their marginalization in Somalia and the U.S., Somali-Jareer Bantu students have unique experiences and challenges when navigating their educational experiences and negotiating their ethnic identities on college campuses, especially in a foreign environment. Through a general examination of their educational experience in the U.S., this study aims to explore how Somali-Jareer Bantu students negotiate their multiple identities (i.e., ethnicity) while navigating new higher education environments. Examining how Somali-Jareer Bantu students navigate their experiences with their multiple identities will further situate how they navigate their broad experience in higher education settings. Guiding this study are the following research questions: (1) How do Somali-Jareer Bantu students make meaning of their educational experience while negotiating their multiple identities (i.e., ethnicity) in higher education? (2) How do Somali-Jareer Bantu students identify with their Bantu/Jareer ethnic identity in and outside higher education settings? (3) How do Somali-Jareer Bantu students navigate their ethnic identity during their experience in higher education?

Study Significance

As previously mentioned, research has shown that the Somali-Jareer Bantu population experiences and continues to face marginalization in the educational system of Somalia due to their oppressed ethnic identity (Bestemen, 2016; Eno & Eno, 2008, 2014; Lehman & Eno, 2003), thus calling for the need and importance for their sense of belonging in their college campus environments. When creating an inclusive campus environment, it is natural for higher

education institutions to face challenges (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Patton, 2006). However, for students to feel a sense of belonging on any college campus, their institution must provide them with a sense of connection to their campus culture and community (Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996; Stewart, 2009; Strayhorn, 2012). Students need to feel that they belong on their college campus. The lack of belonging on campus is further enhanced for students from minority backgrounds, especially at Predominantly White institutions (PWI). Higher education institutions must create inclusive spaces allowing students to build community and cultivate support within their campuses. For students from minoritized backgrounds, finding a sense of connectedness and belonging on college campuses enhances their persistence (Strayhorn, 2012); therefore, higher education must continue to explore issues regarding the persistence and retention of minority students, especially Somali-Jareer Bantu students. Creating an inclusive campus environment that includes academic and social support services for Somali-Jareer Bantu students will help enhance their sense of belonging, improve retention and success, and ultimately enrich their overall experience in higher education.

Some scholars highlight how shared spaces on campus have helped underrepresented students build relationships and community on their college campuses (Baber, 2012; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Patton, 2006). While other marginalized student populations may find spaces on college campuses to boost their sense of belonging, research concerning Somali-Jareer Bantu students' college experiences remains substantially limited. While there may be spaces dedicated to other students of marginalized backgrounds to find comfort, build community, and explore their identities, there is no space dedicated to the community building, self-exploration, and success of Somali-Jareer Bantu students. Just like other students from minority backgrounds, it is also crucial for Somali-Jareer Bantu students to

have their own space to find comfort in their authentic selves among their peers. While there is research concerning the educational experiences of marginalized refugee and immigrant students of color, a gap in the literature remains as scholarship on the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education is nearly nonexistent. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap in the literature. Addressing this concern will allow for an opportunity to raise awareness of their presence in higher education in the U.S. and broadly. As such, this study aims to explore the educational experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students and how they navigate their educational experience while negotiating their multiple identities (i.e., ethnicity) within higher education spaces.

Study Overview

This dissertation seeks to share the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education by exploring how they navigate their multiple identities, like ethnicity, and how their meaning-making process impacts their overall educational experience. Chapter One introduces this dissertation's topic, and Chapter Two reviews relevant literature and the theoretical framework. Notably, the Second Chapter, which includes the literature review, provides a review of the literature regarding the experiences of black immigrant students in higher education, any available literature concerning the known status of the Somali-Jareer Bantu population with a historical context, and Somali-Jareer Bantu students in the U.S. educational system. Chapter Three covers my methodology, which includes the research design and rationale, research questions, reflexivity, data collection, co-researchers' demographics, and data analysis. Chapter Three focuses its discussion on a qualitative methodology, phenomenology, as a research design approach to explore the educational experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education. Chapter Four presents the findings from the data sources (fact

sheet, individual and focus group interviews, and online group discussion platform). Chapter Five presents a discussion of the findings from the previous chapter, the study's implications for practitioners, policy, and researchers, and a conclusion of final thoughts for the dissertation study.

Key Terminology

The following section will briefly provide definitions/descriptions of key terms to help compartmentalize some concepts in the body of this dissertation. To better understand the topic of discussion, this section briefly highlights these terms to further guide readers in making sense of the information presented.

Table 1. Key Terminology

Terminology		
Term	Meaning	Other Descriptions (if applicable)
Adoon	A derogatory term that translates to slave	<p>One way to begin to understand the severity of this term is to refer to the word 'nigger' when used by a White individual to refer to a black or African American individual.</p> <p>This term is the most racially derogatory and oppressive in all forms due to its link to the subjugation of the Somali-Jareer Bantu population to slavery and the belief among dominant ethnic Somalians that Somali Bantus are racially inferior to them and, therefore, their existence is unworthy.</p> <p>The use of adoon precedes the later use of Jareer to refer to Somali Bantus. Jareer is a racialized construction for the Somali government to continue its oppression of Somali ethnic minorities and justify its ideology that ethnic Somali minority groups like Somali Bantus are racially and ethnically inferior to dominant Somali ethnic groups.</p>

Bati (Baati)	Long dress worn by women in Somalia and other parts of Africa, especially East Africa.	
Chizigula (Kizigua/zigua)	Ethnic language of minorities from lower Jubba Valley who are descendants of enslaved Ziguas brought to Somalia.	
Clan	Kinship unit of Somali society	
Dadaab	Refugee camp in Kenya	
Dagahaley	Part of the Dadaab refugee camp	
Hagadera	Part of the Dadaab refugee camp	
IFO	Part of the Dadaab refugee camp	
Jareer	Hard (hair)	<p>A racialized term used by members of dominant Somali ethnic groups in reference to ethnic minority populations like the Somali Bantus. Jareer, literally hard hair, is the term that precedes the creation of the name Somali Bantu (Bestemen, 2016).</p> <p>The term, Jareer originates from the difference in hair between dominant ethnic Somalis and ethnic minorities. While the use of Jareer, when used among dominant Somali ethnic clans, is a politically racialized term that precedes the creation of the term Somali Bantu, when the term, Jareer is used among Somali Bantu communities, it references unity and pride in their ethnicity and culture among these communities.</p>
Jileec	Soft (hair)	(opposite of Jareer), means soft, used to describe non-ethnic minority Somalians (dominant ethnic Somalians use to refer to individuals belonging to their ethnic groups).

Jareer/Jileec	Hard/soft	The terms, Jareer and Jileec, are also used in reference to the texture of one's hair. As such, timo jareer (hard hair) is another term used among dominant Somalians to degrade ethnic Somali minorities like the Somali Bantu.
<i>Timo Jareer</i>	hard hair	Dominant Somalis use terms such as timo jareer and or Jareer as a reference to differentiate themselves from ethnic Somali minorities such as the Somali Bantu.
<i>Timo Jileec</i>	Soft hair	(opposite from timo jareer), means soft hair, which dominant Somalis use to refer to and differentiate themselves from Somali ethnic minorities.
Kakuma	Refugee camp in northern Kenya	This camp is where Somali Bantu refugees accepted for U.S. resettlement were relocated to await the remainder of the immigration process until their departure.
Maay Maay (Mai-Mai)	One of the dialects spoken by Somali Bantu ethnic minorities	It was one of the official languages of Somalia before the fall of Siyad Bare
Maxaa (Mahaa)/ Maxa-tiri	The dialect spoken by dominant ethnic groups	One of the official languages of Somalia (which later became the standard dialect in Somalia after the fall of Siyad Bare)
Ooji/Oji/Ogi	Today (Italian)	A racialized word to reference, unable to think beyond today. Derives its original meaning of 'today' from the Italian language.
AS & SAW (PBUH)	Peace be upon him/May peace be upon him	
Somali Bantu	Term created by international humanitarian agencies (in the 1990s) to describe the Somali ethnic minority population who fled Somalia to settle in refugee camps in Dadaab, Kenya.	
Wazigula/Wazigua	(also, Mashughuli) – Ethnic minority groups from the lower Jubba Valley who are descendants of enslaved Ziguas brought to Somalia.	

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literature Review

The primary purpose of a literature review is to aid the researcher in their pursuit to get a clear understanding of the topic of interest, informing readers on the topic and providing them with an understanding of the body of research available on a topic under investigation. A literature review is necessary for any study that investigates a specific phenomenon to prevent the researcher from relying on one study that may or may not be per results from other studies. As a guiding concept, Rhodes (2011) defines a *literature review* as "an account of what was previously published on a specific topic" (p. 1).

In this section, I aim to examine how Somali-Jareer Bantu refugee students experience higher education while highlighting the significance of understanding their double minority ethnic identity. I will begin with an exploration of the literature regarding the experiences of Black immigrants in U.S. higher education and the influence of federal immigration policies during the 1960s and 1980s that helped shape the migration of Black immigrants from parts of Africa. The purpose of this review is to use the available literature to learn what it could suggest about how Somali-Jareer Bantu students may experience higher education. Then, I will turn my attention to the ethnic minority status of the Somali Jareer-Bantu community through an examination of their sociocultural histories and U.S. immigration status to provide a foundation to understand their background and relationship to Somalians from dominant ethnic groups. The final section will focus on the educational experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu refugee students

in the U.S. and Somalia to learn about their educational presence in both societies. Holistically, the purpose of the literature review is to provide the need to create a theoretical framework to understand better how this study contributes to the ways Somali-Jareer Bantu students are represented or lack thereof in the literature of higher education. Further, the literature review is built on integrating sources of Black immigrants in higher education, the sociocultural histories of Somali-Jareer Bantu as an ethnically marginalized group in Somalia, their immigration status in the U.S., and their representation in Somalia and the U.S. in the context of education. An explanation of the theoretical framework will further provide a need to capture empirical research better to introduce this study topic from a unique perspective that is missing in higher education literature and beyond.

Experiences of Black Immigrant Students in Higher Education (U.S.)

In exploring the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu refugee students in higher education, it is essential to consider literature pertaining to the experiences of other similar populations. Therefore, the first section of this literature review will explore Black immigrants within the U.S. higher education system to review the scholarship related to Black immigrants to understand their experiences in higher education and situate the remainder of this literature review. The hope is for this review to provide a glimpse of what it may suggest about how Somali-Jareer Bantu refugee students may also experience higher education from this perspective. Research about Somali-Jareer Bantu students heavily focuses on pre-postsecondary education, which mainly examines their experience from a newcomer perspective and educators' expectations of them. A brief overview of Black immigrants' experiences in higher education could further reveal the gaps in the literature regarding the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education. Literature on the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher

education is limited and almost nonexistent, which presents an immediate need to explore this topic to push for the awareness and recognition of the presence of these students on U.S. college campuses and encourage higher education institutions to consider their needs in persistence and retention efforts.

Migration of Black African Immigrants

Black African immigration to North America goes as far back as European colonization; hence, the United States' long history of forced Black immigration through the slave trade of the past centuries. Now a U.S. territory, Puerto Rico is considered the first location of the recorded passage of enslaved people from Africa in 1519 (Capps, McCabe, & Fix, 2012). Capps et al. (2012) note that upon the end of the slave trade, 360,000 enslaved Africans landed in the United States out of an estimated 10 million enslaved Africans forcefully taken from Africa to the Western Hemisphere; hence, the country's significant Black population today. However, large-scale voluntary immigration from Africa has been a phenomenon in recent years. Cape Verde is the origin of the first recorded voluntary African migration to the United States during the early 1800s before the end of the slave trade in the late 1800s (Berriane & De Haas, 2012; Bilger & Kraler, 2005).

During the 1960s, the U.S. Congress made amendments to the country's immigration policy by passing the Hart–Celler Act or the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which abolished the National Origins Formula and removed de facto discrimination from the U.S. immigration policy (Hing, 1965). The act was later revised in 1990 with the establishment of the diversity visa lottery program. Further, this act set the foundation for current immigration laws, enacting language around requirements for primary means of immigration to the U.S. (through family reunification or employment categories). For family categories, the act requires the

presence of a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident spouse or parent for a prospective immigrant to enter the U.S. Although the 1965 Act may have stirred conversations around U.S. immigration policy, it had little to do with the facilitation of African migration. A closer look at African migration to the United States reveals that the vast majority entered as refugees or under a diversity visa lottery program established in 1990 (Immigration Policy Center, 2012).

However, the framework of the 1965 Act has provided the basis for some African migration and continues to serve as the foundation for future African immigrants to the United States.

Briefly reviewing the flow of African migration to the U.S., 31,000 entered the country between 1900 and 1950 (Hing, 1965). During this time, many came through student status, sponsored by missionaries with the expectancy to return to Africa to spread their faith. According to Hing (1965), African migration to the U.S. did not significantly increase until the 1960s, with 35,355 African migrants entering the country. In the 1970s, African migration in the U.S. numbered 80,779 of the total 4.5 million (Hing, 1965; Immigration Policy Center, 2012). By 1990, the number went up to 363,819; by the 2000s, the figure reached 881,300 (Hing, 1965). However, the number represented only 4 percent of the total immigrant population in the United States (Grieco et al., 2012; Immigration Policy Center). Within the next ten years, the African migrant population almost doubled, reaching almost 1.7 million. Today, more than a million immigrants enter the United States annually, and approximately 100,000 are from African countries (African Immigrants in America, 2012).

Table 2. The largest subgroups of African Migrant Communities in the U.S., 2012 (Hing, 1965).

Nigerians	228,166
Ethiopians	177,909
Egyptians	153,735
Ghanaians	127,802
Kenyans	99,115
Somalians	85,700

Since 2012, the numbers have drastically changed for all Sub-Saharan African countries, as shown in the table below.

Table 3. Sub-Saharan African Immigrants in the United States by Country and Region of Origin, 2019 (Batalova, J. & Lorenzi, J, 2022).

Region and Country	Number of Immigrants	Share (%)
TOTAL SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	2,094,000	100.0%
Eastern Africa	737,000	35.2%
Eritrea	49,000	2.4%
Ethiopia	256,000	12.2%
Kenya	153,000	7.3%
Somalia	115,000	5.5%
Uganda	44,000	2.1%
Zimbabwe	21,000	1.0%
Other Eastern Africa	99,000	4.7%
Middle Africa	195,000	9.3%
Cameroon	73,000	3.5%
Republic of the Congo	39,000	1.9%
Democratic Republic of Congo	61,000	2.9%
Other Middle Africa	23,000	1.1%
Southern Africa	116,000	5.5%
South Africa	111,000	5.3%
Other Southern Africa	5,000	0.2%
Western Africa	926,000	44.2%
Cabo Verde	36,000	1.7%
Ghana	199,000	9.5%
Liberia	98,000	4.7%
Nigeria	393,000	18.8%
Senegal	31,000	1.5%
Sierra Leone	46,000	2.2%
Other Western Africa	123,000	5.9%
Africa (not elsewhere classified)	120,000	5.7%

Per recent migration, particularly after the 1960s and 1980s, the rhetoric about migration from Africa has placed the continent as one of mass displacement, poverty, and violence, claiming to lead its citizens to migrate to other parts of the world, such as the U.S. Severe restrictions of flows from Africa and Southern Europe and Asia limited immigration waves from Africa to the United States until the end of the 20th century. U.S. immigration law policy

reforms in the 1960s and 1980s terminated national origin quotas and limited migration from outside Northern Europe. These policy reforms helped establish the current U.S. system, which grants most legal immigrants access to the U.S. through refugee or asylum status, and visa programs such as family reunification, employment, or diversity (Bakewell & Jónsson, 2011; Capps & Fix, 2012; Capps, McCabe & Fix, 2012; Flahaux, & De Haas, 2016). Through asylum visa programs, Black Africans who enter the United States are legal permanent residents with government authorization to reside and work in the U.S.

Since the lift of strict immigration laws, Black Africans have been among the fastest-growing immigrant population in the U.S. Capps et al. (2012) commented that the number of Black African immigrants in the U.S. increased by 92% between 2000 and 2009. According to data from the Global Bilateral Migration Database based on the U.S. census, 74% of African immigrants (approximately 1.1 million) identified themselves as Black in 2009. Although the number of Black African immigrants in the U.S. continued to increase throughout the years, research in this area remains limited. Despite the increasing availability of survey and interview-based micro-level data on African migration, data availability still needs to be improved. Most of the research on migration often focuses on migration to Europe from a limited number of better-researched African countries, such as Morocco, Senegal, Ghana, South Africa, and Nigeria (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016). Some scholars touch base on African migration; however, as mentioned above, the discussion remains restricted as the countries in the research mainly focus on west African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, which are all Anglophone countries (Bakewell & Jonson, 2011; Berriane & De Haas, 2012; Bilger & Kraler, 2005; Bredeloup & Pliez, 2005; Capps, McCabe & Fix, 2012; De Bruijn, Van Dijk & Foeken, 2001; Flahaux & De Haas, 2016; Gordon, 1998). Focusing the discussion of Black African migration

to the U.S. on select countries such as Nigeria and Ghana removes immigration flows from other parts of Africa such as Somalia.

In their paper, analyzing the evolution of Black African migration trends within, towards, and from the continent of Africa in the post-colonial era, Flahaux & De Haas (2016) explore major factors explaining changes in the volume and the direction of these migrations. While drawing on new longitudinal databases with data on migration flows and empirical analysis, they further explore theoretical arguments to rethink the state and flow of migration processes critically. On the other hand, Capps et al. (2012) extend the discussion on Black African immigration by shedding light on the various forms of immigration from Africa to the United States. By furthering the conversation on Black African immigration, Capps et al. (2012) discuss the various legal forms of immigration in which Black Africans have been able to gain passage to the U.S. In doing so, Capps et al. (2012) strive to disrupt the gap in the discussion of Black African immigrants by including countries such as Somalia, whose citizens mainly enter the U.S. through refugee status. However, the literature lacks a focus on the various types of ethnic minority groups in Somalia, entering the U.S. as refugees and minorities, hence their double minority status. Since the 1980s, the United States recognized the international definition of refugees as fleeing "persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution" (Capps et al., 2012, p. 6), which has allowed individuals from African source countries such as Somalia, fleeing civil wars and famine, legal passage into the U.S.

Although Capps et al. (2012) include Somalia in their discussion of Black African immigration flow to the U.S., the conversation is minimal on individuals from Somalia in general. The literature regarding Black migration to the U.S. mainly focuses on Anglophone countries such as Ghana and Nigeria, which limits the conversation concerning underprivileged

African countries like Somalia, whose citizens do not have the same educational and global experience as anglophone African countries. This particular review of the literature about the immigration flow of Black African immigrants points to anglophone African countries like Ghana and Nigeria, whose citizens often enter the U.S. through employment visas. However, the educational level of displaced ethnic minorities entering the U.S. from Somalia is far lower than their other Black African immigrant counterparts and immigrant/refugee populations. The following subsection proceeds to review the literature on Black immigrants' experiences in higher education.

Black Immigrants in Higher Education

When examining the experiences of Black immigrant students in higher education, the similarity within the literature is that their experiences differ from their counterparts and U.S. native-born students. Due to their unique experiences from refugee or immigrant backgrounds, Black immigrant students face many challenges which significantly impact their overall education experience. Stebleton, Rost-Banik, Greene, and DeAngelo (2017) share a similarity in the challenges Black immigrant students experience in higher education institutions in the U.S. Exploring the experiences of foreign-born undergraduate immigrant students at four-year higher education institutions, Stebleton et al. (2017) argue that the experiences of Black immigrants are distinct in that they face challenges that make their educational journeys complex. One element to examine Black immigrant students' experiences in higher education is their interaction with faculty and staff to understand the impact that educators and staff have on Black immigrant students' sense of belonging on college campuses. To connect with students, faculty, and staff position themselves to understand better the various challenges Black immigrant students experience in navigating higher education in the U.S. Such challenges include navigating the

U.S. education system itself, encountering injustices, as well as seeking validating relationships (Baber, 2012; Stebleton, Rost-Banik, Greene, and DeAngelo, 2017). Student and faculty interactions influence Black immigrant students' engagement with their college experience and learning process. Observing interactions with faculty and staff (i.e., academic advisors, counselors, etc.) can allow educators and practitioners to establish a space to understand how foreign-born immigrant college students interpret their surroundings. Further, higher education practitioners can align support services to meet Black immigrant students' personal and educational needs to enhance their sense of belonging and educational journeys.

Other scholars examine the experiences of Black students from immigrant backgrounds in higher education to determine whether and how to engage in and out of class activities. These scholars also examine the meaning-making process of Black immigrant students in higher education regarding how their multiple identities related to their decision-making processes (Freeman, 2002; Griffin & McIntosh, 2015). To further understand the meaning-making process of Black immigrant students, it is worth investigating the role of race and ethnicity in shaping their identities and engagement patterns. Griffin & McIntosh (2015) examine campus engagement patterns of 23 Black immigrant students in which they consider how racial and ethnic identity influence the meaning-making process of Black immigrant students as it relates to their multiple identities and their decision-making process. Using the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (MMDI) frame, they examine specific behaviors such as campus engagement.

As a theoretical concept, the MMDI framework suggests how the interplay between relationships and interactions with others, context, and identity can influence how individuals enact identity to shape behavior. The model proposes that individuals have several identities

around a core sense of self, which is internally defined and represents valued personal characteristics and attributes. According to Griffin & McIntosh (2015), MMPI ultimately suggests that students have multiple identities, described as "intersecting rings around a core" (p. 3), that are distinctive yet, interconnected. In terms of campus engagement among Black immigrant students, Griffin & McIntosh (2015) note how Black immigrant students make meaning of their identities and engage in their environment based on their sense of self and resources available to them through their educational institutions and at home. Griffin and McIntosh (2015) found that Black students from immigrant backgrounds balance multiple identities as they consider their engagement in on-campus activities and interactions with staff and faculty. Black immigrant students recognize the racial and ethnic dimensions of their identity; thus, they often balance their multiple identities as they consider their engagement in student organizations (Griffin & McIntosh, 2015). For example, Griffin & McIntosh (2015) share that students feel a greater sense of comfort when surrounded by individuals with similar backgrounds and appearances, whether ethnicity or race. Thus, Black immigrant students tend to express more initial interest, membership, and engagement in student groups with missions that specifically speak to their racial or ethnic backgrounds.

Further, Griffin & McIntosh (2015) report that identities do not only shape students' decision to join a student organization but also their level of engagement in that organization, with students often taking on leadership roles and investing time in organizations aligned with their identities. The extent to which race and ethnicity are salient identities and connected to their choices for engagement in campus activities vary based on students' generational statuses and interests. However, this study concludes that Black immigrant students' narratives suggest that their identities often incorporate race and ethnicity. In many ways, the results of this study

are consistent with more considerable literature, which indicate that identity plays a role in how Black immigrant students make decisions about the quantity and quality of time they spend on activities and relationship-building efforts at school (Baber, 2012; Benson, 2006; Brown, 2010; Guenther, Pendaz, & Songora Makene, 2011; Massey, Mooney, Torres, & Charles, 2007; Mwangi, 2014; Mwangi & Fries–Britt, 2015; Ndemanu & Jordan, 2018; Scopilliti & Iceland, 2008).

In terms of building relationships and engaging in other connections and activities on campus, it is essential to consider that Black immigrant students develop a shared racial group identity with native-born blacks over time (Benson, 2006; Butcher, 1994). This finding also meshes well with Griffin & McIntosh's (2015) study. Black immigrant students are more comfortable around students with shared racial and ethnic backgrounds, enhancing their engagement in campus activities and overall learning experiences. Although Black immigrant students may feel more connected to other black students, the meaning they attach to being Black and blackness evolves over time. Their shared interactions and relationships with other Black students vary by native origin over time (Benson, 2006). For instance, if one group of Black immigrant students reveals a connection to native-born blacks, this phenomenon should not be applied to all Black immigrant student groups as all their experiences are not homogenous. Considering the impact of native origin on race, Benson (2006) examines whether native heritage obscures skin color in shaping the racial identities of Black immigrants. From this study, Benson (2006) conveys that Black immigrant students' understanding of their place in the racial stratification system of the U.S. varies by their native origin and their exposure to and experience with race and racial issues. While this sense of understanding their racial identity's place in the U.S. may play a significant role in incorporating themselves into the U.S. racial system, the

educational experiences of all Black immigrants are not the same. Therefore, examining Black immigrant students as one homogenous group will convey an incomplete picture and risk masking substantial variation (Ndemanu & Jordan, 2018).

Reviewing how Black immigrant students make sense of their race in higher education, Mwangi (2014) examines the racial positioning of Black immigrant students. Mwangi (2014) argues that generally, the literature positions the race of Black immigrant students the same as that of African Americans in higher education. This notion is usually due to a lack of disaggregation of Black students and faculty data by ethnicity, nativity, generational status, and lack of acknowledgment of the diversity of within-group Blacks among Black immigrant students. Mwangi (2014) uses the redressing past wrongs argument to analyze the data, encouraging scholars engaged in this topic to push back on this ideology of leveling Black immigrant students' race in the same way as African Americans in higher education. Mwangi (2014) also suggests that Black immigrant students should not receive race-based support or opportunities in higher education to the same extent that exists for African Americans. The gap in support is due to the differences in experience between Black Africans and U.S. native African Americans. However, it is worth considering a diversity and inclusion lens to point out that Black immigrant students contribute to campus racial diversity as much as African Americans. This paradigm highlights a comparable racial positioning, but how one minority group requires support in higher education is not equal to that of another group. Further, the diversity and inclusion paradigm positions blackness as one of many identity characteristics contributing to establishing a diverse organization. This paradigm highlights that race intersects with other aspects of identity (Griffin & McIntosh, 2015; Mwangi, 2014; Stebelton et al., 2017), such as religion, socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, and nativity. The codependency and

intersections of many identities illustrate that there is no one way to define blackness or how Black immigrants identify with their blackness. Thus, the literature should refrain from referencing Black immigrant students as a homogenous group with the same challenges and needs.

Moreover, other scholars further examine the various identities shaping the college experiences of Black Americans and Black immigrant students in the U.S. by exploring diverse factors, such as educational opportunities, socioeconomic status, sexual identity, and place of birth (Brown, 2010; Freeman, 2002; Hatoss, 2012; Massey, Mooney, Torres, & Charles, 2007; Mwangi & Fries-Britt, 2015; Ndemanu & Jordan, 2018; Stebleton, Rost-Banik, Greene, DeAngelo, 2017). These factors play a significant role in shaping students' perceptions and sense of belonging on college campuses. However, the immigrant population from predominantly black countries, including Sub-Saharan Africa (i.e., Somalia), has doubled within the past two decades. With approximately 3.6 million Black immigrants living in the United States (Mwangi & Fries-Britt, 2015), there is still minimal information about the experiences and challenges of this student population in higher education and, generally, the U.S. educational system. Regarding transitioning to life in the United States, Black immigrant students experience economic, social, and cultural challenges compared to their non-black immigrant counterparts (Mwangi & Fries-Britt, 2015). However, what is unique about their immigrant experience is being Black in a highly racialized country. After resettlement in the U.S., Black immigrant students must make various cultural adjustments academically and socially on college campuses. Although many U.S. colleges and universities may be diverse, Black immigrant students have different ways of processing race in the United States compared to their Black American peers and other immigrant student groups (Mwangi & Fries-Britt, 2015; Ndemanu &

Jordan, 2018). Therefore, in addition to challenges in adjusting to a new country, Black immigrant students experience race, racism, and discrimination in unique ways that are different from their fellow Black Americans and non-Black immigrants (Stebbleton et al., 2017).

Continuing the discussion on the challenges of Black immigrant students about their experiences in higher education, Ndemanu and Jordan (2018) further shed light on the obstacles first-and-second-generation Black African immigrant children face in navigating through a relatively different and unfamiliar system of education in the U.S. In doing so, Ndemanu and Jordan (2018) also provide pre-migration background information to the educational systems prevalent in Africa and the culturally responsive teaching strategies that support and enhance learning experiences for African immigrant students. Highlighted below are some recommendations (Ndemanu & Jordan, 2018) to help guide staff and faculty working with Black immigrant students in understanding their experiences in higher education:

- Grow their knowledge base with authentic information about their students' cultures and educational backgrounds. [Without this sense of understanding, there is a high probability of subconsciously indulging in stereotypical information to inform instruction and decisions that affect ethnically different students].
- Avoid lumping African immigrant students into one monolithic group, as that is misleading
- Staff and faculty should avoid generalizations by familiarizing themselves with, at least, the macro-history and macro-culture of Africa.
- Acknowledge differences in Language and Education Systems. [Most immigrant children are bilingual, so a culturally responsive instructional practice must entail an understanding of this linguistic diversity which is part of the culture in Africa].

- Be aware that the reading development expectations in the U.S. are overwhelming to new African immigrants who generally approach reading in-depth in their home countries only at the later grade level (not from kindergarten, which is the case in the U.S.).
- Acknowledge that many African immigrant parents who have not studied in the U.S. do not expect involvement in their children's education to extend beyond the home into the schools because they are unaware of such expectations or the school schedule overlaps with the work schedule.
- Recognize that African immigrant students are assets in the classroom. [Teachers should move from seeing African immigrant students from a deficit perspective to understanding their intellects and the rich frames of cultural and linguistic reference they bring to the classroom, enriching learning for all students when their resources are utilized adequately].

The suggestions above, while not exhaustive, aim to guide practitioners to increase unawareness of Black immigrant students' difficulties, recognize their presence in higher education, and implement support services that align with their diverse needs for growth and success. In exploring the various factors shaping the identity and experiences of Black immigrant students, Mwangi & Fries-Britt (2015) found several themes among this student population, such as adjusting to racial minority status, encounters with racial and ethnic otherness, and learning in a community of diverse peers. Some Black immigrant students may have had little to no education before coming to the U.S. In contrast, some may have attended an all-black school in their home countries; therefore, attending a predominantly White college in the U.S. may come as a shock to many, even if they enroll in a Historically Black College or University (HBCU). In terms of perceptions of race and racism, Black immigrant students often

feel that U.S.-born Blacks are more inclined to view issues from a racial perspective. In contrast, U.S.-born Black students feel significantly frustrated with these perceptions, often thinking that their Black immigrant peers' delayed reaction to or inability to see the manifestation of race and racism creates within-group tensions. Furthermore, Mwangi and Fries-Britt (2015) claim that some Black American students feel misunderstood by their Black immigrant peers. Mainly, Black American students think that their Black immigrant peers ignore important campus climate issues because they may not fully understand the legacy of racism due to the short period they may have lived in the United States. Therefore, Black immigrant students may not immediately identify U.S. racism in ways that may be apparent to their Black American counterparts. Due to the intersection of varying contextual factors, Black students from immigrant backgrounds experience college differently than non-immigrant and native-born U.S. students (Baber, 2012; Capps, McCabe & Fix, 2012; Griffin & McIntosh, 2015; Guenther, Pendaz & Songora Makene, 2011; Massey, Mooney, Torres & Charles, 2007; Mwangi, 2014; Mwangi & Fries–Britt, 2015; Ndemanu & Jordan, 2018; Scopilliti & Iceland, 2008; Stebleton, Rost-Banik, Greene & DeAngelo, 2017). Black immigrant students recognize both the racial and ethnic dimensions of their identity, balancing multiple identities as they consider their engagement in campus activities and their college experience (Benson, 2006; Guenther, Pendaz, & Songora Makene, 2011).

While there is some discussion about the educational experiences of Black immigrant students, the data remains insufficient. The research on this student population also lacks in diversity of their geographic regions as most of the literature focuses on individuals from Sub-Saharan anglophone African countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, South Africa, and Sudan (Capps & Fix, 2012; Capps, McCabe & Fix, 2011, 2012; Griffin & McIntosh, 2015; Mwangi,

2014; Mwangi & Fries-Britt, 2015; Ndemanu & Jordan, 2018; Stebleton, Rost-Banik, Greene, & DeAngelo, 2017). This limited approach to the literature on the educational experiences of Black immigrant students from Africa leans towards a narrative of Black immigrant students being a homogenous group (Benson, 2006). This narrative also portrays an incomplete picture of their uniquely diverse experiences and trumps the diversity of within-group Black immigrants. The literature lacks adequate information on ethnic minority Black immigrant groups, such as those entering the U.S. as refugees from Somalia. Before higher education institutions can begin to acknowledge the diversity among Black immigrant students, there is a need for the literature to address this gap of within-group diversity among Black African immigrants and refugees. Understanding this diversity will allow higher education institutions to implement strategic efforts intentionally aligned with the unique needs of specific Black immigrant students, particularly ethnic minority groups from Somalia, such as Somali-Jareer Bantu refugee students. The following section will examine Somali-Jareer Bantus, an ethnic Black African minority, with a consideration of their histories with minority status in Somalia, and exploration of their background, educational experience in Somalia, language and literacy, immigration status, and resettlement in the U.S. This will provide a lens on the necessity of addressing the diversity of within-group Black African immigrants/refugees within higher education,

The Known Status of Somali-Jareer Bantu

This section of the literature review explores the status of the Somali-Jareer Bantu (also Somali Bantu) as an ethnic minority group from Somalia within the context of the United States. This review will examine the sociocultural histories of the Somali-Jareer Bantu ethnic minority group and their immigration status in the U.S. Exploring the Somali-Jareer Bantu ethnic minority group's known status in the U.S. will provide a perspective of their background and

relationship with other Somalians from dominant ethnic groups. By examining the background of the Somali Bantu population as an ethnic minority in Somalia, this review will investigate historical literature relating to this community and other mentions of immigration waves and their experiences with educational attainment broadly.

The Somali-Jareer Bantu population is an ethnic minority that has lived and continues to live in extreme oppression under Somalia's government (Eno, 2008; Eno & Eno, 2008, 2014). As with many other oppressed groups, it is crucial to consider that aspects related to the culture of the Somali-Jareer Bantu population and their scholarship have been deemed valueless and near nonexistent from Somalia's scholarship (Gundel, 2009; Ingiriis, 2012; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003; Webersik, 2004). Consequently, the literature on the Somali-Jareer Bantu population has been deemed as an "institution [that is] unworthy [of] studying" (Eno & Eno, 2014, p. 95). Despite the degradation and neglect of the Somali-Jareer Bantu by the Somali state and Somalia's scholarship (Lehman & Eno, 2003), it is also essential to note that the Somali-Jareer Bantu population bestows wisdom filled with richness in culture and literature. Some of the literature argues that this ethnic minority population is known to have resided in the mountains of Somalia as early as the existence of Somalia in the 1960s (Besteman, 2012; Birman & Tran, 2017; Kapteijns & Arman, 2004; Lehman & Eno, 2003). Caught in the middle of Somalia's Civil War in the early 1990s between dominant Somali ethnic clans, the Somali-Jareer Bantu population fled to Kenyan refugee camps for safety (Bestman, 2016). The majority of the Somali-Jareer Bantu population spent 12 or more years in Kenyan refugee camps before the United States agreed to accept sponsorship of this population for resettlement in various parts of the U.S., under the notion of persecuted minorities beginning in the year 1999 (Birman & Tran, 2017; Jarratt, 2020; Lehman & Eno, 2003).

Background

Discussion around ethnic minorities, especially double ethnic minorities, in any society, specifically within the context of widespread human rights abuses, is a sensitive subject. There is no exception when it comes to the horn of Africa, Somalia. Sitting on the horn of Africa, Somalia is more ethnically diverse and far less egalitarian in its culture than its orthodox nationalist history may acknowledge. For instance, to non-Somalis, Somalia may present itself as a single country with a homogenous ethnicity in which its citizens live as one harmonious community. Although the history of Somalia may have refused to acknowledge the existence of minority groups in Somalia and discrimination caused upon these minority populations by dominant Somali ethnic groups, such topics of Somalia's troubling history, including the discussion of minorities, is controversial. However, it is quite the opposite, and there is no shock that Somalia has a pre-colonial history of slavery in which tens of thousands of East Africans were purchased in the 19th century to forcefully work on southern Somali plantations where even into the 1970s and 1980s, low caste or minoritized Somalis suffered discrimination (Eno, 2008; Menkhaus, 2003, 2009). Somalia's various dominant clan warfare in the 1990s subjugated minority groups to severe levels of looting, assault, rape, and forced labor at the hands of the militia of more powerful dominant Somali clans. Until the 1990s, Somalia was routinely portrayed as a country with a synonymous nation and state, insinuating Somalia as an island of a homogeneous ethnicity with multi-ethnic states (Besteman, 2012; Eno & Eno, 2008; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003). However, after the country's collapse into its extended clan warfare in 1990, the aftermath of international attention to and intervention of the state of minority groups in Somalia as vulnerable victims of famine and war fractured this myth. Nevertheless, this discussion is no longer taboo as Somali intellectuals may have been more

willing to acknowledge these troubling recollections of their history (Eno, 2008; Eno & Eno, 2008b; Menkhaus, 2003).

The collapse of Siyad Barre and the Somali Civil War

After Somalia's government under Siyad Barre's dictatorship collapsed in 1991, the Somali Civil War began in which several rebel factions previously working as one force to take down Barre turned against each other to gain single control of the country. After clan warfare broke up in Somalia, ethnic minorities like the Somali-Jareer Bantu were subject to warfare violence, such as looting, assault, rape, killings, forced military recruitment, and forced labor at the hands of the militia of powerful, dominant Somali clans. The Somali clan warfare of militia battles displaced and killed hundreds of thousands of unarmed civilians (mainly ethnic minorities), forcing refugee status upon ethnic minorities like the Somali-Jareer Bantu population to cross the border into Kenya, where they settled in various refugee camps seeking asylum. Per the blanket resettlement policy, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), multilateral organizations, and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) managed the refugee camps in Kenya with collaboration from the Kenyan government. An international peacekeeping force later invaded Somalia in 1992 to help restore order and peace in the country. However, after they could not meet their humanitarian or military objectives, they withdrew their support after losing 18 American army rangers in Mogadishu (Menkhaus, 2009). Later, the tens of thousands of ethnic Somali minorities who previously returned to Somalia after the peacekeeping intervention flooded the Kenyan border again as refugees.

Somali-Jareer Bantu Ethnic Minority

One ethnic minority displaced by Somalia's Civil War is the Somali-Jareer Bantu, who suffered considerable discrimination in Somalia. Unlike the nomadic section of the country that

claims Arab origin (Eno & Eno, 2008, 2014; Menkhaus, 2003), the Somali-Jareer Bantu maintain their Black African descent, which dominant Somali ethnic groups often use in a highly racialized way for ethnopolitical marginalization against this population. According to Frounfelker et al. (2020), the Somali-Jareer Bantu make up approximately 5% of the people in East Africa. The term Somali Bantu (without jareer), as it is known to the world today, is used to describe diverse groups of ethnic minorities who are linked only by a common physical trait: specifically, tightly curled or "hard hair" [Somali language: *timo jareer*], distinguishing them from "soft-haired" [Somali language: *timo jileec*] dominant ethnic Somalis (Menkhaus, 2003, p. 324). As a minoritized population scattered throughout East Africa without much knowledge of their communities until the 1990s among some within-groups in the population, Menkhaus (2003) shares that among their commonalities as a minority group of people include:

- their low or no status within the Somali lineage system,
- a historical identity as subsistence farmers in a predominantly pastoral and agro-pastoral society, and
- a shared history of subjugation and oppression under Somalia's government.

These shared commonalities, as mentioned by Menkhaus (2003), should not be mistaken for their original history but one which resulted from subjugation under Somalia's government and its efforts to obliterate the history and scholarship of this ethnic minority group. The following will briefly discuss some ethnic minority groups to provide a perspective into the diversity of ethnic minorities in Somalia; however, this is a brief discussion, not an exhaustive list, as there may be many other ethnic minority groups in Somalia.

Ethnic Minorities in Somalia

In terms of marginalized ethnic groups in Somalia, there are various social groups with claims to minority status, making it difficult and confusing to determine what precisely constitutes a minority in Somalia. However, this discussion will focus on the Somali-Jareer Bantu community, composed of within-group diverse ethnic minorities who may or may not have legal membership in any Somali clan or lineage to a Somali majority clan. Due to their marginalization, it is difficult to prove the authentic ethnic lineage of the Somali-Jareer Bantu to dominant Somali clans.

Among these diverse Somali-Jareer Bantu communities are the Barawan/Baravani and Benadiri (Banadiri) from southern Somali coastal commercial populations. Outside the Somali tree, the Bajuni coastal fishing communities are another Somali-Jareer Bantu ethnic minority group. As descendants of immigrant settlers from Yemen and far East African countries, this population generally has a lighter skin tone. They trace their origins back to Arab, Persian, and other sea-faring peoples with a presence in Somalia for over 200 years, predating the Somali nomads' existence by many centuries (Menkhaus, 2003). Although this population of coastal trading groups may be politically and militarily vulnerable, they were economically privileged in the past, making them susceptible to predation during Somalia's Civil War. The Bajuni have lived on the islands and coast of southernmost Somalia for centuries. Unlike the commercial coastal populations, the Bajuni are politically and economically fragile. Worth noting is that although the literature may categorize these minority groups as Somali Bantus, they may not identify with Bantu as part of their identity as this term is a recent addition of humanitarian efforts to distinguish Somali-Jareer minority refugees from members of dominant Somali clans.

This distinction of the term prioritized members of Somali ethnic minorities over members of dominant ethnic clans for the immigration process and determining resettlement strategies.

Finally, there is another minority group within this community, often referred to as Jareer Somalis (Somali-Jareer) or simply Somali Bantu (after the resettlement in Kenyan refugee camps). They may also be referred to as Jareer-Bantu, or Somali-Jareer Bantu. It is worth noting that this population comprises various within-ethnic groups, including, Eelay, Makane, and Shabelle Mai speaking peoples), and Wazigula/Wazigua/Mashughuli (who may not necessarily claim ancestral lineage to Somalia, but instead other parts of Africa such as West Africa). The literature points to the Somali-Jareer Bantu as descendants of East and Central Africa, mainly naming countries such as Tanzania, Mozambique, and Malawi, who (some of its groups) were brought to Somalia by Arab slave traders to work on Somali farmlands (Eno, 2008; Eno & Eno, 2008, 2008b; Frounfelder, Tahir, Abdirahman, Betancourt, 2020; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003). Historically, this population is of farming communities concentrated in southern Somalia and the riverine areas of the Jubba and Shabelle rivers (the only permanent rivers that run through south Somalia). This population remained a tribal identity outside the Somali lineage system. As a form of marginalization to claim ethnic dominance over ethnic minorities, mainstream Somalia portrays the Somali Jareer-Bantu population as displaying phenotypic, Negroid physical features (i.e., kinky hair texture, dark skin tone, and broad nose). Through these claimed pronounced physical features, dominant Somali ethnic groups distinguish themselves from the Somali-Jareer Bantu (Eno, 2008; Eno & Eno, 2008, 2008b; Frounfelder, Tahir, Abdirahman, Betancourt, 2020; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003). However, only a portion of this population remains outside the Somali lineage system, while most Somali-Jareer Bantu population shares an affiliation with a dominant Somali clan (Lehman & Eno, 2003). As

mentioned earlier, this population is also called Somali Bantu, a recent construction of the international humanitarian community.

Construction of the Somali ‘Bantu’ Term

Upon international involvement to help restore peace in Somalia, the Somali-Jareer Bantu attracted attention from international humanitarian organizations due to their marginalization and acute need for resettlement. Creating the Somali Bantu term as a racially distinct ethnic minority identity in Somalia is an object of humanitarian intervention. After the development of an immigration program with a mission to assist vulnerable, minoritized, and oppressed populations fleeing war zones in search of safety and new homes to resettle, international humanitarian organizations identified the Somali Jareer ethnic minority, hence the Somali Bantu term as victims of Somalia's Civil War in need of resettlement opportunities (Besteman, 2012; Bjork, 2016; Jarratt, 2020). This program was further made possible through the blanket resettlement policy, based on the conclusion that the Somali-Jareer Bantu population faces chronic discrimination, is vulnerable to predatory attacks and abuse by dominant ethnic Somalis, and cannot safely be repatriated back into a lawless country (Menkhaus, 2003). The Somali ‘Bantu’ ethnicity, which most international observers and aid agencies may take for granted, did not exist before 1991 (Bjork, 2016; Menkhaus, 2003, p. 1), and some may even be surprised to discover the international community's unintentional creation of the term. However, preceding the construction of the Somali Bantu term is 'Mtu' (Menkhaus, 2003), which refers to peoples primarily populated along southern parts of Africa, mainly connected linguistically. However, due to the mispronunciation of the word Mtu among humanitarian agencies, Bantu was formed to refer to the diverse ethnic minority groups in Somalia whose state at the time, due to the Somali Civil War, was deemed vulnerable among peacemakers from humanitarian organizations

(Britannica, 2011). The ethnically diverse minority groups, including the Somali-Jareer Bantu in Somalia, as mentioned above, fall under this newly formed group called Somali Bantu.

Somali-'Jareer' Bantu, an Ethnicity Different from Dominant Somalis

While dominant Somali groups use Jareer to degrade Somali Bantus, Jareer racially, among Somali-Jareer Bantu populations, is generally a meeting point of unity and ethnic commonality amongst peoples within this community. It is often used as a distinguishing factor from dominant Somali ethnic groups. Another highly racialized term used by members of dominant Somalis clans to refer to the Somali-Jareer Bantu communities is *Ooji/Oggi*, an Italian word meaning today (Menkhaus, 2003). Politically and racially, this term is degradingly offensive because it alludes to the inability of people identifying with the Somali-Jareer Bantu population to think beyond the current moment. However, among the most racially demeaning of them is *adoon*, which directly translates to slave in the Somali language. Members of dominant ethnic Somali clans use this term as the highest form of dehumanizing members of Somali-Jareer Bantu and enforce claims of ethnic dominance. In contrast, dominant Somali clans use the term *jileec* or *soft* to describe themselves or non-Jareer Somali. In this context, hair texture (hard or soft/jareer or *jileec*), not skin color, precedes the notable distinction among members of dominant ethnic Somali clans in differentiating the Somali-Jareer Bantu from dominant Somali ethnic groups. More prominent noses and jawlines are other racialized distinctions that dominant Somali ethnic groups associate with the ethnic description of the Somali-Jareer Bantu. Dominant ethnic Somali clans allege their ethnic descentance to Arabs and embodiment of softer, lighter features like the Arabs while proclaiming that the Somali-Jareer Bantu population displays more African-like physical characteristics (Eno, 2008; Eno & Eno, 2008b; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003, 2009).

Historically, the literature argues that most of the Somali-Jareer Bantu population was enslaved from other parts of Africa to work in Somalia (Besteman, 2012, 2016; Bjork, 2016; Eno, 2008; Eno & Eno, 2008; Ingiriis, 2012; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003). As with any other minority population, the Somali-Jareer Bantu suffered significant marginalization under Somalia's government. They were treated as second-class citizens for decades, contributing to their widespread poverty, lack of access to schools, and limited land and political rights. When the Somali Civil War began in the early 1990s, the country's minor rights violations against the Somali-Jareer Bantu amplified, further exposing this population to high levels of war violence such as killings, rape, looting, and forced labor. Although the Somali-Jareer Bantu population lived on farmlands along the inter-riverine and mountainous regions in Somalia, they were not immune to the subjugation of Somalia's corrupt government, leading to its subsequent civil war among dominant ethnic Somali clans fighting over single control of the government.

Somali-Jareer Bantu Regions in Somalia

Although the Somali-Jareer Bantu population may not necessarily share a common history or origin, their geographic location is one of their different factors. Before 1992, the literature points to Somali-Jareer Bantu people residing in the mountains of Somalia as an ethnic minority group (Birman & Tran, 2017; Eno, 2008; Eno & Eno, 2008, 2014; Jarratt, 2020; Kapteijns & Arman, 2004). The Somali-Jareer Bantu occupies approximately eight parts of central and southern Somalia (Eno & Eno, 2014). While there may also be some of this population, in various numbers, living in the inter-riverine regions of Bay and Bakool, others live in the northern coastal towns of Somalia mainly as fishermen (Besteman, 2012; 2016; Menkhaus, 2003). In terms of their geographic location in Somalia, they are dispersed

throughout the country but mainly populating the inter-riverine area of Somalia and the uncharted areas of Somalia's major rivers, Jubba and Shabelle. Historically, the Somali-Jareer Bantu generally live along the inter-riverine regions of Somalia, but their residence also increased in large numbers in urban cities, such as Kismayo and Mogadishu (Muqdisho). A large outflow of rural Somali-Jareer Bantus moved into metropolitan cities due to urban migration in the 1970s and displacement from the Somali Civil War in the early 1990s. According to Menkhaus (2003), displaced Somali-Jareer Bantus are now considered the largest population in Somalia due to the large outflow of this population from rural areas to large cities in the 1990s. Another factor distinguishing this ethnic minority population from dominant ethnic Somali clans is language and dialect.

Language

The two main dialects of the Somali language are *Af-Maay* (af-Mai) and *Af-Maxaa* (af-mahaa). Both dialects are Cushitic; almost all Somalis speak at least one of these dialects or understand the other, if not fluent in both. *Af-Maay*, also known as *Maay-Maay* (Mai-Mai), the lingua Franca in southern Somalia, is an agro-pastoral language. In contrast, *Af-Maxaa* is spoken throughout the rest of Somalia and neighboring countries, including Kenya, where many Somali ethnic groups reside.

Af-Maay and *Af-Maxaa* (or just *Maay/Maxaa*) were the official dialects in Somalia until 1972 when the Somali government denounced the *Maay* dialect (Bjork, 2016; Eno, 2008; Eno & Lehman, 2003) and succeeded *Maxaa* as the country's only official language. This decision further isolated and hindered Southerners, including the Somali-Jareer Bantu population, from participation in mainstream Somali politics, government services, and formal education. Keeping in mind that most Somali-Jareer Bantu population resides along the banks of the Jubba

and Shabelle river areas of southern Somalia, the Maay dialect is the most common language spoken by most of the Somali-Jareer Bantu. Along the riverine, many Somali-Jareer Bantu communities in parts of the Middle Jubba region use Maay as their first language, while others may also understand Kiswahili. Af-Maxaa Tiri (af-mahaa tiri), or standard Somali in the central part, is spoken by some ethnic minorities like the Somali-Jareer Bantu communities such as the Makanne. The Makenne population generally resides along the Hiran region of Somalia.

Another ethnic minority group in the Bantu community is the Wazigula, whose affiliation with the Somali-Jareer Bantu is controversial as they claim their origin to other parts of Africa, such as west African countries. The literature may also refer to this ethnic minority group as Mashughuli (Mushunguli), which may not be welcomed among many members of this community as they may not have an ethnic connection to the term. As such, the majority of this community often prefers Wazigula or Wazigua as their ethnic identity. Known to reside along the Lower Jubba valley, the Wazigula community retained a Bantu tongue called the Zigua (Kizigua) or Chizigula. Other ethnic minorities and dominant Somali ethnic groups may refer to the Zigua language as Af-Mashughuli. However, not all members of this community may have a shared association or identification with this reference to their language, which may be unacceptable to some. Although the Af-Maay is the main dialect spoken among Somali-Jareer Bantu along the Jubba River Valley, most Zigua speakers living in traditional villages may not understand the Af-Maay. These Zigua-speaking minority peoples still practice their ancestral tribal languages from Tanzania (primarily Zigua), occasionally using Swahili as a common language (Bjork, 2016). As a diverse ethnic population, the Somali-Jareer Bantu is also rich in culture and tradition.

Culture, Religion & Traditions

According to some scholars, ancestors of the Somali-Jareer Bantu in southeast Africa practiced indigenous ceremonies and beliefs before their abduction into slavery (Besteman, 2012, 2016; Eno, 2008; Eno & Eno, 2008, 2008b, 2014; Eno & Lehman, 2003; Ingiriis, 2012; Menkhaus, 2003). Like other African populations and Muslims, the Somali-Jareer Bantu society is patriarchal. Due to the Islamic influence among the escaped enslaved people in the Jubba River Valley, the majority of the Somali-Jareer Bantu population of today follow the religion of Islam, specifically the Sunni branch, which follows the sunnah or way of Muhammad (SAW), the last prophet in Islam. Like other Muslims, the Somali-Jareer Bantu follow the lunar year system and use the solar year system to determine crop planting and harvesting seasons. They annually celebrate two significant religious occasions: the first is Eid-al-Fitr, which marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan (the ninth month in the Islamic lunar year), and the second is Eid-al-Adha, which coincides with the annual hajj to Mecca, Saudi Arabia (12th month of the lunar year). This Eid marks the culmination of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca and the commemoration of prophet Ibrahim (AS) 's sacrifice. The men serve as the head of the household, making important familial decisions and serving as the primary provider. In contrast, the mother serves as the general manager of the family's domestic affairs, such as raising children, food preparation, and farming tasks. In the absence of a male figure, women take on the head of the household role. The mother holds a significant figure in the Somali-Jareer Bantu society, generally spending more time with the children; therefore, traditional rituals are often passed down through mothers to prevent children from losing their culture and heritage. Somali-Jareer Bantu children often work alongside their parents on the family farm and participate in minor traditional ceremonies with adults.

Due to their marginalization in Somalia's history (Webersik, 2004), the Somali-Jareer Bantu still need a formal written account of their history. However, art within the Somali-Jareer Bantu communities primarily conveys through music and dance. Significant aspects of the Somali-Jareer Bantu culture are passed down from one generation to the next through the art form of storytelling, singing, dancing, poetry, and oral recounting of their history (Eno & Eno, 2008; 2014; Jarratt, 2020; Menkahauss, 2009). In terms of literature, this form of art mainly links to their community structure and spiritual well-being. Although the oral literature of the Somali-Jareer Bantu, in terms of literary art, shares similar characteristics with its Somali pastoral ethnic group, there are varying distinctions in many aspects in which the Somali-Jareer Bantu play musical instruments, primarily drums, during traditional ceremonies. Highlighted below are some common traditional festivals (not exhaustive) practiced within some of the various Somali-Jareer Bantu communities (Eno & Eno, 2014):

- Anyakow (anyhawow) is a dance and singing celebration, mostly held at night in the forest, in which both males and females participate. It is not uncommon for the performance of Anyakow during the day, which would only be for the commemoration of a significant figure in the community or per the request of someone's wedding ceremony. Another famous traditional dance is the Cadow Makaraan.
- Deb-Shid, one of the famous, celebrated traditional festivals, is the fire festival, in which people dance and sing around a bonfire to celebrate the beginning of a new year.
- Bishashap (bee-sha-shap) is part of Deb-Shid, which includes water splashing onto people during the day. During the day, people can throw water (clean or dirty) or mud at each other (similar to the ancient Indian holiday, Holi, in which people dump colors at each other) before the bonfire.

- Istunka, a grand annual traditional festival of stick fighting, is held in agricultural towns such as Afgooye, southwest of Somalia's capital city, Mogadishu.
- Mazawey (Masawey) is a traditional acrobatic dance where men and women wear dried banana leaves on their waists, metal anklets on their feet, and bracelets on their hands to make synchronized rhythmic noises while simultaneously swinging and moving their bodies. Like Anyakow, the Somali-Jareer Bantu communities that have this traditional dance sing Mazawey in either Swahili or a local dialect.
- Sharara is a traditional folklore guitar played during social events as well as during ritual events.
- Sharara is among the few indigenous ceremonies and beliefs still practiced among some Somali-Jareer Bantu communities today.
 - Tumbura, Jinni Manyika & Jinni Shitimiri – are indigenous practices like Sharara in which traditional folklore guitar and drums are played. These are ritual means believed to heal someone from spiritual sickness. Although Islam prohibits such practices, some members of the Somali-Jareer Bantu communities still practice these traditions today.
- Shareero, accompanied by gurbaan or drum (s), is a traditional dance ceremony (traditional folklore guitar) commonly performed for special occasions such as weddings or other social and entertainment events.
- Sholay is a dance competition between some practicing Somali-Jareer Bantu villages. Usually, each village's best boy and girl dancers perform this dance.
- Shrub, used in the context of poetry, is one of several oral songs. The shrub differs from other songs or poetry accompanied by drum (s). An event used to mark special

occasions, shrub is conducted during shir (meeting) or festival gatherings when members of the practicing Somali-Jareer Bantu community participate in traditional festivals with songs and dances. The shrub is performed in the daytime during festival gatherings, nighttime, or during other certain occasions such as preliminary gatherings or outings, often leading to istunka (stick fight). [Note that in all these events, whether ritual or fantasy, performers play different drums and other instruments. Also, the same instruments may be used for several dance ceremonies, whether mixed with others or played alone].

The Somali-Jareer Bantu has a diverse culture that incorporates strong oral traditions and skills, with children farming most days with their families. Farming provides Somali-Jareer Bantu communities with their primary source of food and income. As a community, the Somali-Jareer Bantu has been able to avoid the colonizing educational system of Somalia. Therefore, their exclusion from the formal educational system of Somalia marginalized them from the country's mainstream culture. However, they reinforced traditional values of informal learning through modeling and helping with family life (Birman & Tran, 2017). Caught in the middle of the Somali tribal Civil War, most Somali-Jareer Bantu communities were met with displacement in Somalia and fled to refugee camps in Kenya. After fleeing Somalia in search of safety, they spent many years in Kenyan refugee camps before the United States' agreement in 1999 to begin accepting members from these ethnic Somali minority groups for resettlement in the U.S. as "persecuted minorities" (Jarratt, 2020, p. 2).

Education and Literacy

In 1975, the estimated literacy rate among Somali citizens was 55% compared to only 5% before the country adopted its national script (Lehman & Eno, 2003). However, there is a

discrepancy in the data that the United Nations reported for Somalia's literacy rate, which was much lower, 24%, during that same year (Lehman & Eno, 2003). Before Somalia's government removed the Af-Maay dialect as an official language, the Somali-Jareer Bantu were already experiencing extreme institutional discrimination, such as exclusion from participation in Somalia's government. Because of this exclusion from Somalia's mainstream formal education and culture, the Somali-Jareer Bantu are often illiterate. Due to the unavailability of information about this population and the intentional removal of their history by Somali scholarship, there is no accurate data to estimate the literacy rate for the Somali-Jareer Bantu, but Lehman and Eno (2003) report that it is drastically below the United Nations estimate of 24%.

Generally, the Somali government deliberately excluded the Somali-Jareer Bantu from participating in scholarship programs that allowed exposure to educational experiences such as study abroad opportunities (Bjork, 2016; Eno, 2008). Although some Somali Jareer-Bantu children in Somalia had access to Qur'anic (Koranic; religious education) schools, there is a lack of data about the education level of Somali-Jareer Bantu because the Somali government denied them participation in mainstream Somali society (Frounfelder, Tahir, Abdirahman, & Betancourt, 2020). This institutional discrimination impeded the Somali-Jareer Bantu from participating in Somalia's formal education system. The Somali government warranted the intentional imposition of detrimental institutional discrimination upon the Somali-Jareer Bantu by deliberately creating almost no schools in regions occupied by these communities to increase exclusion from access to educational opportunities. With the limited access to informal schools within the Somali-Jareer Bantu residential areas, the language used as the medium of instruction was unfamiliar to some students from rural Somali-Jareer Bantu communities. The limited number of Somali-Jareer Bantus able to send some of their children to nearby cities for school

faced discrimination against pursuing educational opportunities (Lehman & Eno, 2003).

However, the limited number of Somali-Jareer Bantu students who may have received scholarships to study overseas generally went to the Soviet military academy due to the apparent disinterest of their student counterparts from dominant Somali ethnic groups.

Regarding exclusion from the formal educational experience, Somali-Jareer Bantu women experienced even greater exclusion. As a patriarchal society, educating male children has historically been the priority in Somali society, including Somali-Jareer Bantu communities. In terms of women and education, female children within Somali-Jareer Bantu communities generally were not awarded the opportunity to openly pursue formal schooling until their resettlement in Kenyan refugee camps due to social enforcements of gender roles within the Somali society, forcing female children to stay behind to help with domestic chores.

The Somali government's general discrimination against the Somali-Jareer Bantu continuously excluded them from virtually any participation in Somalia's mainstream society except for remedial roles, which often do not require literacy, further decreasing the Somali-Jareer Bantus' interest in pursuing formal education (Eno, 2008). According to reports from officials from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), it was not until resettlement in Kenyan refugee camps in the late 1990s that Somali-Jareer Bantu children gained access to a formal primary education in which they were able to attend primary and secondary school (Bjork, 2016). Despite this basic educational introduction, only an average of 5% of all Somali-Jareer Bantu refugees are formally educated (Jarratt, 2020; Lehman & Eno, 2003). Even in refugee camps, Somalis from dominant ethnic clans continued to discriminate against members of Somali-Jareer Bantu. They refused to allow their children to study alongside Somali-Jareer

Bantu children and instead had them attend separate classes or schools from Somali-Jareer Bantu students.

Resettlement in Kenyan Refugee Camps

After the collapse of Siyad Barre's dictatorship in Somalia, an international peacemaking force intervened to restore peace in the country. However, efforts to restore peace in Somalia failed. It was through humanitarian efforts which eventually gained the Somali-Jareer Bantu international attention in the 1990s and early 2000s, leading to their resettlement in several Kenyan refugee camps (Besteman, 2016) and later in the U.S. After reviewing the state of this population, the UNHCR, in collaboration with NGOs and multilateral organizations, established a blanket resettlement policy which determined the Somali-Jareer Bantu as a vulnerable population in need of international intervention for U.S. resettlement (Lehman & Eno, 2003). Before their resettlement in the U.S., the Somali-Jareer Bantu ethnic minority population settled in various Kenyan refugee camps in Dadaab, Kenya (e.g., Dagahley, Hagadera, IFO & Kakuma). Managed by UNHCR, they lived in these refugee sites for many years before the United States approved their sponsorship for resettlement. Refugees in the process for U.S. resettlement were first transferred to Kakuma to await the remainder of the process, which had no documented time limit.

Below is a list, not intended to be exhaustive, to provide a synopsis of one example of events leading to the resettlement of Somali-Jareer Bantus in the United States as adapted from (Besteman, 2016; Jarratt, 2020):

- 1991: Collapse of Siad Barre
- 1991–93: Violence against civilians peaks in the Jubba Valley region, and villagers from Banta flee.

- 1992: Launch of Operation Restore Hope, a multinational humanitarian military intervention, followed in 1993 by UNOSOM (United Nations Operations in Somalia), a U.S.-led un-backed intervention.
- 1993: Black Hawk Down incident in Mogadishu and conclusion of UNOSOM.
- 1995: Some refugees in Dadaab return to Jubba Valley, but many flee again to Kenyan refugee camps because violence is still pervasive in Somalia due to continued clan Somali warfare among dominant Somali ethnic groups.
- 1994-97: Some refugee members in the Somali-Jareer Bantu communities in Dadaab attempt to negotiate resettlement in other parts of Africa (ex., Tanzania and Mozambique).
- 1999: The United States agrees to accept 12,000 Somali-Jareer Bantus for resettlement as ‘persecuted’ minorities.
- 2001: Reverification in Dadaab of Somali-Jareer Bantu names for U.S. resettlement begins.
- 2002: Reverified Somali-Jareer Bantus in Dadaab trucked to Kakuma.
- 2003-04: Through the Unanticipated Arrivals grant, Catholic Charities agreed to provide services to refugees in parts of the U.S. Somali-Jareer Bantus began arriving in the United States.

The final section of this literature review will discuss the experience of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in education, specifically in the United States, while referencing their educational experience in Somalia (if any). Considering the educational level in which the literature of Somali scholarship discusses the Somali-Jareer Bantu population regarding their known or unknown presence, this review will help shed some light on the educational experiences of the

Somali-Jareer Bantu ethnic minority population as well as how the literature mentions them in the educational system of Somalia and the U.S. This portion of the discussion seeks to learn about the presence of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in the educational sphere of Somalia and the U.S. in order to gain an understanding of this population's experience in education, specifically in what educational level and what limitation that may be present in the literature as it relates to the experiences of students identifying with this ethnic minority population. In doing so, this review seeks to understand better what resistance to deficit discourse could look like in creating inclusive spaces for new stories by and about historically marginalized populations such as Somali-Jareer Bantu students from refugee backgrounds.

Somali-Jareer Bantu and Educational Experiences

The Somali-Jareer Bantu population is an ethnic minority group historically marginalized by the Somali government and members of dominant Somali clans. Although they experienced extreme discrimination from Somalia's educational system and Somalia's mainstream culture, the Somali-Jareer Bantu reinforced traditional values of informal learning through skillful modeling and assisting with family life. Due to their exclusion from Somalia's formal educational system, the note on the education of the Somali-Jareer Bantu community is that the majority of this population did not attend school in Somalia, thus, may often be illiterate in their language (Giliomee, 2009; Jarratt, 2020).

Discussion surrounding the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in education within the context of the U.S. often focuses on pre-postsecondary education from a male perspective (Birman & Tran, 2015, 2017, Tran & Birman, 2019). Scholars like Shapiro and MacDonald (2017) examine how refugee-background Somali Bantu students employ linguistic resources to make sense of their experience with forced migration, resettlement, and formal

education. This study conveys resistance discourse regarding the Somali Bantu communities, which the literature fails to mention, generally due to the implication of Somalia as a homogeneous society with a single ethnicity and language. Other scholars also examine the experiences of Somali Bantu students in the education system of the U.S. with an emphasis on their background as refugees and teacher's responses to their specialized needs without experience in formal schooling in Somalia and limited formal schooling in Kenyan refugee camps (Roxas, 2010; Roy & Roxas, 2011; Roxas & Roy, 2012). Some scholars seek to understand resistance-deficit discourse from the lens of refugee background students like Somali-Jareer Bantu students. However, the literature concerning the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students is limited, which mainly focuses on the realm of pre-postsecondary education with almost no discourse about the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in the context of higher education. The following section will review Somali-Jareer Bantu in the context of education before their resettlement in the U.S.

Literacy & Education of Somali-Jareer Bantu Before U.S. Resettlement (Kenya & Somalia)

As an oppressed ethnic minority population, the Somali government denied the Somali-Jareer Bantu population access to educational pursuits. Although Lehman & Eno (2003) report that in 1975, Somalia's literacy rate among its general citizens was 24%, there is no accurate data to determine the literacy rate among the Somali-Jareer Bantu population due to the limited or lack of information concerning this population and Somali government's attempt to remove their history from Somalia's scholarship intentionally. However, some scholars share that the literacy rate among the Somali-Jareer Bantu is low and well below the United Nations' estimate of 24% estimate among Somalia's general citizens (Besteman, 2016; Eno & Eno, 2008; Lehman & Eno, 2003). After their resettlement in Kenyan refugee camps beginning in the early 2000s, roughly

5% of the Somali-Jareer Bantu community was reported to be literate (Besteman, 2009; Eno, 2008; Frounfelker, Tahir, Abdirahman, & Betancourt, 2020; Jarratt, 2020). Kenyan refugee camps are the first introduction to formal schooling for most Somali-Jareer Bantu students (Besteman, 2012; Giliomee, 2009; Jarratt, 2020).

While Af-Maay (the dialect spoken by members of some communities of the Somali-Jareer Bantu) was once one of the two official languages of Somalia, the Somali government removed it in 1972 (Eno & Eno, 2008; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003). The Somali government later adopted Af-Maxaa (now the standard Somali dialect spoken by dominant Somali ethnic clans) as the country's official language. This decision further excluded the Somali-Jareer Bantu from participation in Somalia's mainstream society, including formal education, which explains, in part, the significant illiteracy rate among the Somali-Jareer Bantu community. Although some Somali-Jareer Bantu children in Somalia attended Qur'anic (Koranic; religious education) schools in Somalia (Moore, 2011), the need for more data about their education or level of education remains significantly large.

Language Barrier

Somali-Jareer Bantu children attended Qur'anic schools (madrassa), often managed by older male community members to learn how to read, write and memorize the Qur'an (Koran). Access to Qur'anic schools did not imply access to other forms of education. Although there is a slight mention in the literature about their limited educational pursuits, most Somali-Jareer Bantus did not attend formal schooling in Somalia. To further impose detrimental institutional marginalization, the Somali government deliberately denied establishing schools in the Somali-Jareer Bantu geographic regions of the Jubba and Shabelle rivers. This decision further excluded them from participating in Somalia's formal educational system and mainstream society. Even if

some could send their children to the city for education, the Af-Maxaa dialect was the primary language of instruction, but not all Somali-Jareer Bantu students fully understood the standard Somali dialect. Along with the language barrier, Somali-Jareer Bantu students experienced discrimination from dominant Somali ethnic groups simply for daring to seek educational opportunities.

International Humanitarian Intervention

After the blanket resettlement policy was passed through international efforts of UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations, in collaboration with the Kenyan government, Somali-Jareer Bantus were granted the status of persecuted refugees, allowing them to immigrate to refugee camps in Kenya for international resettlement opportunities (i.e., U.S.). During their time in refugee camps, the Somali-Jareer Bantu community had limited access to formal education, which in part was to help ease their transition to the western world, where English is the official language. With the population being highly illiterate, many Somali-Jareer Bantus could not even write their names before arriving in the refugee camps (Jarratt, 2020). Even female children, whose access to education in the Somali-Jareer Bantu society is slim to none, gained the same educational opportunities as male children whose education the Somali-Jareer Bantu community prioritizes over female children.

Somali-Jareer Bantu Refugees in U.S Education System

Resettlement in Kenyan refugee camps introduced Somali-Jareer Bantu children to formal education. Although many may have spent hours a day in English classes, most Somali-Jareer Bantus needed to learn how to speak, read, or write English upon entering the United States, which further made adjusting to life in the U.S. more difficult. Due to their need to balance school with familial commitments, engagement in formal schooling remained limited for

most of this population, especially women who often serve as maternal heads of household chores. Because many Somali-Jareer Bantus did not attend school in Somalia, the literature portrays them as shockingly disadvantaged before arriving in the U.S. (Bjork, 2016; Jarratt, 2020). Along with other aspects of Somali scholarship, there needs to be more representation of the experiences of the Somali-Jareer Bantu population in the education realm. This troubling case remains the same in the education system of the U.S. in which scholarship regarding the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students is limited, lumped with those of dominant Somali ethnic populations or other refugee-background students, or nonexistent, especially in some parts of the education system like higher education. As the literature makes broad mention of Somali-Jareer Bantu students' experiences in education, it mainly focuses on pre-postsecondary education from the realm of teachers' impact with an emphasis on male students as a mere representation of the student population of Somali-Jareer Bantu communities (Birman & Tran, 2015, 2017; Tran & Birman, 2019; Roxas, 2008, 2010; Roy & Roxas, 2011; Roxas & Roy, 2012; Shapiro & MacDonald, 2017).

Limited Formal Schooling & Challenges

Using Rogoff's cultural-historical framework with an open-ended ethnographic approach, Birman and Tran (2015) examine the gulf between children with limited or no exposure to formal schooling and U.S. schools' expectations of them. In exploring the experiences of newly arrived Somali Bantu refugee students in the U.S. and their teachers' expectations, Birman and Tran (2015) report that teachers' attitudes impact whether or not they use strategies to engage Somali Bantu students in their learning process successfully. To fully engage refugee students, especially Somali-Jareer Bantu students, teachers must understand the lives of these students before adjusting teaching strategies based on their past educational experiences and available

resources. Teachers' lack of adequate knowledge about Somali-Jareer Bantu students increases the chances of teachers negatively influencing their learning experience. Regarding U.S. schools' expectations of Somali-Jareer Bantu students, this study claims refugee students' involvement in behavioral incidents is problematic because these behaviors contribute to students' level of engagement or disengagement in their overall learning process. However, it is worth considering that when refugee students like Somali-Jareer Bantu students are unfamiliar with the behavioral norms and cues expressed through language, they may externalize disruptive behaviors, including acting out, aggression, frustration, resentment, ignoring directions, being rude or defiant, or not listening (Nemeth & Brillante, 2019; Rhodes, Ochoa, & Ortiz, 2005; Rumberger, 2015). As such, the literature reveals that these students are more likely to be documented for negative behavioral issues, which could lead to a misdiagnosis of their learning process and their adjustment to western culture and formal schooling in general.

Limited Formal Schooling: Adapting to U.S. Formal Schooling & Culture

As Somali-Jareer Bantu students are resettling in the U.S., they experience difficulties adjusting to formal schooling. Most of this population has no prior experience in formal schooling before their resettlement in the U.S. Negative behavioral issues contribute to a poor or lack of connection with their school (Guarnaccia & Lopez, 1998; Sharp-Ross, 2011; Suh & Satcher, 2005; Williams & Butler, 2003); cultural-linguistic misunderstandings (Cho, Wang, & Christ, 2019; Rhodes, Ochoa, & Ortiz, 2005; Rumberger, 2015; Nemeth & Brillante, 2019); higher mobility rates (Humke & Schaefer, 1995; Rumberger, 2015); significant psychological distress resulting from prior traumas (Sullivan & Simonson, 2016); and difficulty integrating and acculturating to their new environments (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011). However, some of these challenges regarding the adjustment of refugee and immigrant students, specifically

Somali-Jareer Bantu students, are not fully accounted for in prior theory and research, especially within higher education. When schools make it a part of their mission to learn about the needs of minoritized refugee-background students like Somali-Jareer Bantu students, and the challenges they face, they can create a space for students to become more engaged in their learning process, therefore, improving their adjustment to formal schooling and overall learning experience.

Regarding challenges to integrating into formal schooling, it is crucial to note that schools' perceived notion of negative behaviors of refugee students is usually due to various factors, such as prior experiences of trauma (Akay & Jaffe-Walter, 2021). Prior experiences of trauma can cause cognitive difficulties among students from refugee and marginalized backgrounds, which can further impact their transition to formal schooling and life in the U.S. Refugee students generally need to acquire a new language in the country of resettlement (Kaplan, Valibhoy, Tucker, & Baker, 2016). The need to acquire new skills, such as language, ultimately influences cognitive functioning inabilities that may arise from exposure to traumatic events. Kaplan et al. (2016) further convey that due to their experience with traumatic events, refugee-background students often experience disruptions in family relationships and school. Although some of the mechanisms influencing these disruptions may arguably be complex, a considerable number of refugee-specific and broader research has shown links between the cognitive functioning of refugee students and exposure to traumatic events, family functioning, and English-language learning (Fruja Amthor & Roxas, 2016; Kaplan, Stolk, Valibhoy, Tucker, & Baker, 2016; Kiramba & Oloo, 2019; Morrice, Tip, Brown, & Collyer, 2020; Mthethwa-Sommers & Kisiara, 2015; Nwosu & Barnes, 2014; Price, Ellis, Escudero, Huffman-Gottschling, Sander, & Birman, 2012; Shapiro, 2014; Shapiro & MacDonald, 2017; Tran & Birman, 2019).

Other scholars examining the adaptation process of refugee-background students with limited formal schooling, like Somali-Jareer Bantu students, specifically within the context of teacher expectations, report that teachers have different expectations of Somali Bantu students. Differences in teacher expectations of these students create a disconnect between teachers and students. Due to their limited experience with formal schooling, Somali-Jareer Bantu students may not entirely understand their teachers' expectations (Birman & Tran, 2017; Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011; Fruja Amthor, & Roxas, 2016; Gichiru, 2012, 2014; Kruizenga, 2010; Meloche, Provinzano, Sondergeld, & Moy, 2020; Soylu, Kaysılı & Sever, 2020). From this study, acculturation (i.e., English language, and content, behaviors, internal traits, classroom assimilation, and the family/home) rises as a central theme in that as students gain more exposure to U.S. culture and new experiences, they find it easier to adapt to changes. Thus, this adaptation mode helps Somali-Jareer Bantu students meet their teachers' expectations. While adapting to cultural and social changes is vital for resettling in any new society, it is also crucial to recognize the difficulty of balancing more than one culture to survive. Somali-Jareer Bantu students have historically felt like outsiders even in the culture and society of their home country. Due to their marginalization for allegedly enhanced African features, they were enslaved and oppressed for decades under the Somali government. Thus, it is essential for the literature to specifically investigate this population to learn about their unique experiences in higher education, not a generalized experience lumped with the experiences of dominant Somali ethnic groups or other students from immigrant and refugee backgrounds.

Concerning the acculturation of immigrant and refugee background students with limited or no formal education experience, like Somali-Jareer Bantu students, schools serve as an essential part of their lives which aids in their academic and socio-emotional development (Cho,

Wang, & Christ, 2019; DeCapua, 2016; Shapiro & MacDonald, 2017). Within the context of adaptation to formalized schooling, various aspects affect the levels of engagement and adaptation outcomes of refugee and immigrant students, especially considering differences shaping the unique experiences of these students (Schachner, Juang, Moffitt, & van de Vijver, 2018). Such aspects include interindividual interactions in the classroom (i.e., peer relations, student-teacher relations, teacher beliefs, and teaching practices); characteristics of the classroom or school (i.e., ethnic composition and diversity climate); and relevant school- and national-level policies (i.e., diversity policies and school tracking). At the immediate level, English language competency can influence engagement in formal schooling and adaptation to western culture.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

When persecuted refugees and immigrants, including members of the Somali-Jareer Bantu community, enter the U.S., the notion of assimilation to American norms and values is naturally imposed upon them as they begin to settle in the U.S. Through societal reinforcements, they must learn the English language to reach a step closer to adjusting to U.S. norms and values and ease their adaptation process in joining the ambiguous melting pot of an American sameness society. Daring not to assimilate to these norms and values brings forth the fear of being othered even more. Such rhetoric of othering is often layered with other deficit narratives, creating a distance between American or U.S.-born natives and refugee students. The notion of othering contributes to an ongoing discourse of racial supremacy and inferiority, which may or may not likely be below conscious awareness. This ideology of othering conveys that the distance between refugees and U.S. citizens can only lessen when those at a deficit (individuals from refugee backgrounds) commit themselves to becoming more like U.S. citizens (Jarratt, 2020). This refugee deficit rhetoric shifts the blame from schools to students and parents.

In a multi-year qualitative case study focusing on the preparation of elementary teachers and their experiences in working with English learners, such as Somali Bantu students in an elementary school with 75% of its population being refugee background students, Newcomer, Ardasheva, Morrison, Ernst-Slavit, Morrison, Carbonneau, and Lightner (2020) discuss the unique challenges refugee-background students face in learning English as a second language and strategies to prepare teachers to support their needs better. Regarding the preparation of teachers to successfully work with refugee-background students such as Somali-Jareer Bantu students, Henderson and Ambroso (2018) also share similar results, especially highlighting the importance of teacher training to support the needs of refugee students resettling in U.S. middle schools. Strategies of how teachers can support refugee-background students' socioemotional well-being and learning process in a formal school setting include: creating spaces for students to share their personal experiences; partnering with families in support of cross-cultural understandings; and scaffolding instruction, primarily through modeling, schema building, and contextualizing (Gichiru, 2016; Liscio & Farrelly, 2019; Kruizenga, 2010; Warriner, Fredricks, & Duran, 2020). These strategies may work for refugee-background students like Somali-Jareer Bantu students as they learn to gain more skills necessary to adjust to resettlement in the U.S. and formal schooling in general. However, Somali-Jareer Bantu youth have encountered traumatic events (Kaplan, Stolk, Valibhoy, Tucker, & Baker, 2016), such as killings, rape, looting, and forced migration. Engaging in an open dialogue about their experiences in front of other students in the classroom may be difficult and traumatizing as they suffer from trauma and displacement (Kapteijns & Arman, 2004). Somali-Jareer Bantu students have been excluded from Somalia's formal education system, so their experience with socio-cultural development opportunities offered through formal schooling is limited to none. As the literature about Somali

scholarship lumps this ethnic minority population with dominant Somali ethnic groups, research around the experiences of refugee-background students should refrain from generalizing the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students with that of other refugee-background populations to avoid misdiagnosis of their experiences and needs for retention and success in higher education.

Homogeneity of Immigrants & Applied Theoretical Frameworks

Scholars concerned with the adaptation process among refugee-background students, such as Soylu, Kaysılı, & Sever (2020), argue that teachers lack knowledge of the cultural backgrounds of refugee students. Teachers often form their knowledge assessments about refugee-background students through general models of refugees due to a lack of sufficient resources on the experiences of refugee students outside of school settings (Cho, Wang, & Christ, 2019; Roy & Roxas, 2011; Walick & Sullivan, 2015). Ultimately, teachers who do not know enough about their students' cultural and educational backgrounds end up misdiagnosing refugee students' needs, negatively impacting their school engagement. To help ease the adaptation experiences of refugee-background students like those from the Somali-Jareer Bantu community, Schachner et al. (2018) call for a focus on teachers' beliefs and the normative climate within the schools because, unlike structural aspects of the school context, these areas may be easier to modify. Refugee and immigrant background students like Somali-Jareer Bantu students experience events of their adaptation process differently. Schools must practice cultural and inter-ethnic inclusivity, focusing on how refugee-background students respond to such events to understand their experiences and improve their learning and adaptation process.

To gain a broad understanding of educating Somali refugee children, another scholar examines the salient challenges of K-12 teachers directly involved with the education of Somali

refugee students (Gichiru, 2012, 2016). Through a culturally relevant approach, Gichiru (2012) discusses the challenges Somali refugee students face, sharing that teachers of refugee and immigrant students feel that to understand and successfully educate them, they must have a bulk of information at their disposal. However, the pressure to have so much information is not a more effective strategy to help refugee students such as Somali-Jareer Bantu students. Instead, direct dialogue benefits the learning and understanding of the needs and experiences of any student population. Thus, this is yet another study among others (Kruizenga, 2010; Ndungu, 2019) that presents Somalia as a homogenous society, lumping all its diverse ethnicities into one, further excluding the unique experiences of Somali ethnic minorities like the Somali-Jareer Bantu.

Further, this notion also nurtures the idea that the educational needs of all immigrant and refugee-background students should be addressed equally, dismissing the unique backgrounds and challenges of such students. However, more research is needed to address generalizations about refugee-minority students such as Somali-Jareer Bantu students. Only then can we begin to discuss adapting and optimizing resources to meet the needs of specific refugee and immigrant minority student groups, as information regarding the educational experiences of student groups from such backgrounds groups remains limited.

Somali-Jareer Bantu U.S. Educational Experience

Studies surrounding the experiences of Somali-Bantu refugee students in the education system of the U.S. rely on a male perspective in a pre-postsecondary educational setting (Roxas, 2008; 2010; Roxas & Roy, 2012). After speaking with Somali Bantu families, students, and educators, Roxas and Roy (2012) share that Somali Bantu refugee students experience many challenges and need specific accommodations to support their learning and growth. From an

intersectionality lens, Roxas and Roy (2012) suggest a consideration of the complexities of culture, ethnicity, religion, and race in supporting Somali Bantu refugee students in U.S. schools. Due to their unique experiences and limited experience with formal schooling, their lives as refugees and ethnic minorities influence how they perceive schooling and its relevance. Although this study directly informs the educational experiences of Somali Bantu refugee students to some degree, it is only one study that also bases its results on male students' perspectives. Therefore, this single study cannot be generalized to account for the experiences of all refugee students from the Somali-Jareer Bantu community as they experience schooling in the U.S. in individually unique ways like any other refugee and immigrant background student population.

Similarly, Roxas (2008) investigates the socio-cultural factors that influence and constrain the educational experience of Somali Bantu students from the lens of male high school students. Historically, the Somali government denied members of the Somali-Jareer Bantu communities access to education (Besteman, 2009; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003). Due to their lack of experience in formal schooling, they often face many difficulties in transitioning to formalized schooling in the U.S., including difficulty in mastering the English language needed to understand academic subjects and successfully adapt to mainstream U.S. culture and norms. Although they commit themselves to understanding subjects in U.S. schools, Somali Bantu students often find it challenging to keep up with their U.S.-born peers (Roy & Roxas, 2011). Roxas (2008) lays a contextual framework for educators and school officials to understand the potential difficulties Somali Bantu students face as they transition to resettlement and formal schooling in the U.S. Understandably, this study's focus on the male perspective and others mentioned above, being at the pre-postsecondary education level, is limited as it is

completely missing a female perspective related to the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students. The complete removal of a female perspective in the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students is as alarming as it is the near extinction of the educational experiences of the general Somali Bantu student population beyond pre-postsecondary education in the U.S. and broadly.

Perception of Schooling: Somali-Jareer Bantu Families

Through an ethnographic lens, Roy and Roxas (2011) examine the experiences of Somali Bantu refugee students and families to understand their perception of schooling and how schooling impacts their lives. Other scholars, also approaching their studies from the lens of refugee-specific families in terms of their perception of schooling, explore students' experiences with formal schooling while considering their families' perception of schooling and how that impacts their students (He, Bettez, & Levin, 2017; Roxas, 2008, 2010; Roxas & Roy, 2012). Specifically, Roy and Roxas (2011) investigate Somali Bantu refugee students' experiences, focusing on how educational discourse and structural practices support or hinder Somali Bantu students. Roy and Roxas (2011) also consider other influential factors, such as notions of doing school, educators' roles in assisting refugee-background students such as Somali-Jareer Bantu students, understanding how to navigate school successfully, and the deficit rhetoric that often impedes correctly understanding this student population through a holistic approach. Based on counter-storytelling interviews with Somali Bantu refugee families, Roy and Roxas (2011) proclaim that educators often focus on problems that obstruct students from reaching language and content goals, including mastering the English language, transitioning to formal schooling, and resettlement in the U.S. In some cases, it is not unlikely for schooling to hold less value among Somali Bantu refugee families and students due to factors such as lack of support and

experience in formal schooling in Somalia and the U.S. Hence, U.S. schools need to consider the many factors influencing the experiences of students and families of the Somali-Jareer Bantu community with education in the U.S. to yield the necessary support they need to succeed and lessen the cultural dissonance in classrooms (DeCapua, 2016).

Discussion

The literature exploring the educational experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students is considerably insufficient and almost nonexistent, especially in the context of their histories, presence, and experiences in higher education and beyond. The limited scholarship concerning the experiences of this student population heavily leans from a male perspective in pre- and postsecondary settings. Although from a substantially limited scope, Tran and Birman (2019) attempt to include female participants in investigating the experience of Somali Bantu students in the U.S. education system, specifically about their teachers' expectations. Using content analysis and interviews with teachers of Somali Bantu students at an elementary school, Tran and Birman (2019) explore the range of teacher expectations for Somali Bantu refugee students. This study reports that as Somali Bantu students gain more exposure to U.S. culture, teachers expect them to adapt to formalized schooling and meet teachers' classroom expectations. Although this study includes female Somali Bantu students, results could be more comprehensive considering the sample size and the lack of discussion concerning participants' within-ethnic Somali-Jareer Bantu identities. Consequently, this study's mere results cannot be generalized to account for the educational experiences of the female population of Somali-Jareer Bantu students or the experiences of the student population of this community broadly.

As depicted above, the studies concerning the educational experiences of the student population from the Somali-Jareer Bantu community in the education system of the U.S.

predominantly center around pre-postsecondary education, often guided from a male perspective. Also, such studies only refer to participants as Somali Bantu, lacking a discussion of the ethnic differences. Thus, study participants can identify with any Somali Bantu ethnic minority groups discussed earlier in this chapter. The literature lacks a specificity lens of the within-group ethnic diversity of this student population. Generally, the literature surrounding the experiences of the Somali-Jareer Bantu community as an ethnically marginalized group is significantly limited. Somali scholarship almost erased the history of the Somali-Jareer Bantu community from Somalia's history (Eno, 2008). When the literature loosely mentions the Somali-Jareer Bantu community, whether in education or elsewhere, this population is aggregated with members of dominant Somali ethnic groups or dismissed in general (Ingiriis, 2012; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003). As one of the multiple layers of marginalization, Somali scholarship removed the history and existence of the Somali-Jareer Bantu community; therefore, any mention of this population in the literature is limited to a generalized comparison to dominant Somali ethnic groups. Although the Somali-Jareer Bantu community has lineage to Somalia as much as dominant Somali ethnic clans, Somali scholarship still refuses to acknowledge their rights and membership in Somali society. The following section discusses the theoretical framework used to examine the experiences of the Somali-Jareer Bantu student population.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I provide context for the theoretical framework employed to investigate best the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in the higher education system of the U.S. I used a combination of ideals from W.E.B. Du Bois' double consciousness concept (Levinson, B. A., Hanks, C., Gross, J. P. K., Link, J., Dadds, J. H., & Kumasi, K, 2011) and Gloria Anzaldúa's (2012) *mestiza* consciousness or Borderlands theory in the hope of gaining a deepened

understanding of the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education environments, as it relates to how they navigate their experiences and negotiate their identities (i.e., ethnicity) in multiple social worlds.

Double Consciousness

When Du Bois first explored the concept in a 1903 publication of *The Souls of Black Folk*, he described double consciousness as:

"A peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn as under" (Levinson et al., 2011, p. 204).

Double consciousness, as explained by Du Bois', is a sensation of feeling like one's identity is divided into different parts, making it difficult for an individual to claim a single, unified identity. Drawing from Afrocentric ideas and knowledge, the double consciousness framework centers around the experiences of marginalized individuals, especially those of African descent. Levinson et al. (2011) assert that "placing African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior" (p. 204) provides students with an opportunity to lead their journeys. Du Bois' double consciousness framework helps explain the social and psychological pressures that individuals of African descent and others from marginalized backgrounds combat as they negotiate their multiple identities. Marginalized individuals constantly navigate between their perspectives of their social self, their respective communities, and the perception of others from external communities. One's survival within this

perspective is crucial to understanding tactics needed to balance multiple social worlds from various viewpoints and struggles of culture, ethnicity, and society. Since its inception in literature, Du Bois's double consciousness theory has been a remarkable legacy for scholars and educators with interest in improving the educational experiences of students from marginalized backgrounds. Another complementary ideology that benefits the analysis of the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students is the notion of intersectionality and anti-essentialism best explained through the lens of differential racialization. This theoretical lens holds that "each race has its origins and ever-evolving history, [thereby] no person has a single, easily stated, unitary identity" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 10).

Mestiza Consciousness (Borderlands theory)

As one of the critical social theories expanded from Du Bois's double consciousness framework, Anzaldúa's (2012) *mestiza* consciousness, known as the Borderlands theory, is concerned with both geographical/physical and psychological borders that individuals from marginalized backgrounds experience as they navigate their identities through multiple social worlds that are defined by "cultures, languages, social classes, ..., nation-states, and colonization" (p. 7). Concerning the geographic/physical aspect of this theory, members of the Somali-Jareer Bantu community crossed many physical borders with each of its own societal norms and values, which inevitably impact the experiences of this community's student population. This process is particularly impactful to their experiences as they navigate the exhaustive process of adapting to the cultural norms and values necessary to survive in those societies while maintaining their native cultural norms, which undeniably forces them to establish a double reality. Quoting Anzaldúa (1987), Chang (2018) states that "for a mestiza: in perceiving conflicting information and points of view, she is subjected to a swamping of her

psychological borders. She has found that she cannot hold concepts in rigid boundaries" (p. 32). Anzaldúa (2012) explains that living psychologically between "borders and margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element, in an alien element" (preface) because it is exceedingly difficult for individuals in this life experience to feel whole in either social worlds, thereby, adopting a new culture—"a border culture" (p. 25), a culture that requires one to "inhabit [double] realities and live "in the interface between the two [borders], forc[ing one] to become adept at switching modes as a "survival tactic" (p. 61) to navigate between social worlds.

Anzaldúa (2012) describes a border as a "vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary... and those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the *normal*" (p. 25). Anzaldúa (2012) asserts that "before a scab forms, it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds, merging to form a third country—a border culture, [that] is in a constant state of transition" (p. 25).

La facultad

Extending her understanding of her experience with culture and society, Anzaldúa (2012) later coined *la facultad*, an inner sense of knowing, especially among women and minoritized individuals, against monocultural conceptions of our social realities. *La facultad*, a tenant of Borderlands theory, refers to an individual's unconscious sensing of their surrounding environment.

Anzaldúa (2012) argues that individuals often develop *la facultad* due to society 'othering' their identities. *Othering* is a hegemonic ideology used to categorize people, things, and ideas in terms of their differences as a justification for racial, gender, and class oppression (Collins, 2000; Hatos, 2012). Anzaldúa (2012) explains *la facultad*, as she writes:

"Those pushed out of the tribe for being different are likely to become more sensitized (when not brutalized into insensitivity). Those who do not feel psychologically or physically safe in the world are more apt to develop this sense. Those who pounced on the most have it the strongest—the females, the homosexuals of all races, the dark-skinned, the outcast, the persecuted, the marginalized, the foreign" (p. 60).

In this aspect, *la facultad* becomes a survival tactic for individuals from minority backgrounds to navigate psychological borders between their ever-changing social worlds. With this developed sense of *la facultad*, "we lose something in this mode of initiation, something is taken from us: our innocence, our unknowing ways, our safe and easy ignorance" (Anzaldúa (2012, p. 61). Individuals in this mode may often be immersed in this othered sensing that their senses are constantly turned on; therefore, they lose the luxury of not knowing or sensing specific ambiances.

Connecting Double Consciousness & Mestiza Consciousness

Elements from a combination of these theoretical frameworks were applied to examine the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students best as they lay a foundation to analyze the experiences of marginalized student populations and how they make sense of their social environments as they navigate their journeys in higher education. Du Bois' double consciousness concept (Levinson et al., 2011) centers explicitly around the experiences of marginalized individuals as a foundation for examining their lived experiences, allowing them the agency to tell their own stories. Du Bois comments that individuals of African descent have a sense of two-ness in which they view themselves through two different eyes or perspectives: one of their communities and the other of members outside their community. This feeling of two-ness forces them to be in between two different perceptions, constantly comparing their

perspective of themselves to how others view them. Anzaldua's (2012) mestiza consciousness ideology expands this theory, adding that marginalized individuals live between borderlands or worlds where they constantly have to navigate their identities. For Somali-Jareer Bantu students, both frameworks best serve to examine their experiences as they acknowledge the complexities of intersecting identities. Somali-Jareer Bantu students battle waging worlds (school environments, home, and themselves) while navigating their educational experience in the U.S. Therefore, while exploring the lived experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu experiences, it is crucial to place them at the center of this investigation to allow them to be agents of their stories and better understand their experiences.

Connections to Methodology

The combination of elements from the theoretical frameworks discussed directly aligns with phenomenology research methodology because both inform the essence of identity, race, and positionality development in various environments. Phenomenology examines the essence of individuals' lived experiences (Saldana, 2011; van Manen, 2017). This study explores how Somali-Jareer Bantu students navigate their college experience as it relates to their identities (i.e., ethnicity) within higher education environments in the U.S. Elements from the double consciousness and borderlands theoretical frameworks (Anzaldua, 2012; Levinson et al., 2011) acknowledge the complexities of an individual's intersectionality and provide a lens to examine the experiences of marginalized identities through an acknowledgment of individuals' intersecting identities. Through this perspective, these frameworks inform how marginalized individuals such as Somali-Jareer Bantu students grapple with their multiple identities as they navigate their educational and personal experiences within higher education. Exploring the essence of ethnic identity as it relates to navigating one's college experience, I hope to hone in on my research questions and further inform my dissertation study. Due to their intersecting identities, Somali-Jareer Bantu students battle

multiple essences as they are introduced to a new environment built on hegemonic practices of white supremacy, dominance, and patriarchy. Somali-Jareer Bantu students constantly navigate between multiple social worlds in which they seek understanding and belonging as they attempt to carve their experiences in environments that lack an awareness of their presence and representation of their identities. Through my research questions, I seek to explore the notions of multiple identities, including ethnicity, culture, and religion, and how they shape the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education spaces.

Summary

Throughout this literature review, I sought to investigate the experiences of students identifying with Somali Bantu ethnic minority communities, particularly the Somali-Jareer in higher education, by examining three sub-questions. To situate the literature, the first section examines research surrounding the experiences of Black immigrant students in higher education to review scholarship surrounding the experiences of students of similar black African backgrounds as Somali-Jareer Bantu students. Considering one of their marginalized identities, refugee status, this section also considers literature regarding the influence of federal immigration policies, which helped shape the migration of Black immigrants from certain African countries, particularly during the 1960s and 1980s. As a foundation for further literature exploring Black immigrant students' experiences in higher education, this section aims to provide a perspective of what existing literature may suggest about the educational experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students from refugee backgrounds and highlight gaps in the literature concerning the experiences of this ethnic minority student population in the higher education system of the U.S.

The subsequent section reviews the known status of the Somali Bantu ethnic minority populations by examining their background, ethnic diversity, and relationship to dominant Somali ethnic groups to push back against Somalia's rhetoric of a homogenous state with a single ethnicity (Lehman & Eno, 2003). To shed light on this population's extreme oppression under the Somali government (Eno, 2008; Eno & Eno, 2014), this section reviews their background and sociopolitical histories with particular attention to this population's almost absent literature and Somali scholarship's disregard of this population's literature as valueless (Eno, 2008; Gundel, 2009; Ingiriis, 2012; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003; Webersik, 2004), as well as elements of this community's culture, immigration process to Kenyan refugee camps leading to their resettlement in the U.S., and their experiences in education and educational attainment broadly. The final section of this literature review probes the educational experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in Somalia and the U.S. while drawing attention to how the literature mentions this population in the educational systems of Somalia and the U.S., especially how Somali scholarship discusses the Somali-Jareer Bantu population regarding their known or unknown presence. Seeking to highlight awareness about the existence of Somali-Jareer Bantu students and their experiences in the educational sphere of Somalia and the U.S., this section also considers elements of education and literature among this population and any limitations present in the literature.

This review of the literature reveals that scholarship regarding the educational experiences of the Somali-Jareer Bantu community as an ethnically marginalized and oppressed population is notably insubstantial as their history appears almost nonexistent from Somalia's history and scholarship (Eno, 2008; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhau, 2003). Where the literature slightly references the Somali-Jareer Bantu in the realm of education, they are either

merged with dominant Somali ethnic groups or wholly dismissed (Eno, 2014). Due to the removal of the histories of Somali-Jareer Bantu by Somali scholarship, the literature's approach to this population often leads from a limited scope of mere comparisons to dominant Somali ethnic groups. Therefore, research regarding the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students generally in education, in the U.S. and Somalia, remains remarkably insufficient and even near inexistent in certain contexts such as higher education.

Although Somali refugees are resettling in the U.S. in large numbers, research about the Somali-Jareer Bantu ethnic minority population remains extremely limited, mainly due to a lack of knowledge. Literature about Somali scholarship points to Somalia as a synonymous country with a homogenous ethnicity, negating Somalia's general ethnic diversity (Ingiriis, 2012; Menkhaus, 2003) and within-group ethnic diversity. As such, research investigating the educational experiences of Somali Bantu students is limited and heavily focuses on pre-postsecondary education from a male perspective and lacks a discussion on the specificity of the ethnic inner diversity (within-group ethnic diversity) within the Somali Bantu community itself. Thus, the literature points to a gap regarding the educational experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students, as there is a lack of representation of this population beyond pre-postsecondary education settings and broadly in the scholarship of education. Therefore, this literature review aims to accentuate the need to fill this gap by introducing a critical lens in higher education literature vis-à-vis the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students, marginalized ethnic minorities distinct from students of dominant Somali ethnic groups. Ultimately, this review seeks to provide a source of hope to students from minority backgrounds that higher education institutions will include them in persistence and retention efforts to create spaces that allow the

reception of new stories by/for and about historically marginalized populations such as Somali-Jareer Bantu students from refugee backgrounds of limited experience to formal schooling.

As higher education institutions explore strategies to practice inclusivity, it is vital to learn and understand the ethnic diversity within the Somali Bantu population and Somalia in general, and other refugee student groups from Africa. Somali-Jareer Bantu students' experiences differ from other African refugee and immigrant student populations, notably Nigerians and Ghanaians, and dominant Somali ethnic groups (Benson, 2006; Baber, 2012; Capps, McCabe, & Fix, 2012; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Griffin & McIntosh, 2015; Guenther, Pendaz, & Songora Makene, 2011; Mwangi & Fries-Britt, 2015; Stebleton, Rost-Banik, Greene, & DeAngelo, 2017). Understanding their differences in experience will provide higher education institutions a lens to acknowledge their presence and the unique place that Somali-Jareer Bantu students hold in higher education, further assisting with persistence and retention efforts to align support services to help meet the needs of this student population. Recognizing that Somali-Jareer Bantu students' needs differ from other Black immigrant and refugee students, students from dominant Somali ethnic groups, and other minority student populations, will further allow higher education institutions to acknowledge their presence on U.S. college campuses and understand their developmental needs to access meaningful opportunities to enhance their overall educational experience.

The study's research questions were designed further to explore the multiple complex identities of Somali-Jareer Bantu students as they navigate their experiences and negotiate their multiple identities within the higher education system of the U.S. The following research questions guide the investigation of learning about the educational experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education.

Overarching question:

- What are the experiences of Somali Bantu students in the higher education system of the United States (U.S.)?

Subset questions:

- What is the experience of Black immigrants in higher education?
- What is the status of the Somali Bantu population in the U.S., particularly regarding their immigration status, background, and relationship to the dominant Somali ethnic groups?
- What is the experience of the Somali Bantu population in the education systems of Somalia and the U.S.?

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the literature review and theoretical framework. By researching the experiences of black immigrants in the higher education system of the U.S., Somali-Jareer Bantu's known status in the context of the U.S. and Somalia, and their experience in the U.S. and Somalia's educational systems, I reviewed literature relevant to this research area. The next chapter outlines the study's methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of my inquiry-based qualitative methodology study using a phenomenological approach. This study investigates Somali-Jareer Bantu students' educational experiences, specifically their navigation process and creating meaning of their multiple marginalized identities within higher education and the general Somali population. Thus, this chapter presents details regarding the research design, data collection, and analysis, as well as the strengths and limitations of the design.

Research Design

As stated in Chapter Two, research surrounding the histories and experiences of the Somali-Jareer Bantu population, in general, is almost nonexistent in Somali scholarship as well as in global scholarship. Therefore, research regarding the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education is limited. The limited research exploring this marginalized student population often frames their experiences from a newcomer perspective. It also heavily relies on the perspective of male students as a generalization for discussing the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education. While exploring my research questions, I utilized phenomenology as a methods approach within qualitative research.

Qualitative research relies primarily on collecting nonnumerical data such as words, categories, and images. As a scientific method, qualitative research relies on inductive reasoning; therefore, it is naturally exploratory. Qualitative research is exploratory as it utilizes a "bottom-up" approach requiring the researcher to construct knowledge, hypotheses, and

grounded theory from data collected during fieldwork or the data collection phase (Johnson & Christenson, 2017, p. 34). In other words, qualitative research examines individuals' process of interpreting, making meaning, and generating an understanding of their lived experiences. According to Johnson and Christenson (2017), the focus of qualitative research derives from a "wide-angle" and "deep-angle" lens, examining the breadth and depth of a phenomenon to further learn more about them (p. 34). The idea behind this process is that individuals construct knowledge as they interact with their social environment and make meaning of a particular moment, experience, or phenomenon. As qualitative research seeks to understand how individuals construct, interpret, and make meaning of their lived experiences, it provides, in a way, a means for individuals to create agency in interpreting their experiences as they engage with their social worlds. Thus, this study employs phenomenology to capture better how Somali-Jareer Bantu students make meaning of their experience in higher education.

Phenomenology means a study deals with individuals' "experience" (van Manen, 2017, p. 1). Saldana (2011) asserts that phenomenology studies the nature and meaning of things – in that it is described as a "phenomenon's essence and essentials that determine what it is" (p. 7). Phenomenology references the description of one or more individuals' consciousness and experience of a phenomenon (Johnson & Christenson, 2017). Similarly, Giorgi (2012) shares that phenomenology is ultimately interested in the activities of consciousness and the objects that present themselves to consciousness. Ultimately, as described by Johnson and Christenson (2017), the purpose of phenomenological research is for the researcher to gain a perspective into their research participants' "life-worlds" and understand personal meanings they associate with their experiences, such as what meanings they attach to something in their life including a moment, experience or a phenomenon (p. 444). According to the New World Encyclopedia, life-

world in the case of phenomenology derives from a German term, *Lebenswelt*, conceived in the 1930s by philosopher and father of phenomenology Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). Life-world is a concept used in philosophy and some social sciences to describe the world “as lived” prior to reflective representation or analysis (New World Encyclopedia, 2018). When translated, life-world refers to individuals' "world of immediate experience" (Todres, 2005, p.123), an individual's inner world of consciousness and experience existing in one's mind. Further, one's life-world is a combination of feelings, thoughts, and self-awareness at any moment in time. Therefore, life-world could be conceived as a world of what is self-evident or given, a world or society that its inhabitants may experience together. Popularized by Husserl, life-world is emphasized for its role as the ground of all knowledge in lived experience (New World Encyclopedia, 2018). Thus, the primary purpose of phenomenology is to obtain access to individuals' life-worlds and describe their experiences of a phenomenon.

Many phenomenological research studies have been conducted based on the descriptive approach or some moderation of its guiding principles. However, a significant change made within this approach is to use descriptions of experiences from others and not just from oneself, as in philosophical reflection on experience (Todres, 2005). Adopted from Husserl, Todres (2005) shares the central features of a descriptive phenomenological research approach characterized by the following components:

- The researcher gathers detailed concrete descriptions of specific experiences from others.
- The researcher adopts the attitude of phenomenological reduction to intuit the intelligibility of what is given in the experience.
- The researcher seeks the most invariant meanings for a context.

As other qualitative research methods have grown and continue to expand, phenomenology has grown into a newer form. This new type of phenomenology, called interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), seeks to attain individuals' experiences by critically questioning the concept of participants bracketing out their demographic, cultural, and personal characteristics (Johnson & Christenson, 2017). Bracketing is a researcher's ability to "suspend any preconceptions or learned feelings" about a phenomenon to experience it in its purest form (p. 445). Specifically, IPA examines how particular people in certain contexts make meaning and interpret their experiences. Because individuals' experiences are distinct and experience a phenomenon differently, IPA seeks to understand research participants' perspectives on their experience instead of trying to describe a universal experience across all people (transcendental experience). Instead of searching for a universal experience among individuals, IPA begins with an interest in understanding individuals' particular experiences at particular places and times, seeking to understand different individuals' shared experiences with a specific phenomenon. IPA is also a strongly idiographic approach concerned with a detailed analysis of the case either as is and in itself or before moving to similarly detailed analyses of other cases. Originating from Greek, the term "idios" means own or private; therefore, IPA, interested in this aspect of individual experience, seeks to discover what makes each unique (Picione, 2015, p. 366). An idiographic approach allows models of knowledge construction through in-depth studies so as not to limit the ability to produce models of general knowledge. According to Reid et al. (2005), IPA is an approach interested in 'exploring the lived experience' of individuals in a study (p. 20). As an interpretive approach, IPA is subjective, transparent, and plausible to participants. In its entirety, IPA is naturally inductive, with "no pre-existing hypothesis"; thus, IPA aims to capture and explore the meanings that participants assign to their experiences (Reid

et al., 2005, p. 20). This research approach utilizes the participants as experts in the chosen phenomenon of analysis. Therefore, qualitative researchers engaged in this approach may refer to their research participants as co-researchers. The following section will briefly consider the strengths and limitations of phenomenology.

Strengths and limitations

As adopted from Husserl and Heidegger, the essence of a phenomenological approach to a study aims to develop a complete, accurate, clear, and articulate description and understanding of a particular phenomenon (human experience or moment). Schutz (1962) asserts:

"The world of nature, as explored by the natural scientist, does not 'mean' anything to the molecules, atoms, and electrons. Nevertheless, the observational field of the social scientist – social reality – has a specific meaning and reference structure for the human beings living, acting, and thinking within it" (p. 59).

Phenomenology seeks to understand individuals' process of making meaning of their lived experiences and interpret their life-worlds as they engage with their social worlds. Using phenomenology as a research approach allows for a rich and complete description of human experiences and meanings. Through this observational process of individuals' meaning-making and constructing knowledge, phenomenology allows for the natural emergence of findings rather than the manipulation of an investigator. Phenomenology requires the use of careful techniques to keep descriptions as valid as possible to the experiential raw data by using extreme care in moving step by step and in being mindful not to delete from, add to, change, or distort anything initially present in the initial meaning categories of the participants' transcripts. To enhance experiencing the phenomenon in its purest form and help minimize the researcher's influence on

the findings, the researcher understands and reflects upon their biases and attempts to bracket presuppositions throughout all phases of the research process.

Limitations

Although phenomenology benefits the process of capturing individuals' lived experiences, it also presents limitations as any other research method, whether quantitative or qualitative. A limitation of phenomenology is its dependence on the articulate skills of the participants providing the necessary information needed to carry out the phenomenon. Matters surrounding logistics and generalizations connect with this as language and terms employed in existential-phenomenological philosophy, and phenomenological inquiry are generally difficult. In terms of conclusions formed from this method, it depends on the specific participants in the study. Due to phenomenology's orientation toward a particular time frame or moment, it is possible to miss information about broader periods or the development of an experience. Specifically, focusing on a rich description of an experience, phenomenology in this sense may miss information about what led up to that experience, what its outcomes or consequences might be, and what the accompaniments and other factors associated with the experience are because of the method's limited interest in conceptualizing the experience.

On the other hand, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is concerned with understanding lived experience and how participants interpret their experiences. IPA is phenomenological in that it wishes to explore an individual's perception or account of an event or state instead of attempting to produce an objective record of the event or state itself. Simultaneously, while trying to get close to the participant's world, IPA considers that one cannot do this directly or entirely. Therefore, access depends on the researcher's own conceptions required to make sense of that other personal world through an interpretative activity

(Reid et al., 2005; van Manen, 2017). Due to the interest in understanding participants' experiences and unfolding meanings they may associate with certain experiences, this study may often focus on IPA; however, with an exchange of the descriptive approach to enhance the study with further detailing of participants' experiences in a rich and deeply meaningful way. The following section provides an overview of the researcher's reflexivity regarding engaging in human experience.

Reflexivity

Before conducting a study, especially one that deals with individuals' experiences, such as phenomenology, researchers must first examine their own biases and assumptions about the phenomena (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Given my multiple salient identities, I acknowledge that I have similar lived experiences to the participants I worked with (co-researchers). While our experiences are unique to each of us, I anticipated some moments to merge, especially our upbringing, considering our shared cultural background and how we may have experienced higher education from that perspective. Although our salient identities may vary across a spectrum, I hoped my co-researchers and I would share an experience of co-creating and co-constructing knowledge throughout the data collection phase. Considering my role in this study as the principal investigator, I planned to differentiate myself from my co-researchers by clearly communicating with them about the purpose of the study, sharing community agreements during the interview, as well as hosting a space for them to share their narratives within the period of this study openly. I consider the participants I interviewed co-researchers because they helped construct knowledge by allowing me into their worlds and sharing their experiences, not because they were directly involved in the research process. Although I closely identify with the participants in this study, I hoped to cultivate further a positive relationship that will prove to be

essential in the pairing of my researcher's positionality and biases with decisions later dealing with the evaluation of methods and criticality of the design (Schutz, 1962; Maxwell, 2012).

According to Schutz (1962), the researcher's understanding of the topic and problem determines the data collection process in phenomenology. Therefore, I engaged in the process of reflexivity by understanding the study's significance to address further my researcher's lens of the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2017; Saldana, 2011). To fully carry out a research study, a researcher is pivotal to the research design and approach, which requires prior knowledge of the study being undertaken. Similarly, the researcher conducting a phenomenological study must have prior knowledge of the study phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen, 2017) to serve as a source to help co-researchers gain an inner sense of understanding. For example, sharing knowledge and experience on this study's topic allowed me to criticize the literature, which I hoped would further allow me to cultivate interconnectedness with my co-researchers during our dialogue and throughout the rest of the study. As a Somali-Jareer Bantu individual who has gone through the navigation process of higher education in the U.S., my shared lived experience with my co-researchers is critical to mention within this study as it provides readers with an overview of my personal background as a researcher. The following section provides the methods I employed for the research study.

Research Method

This phenomenological study aimed to explore the navigational experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education. In phenomenology, the researcher seeks "to conduct a deeply "rich descriptive" research study (Johnson & Christensen, 2017, p. 446). Providing a case rich in information like descriptive phenomenology is essential to research to enhance people's awareness and understanding of central issues. An information-rich case further contributes to

the general society's learning about the research study topic. As a researcher, I looked forward to engaging in an information-rich case through this study because understanding and learning about the phenomena of how Somali-Jareer Bantu students make meaning of their experiences were crucial to my learning experience in terms of helping me learn about significant issues that they experience in higher education (Todres, 2005).

Recruitment and Selection

By centering factors such as intersectionality (ethnic, cultural, religious, and gender identity), my initial phase of analysis for this research required co-researchers to:

- Identify as Somali-Jareer Bantu (also Somali Bantu, Somali-Jareer)
- Be enrolled as an undergraduate or graduate student at an accredited 2- or 4-year higher education institution in the United States.
- Be in at least the second semester of the academic year
- Recently (1-5 years) graduated from an accredited 2- or 4-year U.S. higher education in the United States.

Sampling

I used purposeful sampling to seek and learn about my research population (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). According to Johnson & Christensen (2017), purposeful sampling is used by a researcher when they are interested in identifying and understanding a specific study sample. Purposeful sampling is also referred to as "judgmental sampling" (p. 268) because the researcher first specifies the characteristics of a population of interest and then works to locate potential participants. Considering the multiple marginalized identities held by the research population, finding appropriate co-researchers for this study was challenging. Given my connections as a student and employee at previous institutions, I used network sampling to contact professionals

working with Somali-Jareer Bantu students, inviting them to help identify students eligible to participate in the study. I also utilized snowball sampling to solicit participants using my social media platforms to help identify potential co-researchers. I then contacted them individually through direct chat, social media, and email. Snowball sampling (Johnson & Christensen, 2017) is used when each participant who volunteers to participate in a study is asked to identify additional people who meet the study's specified criteria and are willing to participate in the study. This sampling method was the most helpful as it yielded the most participants for the study.

Recruitment Strategies

Recruitment strategies consisted of targeting recruitment materials to specific individuals and offices, submitting posts and/or flyers to various social media platforms (i.e., Facebook and Snapchat), and asking my network to share my recruitment flyer on their social media sites. Snowball sampling benefited this phase of the recruitment process as it allowed me to utilize multiple social media sites to recruit co-researchers. Since I did not have direct access to some of the more popular social media sites (Instagram and Twitter), snowball sampling was to allow others to share my dissertation study on their social media sites with their family and friends. Also, expanding my participant qualifications to individuals who are not current students yielded more perspectives to my dissertation study. Thus, my study consists of Somali-Jareer Bantu students (male and female) interested in sharing their lived experiences regarding higher education with me as the researcher. As the state of the world remained uncertain due to the pandemic, the following section discusses the potential effect of COVID-19 on my recruitment strategies and the overall progress of this study in general.

COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the state of the world at the time was woefully unpredictable. Therefore, the possibility of needing to make decisions that could have shifted the direction of my study was inevitable. Depending on the nature of the pandemic, I decided to consider adjusting my plan to unforeseeable circumstances. I planned to maintain my original recruitment plan of sending recruitment materials to multicultural centers, student organizations serving underrepresented students of color, and my current professional networks to help advance the recruitment process. However, with the ambiguous status of COVID-19, I expected a delayed response from students. As higher education institutions fumbled with transitions to campus operations, I also expected delayed responses from individuals and offices I reached out to due to unexpected changes in offices/departments, such as individuals' roles or communication methods. As I initially hoped to conduct face-to-face interviews, I realized it was no longer possible due to the pandemic, the diversity of participants' locations, and the lack of funds. However, conducting interviews through an online platform like Zoom allowed me to adhere to the safety precautions of my co-researchers and myself. Also, considering this is a new research study, expanding recruitment efforts for co-researchers across various institutions within the United States created an opportunity to widen the scope of my study and the participation criteria for my co-researchers. As I considered the need for my study, I expanded my selection criteria to include individuals who may not be actively attending an institution to help increase the number of potential co-researchers who may qualify to participate in my study. The following section provides my data collection process for the study.

Data Collection

This section details how I collected data for my study. In phenomenological research, the researcher must focus the study on the lived experiences of co-researchers to help guide the narrative of the research study (Todres, 2005). The data collection process was conducted using a profile sheet and semi-structured individual and focus group interviews via Zoom. The purpose of the profile sheet was to help gain demographic information from each participant in the study. An additional online-format focus group discussion was included via Google Documents to retrieve information from co-researchers for this study. A *qualitative* or in-depth interview is a data collection method in which an interviewer (researcher or moderator) asks open-ended questions of interviewees (i.e., co-researchers). A focus group is a type of group interview used to collect qualitative data in the participants' words (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). In a focus group interview, a researcher (i.e., moderator) leads a discussion among a small group of individuals (i.e., co-researchers) to examine how individuals think and feel about a topic in detail. This type of data collection method is referred to as a focus group because it is the researcher's responsibility to keep individuals in the group focused on the topic of discussion. The online platform group discussion through Google Documents was intended to provide additional reflective space for participants if they felt the need to add or clarify anything previously shared or ask questions to the researcher or amongst each other.

The semi-structured individual and focus group interviews were mainly used as sources to investigate Somali-Jareer Bantu individual experiences through the lens of phenomenology by providing co-researchers with a constructive space to share their narratives. As the purpose of these data sources is to help facilitate a conversation around unfolding the meaning and understanding of this study's phenomena, these data collection methods provided a more in-depth

understanding of participants' experiences within higher education. I planned to interview 8-10 participants for my study; however, I received more participants than expected during the recruitment phase. I received interest from nearly thirty participants before I completely stopped recruiting. To limit the number of participants for the study's purpose, I reduced the participant list by approximately half based on participants' location, background, and length of graduation from a higher education institution. Therefore, I removed participants located outside of the U.S. or have graduated five or more years ago. To move forward, I kept participants who are either currently attending a higher education institution or graduated one to five years ago in the U.S.

Table 4: Background Overview of Participants' Demographics.

Data Analysis

My theoretical framework focuses on exploring how my co-researchers experience higher education regarding their ethnic identity as Somali-Jareer Bantu students. This section outlines the data analysis process. The data was analyzed through interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). IPA uses social norms to understand the lived experiences of individuals and investigate how individuals make meaning of their experiences (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008; Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006; Pringle, Drummond, McLafferty & Hendry, 2011). Larkin et al. (2006) commented that researchers must give participants a voice while making sense of their experiences in IPA. This process enhances researchers' ability to attain an insider perspective of individuals' lived experiences.

My data set consists of participants' profile sheets and individual and group interview transcriptions. The data analysis phase was completed by coding each interview transcript. Zoom and Google documents were used to complete the coding process. Considering the inductive nature of this process, the application of qualitative data analysis allowed for the data

to develop from common themes, patterns, and categories (Johnson & Christensen, 2017; Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Further, reading the interview transcripts through Google documents was used to identify common themes and patterns from co-researchers' responses to learn the significance of the study's phenomenon (Drummond, McLafferty & Hendry, 2011).

As it is crucial to follow the IPA commitments to ensure efficiency in the data analysis process, there is also a seven-step protocol to elevate the data analysis phase further: (1) reading and note-taking, which includes eliminating unnecessary or irrelevant language (ex: um, you know, etc.); (2) taking notes for emergent themes to help with the generation of preliminary meaning units; (3) connecting to emergent themes; (4) producing a table of themes; (5) continuing to the next case; (6) creating a final table (synthesizing situated meaning units into situated narratives under each interview/survey question); and (7) writing up the research (synthesizing situated narratives into general narratives, integrating all major themes of participants, and generating a general description) (Noon, 2018; Peoples, 2020). The aim of using IPA was to enable co-researchers to seek the essence of their Somali-Jareer Bantu ethnic identity within higher education and how that aligns with their retention and success in higher education institutions.

The initial data analysis stage was completed by listening to audio and written transcripts to take annotative notes to help organize my thoughts, observations, and reflections on each of my co-researchers' interview narratives. The second stage was done by reviewing my annotative notes to generate preliminary meaning units and connect them to specific excerpts that align with the essence of ethnic identity (Peoples, 2020). Regarding connections within excerpts, Larkin et al. (2006) advised considering a chronological order to search for connections between emergent themes. Considering Larkin et al. (2006)'s recommendation, I created clusters to connect the

sub-themes from the focus group and individual interview transcripts as I found emergent themes in the excerpts. As I gathered sub-themes or patterns into a single document under each emergent theme, I listed all of the themes and patterns from my data set. Under the themes and patterns, I also added (where applicable) a list of interview excerpts connecting to the essence of co-researchers' narratives (Pringle, Drummond, McLafferty & Hendry, 2011). The following stage continued to the next stage and repeated each interview and transcript. Analyzing each transcript, I created a final list of themes and patterns. This step was completed by reviewing the original list of themes and patterns that emerged from the co-researcher's individual and focus group interview transcripts and any additional information gathered from the online Google Document group discussion. The final stage of the data analysis sought to best capture the essence of ethnic identity within higher education by distinguishing between co-researchers' narratives and my interpretations of the data (Pringle et al., 2011). Ultimately, the data analysis phase was completed by reading each interview transcription and maintaining an online research journal to gather notes throughout the data collection and analysis process. The employment of reflexivity tools was applied to help meet the needs of this data analysis process. Included in the researcher's reflexivity section of this chapter, I highlight how I connect my personal and researcher positionality for my study. In the following section, I highlight the strengths and limitations of IPA.

Strengths and Limitations of IPA

Due to the comprehensive language in educational research, the nature of IPA as a research process is accessible and flexible (Maxwell, 2012). As a qualitative research method, Johnson & Christenson (2017) comment that IPA acknowledges subjective experience as scientific data. Because of the inductive nature of IPA, it allows co-researchers to share

responses during the interview process in unforeseen ways (Miller, Chan, & Farmer, 2018; Maxwell, 2012; Noon, 2018). Provided the flexible nature of IPA, it is vital to consider the possibility of tensions emerging in the data presented since IPA researchers use a dualistic reality between co-researchers' responses on opposite ends of a single theme. Further, IPA is also cautious about generalizability claims; therefore, due to sensitivity and exploration of individuals' personal experiences, co-researchers may sense various emotions. This tension can further present researchers with various ethical dilemmas (Maxwell, 2012).

Trustworthiness

Because qualitative research is often constructed based on assumptions or inferences, validity and reliability must be achieved ethically (Johnson & Christensen, 2017; Merriam & Tisdale, 2016; Peoples, 2020). Creswell and Miller (2000) explain that writing about "validity in qualitative research is difficult on many levels" (p. 124) because there are various ways to express one's truth. Further, the underlying assumptions researchers bring with them in qualitative research show up in multiple forms of truths and realities, with each calling for the requirement to be investigated. In a phenomenological study, the researcher constantly engages with the phenomenon and the co-researchers' experiences with the phenomenon to ensure validity (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Rolfe, 2006; Vagle, 2018; van Manen, 2001).

Further, Creswell and Miller (2000) explain that to ensure qualitative credibility, the researcher must engage in thick description, triangulation, multivocality, and partiality. This part of ensuring validity in this study was achieved using multiple data sources, member checking, researcher's reflexivity, and debriefing moments (Johnson & Christensen, 2017; Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). As the researcher with phenomenological expertise among my co-researchers, I prioritized myself as the debriefer to ensure effective and accurate data analysis (Rolfe, 2006).

The multiple data sources included individual and focus group interviews and an online group discussion platform to ensure credibility. The aim of employing these data sources was to help create a thick description of the essence of a minority ethnic identity framework of Somali-Jareer Bantu refugee students' experiences within higher education in the U.S. To broaden the analysis unit, I included undergraduate and graduate students and recent graduates to enhance the study's credibility further. Member checking was employed by sending interview transcriptions to co-researchers for optional feedback tracking (Lincoln & Guba 1986). To address any inconsistencies with multiple data sources, I engaged in multivocality by contacting co-researchers for feedback regarding individual and focus group transcripts and any additional information shared within the online group discussion platform (Mizzi, 2010). According to Mizzi (2010), multivocality refers to the process of "providing representational space in the autoethnography for the plural and sometimes contradictory narrative voices located within the researcher" (p. 2). Finally, reliability was further ensured by using an audit trail, online research journal, and online memo to track and reflect my researcher's experience with data sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Merriam & Tisdale, 2016; Mizzi, 2010). Also, engaging in crystallization allowed me to gather multiple data sources aligned with my theoretical framework seeking a richer understanding of the study's phenomena (Tracy, 2010). I utilized these strategies discussed above when writing my reflective notes about each strategy in my online researcher's journal. Thus, the various strategies presented helped me analyze and interpret the data in a detailed and accurate process for the dissertation study. The following section discusses the limitations of this study.

Limitations

As with any study, my dissertation also presents some limitations. This dissertation study represents social identities based on culture, ethnicity, and race. The proposed population was chosen based on the Somali-Jareer Bantu student demographic from previous literature findings in Chapter Two. Another potential limitation is the reach of co-researchers. Although I found participants for the study, finding participants willing to serve as co-researchers was further challenging as participants were not up for the task. This research study attempts to capture co-individuals who identify as Somali-Jareer Bantu (also; Somali Bantu or Somali Jareer) ethnic minorities. A literature scan reveals that Somali-Jareer Bantu's experiences have been lumped with that of the dominant Somali ethnic groups or wholly disregarded as a whole (Bjork, 2016; Eno, 2008; Jarrat, 2020; Lehman & Eno, 2003).

During the interviews, I asked co-researchers questions that allowed them to share how they make meaning of their experiences in higher education and negotiate their ethnic identity in an environment where their presence is not recognized. Although this study aims to share the views of these individuals' experiences with higher education, there is no expectation of direct observations of their experiences because the study mainly relies on the perceptions of co-researchers identifying as Somali-Jareer Bantu rather than direct views of their experiences in higher education. Finally, the Somali-Jareer Bantu population is scattered throughout the U.S., so the co-researchers in this study represent only a small sample of this population.

The natural setting in which qualitative research occurs makes it much more difficult to replicate studies (Johnson & Christensen, 2017; Wiersma, 2000). This study's phenomenological approach also presents some limitations in its research design. According to Ziakas & Boukas (2014), phenomenology's focus on generalizing "life-world subjectivity" is considered a

limitation (p. 1). Another limitation is the possibility of falsifying results (reality and representation of that reality). For instance, Sandelwski (2016) comments that results could risk falsification of the reality and representation of reality between co-researchers and researchers. While this study aims to capture best the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education, the hope for the findings is that the study does not intentionally generalize this population's demographic. However, any academic study attempting to capture human experience poses limitations because academic research can present challenges to "adequately address the complex questions of human experience" (Atkins, 2012, p. 61). Nonetheless, any qualitative methodology can create an opportunity to stimulate further research and provide substantial contributions to the general body of research in many ways. While this study aims to focus on one qualitative methodological approach, it is also critical to share any limitations the study's approach may present.

Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to provide an overview of my methodology, which includes the research questions, research design, rationale, data collection and analysis processes, and the design's strengths and limitations. With a profile sheet and semi-structured individual and group interviews, I intended to closely explore the lived experiences of the co-researchers within the context of higher education (especially navigating higher education spaces) in the U.S. By using phenomenology, this study aimed to capture best how the co-researchers construct meanings and understandings of their experiences regarding the navigation of their ethnic identity and higher education. Applying IPA as a source to analyze my data, I aimed to examine the essence of navigating higher education and ethnic identity in my data collection methods and considered data triangulation as a method for my dissertation study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) allows the researcher to examine participants' 'lived experiences' and explore how they interpret those experiences as a phenomenon (Reid et al., 2005, p. 20). This study explores the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu (SJB) students in higher education within the U.S. This phenomenon (i.e., minoritized ethnic identity) creates a complex state of hyper-consciousness for Somali-Jareer Bantu students to exist and survive within higher education institutions in the U.S. Through this phenomenon, it is evident that their marginalized ethnic identity (among other factors including refugee status and lack of formal schooling) is prevalent in how they understand and express themselves within spaces of higher education institutions. Due to marginalization and allegedly pronounced physical features, members of dominant Somali ethnic groups within the greater Somali community may view their ethnic identity as inferior to theirs. However, the Somali-Jareer Bantu ethnic identity is a source of strength and community globally. Their subjugation of the Somali government has created a problematic lens in which their ethnic identity and presence in higher education institutions is unknown, most often mixed with dominant Somali ethnic groups or ultimately dismissed from the discussion. Therefore, this dismissal has led to the lack of necessary support to enhance their development and success. Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), which all participants shared they attend (ed), are not historically designed to support the development and success of black and brown students. Therefore, the lack of awareness regarding Somali-Jareer Bantu students presents another challenge, especially in how they navigate their college experience while negotiating their multiple identities. Therefore, this lack

of awareness of their presence further hinders Somali-Jareer Bantu students' ability to authentically exist in higher education spaces with their marginalized ethnic identity in both societies (Somalia and U.S.) as well as in the larger society.

As previously mentioned in other chapters of this dissertation, it is apparent that Somali-Jareer Bantu students perpetually battle with their ethnic identity in education broadly. Within the walls of higher education institutions, they feel like outcasts forced to negotiate their authentic selves and shift the ways they process their thoughts around their ethnic identity while seeking means of support due to the lack of awareness and representation about their existence in the literature and higher education scholarship. Thus, Somali-Jareer Bantu students are often left with the only option of focusing on academics, specifically completing the necessary credits to graduate, instead of exploring their ethnic identities and building community at their respective campuses. In this case, this phenomenon highlights that academically, they may feel supported or even welcomed to some degree; however, authentically expressing their ethnic identity and needs is unknown. As such, the general idea of their identity may be tolerated with other minority identities to create a misleading image of inclusivity in higher education. Somali-Jareer Bantu students are often forced to compartmentalize their identities (i.e., ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, etc.), making their authentic identity invisible. The presentation of these findings seeks to shine a light on Somali-Jareer Bantu students' lived experiences within higher education institutions. Thus, the findings highlight how they navigate and make meaning of their educational experiences in predominantly white higher education environments and how they generally experience higher education.

As previously mentioned in Chapter Two, the Somali-Jareer Bantu and the larger Somali society is a community that relies on oral language to pass experiences, knowledge, customs, and

beliefs from one generation to the next. Storytelling is a form of communication that members of the Somali-Jareer Bantu community use to express themselves and share meaningful events. Thus, Somali-Jareer Bantu students rely on oral communication, such as one-on-one or intimate group dialogue, to express how they navigate and experience the world. Individual interviews were applied to address pertinent issues for this student population in higher education institutions. As such, it was crucial to present my findings to capture best the complexity and nuance of Somali-Jareer Bantu students' experiences in the higher education system of the U.S. Dialogic conversations allow these students to share and co-construct their narratives in a safe space. Co-rounded by my co-constructive epistemology stance and theoretical framework grounded in identity, ethnicity, and expression, one-on-one interviews provide a deeply rich representation of my data sources. I synthesize these sources into one substantive narrative through my data sources (i.e., interviews, online-format focus group discussion, and participant fact/questionnaire sheet). Thus, the findings chapter is designed to highlight the collective narrative experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students within the higher education system of the U.S. The following is an outline, narrating and summarizing participants' background information, a table inclusive of information from their narratives, and a presentation of the findings from the data.

Overview of Participants

The narrative in this section incorporates the stories of Somali-Jareer Bantu students from this study through scripts from the data sources. Each interview topic outlines emerging themes from my data analysis methods (i.e., individual and focus group interviews and participant questionnaire sheets). Data sources support quotes used in this section to help intertwine the data sources in the form of an analysis. This chapter highlights the experiences of Somali-Jareer

Bantu students in higher education and how they made meaning of their experiences while negotiating their identities in and outside of higher education environments. The interview script template provided structure for a consistent flow to the dialogue, allowing the data to best capture their experiences in an organically unified format. Further, the narrative below provides a better glimpse into this study's participants.

Abdiah

Abdiah is a sophomore at a two-year technical community college taking general courses toward a major in Orthodontics. Although she desired to attend a university right out of high school, she weighed her options and thought that financially, starting at a community would be her best option. This option saves her money as she completes her general courses and then transfers to a four-year institution to continue pursuing orthodontics. Despite being at a technical college, Abdiah describes her college experience as "difficult" as she speaks of "struggling with classes [and] not being able to ask [her] parents for help because they don't really know much [about higher education] so they can't really provide support to us" in that aspect. Although her experience has "been hard" so far, she has learned to navigate campus resources such as tutoring services to help persist toward her educational and professional goals. As a full-time student, she also works as a restaurant manager.

Asha

Asha is a Sophomore majoring in Nursing at a four-year public institution. She hopes to pursue a Midwife or Obstetrics and Gynecology (OB/GYN) career. Asha currently works at a local hospital as an intern gaining experience in the career field she hopes to pursue. After high school, she decided to attend school in a city close to home because "it was affordable and provided [her] with a scholarship." As a first-generation student at a Predominantly White

Institution (PWI), she recalls her college journey as "tough" although she took two college preparatory courses in high school. Due to a lack of guidance, Asha failed her first two courses because she began college "with a high school mindset of procrastinating". Having no support on campus, Asha turned to her partner (who was two years ahead in college), who provided some guidance to help ease her transition into college. Going with an undecided major, Asha wishes someone could have advised her "to start at a community college to complete general education courses". Instead, she found herself "taking unnecessary classes" that did not aid her later declared major. Because of her experience, Asha wishes she had some guidance and does "not want her siblings to go through the same experience" when they are ready to begin their journey into postsecondary education.

Shankaron

Shankaron is a sophomore at a four-year public institution majoring in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing. Initially, Shankaron was interested in an out-of-state college. However, after realizing her parents' disapproval of her leaving her home state, she decided to attend school just outside her city because of its proximity to family, allowing her more accessible to visit home during the holiday breaks. Shankaron began her college journey during the Covid-19 pandemic and so described her experience thus far as "depressing [and] lonely," having "to seek resources on [her] own." It has been a harrowing experience as she explains, "I came in kind of clueless" but soon learned to advocate for herself as she realized that "this is how the real world is, [and] we just have to accept it [because] we're a minority." As she continues her college journey, Shankaron is doing better than her first year and currently works part-time as a student aid on campus.

Nina

Nina began her college journey at a four-year public institution, where she pursued a major in Nursing for two years. Nina initially wanted to attend a Historically Black College/University (HBCU). She gained acceptance to several out-of-state colleges, but leaving her home state for college was "not an option for [her]" because her parents would not allow it. Hence, she decided to settle for a university within proximity to home. After two years of taking general courses in the Nursing program at her institution, she decided to leave the program due to the institution's inflated tuition and her loss of interest in Nursing as a professional career. She then switched to a medical assistant program, however, after realizing her uncertainty and lack of interest in the medical field, she decided to leave to attend a sister community college to pursue Business. There she learned about entrepreneurship, and after taking courses in entrepreneurship, she learned of her interest in real estate.

Nina's expectation of college was nothing like she expected, and she quickly learned that "it was very difficult, more difficult than [she] expected it to be. Nina further explained that she "had to become more independent [and] figure things out on [her] own. In high school, Nina remembered her guidance counselor reaching out to her and being accessible. However, in college, she "had to search for them," so "it was a completely new experience to [her]," and "the first year was overwhelming" in terms of learning "to navigate [her] interests and resources [including the process for] FAFSA and student loans" because no one shared that information with her. Despite her bumpy road into the first years of her college education, Nina continues to persist. She is currently enrolled in online classes pursuing real estate as she hopes to become an entrepreneur and start her own business in the future. She is also an expecting mother who currently works with her city's greater Somali-Jareer Bantu community.

Jamila

Jamila is a junior pursuing an undergraduate degree in Pre-Law at a small, four-year institution outside her city. She chose to attend a small institution to begin her college education in hopes of pursuing a career in law. Although her institution may not be as affordable as she would like it to be, she shares that “it is cheap” and provides what she needs” to get to the next destination for four years” compared to out-of-state schools that “were not offering a lot of money.” As a rising senior, Jamila shared that her “first year of college really sucked” due to lack of support and diversity, and at times felt like she could not go outside with her baati (long dress worn by people in Somalia and other parts of Africa) because people “were looking” and asking, “why do you dress like that; why do you talk that way?”.

As a student activist on campus, Jamila “mentioned [her concerns] to a lot of professors and one of [her] deans.” However, her concerns have not been addressed, as she shared that the retention of students of color continues to decline dramatically. Jamila felt and continues to feel as if she does not belong on campus, making her uncomfortable and adding to her sense of feeling invisible. After completing her undergraduate degree, Jamila hopes to further her education by pursuing graduate school and a career as an attorney. Further, Jamila aspires to become a judge someday in hopes of helping fill the gaps within this country's judicial system.

Dee

Dee is a senior pursuing her undergraduate degree at a private PWI. Being an all-women's college is one of the main reasons she chose to attend the institution and its affordable tuition rate. As a Muslim woman, she enjoys being in a space with all women aspiring to work hard to reach their goals. She is a mother to three boys and is currently in the last semester of her senior year, looking forward to graduation in the Spring term. As a nursing student, she aspires

to work in family medicine after graduation. Especially as a first-generation nursing student, Dee described her college journey as a "tough road," especially grappling with establishing "time management" as she struggled to find a balance between school and her personal life as a mother, wife, and as an individual of her own. Dee shared that the support she found in others, especially her husband, kept her going in ultimately reaching the end of her undergraduate journey.

Tchala

Tchala is a senior pursuing undergraduate studies at a four-year public institution. He is currently in his last semester studying Software and Cyber Security Engineering. Although his major is Engineering, he is also interested in the historical diaspora of the greater Somali-Jareer Bantu community. He is engaged in research regarding the experiences of the Somali-Jareer Bantu community. He plans to travel to Kenya after graduation to interview older community members and continue his research endeavors. Tchala shared that his school choice was challenging due to cultural reasons. Although he gained admission into many schools, he was not admitted into his first choice, so he decided to attend an institution near his city because his parents wanted him to stay there for school.

As a first-generation student at a PWI, Tchala speaks of how his first struggle began during an encounter with a student counselor who told him that "there's no way that you can pursue postsecondary education" because of his status as an immigrant as well as his Somali ethnic minority background. From there onwards, Tchala's college journey has been "very difficult" in which he experienced discrimination both on a macro and micro level from his institution and the greater Somali community. Tchala shares certain instances of "racial profiling within the university, [especially] being very visible with [his] religious identity, while "also

dealing with a tribal sense of conflict within [his] community, so it's been very challenging, to say the least. He feels proud to have gone through this experience as it has allowed him to set an example for his siblings and others in the Somali-Jareer Bantu community. He plans to pursue graduate school and continue to engage in research that highlights and brings awareness to the experiences of the Somali-Jareer community globally.

Mbaro

Mbaro is a mother to one daughter whose father she recently separated from and works in Social Welfare during the day. She recently graduated in Spring 2021 with an undergraduate degree in Psychology from a public, four-year institution. Mbaro began her college journey at a local community college, which she later felt was not a suitable environment for what she developmentally needed at the time because "it was not challenging [and] the environment was [also] too familiar" to her. Wanting to escape the familiarity of being around family too often, Mbaro transferred to a public, four-year institution in another city to seek a more challenging college experience and get closer to her brother who was also a student there. Mbaro describes her college experience at a PWI as "hard" because she "made so many cultural mistakes because growing up in the Somali Bantu community, [she] was very sheltered and was always told what to do and how to behave". Being away from home and with her newfound freedom, Mbaro found herself watering her curiosity and engaging in experiences she otherwise would not have around family. She shared that she was going through an identity crisis and getting depressed due to being in an unsupportive environment; however, with her perseverance, she was able to revive her health and continue her educational journey to completion.

Roman

Initially, Roman began her undergraduate studies at a two-year technical school with a major in nursing due to its affordable tuition. However, due to the lack of support, she later transferred to a four-year institution where she changed her major to Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). Roman, a wife and mother to a daughter, attended a private, four-year institution where she recently graduated with her undergraduate degree in LPN last fall of 2021. As Roman discussed her college experience as a first-generation student at a PWI, she shared that "specifically, as a Somali-Bantu student, I had a very difficult experience. The most difficult part of postsecondary education for me was the lack of support, especially coming right out of a [high] school that had very limited resources. I did not have that much information about college as other students did, so the transition was very hard, and the lack of support". Roman further shared that the first thing one of her college professors said was, "by the end of the school year, only two of you will make it" out of the nursing program, which further damaged her confidence. However, she did not let her challenges define her and continued to persevere throughout the rest of her college journey. Roman now works as an LPN at a local hospital.

Tima

Tima is a recent graduate who started her educational journey at a two-year technical community college before transferring to a four-year school where she continued her major in Early Childhood Education and completed her undergraduate studies in K-12 Education. Before she landed in a technical school, Tima wanted to attend a university in another city which she learned about through her involvement in the Boys & Girls Club. However, after her parents disapproved of her first choice, she realized she could not apply to a local university due to poor grades. She then decided to attend a community college to begin her educational pursuits with

plans to transfer after completing her Associate's degree. Tima explains that "as a Somali Bantu student at a PWI, [college] was really hard". She was already 18 years old by high school completion, so her "parents expected [her] to get married and settle down," which further added to the challenges in her higher education experience as she "had no financial or emotional support, so it was really hard because I had to do everything by myself." While being a full-time student and caring for her younger siblings, she also worked multiple jobs to support her family and herself. Tima completed her undergraduate studies in December of 2021 and is currently an elementary school teacher at an elementary. She has plans to start pursuing a graduate program in Education Administration in the summer.

Diya

Diya attended a private institution for her graduate studies, where she recently earned a master's degree in Criminal Justice with a concentration in Cyberbullying in the Spring of 2021. She decided to attend a local institution because of its criminology program as well as "its affordable tuition" along with the "other options" for financial assistance. When speaking about her college experience, Diya shares memories of struggle since beginning her undergraduate journey because at the time, she "didn't know what to do as a first-generation college student at a PWI." However, as she enrolled in more classes, she found depending more on herself to figure things out on her own and learn about her interests. Although it was a great struggle, she learned that "figuring things out" on her own helped her grow and become more independent as she steadily progressed in her educational journey. She currently works as an intern in her local law enforcement's Cyberbullying division and hopes to further her education.

Wade

Wade recently graduated with a master's degree in Educational Policy and Leadership from a four-year, public university in Spring 2022. He is currently employed in the social welfare sector, where he works with the larger Somali-Jareer Bantu community and other marginalized communities in his city. Wade experienced the education system in Somalia as he completed high school before resettling in the U.S. After the Civil War in Somalia, Wade and his family fled the country and resettled in a refugee camp in Kenya. After a while, he received an opportunity to further his education and ended up teaching in Nairobi, where his educational journey continued. He later relocated to South Africa where he earned an opportunity to work for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Homeland Security, advocating for marginalized groups such as refugees in Africa. As Wade describes his educational experience in Somalia, he explains that his "personal journey in education was rough [in which he] was refused [his] political and social rights, and [experienced] a lot of discrimination."

Wade shared that even enrolling in elementary school was a challenge in Somalia as the Somali-Jareer Bantu community has no access to education. Wade ended up taking up a neighbor's (from a dominant Somali ethnic group) last name, who assisted his mother with his school enrollment. As a result, Wade is five years behind in his education. After resettling in the U.S. and attending a PWI as a first-generation student, Wade talks about being lost and having a "challenging" college experience as he had to start from the basics and get another undergraduate degree (due to his lack of knowledge in the U.S. education system) while "juggling with the cultural adjustment" and "working full time" as a new refugee in a new environment. Although Wade had a challenging educational journey in Somalia and the U.S., he

kept an optimistic mindset, determined to advocate for himself and his needs in all spaces until he could finally complete his degree. Wade recently completed his master's degree in the Spring and continues his career as a Social Worker, advocating for the greater Somali-Jareer Bantu community globally and other marginalized populations alike.

Abdalla

Abdalla, a father, and husband, recently completed his master's in Social Work. Since graduation, he has been a Community Relations Coordinator for nonprofit organizations with missions aligned with supporting communities from refugee and immigrant backgrounds, including Somali-Jareer Bantus, in and outside educational spaces. For his undergraduate studies, Abdalla attended a public, four-year institution where he studied criminal justice. Due to his limited formal schooling experience back in Kenya and Somalia, Abdalla always dreamt of furthering his education. After resettling in the states, he decided to attend a technical school after receiving a scholarship to cover his tuition. Regarding his college experience in the U.S., Abdalla shared that it "was very difficult, especially with two jobs and a family". He further explained that attending high school was problematic in Kenya, especially "when the entire Somali-Jareer Bantu community never had access to education," and reaching his educational goals was almost impossible without the appropriate resources. Although most members of the Somali-Jareer Bantu community were focused on finding work after resettlement in the states to provide for their families, Abdalla envisioned wanting to pursue his educational endeavors while working full-time. Attending a PWI as a first-generation student, he recalled his college experience as extremely challenging, but using resources around him, such as the library, helped him to reach the goals he set for himself eventually.

Maryan

Maryan was formerly pursuing an EdD in Educational Leadership with a particular interest in Public Health but took a break to focus on her entrepreneurial goals. She attended a public four-year institution and earned her master's degree in Public Health. She currently works in the public healthcare sector and is one of the founders of a clinic in Africa to help treat aids among minorities. Like the stories uttered by the other participants, Maryan's experience in higher education was no different, as she recalled. Like many first-generation Somali-Jareer Bantu students at PWIs in the U.S., Maryan began her undergraduate journey with little to no guidance, forcing her to get out of her comfort to seek support and guidance independently. Self-advocacy supported her transition into higher education and completing her undergraduate and graduate education. Through her involvement in her city and nonprofit organizations, Maryan uses her knowledge and skills to advocate for communities from marginalized backgrounds, such as the Somali-Jareer Bantu. She hopes to return to her educational endeavor of pursuing an EdD as she aspires to inspire the voiceless and helpless in society to pursue their dreams and occupy spaces through education.

Summary of Participants' Overview

Based on the data gathered from the participant questionnaire sheet and interviews, most participants are young students pursuing undergraduate studies at a PWI, with majors varying from business, education, and the medical field, such as nursing and LPN. Regarding the timing of their higher educational pursuits, most participants began as traditional students going to college right after high school. Although almost all participants dreamed of attending an out-of-state school, they ended up attending local colleges and universities due to financial concerns and cultural reasons (parents' disapproval of them leaving their city for college). Most of the

participants in the study are women from families with strict cultural values and beliefs. One of those cultural beliefs is that women should not be far from their parent's home unless married. Thus, when the female participants shared their parents' objection to them pursuing their educational endeavors in another state, I was not surprised because I, too, come from a family with these same cultural beliefs, which can often negatively impact how women in this ethnic community think about educational aspirations.

Although there were many similarities among the participants, there also were some outliers worth mentioning. One of the differences discernable among participants is parenthood. A few participants are parents, which added to the uniqueness of their college experience. As shared by the participants, their college experience has been challenging, but as parents with full-time jobs, while attending school full-time, it was more challenging for some participants than others. While some participants had supportive partners to turn to, others, unfortunately, lacked access to that same level of support which challenged them and their journey in a way different from the rest. Another outlier visible among participants was their exposure to education before resettlement in the states. A couple of the participants spoke of having exposure to some form of schooling back in Somalia and Kenya, giving them a limited introductory experience in education, broadly. Specifically, two participants attended a technical school in Kenya, coming to the states with a degree equivalent to an Associate's and a Bachelor's, but those degrees did not transfer directly to the credential requirements in the states to allow them to pursue careers of their interest. On the other hand, most of the younger participants pursuing undergraduate degrees were born in refugee camps in Kenya. Before their families' resettlement in the U.S., these participants had no exposure to formal schooling. Consequently, the U.S. classroom is their first introduction to formal schooling. Following this section is a table summarizing the

overview of participants' demographic backgrounds, and a presentation of the findings, outlining four themes with patterns that emerged from the data.

Table 4. This table provides information about participants' demographic backgrounds.

Participant (Pseudonym)	Gender	School Year	School Status	Institution Type	Highest Degree	Occupation	Parent Ed.
Abdiyah	Female	Soph.	Undergrad	2yr, public	High School	Manager, restaurant	None
Asha	Female	Soph.	Undergrad	4yr, public	High School	Student Aid Nurse Aid	None
Shankaron	Female	Soph.	Undergrad	4yr, public	High School	Student Aid	None
Nina	Female	Soph./J	Undergrad	4yr, public	High School	Community Engagement Advocate	None
Jamilla	Female	Junior	Undergrad	4yr, public	High School	Student Aid	None
Dee	Female	Senior	Undergrad	4yr, private	High School	Nurse Asst.	None
Tchala	Male	Senior	Undergrad	4yr, public	High School	Intern, Mechanical Engineering	None
Mbaro	Female	Grad.	Graduated	4yr, public	Undergraduate	Asst. Social Worker	None
Roman	Female	Grad.	Graduated	4yr, private	Undergraduate	Licensed Practitioner Nurse	None
Tima	Female	Grad.	Graduated	4yr, public	Undergraduate	Elementary teacher	None
Diya	Female	Grad.	Graduated	4yr, private	Graduate	Cyberbullying Associate, Law Enforcement	None
Wade	Male	Senior	Undergraduate	4yr, public	Graduate	Social Worker	None
Abdalla	Male	Grad.	Graduated	4yr, public	Graduate	Community Relations Coordinator	None
Maryan	Female	Grad.	Graduated	4yr, public	Graduate	Public Health Advocate	None

Table Key

Soph sophomore
 J – junior
 Undergrad undergraduate
 Grad. graduated
 Ed. Education

Presentation of Themes and Patterns

This section presents the data by outlining the themes and patterns emerged from participants' conversations.

Theme One: Transition into Higher Education Environment

One of the themes which emerged from participants' testimonies during our virtual conversation is adapting to the higher education environment. While transiting to cultural and social changes in any society is vital for resettling in any new society, it is also crucial to recognize the difficulty of balancing multiple cultures. Individuals accumulate positive and negative experiences in varying contexts as they move through life. An effective effort to integrate students from marginalized backgrounds, especially those with limited to no experience in formal schooling, enhances their chances of adapting to the culture and community of higher education (Birman & Tran, 2017; Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011; Fruja Amthor, & Roxas, 2016; Gichiru, 2012, 2014; Kruienza, 2010; Meloche, Provinzano, Sondergeld, & Moy, 2020; Soyly, Kaysılı & Sever, 2020). When refugee and immigrant background students resettle in the U.S., engagement and transition into the western culture are automatically assumed, however, the transition process of this population, especially Somali-Jareer Bantus is greatly understudied (Fruja Amthor & Roxas, 2016; Gichiru, 2012, 2014; Jarratt, 2020). While participants struggled to balance multiple responsibilities, further pushing them away from establishing a sense of connectedness to their respective campus communities, they maintained a commitment to not fully assimilate. Instead, they strived to adapt to a new environment without losing touch with their identity. Although their educational journey has been profoundly challenging, they continued to search for avenues to connect with their campus community to navigate better and enhance their educational experience. The patterns which support the theme of transitioning to a

new environment emerged from discussions with participants regarding crafting a sense of belonging, managing isolation, and tension between home and school culture.

Pattern One: Crafting A Sense of Belonging

For this study's participants, the accumulation of experiences includes an attempt to craft a sense of belonging in an exclusive environment lacking to recognize their presence.

Participants' testimonies echoed a journey of struggle, isolation, feeling clueless, and entirely left out. As she began reflecting on her experience, Shankaron recalled feeling a sense of loss, even after changing how she dresses to help ease her transition and better adapt to the campus culture.

Shankaron shared:

Since the first term, I never thought I belonged on campus, and I'm trying not to think like that because I have bad imposter syndrome. When I first came the first term, I had an identity crisis that whole year. When I came on campus, I stopped wearing my hijab because I wasn't comfortable with all the stares I got. Even when you're being yourself, people still have assumptions and stereotypes. Even just being a black girl, that doesn't make it any easier.

I really don't have friends on campus. I have associates, but I don't feel like I'm at home. Even though I don't mind my school, I feel like every day, I'm like okay, I'm just another black girl at this PWI. But I try not to think like that, it is part of my story in a sense.

Like Shankaron, Tchala who also attends a predominantly white institution commented about his experience crafting a sense of belonging on campus has been difficult until now as he prepares to complete his undergraduate journey. While continuing to reflect on how lonely his journey has been with facing prejudice and countless racial encounters both from his internal and external community, Tchala disappointedly explained:

Here is very, very lonely and you have to face the microaggression within my own community, the greater Somali community and the conflict of them describing you as someone who doesn't belong to this community. And then you have to deal with the outside racial stuff.

So definitely, very challenging and is something that I still don't understand how I still still got this far. I still wonder how I've gotten here after the amount of times I've been

downflated and people within my community have been told that, "*you cannot make it based on my ethnicity. "What do you guys know? You guys are pretty much donfaars [pigs]"*", all of this nonsense.

Further, Wade, a graduate student at another predominantly white institution, shared his confusion about how the educational system is designed to comfort a particular group of people who do not include him and others who look like him. Wade commented that, "if it was designed for me, I'd go in and dominate. I'd show that I belong here because I pay (tuition like everyone else). They (peers) say that I speak like Obama, but I'm not pretending to be Barack Obama; I want to advocate for myself. So, wherever I go, I speak whether the system was designed for me or not".

Although aware that the educational system in the U.S. is not designed to support the transition, persistence, and success of minority individuals like himself, Wade explained that self-advocacy helped to slightly provide ease of a sense of belonging within the physical campus and perhaps the system itself. Speaking with irritation, Diya, a recent graduate from a predominantly private institution described her frustration with her school's lack of inclusion regarding her ethnicity. Although feeling a lack of belonging on campus, she recalled liking her recent institution. As a Muslim student, Diya continued to speak about her experience of not fitting in as she shared:

Not really because my grad school is a Christian school, too. So, I seriously felt that I did not fit in at all. One, it [school] being a Christian school [and] they have a whole church on campus. I feel like they try to make it seem like but they don't because how do you have a church and have the cross on buildings and stuff? My current school is like that, [too]. I like the school, but it's just I just don't feel like I belong there.

College is intended to allow students from all backgrounds to embark on a journey of self-development. This transition to newfound freedom and independence is a time in which students can expand their surroundings and the way they understand the world. Interactions

between students and faculty and the ability to find spaces of comfort on campus enhance students' sense of belonging (Baber, 2012; Stebleton, Rost-Banik, Greene, & DeAngelo, 2017). For Somali-Jareer Bantu students needing more formal schooling experience, navigating the U.S. education system can be exhausting. As students from a marginalized background with almost no experience with formal schooling, this pattern confirms the struggles participants faced and continue to face as they attempt to craft a sense of belonging on their college campuses while navigating the system and the journey they embark on in a new environment.

Pattern Two: Managing Isolation

The second pattern which supports the theme of transition into higher education (adaptation instead of complete assimilation) is managing isolation. Participants shared feeling alone and left out on their campuses. Jamila, a rising senior at a small institution, commented that her experience has been challenging as peers add to her discomfort of being able to express her ethnic identity fully. As a student activist at her institution, Jamila attempts to bring awareness to issues of discrimination and racism to her deen. However, her efforts have not been addressed as she realized the retention rate of minority students of similar backgrounds continues to decline. While scanning the virtual space, Jamila then shared:

My first year of college really sucked. My school lacks diversity and culture. Some students go there, see how it is and then they leave afterward. It's something that I've mentioned to a lot of professors and one of my deans that this is an issue because my first year, I felt like I couldn't even go outside with my Baati because people were looking at me as if I just came off the boat from Africa, and asking, OMG, why do you dress like that, why do you talk that way?'

Like Jamila, another participant, Mbaro, a recent graduate from a large public institution, shared that her isolation pushed her into depression because she began to engage in activities she otherwise would not have as a means to seek a sense of inclusion into the campus community. As she now realized that she needed that experience to grow, Mbaro recalled that "I'm having

depression because I'm doing something that I was told was so bad and I'm now engaging in it, so how do I get back to my identity and stay true to myself?"

Mbaro and Jamila turned to each other virtually in conversation, recognizing how isolating their experience had been, but they still appreciated that experience because it brought them to this point in their lives. Mbaro then continued to explain:

You know all this discourse that I'm doing, but then I'm a rounded individual and there are journeys that I need to take in order to better myself and to learn from this. So, I calmed myself down when I was going through that kind of spiral because being people who are sheltered and kept away from a certain thing, and then wonder, are introduced to this certain thing, they don't know how to act. They want to try everything so that's what happened to me.

As portrayed in the above testimonies, it is apparent that due to isolation on campus, participants turned to other means to help manage their isolation and to help them feel included in the campus community. Feeling a sense of frustration, Shankaron joined the conversation and explained that being the only Somali Bantu student at her school feels daunting because her sense of isolation and loss amplified her discomfort, forcing her to accept assimilation, to some degree, to find a source of comfort on campus. Shankaron shared:

Oh, God, I feel like I'm the only Somali Bantu person here. I have to go out of my way which is sad [to help ease feeling isolated]. I feel like for Somali Bantus, they are just Muslims and Muslim students in general. There's not really a community here for us. I hate that you kind of assimilate in a way, or get out of your comfort zone. I feel like I'm really not a part of any spaces. Even though I go here, most of my friends are black.

This pattern presents participants' sense of isolation on their college campuses as they attempt to survive through an endless path of navigating and adapting to a new environment. As shared, participants spoke of many occurrences of feeling alone and left out of their campus communities due to the institution's lack of awareness of the presence of Somali-Jareer Bantu students and the inclusion of them thereof. Griffin and McIntosh (2015) explain that students' sense of connectedness to their campus community aids engagement in the campus community

which further enhances their overall adaptation process toward their educational journey. For Somali-Jareer Bantu students, understanding their place (ethnic and racial identity) around their peers and the greater campus community ultimately plays a critical role in furthering their ability to incorporate themselves into their campus community and the U.S. racial system (Ndemanu & Jordan, 2018).

Pattern Three: Tension between Home and School

As participants attempted to transition into higher education environments in the U.S. and the cultural differences, they navigated through multiple paths of uncertainties while negotiating these new environments and discovering ways to adapt as a means to survive through their educational journeys. As participants struggled to navigate their educational journey, they experienced tension between home and school, which is a third pattern captured in this theme. Many participants discussed their experience with the waging tensions between school and home life. One of the participants, Shankaron, talked about how her attempt to adapt to her campus community culture ultimately pushed her to abandon wearing her scarf on campus. Leaning in to comment, Shankaron shared:

I feel like just staying true to myself. But there are times where I try when I'm home, I kind of don't have a choice. I feel like me and my hijab, that's something between me and God. I hope in the future, that's my goal but it's kind of hard because my parents were super strict, so they kind of just forced it on me, especially dressing.

Like Shankaron struggling with her multiple identities in two different environments (school and home), Mbaro also shared a similar experience as she explained that without her mother's rules and guidance, she found herself in a world of various cultures different from hers. As she continued to reflect on her experience of balancing the tension of her campus and home life, Mbaro commented that, “without my mom telling me, do A, B, and C, it was a whole new world and I'm not just Somali Bantu anymore because I'm surrounded by so many people from

different cultures". As the duration of college is an opportunity for students to discover themselves and grow, Mbaro continued to speak on the challenges of balancing different identities (home and school) as she remarked:

I'm challenging myself to stay true to my identity and also succeed in this new environment. All this discourse that I'm doing, but then I'm a rounded individual and there are journeys that I need to take to better myself and to learn from this. So, I calmed myself down from that spiral because being sheltered from certain things, and then being introduced to them, I didn't know how to act. I wanted to try everything, that's what happened to me.

While some participants struggled to separate their identity between their school and home life, Tima, a recent graduate, described feeling exhausted as she attempted to balance her school and home life which included multiple responsibilities without support. Commenting further on her struggle to maintain a healthy line between home and school life, Tima said:

I had no financial support, emotional support. So, it was really hard because I had to do everything by myself. I worked multiple jobs to support my family and myself while attending school and caring for my siblings.

Similar to Tima, Dee, a senior at a private institution, also explained having to keep up with various responsibilities, leading to her struggle in balancing her life at home and school when she shared that, "I have to manage my timing in between just to study and pass my classes. It's been really tough because I'm not only going to school and coming back and studying. I have kids at home and a personal life to go back to".

Summary

This theme discusses participants' different ways of attempting to transition into the culture of higher education in the U.S. The difficulty they encountered during their educational journey as they attempted to adapt to the culture and community of their respective institution is further supported by the patterns presented above. For instance, while participants attempted to craft a sense of belonging on campus through engagement and building relationships, their

loneliness heightened as they realized how excluded they were from their respective institutions. As one of the patterns, crafting a sense of belonging supports participants' attempt to transition through adapting to the culture and community of higher education. This pattern, along with the others outlined above, further confirms participants' encounters with multiple hurdles as they attempt to navigate through higher education environments and continue to search for means of ethnic recognition and inclusion within their campuses. However, as presented in participants' testimonies, it is apparent that participants have struggled and continue to feel left out of their greater campus communities, further hindering their transition process and overall educational experience.

Theme Two: Motivations Fueling Pursuit of Higher Education & Persistence

The second theme apparent throughout participants' conversations is the motivation behind the decision to pursue and persist in higher education. As the educational history of the community with which the participants identify is that of subjugation and exclusion (Eno & Eno, 2008, 2014; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003, 2009), it was necessary yet intriguing to see their conversations take a natural course in the way it did. While the main point of discussion for this study was regarding their educational experiences in higher education, the decision to further their education and continue to persist in the journey diligently brought about dialogue that shared the responsibility of influence with close family and community members and organizations.

The idea of higher education aspirations available to all citizens is a western ideology as individuals from marginalized backgrounds, such as Somali-Jareer Bantus, were denied access to the luxury of such participation in their mainstream society (Eno & Eno, 2014). Due to their marginalization by the Somali government, Somali-Jareer Bantus are still treated as second-class

citizens in the country they call home (Eno & Eno, 2008). Somali-Jareer Bantus have been excluded from full participation in Somalia's mainstream society, which includes educational access (Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2009). For participants in this study to share the influence of their decisions to pursue higher education aspirations speaks to more than pursuing such luxury, but also the freedom to access education which now includes older generations who were denied access to education as a means to control their existence. Patterns that support this theme of motivations fueling participants' decision to pursue higher education and persist in that journey include Trio Pre-College programs, family, personal drive, and members from their school community, such as teachers, counselors, and advisors.

Pattern One: Trio Pre-College Programs -Community

The conversation leading to the theme of participants' motivations to further their education and persist throughout their journey is supported by a pattern of support from members within their larger community. Their community includes nonprofit organizations such as Trio Pre-College Programs (Gear Up), the Boys & Girls Club, College Possible, and Sponsor-a-Scholar, as well as counselors/advisors. Tima, a recent undergraduate graduate from a large public institution, talked about experiencing difficulty in high school when she shared, "I did so terribly, probably graduated with a 1.0 GPA in high school. It wasn't because I didn't like school. I was going through a lot of things at home", however, through her involvement in a Trio Pre-College program, she was able to redeem her academics. Tima further discussed how the Boys & Girls Club exposed her to different colleges and universities through field trips which allowed her to consider her options for furthering her education. Tima shared:

I was in the Boys and Girls Club, a program that helps you get into college. That's how I learned about college with the help of their scholarship. We did a lot of college tours and there was a school I liked. It was my first time going on college tours and that's the school I wanted to go to first.

Similarly, Diya also shared that although she always had a personal drive to consider her options to further her education after high school, her involvement with a pre-college program, Gear Up, helped her cement her career aspirations. As she joined the conversation, Diya commented, "I knew that I wanted to go to college for sure. I was in Gear Up; they gave me a scholarship, helped me look at schools based on what my interests were. They helped me figure out how to fund it. So, Gear Up helped a lot".

Although she desired to pursue higher education, Diya credited her involvement in the Gear Up program as a means which helped her navigate the pre-college process. Jumping in to comment on the external influences of their decision, Shankaron shared, "I was a part of College Possible in high school and still am now, and they still support me." Tchala, a graduating senior, gave credit to members of nonprofit organizations who frequented his high school for his influence, in some capacity, to pursue higher education. While reflecting on his high school experience, Tchala explained:

Some nonprofit organization that used to come around my high school, just inspiring and telling the students to pursue higher education. Also, programs like mentorship within the community that's run by people who really see the value of the younger generation that do want to change the condition of their community, and also the condition of the world, so individual like that and being a part of mentorship programs like that inspired me to actually then pursue higher education.

This pattern of external community involvement impacting participants' decision to pursue higher education is highlighted in many testimonies shared among participants. As a community, Somali-Jareer Bantus were denied access to education in Somali (Frounfelder, Tahir, Abdirahman, & Betancourt, 2020); therefore, participants leaning on support coming from outside of their community is no surprise in this aspect. Although Lehman and Eno (2003) report that the literacy rate among the Somali Bantu community (not specifically, Somali Jareer

Bantu) is exceedingly lower than the United Nations' 24% estimate, there is no accurate data to estimate the literacy rate of this population [or that of the within-group ethnic minority specific of the Somali-Jareer Bantu]. This gap in the literature regarding the scholarship of the Somali-Jareer Bantu population is due to the Somali government's deliberate removal of their history. While participants acknowledged their parents' lack of formal schooling experience, they expressed great appreciation for their involvement (in whatever capacity). They relied on members outside of their community to help push their educational aspirations.

Pattern Two: Family

The second pattern supporting the theme of participants' decision to pursue their higher education aspirations and persist in that journey is family. Within the Somali-Jareer Bantu community, the family is the strongest unit which provides a sense of understanding of the purpose of kinship and roles. Through family, customs, beliefs, and values are passed down from one generation to the next (Eno & Eno, 2008; 2014; Jarratt, 2020; Menkhaus, 2009). The mother often manages the family's domestic affairs, such as raising and helping children develop (Webersik, 2004). In this case, children naturally develop a much closer relationship with their mothers, which gives mothers a better understanding of the children than fathers.

As he turned down for a second to reflect on his response, Wade looked up eagerly as he commented, "my mom was the key person [to influence the decision to further education], and she never stopped me." My mom had eight children, and she never allowed me to skip school. She advised me that, hey, this is your future. You need to hold it. Keep going". Wade credited his mother for his decision to pursue higher education and because of his mother's encouragement and support, he continued to get a master's degree and is now considering a doctorate when he shared, "then and until now, I've been thinking about my doctorate." Joining

the conversation as Wade stopped sharing, Asha, giving credit to her mother, also talked about how supportive her mother was after sharing her educational interests. As she continued to reflect on that experience, Asha explained:

My mom knew my brother didn't want to go to college, but when I started talking about it [about my interests] and sharing some context with her my freshman year and I told her this is what I wanted to do, she said to go for it. She supports me until this day.

Similarly, Dee, a senior in nursing, shared that although her initial drive to pursue higher education was personal, she realized it was ultimately for her family. After getting married and having a family, Dee realized she wanted to be an example for the family she created. Dee commented:

So, I just told myself that I want to pursue higher education for myself and my kids. I said I need to go to college, work hard and do the best that I can to become what I want to become in life. I will be the first to graduate in my family.

Jamila discussed the sacrifice her parents made for their family to resettle in the U.S. and for them to get access to education. Jamila, a rising junior in Pre-Law, also conveyed that her family influenced her decision to further her education. As she continued to reflect on the struggles her parents experienced in the hope of providing a better life for their family, Jamila shared:

So, my family came here in 2003. My parents sacrificed everything, leaving their family behind. My dad always said, I want you guys to do better for yourselves. My parents sacrificed so much for me and my siblings. My parents and my siblings and relatives pushed me and my siblings to continue [our education]. Whenever I call my dad [from campus], he says, continue doing what you're doing because you're doing this for you, not just for me. Hearing that proudness out of his voice makes me feel good, and that I'm doing something good with my life.

Like Jamila, who often appreciated her father's support, Mbaro also shared similar paternal influence when she explained, "academically, I found myself through my father's push, and having my siblings as examples helped." Although Mbaro shared having siblings who

experienced some form of postsecondary education, she commented that "I'm the first one in my immediate family to get a bachelor's degree", but having those siblings provided her an example to some extent with the pre-college process which many of the other participants did not have access to during their pre-college process. Shankaron also felt compelled to join the conversation regarding influential factors of her decision to further her education as she shared:

I would say it [decision to pursue higher education] came a lot from family and from school. My family is very supportive of me being in school and even though they have no idea what I'm doing to like, they say, go to college, do good, like typical African [refugee/immigrant] parents. I feel like my parents tried to the best of their abilities to try to make me a bright student, and help me believe in myself, that there's life outside of my home.

Like many participants, Shankaron shared that although her parents may not have experienced higher education, they often support her decision to pursue her educational aspirations and encourage her to continue to persist.

Regarding educational aspirations, the Somali-Jareer Bantu community was denied access to education (Frounfelker et al., 2020), so the vision of educational aspirations is a contemporary luxury to members of this community. Due to such marginalization under the Somali government, Somali-Jareer Bantus lack experience in formal schooling (Eno & Eno, 2014; Menkhaus, 2009). Somali-Jareer Bantu parents, especially the older generations, are often unable to fully engage in the educational process of their students because of several factors, including the language barrier and lack of experience. Thus, participants sharing the support of their family, especially mothers, in their educational aspirations and journey provides a great sense of relief to the very foundation of this study. This family pattern as a factor of influence behind participants' decision to pursue and persist in higher education sheds light on the importance of family within the Somali-Jareer Bantu community. This pattern also highlights the generational knowledge within this community as some participants shared the

encouragement from parents and family and the involvement of those family members in their educational journey. Although most Somali-Jareer Bantus lack experience in formal schooling, this pattern reveals that the older generation is committed to the betterment of the current and upcoming generations, hence, their encouragement and support of higher educational pursuits.

Pattern Three: Personal Drive & School Community

The third pattern supporting the influences behind participants' decision to pursue higher education and persist in their journey focuses on a personal drive that derives from the lack of generational access to education, as well as members from the school community, including teachers and counselors/advisors. While amid side conversations among participants, Dee, a graduating senior, turned to the screen to share her drive to uplift herself first through hard work and dedication to her future. Dee shared:

Honestly, I've always been a hard worker and in high school, I decided to become a CNA. I always knew I wanted to help people out, so I knew I wanted to further my education, especially once I became a CNA, knowing what they do and everything helped me understand where I wanted to go in life.

Although Dee shared having a personal drive to further her education, her story also echoes that the people around her in the community she found in the CNA program helped her expand her horizons, especially around the career route she wanted to take and for her to follow that route, she understood that she needed to further her education to make her dreams into a reality. Similarly, Abdalla shared a personal drive behind his decision to pursue higher education. As he reflected on his experience in the refugee camp, aspiring to pursue education beyond high school, yet, not knowing if such an opportunity existed for him, Abadalla explained:

I always had the idea after high school because if I were in the refugee camp, there's no way I could've known that even high school exists. But again, I was lucky to grow up in the city where there were technical schools and universities. But those [schools] were for Kenyans. But I always thought that if I get the money, I might even have the opportunity

to go and study. Somehow, that's how I ended up getting into that technical school [through a] scholarship.

Scanning the space as Abdalla finished talking, Wade joined the conversation as he reflected on the difficulty of being an ethnic minority in Somalia, specifically as a Somali-Jareer Bantu being subjugated to less than a human being by the Somali government and its citizens from dominant ethnic groups. As he sighed in frustration and disappointment, Wade explained:

Being born in Somalia and seeing they don't see you as a human being, that's actually what's keeping me here; just to go to school and learn. There is an African proverb that if you want to hide someone like me who's dark skin, write it down. That applies in Somalia because nobody reads. Somalia is an oral community, so if you want to hear your society, talk, they can hear. But if you write something, nobody will come back to you because we don't read and write.

Other participants allotted credit to members from their school's community, such as teachers and counselors/advisors who provided support which helped pave the way for them to consider options in pursuing higher education. For instance, Shankaron pondered upon her teachers' support in high school, who encouraged her to apply to several colleges and universities. Shankaron recounted:

And in school, I feel like teachers were very supportive because it was also a diverse school, and they always encouraged us to apply to as many schools as we wanted to. They were all very supportive.

While the conversation stirred around the space, crediting teachers and counselors for supporting their pursuit of higher education, Asha joined the conversation, reflecting on her experience with her math teacher, who provided a lens into understanding college and the different pathways to pursue a field of her interest. Asha shared:

I never knew where to go [with my interests] until my sophomore math teacher mentioned college. So, I sat down with her during lunch, and shared my story with her, and she mentioned healthcare, and I never knew what health care was. I never knew what a nurse was. But as I told my story, she was like, oh, nurses do this and that. I just knew from then on, I wanted to be a nurse, but I never knew there were midwife nurses, or OBGYN, labor and delivery, that help deliver babies.

Nina also shared that her counselor's help with her pre-college process and interactions from field trips to different college fairs positively impacted her decision to further her education when she shared:

During my junior year, our counselor started helping us out with where we wanted to go to college or what we wanted to do. Before those questions even rose, they had colleges come to the school and would take us on trips to different college events which allows you to see programs [and what the schools are like]. So, that's how I was introduced to higher education and wanting to pursue that.

Quietly in reflective thought, Roman looked up to share about her interactions in and outside of her classrooms as one factor influencing her decision to pursue higher education. As she continued to reflect, Roman shared, "learning how to go about college and what things are required was freshman year of high school." Abdiyah also joined the conversation as she shared, "yeah, my school counselor definitely helped. But when you tell friends or family [about your educational aspirations], they just put you down [discourage], but if the person has the drive, nothing can stop you".

Summary

This theme discusses the factors influencing participants' decision to pursue higher education and persist in their journeys. Although many factors fuel the pursuit of higher education, this theme discussed pertinent patterns that closely captured the factors significant to participants as showcased in their testimonies. Such patterns supporting factors fueling participants' decision to further their educational aspirations and commitment to persist in their journeys include the support from Trio pre-college programs (i.e., Gear Up) and other nonprofit organizations, family, and personal drive as well as members from the school community such as teachers and counselors. Although these factors positively influenced participants' decision to pursue higher education, their testimonies highlight a personal drive to uplift themselves through

their opportunity to access education which was denied to their larger community due to the marginalization of their ethnic minority membership in Somalia. While participants' testimonies reveal an inner drive to pursue higher education, the support from their community further influenced their desire and commitment to their education and the betterment of their community broadly.

Theme Three: Hyper Visibility & Invisibility of Religion and Ethnicity

This theme of hypervisibility versus hyper-invisibility discusses participants' invisibility in higher education regarding their ethnic and cultural identity over their other identities, such as religion. The invisibility of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in the higher education system of the U.S. is the focal point of participants' educational experiences on college campuses. Thus, participants' testimonies highlighting the same challenges about their educational experiences broadly speak to this subject's volume. The Somali-Jareer Bantu community has been and continues to be marginalized in Somalia (Eno & Eno, 2014). Thus, as a marginalized ethnic group, they face exclusion from participation in Somalia's mainstream society. As such, this community has been denied access to education and other means to participate in Somalia's mainstream society. To further enhance their invisibility in Somalia's society, the Somali government has almost erased their history from Somalia's scholarship (Frounfelker et al., 2017, 2020; Gundel, 2009; Ingiriis, 2012; Lehman & Eno, 2003), so to learn through participants' testimonies about the challenges of invisibility they experience in higher education in the U.S. is almost a *déjà vu* because as a current generation in another society which flaunts itself on freedom and acceptance for all regardless of background, participants now find themselves in the same marginalization as their older generations, as they also battle challenges of invisibility of their ethnic identity at their respective college campuses. This theme is supported by several

patterns of ethnic invisibility, generalizations of Somali-Jareer Bantu students, and balancing cultural differences.

Pattern One: Ethnic Invisibility

The first pattern which supports this theme of participants' sense of hyper invisibility of their ethnic and cultural identity is through institutional lack of awareness of their ethnic minority status and their presence on campus in general. While participants looked around at each other, Tchala began to reflect on his journey of feeling invisible in classes and on campus. He shared challenging experiences in which he felt nonexistent on campus and did not belong on campus, especially when professors failed to recognize his presence in class despite his constant attempts to participate. Tchala explained:

When it comes to engineering, you're pretty much not even acknowledged. It's like you're nonexistent. Sometimes, it can be very challenging, especially in class or when you're talking to professors, they're just like "oh, sorry, I didn't see you in the class, or are you in the wrong class?"

Tchala continued to share his challenges with professors who chose to blind themselves from his existence as they made him feel like an outcast, forcing him to get used to such atrocities to make it through his educational journey. Tchala shared:

So, you pretty much don't exist unless you make yourself visible 24/7 by being in their face, sending them emails, raising your hand in class to answer/ask questions, and engaging in discussions. But I've gotten used to it, but that still does not change the fact that they still don't really see you or that you belong there.

Another participant, Diya, joined Tchala, sharing a similar account of feeling like an outsider on her campus. She shared, "the private university I went to, I was the only Somali Bantu there. In general, I was an outsider". Similarly recounting her experience of feeling invisible on campus, Dee also shared, "I don't even think the school, in general, knows about Somali Bantus. I don't even think they know about us". As Diya and Dee expressed their

experiences as outsiders in their campus communities, as their institutions were unaware of their presence, Shankaron echoed similar accounts like many other participants. While looking at other participants in agreement and with frustration, Shankaron shared, "Oh, God, I feel like I'm the only Somali Bantu person here." Diya, as she shook her head in response, talked about her institution's lack of awareness of her presence as a Somali-Jareer Bantu student, as she reflected:

It doesn't look like they were even aware of my presence. I feel like when you talk about minority groups, they focus more on the Latinos and the blacks [African Americans]. They didn't necessarily include different African countries.

While Diya reflected on her undergraduate experience and her institution's lack of inclusion of her ethnicity compared to other minority groups, Jamila jumped into the conversation in agreement as she commented, "they [the school] don't even know what Somali Bantu is. Only one black professor I'm close with knows about me". As participants reflected on their experience of feeling invisible as Somali-Jareer Bantu students at their respective college campus communities, another subtopic to this pattern in which participants felt slightly recognized is through their religion. The basis for their religious visibility relies on how they physically presented themselves, particularly the covering of their hair with a scarf. For instance, Dee talked about how her religion took over all other aspects of her identity because of the visible scarf she wore. Dee explained:

They [school] just consider me as a Muslim. If they [peers] see me, they recognize me as a Muslim, not as my ethnicity, and I don't think they know much about it [my ethnicity].

Following up on the previous comment, Shankaron shared her feelings about how Somali-Jareer Bantu students are considered just as Muslim students, nothing else, when she commented, "I feel like for Somali Bantus, they are just Muslims and Muslim students in general. There's not really a community here [in higher education] for us". Jamila also spoke

about her school's perception of her whole identity as just her religion, further adding to the invisibility of her ethnic and other salient identities. Jamila explained:

No, I don't think that they would know to be honest because when I see a hijabi, they're gonna automatically say, she's Muslim but they're not gonna distinguish us as Somali or Somali Bantu. The recognition doesn't really exist in a school that only has one Somali Bantu person there, but I pretty much just go to my friends and educate them on certain things about my culture and ethnicity. Growing up in America, everyone wearing a scarf is assumed to be Muslim, but their ethnicity or culture is not considered.

Supporting the ethnic hyper-invisibility of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education, this pattern discusses participants' sense of invisibleness as it relates to their ethnicity. While participants felt complete invisibility of their ethnic identity, they communicated feeling almost the complete opposite with their religion which was not necessarily positive. This pattern highlights participants' experience of feeling their religious identity taking precedence over their ethnic identity due to their appearance in dressing (i.e., scarf). As such, the precedence of their religion deduces their whole identity to the scarf they wore on their heads and nothing else, as their campus communities refused to recognize their presence beyond their religion. Through participants' testimonies, it is apparent that their challenges of invisibility in higher education spaces is heightened as they reflected on their experiences of being made to feel like outsiders, outcastes, and nonexistent by staff and peers, while they persevered to navigate their educational journeys in a new space within higher education.

Pattern Two: Generalizations of Somali-Jareer Bantu Students

Partially due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of ethnic differences, the second pattern which supports this theme of ethnic hyper-invisibility is the generalizations of Somali-Jareer Bantu students within higher education. As participants shared, such generalizations span across the assumption of Somalia as a homogeneous country with one ethnic group and the generalization of the refugee/immigrant background of Somali-Jareer Bantu students with other

students from refugee and immigrant backgrounds. The other generalization among participants' testimonies is the grouping of Somali-Jareer Bantu students with other black Africans and African Americans. Thus, Abdalla reflected on his experience of advocating for himself during his educational journey due to the staff's lack of knowledge about Somalia and its many ethnic minority groups. Realizing the lack of understanding of his ethnic minority status and needs from staff, Abdalla shared:

No, those conversations [about Somali Bantus] came from me because they have no idea. Because whenever you say you come from Somalia, they know Somalia as just one Somalia, there's no minority, there's no people who are left behind. I was advocating for myself and telling them, hey, this is who we are, this is what happened to us. We never had this opportunity, this kind of higher education, so I was the person advocating for myself.

Joining Abdalla's point, Wade, shared how higher education staff often lack basic knowledge about Somalia, further hindering the educational experiences of ethnic minority students from Somalia as he commented:

Most of the teachers, counselors and the administrators don't even know where Somalia is located let alone Bantu. When they see you, they see you as an African American, a Black and brown kid, but in that box as a black male or black student, I don't think they care what or want to know more than that. If you are participating in class discussions, and sharing something, that's the only time that they hear where you come from, and the experiences or the challenge or the trauma you faced.

Similarly, as Wade shared being categorized as African American or black, stripping him of his ethnic identity, Shankaron also recalled the same experience when she commented, "they just categorize us as African and black." While the conversation circulated participants' experiences of being categorized as general Africans and African Americans, Abdiyah joined as she discussed her experience of being placed in a general box at her institution. Abdiyah shared, "there's a lot of us [Somalians]. They see us and just assume we are the same". Wade returned to the conversation to further share his experience of being ignored by other members of

dominant Somali ethnic groups in higher education spaces and having to challenge others about the homogenous assumption of Somalia as a unified country of one ethnicity and culture. As he sighed, Wade explained:

Yeah, most of the time when Africans are somewhere, especially my fellow Somalis, like to ignore me or to ignore us [Somali Bantus] but I don't give them room. In general, we are Somalis, but this is a country that tries to dominate us. So, when other folks [non-Somalis] ask, "do you guys have Somalis like Abdillahi?", I challenge them that they should have to look like me; I shouldn't have to look like them because of my morphology. I'm from Africa and I'm African. Nobody questions when you see me, they know immediately. Why should I look like them [Somalis from dominant ethnic groups]? But they say, mostly we have seen Somalis and they look like this and that. I ask, 'have you ever been to Somalia? Go to Goshu [city in Somalia] and look at who you see'. If I keep quiet, I won't get anything, so wherever I go, I introduce myself, who I am and where I come from, and that I'm proud of how I look.

Showing a sign of inspiration from Wade's comment about self-advocacy and pride in his identity, Diya looked up to share the difficult experience she had, attempting to explain her ethnic identity to peers and staff. She shared that the lack of understanding of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education based on her experience further pushed her to question her Somali identity, which only heightens the marginalization she already feels within the greater Somali community and here in the U.S. Diya commented:

Okay, when they [peers, staff] ask me where I'm from and I say that I was born in Kenya, they think I'm just Kenyan and that I speak Swahili. I'm like no and then I give them my background. When I tell them, I'm Somali Bantu, they're like, oh and they just generalize it. So, it just puts me in a hard place, because, what do I identify as? I was born in Kenya, but I'm not only Kenyan because [of my parents]. But, Somalia, there are different tribes. We're not [considered] fully Somalis in Somalia or here [U.S.].

This pattern focusing on the generalizations of Somalia-Jareer Bantu students with other minority student groups highlights participants' experiences of their identities being stripped of them when the literature places them in the same category as other students from refugee and immigrant backgrounds, other black Africans, African Americans and blacks in general. Due to the lack of knowledge and understanding of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education

broadly, this student population, as highlighted in the testimonies of participants, endures a tremendously challenging educational experience. Generalizing Somali-Jareer Bantu students with other minority student groups further hinders their educational experiences because higher education institutions lack an educational approach centered around their unique needs for growth and success (Benson, 2006; Kruiuzenga, 2010; Ndungu, 2019).

Pattern Three: Cultural Differences (Balancing the Somali and American Self)

Balancing different cultures or fighting to live in their true selves without risking a split of their identity between two cultures further supports participants' sense of ethnic hyper-invisibility. Notably, Jamila discussed the exhaustion of continuously fighting to embrace her culture on campus by constantly explaining her clothing and why she dresses the way she does.

In doing so, Jamila shared:

It's something that you have to push and fight for every day. I try to make sure that people know that this is how I wear my scarf. This is a baati (long dress worn throughout parts of Africa). It's part of our culture. You may think this is weird, but this is completely normal. When I'm back in my city, I wear baati everywhere, but if I wear it to a Walmart at my school, people think it's a nightgown. It's like my race and my culture, everything is new to them and I have to tell them I wasn't born here, that I'm from Kenya and my mom is Somalian and I'm Muslim. They're always confused and ask if I'm Congolese and think Africa is just one big country. There are a lot of Congolese at my school, so they automatically associate me with them.

While Jamila chooses to fight an everyday battle to be able to embrace her culture through educating others about the Somali-Jareer Bantu culture regardless of the outcome, Abdiyah, on the other hand, talked about detaching herself from a part of her ethnic identity in the hope of easing her experience and educating others. Abdiyah commented:

We're all different. Honestly, I don't say I'm Somali. I just say I'm Bantu. I don't use the word Somali because I feel like that's what everyone is comfortable with hearing, so I tell them I'm Bantu, and when they ask me, what's that? Then I tell them that I'm Jareer, a minority in Somalia.

“Some people don’t have to deal with the whole marriage thing, ” commented Tima as she joined the conversation, and reflected on her experience of living in between two cultures as her parents expected her to get married while she aspired to continue her education. Continuing to reflect, Tima explained:

As a Somali Bantu student, it was really hard because you know how it is when you're a Muslim. Not even just a Muslim, but more of a cultural thing where they expect you to get married and settle down at a certain age. Obviously, I already hit that benchmark for them, which is like 18. So, going to school was hard because I had no support whatsoever, and nobody cared about what I was doing or my homework when I came home. The only thing that mattered was finding a husband, so I had no support. I had no financial support, emotional support. So, it was really hard because I had to do everything by myself. I worked multiple jobs to support my family and myself while attending school and caring for my siblings.

Participants shared the burden of having to manage the burden of two different cultural identities. Tima talked about balancing two identities (who she was as a student at school and a Somali-Jareer Bantu person at home). Diya as she shared, "I first went to college due to the pressure that we face in our community of marriage expectancy after high school, and I told my parents that I was gonna get married after I graduated college." Due to the pressures of balancing two different cultures, Shankaron discussed abandoning her scarf as a means to ease her experience of feeling like an outsider. Shankaron shared, "when I came on campus, I stopped wearing my hijab because I wasn't comfortable with all the stares I got." Shankaron further expressed her effort to stay true to herself while balancing two different cultures at school and home when she commented:

I feel like just staying true to myself. But there are times when I try when I'm home, I kind of don't have a choice. I feel like me and my hijab; that's something between God and me. I hope in the future, that's my goal but it's kind of hard because my parents were super strict, so they kind of just forced it on me, especially dressing.

Similarly, Mbaro talked about her challenges in balancing different cultures as a mechanism to live and get through her educational journey. As she continued to reflect on her harrowing journey of living between her native culture and border culture, Mbaro shared:

My college experience was hard. I made so many cultural mistakes because growing up in the Somali Bantu community, I was sheltered and was always told what to do, and how to behave. Surrounded by so many people from different cultures, I'm challenging myself how to stay true to my identity and also succeed in this new environment. How do I do it?

For me, now I'm having depression because I'm doing something that I was told was so bad, and I'm now engaging in it, so how do I get back to my identity? How do I stay true to myself? I was just lost. So, I went through a little bit of an identity crisis, but I found myself.

Wade joined the conversation to reflect on his experience early on when he first arrived in the U.S., in which he also felt lost at times with juggling the cultural differences as he commented:

My personal journey in education was rough. In the beginning, I got lost. It was challenging. I was juggling with the cultural adjustment. The U.S. culture is totally different from where I come from, especially in Africa. I was working full-time. I was new to the country.

Although participants spoke of the difficulty of balancing their native and border cultures and fighting to embrace their native culture in higher education, some participants shared some ways in which they could not express their culture. For example, while some participants were unable to express themselves, others shared, in small steps in which they could express small parts of their authenticity. Some attended classes wearing their baati, including Mbaro, who shared, "sometimes, I'd just go outside with my baati on because that is significant to our culture." Others like Asha shared, "I wear my hijab and eat with my hand," while Jamila talked about her apartment as the most comforting space on campus besides when she visits home where she feels safe to dress and eat in her comfort. Jamila shared:

I only feel comfortable in my apartment on campus, eating my food, cooking what I like to cook and eat at home, wearing baati, and walking around freely, and no one's judging me, but if I'm walking on campus like that, people staring is so scary.

Summary

This theme and its supportive patterns focused on participants' sense of hypervisibility of their religion and hyper-invisibility of their ethnic/cultural identity within higher education spaces. As participants identify with a community that faces marginalization and exclusion from participating in their country's mainstream society (Eno & Eno, 2014), participants' educational experience in their campus communities often emphasizes their universal invisibility in higher education in the U.S. and broadly. As such, the data highlights the same challenges in their educational experiences. As a marginalized ethnic population, this community has been denied access to education, which further heightens their lack of experience in formal schooling (Frounfelker et al., 2017, 2020; Gundel, 2009; Ingiriis, 2012; Lehman & Eno, 2003) and the opportunity to persist and succeed in these environments.

Theme Four: Lack of Aligned Institutional Support & Recognition

The fourth theme that surfaced from participants' testimonies in this study is the lack of institutional support for Somali-Jareer Bantu students. Participants spoke of the struggles throughout their educational journey due to the lack of support and recognition of their presence as they grappled with transitioning into a new environment and committing to their educational journey. College should provide students from all backgrounds with opportunities to challenge themselves and grow. For students to engage in opportunities for growth and self-discovery, they must also feel comfortable and supported in the higher education institution they attend. According to the testimonies of participants in this study, their educational journey has been challenging due to many factors, including the lack of support in higher education. Thus, the

lack of support links to a lack of connectedness to college campus communities (Birman & Tran, 2017; Frounfelker et al., 2017), further hindering students' persistence in their educational journey. As students from a background of zero to limited formal schooling (Bjork, 2016; Jarratt, 2020; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Roxas, 2010; Roy & Roxas, 2011; Roxas & Roy, 2012), the testimonies of participants further highlight their marginalization within the educational systems of Somalia and the US. as higher education institutions have failed to recognize the presence of Somali-Jareer Bantu students on their campuses. Additionally, several patterns support this theme, such as the lack of guidance in transitioning and persisting in higher education, lack of guidance and support in navigating support services, and exclusion in the institution's social community and strategic mission statement as it relates to the alignment of support and guidance to help meet the unique needs of Somali-Jareer Bantu students.

Pattern One: Transitional Guidance

The first pattern discusses the need for more transitional support for Somali-Jareer Bantu students. Participants shared their experiences of feeling unsupported as they embarked on their educational journey. Roman, who first started at a community college for a Nursing program, reflected on her experience transitioning into college with limited guidance from high school and feeling out of place. Roman shared:

Specifically, as a Somali Bantu student, I had a very difficult experience. The most difficult part of postsecondary education for me was the lack of support, especially coming right out of school that had very limited resources such as Trio programs. I know some other high schools have Trio programs, but my school specifically didn't have that much resources so coming right out of that was very difficult and just the transition was very hard, and the lack of support, and I didn't really have that much information about college as other students did.

Shankaron, quickly joining the conversation, shared in disappointment that "I came in clueless. I had to seek resources on my own. I have felt alone. There is not really a community

here for us". Similarly, Diya also shared her lack of guidance during her transition phase when she commented, "from my undergrad, I struggled because then I didn't know what to do."

Another participant, Asha joined to express her experience of not having guidance to ease her transition as a first-generation college student. Asha explained:

And then, as a first-generation student, especially not having that sort of guidance, it is difficult. Some people have their families to fall back on, but people like us [Somali-Jareer Bantu students], we don't have that. It's always like I wish I had guidance. I mean he was kind of my guide. But then, at the same time, I didn't have guidance. I don't want my siblings to go through any of that. I also wish I had someone to tell me, 'if you're undecided, start off at a community college and do your general ed. courses there.

Frustrated with the lack of support from her own experience as a Somali-Jareer Bantu student transitioning into higher education, Tima commented:

You keep bringing up Somali Bantu, Somali Bantu, but that makes me feel like no, they really do not! They were supporting other students, but not us. We need more support than other people because of our background!

Participants shared their challenging experiences due to the lack of guidance from their institutions. This pattern focuses on the need for more support for Somali-Jareer Bantu students as it relates to their need for guidance in effectively transitioning and persisting in higher education environments. As minority students from a background of limited experience in formal schooling, the U.S. education system serves as an introduction to many Somali-Jareer Bantus to access a once-envisioned opportunity to pursue educational aspirations. However, the lack of support and guidance further hampers this opportunity to successfully transition and succeed in higher education because of their endless path of obstacles, preventing them from a meaningful educational experience.

Pattern Two: Support in Navigating Resources & HiED Environment

The second pattern which supports the lack of support for Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education, as expressed by participants' testimonies, is the navigation of resources and

the environment in general. Nina, who switched schools due to the lack of support, talked about how overwhelming her first year was navigating resources, her interests, and her institution.

Nina shared:

So, it was a completely new experience for me. It was overwhelming for my first year, not in terms of the classes because they were just general courses, but trying to navigate what I am doing with the rest of my life, and the student loans and FAFSA because no one tells you about it. It was very difficult, more difficult than I expected it to be. You become more independent, and you gotta figure things out on your own. And then I'm like, Where's my advisor? You have to go and search for these people.

Following Nina's comment, Tchala joined the conversation in which he shared his struggle navigating resources in a new environment. Due to the challenge of finding guidance in navigating resources to ease his college experience, Tchala shared that he almost dropped out of college and was also placed on probation. He reflected:

I remember my first year being very challenging and very difficult. Honestly, first-year and second years, I almost dropped out because of the lack of support to help me navigate resources and the environment itself. My second year was when things kind of stopped making sense, and that's when I even got on probation and almost got kicked out because of my academic performance. I was actually supposed to graduate last June, 2021, but I had to take a year off. So, it's been very challenging. Later on, I had to reconnect with the people outside of the campus who helped me the most on my academic journey. So right now, honestly there's nothing much of a support.

On a similar account regarding the challenge of navigating resources and the institution, Wade reflected on his experience of his institution not accommodating his unique needs as a Somali-Jareer Bantu student whose experience in education is limited. As he further discussed how disadvantaged Somali-Jareer Bantus are in education due to their marginalization and exclusion in Somalia, Wade explained:

The education system in the United States is not designed for Black and brown kids at all, let alone Somali Bantu. We are a small portion. So, we're forced to struggle because their policy is not designed for us or to accommodate us. Real minorities like Somali Bantus, we are really behind. We are the first generation in everything. Most of us arrived in this country at a young age. This is our first time going to university. We don't

know how it works. Most of this, we are learning and forcing ourselves, and what support are we getting from the university? None. What we need is guidance and advice.

Tima then joined as she commented on the need for institutions to establish support to help meet the unique needs of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education environments and how the lack of that support on her campus further only hinders Somali-Jareer Bantu students like herself. Tima commented:

My school does not have support services for Somali-Jareer Bantu students. The support the school has is not meeting our needs because we need more support than other people who have parents who already went to college or had funds. We just need more support.

Further, regarding the lack of support services aligned to meet the needs of Somali-Jareer Bantu students and assisting them in navigating those services successfully, Shankaron shared:

No, I have no support, and the resources they have, they're not loud about it, so you have to reach out for them yourself, so basically, it is a challenge nearly every damn day. Yeah, because I definitely had breakdowns, and I still do until this day. That's why we need to bring light into this: we exist. We need support and we need people to know that we're here.

The lack of support in navigating resources and the campus environment is highlighted throughout this pattern as participants shared their experiences of struggling in their educational journey. This pattern is heightened by participants' shared experiences of feeling unsupported academically and in all other aspects of their needs as they persevered to tackle multiple aspects of exclusion in new educational environments, which continue to remain negligent of their presence as well as their need for support and guidance to help navigate resources, connect with the campus community and succeed in higher education spaces.

Pattern Three: Alignment of Support Services towards Somali-Jareer Bantu Students' Needs

The final pattern that emerged from this fourth theme is support services aligned to address and meet Somali-Jareer Bantu students' needs for social belonging, growth, and success

in higher education environments. For example, Diya shared her lack of comfort on campus as she commented, "there was no cultural center where I could feel comfortable". Nodding his head in agreement, Tchala commented, "honestly there's nothing much of a support designed for Somali Bantu students. I don't even exist at this institution. I'm barely recognized as a human being". As other participants looked around to each other, nodding, Shankaron explained the lack of support from her advisors and feeling unrepresented in student organizations and the campus community in general. Shankaron shared:

I don't feel like I'm represented. I don't feel supported at all. I feel like if I want support like how I was saying earlier when I feel like my life is in crisis, that's when my advisors try to help. I've had an advisor where she'd be like, oh there's a small Muslim population and I could go there, but it's not the same.

Regarding student the lack of representation, especially in campus community such as student organizations, Nina further added to the conversation, expressing her exclusion as a Somali-Jareer Bantu student when she explained:

When it comes to the recognition of Somali Bantu, I have not seen much support and the only thing that comes to my mind is the student organizations where Somalia was represented, but not Somali Bantu, so I just go along with it.

In agreement with Shankaron, Jamila commented that "as a Somali Bantu student, I have never felt supported at my school, other than from my peers that I'm very close with [whom] I've known since I was a kid. They're my community, really." Continuing the conversation on the lack of community for Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education, Jamila joined as she reflected on her experience as the only Somali-Jareer Bantu student on her campus and how she looks up to her new friends to provide her with a sense to the community on campus. Jamila explained:

Well, community is not something that's there for me. It doesn't really exist in a school that only has one Somali Bantu person there, but I pretty much just go to my friends. I educate them on certain things. They are Black, so I educate them on certain things about

my ethnicity. We support each other. My support and community are the people that I've made friends with there that understand what it is like going to a white school. So, technically, there isn't really a support or community created for me.

When the conversation shifted to inclusion or lack thereof in their institution's mission or vision statements, participants discussed not thinking about it as they have yet to experience inclusion in any aspect of their campus community. For instance, Nina shared "I feel like it's just very generalized. It's not like it's specialized towards me or my nationality/ethnicity". Roman slowly joined and commented, "No, I do not feel included in the mission statement." As participants looked around at each other, thinking about their own institution's mission/vision statements (as I requested them to review them on their phones), Wade shared how his feeling of exclusion from his institution's mission/vision statements was no surprise to him as he did not expect to be included as an ethnic minority student. Wade explained:

I can simply say no, because the education system in the United States is not designed for Black and brown kids at all, let alone Somali Bantu. We are a small portion. Think about the policies of colleges and universities. If you are a minority like us with limited educational experience, we're forced to change the field that we want, leave our job and/or struggle because their policy is not designed for us. People like us don't have other support, and the schools don't include our needs or accommodate us.

Then, Jamila commented about the lack of understanding of minority students, generally, within her institution, therefore, feeling further excluded as a Somali-Jareer Bantu student.

Jamila shared:

No, I don't see myself in the mission. They try to have minorities, but their idea of a minority is a black person, and they don't know what that is to them or what their needs are. They just try to recruit a certain student group and not really support them. Also, when it comes to Ramadan, again, I'm the only one that's fasting, and they offer food at such an early time. As soon as the prayer [call to break the fast] goes off, it's done and I can't get food because the common area is closed. They don't know things like that, and it's pretty frustrating.

As shared by participants, this pattern highlights the need for more support for Somali-Jareer Bantu students regarding a sense of connectedness and inclusion into the campus

community, such as student organizations and institutional mission/vision strategies designed to enhance the general student body's experience in higher education.

Summary

This theme focused on the lack of support for Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education. Supporting this theme are various patterns, including the lack of guidance in transitioning and persisting in higher education, lack of guidance and support in navigating support services, and exclusion in social community and institution's strategic mission/vision strategies as it relates to persistence and retention efforts aligned to help address and meet their unique needs. As higher education aims to challenge students to broaden their perspective and help them grow through supportive means, the successful transition into their campus community is among the first steps to ascertaining the persistence and success of their educational journey. Somali-Jareer Bantu students come from a background of limited formal schooling due to their marginalization in Somalia, in which the government excluded them from participation in Somalia's mainstream society, including access to education. As such, these students require extra support in transitioning and persisting in higher education as they are the first generation in their community to pursue higher education.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

This study explores Somali-Jareer Bantu students' experiences as they struggle to navigate and express their multiple identities (i.e., ethnicity, culture, religion, and gender) within higher education spaces in the United States. The first chapter introduced the issue influenced by the study's investigation – the lack of awareness of students from this ethnic Somali minority community in higher education scholarship; hence, the countless challenges they encounter during their educational journey as an unrecognized marginalized ethnic population and their unique background. Chapter two presented a review of the literature about Black immigrants and refugees to form a lens to understand Somali-Jareer Bantu students' experiences in higher education. This chapter also discussed the available literature concerning the known/unknown status of Somali-Jareer Bantus, including their historical background, culture and traditions, refugee resettlement, and their experience with formal schooling. The conceptual framework employed to analyze the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education is also outlined in this chapter. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology utilized for this study. Chapter Four provided the results from the collected data by detailing a description of participants in the sample and observations from their background characteristics. This chapter also summarizes significant themes and patterns which emerged from participants' testimonies (the intricacies of negotiating multiple identities (i.e., ethnicity, culture, religion), exclusion, and invisibility while navigating their experiences as Somali-Jareer Bantu students from a background of limited experience to formal schooling, in higher education environments. This

chapter clarifies these findings by returning to the themes and patterns from the previous chapter, followed by a discussion of how key findings modify the conceptual framework developed in Chapter Two. Finally, this chapter offers implications and recommendations for practitioners, policy, and future research.

Presentation & Analysis of Findings

This section of the chapter will discuss key findings (themes and patterns) that emerged from the data provided in the previous chapter from participants' testimonies based on their experiences in higher education. As such, the summary of findings will focus on themes and patterns that emerged from the previous chapter: transition into higher education environment, motivations fueling pursuit of and persistence in higher education, ethnic hypervisibility, and the lack of institutional support aligned to help avail the navigation, development, and success of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education.

Theme One: Transition into Higher Education Environment

The first theme that emerged from the data is the transition of Somali-Jareer Bantu students into higher education and their persistence and retention. The transition phase into higher education is essential for students' persistence and retention as well as their development and overall success throughout the rest of their educational journey. For minority students like Somali-Jareer Bantu students who descend from an educational background of limited experience in formal schooling, access or lack thereof to higher education is essential to their success in the remainder of their journey as they lack the necessary experience to effectively navigate higher education (Birman & Tran, 2017; Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011; Fruja Amthor, & Roxas, 2016; Gichiru, 2012, 2014; Jarratt, 2020; Kruizenga, 2010; Meloche, Provinzano, Sondergeld, & Moy, 2020; Soyly, Kaysılı & Sever, 2020). This theme is further

supported by patterns of participants' challenging experiences with crafting a sense of belonging, managing isolation, and tension between home and school.

Crafting a Sense of Belonging

College serves as a place where students from all backgrounds can embark on a journey of self-development. This transition of newfound freedom and independence is a time in which students can expand their horizons and the different avenues in which they understand the world. Interactions between students and faculty and access to spaces of comfort on campus enhance students' sense of belonging (Baber, 2012; Stebleton et al., 2017). Other scholars examining the various identities shaping the college experiences of Black immigrant students in the U.S. found a sense of belonging as a significant factor in enhancing the educational experiences of students (Brown, 2010; Freeman, 2002; Hatoss, 2012; Massey et al., 2007; Mwangi & Fries–Britt, 2015; Ndemanu & Jordan, 2018; Stebleton et al., 2017). For Somali-Jareer Bantu students who lack formal schooling experience, navigating the U.S. education system can be exhausting. This pattern presents a sense of loss and detachment from the campus community as participants in the study attempted to commit to their educational journey by establishing a sense of connectedness to their campus communities. Due to their unique experiences from refugee/immigrant backgrounds, Black immigrant students face many challenges which significantly impact their overall education experience. Stebleton et al. (2017) argue that a sense of belonging is a factor that profoundly influences the experiences of Black immigrant students in higher education. Students' sense of belonging within their institutions can vary across interactions with faculty, staff, peers, and engagement in activities, broadly enhancing their sense of connectedness to their campus environment and educational experience. This study presents

participants' sense of loss, loneliness, and lack of belonging on their college campuses, which create a further distance between the physical campus and their educational journey.

Tchala discussed the loneliness of his educational experience, especially dealing with discrimination from the greater Somali community, campus community, and society in general. In addition to his resentment at the Somali government for its subjugation of the Somali-Jareer Bantu community, he shared the difficulty in processing the current chapter of his educational endeavors considering how unforgettably challenging the journey has been. With a history rooted in marginalization and socially constructed inferiority under Somalia's government, Somali Bantus have been told they are incapable of pursuing education because of their membership in minority ethnic groups (Eno & Eno, 2008, 2014). Griffin and McIntosh (2015) found that Black students from immigrant backgrounds balance multiple identities, recognizing the racial and ethnic dimensions of their identity. Students feel a greater sense of comfort when surrounded by individuals with similar backgrounds and appearances. Somali-Jareer Bantu students like Tchala find themselves lonely and isolated as they have to deal with continued marginalization both on and off campus from within and outside their community, thus making their educational journey grueling.

As a framework utilized to explain the social and psychological pressures individuals of African descent and others from marginalized backgrounds combat as they negotiate their multiple identities in higher education, Du Bois's double consciousness concept is a sensation of feeling like one's identity is divided into different parts, making it highly challenging for an individual to claim a single, unified identity (Levinson et al., 2011). This framework supports the challenges Somali-Jareer Bantu students face in higher education as they attempt to pave a path for themselves in an environment where they feel their identities are split into multiple

dimensions. Due to their marginalization, they lack experience in formal schooling, making their transition process even more challenging, especially when there is a lack of awareness of their presence in higher education institutions. As such, their transition into higher education is tremendously strenuous as they are left to navigate new environments alone while feeling lost, out of place, and isolated in a space that makes them feel unwhole because of their differences.

Managing Isolation

Another pattern that emerged from participants' conversations within this theme is managing isolation. While trying to live through an endless path of navigating higher education during the transition phase and beyond, participants shared feelings of isolation and loneliness on their college campuses. Participants recounted feelings of exclusion from their campus communities. For example, Jamila recalled the challenge of her experience as her peers added to her discomfort of being able to express her ethnic identity within campus spaces fully. As a marginalized community, this is the first time that Somali-Jareer Bantus have access to education (Eno & Eno, 2008, 2014; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003, 2009); therefore, the whole experience is new to them as they lack exposure to formal schooling. As expressed by Shankaron, "Oh, God, I feel like I'm the only Somali Bantu person here," the sense of feeling left out and alone on campus is shared among participants struggling to navigate a college campus community that lacks awareness of their presence. In most cases, participants shared a compulsion to move out of their comfort zone to manage their isolation on campus slightly.

Marginalized individuals constantly navigate between their perspectives of their social self, their respective communities, and the perception of others from external communities. Due to the exclusion and lack of awareness of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in the higher education system of the U.S., these students feel left out of their campus community, as presented in the

data in this study. Griffin and McIntosh (2015) explain that students' sense of connectedness to their campus community aids engagement in the campus community which further enhances their overall adaptation and transition process toward their educational journey. For Somali-Jareer Bantu students, understanding their place from an identity perspective, both ethnically and racially, around their peers and the greater campus community ultimately plays a critical role in furthering incorporation levels into their campus community as well as the U.S. racial system (Mwangi, 2014; Ndemanu & Jordan, 2018 Mwangi; Stebelton et al., 2017).

As Somali-Jareer Bantu students embark on educational journeys in new college environments, they face a myriad of obstacles, enhancing their struggle to balance multiple identities and never feeling wholesome as they experience a division of their identities into multiple parts. Attempting to balance multiple social worlds as first-generation and refugee students, they often see themselves not only through their eyes but also through the eyes of their communities and others who often categorize their presence as the 'othered'. As described by Du Bois, minority students develop an innate feeling of two-ness and "measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Levinson et al., 2011, p. 204). Referencing Du Bois's perspective, Somali-Jareer Bantu students face a constant battle of measuring their view of themselves versus others' perception of them, with both views presenting distinctively from a religious and ethnic/cultural standpoint. Therefore, their sense of loss on college campuses is due to the lack of awareness of their presence and their sense of difference/otherness, evidently present through their dressing and culture, further intensifying tension with incompleteness as they continue to fight for a place in higher education.

Tension between Home and School

This third pattern of tension between home and school further supports this theme. As presented in the data, participants shared their experiences of balancing their identities (who they are at home vs. school or the Somali self vs. the American self) while transitioning into a new environment and navigating their educational journey in higher education. One of the participants, Mbaro, shared being at a loss and experiencing an identity crisis because she felt she could not be her authentic self. Being on campus with newfound freedom and lacking the guidance to navigate their identities effectively, many participants found themselves trying to balance multiple identities. While the transition and adaptation to different cultures are vital for refugee and immigrant students resettling in any society, it is also important to recognize the challenge of balancing more than one culture to survive.

According to various scholars, African and black students from immigrant and refugee backgrounds experience college differently than non-immigrant and native-born U.S. students (Baber, 2012; Capps, McCabe & Fix, 2012; Griffin & McIntosh, 2015; Guenther, Pendaz & Songora Makene, 2011; Massey, Mooney, Torres & Charles, 2007; Mwangi, 2014; Mwangi & Fries-Britt, 2015; Ndemanu & Jordan, 2018; Scopilliti & Iceland, 2008; Stebleton, Rost-Banik, Greene & DeAngelo, 2017). Due to the intersection of varying contextual factors, black immigrant students acknowledge ethnic and racial elements of their identity. As such, students from marginalized backgrounds balance multiple identities while navigating their educational experience (Benson, 2006; Guenther, Pendaz, & Songora Makene, 2011). Exposure to and acculturation of educational experiences allow students to prepare themselves better to process their different identities. For Somali-Jareer Bantu students with limited experience in formal schooling, they do not entirely understand the navigational aspects of higher education (Birman

& Tran, 2017; Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011; Fruja Amthor & Roxas, 2016; Gichiru, 2012, 2014; Kruizenga, 2010; Meloche, Provinzano, Sondergeld, & Moy, 2020; Soylu, Kaysılı & Sever, 2020). Therefore, their expectation of college versus their actual journey is often unmatched. Somali-Jareer Bantu students' lives are occupied by a double consciousness in which they experience a division of their identities as they balance them in multiple social worlds. Provided as a concept to analyze the experiences of marginalized individuals in education, Du Bois explains:

"...One ever feels his two-ness –an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn as under" (Levinson, 2011, p. 204).

As expressed by many participants in this study, this framework speaks to how Somali-Jareer Bantu students feel torn between their home and school life, often fighting a battle of identity negotiation. Navigating their identities through multiple social worlds defined by "cultures, languages, social classes, sexualities, nation-states, and colonization" (Anzaldúa (2012, p. 7) presents several barriers as their experience of formal schooling is limited, which further creates a glaring complication to the processing of their identities and the way they understand themselves in different social worlds. The experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students, precisely the tension of balancing multiple identities in higher education, are further supported by Du Bois's double consciousness ideology (Levinson, 2011) and Anzaldúa's (2012) borderlands theory. Elements from these frameworks explain the struggles marginalized students of color face in higher education as they balance multiple identities in different social worlds to survive and ultimately 'make it through' in these environments.

Theme Two: Motivations Fueling Pursuit of Higher Education & Persistence

The second theme apparent throughout the conversations among participants in this study is the motivation behind the decision to pursue higher education and persistence in the journey itself. As the educational history of the community with which the participants identify is that of subjugation and exclusion (Eno & Eno, 2008, 2014; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003, 2009), it was necessary yet fascinating to witness their conversations take a natural course this way. While this study's main point of discussion concerns their experiences in higher education, the decision to further their education and persistence in their journey brought about dialogue that shared the responsibility of influence with close family and community members. This theme discussed factors influencing the decision to pursue and persist in higher education. While multiple factors fuel the pursuit of higher education, this theme focused on patterns that captured aspects relevant to participants' experiences. The educational history of the Somali-Jareer Bantu community is that of subjugation and exclusion (Eno & Eno, 2008, 2014; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003, 2009). Participants' testimonies highlight an inner drive to uplift themselves and their families/community through a found opportunity for educational access and mainstream access, which their community was denied because of their ethnic minority membership in Somalia. Although participants' testimonies reveal an inner drive to pursue higher education, the support from their community further influenced their commitment to their education and desire to better their community broadly. The following patterns support factors influencing participants' decision to further their educational aspirations: Trio pre-college programs such as Gear Up and other nonprofit organizations, families, and school community such as teachers and counselors.

Trio Pre-College Programs -Community

The first factor which fueled participants' motivations to pursue higher education is their involvement in Trio Pre-College programs, specifically Gear Up and other community-based nonprofit organizations such as College Possible, Sponsor-a-Scholar, and the Boys and Girls Club, to name a few. This pattern discussed one of the many reasons which helped motivate participants to consider their educational aspirations and helped pave the way for them to pursue those dreams. Some participants shared their struggles beginning in high school due to the lack of guidance and support. However, after their engagement in pre-college programs and other nonprofit organizations with a mission to support college access for minority students, they were able to find the support and guidance they needed to encourage themselves to pursue higher education and also commit to their educational and professional aspirations. Due to the lack of educational experience, participants expressed their parents' involvement as minimal; hence, participants shared reliance on members outside of their community as a source of motivation to pursue higher education.

The Somali-Jareer Bantu community is an ethnic minority in Somalia. Due to their marginalization under Somalia's government, they were denied participation in Somalia's mainstream society, including access to education (Frounfelder, Tahir, Abdirahman, & Betancourt, 2020). Consequently, as reported by some scholars, there is a lack of accurate data to estimate the literacy rate among the Somali-Jareer Bantu community (Bjork, 2016; Eno, 2008; Jarrat, 2020) while the United Nations gauges it at 24% (Lehman & Eno, 2003). Literature on the education and general history of the Somali-Jareer Bantu community remains considerably slim due mainly to the Somali government's attempt to obliterate their history from Somalia's scholarship (Eno, 2003, 2008). Due to their limited experience in formal schooling (Roxas,

2010; Roy & Roxas, 2011; Roxas & Roy, 2012), external support from outside the Somali-Jareer Bantu community is often one of the significant motivations guiding the pursuit of educational aspirations for members in this community. While participants acknowledged their parents' lack of experience in formal schooling, they displayed great appreciation for their involvement (in whatever capacity) and relied on members outside of their community to help push their educational aspirations.

Du Bois's double consciousness ideology explains the social pressures felt by individuals of African descent and others from marginalized backgrounds while negotiating their multiple identities (Levinson et al., 2011). For Somali-Jareer Bantu students, the thought of pursuing higher education was a dream which remains as such to many who do not have access to the same educational opportunities as their fellow Somali-Jareer Bantus in the U.S. However, with their limited experience in formal schooling, they constantly combat multiple identities in different social worlds, which forces a division of their identities into different parts for them to survive in these environments. Generally speaking of formal schooling, it is an entirely different environment for this student population. It often requires them to adapt to the physical environment and learn new ways to navigate those spaces properly. However, effectively navigating the motivation behind their educational aspirations and successfully transitioning into higher education heightens their sense of difference, further excluding them from that environment and society. Anzaldúa (2012) explains that living between "borders and margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element, in an alien element" (preface) because it is difficult for individuals in this life experience to feel whole in either social worlds, thereby, adopting a new culture—"a border culture" (p. 25). These concepts further enhance the struggles Somali-Jareer Bantu students

experience as they consider motivations to pursue higher education and transition to a new environment accompanied by countless unknowns throughout their educational journey.

Family

Family is the second motivating factor fueling participants' decision to pursue higher education. Although many participants' motivation to further their education came from outside their community, some participants credited their families, especially their mothers, as a significant motivating factor. Some participants gave a more considerable credit of support to their mothers. In the Somali-Jareer Bantu community, the mother often manages domestic affairs (Webersik, 2004), allowing for the formation of a naturally close relationship with their children. In this case, mothers usually develop a better understanding of their children than fathers. So, when participants shared their close relationships with their mothers, the support from their mothers to further their education came as no surprise. While Somali-Jareer Bantu parents may not understand higher education and the requirements for pursuing such a level of education and the support needed to maintain that commitment, it is apparent that their unwavering support played a great deal in participants' decisions to further their education. Participants shared that even though the journey was difficult, their parents' support helped them persist. Family as a factor of influence behind participants' decision to pursue and persist in higher education further sheds light on the importance of family within this ethnic minority community. This pattern also highlights the generational knowledge and wisdom bestowed within this community as some participants shared the encouragement from parents and family as well as the involvement of those family members in their educational journey. Although many Somali-Jareer Bantus lack experience in formal schooling, this pattern reveals that for the

advancement of the general community, the older generation is committed to supporting the current and upcoming generations with their educational aspirations.

Family is important in any society; however, within the Somali-Jareer Bantu community is the strongest unit and helps provide a sense of purpose for kinship and distinguishes roles. The Somali-Jareer Bantu community uses family as a line of communication to pass down customs, beliefs, and values between generations (Eno & Eno, 2008; 2014; Jarratt, 2020; Menkhaus, 2009). Due to their marginalization in Somalia, this community was denied participation in mainstream society (Frounfelker et al., 2020). Due to the limitation of their experience in formal schooling (Eno & Eno, 2014; Menkhaus, 2009), which presents them with a language barrier, among many other factors, Somali-Jareer Bantu parents are unable to intimately engage in the educational process of their students due to many factors. As such, being able to envision pursuing higher education is a contemporary that many members of this community still need access to today.

The double consciousness (Levinson et al., 2011) framework, along with Anzaldúa's (2012) extension, further expands a lens to understand the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education. While other student populations have access to experiences and opportunities to prepare them for higher education, Somali-Jareer Bantu students depend on themselves and any support they can access through external community members to serve as hopeful sources of motivation to pursue and persist in higher education. However, once they begin their college journey, they lack familial support as the educational experience does not exist in most cases. The lack of experience in formal schooling further hinders their success in an educational environment that meets them with exclusion. At the same time, they continue to negotiate between their identities in wavering social worlds. As they transition and navigate a

new environment solitarily, their lives become what Anzaldúa (2012) describes as a "vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary" (p. 25). In this survival mode, they battle with a force of exclusion while attempting to navigate their multiple identities in an environment where they seek an opportunity to be recognized and included.

Personal & School Community

Participants' sense of personal drive, aided by school community members, including teachers and counselors/advisors, is the third factor motivating their decision to pursue and persist in higher education. This factor of personal drive stems from participants' sense of their community's lack of educational experience due to the Somali government's marginalization, denying them access to education. In this pattern, participants such as Dee discussed her desire to pursue higher education because of the exposure to opportunities she received in high school, helping her realize her interests and the necessity to further her education beyond high school. Other participants talked about the lack of access to education that their community continues to face in Somalia and want to use the opportunity of being in the states to forge a pathway for future generations of Somali-Jareer Bantu students and others alike. While their educational journey remains challenging, participants associated a positive impact with the guidance from high school counselors and college advisors to continue navigating higher education and persist in their educational journey.

The involvement of counselors and advisors remains significant to the educational experience of students, especially students from marginalized populations, due to their need for an extra boost of support and guidance throughout their educational journey (Baber, 2012; Roxas, 2010; Roy & Roxas, 2011; Roxas & Roy, 2012; Stebleton et al., 2017). While the meager support of counselors and advisors, as highlighted through participants' testimonies, is

helpful towards their motivation to pursue higher education, their transition to higher education and their experiences thereon remains strenuous as the literature about the educational experiences of this student population is either lumped with dominant Somali ethnic groups, other marginalized student groups or almost nonexistent (Eno, 2008, 2014; Ingiriis, 2012; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhau, 2003). The educational experience of black students from refugee and immigrant backgrounds like Somali-Jareer Bantus is complex due to the uniqueness of their backgrounds. For Somali-Jareer Bantu students whose experience in formal school is limited, their experience in higher education is even more challenging (Giliomee, 2009; Jarratt, 2020).

Du Bois's double consciousness (Levinson et al., 2011) framework and its extension by Anzaldúa (2012) both forge a way to explain the challenges marginalized student populations experience as they battle with multiple identities in the different social worlds they acquire. As presented in the data of this study, Somali-Jareer Bantu students experience many hurdles as they negotiate their different identities between border cultures (different social environments) which ultimately impels them to develop a new culture formed out of survival tactics of learning to live between different social worlds. Regarding the motivations behind their educational pursuits, that aspect remains a challenge as the educational atmosphere in the U.S. is a new environment that requires them to adapt to new survival tactics to navigate the cultures and norms of multiple changing social worlds.

Theme Three: Hyper Invisibility and Visibility of Ethnicity & Religion

This theme discusses participants' experience with the hypervisibility and hyper-invisibility of religion and ethnicity/culture. This theme further highlights participants' general need for more visibility in higher education. Therefore, regarding the educational experiences of

Somali-Jareer Bantu students, this theme naturally centers around the invisibility of this student population in higher education in the U.S. The Somali-Jareer Bantu community, as a marginalized ethnic group, has been denied participation in Somalia's mainstream society (Eno, 2003). Their history is almost obliterated from Somalia's scholarship to enhance their marginalization in Somalia's society further (Frounfelker et al., 2017, 2020; Gundel, 2009; Ingiriis, 2012; Lehman & Eno, 2003). Participants' shared experiences of invisibility in higher education only add more layers to their unique experiences both in Somalia and the U.S. This theme is supported by several patterns of ethnic invisibility, generalizations of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education literature and beyond, as well as balancing cultural differences.

Ethnic Invisibility

As a pattern that permeates under participants' experience of ethnic hyper-invisibility in higher education, this pattern discusses participants' ethnic invisibility. Although participants shared their experience of invisibility concerning their ethnic identity, their conversations also spoke of an opposite experience with religion. Thus, this pattern highlights the precedence that religion takes over the participant's ethnic identity. This precedence is often due to the evident physical appearance of their dressing in public. Although religion constitutes a significant part of their identity, participants felt their existence in higher education environments is truncated to the scarves on their heads. This pattern highlights participants' challenges of invisibility on college campuses, further reducing them to outsiders, outcasts, and inexistent in higher education spaces.

As previously discussed, Somali-Jareer Bantu students have long been battling their identities. Within the walls of higher education, they feel like outsiders compelled to negotiate

their authentic selves and shift and completely change how they process their thoughts around their ethnic identity. Thus, this challenge of negotiating multiple identities is the same in higher education institutions. Due to the lack of awareness and representation of their existence in the literature and higher education (Eno, 2003; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Roxas, 2010; Roy & Roxas, 2011; Roxas & Roy, 2012), expressing their ethnic identity and needs remains a considerable challenge which ultimately pressurizes them to navigate through new social environments alone. Thus, these students are often forced to compartmentalize their identities, making their ethnicity invisible. When their identity is mixed with those of other minority student populations, Somali-Jareer Bantu students may be tolerated to create a misleading image of inclusivity in higher education. Their generational subjugation in the larger Somali community has created a fallacious lens that presents Somalia as a homogeneous state with one ethnicity and culture (Frounfelker et al., 2017, 2020; Gundel, 2009; Ingiriis, 2012; Lehman & Eno, 2003). Therefore, literature regarding the ethnic identity of Somali-Jareer Bantu students and their presence in higher education institutions remains largely insufficient and near inexistent (Eno & Eno, 2008) because they are mixed with dominant Somali ethnic groups or completely dismissed from the discussion. Therefore, this dismissal has led to the need for more support to enhance their development and success in higher education.

The theoretical framework further highlights the importance of explaining and understanding the educational experiences of minority students, especially those from African backgrounds, in education. This framework further provides a lens to not only acknowledge the presence of Somali-Jareer Bantu students on college campuses in the U.S. but also to center around their experiences in order to help ease their transition to and persistence in higher education environments. As the educational journey of Somali-Jareer Bantu students has been

alarming difficult, this framework helps to provide a perspective into the uniqueness of their needs considering their refugee background status along with their marginalization in Somalia. Therefore, this lens highlights the need to recognize their presence in higher education to begin understanding their unique experiences and include their developmental and success needs in transition, persistence, and retention efforts.

Generalizations of Somali-Jareer Bantu Students

The second pattern which supports participants' ethnic hyper-invisibility is the generalizations of Somali-Jareer Bantu students with other minority student groups in higher education. As participants shared, such generalizations span across the assumption of Somalia as a homogeneous country with one ethnic group, and the generalization of the Somali-Jareer Bantu students' refugee background with other students from refugee and immigrant backgrounds. The other generalization among participants' testimonies is the grouping of Somali-Jareer Bantu students with other black Africans or African Americans. Generalizing the educational experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students with other students from African, black, and other refugee and immigrant backgrounds often strips off their ethnic identity, as participants alluded to in their testimonies. As highlighted in participants' testimonies, Somali-Jareer Bantu students endure multiple challenges throughout their educational journey.

As there is already a lack of awareness regarding the presence of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education, generalizing them with other minority student groups further hinders their educational experiences (Chen & Carroll, 2005; Perna, 2015; Redford & Hoyer, 2017; Shupp, 2009; Petty, 2014; Toutkoushian, May-Trifiletti, & Clayton, 2021). Due to the lack of knowledge and understanding of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education broadly, these institutions lack an educational approach centered around the unique needs of this

student population (Benson, 2006; Kruizenga, 2010; Ndungu, 2019). According to many scholars, scholarship about Somalia historically situates members of the Somali-Jareer Bantu ethnic group with members of dominant Somali ethnic groups. However, this lens creates a troubling view of the country as a homogenous nation, further excluding the country's many ethnic minorities like the Somali-Jareer Bantus (Besteman, 2012, 2016; Birman & Tran, 2015, 2017; Eno, 2008; Eno & Eno, 2008, 2014; Frounfelder, Tahir, Abdirahman & Betancourt, 2017, 2020; Giliomee, 2009; Gundel, 2009; Ingiriis, 2012; Jarratt, 2020; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003; Roxas, 2008, 2010; Smith, 2013; Springer, Black, Martz, Deckys & Soelberg, 2010).

The double consciousness concept, as described by Du Bois (Levinson et al., 2011), centers around the experiences of individuals from minority backgrounds to help explain their unique experiences in education. Therefore, this framework further analyzes the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students within the realm of higher education. Somali-Jareer Bantu students come from a background of the limited formal schooling experience, so the higher education environment in the U.S. is new to them. As such, they not only have to navigate a new environment that lacks awareness of their presence but also negotiate between their multiple identities in different social worlds as they attempt to persist in their educational journey.

Balancing Cultural Differences

The third pattern which emerged from participants' sense of hyper-invisibility and hypervisibility of their ethnicity and religion within the spaces of higher education is the constant need to balance different cultures in different social worlds. As such, participants expressed having to constantly struggle to embrace somewhat of their authentic selves while they watch their identities torn between two cultures and even more depending on the many social worlds

they navigated. While some participants fight an everyday battle to allow them an imperceptible chance to embrace their culture through education and code-switching at times, others on the other hand feel imposed to denounce parts of their identity, hoping it will help ease the struggles of their educational journey.

Many participants, including Jamila, shared a sense of exhaustion in fighting daily to embrace their culture on campus and in surrounding communities.

The participants' testimonies highlight the obstacles Somali-Jareer Bantu experience in higher education. Regarding the educational experiences of black/African and other minority students, scholars have shared that such students balance multiple cultures in addition to the culture of higher education (Freeman, 2002; Griffin & McIntosh, 2015; Mwangi & Fries-Britt, 2015; Ndemanu & Jordan, 2018; Stebleton et al., 2017). Thus, it is crucial to understand their backgrounds in order to help ease their educational journey (DeCapua, 2016). Somali-Jareer Bantu students who lack experience in formal schooling require a much deeper examination of their background and experiences to create a supportive space for them to navigate cultural differences and find guidance to enhance their educational experience. As a marginalized population that was denied access to educational opportunities in their home country (Bjork, 2016; Eno, 2008; Frounfelker et al., 2020; Lehman & Eno, 2003), Somali-Jareer Bantu students do not only experience difficulty in balancing multiple cultures along their education, but they also must negotiate their multiple identities in different social worlds in order to remain buoyant in higher education environments.

Anzaldúa (2012) explains that individuals from minority backgrounds develop a border culture due to the many physical and psychological borders they cross throughout their lives. Somali-Jareer Bantus have crossed many physical and psychological borders as they hail from

refugee status and marginalization. Their displacement from the Somali Civil War left them with nothing, and while looking for safety, they crossed many borders with different cultures and values, of which they were not always welcome, to forge a new life. Therefore, this framework provides a much deeper understanding of the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students as a minority population that constantly balances multiple cultures and identities in multiple social worlds as a means of survival.

Theme Four: Lack of Aligned Institutional Support & Recognition

The fourth theme from the data is the lack of support for Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education. For students to engage in opportunities for growth and self-discovery, they must also feel comfortable and supported in the higher education institution they attend. Participants' testimonies echoed a shared educational journey which has been challenging due to several factors, such as the lack of support in higher education. As they struggled to transition into a new environment and commit to their educational journey, participants spoke of the complex experience they encountered throughout their journey due to the lack of support and recognition of their presence. This theme is supported by shared patterns which include the lack of guidance in transitioning and persisting in higher education, lack of guidance and support in navigating support services, and exclusion in social community and institution's strategic mission statement as it relates to the alignment of persistence and retention efforts to include the unique needs of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education.

Transitional Guidance

Within this theme emerged a pattern of lack of transitional support for Somali-Jareer Bantu students. This pattern focuses on the need for more support for this student population regarding guidance to ease transition and persistence in higher education. According to the data,

participants felt unsupported beginning of their college journey and throughout the rest of their educational experience. Due to the lack of guidance to aid the transition and persistence process of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education, participants reflected on how challenging their college experience has been. As an ethnic minority student population with limited experience in formal schooling, the U.S. higher education system serves them as an introduction to an education system designed to provide them and others alike, an opportunity to pursue educational aspirations. However, the lack of support and guidance, especially during their transition phase, further obstructs any chance they may have in persisting and succeeding in higher education.

College is intended to provide students with opportunities to challenge them to grow and broaden their perspectives through multiple sources of guided support (Baber, 2012; Roxas, 2010; Roy & Roxas, 2011; Roxas & Roy, 2012). Thus, an effective transition process of students into the campus community is one of the primary steps to enhance their chances of persistence and success (Roxas & Roy, 2012). For students to engage in opportunities for growth and self-discovery, they must also feel a sense of inclusion and support. For instance, participants in this study reflected on how challenging their educational journey has been due to the lack of support in higher education. Some participants even shared being placed on academic probation and eventually dropping out because of the unsupportive environment of their institution, further alienating them from continuing with the whole experience. Due to their marginalization in Somalia and their exclusion from participation in Somalia's mainstream society, the educational background of Somali-Jareer Bantu students is that of limited experience in formal schooling (Bjork, 2016; Eno, 2008; Frounfelker et al., 2020; Lehman & Eno, 2003). Thus, students from this ethnic population require additional support in transitioning and

persisting in higher education as they are the first generation to pursue higher education in their community.

Somali-Jareer Bantu students balance responsibilities, including academic commitments, while negotiating their identities in various social environments. In such a case, they often do not feel complete in terms of their identity because they have to balance different commitments and different social environments, which often splits their identity into multiple parts as a means of survival. As mentioned in *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois (Levinson et al., 2011) explains double consciousness as a:

"A peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, –an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn as under" (p. 204).

This concept explains the contradictions minority students of color, especially those of African backgrounds, battle with when it relates to their educational experience in higher education. As such, this framework further aids in the exploration of the challenges Somali-Jareer Bantu students experience in higher education as they identify with a marginalized ethnic community with limited experience with formal schooling, having to negotiate their identities in changing social environments while trying to persist in institutions that tremendously lack an awareness of their presence and the grave need to address their needs.

Support in Navigating Resources & HiED Environments

The second pattern that emerged from the theme of the lack of support for Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education is the navigation of resources and the college environment

broadly. The lack of support in navigating resources and the campus environment is highlighted throughout this pattern as participants shared their experiences of struggling in their educational journey. Due to the lack of guidance in navigating resources, interests, and the institutional environment, some participants, including Nina, reflected on their experience of the constant switch between schools, hoping for recognition of their struggle and presence as they found themselves in one quandary after another. This pattern is heightened by participants' shared experiences of feeling unsupported academically and emotionally as they persevere through an environment of exclusion.

According to the literature, the educational journeys of Somali-Jareer Bantu students are complex as they experience education differently than other student populations from marginalized backgrounds (Besteman, 2012; Capps et al., 2012; De Bruijn, Van Dijk, & Foeken, 2001; Flahaux & De Haas, 2016; Menkhaus, 2003; Stebleton et al., 2017). Due to their exclusion from Somalia's formal educational system, the note on Somali-Jareer Bantu education is that the majority of this community did not attend school in Somalia and may often be illiterate in their language (Giliomee, 2009; Jarratt, 2020). According to various scholars, Somali-Jareer Bantu students often experience difficulties transitioning to formalized schooling and the U.S. mainstream society (Besteman, 2009; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003). As echoed through participants' testimonies, Somali-Jareer Bantu students encounter many obstacles in higher education, including a lack of guidance in navigating resources on campus. This lack of guidance in navigating resources and institutional environments impedes their overall educational experience. As a marginalized student population with limited exposure to educational experiences, Somali-Jareer Bantu students require an educational approach centered around their unique needs and experiences.

Minority students of color, especially those of African backgrounds, contend with the reality of negotiating between their multiple identities in social environments that are forever changing. Du Bois (Levinson et al., 2011) explain that through the lens of double consciousness, students from such minority backgrounds develop an innate feeling of two-ness in which their identities are separated into multiple parts, forcing them into a state of questioning the wholeness of their identity. As such, Somali-Jareer Bantu students who have never felt included in their home country's society find it challenging to reconcile with such differing thoughts of not feeling complete in any social environment they acquire while they continue to live in between borders (Anzaldua, 2012). Therefore, these frameworks further amplify the many struggles of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education and the different lens through which to analyze and understand their educational experiences.

Alignment of Support Services toward Somali-Jareer Bantu students' Needs

The third pattern closely links with the previous patterns which discuss the lack of support in the transition phase and navigation of resources and college environments for Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education. Also surfaced from the lack of institutional support and recognition for Somali-Jareer Bantu students, this pattern discusses the lack of intentional alignment of support services to aid this particular student population's needs to foster social belonging, growth, and success. Further, this pattern highlights the need for more support for Somali-Jareer Bantu students regarding their sense of connection and inclusion into the campus community, such as student organizations and institutional mission/vision efforts designed to enhance the general student experience in higher education.

The educational experiences of college students are different in many aspects. However, as it relates to the educational experiences of minority students, their needs profoundly differ

across populations (Roy & Roxas, 2011). Thus, the alignment of support to help ease the educational journey of student populations is significant to their success and growth (Roxas & Roy, 2012). Somali-Jareer Bantu students as ethnic minorities who were denied access to educational opportunities and Somalia's mainstream society, their educational experience in higher education presents a uniqueness in that they lack exposure to formal schooling and education broadly (Eno & Eno, 2014; He, Bettez, & Levin, 2017; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2009; Roxas, 2008, 2010; Roxas & Roy, 2012). Notably, one of the participants, Tchala, shared, "honestly, there is nothing much of a support designed for Somali-Jareer Bantu students. I don't even exist at this institution. I'm barely recognized as a human being". As highlighted in the data, Somali-Jareer Bantu students not only feel unsupported, but institutions lack an alignment of support services designed to aid this student population's educational experiences. Thus, as echoed through participants' testimonies, the lack of awareness of their presence on U.S. college campuses presents an even more significant challenge to the persistence, success, and growth of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education environments.

Somali-Jareer Bantu students need enhanced support to help ease their transition into college as well as their persistence, growth, and success in higher education. However, to provide support to address the educational needs of these students, there needs to be an understanding of their background as marginalized individuals with significantly low to no experience in formal schooling. Within the walls of higher education environments in the U.S., they struggle to balance many responsibilities while hardly maintaining their commitment to academics in an environment that disregards their presence. In addition, they constantly negotiate between multiple identities in changing social worlds. Du Bois (Levinson et al., 2011)

and Anzaldúa (2012) discuss the challenging experiences of minority students of color in higher education as they battle to negotiate the two-ness of their severing identities and living in between borders because they do not feel whole in either world. Thus, the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education are further aided through these frameworks as they validate their feelings of unrecognition and exclusion due to their many marginalized identities pulled into multiple parts.

Summary

This section presented the emerging themes from the previous chapter which laid out the results from the data. In summary, this section discussed the themes and patterns that emerged from the data, as presented in Chapter Four. As surfaced from the data, this section highlighted four major themes: transition into the environment of higher education, motivations fueling the pursuit of higher education and persistence in the journey, hyper invisibility and visibility of ethnicity and religion, and the lack of recognition/awareness and institutional support aligned to meet the needs of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education. Several patterns further support the discussion of these themes. The first theme is supported by patterns of crafting a sense of belonging, managing isolation, and tension between home and school. Patterns supported by the second theme are Trio pre-college programs such as Gear Up and other nonprofit organizations, families, and school communities such as teachers and counselors. The third theme is supported by patterns of ethnic invisibility, generalizations of Somali-Jareer Bantu students, and balancing cultural differences. Lastly, the final theme is supported by emergent patterns of the lack of guidance in transitioning and persisting in higher education, lack of guidance and support in navigating support services, and exclusion in social community and institution's strategic mission statement as it relates to the alignment of transition, persistence and

retention efforts designed to meet the unique needs of Somali-Jareer Bantu students. The following section discusses implications for practitioners, research and future research, and concluding remarks.

Implications

This study aims to bring awareness to the presence of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in the higher education system of the U.S. by exploring their educational endeavors and experiences along that journey. By exploring the essence of their educational experience, it is evident that Somali-Jareer Bantu students endure many complexities regarding the salient negotiation of their ethnicity and culture within higher education spaces. This discussion of findings will further challenge the unwelcoming and exclusive spaces of higher education environments to ensure all Somali-Jareer Bantu students and their intersecting identities are recognized, welcomed, and supported. The following section provides key considerations and recommendations for practitioners, research, and future researchers.

Implications for Practice

This study covered a comprehensive understanding of the limited to almost nonexistent research regarding the Somali-Jareer Bantu experience, specifically in the realm of the higher education system of the U.S. and the education system broadly. Higher education practitioners working with students are tasked with helping students successfully transition into higher education and persist through graduation by providing them with the necessary support to aid their academic progress and personal growth. Through this level of support, practitioners can create an inclusive space for students to form communities, establish a sense of belonging, and acknowledge their presence on campus and in higher education environments.

By exploring the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students through the lens of Du Bois's double consciousness framework (Levinson et al., 2011) and Anzaldúa's (2012) extension of this concept through her development of the borderland's theory or mestiza consciousness, practitioners can no longer default to a generalized approach for the needs of all students from minority backgrounds, particularly those from refugee and African backgrounds. Integrating a critical approach of Du Bois's and Anzaldúa's frameworks into the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students, higher education environments can serve as a programmatic pathway to address and divulge the double consciousness and borderlands experience prevalent within the educational journeys of this student population in higher education environments. Higher education environments must center around minority-aligned frameworks, particularly Du Bois's (Levinson et al., 2011) double consciousness and Anzaldúa's (2012) borderlands theory rather than general in their programmatic efforts towards the inclusion, success, and growth of minority students of black, African and refugee backgrounds. Worth sharing are a few exemplary anecdotes that some participants shared in terms of programming efforts that higher education environments should consider regarding the ethnically marginalized background of Somali-Jareer Bantu students and establishing support.

Wade

The services and support available for Black and brown students in higher education is not for Somali Bantus. Moreover, the reason is that the resources themselves need proper navigation; to ask other people. But other Somalis have some connections. Remember that they came to this country before us. They were here in the 1980s, so they are like the third generation, and we are struggling with the first generation. So that's a difference, that's why we fall short. Even if the resources are there, we are not aware of it.

Abdalla

We're totally different, because other black/African immigrant groups have experience with higher education from wherever they come from (Congo, Burundi, etc). They are familiar with the system, they know what to expect. But for us who never went to study,

never even had the opportunity to go to high school, forget about higher education, it is always totally different. I mean it's always different. One of the reasons why is because we didn't even know what it [higher education] was. So, whenever you hear about college or university, people [Somali-Jareer Bantu] ask, what is it? So that's one thing. we [Somali-Jareer Bantu] never had this kind of opportunity, and it is the first time, so it's up to us again to advocate and find all of this [support].

Tchala

We are definitely different. It's something that I will actually advocate for and it's something that I actually want to see more happening within the future because putting us in the greater Somali community is not helping us. We have different needs, a different perspective of looking at things, a different history, a different struggle, not to say that we are totally different because at the end of the day, we all come from the same regions. When you look at tribes, we have different backgrounds and some of us don't even speak the same language. Some people speak Kizigua. Some people speak Swahili. Others speak Af Maxa-tiri, Mai come from different regions within the Somali Peninsula.

Shankaron

Honestly, I feel like we are different from other black immigrants. We're similar in some ways, but also, I feel like at the same time, we're really different because as Somali Bantus, we really don't have access to resources. Some other Africans or other black/African immigrants like Nigerians are stable [and have a] sense of wealth. I feel like we're the only ones from our whole lineage, with everything that happened in Somalia, we've always been underrepresented. We've always been in the bottom compared to other Africans. I feel like we really don't have much compared to other Africans. Honestly, I just feel like it's tough. Plus, there are other African demographics that I feel have generational wealth where Somali Bantus don't.

Tima

Compared to other black immigrants, yes, I do. I would say that they [the literature and higher education institutions] would definitely have to approach it [designing support] with us differently. The thing is when people see black people, they look at us as the same, and we're not the same. I am not the same as an African American. We are two different people, totally different and our needs are different. I'm not saying they don't go through a hard time, but it's totally different. Some people don't have to deal with the whole marriage thing, don't have to go home and help. So, if schools were to create those kinds of services, they would need to differentiate it because we definitely need support differently.

As voiced by participants in the study, the quotes are some examples from select participants, not to be exhaustive. Within these quotes are a cry for help from Somali-Jareer

Bantu students to be seen; to be heard; for their presence to be recognized; for their difference to be recognized and not be merged with other minority student populations, including other Somali ethnic groups due to the ethnic diversity, thereby presenting a complexity in generalizing their needs with other ethnic Somalis, especially those from dominant ethnic groups. Therefore, practitioners working with refugees and immigrant students should be aware of their differences to aid the needs of Somali-Jareer Bantu students and ease their educational experience. The environment of higher education institutions is very white, very male, and very old, and most often, practices represent those values and beliefs. However, with the inconstant dynamics of higher education, it is critical to adjust programming strategies to meet the needs of the changing dynamics of the diverse student backgrounds entering these institutions.

I invite practitioners who facilitate these programmatic interventions to engage in deep reflection and learning regarding the students who feel a sense of belonging and representation and those who do not. Furthermore, the lack of awareness of the presence of Somali-Jareer Bantu students further excludes them within the efforts of student persistence and retention. This exclusion and discernible disregard for their presence in higher education further contribute to reinforcing the traditional white, heteronormative institutional practices. Practitioners must use an intersectional approach to broaden programmatic efforts and cultivate inclusive spaces for all students to navigate higher education, succeed and grow. For practitioners working with minority students, especially students from refugee backgrounds such as Somali-Jareer Bantu students, I invite you to ask about their background, seek these students, ask how they need support and what support, include their needs in the development of programming efforts, seek their presence on campus, and align support (both academic and social) towards their unique needs and experience. I request that you avoid the assumption that all individuals from Somalia

are the same, speak the same language, identify with one ethnicity and have or had the same or similar opportunities to access education and mainstream society. When we divert away from the assumption of Somalia as a homogenous nation, we can begin to consider the many ethnic minorities of this country and create a pathway to address their unique needs.

Implications for Policy

The purpose of this study was to help bring awareness to the presence of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in the higher education system of the U.S. through a comprehensive dig into the literature to form a foundational lens to understand this student population regarding their educational experiences and beyond. The literature presents this student population from a limited perspective that makes them almost nonexistent in some capacity. As a marginalized ethnic group in Somalia, the Somali-Jareer Bantu community has been excluded from participating in Somalia's mainstream society, including access to education. As such, policy regarding programming efforts towards supporting minority students should consider this factual aspect in the background of Somali-Jareer Bantu students.

Due to the limitation in scholarship regarding the Somali-Jareer Bantu experience in education and broadly, policy implementations pertaining to educational programming efforts towards enhancing the persistence, retention, success, and growth of minority students in higher education do not exist for Somali-Jareer Bantu students. With policy changes and the creation of new policies, whether at the administration, regional, or federal level, it may well include minority students in some aspect, but does not include Somali-Jareer Bantu students because they are not only a minority population both in Somalia and the U.S., there is also a lack of awareness about their entire existence globally. This lack of global awareness further highlights their need for awareness regarding their presence in higher education in the U.S. Consequently,

the lack of awareness regarding their existence globally and presence in higher education completely exclude them from consideration in the policy.

Somali-Jareer Bantu students have been left out of Somalia's society. As such, the majority of this community is often illiterate due to the long and endless subjugation of the Somali government. Thus, they fled Somalia to search for a better life which included access to education for their children. After resettlement in the U.S., they remain a minority whose existence is almost unknown. As such, Somali-Jareer Bantu students struggle in higher education because they are excluded practically from all aspects of the education realm. However, policymakers cannot continue to place all minority students in the same category and hope to meet their needs. Mixing Somali-Jareer Bantu students in the same category as other minority students (that is, if there is an awareness of their existence/presence) further exclude them and robs them of access to a truly meaningful educational experience. Whether it is through the institution's infrastructure or its administrators, faculty, and staff, institutions cannot continue to fail to address the needs of its most marginalized students. I invite policymakers to reflect on policies created and changes made to policies to review what types of students are included and which are not. From a minority perspective, consider which populations are included and reflect on ways to include others, specifically Somali-Jareer Bantu students. Including Somali-Jareer Bantu students in policy changes is critical to their success due to their educational background and limited formal schooling experience. This inclusion in policy will encourage practitioners working with these students to align programming efforts of persistence, retention, and success to meet the unique needs of Somali-Jareer Bantu students. Therefore, this effort will help bring awareness to their presence in higher education in the U.S. and broadly.

Implications for Research

There needs to be more awareness, acknowledgment, and understanding of Somali-Jareer Bantu students and other members identifying with the general Somali Bantu community broadly. As discussed in Chapter Two, there is limited research on the Somali-Jareer Bantu community in global higher education scholarship. The research that may be available either lumps this community with other ethnic groups from dominant Somali clans or dismisses them completely, presenting Somalia as a homogenous nation with one ethnicity and language (Eno, 2003; Eno & Eno, 2008; Ingiriis, 2012; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003). In other cases, the literature places this student population in the same category as other minority student populations or hardly includes them in the discussion. Regarding the experience of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education, it is almost nonexistent. The research is not only insubstantial in many aspects, but when it comes to the student experience in higher education and education widely, it is from a limited perspective. For instance, the scanty research that exists regarding the experience of Somali-Jareer Bantu students focuses on the pre-postsecondary perspective, which is also very male-oriented (Birman & Tran, 2015, 2017, 2019; Ingiriis, 2012; Roxas, 2010; Roy & Roxas, 2011; Roxas & Roy, 2012; Shapiro & MacDonald, 2017; Smith, 2013). Thus, there is a lack of scholarship regarding the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education entirely, while their experiences in other aspects remain delimited in scope and mixed with other minority student populations. In his testimony, Tchala provided an exemplary anecdote regarding the limitation in the research and lack of understanding of the Somali-Jareer Bantu, other Somali Bantu ethnic minority communities broadly, and the educational experiences of students from these communities. Tchala said:

Some of the research that I came across is very problematic, even some of the research that has been done within our own community is more of looking at things from a

colonial perspective. I remember for example, talking about all those people as products of slavery, of the East African slave descendants of the East African slaves. But not all of us have the same history. We have different tribes; Shidle, Makane, Wazigula, etc. All these have a different history. So, this a lot of things are even more than our case. The people who actually even conduct research haven't really done that much of a research, and they're just repeating a colonial cycle.

Presented in the quote above, Tchala voiced the frustration shared by participants and Somali-Jareer Bantus globally, regarding the lack of understanding of their backgrounds in research and higher education. This quote lightly taps into the ethnic diversity within the Somali Bantu community. For example, Somali Bantu is not an ethnicity among Somali Bantus because members of this community have many different ethnic tribes, such as Eelay, Barraw, Shaweele, Shidle, etc. Ethnic tribes might have some fascinating traditions, but there is a distinction between histories, dialects, cultural practices, and many other aspects. Referencing the assumption of Somalia as a homogenous nation with one ethnicity and language, this example of within-group ethnic diversity within one community of peoples like the Somali Bantu provides a lens into how misleading this presentation of Somalia is in the literature. Therefore, when considering research to understand this student population better, it is essential to understand the differences among the many ethnicities and diversity within tribes alone. Then, higher education can begin to address the difference between Somali-Jareer Bantu students not only from other minority student populations but also from other students from Somalia, especially those with membership in dominant Somali ethnic clans. With this step in research, can scholarship begin to appropriately discuss Somali-Jareer Bantu students, their experiences in education, and their community from a well-deserved perspective of acknowledgment and understanding.

There is much-needed research examining the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education and the realm of education in general. Generalizing students should not be the standard when researching the experiences of minority students in higher education.

Therefore, research must examine the backgrounds and ethnic identities in higher education. As society evolves, higher education institutions should also be mindful of the changing dynamics of their students and constantly develop effective methods to deconstruct structures that further exclude marginalized students. Levinson et al. (2011) recommend that scholars and practitioners apply multiple theoretical perspectives to understand the unique experiences of minority students of color. Furthermore, Du Bois in Levinson et al. (2011) suggests that research examining the experiences of minority students of African descent should center around their African ideals to gain a better perspective and understand their educational experiences. Placing all African students under the same umbrella when researching persistence and retention issues among these populations is problematic as this presents a homogeneous lens. This dissertation furthers the need for future researchers to implement a critically intentional perspective to examine the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education.

Further, when researching the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education or education broadly, researchers should reflect on their epistemological positionality to engage in this work from a non-judgemental lens that seeks to use their experience as a source of knowledge construction in higher education scholarship and beyond. Within the co-researchers and participant's identities are a myriad of individual and collective experiences and subtle experiences that require acknowledgment, affirmation, and honor. As presented throughout this dissertation, prior studies regarding Somali-Jareer Bantu students in education are limited in scope, while their experience in higher education is nonexistent (Birman & Tran, 2015, 2017; Eno & Eno, 2008; Ingiriis, 2012; Lehman & Eno, 2003; Menkhaus, 2003). Thus, further research needs to be conducted regarding the within-group ethnicities of the Somali Bantu community in general, their experiences with marginalization in Somalia, and their

experience in education. Future examination of the Somali-Jareer Bantu community and their stance in the African and Somali diaspora can help practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and scholars better support students identifying with this community. Exploring critical research approaches such as double consciousness, mestiza consciousness, multiple consciousnesses, and others like participatory action research within higher education can help bring awareness to the presence of Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education environments and also advance the field of education, particularly in the understanding of the many identities, backgrounds, and needs of minority students in higher education.

Conclusion

Higher education institutions have become a hub for students from various backgrounds to seek knowledge, growth, and understanding of the world around them. While the dynamics of these students entering these institutions fluctuate, higher education environments should also maintain a working strategy to align persistence and retention efforts to meet the changing needs of students. Inclusion and awareness of student backgrounds are essential to supporting students in a way that is unique to their needs for growth and success. Coming from an educational background of limited experience in formal schooling, Somali-Jareer Bantu students often feel like outcasts in higher education. There is a lack of awareness of their presence on college campuses, thus, further intensifying their exclusion from these environments. As Somali-Jareer Bantu students, we often turn to ourselves while constantly searching for others to be in our corners. We do that to create a sense of support because there is no community for us in higher education and globally. From a global perspective and especially mentions of our ethnic communities in Somali scholarship, our stories have been told for us. As such, we resist and persevere through what is undoubtedly a challenging experience both in education spaces and

societies of the world. We do it to survive because marching on is all we have ever known. We struggle, hoping it will someday create a path for future Somali Bantu-Jareer students and others from diverse ethnic communities.

This dissertation is a byproduct of that struggle and hopes to establish a pathway of awareness for Somali-Jareer Bantu students in higher education and globally. This product is for all Somali-Jareer Bantus worldwide to claim as their own. It is a foundation for us all to build upon, to challenge higher education, broad literature, and the world, to recognize our presence and include us; to disrupt normative and generalized methods of supporting minority students; to take up space in the world, and to challenge the world to make room for us to tell our stories. Centering around the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu students within higher education spaces will incite practitioners and scholars to engage in praxis intended to challenge standard methods of addressing awareness and support for minority students. Thus, introducing a new approach to research that centers around the stories of Somali-Jareer Bantu students provide a new theoretical perspective on their experiences. I hope these collective narratives evoke a change necessary in higher education, education broadly, and the world. Through the voices of Somali-Jareer Bantus, this work will serve as a foundation to continue the fight to raise awareness of their presence and deconstruct exclusive environments and oppressive structures within higher education spaces and society at large.

APPENDIX A
PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Hello Student,

My name is Arli Mohamed and I am a doctoral candidate and researcher in the Higher Education Program at Loyola University Chicago. I am conducting a study under the supervision of Dr. Lorenzo Baber in the School of Education's Higher Education program at Loyola University Chicago. I am currently starting my dissertation study on Somali-Jareer Bantu individuals' navigational experiences in higher education. Participants will complete an audio-recorded interview lasting no longer than 60 minutes with myself via Zoom. If you are interested, please email amohamed7@luc.edu to set up an interview. Also, if you know other individuals who may be interested in participating, please feel free to share the study and my information with them, so they can contact me. This is an IRB approved study by Loyola University Chicago.

Through the research, we hope to understand the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu individuals and how they navigate their ethnic identity and other salient identities in higher education institutions. I am emailing to invite you to participate in my study. Please see the information below highlighting participant qualifications and how to contact the researcher to set up an interview.

Qualifications to Participate:

- Self-identify as Somali-Jareer Bantu (Somali Bantu, Somali-Jareer, Jareer, Bantu)
- Be enrolled as an undergraduate or graduate student at an accredited 2- or 4-year higher education institution in the United States
- Enrolled in at least the second semester of the academic year
- Recently graduated from an accredited 2- or 4-year US higher education in the United States

If you are interested in participating in the study or have any questions, please email me at amohamed7@luc.edu.

Best regards,

Arli Mohamed | amohamed7@luc.edu
Doctoral Candidate | Higher Education
School of Education | Loyola University Chicago

APPENDIX B

STAFF RECRUITMENT EMAIL TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Hello Staff Member,

My name is Arli Mohamed and I am a doctoral candidate and researcher in the Higher Education Program at Loyola University Chicago. I am conducting a study under the supervision of Dr. Lorenzo Baber in the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago. I am currently beginning my dissertation study on Somali-Jareer Bantu individuals' navigational experiences in higher education. Participants will complete an audio-recorded interview lasting no longer than 60 minutes with myself via Zoom. If you are interested, please email me at amohamed7@luc.edu to set up an interview. This is an IRB approved study by Loyola University Chicago.

Through the research, we hope to understand the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu individuals and how they navigate their ethnic identity and other salient identities in higher education. I am emailing in hopes to find participants to participate in my study. Please see the information below highlighting participant qualifications and how to contact the researcher to set up an interview if you know of any of your students who are interested in participating in this study.

Qualifications to Participate:

- Self-identify as Somali-Jareer Bantu (Somali Bantu, Somali-Jareer, Jareer, Bantu)
- Be enrolled as an undergraduate or graduate student at an accredited 2- or 4-year higher education institution in the United States
- Enrolled in at least the second semester of the academic year
- Recently graduated from an accredited 2- or 4-year US higher education in the United States

If you are interested in participating in the study or have any questions, please email me at amohamed7@luc.edu.

Best regards,

Arli Mohamed | amohamed7@luc.edu
Doctoral Candidate | Higher Education
School of Education | Loyola University Chicago

APPENDIX C
PARTICIPANT FACT SHEET

Project Title: The Forgotten Minority: Examining the Experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu Students in Higher Education

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Lorenzo Baber, Loyola University Chicago

Principle Investigator: Arli Mohamed, Ph.D. Candidate, Loyola University Chicago

Introduction:

Please complete the following fact sheet in order to be considered to participate in the study.

- Pseudonym (other than your actual name, what name would you like to be called?):
- Institution:
- Race:
- Gender identity:
- Sexual identity:
- Year classification (year in school):
- Current student, graduate student, or alumni:
- Would you be willing and able to attend a focus group sharing your experience with other participants in the study?

Thank you for completing this participant fact sheet form.

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

The Forgotten Minority: Somali-Jareer Bantu Experiences in Higher Education

Interview Protocol

Introduction Statement:

My name is Arli Mohamed and I am a doctoral candidate and researcher in the Higher Education Program at Loyola University Chicago. I am conducting a study under the supervision of Dr. Lorenzo Baber in the School of Education's Higher Education program at Loyola University Chicago. I am currently starting my dissertation study on Somali-Jareer Bantu experiences in higher education.

As mentioned in the email I sent, I will be recording you during the interview. If you are not comfortable with this, you have the option to leave the interview at no fault. The interview should be no more than 60 minutes (1-hour maximum) but could also end earlier. As a reminder, your name or any identifying information will not be used in any reports or publications that result from this study. If at any time during our interview you want to end the conversation, you have the right to stop sharing and exit the study if necessary, at no penalty.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

As a measure to protect your identity in the study, I ask that all participants select names that I will use to refer to you during the study instead of your actual name. What is your preference for a pseudonym?

I will now briefly give you a sense of the process for this interview (how the interview will go). Since I am interested in learning about your experiences as a Somali-Jareer Bantu person within higher education, my questions will help guide the conversation to understand your individual experience and journey.

Interview Questions:

SECTION ONE: Opening Questions

1. Can you please tell me a little about yourself? Include your current year in school and institution as well as other salient identities you may have such as race, orientation, class, ability, and anything else you feel comfortable sharing.
2. When you hear the word, higher education, what are some things that come to mind for you?
 - a. What does it mean to you?
 - b. How has that changed over time? When and why?
3. Can you talk about your college experience in terms of your understanding of what it means to you?
 - a. Do you believe that how you navigate (d) your experiences have an influence upon your development in college? How so?

SECTION TWO: Reflection on Navigating Your Higher Education Experience

1. How did you first learn about higher education and if you wanted to pursue it?

2. Are there specific people, events, or general interactions that have shaped your decision to pursue higher education? Please describe.
3. How did you decide on your current institution?
4. How do you feel about your institution in addressing support and advocacy for minority students who identify as Somali-Jareer Bantu?
5. Do you think/feel that your institution is aware of your presence as a Somali-Jareer Bantu? How so?
6. Can you share when your institution has had conversations on topics around supporting Somali-Jareer Bantu students navigate higher education?
7. How, if at all, has your involvement/enrollment at your institution given you a better understanding of your salient identities?

SECTION THREE: Reflection on Negotiating and Navigating of Ethnic Identity

8. Considering your ethnic identity and other salient identities, tell me about a time in which you felt supported within your institution?
9. Tell me about a time in which you felt like you belonged on campus (i.e., class), as a Somali-Jareer Bantu individual/student?
10. How do/did you express your Somali-Jareer Bantu ethnic identity within your institution?
11. How do/did you navigate your salient identities within your institution, especially conversations or dialogue around race, ethnicity, gender, and intersectionality?
12. How do/did you navigate support services on campus?
 - a. Do you think your institution aligned support services to your needs? How?
13. Can you please share an experience, if any, when you felt like you did not fit in or challenged because you could not find support?
14. Do you feel that your identity is different from other black immigrant students? How? Tell me if you feel that your institution recognizes your needs in its mission?
15. Is there anything that I did not ask you to share about in this interview that you would like to?

The Forgotten Minority: Somali-Jareer Bantu Experiences in Higher Education

Focus Group Protocol

Introduction:

Thank you all for taking the time to attend this focus group. It is my hope that this time together will be valuable for everyone in this space.

Before we begin, I would like to begin going over a few community agreements:

- I would invite everyone to be respectful of each other's opinions and lived experience around their experience within higher education.
- As each person's perspectives are important, I want you all to feel empowered to be your authentic selves during our time in this shared space.

As mentioned in previous communication to you all, I will be recording this podcast to help capture everyone's opinions and perspectives shared here today. None of your real names will be attached or shared to quotes or ideas in the results of this study. Your confidentiality will remain in any reporting. During our time together, we will adhere to the *Vegas rule*: Whatever is shared in this space stays in the space, so please do not share this information with others.

Are there any other questions or thoughts before we begin?

Focus Group Topic and Questions

SECTION ONE: Opening Questions

1. I would like to begin by asking if anyone has anything to share about ways in which you understand your identity as a Somali-Jareer Bantu and if any, how you express your ethnic identity in your lives.

SECTION TWO: Navigating Higher Education Experience

2. What has been your experience in negotiating your ethnic identities within higher education?
3. Tell me about how you are able to express and engage with your peers around the salient identities you hold?
4. How do you define Somali-Jareer Bantu, Somali Bantu, Jareer, or Bantu within your experience in higher education?
5. As you navigate (d) your experience in higher education, how do you feel your institution is supportive of students who identify as Somali-Jareer Bantu?
6. How has your understanding of your ethnic identity changed or stayed the same during your experience in higher education?

SECTION FOUR: Feedback

7. What are ways that higher education institutions can help students who identify as Somali-Jareer Bantu successfully navigate their college experience?
8. What are some relevant topics or dialogue surrounding your ethnicity you would like to engage in with your peers (Somali-Jareer Bantu and others) within the mentorship program?

9. Is there anyone that would like to share feedback or critique regarding how their institution can support their individual development as you navigate your experiences?
10. Is there anything that I did not ask you to share about in this interview that you would like to?

APPENDIX E
CONSENT FORM

Project Title: The Forgotten Minority: Somali-Jareer Bantu Experiences in Higher Education

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Lorenzo Baber, Loyola University Chicago

Principle Investigator: Arli Mohamed, Ph.D. Candidate, Loyola University Chicago

Introduction:

You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Arli Mohamed for part of her dissertation study under the supervision of Dr. Lorenzo Baber in the School of Education's Higher Education program at Loyola University Chicago.

You are being asked to participate because you are a current student that self-identifies as a Somali-Jareer Bantu, who is currently enrolled in or graduated from a higher education institution within the United States.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

Purpose:

The purpose of the interview is to investigate how Somali-Jareer Bantu individuals navigate higher education and make meaning of their experiences.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in a (n):

- **Individual Interview:** Participants will engage in an in-person semi-structured interview lasting no more than 45-60 minutes. Before the interview, participants will be given the opportunity to provide a pseudonym or alternative name so as not to reveal any information that would identify the participant. The interview will be recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The audio recording is a requirement to participate in the interview. The audio recordings will be deleted once the transcriptions have been verified for accuracy. Transcripts will be stored in a OneDrive folder only accessible by password to the research team. The results of the interview will be used to better understand the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu in navigating higher education.
- **Focus Group:** Participants will be asked to engage in a focus group lasting no more than 60-90 minutes. The location of the focus group will be an online platform, Zoom. Before the interview, participants will be given the opportunity to provide a pseudonym or alternative name so as not to reveal any information that would identify the participant. The interview will be recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The audio recording is a requirement to participate in the interview. The audio recordings will be deleted once the transcriptions have been verified for accuracy. Transcripts will be stored in a OneDrive folder only accessible by password to the research team. The results of the interview will be used to better understand the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu in navigating higher education.

Risks/Benefits:

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. For example, you may experience some discomfort responding to some of the questions.

There are no direct benefits to you from participation, but *participants* may indirectly benefit by contributing to research surrounding the experiences of Somali-Jareer Bantu in higher education that may have a future positive or collective impact on how higher education institutions are providing support aligned to meeting the needs of this student population and their development in college.

Confidentiality:

- All matters discussed between participants and researchers during the study will be kept strictly confidential except in the case where physical danger to oneself or others is imminent.
- Except for the principal investigators for this research study and the advising faculty, no one will have access to any recordings or written documents with your name attached that might be obtained during the study.
- Coded information from interviews will not include identifiable information from the participant.
- The audio recordings will be deleted once the transcriptions have been verified for accuracy. Transcripts will be stored in a One Drive folder only accessible by password to the research team.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you may decide not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact the Principle Investigator, Arli Mohamed at amohamed7@luc.edu or the Faculty Sponsor, Dr. Lorenzo Baber at lbaber@luc.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Statement of Consent:

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

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VITA

Dr. Mohamed (Baba) was born in Somalia, but lived in a refugee camp in Somalia before resettling in the United States. Arriving in the states as a refugee with some of her family members, she had no experience in formal schooling, therefore, began her introduction to formal education in a middle school classroom in the greater metropolitan city of Milwaukee, WI. After completing middle school, Dr. Baba went on to Riverside University High School. During her time in high school and college, she was involved in Trio Pre-College Programs where she received academic support. It was her time in Trio Pre-College Programs which allowed her to explore the idea of postsecondary education. After high school, Dr. Baba attended the university of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) where she earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree with an emphasis in Human Resource Administration/Management.

During her time in college, Dr. Baba continued her involvement in Trio Pre-College Programs at her institution to help pay forward by joining the staff to tutor middle and high school students, and provide support with the college access process. Dr. Baba also worked in multiple departments at her institution including admissions, first-year programs, retention, student activities and student government, where she served in several roles. Her undergraduate experience in student affairs propelled her to continue her education in which she earned a Master of Science degree from UWM, in Administrative Leadership with a concentration in Higher Education.

Then, Dr. Baba spent a year serving in the AmeriCorps VISTA program as a College Access and Retention Coach in Milwaukee, WI. There, she had the opportunity to work with higher education institutions throughout the U.S., serving minority students, including Somali-

Jareer Bantu students, persist and succeed in their educational and professional journey. During this time, she was able to further hone in on her passion for supporting minority students persist, grow, and succeed in higher education environments. This experience led Dr. Baba to continue her educational endeavors in pursuing a Ph.D. program in Higher Education at Loyola University Chicago.

During her time as a doctoral student at Loyola, Dr. Baba worked under the guidance of Dr. Lorenzo Baber, and held several research and teaching assistant positions. She also served as an executive board member of the Black Graduate Student Alliance (BGSA), and the Black Liver Matter Conference (BLM), and the Higher Education Student Affairs (HESA) organization. Dr. Baba's research examines the experiences of ethnic minority undergraduate and graduate students in the field of higher education. She looks forward to using her experiences to open doors of opportunity to bring awareness and recognition to the presence and needs of minority students in higher education, especially Somali-Jareer Bantu students whose existence is almost inexistent in the realm of education broadly.

Dr. Baba also wants to continue to give back to communities/organizations that support and uplift individuals from low-income, refugee and other minority backgrounds, like herself throughout their educational, professional, and personal journeys. Currently, as a Research Fellow in the Center for Urban Research and Learning at Loyola, Dr. Baba collaborates with multiple nonprofit partner organizations from Chicago to assess and evaluate the intentionality and diversity of their services to the low-income community members they serve. Through her research lens and practice, Dr. Baba continues to dismantle the oppressive institutional systems prevalent in our society.

Select publications and works in progress in which Dr. Baba has appeared in include the following:

Mohamed, A. (2022). "Book review -The struggles of identity, education, and agency in the lives of undocumented students: The burden of hyperdocumentation," *Journal of Critical Scholarship on Higher Education and Student Affairs*: Vol. 6: Iss. 2, Article 3.
Available at: <https://ecommons.luc.edu/jcshesa/vol6/iss2/3>

Mohamed, A., & Hutchings, Q. R. (2021). Compulsory Heterogenderism. In *Encyclopedia of Queer Studies in Education* (pp. 112-114). Brill.
<https://brill.com/view/book/9789004506725/BP000031.xml>

Campbell, J., **Mohamed, A.** & Baber, L. (eds.) (*Accepted*). The emerging role and responsibility of Chief Diversity Officers in an era of racial (in)justice in *Critiques for Transformation: Reimagining Colleges & Communities for Social Justice*. Edited Volume

Gardner, P., Abdelghaffar, A., Castro, K., **Mohamed, A.**, Garrett, A. & Chang, A. (*Under Review*). Freedom dreaming: Counterstories of Faculty Women of Color (FWOC) in Jesuit higher education in the U.S.

Mohamed, A., Campbell, J., & Abdelghaffar, A. (*Work in Progress*). Corliss High School: Evaluating the Pullman Talent Search Project