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Multiple Lives: A Narrative Autoethnography Exploring Women's Migration Experience

by

Danaiet Teame

A THESIS

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Abstract

This autoethnographic research investigates my shifting positions of privilege and oppression that are part of my personal experience of global migration. Using a theoretical framework of intersectionality, this research develops a deeper understanding of my varied migratory journeys. I identify as an East African Canadian who resides in Qatar. There are women in my life, such as my mother and domestic workers in Qatar who share similar identities, yet their experiences are significantly different from mine. This observation has led me to examine current literature that links to migration experiences and experiences constructed by identities that result in oppression and privilege. My experiences rooted from my multiple identities such as, female, Canadian, Ethiopia, Eritrean, immigrant, and black continuously shift placing me in positions of being privileged or being oppressed, a phenomenon that I have refer as my *multiple lives*. In this autoethnography, I deconstruct my multiple lives to expose the systemic imbalance of power in society that link into my *intersecting identities*, which refers to how, where and which of my multiple identities intersect. Evocative story telling is used as a strategy to expose how my nursing work is enmeshed with my activist work and my moral conviction that health is a fundamental human right. The work entreats readers to develop a personal knowledge, built in relationship with my multiple lives and expose the day-to-day injustices being perpetrated within globalized migration.

Keywords: Ethiopia, migration, Middle East, Canada, domestic workers, autoethnography, intersectionality, gender, race, nationality, citizenship, ethnicity, class, healthy immigrant effect, deskilling of immigrants, feminized migration.

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List of Abbreviations

Symbol	Definition
CCIS	Calgary Catholic Immigrant Services
CIWA	Calgary Immigrant Women Association
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual
MOI	Ministry of Interior
SDH	Social Determinants of Health
PEIANC	Prince Edward Island Association for Newcomers
PTB	Pulmonary Tuberculosis
TCK	Third Culture Kids
UNHCR	United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHRC	United Nation Human Right Council

Epigraph

"Without frames that allow us to see how social problems impact all the members of a targeted group, many will fall through the cracks of our movement, left to suffer in virtual isolation."

(Crenshaw, 2016)

Chapter 1 Introduction

There has been considerable academic discussion on the current state of migration and globalization (Bryceson, 2019; Saw, 2018; Vilić, 2018). International Organization for Migration defines migration as, “a process of moving, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes” (International Organization for Migration, 2009 p. 5). Natural disasters, war, poverty, draught, famine, and scarcity are major contributors to mass migration in which people migrate to a new location in the hope of a better life and opportunity (Amnesty International, 2019; Boyle, 2002). Women have been part of this movement, yet literature related to women’s unique presence in international migration flow only developed over the last quarter of the twentieth century (Boyd & Pikkov, 2005; Castles & Miller, 1998; Donato & Gabaccia 2015; Freeman, 1986; Leal, Malhotra, & Misra, 2019; Zlotnik, 2003). Prior to 1970, it was assumed that women generally migrated as secondary or associational to their male partners where men were positioned as the primary economic migrant. Such assumptions have been debated and feminist theorists have contributed to the development of migration narratives that showcase women’s significant impact on migration (Donato, Gabaccia, Holdaway, Manalansan & Pessar, 2006; Curran, Shafer, Donato & Garip, 2006; Manning, 2005; Oishi, 2005; Parrenas, 2001; Pessar, 2001). Within this scholarly feminist interest, the historical documentation of the contemporary diaspora of women who migrate across the world describes shared experiences that directly correlate to gender and women’s role in migration (Anthias & Yuval-Davis; Donato & Llewellyn, 2017).

As women continue to migrate, researchers continue to document and narrate women’s present-day experiences as they relate to migration, gender, and feminist studies. Contemporary

researchers continue to outline how interlocking relationships of women's identity, such as race, ethnicity, class, age, nationality, and other labels, shape each woman's migration experience (Alberti, Holgate, & Tapia, 2013; Nawyn, 2019; Ngoubene-Atioky, Lu, Muse, & Tokplo, 2019). As women migrate, the type of visas issued, their employment, income, quality of health, family circumstances they leave in their country of origin, and ultimately their survival are closely linked to their gender *and* the complex intersecting characteristics of their individual circumstances (Castles & Miller, 1998; Donato & Gabaccia 2016; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013; Yeates 2009). This aspect of migration experiences resonates with my own childhood migration experience as I moved with my family from Ethiopia to Canada and then, as an adult, independently relocated to Qatar.

Background and Context

My story begins in Ethiopia where I was born to an Ethiopian mother and an Eritrean father. During the summer of 2004, I immigrated to Canada with my family at the age of 14. My journey to Canada resonates with the experiences of many newcomers I have met who head to Canada in hope of better opportunities. My own home had been broken by the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. When the war began, my Eritrean father was deported from Ethiopia leaving behind my Ethiopian mother, my brother, and me. After six years of separation and vigorous work by my father, my family and I had the opportunity to reunite in Canada. As a family, we believed that moving to Canada would give us a better chance at a united family life. Our collective hope was that Canada would allow us to solve the challenges and problems that we had encountered in our native home. We believed Canada would be a place where our dreams would flourish, life would become easier, and opportunities would be endless. Above all, for my family, it was our only hope for reunification and the dream of being a happy family and it was

through these dreams that Canada became my home for 11 years. In Canada, I became fluent in English, went to high school, and completed a nursing degree at the University of Prince Edward Island.

My migration journey did not end in Canada. During the winter of 2015, I relocated to Qatar as an employee of the University of Calgary in Qatar in the Nursing Faculty. My goal in relocating to Qatar was influenced by multiple factors, including higher income, opportunity to advance my education, and better employment opportunities. In addition, my relocation was driven by a core goal to be part of the changing narrative of East African Women in the Middle East. I had a deep desire to use my professional accomplishments, as a nurse and educator to advocate for the wellbeing and success of Ethiopian women in Qatar. This desire was drawn from the negative stories I had heard from the media and my family regarding the experience of Ethiopian women in the Middle East. The mistreatment of Ethiopian women in the Middle East was a common knowledge that was discussed in most family households in Ethiopia. I currently continue to reside in Qatar and work for the University of Calgary in Qatar. My contract has been extended until the end 2020, and I plan to return to Canada once I have finished my contract. I reflect on my own migration experience to further understand the experience of women as they cross international borders.

Research Purpose: Exploring the Shifts in my Lived Experiences

This Master of Nursing (MN) research presents an autoethnographic reflection on my own past and present experiences navigating life in Ethiopia, Canada, and Qatar. I use experiences drawn from the varied places I have lived to contextualize and analyze shifting experiences, as part of my own migration. In addition, I expand beyond my own experience by reflecting on the experiences of the many women I encountered while living in Ethiopia, Canada,

and Qatar. Each geographical move provided a distinct experience. I explore my experiences examining the positive and negative outcomes that have shaped my migratory life. In order to understand migratory experiences, I also began to pay attention to other women who have similar backgrounds as me. In particular, I began to reflect on the experiences of my mother and other migrant women I encountered in Canada and Qatar. Despite underlying similarities, I was struck by women like my mother, who are culturally, racially, and ethnically similar to me, but whose migrant experiences are significantly different from mine. In Canada I witnessed these differences as I volunteered with programs such as Prince Edward Island Association for Newcomers (PEIANC), Calgary Immigrant Women Association (CIWA), Calgary Catholic Immigrant Services (CCIS), and Excel Family and Youth Society. In Qatar, I continued similar community work, establishing a women's support group in collaboration with the Ethiopian community in Qatar, providing a platform where women shared their experiences. Each of my volunteer opportunities has allowed me to reflect on where my own story sits within the lives of other women who cross international borders and become members of the diaspora.

In this research, I reflect on my shifting experiences based on how society perceives my *multiple identities* such as, female, Canadian, Ethiopian, Eritrean, immigrant, or black. These are some of identities that people identify as they are getting to know me. These identities intersect and can be read differently depending upon where I am and who I am with, which results in significant different experiences. My experiences are never rooted from all of my identities merged, but they are developed from identities people choose to intersect as I move across the globe. For example, I can be seen as a female Canadian in Qatar, an East African in Qatar, an African immigrant in Canada, and/or an Eritrean in Ethiopia. My intersecting identities produce experiences that fluctuate between positions of privilege and oppression, which I refer as my

multiple lives. As I navigate through my life, I know women such as my mother and domestic workers in Qatar who share similar multiple identities (black, female, Ethiopian) but their intersecting identities (East African in Qatar or African immigrant in Canada) have left them in constant position of oppressive experiences.

My experience in Canada and Qatar highlights troubling issues faced by migrant women across the globe. I expected migrant women in Canada, which is known as a nation with strong legislation to protect immigrants and refugees, to have different challenges than the women in Qatar, a nation known to violate basic human rights (Human Rights Watch, 2016). In both places I found migrant women struggling with their mental and physical health. I witnessed my mother's health decline and her ability to earn higher income being limited. The only employment she could secure was in the gendered sector of hotel housekeeping services. I also recognized similar experiences in Qatar where Ethiopian women were relegated to jobs as domestic workers; the support group that I established became a safe ground where they discussed the challenges to their mental and physical health. Although, of course, there were differences in the experiences of migrant women, there were many similarities that related to the circumstances of the intersecting identities of their class, ethnicity, nationality, education, ability, age and other categories organizing their lives. This observation made me want to explore the experiences of women who belong to similar social groups as me but whose experiences are significantly different from mine.

There is a rich body of scholarship that is aligned with my observation about how social positioning, vested in the specific attributes of a person's gender, income, and social status, can be closely correlated as social determinants of health (Bhopal 2007; LaVeist & Isaac, 2012; Kaushik & Walsh, 2018; Kronenfield, 2012; Simandan, 2018). However, there is limited

research into *intersecting inequalities* that arise from a intersecting of identities constructed by migration that result in structural barriers or facilitators that affect health and wellbeing (Borrell, & Benach, 2010; Davies, Basten, & Frattini, 2009; Duckett, 2001; Malmusi, Marmot, 2006; Nygren-Krug, 2003; Vissandiee, Desmeules, Cao, Abdool, & Kazanjian, 2004). Life outcomes, rooted in the nature of each person's migration within *intersecting categories* have been implicated in overlapping and interdependent relations of power and oppression. Evans, Williams, Onnela, and Subramanian (2017), suggest that examining interactions between numerous interlocking social identities and the systems of oppression and privilege can lead to a better understanding of inequalities. Migrant women's experience requires further attention in order to explore intersecting axis of inequality (Malmusi, et., al, 2010; Fernandez, 2018). My autoethnographic research reflects on my migration experience in order to gain a deeper understanding of life experiences rooted from the diverse social groups I am part of. I reflect on the intersecting relationships of my race, ethnicity, gender, class, citizenship and nationality that construct my multiple lives. To do this, I narrate fluctuating experiences about the varied places I have lived and how I experienced people's responses to these intersecting identities.

My migratory experiences and the various shifts I experience in relation to my relative power or oppression underpin my decision to conduct this research. In addition, the many relationships I have forged with migrant women led me to use narrative autoethnography as a way to share my understanding of the lived migratory experiences. In doing so, I hope knowledge acquired from this experience can make me be a better educator, nurse, and ally. I present this research as a first step in recognizing my agency as a way to consider how I can use my advantages as a tool through which to build community support. I aim to use the new insights generated through this research to consider broader issues of the lived experiences of migration

and the ensuing adaptations to varying entitlements, privileges, proscriptions, biases, racism and discrimination.

Methodology

Autoethnography

According to Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011), "autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (*graphy*) personal experience (*auto*) in order to understand cultural experience" (p. 487). Influenced by ethnography and anthropology, autoethnography challenges traditional ways of conducting research by treating the research project as a method to describe stories rather than present theories (Adams, 2012). An anthropologist Heidgger (1975), first introduced the term autoethnography. He refers to the research participant as auto or self rather than the ethnographer studying the culture of others. The genesis of auto has evolved and currently represents the autoethnographer and their interconnectivity of self and others (Anderson, 2006). The form of autoethnography varies based on the purpose of the study and researchers such as Ellis and Bochner (2011) present over 40 forms. The scope of this paper cannot provide details about the purpose and meaning of the variety of precise approaches. For the purpose of this research, I have utilized narrative autoethnography (Ellis et., al, 2011).

Narrative Autoethnography

Narrative autoethnography refers to "texts presented in the form of stories that incorporate the ethnographer's experiences into the ethnographic descriptions and analysis of others" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011 p. 4). It is a branch of autoethnography dating back to early 1980s that produces "meaningful, evocative, and accessible research grounded on personal experience" (Bochner, 1994 p. 23). I use narrative autoethnography to understand taken for

granted experiences, to evoke and highlight personal "epiphanies" that resonate with readers (Ellis et., al, 2011 p. 45). Narrative autoethnography as a research method has guided a back and forth gaze of my life experience that includes a close and investigative look at my personal diaries, pictures, documents, and family videos in order to uncover multiple layers of consciousness available through memory. In this research, I reflected on my life in Ethiopia, Canada, and Qatar in order to understand my relationship to the varied cultural surroundings I have encountered and lived. Data generated from exploring my life, which are constructed from the intersections of my race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, and citizenship have stimulated questions and insights regarding my migration experiences. Exploring those aspects of my life have allowed for better understanding of migration experience while highlighting the relationships of power and privilege among my intersecting labels. Thus, this research has built on an inward understanding of personal experience, while also addressing migration more broadly.

Researchers using narrative autoethnography describe its wide benefits and advantages. Farrell, Bourgeois, Regehr, & Ajjawi (2015), emphasized the effective use of narrative auto ethnographic research for its capacity to allow researchers to engage in self-reflective narration while analyzing their own cultural biographies. Richard (2008) described the benefit of narrative autoethnography and its capacities for emancipatory discourse and contributions to readers who share similar lives, supporting them to reflect and empathize. Richard (2008) stressed that autoethnographers' emancipation is about "representing themselves instead of being colonized by others and subjected to their agendas or relegated to the role of second-class citizens" (p. 1724). Autoethnography has been beneficial in studying human relations in multicultural

societies by allowing autoethnographers to take the role of telling their story, truth, feelings, and thoughts, as well as examining their own actions in the world.

Autoethnography relies on the memories of the autoethnographer in order to organise the stories and transform stories into data (Ellis et., al, 2011). Narrative is a literary tool for communicating or sharing knowledge while supporting the ethnographer to develop a story that can be used as data (Pavlenlo, 2007; Wolcott, 1994). Bruner (1990) applied narrative autoethnography as a research approach to express cognitive issues of memory, constructed memory, and perceived memory. In addition, Bruner (1990) described narrative research as a "non-neutral rhetorical" account (p. 85). Narrative autoethnography approaches time as particularly important whereby the narrator assumes an *experience* of time rather than a dispassionate positioning of historical time (Polkinghorne,1995). It was my aim to place emphasis on personal experiences that extend to sociological understandings. In my research, autoethnography was beneficial for narrating the different social groups into which I am placed, how people have responded to me, and how these responses shift my experiences of power and privilege. Smith's (2005) description of narrative autoethnography supports my reason for selecting this method. Smith (2005) stated, "autoethnography allowed my personal experiences to become valid data…. Autoethnography freed me to write reflectively, thoughtfully, and introspectively about a very personal subject close to my heart" (p. 73). In this research, I have included a first person narration of my experience in Ethiopia, Canada and Qatar. I have also shared very personal experiences that highlight privileges I have acquired in my new life that my old self was not able to access.

Theoretical Framework

Intersectionality

Intersectionality has been used as a particular approach in feminist theory to analyze the complex origins of multiple sources of women's oppression as early as 1980s (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1983; Crenshaw, 1991; Nash, 2008). Legal scholar Kimberly Crenshaw (1989) originally coined the term intersectionality to describe how different power structures such as race, gender, and class interact in the lives of minorities, specifically black women (Crenshaw, 1989). Crenshaw's early work pioneered the multidimensionality of the experience of African American women in the labour market (Crenshaw, 1989). Her earliest descriptions of intersectionality outlined the oppression faced by African American women, not merely based on their gender but also the multifactorial experience rooted from the intersecting relationship of their race, class, and sex (Crenshaw, 1989). Furthermore, Crenshaw (1991) argues that those experiences faced by the African American women and migrant women cannot be understood as distinct subjects of inquiry of race, gender, and sex; in her (1991) work, she explores "the various ways in which race and gender intersect in shaping structural, political, and representational aspects of violence against women of color" (1244). Crenshaw's research regarding black and migrant women was an effort to explore the benefit of intersectionality for identities that fail to fit neatly into predesignated categories of identities such as race, gender, and class.

Crenshaw's effort to outline non-predesignated categories of identity has influenced my use of intersectionality as I explore the experience of migrant women. As migrants move from one place to another, they destabilize fixed borders and boundaries, both geographic and/or inter-categorical (Bastia, 2014). Identities such as ethnicity, nationality, and citizenship can emerge as

key set of identities that are understood in various social situations that can contribute to privileged or oppressive experiences (Bastia, 2014). Furthermore, these multiple identities are further interlocked in different dimensions developing each individual novel and distinctive experience (Parent & Moradi, 2013). In this research, I explore how *my* multiple identities such as race, gender, class, nationality, citizenship, and ethnicity hold different sociocultural categorical meanings based on the places where I have lived, which results in the fluctuation of my power and privilege (Shields, 2008). Intersectionality considers how multiple identities are constituted in the context of power relations (Crenshaw, 1989; Brah and Phoenix, 2013; Warner and Shields, 2013). Thus, intersectionality will involve "social maneuvering and power games … [and] attempts to establish, legitimate or challenge the prevailing relationships of power and status" (Ybema, Keenoy, Oswick, Beverungen, Ellis, & Sabelis, 2009, p. 307).

Intersectionality as a framework has three key assumptions. First, theorists who use intersectionality base their thinking within assumptions that society is a "multiple system of social stratification and no social group is the homogenous" (Dill & Zambrana, 2009 p.31). This social organization is rooted in social understandings such as religion, politics, and social power (Bilge & Denis, 2010). The core understanding of social organization sustains the individuality of people within one group, which allows for people to be part of the group with common understanding. Second, there is an assumption that social groups and stratifications hold interlocking relationships of power and oppression, which is called matrix of domination (Demos & Lemelle, 2009). The third assumption relates to the view that "a person's unique world perspective and life-chances are influenced by her/his specific location on the matrix of domination rather than a single form of social stratification" (Collins 1986, p. 208). Overall, the key assumption of intersectionality is that "social identities are intersectional, not additive and

thus cannot be ranked" (Bowleg, 2012, p. 759). Although, I find this aspect of intersectionality to be true in North America where race, gender, and class are seen as the "quintessential intersection" (Nash, 2008: 1), I find experiences being rooted from Crenshaw's application of intersectionality in North America is not as useful in Qatar. Crenshaw's (1991) effort to include migrant women in her early work is an excellent example of how migrant women were impacted in a similar form as African American women, but her work demonstrate the experience of migrant black women in United State of America where the conceptualization of race, gender, and class remains the same. I apply the assumption stated by Diamond and Butterworth (2008), "categorical modes of thinking in which certain loci of identity ... are granted 'primary' status" (p. 366) due to intersections between different social locations and in particular, different sites of sociopolitical oppression, such as citizenship, nationality, accent, and race develop different experiences (Collins, 2002). My identities in Qatar are compartmentalized rather than integrated, which makes it challenging to explore my experience using all the assumptions of intersectionality. In this research, I explore my multiple lives shaped by the interplay of my intersecting identities within the Ethiopian, Canadian, and Qatar context.

Crenshaw (2011) states "no one exists outside of the matrix of power" (p.203) and for this reason I have been able to apply intersectionality as a framework to deepen my understanding of how interlocking systems of power impact those who are most marginalized in society (Crenshaw, 1989; McCall 2005). I have built my standpoint from understanding migrant women's social organization and my own privilege within systems of social stratification as a tool that I hope will be useful to counter oppression and marginalization related to intersecting social categories: race, ethnicity, citizenship, nationality, class, and gender. I have selected these

dominant social categories because they are critical in my account of the multiple identities which have constructed my multiple lives.

In recent years, Crenshaw (2016) has continued to champion the use of intersectionality as a lens to advocate and emancipate marginalized women. In a TEDx presentation, Crenshaw (2016), stated “without frames that allow us to see how social problems impact all the members of a targeted group, many will fall through the cracks of our movement, left to suffer in virtual isolation”. My existence and relationship as an insider and outsider to different communities provides me with insights that I explored using scholarship and my nursing knowledge. The intersecting categories I share with other migrant women, provide a way to understand where I have lived on the globe and what has happened in my life that has allowed for my different experiences. My identities as an Eritrean, Ethiopian, and Canadian woman who currently resides in Qatar have created a wider lens. The conceptual framework of intersectionality revealed the complexity of migratory experiences and the vulnerability migrant women like me may endure based on these experiences. Using narrative autoethnography and the theoretical framework of intersectionality, I examine the overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination and oppression that are globally systemic to migrant women (Crenshaw, 1989/1991; Dill, 2002; McCall 2005; Diamond & Butterworth, 2008). In addition, I demonstrate how a person who experiences oppression rather than privilege can end up with significantly different life circumstances than they would have if they were a member of the privileged party (Crenshaw, 1995).

Ethical Considerations

Although this research is focused on my personal experiences, it includes stories about my family and sheds a light into my family’s dynamics. Ellis et al. (2011), stated, “in using

personal experience, autoethnographers not only implicate themselves with their work, but also close, intimate others” (p. 8). Therefore, it is critical to address relational ethics. In autoethnography, relational ethics refers to the ethical representation of other people who are referenced in the experiences being researched. In addition, relational ethics requires me to act from my heart and mind while acknowledging my interpersonal relationship with my mother and brother (Slattery & Rapp, 2003). It is critical for me to respect the relationship I hold as a researcher but also to recognize and provide space for my roles as a daughter, sister and friend (Bergum & Dossetor, 1998). I cannot remain anonymous, thus, the relationship with family must be addressed. I have told the stories from my memories but it is impossible to tell stories without including other people; my experiences do not exist in isolation. In regard to ethical issues, the complexity of representing other people increases if the relationships being discussed are negative or hostile. In order to overcome relational ethical concerns, Ellis (2007) suggested that autoethnographers may choose to show their work to people who are implicated.

My family were part of the design of this research and consented to ethically approved informal interviews. My mother and brother travelled to Qatar to read my writing and they concurred with my story telling. Although, there were moments when they noted “I did not see it that way or I do not feel the same about it now.” Furthermore, I invited their close input during the writing of Chapter Three, in order to ensure I represented them in a way that they were comfortable with. My relationship with family is loving and close; we share the activist intentions of this research and support its interest in migration. Furthermore, my mother and brother are in full support of my mission to explore the oppressions that some East African women experience in their quest for a better life.

The thesis is organized into five chapters, this first chapter of introduction with an overview of the topic, the method, theoretical framework, and the ethical considerations establishes the focus of the review of the literature in Chapter Two. Chapters Three and Four are analysis chapters with Chapter Three being a chronological chronicling of the stories of my life with an accompanying analysis that shows them as relevant to my migration, while Chapter Four assumes a more nuanced representation of the *experience* of time, departing from the chronological account in order to expand insights and formulate new understandings that arose under the scrutiny of intersectionality. Chapter five provides the conclusion and summarises my new understanding of my migratory experience and how it relates to the broader context of my activism on behalf of women whose lives intersect with mine in various places in Qatar.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The literature is organized using my own migration experiences as the foundation. This approach is to build focus and to develop congruence with the autoethnograpic method used in this research. In particular, I introduce select literature related to Qatar and Canadian immigration that resonated with my experiences following my family's relocation in Canada and my current experience in Qatar. Particular issues related to socio-economical, employment, and the broad implications these have for migrants' health. The presentation of the literature opens with a description of the history and politics that influence life in East Africa – Ethiopia and then discusses migration out of East Africa while highlighting push and pull factors of migration. The literature findings emphasize women's migration routes and the experiences they encounter in getting to the Middle East and/or the West. The literature review for this research was guided by a variety of data base searches for publications on globalization, migration out of East Africa, and gender-based migration. The strategy used to conduct the literature search for this study used databases of social sciences, Google Scholar, sociology, and openedition. Search terms *East Africa, Ethiopia, migration, gender, feminized migration, domestic workers, Middle East, Canada, diasporic life, intersectionality, and autoethnography* were used. Other resources and websites of Ministry of the Interior in Qatar, the World Health Organization, International Labour Migration, and Human Rights Watch were accessed.

Life in East Africa – Ethiopia

Ethiopia is located in the Horn of Africa hosting the second largest population in the region at 102.4 million people (World Bank, 2018). Landlocked, Ethiopia borders Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, and Djibouti that serves as Ethiopia's only source of port (Appendix A). Ethiopia has a well-documented history of its agrological, religious, scientific,

and political developments; however, Ethiopia's history has been predominantly over-shadowed by political and economic instability, recurrent famine, poverty, and war with neighbouring countries (Bariagaber, 1995; Berhanu & White, 2000; Dejene & Cocrane, 2000). This section provides a general overview of Ethiopian history, culture, politics, economics, and current social context. Ethiopia has been described as "the cradle of civilization" highlighting its magnificent past, present, and future. Early kingdoms such as Damt and Aksumite established the country and allowed for external relationship with the outside world, especially the Middle East and Europe (Adem, Hawas, Seid, & Hussein, 2018; Bariagaber, 1995). During the 10th century BC, Ethiopia had a strong ruling in the northern region of Africa enabling access to the Red Sea and Nile. The Aksumite kingdom placed Ethiopia as one of the world's early and powerful civilizations. Remaining free from colonization allowed Ethiopia to maintain its diverse ethnic and linguistic background that is uniquely Ethiopian. There are more than 80 ethnic groups, over 83 languages, and over 200 dialects (Tosco, 2000). Historically, Ethiopia was a Christian country that followed one of the oldest orthodox religions. The fall of Aksumite began the change in religious ratios in society. Currently, Ethiopia has two major religions with 40% Muslims and 60% Christians (Abbink, 2014). Ethiopia has a federal system of government with 11 regional states with an emphasis on ethnic equity and religious freedom. Although federalism aims to equalize and empower different religions and ethnicities.

The World Bank (2018) estimates over 80% of Ethiopians live in rural settings that depend on an agricultural economy. Appendix B outlines current statistics and demographics of Ethiopia. The country is ranked as the second fastest growing economy in Africa while it continues to climb to number one (World Bank, 2018). Although it is the second fastest growing economy, it is also one of the poorest nations with a per capita annual income of $783USD

(World Bank, 2018). The extreme poverty along with internal and external political instability, ethnic conflict, and environmental factors are the realities that lead thousands of Ethiopians to choose to migrate out of Ethiopia in hopes of a better life and opportunity. In most resent years, "Ethiopia's economy experienced strong, broad-based growth averaging 10.3% a year from 2005/06 to 2015/16, compared to a regional average of 5.4%." (World Bank, 2018 p.78) The expansion of agriculture, construction and services accounted for most of this, with modest manufacturing growth" (p. 31). Despite the economic growth, 33.5% of Ethiopians live in extreme poverty (World Bank, 2018).

In the absence of political and economic stability at home, Ethiopians have long been migrating to seek opportunities and a better quality of life outside of the country (Frouws, 2015; Kuschminder & Siegel, 2014). In fact, Ethiopia has one of Africa's largest proportions of its citizens living outside the country (Carter & Rohwerde, 2016). Exploring migration history in the Horn of Africa, especially in Ethiopia, is a complex task due to the multifactorial agents. Bariagaber (1995) stated, "untangling the causes of refugee formations in the Horn of Africa requires examination of a host of factors, including ethnic and religious conflicts, irredentist and separatist-inspired violence, international war between countries in the region, and intervention in domestic conflicts by external powers" (p. 599). Bariagaber added that challenging ecological factors, such as drought, also contributes to the complexity of East African migration. The number of displaced Ethiopians in the year 2017 increased due to internal displacement and new asylum claims. United Nation High Commissioners for Refugee (UNHCR) estimated 1,560,800 Ethiopians made up the largest newly displaced population during 2018 with 98% Ethiopian population displaced (UNHCR Report, 2017). This increase more than doubled the existing internally displaced population in the country.

Migration from East Africa

During the Derg regime from 1974 to 1987, migration from Ethiopia was abolished. This 13-year period resulted in increased unemployment, refugee status, and internal migration (migration within the country) and external migration (migration out of Ethiopia) (Bariagaber, 1995). Despite the Derg regime's political blockade on migration, Ethiopians continued to travel by foot and sea illegally leaving the country to neighbouring countries. Approximately two million Ethiopians lived in Somalia and Sudan in the late 1980s (Alemu, 2007; Jamie, 2013). Legal migration from Ethiopia recommenced in 1991 after the fall of Derg; as a result, migration to the Middle East, North America, and Europe became more common (Fransen & Kuschminder, 2009). Lebanon received an influx of Ethiopian women as temporary domestic workers while Washington District of Colombia received families as part of diversifying visas. The two countries continue to be areas Ethiopians continue to migrate.

Legal migration allowed women and men to emigrate from Ethiopia to find employment, which became a solution to the unemployment and poverty that dominated the experiences of many Ethiopians living in rural areas (De Regt & Tafesse, 2015). There are multiple ways that Ethiopians can migrate legally to different parts of the world. The categories of visas are dependent of the host countries and varies, some examples are academic, new business, family sponsorship, refugee and immigrant settlement, diversifying, and skilled or domestic worker visas (Frouws, 2014a). Due to the lengthy process of securing a visa and lack of access to legal migration processes, a significant number of Ethiopians opt out of the bureaucratic processes and continue to rely on illegal migration processes (Abbink, 2014; Schroder, 2015). A common, dangerous way for Ethiopians to leave the country is by falsifying documents or taking a dangerous sea route from the Horn of Africa to Libya then to Europe (Berhanu & White, 2000;

Frouws, 2014a). Leonard Doyle, chief spokesperson of International Organization for Migration, stated, the current state of African migrants in Libya is heinous (UNHCR Report, 2017). Leonard added, “In [Libya] [migrants] become commodities to be bought, sold and discarded when they have no more value” (UNHCR Report, 2017). Ethiopian migrants continue to leave Ethiopia unaware of the challenges that await them once they cross the border in hopes of a better life. According to UNHCR, the current migration crisis in the Horn of Africa has disproportionally affected migrants when they seek refuge in other countries. European countries, such as Italy, France, and Spain have placed restrictions and regulations for migrants from the Horn of Africa (Kuschminde, 2014).

Similar to Ethiopians, other East Africans migrate due to wars, unemployment, extreme poverty, and political conflicts (Prunier, 2008). People not only migrate out of Ethiopia but there is also a significant population movement from Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia into Ethiopia (Frouws, 2014b; Schroder, 2015). Today, Ethiopia is the second largest host country in Africa and the ninth in the world, becoming home to over 903,200 refugees (UNHCR Report, 2019). In addition, Ethiopia witnessed a drastic increase in internal displacement attributed to the conflict in the West Guji and Gedeo zones along the Southern Nations and Oromia Region border with the Somali Region, which created 2,615,800 refugees at the end 2018 (UNHCR, 2018).

The complexities of the conditions linked to migration and diaspora are varied (Frouws 2014a; Jones, Presler-Marshall, & Tefera, 2014). For the purpose of this research, I have selected to discuss migration out of Ethiopia to the Middle East and to Canada. It is these focused topics in the literature that frame my autoethnograpic research about my own story about my childhood in Ethiopia, my Canadian experience and my experience of being a in the Middle East. It is

important to note the complexity of migration *within* Africa as a significant topic that is *not* addressed within the scope of this research but, nonetheless, is an important backdrop. I make a special mention of this as some migrants who come to West and the Middle East have spent time in other parts of Africa mainly countries with port access to the West or the Middle East.

Migration and the Middle East. During the seventh century, the East African slave trade created a close relationship between Ethiopia and the Middle East establishing exchange in slaves, culture, religion, language, and ideas (Campbell, 2016). In recent years, the relationship between the two regions has been unstable due to conflicts related to labor migration. In October 19, 2013, the Ethiopian government withdrew from the diplomatic missions that had existed in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region and implemented a ban on labor migration to the Middle East. This was in response to human rights violations against Ethiopian migrants across the Middle East and the unjust mass deportation of Ethiopians from Saudi Arabia (De Regt & Tafesse, 2015). Migration purposes and routes vary based on diverse factors, such as gender, prior connections, and socioeconomics (Abay, Amare, & Gebre-Egziabher, 2019; Carter & Rohwerde, 2016; Ayele, 2018; Fernandez, 2015).

It is critical to have an understanding of the systematic organization of workers in the GCC in order to understand visas, migration, and the nature of the diasporic life in the region. Countries of the GCC operate with a system called the kafala. The kafala system arose in traditional Bedouin hospitality and has been part of the culture dating back to colonization. The host nation takes responsibility of the guests' safety and wellbeing during their stay (Bajracharya & Sijapati, 2012). However, the system has evolved beyond its hospitable genesis as it has become entrenched in labour law. Now, kafala works as a sole provider and regulator of labour migration in the GCC. The kafala system allows for the organization of temporary labour during

economic booms and then ousts foreign workers during less affluent periods. The system legally binds the employee to a *kafeel* [*sponsor*] during the contract period. During the period of contract, the kafeel is responsible for paying recruitment fees, medical examination and care, housing, and legal necessities (Diop, Johnston, & Le, 2018; Essaid, 2010; Longya, 1999; Sonmez, Apostoupulos, Tran & Reentrope, 2011). Although the system seems supportive of migrant workers, it essentially provides complete power to the kafeel, even for highly skilled workers (Babar, Ewers & Khattab, 2019). Within the contract period, the employee must have written permission from the sponsor to enter the country, to transfer employment, and to exit the country. Domestic workers are particularly vulnerable under the kafala labour laws that establish standards of health and safety for workers. In Qatar, Article 3.4 in the Qatar Labor Law distinctly prohibits protection for domestic workers stating, "except as otherwise provided for in any other law the provisions of *this law shall not apply to* the following categories: the persons employed in domestic employment such as drivers, nurses, cooks, gardeners and similar workers" (Qatar Labor Law 2017, p. 27). Despite potential risks that migrants may encounter, the Ethiopian diaspora continues to migrate to countries of the GCC using different methods. Migrating to the GCC without bilateral agreement has made migration to these countries more difficult, but people continue to travel from Ethiopia to the Middle East via multiple routes. Gardner (2012) suggested that higher pay in the GCC has been the simple attraction and the pull factor for low skilled workers to migrate to the Middle East. The most common way of securing the papers necessary for migration are to secure a visa from a licensed or unlicensed overseas recruitment agency. The types of visa commonly issued by recruitment agencies is an *Azad* (free visa) or Hajj (pilgrimage). The use of these two visas are the most widespread sources of the necessary

visas to travel and gain entry into the GCC countries. They are the types of visa that are most readily obtained within the conditions of the political blockade.

Prior to the 2013 blockade, multiple licensed Ethiopian agencies actively recruited men and women to the Middle East by glamorizing life in the GCC. The recruitment agencies operated by connecting migrant workers to their kafeel (Jamie & Tsega, 2016). Even before the breakdown of diplomatic relations between GCC countries and Ethiopia, adherence to written policies in the government licensed, foreign recruitment agencies was uncertain and questionable. For example, the majority of licensed agencies use sub-contractors, making it difficult to monitor and control recruitment techniques. The breach of policies and lack of ethical practices in the agencies put migrants in danger of being trafficked and exploited. For instance, agencies charged extra fees by promising to bypass bureaucratic procedures, withholding passports, and demanding payback of airfare costs from migrants even though fares are an obligation of the visa issuing agency per kafala system (Fernandez, 2014; Internationalis, 2010). Furthermore, agents were known to receive bribes to further their personal gains and dismiss the rules such as recruiting girls under the age of 18. Dishonest agencies increase the cost of migration for migrants and many applicants borrow money from family savings and generate debt to secure working visas in the GCC. Other women commit their monthly salary to the agencies for a pre-agreed period of time in advance of their migration. On average, migration fees can range from $500 – 1,000 USD and migrants may pay an additional fee $1,500 – 3,500 USD to cover airfare, health insurance, and charges to speed up the migration process (Fernandez, 2014).

The Ethiopian government's 2013 migration ban attempted to put a stop to the exploitive practices of agencies by closing services that offer migration visas to the countries of GCC.

Despite this attempt, agencies continue to operate illegally, mainly within an underground system that has developed to subvert the strict terms of kafala. For example in January 2016 alone, the number of migrants reaching Yemen was around 10,000, of which 75% were Ethiopians (UNHCR, 2019). The underground world has established the *Azad* a form of visa known as a "free visa". Similar to a legal work visa, free visas are used to recruit migrant workers (Pessoa, 2014). However, there are significant differences between free and legal working visas. So-called free visas are generated when established companies seeking labour resources in the GCC over estimate the number of workers needed on a project. In Qatar, the Ministry of Interior issues the company the estimated number of working visas. However, if the company does not use all the visas that were issued, the extra visas are sold to different agencies or *delala* [broker]. These visas are issued to migrants under the original job description and the original kafeel (the company that applied for the visas), but the job now attached to the visa is fictional (Gardner, 2013). Thus, laborers who enter the country with a free visa do not report to work for the company the visa was issued for. Rather, holders of a free visa can seek their own employment and negotiate the conditions of their work including salary and accommodation. Although the idea of free visa maybe appealing, migrants have to arrange their own working and living situation that can be very costly. Moreover, the free visa is not sanctioned under the kafala labour law due to the strict rule of working for the kafeel responsible issuing the visa. Thus, despite possessing a visa, workers with a free visa are working illegally if they do not work for the company that owns the visa (Peassoa, 2014). Most holders of free visas are unaware of the legal requirement that requires them to work for the kafeel under which the visa was issued and the regulations that apply to transfer of sponsorship. The *delala* does not disclose the legal impropriates. Thus when the worker reports to renew their visa (an annual requirement) they face

bureaucratic challenges that may result in deportation. Alternatively, they must pay more fees to the issuing *delala* who mediates with the company to which the visa was originally issued. Frequently the issuing sponsor disappears or is unreachable (Peassoa, 2014).

Another common method used by Ethiopians migrating to the Middle East is with an application for a religious pilgrimage visa called *Hajj*. Hajj visa are issued for a specific period of time from the tenth month of the Islamic calendar until the 25th date of the 11th month. This visa allows Muslims to complete a required religious pilgrimage in the holy city of Mecca, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). It has been a common practice for Ethiopians to falsify their documents; changing their name and religion in order to obtain this visa (Beydoun, 2006). Once access to Saudi Arabia is issued, migrants illegally extend their stay and seek work illegally as domestic workers and labourers. In addition, migrants use the Hajj visa as a steppingstone to countries that neighbour KSA such as Qatar and UAE to seek work (Malaeb, 2015). If migrants fail to secure visas prior to departure, some of them take a long walking route via Hargeisa, then a boat trip over the Red Sea and enter via Yemen (Franandez, 2013b). Such journeys are very dangerous. In most cases, migrants are not aware of the travel risks and challenges that await them on arrival to the GCC such as rape and trafficking (Global Forum on Migration and Development, 2015; Internationalis, 2010). Furthermore, many migrants lack knowledge regarding the dangers of being in the host country illegally or even the jeopardy of entering the country using the free visa (De Regt and Tafesse, 2015). They lack the knowledge of the kafala system the complications of working for a kafeel who is not the one for whom the visa was issued. Moreover, migrants cannot anticipate the lack of freedom they will experience in the countries of the GCC under the strict rules of kafala (Atnafu & Adamek, 2015).

Once an Ethiopian worker has travelled and found paid employment in the GCC, they are placed in more precarious position than migrants from other countries due to lack of bilateral agreements between Ethiopia and the countries of the GCC. Bilateral agreements provides diplomatic protections, but the Ethiopian embassy in Qatar lacks access to the legal protections offered to other countries. The Ethiopian embassy in Qatar is only authorized to support Ethiopians to repatriate. It cannot seek legal redress to support Ethiopians living in Qatar. The absence of formal diplomatic relationships means that a worker has no formal recourse through which to report abuses. The embassy is unable to intervene when Ethiopians are deported or jailed. Without proper labour exchange agreements, migrant workers are at a high risk for trafficking and exploitation. Despite these risks, the Ethiopian diaspora continues with migration to countries of the GCC. Push factors such as, lack of local job opportunities, poor living conditions, careful grooming of negative experiences by returning migrants, and unrealistic descriptions of the conditions in the GCC promulgated by labour brokers cause low-skilled migrants to continue to travel to the Middle East (Gardner, 2012). In addition, remittance is a key contributor of people continuing to migrate. Remittance refers to the money that migrant workers send back to their family in their countries of origin (Oladipo, 2020) Data obtained from the National Bank of Ethiopia show that official remittances to Ethiopia reached $US 5 billion in 2018, from only $US140 million in 2002/03. The actual amount is estimated to be much larger as informal remittances are not captured in official data. While exploring the literature regarding migration to the Middle East, the disproportional movement of women to Qatar was evident. Current literature refers to this as feminization of migration.

Feminized migration in the Middle East. Current researchers refer to the strong correlation between gender, feminized job opportunities, and migration as feminization of

migration (Boyd & Pikkov, 2005; Castles & Miller, 1998; Donato & Gabaccia 2015; Freeman, 1986; Leal, Malhotra, & Misra, 2019; Zlotnik, 2003). A predominant number of female who migrants are young impoverished and uneducated women who are motivated to migrate both internally and externally in order to gain employment as domestic workers with hopes of better economic opportunities (Anbesse, Hanlon, Alem, Packer, & Whitley, 2009; Ahmed, 2010; Fernandez, 2011/2013a/2014/2018; Fransen & Kuschminder, 2009). The study of feminized migration explores migration in relation to gender, purpose, method, and global contribution. This approach to feminist scholarship places emphasis on feminized migration as a body of research that focuses on understanding the role of gender in the job market that relegates women into "women's jobs" mainly as a domestic or sex worker. In addition, these scholars focus attention on quality of life, economic growth, trades, and growth in gross domestic product (Donato & Gabaccia, 2016; Castles & Miller, 1989).

The Middle East hosts one of the largest populations of women migrants who come to the region for jobs that fit the category of feminized labor. In the late 1990s, women from the Philippines and India comprised the majority of domestic workers in the GCC, but in the last two decades, women from North Africa, especially Ethiopia, have begun to secure the illegal "free visa" to migrate to the region in increasing numbers (De Reger & Tafessa, 2015; Fernandez, 2013a). In 2013, licensed recruitment agencies in Ethiopia received over 182,000 visa applicants of which 90% were female domestic workers (Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2015). The demographic measures of feminized migration reveal the trend of increasing numbers of women among international migrant workers (Johnston, 2009). However, the increase in the number of female migrants is not the core interest of the feminist scholars who study this phenomenon. While statistical increases, countries of origin and countries of landing are

important to understanding the women-predominant or ‘feminized flow’ of labour is important, it is not sole focus of research into feminized migration. The diaspora of women creates unique vulnerabilities, exploitation, loss and opportunity based on gender (Fernandez, 2014). In addition, the scholarship on feminized migration establishes a more nuanced way to explore the complexities of the trends towards the feminization of migration that lead to negative outcomes.

In the countries of the GCC, work completed by domestic workers (mostly feminized migrants) has been conceptualized as intimate or family like. Boris and Parrenas (2001) in Friedman and Mahdavi (2015) define “intimate labor” as, “work that involves embodied and affective interactions in the service of social reproduction” (p. 135). In this intimate domestic realm workers may face long working hours, unpaid wages, and poor living conditions but they have no legal protection from their kafeel. Furthermore, domestic workers’ legal documents such as their passport can be confiscated by their employee, which limits their opportunity to seek a different job or to return home. The kafala system generates specific vulnerability for domestic workers in Qatar by awarding the employer with absolute power over the domestic worker’s living and working conditions. Most domestic workers live in the same home as their employer, which increases their vulnerability.

Most feminized migrant women’s monthly salaries range from $300-500 USD. The significant costs of migration result in women being in serious debt on arrival to the GCC. These expenses drive some migrants to seek alternative methods of migration placing them at higher risk for being trafficked and exploited (Frouws, 2014a). Fernadez (2011) identified how the lack of proper ethical agreements between the sending and receiving countries are key contributors to negative experiences of migrants. In addition, Gardner (2010) reported on the circumstances of domestic workers from countries that lack diplomatic relations such as, Kenya and Indonesia

emphasizing vulnerabilities for migrants who persist in seeking work in the Middle East. Without proper labour exchange agreements, many feminized migrants are at a high risk for trafficking and exploitation because they lack government protection from both their country of origin *and* the country of destination.

Migration and Canada. As with the history of migration from Africa to the Middle East, slaves from Africa have been forcefully migrated to North and South America dating back to 1860s. In Canada, enslaving people from Africa was abolished by the British parliament in 1834 and Canada became a refuge nation for slaves escaping from the United States (Reese, 2011). Canada implemented its first immigration legislative framework in 1869 in order to regulate and organize migrants. That early legislation privileged European migrants and disadvantaged other ethnic groups through racial profiling. Specifically, the 1910 Immigration Act established additional requirements for African migrants and others criteria that are now considered colonial and racist (Carty, 1999).

Canadian legislation has evolved and changed within constitutional efforts to establish Canada as a multicultural nation. In 1997, the Canadian Multiculturalism Immigration Act was changed to provide sanctuary to refugees, and refugees were defined as a distinct class of immigrants exempt from other immigration requirements. The new legislation mandated the federal government to consult with provincial levels of government to plan for immigration and settlement for those newcomers who were escaping regimes with human rights abuses (Aiken, 2014). The 1997 Immigration Act has led to the development of the current Immigration and Refugee Protection Act that went into action in 2002. Currently, for most Africans who are hoping to immigrate, migration to the West mainly Canada or the United States of America is considered a dream that offers the opportunity to establish a new prosperous life.

The process of migration to Canada is complex and lengthy, yet migrants are tenacious with the immigration system, believing they will have opportunities for financial security and citizenship. These aspirations are not unfounded; Canada significantly depends on immigrants for population growth, a strategy that is understood as a precursor to changing the economy from product based to a knowledge-based economy (Guo & Shan, 2013). Although there are efforts made in an equitable immigration act, Canada continues to face criticism to the immigration system (Trebilcock, 2018). For example, the temporary worker program and the point-base system have faced criticism as they continue to leave room subjectivity, which leads to marginalizing and favouring groups (Anwar, 2014). Immigration policy and system continue to change, currently, Canada has four major admission categories with programs for: “economic class (skilled workers, business immigrants, Canadian Experience Class); family class (family member sponsored by Canadian citizens and permanent residents); protected persons (refugees admitted as a result of positive asylum claims); and others (humanitarian and compassionate considerations” (Trebilcock, 2018, p.830). Each category further expands (Appendix C) to accommodate people wanting to migrate to Canada. According to statistics Canada (2017) African-born immigrants represent a growing ratio of the foreign-born population (13.4%), ranking second, ahead of Europe, as a source continent of recent immigrants to Canada. Nigeria, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and Cameroon were the top five countries of birth of African born immigrants in 2016.

In recent years, Canada has played its part in receiving increased number of refuges. A UNHCR report published in 2018 states that globally, 92,400 refugees were resettled to 25 countries. Canada admitted the largest number of resettled refugees (28,100). The United States of America was second with 22,900. Other countries that admitted large numbers of resettled

refugees during 2018 were Australia (12,700), the United Kingdom (5,800) and France (5,600). As well, during 2018, 55,400 asylum claims were registered in Canada while there are 78,800 applications still pending (UNHCR Report, 2018). The Canadian government continues to commit to resettling immigrant and refugees as they project over 310,000 people will apply to stay in Canada in 2019 and 350,000 in 2020. The number are expected to grow each year making rooms newcomers to Canada (Government of Canada, 2018). Aside from the literature regarding the increase number of migrants to Canada, there were two key aspects of migratory experience that resonated with my own life. First, of the impact of migration on health and deskilling immigrants.

***The Healthy Immigrant Effect*.** The healthy immigrant effect is a term used to describe the changing state of immigrants' health (Beiser, 2005). Canadian research into the healthy immigrant effect suggests that upon arrival new immigrants to Canada have better health, on average, than those born in Canada (Fuller-Thomson, Noack, & George, 2011). However, as immigrants stay, their health declines and merges to Canadian born. The healthy immigrant effect is believed to be true due to the pre-selection and adjustment process. Prior to moving, immigrants have to go through multiple pre-screenings. These screenings include X-Ray, HIV testing, vaccine status, urinalysis, physical assessment for both chronic and acute disease screening. The pre-selection processes, socioeconomic status, life style, degree of culture shock, acculturation, and adjustment have been identified as some of the key factors that contribute to the immigrant arriving in good health (Newbold, 2017; Ng, 2004/2010). In addition, Ng (2010) found that declining mental health in immigrants is exacerbated by the pressure to make remittance payments, which become the only economic hope for family members who remain in the country of origin. This effect seems paradoxical given that Canada prides itself on its

publicly insured fully accessible healthcare system, but despite the available health resources, as immigrants stay in Canada, the incidence of anemia, dental problems, chronic otitis media, mental illness and chronic illnesses such as diabetes increase (Fuller-Thomson, Noack, & George, 2011).

The healthy immigrant effect is also seen while addressing mental health. Research indicates that female immigrants to Canadian face limitations in their capacity to access health services; another factor leading to poor overall health (Blane, 2006). Somatic symptoms have been found to be more prevalent among women. The pressure of remittance also is a contributing factor to the decline of mental health in immigrants since most migrants are the only economic hope for a larger family who remain in the country of origin (Ng, 2010). A study conducted by Fenta and Noh (2010), examined 342 Ethiopian migrant women in order to study their somatic symptoms. In the study 63.2% of the women reported having at least one symptom. The study concluded with that, "Somatic symptom level was significantly associated with older age, pre-migration trauma, post-migration stressful life events and limited English language fluency, with the association between pre-migration trauma and somatic symptoms being largely mediated by onset of PTSD" (p. 6). The health immigrant effect is a common finding all across Canada and a phenomena that continues to occur.

***Employment Challenges: Deskilling Immigrants*.** The other aspect of immigrant life that resonated with mine was deskilling of immigrants. In Canada, a practice of "deskilling immigrants" refers to Canadian employers' and professional regulatory associations' lack of recognition for foreign education and credentials. This restricts the employment opportunities for immigrants in their professional fields (Creese & Wiebe, 2012). Overall research into immigrant employment in Canada shows how immigrants are channeled into low-paying jobs where there

are labour shortages. This is a phenomenon known as “deskilling” (Creese and Wiebe, 2012). Ku, Bhuyan, Sakamoto, Jeyapal and Fang (2019) investigated how, visible minority immigrants to Canada who have higher levels of educational achievement than people born in Canada have a sustained employment insecurity; with lower earnings than their less educated Canadian born counterparts. Ku et al.’s analysis suggests that that job descriptions that require Canadian experience perpetuate racist practices within a country that purports to embrace multiculturalism. The researchers conclude how Canadian experience required:

> “ . . constructs their [immigrants’] experiences of exclusion as non-racial. This is theorized as a “post-racial” strategy that relies on anit-racialism (avoidance of racial references) to deny the existence and effects of racism, thereby allowing the Canadian public to maintain its façade of innocence but perpetuates racism without racists” (p. 291)

Immigrants are further penalized for lack of “Canadian experience” as they lack a set of professional knowledge and skills unique to the Canadian context involving both communication and certified skills (Ku., et., al 2019 p.6). Mojab’s (2018) work focused on immigrants who had recently completed professional education in their country of origin. The research examined their experiences navigating the workforce. Mojab’s findings conclude that “the market did not value their [immigrants] skills as equal to or fitting what is known as ‘Canadian’ experience”, which led most of the study participants to seek domestic work (Mojab, p. 126). The issue of deskilling immigrants is compounded by systemic racism and ethnicism active in Canada (Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Oreopoulos, 2011; Newbold, 2009; Schellenberg & Maheux, 2007), where women of colour are negatively impacted whereas women of Euro descent who migrate from G7 countries benefit (Mojab, 2018). McCoy and Masuch (2007) refer to this phenomenon as “skill waste”. Their research explicates how women who are trained in clerical work end up in the low wage

service sector. They suggest that immigrant women are not always well served by Canadian employment services established to support their transition to Canada. They investigate how Canada as an immigrant receiving society maintains policies that undermine the integration of newcomers into Canadian society. McCoy and Masuch's (2007) research addresses what they refer to as "subtle forms" of systemic oppression. Thus, even in a country such as Canada, reputed to be a society that values equality that upholds principles of social justice and embraces multiculturalism continues to sustain poor economic outcomes for visible minorities. The systematic deskilling of immigrants disproportionality impacts women (International Organization for Migration, 2012).

> ".the degree of skill wasted is more modest than, for example, the waste that occurs when a physician is employed as a janitor. But it [skill waste] may be more typical of skilled immigrants' experience in regions with labour shortages and may become more common in years to come" (McCoy and Masuch, 2007, p. 202).

Overall research into immigrant employment in Canada shows how immigrants are channeled into low-paying jobs where there are labour shortages. Thus, showcasing the common practise of deskilling of immigrants in Canada.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided key elements that constructed my way of understanding migration out of Ethiopia. It is critical to note that there are other forms of migration that this paper did not reflect, the routes and destinations were deliberately selected in order to align with my own migration experience out of Ethiopia. Due to the absence of a centralized registration system in Ethiopia, it is difficult to know the exact number of Ethiopians who migrate overseas. The International Labour Organization suggests that Ethiopians migrate in large numbers to the GCC,

Europe, South Africa, and Libya illegally; ultimately, hoping to be resettle to a developed nation (ILO, 2019). This chapter highlighted migration out of Ethiopia, routes taken and common destinations such as Canada and the Middle East. In addition, this chapter briefly introduced feminized migration, healthy immigrant effect and deskilling of immigrants which will be further explored while reflecting on my experience.

Chapter 3 Journey: Stories into Data

In this narrative autoethnography research, I used my memories from my experiences reliving hurtful, difficult, enjoyable, and raw experiences. Congruent to the tradition of autoethnograpic research, I used my own memory as a major source of data (Freeman, 2004). I wrote down stories that narrate my experience as I lived in Ethiopia, Canada, and Qatar. I composed narrative stories that describe the interlocking influence of my class, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, and gender. In doing so, my stories provide a way to describe how "each structure of inequality exists on its own yet coexists with every other structure of inequality" (Risman, 2004, p. 444). My stories served as data that I examined to understand where my own story sits within the lives of women who migrate across international borders. This approach developed insight into the complex contextual features of migrant women's lived experince.

Data collection was extended by the compilation of relevant pictures, videos, diaries, and letters collected during my lifetime. These artifacts supplemented how I reflected back on my past life experiences that have shaped my understanding of migration. I used memories from those experiences as a resource for my narrative with the aim of reframing my understanding of women's migratory experiences, which was a way to explore how my own experiences fit into a larger story. I also reflected on the other women's stories I have heard throughout my travels and considered knowledge I gained from the literature review I conducted prior to commencing the autoethnography. Data collation and data analysis for this research began by obtaining ethical approval and engage in conversations with my family. In the tradition of autoethnography, I organized, detangled, and reassessed my memories while placing them in the chronicle of the scholarly conversations I was having with myself and with my supervisory committee members. According to Ellis et al. (2011), the analytic product of the research should not merely reflect

literature and the autoethnograpic methodological tool but should also initiate a way for others to experience epiphanies. Therefore, analysis must incorporate cultural understanding of relationships between self and others.

Once I completed each draft of analytical writing, I detangled and chronically organized new data as they arose in memory of my lived experience. This process developed more nuanced understandings, meanings, and insights into aspects of race, gender, ethnicity, and nationality that were not available in the naïve recall of the events of my life. The lens of intersectionality generated deeper and/or newer understandings of my own privilege and oppression while making connections with other women's migration experience. Intersectionality provided the tools to examine my experiences and understand how my fear, confusion, sense of unease, or feelings of confidence were linked to my social positioning in each moment of time. In addition, I deconstructed my old ways of understanding based on the cultural lenses I placed on myself which enhanced the analyses of this research. For example, rather than viewing an experience from my East African immigrant view, I took a different route and explored similar experiences from my current upper-class situation living in Qatar or middle class living in Ethiopia. This way of shifting my narrative allowed me to gain a different view and displayed a view I had been previously blinded to because of the long-standing feelings and explanations I had initially associated with the experience. This way of viewing my stories (data) allowed me to deconstruct my own understanding of each experience and began to disrupt the labels that continue to surround my life and influence my frames of reference. Throughout this MN research, I highlighted intersecting identities that I had previously failed to recognize would be key experiential components that supported me to have new insight into women's migration experience. The reflexive, rigorous, and iterative process allowed me to note findings that led to

new meanings and in-depth understanding of how migratory experiences are shaped by intersecting identities and social groups.

The literature review in Chapter Two provides the backdrop for the following narration of my life stories which, in this chapter, are introduced as a chronologically coherent group of memories. This chapter is developed *without* unnecessary references to the literature. My goal is to develop the story of my life through my own eyes and interpretations – without the overlay of methods and research. I begin with my life in Ethiopia and end with my current life in Qatar. The stories are told as I remember them, formulating a narrative that provided a way to manage stories as data and findings. The stories are the images from my memories that stand out, often the moments of raw awareness as I moved from my childhood into my adult years. The stories are crafted into an account designed to evoke the shifting characteristics of my migratory circumstances. Taken together, my stories produce a diorama that includes a personal history of confidence, helplessness, pride, and privilege. These feelings co-exist with experiences of uncertainty, vulnerability, discrimination, ambiguity, and isolation. The stories in this chapter establish the foundation for the analysis in the next chapter, where I detangle and deconstruct these memories in more detail using the framework of intersectionality.

Stories into Data: Experiences in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, my family was considered middleclass, and I grew up benefiting from privileges associated with my family's status. My father worked for the Ethiopian Electric and Power Authorities earning roughly $142 USD per month while my mother worked as a secretary at a travel agent earning $72 USD per month. My parents were the eldest of their siblings and received utmost respect from their families and community. My parents were seen as dependable people who came from good families and contributed to their community. Due to this social

positioning, we had many relatives living with us at various points. True to the phenomenon of internal migration, family and friends came from rural parts of Ethiopia or Eritrea to stay with us in the capital until they established a life on their own. In most cases, family members stayed with us with a goal of working in Addis Ababa, or until they completed a lengthy visa process to relocate outside of Ethiopia. In other case, my aunt Sara remained with us and I grew up referring to her as my sister. My parents had brought Sara to the city from the village where my mother grew up in order to provide her with a better opportunity. I refer to Sara as my sister to truly represent my childhood and our relationship. Relocating to the West was often very difficult and most people were assisted by my family. In some cases, we had family members who relocated from Eritrea as a refugee and asked for asylum in Ethiopia. Their ultimate goal was to be resettled to a Western country as part of UNHRC resettlement projects. Out of those who lived with us, one of my cousins now lives in Italy, after taking the difficult route from Ethiopia to Libya and then to Italy by sea. I have a few relatives who are in South Sudan and others who live in United States of America. My parents were able to support other family members because of their middleclass income and their values about what it means to be a family. I grew up with the idea of unity and support as key components of family life.

My parents came from an ethnic group that had power and had ruled the country from 1989 to 2018. Being Tegere (my tribe) was associated with gold, politics, power, and guns. I grew up celebrating my ethnic background as I spoke both Amharic and Tigrigna. People can identify my ethnic background from my name Danaiet, which is derived from a Tigrigna word that means a judge. I was raised in the suburban part of Addis Ababa in an area known for its fresh air, mountain views, historical churches, and being a nice area to raise a family. Our middleclass life allowed me to attend a private school; I had a transportation allowance, a tutor,

and a nanny. My social life was pleasant; I had friends and took part in extracurricular activities. At school, I hosted the morning radio show, played volleyball, and was the class president. Overall, I had a healthy and well-balanced family life where I felt secure and supported mentally, physically, and financially. My experience in Ethiopia was significantly different from the children I saw as I commuted to school. I did not have the burden of caring for younger siblings, working, or worrying about the increasing cost of living. I accepted my life within a knowledge that we were not "rich" because we did not own our car or our house; but I grew up feeling I had everything I asked for. My middle class life in Ethiopia provided me with confidence to dream big and to believe that I was capable of becoming whatever my heart desired. My father, Baba would remind me that I had one job and that was to be a good student. He would say, "*Danaiet, ye temare, wedko aywedkem*" [Danaiet, a person who is educated can never be defeated, they will have ups and downs, but never defeated]. As a young person, all I needed to do was to study hard in order to get the opportunity to complete my post-secondary education outside Ethiopia via an educational scholarship visa.

I had a loving relationship with my family, and being the youngest allowed me to gain certain privileges of being the spoiled child who was never disciplined. When I misbehaved, I always had a few words before I got into trouble: I used to say; "Baba, you always regret after you hit us so why don't you just tell me what I did wrong and why it was wrong." This loving relationship with my father gave me the confidence to feel protected and negotiate my way through life. My life began to change when Ethiopia and Eritrea officially separated in 1991. The countries have had a complex border war dating back to the early 1960s (Clapham, 2018). In 1991, Eritrea divided from Ethiopia establishing their independence, which now required my father to legally identify as Eritrean and my mother as Ethiopian. My father always reminded us

that we are both Ethiopian and Eritrean; he used to say *his* Ethiopia still included Eritrea, and I inherited his assumptions. In 1998, Ethiopia and Eritrea started a major border conflict resulting in the battle of Badme, which led to the deportation of innocent civilians. It was during this time that Eritrea deported over 7,500 Ethiopians living in Eritrea and Ethiopia deported over 70,000 Eritreans living in Ethiopia (Sheona, 2019). On June 20, 1998, my father was removed from our home, placed in jail for three days, and deported to Eritrea. After my father's deportation, it was the first time I began to overhear derogatory comments about my ethnicity and citizenship, such as "they are not 'real' Ethiopians and they should have left with their father." I had grown up under the assumption and experience that all people are equal, but now politics were influencing people's judgment of my worth. Those statements regarding being a real Ethiopian confused me because I had never been to Eritrea and the idea of leaving Ethiopia for Eritrea puzzled me. I questioned how I could call a place I had never been to "home." My life began to change after my father's deportation and I had to accept new life norms.

Despite the political conflicts that forced my father's absence, our social class remained the same, even though we were now referred to as "the Eritreans." My mother continued working at the same job while my aunts and uncles who once lived with us began to help us to sustain our former lifestyle. The key change in my life came from the new expectation of me being the *daughter* of a single mother. My mother feared I would fall into the stereotype of *Ye set lij*, which is a derogatory term used to describe children raised only by their mother who usually misbehave and act outside of the gendered norms. My mother started all her advice with "Danaiet, because you are a girl." My role and responsibilities changed from being a good student to being a "good girl." When my sister Sara was married off at the age of 19, the pressure of being a good girl was further compounded. For the most part, my sister had a similar

upbringing as my brother and me, but there were times that she was treated differently. Sara was responsible for minding my brother and me as part of her big sister duties. My brother and I attended a private school while my sister attended a government school. I called my mother mama and my father baba, while my sister called my mother by her nickname *Tebe.* Sara, as far as she or I can remember never referred to my father directly by any name at all.

Like so many things in our life Sara's duties as big sister also began to change once my father was deported. The goal became family reunification. If my mother, brother and I were to be reunified with my father in a western country, there were no simple methods that would allow Sara to move with us. She was not legally my sister, and my father could not ask for immigrant status for his wife, children, *and* his sister-in-law. Three years after my father was deported, my sister was "married off" to a family friend after she failed her Grade 12 college entrance exam. Being married was presented as the only option for a better life for my sister as we would leave Ethiopia one day and she would be left alone. Before Sara took her exam and before she was married, I overheard a conversation between Sara and my brother that made me fear I may have the same fate as her if my family were to stay in Ethiopia. My brother said, "Wait, what does that mean?" Sara replied, "Well if I pass the national exam to enter university, I will hopefully go to university, if I do not pass then I will marry him." My brother replied, "But the wedding is set." It was official; my sister would marry him and start a new life away from us.

The Ethiopian culture is similar to many African cultures where the expectation of a woman is entirely based on the biological attributes of being female. It was a common expectation for a woman to support her family of origin by getting married to a man in order to provide for herself. This relieved her biological family from the financial burden of her room and board. Furthermore, getting married at a young age guarantees a "good girl" – a woman who is a

virgin. This was relevant to my family situation as my mother was stigmatized by being forced into becoming a single mother, which increased moral scrutiny on my mother. It also resulted in economic hardship; providing for our family was becoming more challenging. On January 7, 2000, my 19 year-old sister was married and started her new life with a man ten years older than her. I interpreted her marriage as a way to support my mother and believed my fate would be similar to my sister's if I was to stay in Ethiopia. After my sister's wedding, I continued to ask myself, *"Would my mother do the same to me*?" and "*Would my father allow it*?" I blamed my mother for giving away my sister without preparing her for marriage. We lived a sheltered life where we had a nanny who cleaned and cooked for us. We had never discussed matters such as living alone, reproductive health, family planning, or the simple aspect of menstruation. We would visit my sister every weekend, and I would want to ask questions. I was unable to articulate my questions because my fears related to my impressions that my sister was now isolated and far away from all she had known; she was becoming a "wife" in ways that my 12-year-old self could not understand. In retrospect, I see that I used ignorance as a defense mechanism. I focused on the positive aspects of her life. I attributed her new house and cars as a means of her living a rich life. I was happy that she would take us to fancy hotels and was helping my mother with our school fees, transportation, and holiday expenses. In our new life, with the absence of my father, my brother had become "the man of the house", and I feared I had become the next "eligible bride". The spectre of these roles, my brother's that was generated within the adults' admonishments that intimated that, at 17, he was now the male family member who has the most responsibility for the family wellbeing and decisions, and my own worries that I would be "married off" were aligned with the cultural norms for males and females. The roles were not without substance. A few days before my father was deported, he had a discussion with

my brother showing him where he kept extra cash and important documents such as our birth certificates. My sister's wedding and absence from our childhood home happened shortly after my father's deportation. In my mind, theses events were linked – two transformative, major disruptions in my experience of my family unit. The comfort I had of being free and aspiring to be whatever I wanted was shifting and I found myself asking questions such as, *"What does my mom want me to be?" or "Who does my mom want me to marry?"* In addition, I began to fear the traditional expectation of being a girl would apply to me.

In 1999, my father left Eritrea and was granted medical asylum in Israel. He stayed in Israel for six years (until 2004) all the time looking for family unification programs across the globe. He applied to the United States of America, Australia, Netherlands, Germany, and multiple other countries in Europe. All his applications were rejected, mainly because in Ethiopia, my mother, brother, and I were not in any immediate danger. We were not living in a refugee camp and Addis Ababa was considered a safe environment. One of the documents I examined for this research was an application where he wrote, "I am looking for democratic country, where there is peace and stability, where humanity is practiced, where my children could get the best education peacefully." While my father was the primary applicant and responsible for all legal work, my mother's sole responsibility was to send all documents that my father requested and perform tasks my father requested, such as, providing proper passport pictures, faxing transcripts, and other documents. As the head of our family, my father completed forms and was interviewed on our behalf, which left us with very little knowledge about what was going on.

After six years of separation and vigorous work by my father, my family and I had the opportunity to reunite in Canada. We celebrated the news; it gave me hope that, not only would I

get to be with my father again, but that I also may not have to write my national grade eight exam – a test that my schoolgirl self would rather avoid. During a phone conversation with my father, I asked "Baba, do I need to write the exam tomorrow?" My father was known to be loud but I was surprised by the tone of his answer. He said, "WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE COMING TO CANADA FOR?" I remember how he emphasized that I not only had to write this exam but, I must also do well in it. He admonished that I must take my exams as if everything depended on it regardless of where I was living. He said, "What kind of question is that? What do you think you are coming to Canada for?" What was simple in my head was not perceived the same in my father's head. I did not see the value in writing the exam since we were moving to Canada. I hung up the phone and started to prepare for my last exam. I knew how my father viewed education and the expectations he had for his children, and I understood this was not going to change even after we got to Canada.

June 6, 2004 holds a very important place in our home. I remember my grandmother not feeling well and stating she was anxious. She said, "I don't feel right, it is unlike your father not to call or not to answer his phone." We received the devastating call saying my father had suddenly died and someone needed to travel to Israel to claim his body. Our happy plans were clouded and turned into devastation and disbelief of his death as we had spoken to my father just three days prior. At that moment, I remember thinking and asking, "The plan to move to Canada must be off, do we still have to go? Would they still accept us? Who are "*they*"? My uncle tried to provide support by saying, "You have to continue Baba's dream and become a doctor, of course you are going to Canada." My father was no longer alive, and we were left with no one to provide directions regarding the big move coming up. In addition, we were asked to send someone to Israel to collect my father's body and carry out the funeral in Ethiopia. The details of

my father's death still remains a mystery to my family as we were not able to organize an autopsy. We rushed his body back to Ethiopia in order to have his funeral and to leave for Canada three weeks after his burial. My extended families supported one another and helped out at this time. My parent's savings were used to pay for our plane tickets and cash from my sister's husband was given to us to take to our new home. We said our goodbyes on June 29, 2004 and left Ethiopia to complete my father's dream of a different opportunity.

As we arrived at the immigration gates in Montreal, an immigration officer asked us different questions including, "Do you have any money on you?" We did not want to lie and said "Yes, we have $3000 USD with us." The immigration officer informed us that nationally subsidized new immigrants to Canada were not allowed to bring that amount of money to Canada. If we did, we would be expected to pay for own expenses upon settling. The immigration officer advised us to return the money back to Ethiopia and we followed his advice. My family and I were confused as to why we had to divest our money but we did not want to create problems, nor did we have the language to explain. We failed to explain that our Ethiopian family had given us the money because my father was dead and we did not know if anyone would be waiting for us in Charlottetown where my father had planned for us to start our new life. In addition, our lack of knowledge regarding our visa and category of immigration created significant fear and we wanted to abide with whatever the officer was stating. We were unable to communicate my father's ill-fated death shortly before we were to be reunited. Nor to explain that this was the reason we lacked knowledge regarding our Canadian immigration category and process. My father was the head of the house who had completed the application process. Without him, I wondered, "W*ould we have a home? Would we have anyone? Do they still want us*?"

Stories into Data: Experiences in Canada

Life in Canada placed us in a different class than we had enjoyed in Ethiopia. We were now unemployed landed immigrants supported by the government for one year while we lived in Canada. My mother received approximately $900.00 per month for the first year of our arrival. In addition, she received $250.00 in child support until my brother and I turned 18. Our limited income placed us in poverty in Canada, and the comfort of a secure income and social support that we once had in Ethiopia was removed. Now we had to rely solely on the government for a year. The sorrow and pain we were feeling from the loss of my father turned us into survival mode; I never thought about what would happen after the government stopped supporting us, nor did I have a sense of a plan for the future. Our life in PEI was far removed from the large community we once had in Ethiopia. In PEI, we did not know anyone and our neighbors labeled us as the new African immigrants who did not speak English. The PEI Association for Newcomers helped us find a three-bedroom apartment near downtown that we called home for the next three years. During the fall of 2004, I began high school, my brother was enrolled in university, and my mother attended college to learn English.

The year passed by in a blur as I struggled to adjust to school and my mother's health started to decline. She began complaining of back pain that was not managed by any of the doctors we visited. The more the doctors were unable to provide some relief for my mother, the more she became resistant to doctors and turned to spiritual healing. In addition, my mother's mental health was being negatively affected due to her worries about our government assistance coming to an end after the first year of support. Once the year finished, my mother faced the reality of our new life and began working as a cleaner for a nearby hotel. I knew my mother was barely making enough money to pay for rent and needed help from the foodbank.

By the time I was 16, I was legally capable of working and could help out my mother financially. I applied for a job at Zeller's restaurant and accepted employment after a very short interview. I knew servers made tips in addition to their biweekly cheques, which made me want to apply for the job. I ignored the fact that I barely spoke English and did not know Western food. I struggled with my job for various reasons, but the key factors were my lack of knowledge regarding food and my pronunciation of the listed menu items; the difference between paper and pepper, super and supper, Caesar and scissor, celery and salary was not clear. These words sounded the same, and it took me many years to pronounce them correctly, let alone identify their distinctive meanings. I wanted to help my mother and make money, but I was fired within three weeks for failing to communicate effectively. For the first time in my life, I had failed and I was devastated. My mother tried to make me feel better by saying I needed to focus on my school and there was no need to worry about money, but I knew she did not have much of it. We moved into low-income housing in order to make rent affordable for my mother. Our rent was adjusted based on her income, and there was enough money to take us to the end of each month. Her pay as a cleaner earning minimum wage was sufficient to keep food on the table and basic necessities for the three of us.

In 2005, I applied for a job at Dairy Queen and started to work as a cashier. I did not have to speak English as much, and I excelled at managing the cash register. I felt I was climbing the ladder of social class by making my own money, but I was still struggling with the social aspect of my life. In Ethiopia, I had friends, family, and neighbours that made me feel like I was part of the community. In Canada, I felt isolated and felt different from everyone. This impacted my ability to make friends as I saw myself as “the black immigrant girl who barley spoke any English.” In addition, people's knowledge of Africa was based on biased assumptions

constructed from clips such as child sponsorship advertisements, AIDS relief concerts, documentary films about tribal life, and “one-week mission trips to Africa.” My neighbours would say, “Ethiopia, we sponsor a kid from there, such a poor country.” Others would ask me about the 1979 famine and the current HIV and AIDS crises that I had limited knowledge about. In addition, this was the first time I was labeled as a “black girl”. I failed to understand the stereotypical expectations that were associated with being a black girl. I understood gender norms based on culture but gender norms based on race was new to me. Prior to moving to Canada, expectations and stereotypes were made based on *ethnicity,* but I noticed the shift towards *race* while living in Canada. People were not aware nor did they care that I had an East African ethnic background; they generalized me to Africa viewing the continent as a “country” and labeling me based on their attributions of my race, which was a black girl with puffy curly hair.

I found it hard to make friends who could relate to my story and allow me to be myself. I felt uncomfortable having friends over because I was unsure how they would categorize our home. Our house was decorated in a traditional Ethiopian style, we ate different food, and my mother barely spoke English. In addition, my neighbourhood was considered “unsafe”. Domestic violence, drug, and alcohol use were visibly evident in our neighbourhood. Here, I felt isolated and remained distant from my peers. I spent my time focusing on my school work. This paid off as I excelled in school even with the challenge of having English as an additional language. The private school in Ethiopia and put me ahead of most students. While Canadian’s started Chemistry, Biology, and Physics in level 11, I had been taking them since level seven while living in Ethiopia. My teachers found it surprising that I could perform well in most of my classes. “Good job” said my math teacher after giving me back my test. The words “good job”

would indicate that I had done well, but her facial expression indicated she was surprised that I did well. I heard it more like "good job, I thought you were stupid but I guess you are not". Although she had taught me the content, she did not expect me to do well – for reasons I would never know for sure. That facial expression followed me throughout my school years, especially in my physics, math, and chemistry classes. I continued to preform well in my science courses and my brother suggested I study nursing. He helped me complete my application as he was already attending University of Prince Edward Island completing his business degree.

Similar to my high school experience, negative experiences followed me to my university years where I faced unpleasant comments. When I was in my student nursing practice, I once had an exchange with a patient while providing health teaching regarding an insulin injection to a 13-year-old patient and his father:

"*Hello, I am here to give you your insulin. Your lunch will be here shortly,"* I said.

"*Sure,*" my patient replied politely.

I started to teach him about injection sites instructing him to "*Watch what I do so you will be able to do this when you go home. It is easy for you to inject your belly or your thighs; the key thing is to rotate the area. First, I want you to take a good pinch of your fat*."

His father interrupted. Laughing he said, "*What fat? He is worse than an Ethiopian*."

I froze, unable to think of a reply. I tried to finish the teaching as soon as possible, and I left to find my nursing instructor. My instructor asked me how it went, and I said "great." I wanted to tell her how it really went and say it was horrible, I felt attacked and a part of my identity was being denigrated. The comment made me forget what I was supposed to do as a nursing student, and I rushed the teaching. I went home angry and wanted to tell my version of Ethiopia but lacked the confidence and words. Similar racist encounters happened throughout the

time we lived in PEI, but my mother, brother and I placed less significance on them as we had other priority challenges.

My life in Canada compounded by the loss of my father required me to hold responsibilities that were unfamiliar to me. At the age of 15, I was expected to translate for my mother; I was responsible for taking my mother grocery shopping, to doctor's appointments, and to any legal meetings that pertained to our immigration status. In a way, I felt like I had become the "man of the house" in some aspects of my life, although I still required approval from my brother in my day to day decisions. For example, if I wanted to stay out with friends, I would ask permission form my brother rather than my mother. The relationship between my brother and I fluctuated from a father daughter relationship to a partnership while we addressed issues that affected my family. It is my observation that I shared the decision making role when we were addressing situation that affected our household routines but my brother held more power regarding situations that affected me and my movements outside the home. The gender norms that we had in Ethiopia followed us to Canada. In a way, he was the man of the house when it came to me, but our new unknown life balanced some of the traditional power relations that might have characterized our life had we stayed in Ethiopia.

My biggest role change came from handling my mother's worsening health. My mother never adjusted to life in Canada, and she continued to grieve the loss of my father. My mother worried about everything and felt powerless due to her lack of understanding of our new life. Her health started to deteriorate causing her to lose weight and cough. My mother refused to go to the hospital and stated "They never could do anything for me." She also began to associate her pain and suffering as a religious sign; she would state, "God is testing my faith." Her health continued to decline, and I felt powerless. I saw her coughing blood and weighing 45kgs. The more she

turned to religion the more I felt frustrated and helpless. There were countless conversations where we would argue over going to the hospital, but my mother refused to go to the hospital and we continued to argue from the time I was 17 until I was 21.

Between the years of 2005 – 2010, my mother's health continued to decline, and I was left with dread that I would receive a call that something had happened to her every time I had to leave her. During the summer of 2010, I received a chance to attend an exchange program in Kiirua, Kenya as part of my nursing program. I was very happy to be part of the exchange program but leaving my mother alone for the whole summer was not something I could arrange. My brother had moved to Toronto after graduating university in 2010, and I was left alone with my mother for the last year. This move came for him to have a better opportunity in finding a job. He began to work in a bank and his financial contribution to our family help pay for my tuition and rent. Being alone with my mother was challenging as I continuously wrestled with the worries of what if something happens to her. The thought of leaving her added to my fears and I began to ask who would take her grocery shopping, who would translate for her, and who would make sure she would not spend all her time locked in her room praying. When I brought up the idea of me leaving, I said:

> *"Mom, I was selected to go on an exchange program to Kenya for the summer, what do you think?"*

My mother responded in a disappointed tone:

> *"What does it do for you? Why can't you attend your clinical here?"*

My mother viewed travelling as a waste of money and something *Ferengi* [white people] did. I hesitated to explain to her because I knew there was no way to change her mind, but I tried by saying:

"Well, it is to provide students with different experience and they pay for all of it."

She said:

"Well, we left Ethiopia to get better health care but you want to go back to hospitals that doesn't have all you have here. What does that even mean?"

I argued:

"Never mind mom, it is an experience and I may get to go to Ethiopia as well",

My mother interrupted me saying:

"*You have to think of going back to Ethiopia when you have graduated and have work,* ***when you have become somebody****. How could you go to Ethiopia empty handed? Do what you think it is right, after all that our family has done and given us money. God is with me, I am not afraid for you to go, I do not see the point.*"

After discussing the topic with my mother, I spoke with my brother and decided to go to Kenya despite my mother's disapproval. My brother agreed to check on her every day and assured me he would fly to PEI if there was any problem.

I left for Kenya, making sure she had everything she needed. I called everyday while in Kenya to check on my mother and I felt comfortable witnessing her independence. She would tell me how she had gone to the store and visited an Ethiopian friend who was our translator at the time of arrival. My trip to Kenya was an excellent educational opportunity where I gained different a perspective of nursing. After a month on internship in Kenya, I was ready to return to Canada with my new outlook on life and nursing. This experience impacted my relationship with my mother. In a way, I felt I abandoned her and placed my needs above hers. I felt I was being ungrateful that I even had the desire to take part in this activity. When I was a child in Ethiopia, my dream was to be educated in the west with an education visa, but now that I had the

opportunity, I felt silly for even wanting to go to Kenya. The feelings were compounded with an underlying anger and resentment about how had to negotiate complexities that the people that travelled with did not have to think about. They seemed not to carry the worries that followed me back to Africa.

A few days after I returned from my amazing experience in Kenya, I found my mother in the bathroom vomiting blood. I feared I would lose her, and I tricked her into receiving the care she desperately needed. I asked her to go grocery shopping but I went into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital emergency department (ED). We walked into the ED and mom was seen within a few minutes as she was coughing and vomiting blood. The doctor pulled me aside and said:

> *"I have to call the pulmonologist because I think your mom has TB, we do not see it often and I am not certain, so the pulmonologist needs to confirm."*

Mom was admitted to the medical unit to be treated for pulmonary tuberculosis in a unit where, not many years earlier, I had completed my medical surgical clinical rotation as a nursing student. This experience I had with my mother impacted me in many ways. I had no one to discuss most of my challenges with because most of my friends did not understand the pressure of providing care for their parents. Furthermore, my brother had moved to Toronto for work, which made me feel alone. I realized my time at university was not similar to most of my friends as it was spent caring for my mother. Every time I became frustrated or angry in response to the stress of caring for her, I had to retract my feelings because I knew the sacrifice made by mother and the pain she still suffered due to the loss of my father. I accepted that my peace would come from graduating from nursing school and sending her back "home" to reunite with our family.

Stories into Data: Experiences in Qatar

The opportunity to relocate to Qatar was initiated by my mentor, former UPEI and UCQ nursing dean, Dr. Kim Critchley. I wanted to explore other opportunities outside of direct patient care and began to explore the academic side of nursing. I was offered a position to work as a nursing practice instructor at UCQ, and the idea of being in academia at the age of 25 was appealing. My mother would say:

> *"Look at me, I am a daughter of farmer who never went to a university but now I could have a daughter that teaches at a university."*

Although the idea of me teaching was appealing, both my brother and mother opposed my decision to relocate to Qatar and could not accept my new life choice. Their opposition was influenced by the knowledge they had regarding the experiences of East Africans in the Middle East.

I was fully aware of the horror stories about what East African women endured as they tried to make a living in the region. For my mother, there was no reason for me to put myself in a position where I could possibly face blatant discrimination, sexism, afrophobia, and poor working conditions. In my mother's mind, my father had given my brother and me the "ultimate ticket" by moving us to the land of opportunities – Canada. It was evident that my family believed that there was no reason for me to find a new home. I had completed my nursing degree and was employed at a well-respected hospital. I was earning a larger salary than any member of my family. My mother would say, "What more do you want, you have all your father dreamed of?" Regardless of my in-depth explanation, my family was unable to fathom my drive to relocate to the Middle East. The ideas they had about Qatar and my decision to relocate there seemed to undermine the countless challenges my parents had undergone as they moved my

family from Ethiopia to Canada. I addition, the feeling I had when I went to Kenya resurfaced. I had to ask if I was being ungrateful for the opportunities I had in Canada and question why I had the deep desire to relocate. Although I shared the same fear as my family, I felt Qatar would have more benefits than disadvantages. In addition, I took this opportunity to work in academic environment, which made me turn my life from surviving into to thriving. I no longer had to do what my mother or brother did in order to live "the Canadian" way. I knew my family felt Canada was the best, but I believe there were more to the world than the romanticized image of Canada. I believed Qatar would offer me a better opportunity in regards to my work and my ability to earn a higher education degree.

One of the pre-departure recommendations from UCQ human resources was to visit a Middle East lifestyle expert in order to gain knowledge regarding life in the Middle East and to discuss "wealth management". I agreed to do this, both to provide reassurance to my family and gain answers to my concerns. My meeting with the expert, who happened to be a middle-aged white man, was far from what I had hoped. This was due to his lack of understanding of my experience as an East African Canadian. He had two pieces of advice that stood out to me. First, his response to my concern of being mistreated based on my East African ethnic appearance was to "tone down my African-ness." He added that I should not wear my bold African prints and should remove the small Africa pendent I was wearing to our meeting. The meeting seemed to center on his own accomplishments, such as, how he had lived in the Middle East for decades and had learned to read the Quran. His personal stories were irrelevant to me and to my questions. Moreover, in regards to the financial advice I was seeking, my concerns about becoming a non-resident for tax purposes, which meant I would give up some of my Canadian privileges such as health care, subsidized education, and investment or real estate opportunities,

was not a significant concern to him. He was dismissive, explaining, "You can afford better health care and you will invest outside of Canada. You can reactivate everything once you return to Canada." His casual responses to my queries were disconcerting, and I left his office with more concerns than answers. I did not have the insights or confidence necessary to express my fears or to emphasize my questions. I felt he did not relate to me or the life I was about to begin. I did not know how I could explain to him that it took me over six years to change my status in Canada from landed immigrant to a Canadian citizen. I wanted him to understand that giving up even a slight part of that was a significant concern. I did not have another person I could ask about what it would mean to be a non-resident as a prior landed immigrant and new Canadian citizen. He did not adequately answer my questions about how a non-resident Canadian status would that affect my residency in the long term.

As well, I was troubled by his advice to reduce my African-ness. What did this mean? Why was it important? How did this relate to the niggling fears that had been planted by all that I had heard about how Ethiopians were treated in Qatar? In Canada, I went by Dee and not Danaiet because no one seem to be able to pronounce my name, but I was unsure how to alter my looks. How does one alter a way of being that they are not aware of? Even if I could isolate my African-ness, I was not comfortable hiding a significant part of who I was as a person. This aspect of my life plays a role in how I identify. Thus, without gaining my family's approval, and carrying the additional worries that the advisor had triggered, I made the decision to move to Qatar for temporary work and life experience. I believed my parents bringing me to Canada was the first step to other opportunities. This offer to work for a generous salary in Canadian dollars, the opportunity to work as a teacher in a Faculty of Nursing, and the suggestion that I could commence graduate studies at UCQ seemed to me to reflect those opportunities. My mentor,

Kim Critchley, Dean and CEO of UCQ indicated that I would be able to break my contract if I found that Qatar did not suit me. She also assured me that the horror stories I had heard about would not become my reality as the university has strong ties with both Qatar and Calgary.

In Qatar, unlike my experience in both Ethiopia and Canada, I quickly noticed that my experience varied based on how I looked, spoke, and who I associated with in Qatar. Factors such as national identity, levels of education, gender, class, and physical appearance have always influenced how people have treated me, but these experiences are amplified in Qatar. True to my pre-departure assumptions, I have learned that there are strong social expectations generated through different practices of racialization that are bound by country of origin. In Qatar there is a strong focus on citizenship and accent. I hold power due to my Canadian accent and passport, but my East African appearance places me at a lower level of privilege. Therefore, how people treat me has differed based on how and where I present myself. When people associate me as being East African, I have experienced racial discrimination with a presumption about my participation in "women's jobs" mainly as a domestic or sex worker. For example, while walking with my white co-worker and her child, I had a white lady scream at me to pay attention to the baby thinking I was his nanny. I looked at her and said "I beg your pardon" in my best Western accent. She immediately apologized and said she thought I was his babysitter. On another occasion, I had a British man ask for his table to be cleaned assuming I was the server for his table. I looked at him and asked, "What made you think I was the server?" He then began to apologize and sent his mother to talk to me to make sure I did not think he was racist. My encounter with his mother was even more difficult as she began to tell me she was not racist because she treats her maid very well. I walked away after telling them that they would not have to prove that they were not racist, if they did not commit racist acts. The family left the restaurant

shortly after our encounter. Similar encounters happen with countless white expatriates or "expats" who live in Qatar as they assume I am a service worker because I look a certain way. This happens when I am shopping in grocery stores when they assume I am a store clerk; when I am playing with the children of my friends outside and they assume I am a nanny; or when I am dining out and they assume I am a server. Situations like this made me feel confused. I am at a loss about how to respond. Often I feel angry, as I expressed in my retort about how it is racist acts that result in the need to apologize. However, there is a part of me believes I should not be angry when someone mistakes me as a nanny or a server – important work being done by many strong women in order to provide for their family. I think of my mother who cleaned and took whatever job she could get in order to provide for her family. I also remember my time working in the service industry during my high school and university days. On the other hand, I *am* angry that my obvious identifiers (female and East African) automatically place me as being a nanny. I am left helpless and feeling confused as I find myself asking, do I ignore my Western privilege and be treated as nanny or do I speak up and earn the privileges as a Westerner. How do racism, sexism and classism coordinate my feelings of being offended? How am I labeled and triggered within these social constructs? Regardless of the option I take, I find myself unable to negotiate my intersecting identities and the feelings that accompany them.

My encounters, such as those described above are not only with westerners who were working in Qatar but also with Arabs from the Middle East. In Qatar, the various shades of dark to light skin tones do not generate the same social responses that they do in the west. People from the Arabic region and many of the migrants from East Asia and Africa have not been constructed along the same racialized lines as those people from North America and Europe. This marked difference in racialized practices is apparent in the story of one of the students

attending the University of Calgary in Qatar. The student was from Jordan. Her husband was Palestinian. In order that her baby son would *not* have to carry a Palestinian passport, she traveled to the USA to deliver her son. She experienced a 'new to her' racism in the small region hospital in North Carolina. She puzzled how one of the nurses she encountered would say "I was just looking after the *other* black lady down the hall". For this woman from Jordan, being responded to within the racialized category of "black" was not part of her prior experience. Moreover, she experienced serious Islamaphobia – so much so that the pediatrician who was called in to consult about her newborn in NICU refused to provide care when he was asked to wait outside her bedside curtain while she covered herself. He left the hospital and told the nurses to call a different doctor. I narrate this story to demonstrate marginalization in Qatar and the difference within the marginalized groups.

In some cases, I fear my actions of speaking up could make a negative impact. For example, it is a common practice for me to clean up after myself when I dine at the hospital cafeteria, but the manager sees this action as a reflection of poor performance from the servers and I feel I place them in a precarious situation where they maybe admonished. I then ask myself, do I clean up after myself to do what I feel is the right thing, or do I allow others to clean up after me in order to maintain the power structure of the cafeteria? I find both options always leave me with a sense of guilt and unease. My only fulfilling option has been to create a connection by smiling or calling the server sir/mam, which places a smile on the manager's and the server's face. I hope my non-verbal communication alongside with cleaning up after myself reflects the fact that I value, support, and respect the work that they do.

Such encounters leave me questioning if it is worth living in a place where I explicitly may be contributing to the discrimination, othering, and oppressions that face migrant workers

from developing nations. These incidents continue to create a conflicting feeling of wanting to stay and wanting to leave. I feel I should stay and speak up on issues of discrimination and bias; my activist self wants to challenge the oppressive practices. However, I also feel I should leave because when I speak up I am using the privileges I acquire as a Canadian. In addition, I also recognise there are people who look like me who face challenges that are much more critical than the issues I have encountered. My own experiences of being mistaken for a sex-worker, store clerk or nanny seem innocuous in comparison.

My volunteer work at the Ethiopian Embassy have provided me with a first-hand view of East African experiences. I have witnessed complex oppressive issues women endure such as, no payment, poor living conditions, and physical abuse. I have also encountered East African migrants as hospitalized patients during clinical rotations with students who I supervise as part of my work at UCQ. I have been appalled by injuries sustained in unsafe, physically threatening domestic environments, or the delays that happen before seeking medical help, that employers are responsible for. Moreover, domestic workers are relegated as low priority cases in the triage and treatment routines that characterize systemic racialized practices of the Qatar health system. My own experiences of being discriminated against seem so minor in comparison. I experience a complex mix of feeling angry, guilty, grateful, fearful and sad. These serious issues increase my feelings of helplessness because I know the underlying structures of privilege and oppression are much bigger than being treated in a respectful way at a grocery store or at a restaurant. For many of the migrant workers in Qatar, the systemic discrimination, prejudice and antagonisms seriously undermine people's mental wellbeing and physical health.

Despite Qatar's pride in its publicly accessible health care system with government funded hospitals, there are systemic practices that organize unjust discriminatory attitudes

embedded in the hospital routines. During my clinical rotations with students, prejudicial labeling of people begins at the start of each shift. The morning nurses, who come mostly from India and Philippines, begin reports by identifying people first by their citizenship and then by diagnosis. For example, “Afrah Ali, a Sudanese with sickle cell disease”. This is a practice that contradicts the nursing education that is taught at UCQ, which advocates for antiracist, socially just approaches to patients; espousing values that every human life is equally valuable. Nursing practise advocates for the removal of identifiers that can create negative experiences, such as race and legality (documented/undocumented patients). In some cases, the allocation of rooms is organized by nationality and citizenship rather than infection control or priority of care. Triage practices of prioritizing the most acute conditions are undermined by systems that prioritize nationality whereby Qatari nationals are at the top, Westerners are second, and the rest of the population is at the lowest priority. Although there are triaging systems in place that are supposed to be based on prioritizing the sickest and most acute, institutional pressures from doctors, supervisors and accepted practices coordinate nurses to care for people based on citizenship. Private hospitals admit expatriates (mostly Qatari and Westerners) while public hospitals admit laborers and domestic workers. The presenting illnesses and injuries for the men and women coming from developing countries are closely related to their living and working conditions. I have treated several patients who have attempted suicide in an effort to render themselves unfit to work and to get themselves deported. I have provided care for patients who have sustained serious injuries due to falls at construction sites that result from unsafe working conditions. I have identified signs of abuse, such as burns and scars that are not included in the worker’s official healthcare documentation – cases where the healthcare team suspect abuse but become complicit in covering it up.

My volunteering experience in the Ethiopian Embassy exposed me to similar cases to those I confront in hospitals. Despite ongoing diplomatic tensions between Qatar and Ethiopia due to the injustices and mistreatment of Ethiopians in Qatar in 2013 Ethiopia re-established an Embassy in Qatar with limited consular authority. According to the Ethiopian Ambassador, the major obligation and purpose of the Ethiopian Embassy in Qatar is to legally represent and provide justice to its people. The opening of the embassy was the first step towards building and strengthening diplomatic ties. However, because of the ongoing tensions, a full bilateral agreement to provide diplomatic protections has not been established. This limited status deprives Ethiopians from full legal protection. The embassy provides shelter to only women who are awaiting trial, fleeing employers, awaiting deportation, or seeking mental, emotional and/or physical care. The housing at the embassy is usually fully occupied, and women reside in the embassy until their legal processes are completed, which may take from four days to two years. In my work as a volunteer at the embassy, I have observed two offences that consistently require a lengthy stay: unmarried women who become pregnant or accusations of theft from a Qatari household. If these women were not able to secure sanctuary at the Ethiopian Embassy they would be jailed. As part of my work with the embassy, I visited the Qatar women's detention center where I visited an Ethiopian woman who was in jail with her three week old baby. Her crime was being an unmarried woman who had given birth. She was very thankful that I was able to provide some formula and diapers for her child, but I left the visit feeling defeated and helpless. Although, I can continue to speak up and visit the women, while I continue with my commitment to engage in small humanitarian actions, but I feel my contribution does not place a dent in the complex issues Ethiopian women endure as they live in the Middle East.

My experience based on my East African ethnic background is not always negative. In Qatar, there are many occasions when I benefit from what I call my "African privilege". There have been countless times that I have been given special treatment because the person I was interacting with was from Africa. For example, I have received VIP access to concerts, parking, and events as the African guard with his West African accent would say, "O! for you, my sista, here, come right here" as he opens the VIP access. Other times, African cleaners have greeted me with a proud smile and a firm handshake as I have walked with my eight students across the hospital halls. At these times, my students have asked, "Ms. did you know the person?" I did not know them but I understood the nod, the smile, and the firm handshake as a sincere celebration of seeing a black woman leading her eight students, which is a picture they do not get to see often. I have also seen how my African students react to me. Once we build our relationship, most complement my curly looks saying, "Ms. I like your hair, you look like my aunt." In addition, I have had incidents where my western accent has provided me with privilege while being with people from East Africa. For example, I had an encounter with an Uber driver who was also from Ethiopia. I walked into my Uber and he said,

"Danaiet?"

"Yes, that is me," I responded.

"Are you Habesha?" (a common word used to describe people from Ethiopia and Eritrea), he asked.

"Yes, I am."

"Oh, the way you were speaking on the phone, you don't sound Habesha," he explained.

"Yes, I grew up in Canada," I told him.

He then asked*, "Can you do me a favor, can we stop at a gas station and pick up a gas*

tank, my own car actually ran out of gas and I need to get gas before I get home."

"Sure, no problem," I told him.

Once we arrived at the gas station, my driver said,

"Go ahead, you ask him and speak like Ferengi; he will give you the tank; he will not give it to me and will ask I bring my own tank or water bottle."

I knew exactly what he was saying, if I speak with a Westerner accent, I will be treated differently and get the container, if I speak with an Ethiopian accent, he would most likely not be loaned the container. It was a direct correlation of trust based on accent where a western accent can be trusted to return the container, while a non-western accent may keep the container and must bring their own. In my best western accent I approached the gas station attendant, said, "excuse me" and made my request. Without hesitation the man at the gas pump gave me the container with gas and we drove off. Although this was an advantage for me to get gas, it left a different form of guilt as I denied my Ethiopian identity to benefit from my Canadian identity. My multiple lives rooted from my intersecting identities creates a mix of emotions as I feel I am denying and accepting part of who I am based on different situations, which is an experience I continue to find a way to manage.

My current life in Qatar provides me with the experience of what it means to be in the upper class. My employment as a Canadian educator established my undeniable privilege of earning a high income and being assigned accommodation a two-bedroom apartment in one of the nicest areas in Qatar. In addition, I have access to private health care, a communication allowance, and paid summer vacation. I never dreamed I would have the lifestyle that my life in Qatar has provided. I have been able to travel the world. I have purchased my mother a house, and I financially support her retirement in Ethiopia. As I continue to live in Qatar, I struggle to

accept privileges that are handed to me based on my citizenship. I continue to look for outlets and for people who share aspects of my experience. I am involved in an ongoing effort to make meaning of my life in Qatar. I have gifted both my mother and my brother trips to visit me in Qatar hoping they can help me navigate through my life while maintaining my true self. Although they are happy to know that I am safe and have wide opportunity, they witness the negative impact that this country has on me and they continue to encourage me to return to Canada.

I live with continuous guilt due to the significant privileges I receive in Qatar while my compatriots from East Africa and people from other developing, impoverished or war-torn nations continue to be treated poorly. In an effort to utilize my privilege towards good, I want to give back to the community and engage in activities that shed a light on the experience of Ethiopian women. In October of 2016, Qatar implemented a three-month amnesty period that provided the opportunity for migrant workers who, for various reasons, were working without a legal visa to be deported home without incurring severe consequences, such as long term imprisonment or fines. Ethiopians in this position were invited to report to the embassy where they were helped to exit Qatar. As part of my volunteer work at the Ethiopian embassy, I ran a fundraiser among my colleagues at UCQ and raised money to support the purchase of seven airfares (1000 QAR each) for Ethiopian women who were reporting to the embassy under the terms of the amnesty but who were unable to pay their airfare. The amnesty opportunity provided for over 1000 illegal Ethiopians living in Qatar to return home without any penalties. The amnesty period is an excellent method to allow migrant workers to exit the country safely, but fails to address deep-rooted issues such as, legality, free visa, and the continued challenges of

being subject to kafala that generate the circumstances in which Ethiopian women find themselves living and working in Qatar without a legal visa.

Writing my experiences in different geographical locations allowed me to identify why it is hard for me to select on group to belong to. Regardless of how I make efforts to form my own identity, other people's perceptions of me are a powerful organizer of my feelings and experiences. For example, if I say I am from Ethiopia, others in that community also have to have the same understanding of what it means to be Ethiopian. For me, there seem to be an essentialist view that I must have certain attributes that allow me to belong into a group. Essentialism is a philosophical tradition that supposes that every entity has a set of stable attributes that are necessary to its identity and function. Although essentialist philosophy is no longer popular, it is argued that "essentialist group beliefs are central to racism" (Verkuyten, 2003, p. 371). Within these essentialist views, the fluidity of my identities seem to be ignored. Because I never quite fit within the representative categories of what it means to be "Ethiopian", "Canadian", a "black woman", "migrant" or an "ex-pat", which led me to often be "othered" (Lister, 2008). I am never quite one of "us" I am one of "them".

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have introduced and sketched out my experiences as they are rooted in my multiple lives. In addition, I have outlined each of them as they arise within my intersecting identities of class, race, gender, nationality, and citizenship. These stories became more prominent to me as they were shaped my experience of growing from girlhood to adulthood and moving from Ethiopia, to Canada, and then to Qatar. The next chapter dives further into how my identities separately, and in their intersecting relationships, have influenced my shifting responses – and how I understand them. The next chapter also explores my fluctuating

experiences as they relate to geographic locations and other people's distinctive ways of structuring their understandings of me. I use the back and forth process of autoethnography further disentangle my own experiences with feminization of migration, deskilling of immigrants, and the healthy immigrant effect. In doing so, I am examine them and inform my deeper understanding in order to be a better nurse and educator.

Chapter 4 Analysis and Discussion: Deconstructing my Multiple Lives

The importance of understanding the nature of social inequalities from a standpoint of self-privilege is emphasized in this section through application of the framework of intersectionality. Guided by intersectionality, this chapter examines more closely how my multiple identities developed the matrix of my experiences. I use my standpoint from within the social groups I share with women to understand migrant women's experiences that are rooted in the social, historical, political, and economic organization of groups. I also recognize the privileged social groups that I have gained entry into as part of my migration experience. I have tried to locate my experiences on the continuum of privilege and/or oppression. I explore race, ethnicity, class, nationality, citizenship, and gender as intertwined identities that have shaped my experience that began in Ethiopia and developed though my migration to Canada and Qatar. Prior to delving into this chapter, I first provide clear definitions that probe my understanding of class, race, ethnicity, citizenship, nationality, and gender to eliminate confusion based on colloquial and/or interchangeable use of these terms. Intersectionality will then be used to interpret, analyse, and integrate literature as well as make meaning of the stories outlined in Chapter Three, while I explore my own fluctuating experiences based on the defined identities. This exploration will end in a discussion of my journey to a new way of understanding women's migration experiences while analyzing my multiple lives.

Race

Definitions of "race" are dynamic and continue to change. Current understanding of race aims to interrogate how constructions of race have been used to establish "global white supremacy" (Millis, 1997, p. 130). The term race was first used in the early 1700s by white Europeans to create racial groups to highlight inferiority or superiority and inclusion or exclusion

factors based on selected physical characteristics (Golash-Boza, 2016). Morning (2011) described race as a "socially constructed belief that the human race can be divided into biologically discrete and exclusive groups based on physical and cultural traits" (p. 130). Discussion, definition, and focus of ideas about race shift based on society and geographical region. There is no single definition of race that can be used as a global standard. As a category, scholars now understand race as an entirely socially constructed phenomenon, with no genetic basis, that has been a powerful organizer of privilege and oppression. The idea of genetically innate racial categories has been explicitly exposed as arbitrary classifications that serve only as convenient labels. Race is not a definable scientific entity and has no biological substantiation. For the purpose of this paper, I use the term race to describe solely the color of my skin, which is black.

Ethnicity

Similar to race, there is no "gold standard" for defining ethnicity. Historically there has been a tendency to use race and ethnicity interchangeably, but treating these terms synonymously negates the conceptual distinction between race and ethnicity. Ethnicity is an explicitly social multidimensional concept "that encompasses shared origins or social background; shared culture or tradition that are distinctive, maintained between generations, and lead to a sense of identity and group; and a common language or religious tradition" (Lockie, McCarthy, Hui, Churilov, Walkera, 2017, p. 707). The characteristics used to define ethnicity are not fixed; rather, they place emphasis on the "subjective, multifaceted and changing nature of ethnic identification" (Lockie et.al., 2017, p. 705). Globalization and the growing multicultural world has shifted how people identify and view themselves (Kunkle, 2015). New ethnic groups emerge when the historic genesis of an ethnic group has been erased, such as the case of African slaves taken to

the western world. Race and ethnicity have an interchangeable use due to the lack of ethnic knowledge secondary to slavery. In this research, I refer to my ethnicity as Tegre: a tribe in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Class

The definition of class varies based on which school of thought is applied. A previously popular view defined class in relation to income and social status. However, current understanding of class encompasses other subjective resources, such as generational wealth, education, skin colour, social status, moral values, social roles, occupation, caste, and lifestyle (Wright, 2018). All of these factors relate to each other and generate challenges for establishing a clear definition. Bach and Nallet (2018) outlined the difficulty of establishing a universal definition of class that represents the "subjective face of social reality" (p. 439). They highlighted the perspective that class systems are constructed from their own socio-economic, political, and historic genesis that are unique to each community. Despite the lack of a standard definition, I have adapted an economical definition of class for my discussion based on the World Bank and African Developmental Bank (ADB). The ADB defines middleclass as those who earn $12.00 to $15.00 USD per day (2019); the ADB further provides a specific definition of middleclass for people living in Africa and it ranges from $2.00 to $20.00 USD per day. I have selected this narrow economic definition of class due to the universal power of higher income that links to privilege, such as access to higher social status, education, occupation, lifestyle, and wealth. Other aspects of class such as skin color and caste are discussed in the latter part of this section when addressing ethnicity and race. In addition, class as defined in the framework of intersectionality will be used in the next chapter to highlight complex identities that shape distinct experiences. In this research, I use terms such as low-income, middle, and

upper class to describe my life experience based on the definition provided above. As described in Chapter Three, my life circumstances have generated a fluctuation up and down the socioeconomic ladder of class relations. Presently, my life has allowed me to climb the ladder of class: I was in the middle-income class in Ethiopia and the low-income class in Canada while am now in the upper-income class in Qatar. The shift in this label correlates both to my income *and* how wealth is constructed in the country where I currently reside.

Nationality and Citizenship

Prior to the literature search conducted for this research, I had used the term nationality as a substitute for citizenship. It was my understanding that nationality meant citizenship, which referred to the passport I held. I now separate the two terms and make key distinctions based on political relationships. Gulalp (2006) defined nationality as a category based on national communities built from people who hold similar ethnicity and who have claim to a *nation*: "a territorially circumscribed entity, exercising legitimate power within its boundaries" (p. 2). On the other hand, citizenship is linked to sovereignty in which members of a citizenry are "accepted" as equal regardless of past status; a citizen has legal rights and obligations that are organized in relation to a governing state. For the purpose of this discussion, I refer to my nationality as East African Canadian and my citizenship as Canadian.

Gender

Often, gender and sex are used interchangeably to identify a person. The difference between gender and sex is distinctly described in gender studies. Gender is a term used to describe "the socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviors, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to people based on their assigned sex" (Vlassoff, 2007, p. 47). This definition contrasts with the definition of sex which references the

biological attributes of humans, while gender focuses on the social differences. Thus, within these definitions and scholarly interest, gender is examined as learned behaviors and mannerisms that may be taught from an early age in order to separate what is acceptable and appropriate while interacting within the sexes. Gender depends on the social cues humans absorb to enact the gender performances we adopt. The language of gender is bound in ideas of masculinity, femininity, and, increasingly in western scholarship, issues of fluidity inside that expression. Similar to race, gender is socially constructed and its definition varies across different *languages*. For example, in my first language, Amharic, there are no words to describe a person's gender and the sex of a person stands alone to identify a person. A person is born and lives as *wend* [male], *set* [*f*emale], or *finafin*t [intersex]. As a person gets older, they remain wend, set, or finafint. Similar to gender roles, there are social norms assigned to the sexes but a terminology for gender is not acknowledged. Despite increased gender freedom as part of the LGBTQIA+[1] community, gender norms are still strong disciplinary organizers of social and economic positioning (Averett, 2016). In this paper, I identify myself as a female (sex) and as a woman (gender). Although there may not be a term for gender in Amharic, there are strong ties between the sex of a person, social roles, and expectations that a person's sex establishes. These are similar to what the English language refers as gender roles.

Journey to Understanding: Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, I never feared being negatively judged based on my race, income, where I lived, what I wore, what I ate, or my social status. When judged, I believe I was *constantly* on the side of privilege. In addition, my experience was built from the intersecting identities of my

[1]Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, ally, pansexual +
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ethnicity, class, gender, and nationality, where race and citizenship did not play major role due to the social construct in Ethiopia. I came from a powerful ethnic background and race was never a factor because Ethiopia was predominantly black and I was privileged in the scheme of colorism as I am a light skin brown person. I came from a middleclass family who was able to afford the high cost of living in Ethiopia. I attended private school, accessed private hospital services, and lived in a nice neighborhood. My category of nationality never came into play until the division between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1991, but my ability to speak fluent Amharic and long-standing community relationships allowed me to never feel out of place or as if I did not belong in Ethiopia. This was a different case for my father who was impacted as he was born in Eritrea and his citizenship being an Eritrean. The war resulted in his deportation and our house became a single parent female-headed household. Although my father shared identities similar to his family, his single identity of being an Eritrean resulted in his deportation and the experience he faced afterwards. It is important to note that his experience was rooted from a single axis identity rather than his intersecting identities, which Diamond & Butterworth (2008) identity as primary identity status.

Despite my family's challenges and my naive response to them, the systemic stratification and intersecting identities my experience; I remained middleclass, Ethiopian, Tegre, and light skinned. Although I was living through the ordeal of family separation, there was a new hope that I would go to *whichi hager* [western world] to reunite with my father and leave Ethiopia. It was his absence that began to introduce the idea of citizenship and a new possibility to identify as a citizen of another country. Yet, I was unaware of the type of life my father was living as a refugee in Israel and his inability to be an Israeli. My girlish imagination was fueled by my ideas that everyone outside of Ethiopia lived like the people I watched on television, and

the government gave free money even when its *citizens* were unable to work. I was naïve to the life of unemployment and the limitations that must have been associated with my father's life as a refugee. It is only now, as I reflect on each category of my identity separately and in their intersecting relationships that I recognize the privileges I lived. I was sheltered from the suffering many other Ethiopians experienced as the adults around me were able to ensure I continued, as much as possible, to live an uninterrupted life. This is where my story differs to the many Ethiopian women I have encountered through my travels. Their migratory experiences were different as they were the ones who were deported and/or they were people like my mother who had lost their significant other, which affected their lives directly; they were people who had no one to shelter them.

I was also naïve and blinded to the influence of gender in my young life. Although I remember being worried by the spectre of being "married off," my younger self did not link this to gender inequality. The gender norms were so assumed as to be invisible; I experienced them as part of our culture as they were firmly integrated into all spectres of life. I certainly had feelings about the rules about wearing skirts in school or my mother's lessons beginning with "because you are a girl," but the impact of gender and any analysis of the socially constructed differences between *wend* and *set* were not part of my conscious awareness. The unspoken gender rules were a taken-for-granted part of my thinking about how the world worked. In addition, I believe that in Ethiopia, the intersecting relationships of my other labels still left me on the side of privilege. This way of thinking began to shift shortly before our migration to Canada when I saw the fate of my sister who was married at the age of 19. I remember how fearful I was that the destiny of women was to be married young and be supported by a husband. Within this backdrop, my behaviors and activities were directed towards becoming a "good girl,"

which would ultimately shape if I was worthy of a good husband. I was expected to be softer, understanding, quiet, and giving. I never thought these expectations made a significant difference; in the day-to-day experiences of my childhood, I was unaware that I was being subjected to gender norms. I experienced myself as living my life unhampered by gender oppression. In hindsight, I can identify how I was subjected to gender norms. As an adult reflecting back on my childhood, I can now see that despite the emphasis on education presented by my family, I was expected to plan for my future with marriage as a priority.

I understand the privileged life I had in Ethiopia as the result of my intersecting identities of gender, class, ethnicity, and nationality. In addition, the sacrifices made by others in order for me to continue to live my life uninterrupted by war and politics. I was also fortunate that my intersecting identities allowed me to remain in the side of privilege, while my father was faced with deportation due to his primary identity status of being an Eritrean. My life in Ethiopia also shaped who I am as a person and began to construct my experiences in Canada. As a child, I was beginning to identify as a proud East African who came from a middle class family.

Journey to Understanding: Canada

My experience in Canada was completely different from the life I had in Ethiopia. How I viewed myself in Canada began to shift as I began to recognize the shift in which stratification held more power and how Canadian society was constructed. Different aspects of my life began to dominate and shape how people viewed me. I lost my middleclass status and tribal privilege in Canada. Canada introduced me to the experiences of racism and racialized oppression in a way that I had not experienced throughout my Ethiopian childhood. I was seen as black, immigrant, lower class/poor, and female, which were in the lower social status groups. In addition, living in a female single-parent household perpetuated the stigma of a westernized stereotype about black

men being absent fathers that I absorbed from the racialized social messages that circulated around me. It was my observation that Canadian society focused on race, class, and gender to construct my experience. Ethnicity, nationality, and citizenship became a morphed term that failed to hold much meaning because in PEI, my family and I were described as CFA. CFA is a colloquial term commonly used in PEI to describe people who were not born on the island – come from away. My experience in Canada also allowed me to reflect beyond my own experience, and I began to be aware of our differences that I had been blind when I was younger. In this section, I outline the experience I had in Canada and compare it with my mothers' experience while highlighting our intersecting identities, focusing on quintessential intersection of race, gender, and class.

Becoming Black, Female, and Poor in PEI

Arriving in Canada generated a process of *becoming* black, female and poor. My Ethiopian citizenship and nationality became that of an amorphous "African," and my ethnicity *became* black. It was in Canada I began to understand the concept of race, where my life in Ethiopia focused on ethnicity. The expectations from my teachers at school were low and were based on what I believe to be the intersecting relationship between my language skill, skin color, and assumptions about "African" education. I once had a teacher tell me that they usually held people a year back to allow to provide kids from Africa "catch up." Aside from being expected to perform poorly, I was also expected to act "black." For example, there was an automatic assumption among Canadians that I am an African American rather than an African who had moved to Canada from Ethiopia or an African Canadian, the image of blackness has been completely relegated to being African American, what people see on TV. I have been subjected to the stereotypes of African American and expected to play basketball, rap, and speak in

Ebonics, which are all foreign to me. The expectation by people around me of being an African American motivated me to learn and understand African American history and what it means to be black. African history, including slavery and what it meant to be a black in the Canadian society rather than the prideful knowledge I had from the African history I was taught in Ethiopia. Ethiopia never being colonized, own language, "cradle of civilization" had no place in the African history I began to read.

It took me many years to understand social norms and way of beings rooted from blackness. For example, I did not actually understand why no one should touch my hair. I learned that such touching or requests to touch were to be considered racialized and offensive acts, but it took me many years to understand why. While growing up in PEI, I was as curious about people's blonde hair as they were about my tight curly hair. Therefore, I felt it was a mutual curiosity. In addition, I grew up believing I had "good" hair as part of my Ethiopian upbringing. I was proud of my tight curly afro hair. I understood people's responses to my hair as their natural curiosity. They would say, "I know I am not supposed to touch your hair, but your hair is so fluffy." I took this interaction as mutual curiosity but I began to understand what it means to be othered regardless of the years I spent with the community.

I began to recognize that their curiosity produced what Lister (2008) called a systematic othering. Even with the people I had known for many years, what I had in common with them was secondary to what made us different. For example, during my last year of high school in 2007, I encountered girls wanting to touch my hair and my tan line as I was changing for physical education class. Those were my early memories of feeling uncomfortable when people touched my hair or my skin. I had attended school for three years with these girls, but I was always seen as being different. I experienced a lack of respect for my personal space. We were a

group of girls with diverse physical attributes, but for me there seemed to be different rules for what was socially acceptable. I have a memory of all the girls walking towards me and commenting with surprise that I had a tan and that my hair had become extra curly after a shower. I felt I existed only for the colour of my skin and the tightness of my curls; there was nothing more to me even among my peers. Looking back analytically through the lens of intersectionality, I now understand there were structural features related to *girls'* interest in my skin and hair that may well have been a gendered experience. However, it was my *racialized difference* that I attribute to attracting what Mattsson (2014) and Mbilishaka (2019) call unwanted attention. It was adolescent encounters like this that shifted my previous acceptance of childhood curiosity with unintentional bias. The longer I felt, othered, it began to feel like it was them against me, which is a core concept of othering (Fahs, 2011). According to Fahs,

> women *do* gender and *do* body work not only to manage their own anxieties but also to manage the anxieties and expectations of others . . .particularly along racial lines. Within these body modification practices, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and homophobia all appear in full force. (p. 452)

It was these subtle practices of social ordering that I was being subject to among the girls I attended school with. I now understand this as both my friends and I enacting the "body politics" (Brown & Gershon, 2017, p.2) of the intersections between gender, sexuality, race and, other social identities that were embedded in our experiences of coming of age.

A similar experience of othering occurred when I moved to Calgary for a short period of time. Previously, part of how I had made meaning of being othered was an understanding that PEI is a very small province with very few black people, and I reasoned that this explained people's extreme behaviours when they encountered a black person. I assumed Calgary would be

different because I felt it was more diverse. Unfortunately, my assumption was wrong. My new white roommate would only introduce me to her friends as "Hi, this is Dee, my black roommate." I assumed it would be a one-time thing but her emphasis on the colour of my skin continued for most of the time we lived together. It was clear to me that regardless of how she came to know me as a person, the colour of my skin would always be the focus of my existence for her. She only stopped introducing me as her black roommate when I began to introduce her as "my white roommate." She was surprised, and we ended up having a conversation regarding why she only saw me as her black roommate. She became uncomfortable and dismissed the conversation, after which she became distant with me. Gans (2017) suggests that

> racialization is best understood as a process . . . it can become a condition of long and even nearly permanent duration. In that case, all members of the racialized group are treated as if all they do, feel and think is caused by their race as it is conceived by the racially dominant population. Then, racialization is likely to become institutionalized (pp. 342-343).

I now understand that my experiences in both PEI and in Calgary were part of the process of institutionalized racism that are part of the social fabric of Canada.

My Canadian experiences of racism were formative. It is hard to discern precisely how they have shaped my personality, my responses, my friendships, and my sense of self. I have an antenna for those people who may be unwittingly racist, for whom the colour of my skin is a prominent part of their response, and for whom I maybe a "token." Similarly, I have an antenna for those people who are honestly respectful of difference; those people who acknowledge but simultaneously see beyond my race and ethnicity. Bannerji (2000), a Canadian feminist of Indian origin, writes about how racialized women forge an "oppositional/coalitional identity" (p. 542)

that is a term that seems to fit how my identity "antennae" are activated. I have learned to move through the various social spaces of my world within the intersections of race, gender, and class where, in Canada, my "race" is almost always the most prominent aspect of my identity that necessitates mediation of my origins with the responses and assumptions of others.

However, my own identity has been informed by the national pride I have in being Ethiopian. Goittom (2016) accurately captures this sense of pride: "what constitutes an Ethiopian or Eritrean innermost core is being born into an Ethiopian or Eritrean culture and feeling the resultant pride of being part of such a culture" (p. 1170). In my view, Ethiopian nationalism is inspired by the achievement of never being colonized by the European diaspora. However, this prideful aspect of my Ethiopian heritage was a foreign concept to the people around me who were quick to erase my history and clump me in with the historical story of Africa and the Americas, which was a new story to me. This mistaken identity also birthed my new way of understanding my nationality and how I now identify. The experiences I have described are tied in into the unease I feel when people ask me where I am from. When I was young, it was a simple question. I knew I was Ethiopian. In PEI that simplicity became complicated. I began to say "I am from Africa;" I too began to erase my own identity. Fahs (2011) discussed bodies and sexualities as they arise within relations of race, gender, and heteronormativity and how researchers debate "ideas about choice, agency, and power, particularly as women conform to or rebel against traditional social scripts" (p. 451). Saying "I am from Africa" is indicative of my conforming response.

People used my race against me during arguments at work or school. I had coworkers mock my accent and tell me to "go back to where you come from." I knew that these comments were antagonistic. I believe they were racialized epithets intended to evoke feelings of shame as

well as inferiority and to reinforce feelings of superiority for the "privileged" person who believed I should "go back." I understand these imbalances of inferiority and superiority as the basis of systemic racialism. I recognized that somehow I was supposed to be upset and angry about such comments. However, for me, "going back" was never associated with negativity. It was never insulting; rather, it was a retirement plan! I had a dream of visiting family and having a place to call home in Ethiopia. The fact that my coworkers felt entitled to being in Canada more than me made me feel upset, but my wish to "go back" to Ethiopia was a normal response to my circumstances. However, having my accent mocked made me feel insecure. It was part of the reason why I knew I needed to learn to speak "good English" that, in my high school and university days, I equated with speaking with a western accent. My early identity formation provided me with a sense of confidence and pride that seemed to be a resource for me in contrast to other black racialized people who may have only ever experienced themselves as marginalized within Canada. I believe that one privilege of my intersecting identities is how I grew up experiencing a very strong sense of respect and belonging that was not subjected to systemic racism. In the literature, the description closest to my experience is discussed within the theory of "place attachment" or "place identity" (Altman & Low, 1992; Boğaç, 2009; DuCros, 2019). Researchers within these theories seek to "elucidate how migrants narratively construct place attachment (an emotional connection to a physical site) and place identities (self-meaning derived from a place)" (DuCros, 2019, p. 678). This literature about the migrant experience suggests that the formative time of my life in Ethiopia, unfettered by racism, is a resilient part of my identity.

My reaction to being told to go back to where I came from made me aware of a distinct privilege, in contrast to what I was learning from my African Canadian friends who were born in

Nova Scotia. Their experience was part of the systemic racism faced by those of African American descent historically influenced by slavery and segregation. An example of the slavery and segregation historically found in Nova Scotia is chronicled in Nelson's (2008) account of what happened in Africville Nova Scotia during the 1960s and into the 1970s. I cannot speak to the experiences of my African Canadian friends, but I understood that my response to the racism we experienced seemed different from theirs.

Living in low-income housing I became a "poor black youth" where, due to racialized stereotypes, I was at risk of being treated with suspicion and fear. Again, I *became* poor and out social position from middle class in Ethiopia has shifted. The precarious socioeconomic status that characterized my family's early years in PEI is well documented in the literature about newcomers to Canada (Elrick & Lightman, 2016; Picot, Hou, Coulombe, 2008). Lightman and Good Gingrich (2018) statistically analyzed the economic exclusion linked to racialized minorities, immigrants and women in Canada. They found evidence of persistent disadvantage tied to immigrant status, race, and gender in Canada's labor market. Similar to their findings, my mother's social and economic poverty in Canada directly affected me and shifted my responsibilities. As well, my mother's capacity to support me with my transition into the Canadian school curriculum was limited. Anisef and Kilbride (2003) published an edited collection of studies about immigrant youth in Ontario chronicling how the children in immigrant families work to protect their parents from the school systems that their parents know nothing about; these essays resonate with my own experiences of being in school.

These factors were all contributors to my desire to act above my age and to begin to work in the service industry which was motivated by my awareness of our tenuous financial situation. My early employment contributed to the family income. Research indicates that

adolescent immigrants embrace collectivist family values and adopt more responsibility for family wellbeing (Geel & Vedder, 2011). My brother was also part of our collective family economy where he played a significant role in supporting my finances. When I was unable to pay for my tuition, it was my brother who paid for my last year of university from his savings from his work as a cashier in a cinema. He had a student loan but paid for my tuition in order to support my mother and allow me to graduate without a student loan. In addition to supporting me with the application to my university, my brother also played the role of my provider at the age of 25.

Becoming well educated, fluent in English, and "successful" became part of a childhood fantasy where I would buy a house for my mother in Ethiopia *and* have a cottage on the beautiful shores of PEI. Such ideas are apparently common experiences for third culture kids (TCK) (Useem et al., 1963). In my own story, my country of origin and countries of arrival have blurred my sense of identity and belonging. Like other TCKs, my identities were being founded upon my goals and aspirations as well as my background and origins. This is a key aspect of being a TCK (Pollock & Van Reken, 2004). Research into the experiences of TCKs describes how our experiences moving between multiple cultures influence our identity development (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). We learn diverse cultural rules that allow us to move fluidly between cultural settings. I am comfortable in a variety of environments and hold flexible plans for my future, but I lack a sense of belonging. This is part of the experience described in literature about TCKs who "may feel socially isolated and have no social group to which they belong" (Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009, p. 256). In part, my adolescent dream of going back, generated by the hardships and isolation I faced as a youth, has been fulfilled by my life circumstances as I continue my TCK

journey now visiting my mother in Ethiopia and my brother in Canada while making my home in Qatar.

Kaushick and Walsh (2018) developed a critical analysis of the use of intersectionality theory to understand the settlement of immigrants to Canada. Although their work focuses on the integration of skilled workers, their research resonates with my experiences. What stands out is how these two authors work to peel apart “the complex factors behind the obstacles to successful settlement and integration” (p. 27). Although there is utility in applying the theoretical framework of intersectionality to support my analysis of my experiences of racism that seem to be generated by the colour of my skin, those experiences are intertwined with my use of language, my accented English, my gender, and my age. Kauahick and Walsh (2018) provided a lens through which I can begin to understand how my intersecting identities “are mutually constituted and are not experienced separately, rather, they are single, synthesized experience” (p. 29). Race, ethnicity, gender, age and class “landed” in my coming of age in PEI in a way that is difficult to separate as distinct subjects of inquiry. It is a challenge to express how I felt marginalized, self conscious, and insecure while also being *proud* of the components of my identity that were being activated by the racial epithets being uttered, which produced a concurrent experience of pride in being Ethiopian.

There was a gendered expectation from my extended family that I took responsibility for my mother’s well-being. This is in contrast to my brother who was expected to be “the man” of the family but was not responsible for supporting my mother during her appointments and had no domestic responsibilities, such as cleaning, grocery shopping, and cooking. Although I tried to contribute to the family budget, I was not pardoned from the other gendered responsibilities that came from being a woman nor did I receive the privileges that accompanied being the “man of

the house." I contributed in ways that were similar to my brother, but I was *seen* for the tasks I completed that reflected the gender norms of a female and these were the characteristics that were nurtured and valued. While completing this autoethnography, my mother would say, "*You know what, you were like a boy, you have always been like a boy. I don't know how you were able to make all the appointments or even order at a restaurants you always knew what to say and do, you are more like your father*." She recognizes the key role I played in our day to day life but also worries that my "man of the house" like character will limit me from finding a potential husband. She would say, "*Danaiet, what man is going to listen to all your rules and your ability to just get up and do what needs to be done, but God has a plan for us*." In such moments of uncertainty, my mother finds comfort in accepting God's plan. Although my mother values the role I played, she also values the traditional roles. Those ideas shape the dream that she attaches to my gender: to be a "good wife."

My brother expressed similar ideas about my capacities that I believe have been influenced by gender norms. He would say, "*I never understood how quick you got comfortable being like them (white Canadian), you were working as a bartender and I still struggled to order at a restaurant or hold the Western mannerism*." My brother's privileged position as the "man of the house" was a function of his being male, not necessarily based on his ability to navigate life in Canada. However, I also benefitted from him being older and his willingness to sacrifice for his family. He absorbed the responsibilities of being older and being male. For example, as I recounted in the introduction to this chapter, when I did not have money for my tuition, he paid for my last year of university from money he saved while working at the movie theatre. He has said, "*Of course that was my responsibility*." This aspect of how his character had developed informed his own identity as the breadwinner and decision maker. Growing up, it was my

brother who made decisions about what I was allowed and not allowed to do. For example, he was the one whose permission I sought when I wanted to stay out late in the evening. I now see how my brother and I contributed in different ways to our household. However, the traditional ways that gender works granted my brother the title of "man of the house," whilst my own contributions did not garner the same respect. As a female, despite the death of my father, I was still subject to the authority of the male as the head of the house.

In addition to not garnering the same respect, I was often characterized negatively and labelled as too aggressive, assertive, and demanding. This characterization resulted from my active participation in the necessary work in and out of the home, my proud and persistent attitude, and being more articulate in English than my brother. In truth, I was merely doing what was needed to survive in our new environment where I felt I the weight of the responsibility for my mother, whose health and wellbeing were in serious decline. I knew that if I did not make her appointments, they would not be made. The development of my heavy sense of responsibility and my family obligations are not uncommon among the children of immigrant families where role reversals among parents and children have been noted by researchers (Dorner, Orellana & Jiménez, 2008). Researchers note that generational changes and adaptations are based on many factors, such as age, culture, income, community, and educational status (Berry, 1989). I was 14 when I moved to Canada, which required me to attend high school. My brother began university. Our adaptation was different. I was still a child and was immersed into the Canadian culture at a younger age, which impacted my ability to assimilate. In PEI, I became the family language broker: the practice in which children "facilitate communication between two linguistically and/or culturally different parties. Unlike formal interpreters and translators, brokers mediate, rather than merely transmit, information" (Tse, 1996, p. 485) (see also Dorner, Orellana &

Jiménez, 2008). Being a language broker required me to fulfil a unique need in my family. I acquired an Islander accent but can take on an Ethiopian accent based on who I am speaking with and the environment at the time, which is discussed in the literature as "code switching" (Li, 1996). This is the practice of adeptly changing a word or a phrase in one language (Amharic) and substituting it for a word or phrase in a second language (English). In addition, my accent and way of dressing can fluctuate based on who I am encountering. Heller (1988) stated that "the use of multiple languages permits people to say and do, indeed to be two or more things where normally a choice is expected" (p. 93).

There has been a steep price to pay for the "Canadian dream." Onlookers would likely suggest that the dream has apparently "come true" as I am financially stable and can provide for my family. Nonetheless, the gender norms that surround marriage, my choice of occupation, and even my economic support for my family that is seen merely as part of my "caregiving" role are evidence that issues of gender, as they arise within race and class, are deeply ingrained in my experiences. It is possible to see how gender norms in Ethiopia and Canada influenced my choices. My early work in the food service industry and, ultimately, my profession as a nurse – a profession that has an historic genesis as deeply gendered women's work (Moss, Mooney, O'Connell, & Statham, 2014) – represent social messaging about the sorts of jobs I could get and the occupations that suited me. My responsibilities at home and outside influenced my decision to enroll in nursing. My family reminded me that I was already doing "the caring" for my mother and were keen to characterize me as *kind, understanding, quiet,* and *giving*. These feeling were further compounded as I witnessed my mother facing what I now understand as the healthy immigrant effect and deskilling of immigrants. Becoming a nurse became the guaranteed way out of current struggle and advocate for others.

Witnessing the healthy immigrant effect. My experience of the intersecting relationships of the oppressive labels I endured are inseparable from my home life with my mother. My mother's experience in Canada was very difficult and, of course, very different from mine. Her challenges with speaking English prohibited her from practising in professional office work. She began to work in the physically demanding toil of housekeeping work. My mother's grief and isolation resulting from the death of my father and the stresses of raising two children in conditions of poverty took a considerable toll on her health experience in Canada. The decline of her health and wellbeing directly affected my family dynamics. She suffered enormously from undiagnosed pain. It is only now, as I reflect on each category of my identity, both separately and together in their intersecting relationships, that I recognize that I was afforded privileges that my mother lacked. I interacted with the community outside our house; I learned to speak fluent English; and I received a Canadian education. My mother lived a physically and mentally isolated life that affected her wellbeing. Her degenerating health fits Canadian research that shows it is common for migrants' health to deteriorate.

The healthy immigrant effect was very evident in the decline of health for my mother. She was a healthy person in Ethiopia. Although the dream of reunification with my father was not a possibility, my mother was stalwart in her decision to travel to Canada. These circumstances greatly influenced her unique experience. In order to come to Canada we went through multiple pre-screening processes, which did not reveal any serious health problems. However, both her physical and mental health began to decline within a few months being in Canada as she began to complain of back pain that was never diagnosed. Five years after our arrival, she was diagnosed with TB and hyperthyroidism. Her physical problems were treated and she was able to recover; however, I continue to notice challenges with her mental health. My

mother was unable to cope with the separation from our extended family. Moreover, it was her expectation that she would be able to send money home, which was a duty she took seriously because she knew her opportunity to relocate to Canada had generated economic hope for family members who remained in Ethiopia. This expectation placed a tremendous burden on her to be mentally and physically healthy. Although she has never been officially diagnosed with a mental illness, her primary care provider has suggested that her ongoing symptoms are somatic and may have an origin in mental suffering. She continues to suffer from pain in her back and knee that comes and goes. Her battle with somatic pain continues and I was able to provide more evidence regarding her condition that she is not alone and her way of coping have been seen in many immigrants who have been affected, which has been conceptualized as the healthy immigrant effect. This new found knowledge has allowed me to seek appropriate help for her but I also have made the realization that research findings require dissemination of findings to the people that are impacted. What I now understand as the healthy immigrant effect would have been significantly beneficial to have known while my mother was directly being impacted by TB.

Witnessing deskilling of immigrants. Interviewing my mother for this autoethnography challenged my childhood ideas about her. My mother spoke of her story and experience in ways that were very different from my own characterizations and understandings. In Ethiopia, my mother was a dependable woman who was responsible for her siblings and had a strong community connection that allowed her to thrive. Once she moved to Canada, her role and how she was perceived by Canadians changed her. The former respect she garnered from neighbours, colleagues, my school teachers, and others was lost; she lost her power and autonomy as an independent educated woman. She told me how she felt when my brother and I began to assume more control of what was happening because we spoke better English. My brother and I began to

build a community outside our home whilst my mother became increasingly socially isolated. She associated only with the small group of women with whom she worked, and relied on the church community for her social connections. The fundamentalist evangelistic church community where she found refuge was also isolated from mainstream Canadian life. These simple, but powerful, insights about my mother led me to explore and question what it means for immigrant women to seek employment opportunities in the service sector: What did it mean for my mother, and the women like her, to abandon their previous career aspirations in order to provide for their families? This revelation from my autoethnography prompted me to examine how the migrant experience and systems for migrant labour changes not only women's own perception of themselves, but also how their children perceive them.

For example, in the early drafts of my data, I characterized my mother as an uneducated Ethiopian immigrant who, in Canada, worked as a cleaner to support her children. A product of my environment, I labelled my mother within the discursive practices of how she was seen by others. The Canadian employment services for immigrants is structured to establish immigrants in low paying "unskilled" employment (Leigh, 2015; McCoy & Masuch, 2007). Thus, her education and prior experience was dismissed by the Canadian employment systems that downgraded her proficiencies and channeled her into the gendered role of hotel housekeeping. My ideas about her were informed by the structural characterizations about newcomers to Canada and where we "fit" in the fabric of Canadian society. I subordinated my prior knowledge of my mother and accepted how she was being seen in Canada. In a way, I had absorbed the social positioning of the Canadian view.

During the writing process of this autoethnograpic research, the labels I had placed on my mother shifted. I began to understand my mother's life differently. This shift was reinforced by

the research conversations I had with my mother. The tone of her voice changed when she was describing her experience in Ethiopia. It was much more animated than when she was speaking of her experience in Canada. She emphasized that, in Ethiopia, she was an independent educated woman working in an office earning a middleclass pay. In addition, she spoke with pride and confidence about her work of raising her children independently once my father was deported. The characterization I made about her as an uneducated single mother working as a cleaner was partially true but fails to represent her pre-migration persona and the identities she holds for herself. I began to recognize that my mother was educated but her education and skills were not recognized in Canada. Her employment potential was classified based on her poor English. This language challenge subjugated her certifications in computer, public relations, and commerce. She was directed into work that did not provide her with the opportunity to use her skills and to develop her language proficiency.

Journey to understand my experience in Canada allowed me to reflect on my identities and how they intersected. It was clear that my race, gender, and class played a significant role in shaping what I refer as my multiple experience. My Canadian experience places me in position of privilege while comparing it to my mother but I feel it places me in an oppressive experience while comparing to Canadian born society. For example, In Canada, I am African Canadian or Black Canadian and this label brings some form of inequality in comparison to dominant Euro, “settler” Canadians. Average income for African Canadian was 30,000 CAD for the general population (Canadian born) and only 24,000 CAD for the African Canadian population. This is despite that the African population in Canada age 15 and over help 19% have a higher education than Canadian born (Statistics Canada, 2007). In addition, the 2001 census indicated that 80% of general Canadian population was employed while only 69% of African Canadians were

employed (Statistics Canada, 2007). In addition, Block and Galabuzi (2019) found that racialized immigrants earned only 78 cents for every dollar paid to non-racialized Canadians for the same job. This is to say, how I am viewed within population-level data has a strong influence in my experience in this socially constructed organization of humans. True to the framework of intersectionality, it is critical I reflect on my own stratification within the matrix of domination to understand my own privilege, in comparison to my mother, and to the bigger population.

Journey to Understanding: Qatar

As stated in Chapter Three, my experience in Qatar fluctuates based on my intersecting identities, and how each identity intersects is different from my experiences in Ethiopia and Canada. Qatar has a deeply heterogeneous population with diverse biases and assumptions. My experience continues to shift as I am embedded in social interactions that correspond with the characterizations and assumptions that other people attribute to my presence. In Qatar, the current positioning of my intersecting experiences of oppression and privilege are challenging to articulate in this autoethnograpic exploration of my life. Paradox, irony, and ambiguity are often the timbre of my experiences. Gratefulness, confusion, guilt, sadness, resentment, anger, frustration, relief, humor, excitement, and indifference are some of the complicated responses I experience as I navigate the politics and social structures. In Qatar, my encounters constructed by my race, ethnicity, citizenship, class, and gender arise in a social world that is *explicitly* structured by conventions, laws, and histories to produce deeply stratified experiences among the population that is dominated by migrants from around the globe. In Qatar, the society is multilingual, multicultural, and multifaceted (Elnashar, Abdelrahim, & Fetters, 2012; Khidir,

Asad, Abdelrahim et al., 2016).[2] My experiences in Qatar are organized within a distinctly different cultural setting than either Ethiopia or Canada. In Ethiopia and Canada, despite the multiculturalism of globalization, the population in both countries are much more homogeneous that the huge ethnic and linguistic diversity that characterizes life in Qatar.

In Qatar, skin colour carries different meanings than its former influences of power and oppresion that I am familiar with as an Ethiopian in Ethiopia and then in Canada. In Qatar, governance is conducted within a system of reigning power based on family lineage. It is a form of governance known as an absolute autocracy. Qatari nationals (people in power) are various shades of black and brown. Thus, in Qatar, facial structures and characteristics such as language learned at birth, accent, gender, grooming, wearing the "national" attire, dressing "western" and the varying shades of skin colour, produce practices of entitlement and deference that are very different from any of my prior experiences. They are rules and conventions that I have learned about during my time in Qatar. Each the diverse national groups seems to express its own distinct social and/or ethnic way of being – people gather in their national categories and groups to socialize and develop communities and these affiliations spill into daily life. So much so that almost every interaction with a stranger begins with the question "Where are you from?" Or conversely, "Let me guess, you are from *Jordan"* or any other country.

In my previous encounters in both Ethiopia and Canada, I experienced my intersecting identities as more fixed and stable. My experiences of navigating daily life did not shift and

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[2] The 2007 national population committee reported that 45% of the overall Qatari population spoke Arabic (Qatar Permanent Population Committee. Cited by Elnashar, Abdelrahim, and Fetters, 2012) but that the first language among the rest of the population was unknown. Elnashar, Abdelrahim, and Fetters surveyed non Arabic speakers at Hamad Medical Corporation's outpatient clinics determining that of 1,600 respondents 1,408 (88%) spoke South Asian languages: 21.2% spoke Hindi, 19.5% spoke Urdu, 14.7% spoke Malayalam, 9.5% spoke Tagalog, 7.2% spoke Bengali, 4.5% spoke Nepali, 3.5% spoke Pashto, 3.1% spoke Tamil, 2.3% spoke Sinhalese, 1.5% spoke Farsi, and 1.1% spoke Telugu.

change as extremely as they do in Qatar. My experiences in Qatar fluctuate more drastically depending on where I am and who I am with. As I have described above, Qatar has numerous, multifaceted indicators of gender, race, ethnicity, and class. Simple factors, such as whether a woman is wearing an abeya and hajib as well as even how her hajib is wrapped or pinned, contributes to how she is classed, racialized, and gendered in her day to day experiences.[3] My experience in Qatar exposed me to a deepened understanding of cultural constructs of gender race and class than I *consciously* attended to in Ethiopia and Canada. Personally, the lessons that I work to absorb in Qatar are influenced by what in nursing and social work is known as "cultural humility" (Abdul-Raheem, 2018; Barsky, 2019; Danso, 2018). Cultural humility requires a state of openness. It requires me to engage in self-critique and to recognize my own prejudices and, foremost, to avoid imposing my biases and assumptions. My developing cultural humility is part of my experience of learning and growing in Qatar. In Qatar, I find primary identity of citizenship as Canadian developing my privileged experience while the intersecting of my gender and ethnicity developing oppressive experience. I have two distinct experiences rooted from two ways in which my multiple identities intersect. These are, when I am seen as Canadian and when I am seen East African (Ethiopian) female. In this section, I analyse my experience rooted from these intersecting identities which results in distinct experiences (multiple lives). In addition, I explore beyond my own personal experience and reflect into the experience of Ethiopian domestic workers.

[3] Bouvier (2016) studied the various styles of Arabic women's hajib. She described how Arabic Muslim women use clothing to communicate a number of different discourses simultaneously.

Being Female, Black, and Canadian

I landed in Qatar as an *adult*. As such, during my acclimatization I was much more conscious about how I was *learning* how to understand the diverse, nuanced, and complex signifiers of social location that play out in the various locations I occupy. In Qatar, citizenship (one's passport) is part of the social hierarchy and being Canadian affords me privileges that I would not have if I were working with my Ethiopian passport. Canadians hold a higher position than Ethiopians in the hierarchy of power in Qatar. For example, systemic visa allocation to Qatar from Ethiopia is linked to low-skilled workers or domestic workers (free visa) while Canadians are granted high-skilled workers, which is directly linked to my income. My Canadian citizenship affords me the most significant privilege as I feel protected. As a Canadian, I receive regular updates from the Canadian embassy and I am on their emergency registry in case the neighbouring region becomes politically unstable. I have had opportunities to meet the Canadian Ambassador and address questions I have in regard to my stay in Qatar. For example, when Qatar became the center of a Middle East embargo in 2017, the Canadian Ambassador came to a town hall meeting on the UCQ campus to address fear about food security and military tensions. The dean of UCQ meets regularly with the Canadian Ambassador. They work together to ensure that Canadians working in Qatar are working in an environment that is safe and secure. Even though labour unions are illegal in Qatar, the comprehensive agreement between UCQ and the state of Qatar is influenced by the Faculty Association at the University of Calgary who ensure that salaries are commensurate with Canadian pay scales.[4]

[4] This does not hold for the 'local hires' at UCQ. Those members of the security, housekeeping, and clerical staff whose terms of employment and remuneration do not come under labour union oversight. Despite this disparity, as a "Canadian employer" in Qatar, UCQ has a reputation for treating local hires well with fair wages and attention to occupational health and safety practices that meet Canadian standards.

My passport powers my intersecting identities of being black, female, and Ethiopian. Although I have demonstrated that my experiences are rooted in my intersecting identities, I find these categorical intersections most difficult to dissect in Qatar. This is to say, there is a strong tie to class based on citizenship where Qatari nationals and westerners are classified in the upper class and earn more, while people who hold non-western passports are positioned in the lower class and earn very little. This observation goes beyond income in-so-far as it determines where one is *allowed* to live, not merely where one can *afford* to live. I believe my Qatar experience is mainly influenced by my citizenship. However, the intersections of my identities are variously accentuated or minimized depending upon where I am and who I am with.

At work, the majority of my colleagues are female, white, Canadians. My experience within my working environment resonates with the experience of women of colour in academia. My experience at work fluctuates to my experience in Canada as black Canadian or immigrant Canadian. I *am* racialized in some of my activities, being singled out as different among the other Canadian faculty with whom I work. It is somewhat unsettling for me when I experience the systemic racialization that I experience in Canada carried over into the University of Calgary in Qatar campus, which is dominated by Canadian faculty of Euro descent.[5] At UCQ I have encountered what I consider to be oppressive experiences that leave me questioning if I belong in my working environment at UCQ.

When I express a different opinion that disagrees with faculty colleagues, I am quickly reminded of the fact that I am the youngest member of faculty. I hear phrases that echo those of my childhood teachers, such as “you are a smart *girl* but;” “your lack of experience;” and “you

[5] Many of these people are my friends and they are aware of racism. However, what I am elaborating here is my experience of *systemic* racism – that arises for me in a similar way in UCQ as it does at home, in Canada.

should be happy you are in this meeting." Phrases like theses ignite feelings of imposter syndrome (Wilkerson & Samuels, 2019). I get messages that I do not belong here in my first experience of being employed in academia. Impostor syndrome has become a feeling I continue to battle and continue to seek mentorship in confronting the feelings of insecurity that being a black woman who is a first-generation educator seem to evoke. The impression that I am being othered because of my age has been a constant experience where other (white) women my age seem to be less readily "shut down" when expressing their opinions. In the UCQ environment, it is almost impossible to examine my experience within the distinct categories of age, race, gender, and class. These are completely interwoven within a response to *me*. It is more difficult to make meaning from this vague consciousness of oppression than it would be if I could clearly identify overt racism, sexism, or ageism. It is a vague feeling of unease that, in Qatar, I *only* experience while at work surrounded by other Canadians. In the literature, experiences such as the ones I am working to describe here are discussed as "racial microaggressions" (Marom, 2019, p.320). Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) wrote that "overt racist acts are usually not socially condoned and examples of overt racism in public discourses are rare . . . it is typically subtle and covert ways . . . racism manifests" (p. 61). It is my experience that there are occasions in my work experience at UCQ when I have been subject to these subtle and covert practices – practices that perhaps the people who commit them are themselves unaware of – that I nonetheless experience as the microagressions discussed in the literature.

Being East African Female in Qatar

Qatar's strict labor laws clearly separate how Qataris and expatriates are to be treated. Here again, my experiences reveal that there are different levels of complexity where expatriates are divided into sub-groups based on country of origin. The language terms used for foreigners

are a telling feature of the social stratifications at work. The term “expat” is used to describe workers from the western world. It is a term that is applied to me, as a Canadian but would not be granted if I was here with my Ethiopian passport. In any conversation I have with the many westerners with whom I interact, the terms “migrants” or “labourers” are used to group people from economically poor countries. As such, my observations of East African females in Qatar has been directly linked to their intersecting identities that are different than mine. They have been relegated to gendered professions and experience challenges due to the feminization of migration (Gabaccia, 2016).

Witnessing the feminization of migration. The effect of feminization of migration is a feature of life in the Middle East where there are many domestic employment opportunities for female workers. In 2018, population statistics from the government of Qatar approximated that only 25% of the total population were women which equated to 632,498 out of the 1,992,584 total population (Ministry of Development, Planning Statistics [MDPS], 2018). Overall, countries of the GCC issue fewer visas to females compared to the US, Canada, and countries in the EU (Naithani, 2009). This is related to rapid development and the magnitude of the construction industry in countries where petroleum and gas have generated significant wealth. The large number of construction workers who are recruited come as single men who live in segregated accommodation known as “labour camps.” Although a fewer number of women enter the country, the visas for women are directly linked to jobs traditionally associated with conventional, socialized gender roles such as maid, nurse, cook, and caregiver (Kuschminer & Sigele, 2014).

As outlined in Chapter Two, in Qatar, the vulnerability of Ethiopian women who unwittingly enter the country through the brokerage of the illegal “free visa” is significant. Upon

discovering that their visas are illegal, the women face jail and deportation. DeGenova (2010) edited a collection of papers in a book titled *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space and Freedom of Movement* that highlights how the threat of deportation is a powerful structural strategy that enforces the vulnerability and silence of the female domestics working in Kafala. Moreover, DeGenova described how Kefala is a system that forces women into a system of illegality. When women's vulnerabilities result in their "running away," they become "caught" in an untenable situation of being unable to leave, beholden to their sponsor (Kafeel), and unable to go to the police for fear of retribution (Jureidini, 2010). My interactions with Ethiopian women (at Ethiopian Embassy, in the women's jail I visit, and among the domestic workers I have befriended) are a testimony to the accuracy of what I have read in the literature about feminized migration in the Middle East. Feminized migration compounded by a lack of diplomatic relations and the prevalence of the "free visas". These conditions channel East African women into a vulnerable life a vulnerability accentuated in the private sphere of domestic life which is accompanied by specific risks of domestic violence and sexual abuse (Gardner, 2011).

The Ethiopian Embassy in Qatar estimates that over 25,000 Ethiopians live in Qatar; the majority are women who work as domestic workers (Ethiopian Embassy, 2018). I worked closely with the former Ambassador of the Ethiopian Embassy in Qatar. He expressed his frustration regarding the limitation of his diplomatic influence in Qatar. The former Ambassador of the Ethiopian Embassy, Melkam, emphasized that his "main mission [was] to get Ethiopians compensated and returned home safely" (personal communication, 2018). Advocating for safe working environments was beyond his capacity and he had to be strategic. The current system results in employees "running away" from their employer, which is against the law. Whether women stay or whether they run away (their only two options), the result is them being in the

country “illegally”. There are no other options because no one can progress through the Qatar border control without an authorized exit visa. Thus women are often placed in jail. Altogether, it is a state system that, although now under reform, has led to serious human rights abuses. In October 2019, the Qatar government introduced labour law reforms that were promoted as a concerted government effort to address human rights abuses (Ministry of Interior, 2019). However, according to Michael Page of Human Rights Watch the “great fanfare” that accompanied the new laws and regulations are currently “only on paper”. Page notes that “without effective implementation and strict enforcement, these laws aren’t worth the ink they are written with and people remain vulnerable to serious abuse” (as cited in Human Rights Watch, 2020).

It is only when those abused workers seek sanctuary at the embassy that the Ambassador and his staff can step in to help by offering a temporary safe haven where the women can be advised about their limited options. However, the freedom of movement of domestic workers is constrained. Thus, women’s ability to find their way to the embassy is a difficult feat to achieve. These tensions related to illegal status in the country, vulnerability in the workplace, substandard accommodations, limited access to phones and transportation, and a great deal of surveillance from employers and security workers define the circumstances of a great many of the Ethiopians in Qatar. They are circumstances that are directly correlated with their Ethiopian passport; without diplomatic relations between the Ethiopian government and Qatar. Ethiopians are an even more vulnerable group of workers than those migrant workers in Qatar who have access to full embassy support.

In conclusion, the dominant experience for East African women has been rooted in their employment as domestic workers as part of the feminization of their migration. Industrial

housekeeping, nursing, and domestic work done in the home (cooking, cleaning, and personal caregiving) have historically been the purview of women (Castel, 1986; Shahvisi, 2018). Across time and geography, women's labour is engaged in activities of production that are subject to the global systems of patriarchy. I did not face the same experiences as the women I met in Qatar, and I believe my Canadian citizenship and life in Canada as awarded me distinct experience than the feminized workforce.

Chapter Summary

Reflecting on my life through an intersectionality lens, I can see more clearly how my experiences within the systemic forces of class, gender, and race have fluctuated as I moved from Ethiopia to Canada and then to Qatar. My autoethnography includes my reflections on my associations with the Ethiopian women in my life. These are the friendships and connections that provide feelings of deep connection. However, they are also the relationships that generate the most consternation. My heart hurts when I listen to their stories. The conditions for most Ethiopian women in Qatar, detailed above, generate significant social disparities. I am set apart from them by my Canadian passport, my English language proficiency, my education and my professional status. The differences between me and the women with whom I share cultural and ethnic origins are profound. For me, my privilege compels me to work *with* them, using my nursing knowledge, and compassion to mobilize and to focus on *health as social justice*. Even with my grandmother who is suffering with brain cancer and who lives in Ethiopia, I am able to offer my nursing knowledge as I support her to navigate the health system and advocate for pain management. I have a privileged set of resources through my Canadian passport, my nursing education and experience and my stable, upper class employment income.

In Ethiopia, Canada, and Qatar, the *intersections of these social matrix* are very different within the contexts of my experiences of my multiple lives: my characterization of my migratory experiences. As well, my *multiple identities* generated within the *intersecting labels* that society constructs around me, shift and morph in relation to each social circumstance and how I am being seen by other people. Although many of the identity characteristics I embrace would *appear* to be the *same* as those attributed to my mother and the many other Ethiopian women I know, personal histories, migration and systemic inequalities continually disrupt and reconstitute my experiences, the meanings I make and the actions I take.

Through this reflection, I have examined how the societies I have lived in place varying significance on race, class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and citizenship. Through this autoethnography, I have identified the social contexts of my identities and their intersecting relationships to better understand my shifting experiences. This autoethnography brought me to what I consider is most relevant: my current situation in Qatar. It is here where I struggle with my place on the socially constructed ladder of power and privilege, which, for me, demands that I use that privilege to support health as a human right in Qatar. This strongly held value is the driver that compels me to enter the lifeworld of Ethiopian women whose lives have unfolded so differently from mine. It demands that I consistently show up at the embassy saying, “Here I am, how I can help?” In this activist work, I consciously attend to what Uma Naryan (1988) called the “the epistemic privilege of the oppressed” (p. 31). Narayan argued how:

> oppressed ‘insiders’ have *epistemic privilege regarding their oppression* [this] creates problems in dialogue and coalitionary politics involving ‘outsiders’ who do not share the oppression, since the latter fail to come to terms with the epistemic privilege of the insiders. (p. 31)

My aim is to *listen and notice and learn from* the Ethiopian women who attend the women's support group at the embassy in order to establish a coalition founded on *their* epistemic privilege.

Applying intersectionality as a framework has allowed me to deconstruct my multiple lives and shed a light into how my identities, both separately and as they intersect, have shaped my life. Establishing specific definitions to the key 'identities' that have influenced my life enabled me to uncover the shifting terrain between my oppression and privilege. I identified and was grateful for the significant privilege granted by my Canadian passport, education, and employment. I noted where my story sits; the contrasts and the similarities I share with the many migrant women who I have encountered in different locations where I have lived. Observations that stand out are the impact of migration on health and the influence of gender in employment. The healthy immigrant effect and the feminization of migration are evident in all aspects of my life. Conducting this autoethnography allowed me to reflect on my experience and to gain a personal, in-depth understanding of the experiences of women as they migrate in order to provide for their family and themselves.

Chapter 5 Conclusion: What Now?

The genesis of my own experiences of moving and resettling captured by my personal memories have constructed the autoethnography of my multiple lives. The intention of sharing my personal stories was to illustrate how my multiple lives are rooted in the intersecting labels of my gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, and class. This research required a detailed analysis of my story to establish the background that enabled me to question the historical conditions of the relationships of power and oppression as they arose (and continue to arise) in my varied experiences. The literature review in Chapter Two provided a relevant background

and current evidence about migration out of Ethiopia. Although Ethiopia holds the second fastest growing economy in Africa, it continues to suffer from poverty and conflict, which are conditions that compel its citizens to migrate. Guided by the ontology of "self" that is the core positioning for autoethnography, the literature review focused on migration out of Ethiopia to the places I have lived. Key literature findings were focused on life in Ethiopia, the issues that contribute to decisions to migrate, and the routes migrant women take to the Middle East and the West. In addition, the literature review introduced challenges of migration, including stress and coping, the Kafala system, trafficking, the fees and costs bound up in visas, legality, health challenges, and feminization of migration. My reading contributed to how I built important knowledge regarding migration; it introduced a useful lens for analysis of my own migration experience.

This chapter provides a summary of this autoethnograpic journey and elaborates on how I plan to use my new found understanding. My contacts at the Ethiopian embassy in Qatar indicate that presently there are increasing numbers of East African women migrating to Qatar. However, documentation regarding their experience is very limited. Due to constraints imposed by the ethics review board in Qatar, I was unable to collect or include any details of the stories that domestic workers have told me. Nonetheless, using autoethnography, I was able to analyze my own relationships and the feelings and actions those generate. In particular I analyzed my relationship with my mother and the complexities of her experiences, which I used to gain a better understanding of migration experiences.

Grant (2010) suggests that autoethnography expands the consciousness of the researcher. This is true for me. Sharing my stories allowed for expansion of my own consciousness. As Ellis et., al (2011) noted about the method, the autoethnographic process has had a therapeutic value

for me as I processed my experiences through my writing and worked to engage both myself and my readers emotionally and cognitively. The experience of conducting this research has led to my growth both personally and as a scholar. Foster et al. (2006) stated that "by making the private public, there is an opportunity to enhance the lives of others as well as the self" (p. 36). The process of conducting this autoethnography has fueled my passion to collaborate with women in Qatar whose experiences are so different from my own and whose lives as migrant workers in Qatar expose them to risk: legal, physical, and psychological.

The purpose of this research was to provide a better understanding of women's migratory experiences through the multifaceted "epistemological and ontological nexus" (Spry, 2001, p. 711) of my journey out of East Africa. Through this narrative autoethnography, I have outlined the contours of many women's migratory experiences within the global labor market. To conduct this research, I used intersectionality to deconstruct stories and expand on my understanding of my power and privilege in order to expose inequalities faced by a community of women who are culturally, racially, and ethnically similar to me but whose experiences are very different from mine. In this work, I contrasted my own middleclass, gendered, and predominantly privileged experience of ethnicity in Ethiopia with the economic hardships that combined with the gendered, and racialized experiences I encountered in Canada. I counterpoised those experiences with my upper class, privileged life in Qatar that my Western passport and affiliation with a Canadian university constructs. In addition to chronicling my experiences in these geographic contexts, I have deconstructed my intersecting identities to demonstrate my fluctuating experiences in relation to the oppressive racialized responses that continue to be part of the fabric of my life here in Qatar.

The lens and context I brought to the research exposed a shared essence of migration that women in my Ethiopian community endure; in particular, it drew my attention to the impact of feminized migration, deskilling of immigrants, and the healthy immigrant effect. As I reflected on my stories and the stories I have heard, the negative impact of migration on health developed personal relevance. They were no longer theoretical constructs but came to life in my story – real people with real lives. My mother's deteriorating health became more than merely a statistic used to generate proof of the healthy immigrant effect. As well, the health status of the majority of the East African women I meet are the result of feminized migration. The stories that circulate among the women in the Ethiopian community in Qatar are compelling and form a narrative worth sharing. The women and their stories who form the backdrop of my autoethnography support me to buttress a sparse literature about the plight of domestic workers in the GCC.

Using my own story and my experiences of privilege and oppression also speaks to the usefulness of the theoretical framework of *intersectionality.* My life experiences have offered me varied lessons from which I continue to learn and make meaning. My life has been coloured by the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and my childhood was cut short by my father's death and the responsibilities I undertook as I was coming of age in Canada. I feel a sense that a "good life" was disrupted when we left Ethiopia even though my move to Canada allowed me to have different opportunities that would not have been there for me in Ethiopia. I have all the opportunities that a Canadian nursing education provides, which, for me, is a summons to use the privileges conferred by being Canadian to be and ally and to build a support network among the Ethiopian women I meet in Qatar. In addition, I have been able to apply my new knowledge in my role as a nurse and educator. My teaching work offers opportunities to become more involved in the transformation of social structures in health and education through inspiring my

students, through my connections with nursing leaders, through my attendance at conferences, and through my ongoing work to influence my colleagues towards social justice and equity for the diverse group of students enrolled in the UCQ undergrad program.

A key take away from this research has been the benefit of applying intersectionality into both my professional and personal life. As a nurse, I believe narrating my story has allowed me to be a better ally and advocate. It has clarified how I frame my purpose and involvement with the Ethiopian women's group. As well, it supports me to be vocal on behalf of my mother as she continues to travel between Canada (staying with my brother) and Ethiopia (where she supports my grandmother). In addition, this research has built my commitment to advocate for all women in each of their intersecting identities that shape their multiple lives.

My role as a nurse is Qatar is limited to being an ally. As part of my work as an ally I hope to conduct further research upon completion of my MN. As a nurse researcher I plan to leverage the network of researchers who I learned about and connected with during this research. Foremost Zahra Baber (2020) who is a faculty member at the Center of International and Regional Studies at Georgetown University Qatar and her colleague Mehran Kamrava who studies Persian Gulf Politics (2020). In 2012 Baber and Kamrava published an edited collection focused on migrant labour in the Persian Gulf. Baber, in particular has expressed interest in studying the contributions and risks related to migrant domestic workers. As an educator, I am in a position of social and political influence; I have the opportunity to design courses that are intended to shape the world view of students. I take extra steps in creating an environment where my students feel represented and heard. I have sat in faculty meetings where I have continuously advocated for our curriculum to represent the unique needs of students and nurses in Qatar to counter the tendency to adopt the strategy "this works in Canada," so we will do the same here.

The contextual issues in Qatar include the development of entry to practise competencies that fit the context of the workplace rather than the current practice that has adopted (in the exact form) the standards from the Canadian Association of School of Nursing. I have continued to advocate for the recognition of students language needs and collaborated with language specialists to support English as a foreign language learning.

Within my own classes, I have more influence and control. I arrange my classroom strategies ensure that *all* the students feel equally welcomed and valued. It has become my first day ritual to spend time learning my students' names. I introduce myself with my full name rather than being called Dee, and we allow for the time needed to learn their names in full. I also encourage them to feel confident in their name, to take pride in its linguistic complexity and to take time to teach people who they are; their name is their first identifier. I acknowledge the large number of students who are from countries such as the Philippines, Sudan, Jordan, India, and Nepal, and prepare my lectures adding representations of diversity in the images I use in my PowerPoint presentations. I use websites that have nursing videos with people who speak English with accents that are similar to my students, such as Philippine or Indian accents. I do this within my endeavor to ensure that students see *themselves* represented and to limit their need to code switch. The person they choose to present in my class is accepted and represented. I work diligently to train my ears to their accents and endeavor to create a space where their cultural values and beliefs are represented.

In other cases, I am provided with unique opportunities to incorporate intersectionality in a way that is different than how I applied it in my research. For example, I teach maternal health and childbearing through simulation and seminars to male students. The Canadian nursing curriculum at UCQ is endorsed by the state because of the stellar Canadian reputation for nursing

education. Because of this, a semester of maternal child health is a curriculum requirement. However, the male nursing students enrolled at the University of Calgary in Qatar are prohibited from entering a practicum at the Women's Hospital. In the course, the men and I spend time understanding nursing as a gendered profession. We talk a lot about gender and it is my impression that the men gain a deeper understanding of the challenges they may face related to their gender and their role in nursing. Although the men do not have the same opportunity as the women students, to be present during a birth, I invite them to look at their broader male privilege. Together we consider how they may work to use their privilege to overcome oppressions. We explore the social conventions based on gender that underpin the social fabric in Qatar and their place in that broad social fabric, and in the nursing profession. I invite them to consider their own intersecting experiences of privilege and oppression. The course seems to open up dialogues about their roles as a brother, father, and husband, that they appear to be really engaged in.

As I conclude this MN research, I see the benefit of using the lens of intersectionality in my day-to-day life as an educator, nurse, and advocate. Autoethnography and the intersectionality framework provided tools to deconstruct the interplay of race, class, ethnicity, gender, nationality, and citizenship *across my own and others' migratory experiences.* Autoethnography is an approach that makes broad gestures towards the economic, political, and social forces that shape individual lives. Stewart (2007), an authoethnographer, suggested that disparate, fragmented, and seemingly inconsequential memories of everyday life are "an integral site of cultural politics that connect people and create common experiences that shape public feeling (p. 102). Madison (2010) asserted that autoethnography is centrally concerned with ethics and advocacy, it can critique and break into oppressive and inequitable social discourses,

processes, and institutions; using oneself and one's experiences as a tool for both critique and intervention (p. 12). Throughout this MN research, I have outlined my experiences in Ethiopia, Canada, and Qatar as they transect across my childhood into adulthood. My memories are used to bring me into the present and to understand my "multiple lives."

Limitations

Despite identifying important core features of migrant experience, I acknowledge that my autoethnograpic narrative *cannot* be representative of a generalized experience of women migrants. Nonetheless, I suggest there are important insights. Understanding and acknowledging this important limitation that my research cannot produce "facts" about migration beyond the "facts" of my own story is well aligned with the framework of intersectionality and my personal belief in the importance of appropriate representation.

Specific limitations identified in this research are the lack of other Ethiopian women's voices; I was specifically prohibited through the ethics review board from formally interviewing women who work in the domestic sector in Qatar. Moreover, the *selective* process of remembering and chronicling as well as the inherent bias of my positive relationship with my mother and brother who I *did* interview for the research are possible limitations. Throughout this thesis, I have referred very generally to the other migrant women I encounter and maintain a clear focus on the impact those encounters have had on *my own life and journey*. Thus, in this MN work, readers do not hear what the women might have to say either from the perspective of their own unique journeys *or* the interpretations I have made of those from my personal recounting of my interactions and experiences.

Additionally, as with any narrative, there is a selective process in relation to what gets included and what gets left out (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Of course, I have left out a

great many stories and interactions. The women of my acquaintance and even my mother may have identified these as more important than those I have recounted. However, this is the essential subjectivity of the method. In the discussion, I tried to expand from the personal history of myself to build insights into the experiences of those others who are present in my story. I worked to represent the East African diaspora that is evoked from an historical recounting. This includes how my own history is embedded in the history of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the history of the fractured diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Qatar, the history of Canada, and the history of European settlers and colonization. All this history underpins my experiences and perceptions. To represent these histories, I set my autoethnography within a select body of literature, and I focused my findings on the “address” of the topics that my reflections generated, especially those that reflect my nursing interest on the phenomenon of health.

The limitation of the possible “bias” that may be introduced by my very positive and loving relationship with my mother is embedded throughout my remembering and my capacity to analyze. I attribute many of my successes and current accomplishments and privilege to her sacrifices. These constructions of my life are inextricably woven into meanings and values I hold about the broad topic of feminized migration. Within these constraints, I have tried my best to be self-reflexive and consider the complexities of the many “truths” that may underpin my relationships and the experiences of my mother. Certainly, whatever truths there may be in this work are *my truths.*

Closing Statement

Global migration is a way of life for many people. Acquiring a better understanding of migratory experience may lead to insights that can promote a healthier transition and adaptation

into diasporic life. This is relevant not only at the individual level, but has significant implications for nation state practices. Human Rights Report (2016) stated that "migration is [also] part of global economy, its rules should be the counterpart to fair trade and investment rules, establishing non-discriminatory treatment of national workers" (p. 149). In my view, it is crucial to increase awareness regarding issues that arise from women who cross international borders to follow their imaginings and to provide for their family and themselves. In particular, I believe that nurses' work and the core value of health to nurses' disciplinary mandate can be enhanced by engaging in substantive new awareness about aspects of human experience, such as those I have written about here. Writing this narrative autoethnography reflects my efforts to develop valuable knowledge about migration that relies on a first-hand lived experience. Applying intersectionality as a framework allowed me to expose how structural oppressions and privileges *work* and to expose the troubles that arise within structural practices of oppression. In doing so, I have gained a better understanding with many personal insights. This culminated in my focus on the broad topics from the literature about the healthy immigrant effect and the nature of feminized migration. I believe that a better understanding of the complexities embedded in these two aspects of migration will provide nurses, community workers, and/or activists important knowledge that will support their capacity to reach out and interact with people of the diaspora with a basic grounding in the commonly identified issues.

Personal stories are a powerful tool for human to human connection. As with the rallying challenge of second wave feminism that "*the personal **is** political*" (Ratcliffe, 2017), the research provided *me* with a new way of understanding my relationships as they arise within my migratory experience out of East Africa. I have learned a new way to listen and have a new awareness about how to think about and possibly intervene in the impact of migration on health

and the feminization of migration. Ultimately, this autoethnographic MN research is an emancipatory tool. My migratory experience has provided a way to explore oppression and social injustice, not only those injustices of my early childhood losses and the challenges of being a poor "African" kid in Nova Scotia, but also as a story of resilience and courage. My hope is that my experience will resonate with other people, especially those people who may share aspects of the intersecting complexities of gender, race, and class as they arise within the phenomenon of feminized migrant – the women of the diaspora.

In conclusion, writing this narrative autoethnography was, in some ways, a therapeutic reflection that allowed me to apply intersectionality to deconstruct my understanding of my migration experiences. In other ways, conducting this research was emotionally draining, painful, and fundamentally destabilizing. I struggled to respond to the demands of my committee members to "dig deeper," and, in so doing, I came face to face with feeling both culpable and powerless in the face of the systemic powers of state sanctioned social stratification that are activated in my daily encounters. I will close this thesis with a drawing of a Sudanese political cartoonist named Khalid Albaih. I end with this image as I believe it represents my experience of my intersecting identities and the intersecting privileges and oppressions – it is an image that resonates with the core of my own experience. My hope is that my readers are left with a sense of curiosity about a story that moves on into the unknown future; in a global society constructed around documents that determine who has access to basic needs such as shelter, air, water, health care, food, and nonviolence.

(Albaih, 2016)

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Appendix A

Map of Ethiopia

Appendix B

Ethiopia Demographics

Access to electricity
42.9 %

Population density (people per sq. km)
102 sq. Km

Poverty headcount ratio at $1.25 a day (PPP) (% of population)
33.5 %

Employment to population ratio, ages 15-24, female (national estimate)
67.7 %

Employment to population ratio, ages 15-24, female
66.2 %

Employment to population ratio, ages 15-24, male
76.8 %

Employment to population ratio, ages 15-24, total (national estimate)
72.2 %

Employment to population ratio, ages 15-24, total
71.6 %

Employment to population ratio, 15+, female (national estimate)
72.1 %

Employment to population ratio, 15+, female
70.9 %

Employment to population ratio, 15+, male (national estimate)
86.9 %

Population, total
102403196

Population, female
51275722 Persons

Population, female (% of total)
50.07 %

Population, male
51127474 Persons

Population, male (% of total)
49.93 %

Rural population
82002431

Rural population growth (annual %)
1.94 %

Rural population
80.08 %

Urban population growth (annual %)
4.79 %

Urban population
20400765

Urban population (% of total)
19.92 %

Refugee population by country or territory of asylum
791616

Refugee population by country or territory of origin
83894

Employment to population ratio, 15+, male
86.4 %

Employment to population ratio, 15+, total (national estimate)
79.4 %

Employment to population ratio, 15+, total
78.6 %

Population growth (annual %)
2.5 %

Appendix C

Categories of Immigration in Canada