



## REFUGE AND LIFE OVERSEAS:

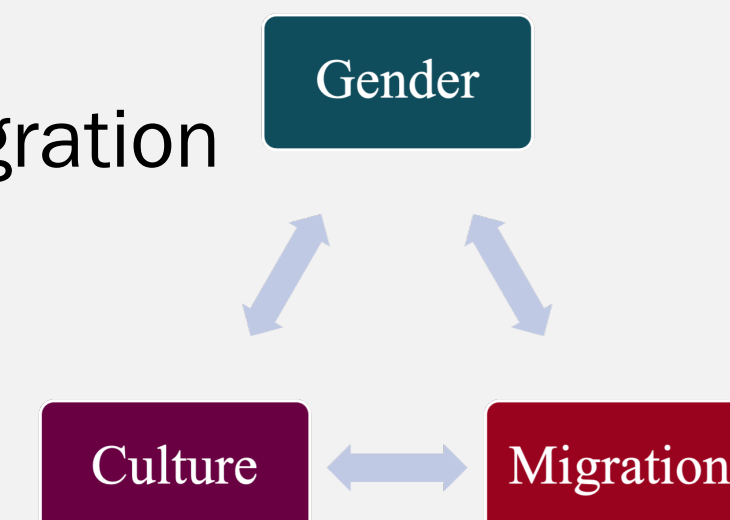
# INFLUENCES OF GENDER, CULTURE, AND MIGRATION ON PARENTING PRACTICES OF AFRICAN REFUGEES IN CANADA

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## BACKGROUND

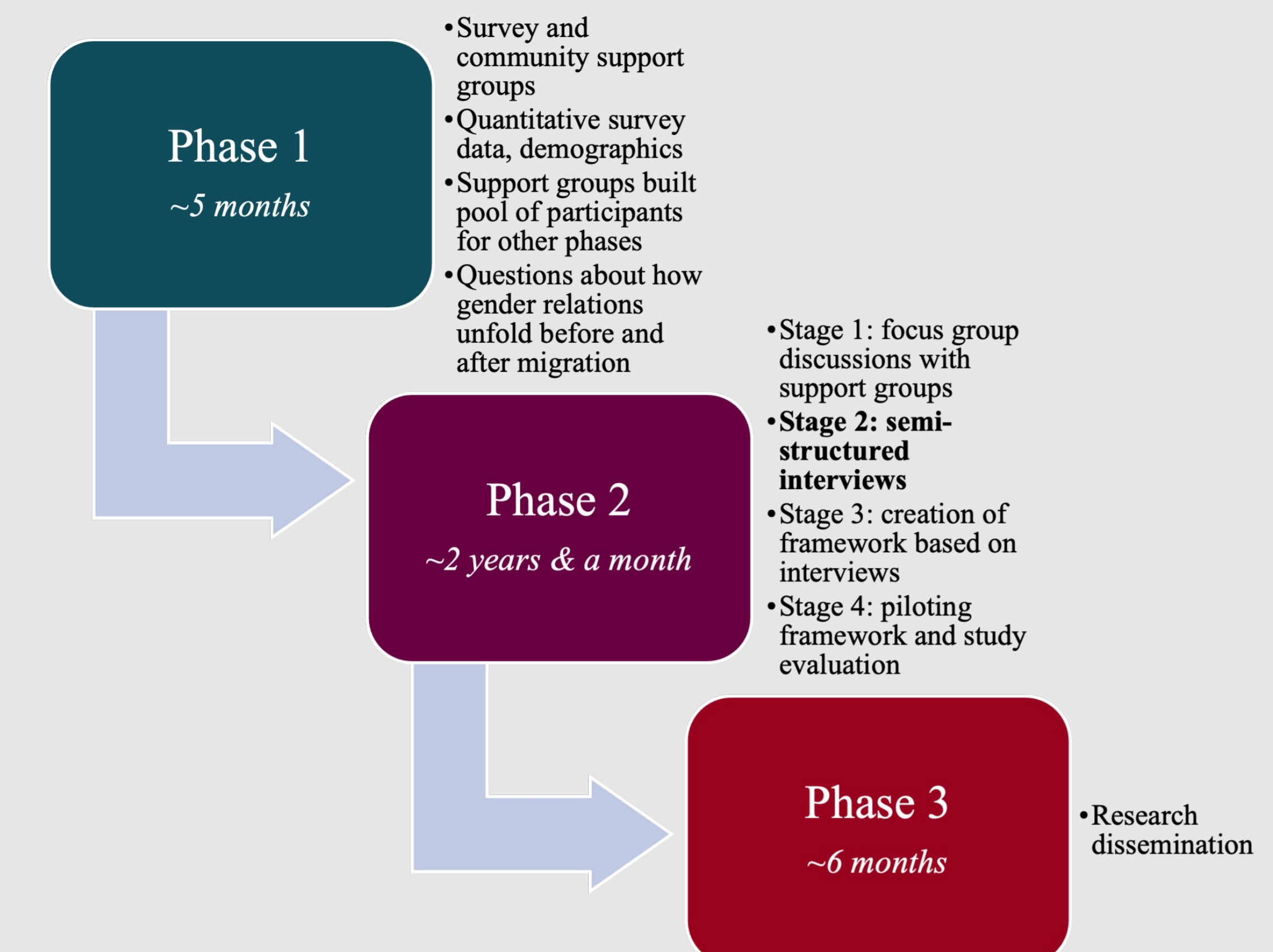
- + Refugees are typically viewed as being higher risk for adaptation challenges compared to immigrants due to the forced, involuntary nature of their migration.
- + While there has been research on the impacts of refugee experiences on parenting, there is limited literature on African refugee families in Canada.
- + Research shows that gender relations and culturally-based parenting practices of African immigrants and refugees change or shift upon migration (e.g., Okeke-Ihejirika & Salami, 2018).
- + The purpose of my study was to explore what gender views and experiences African refugees in Alberta, Canada ascribe to their parenting practices and familial relationships.
- + I also sought to examine the extent culture and migration influences gendered parenting practices of African refugees.



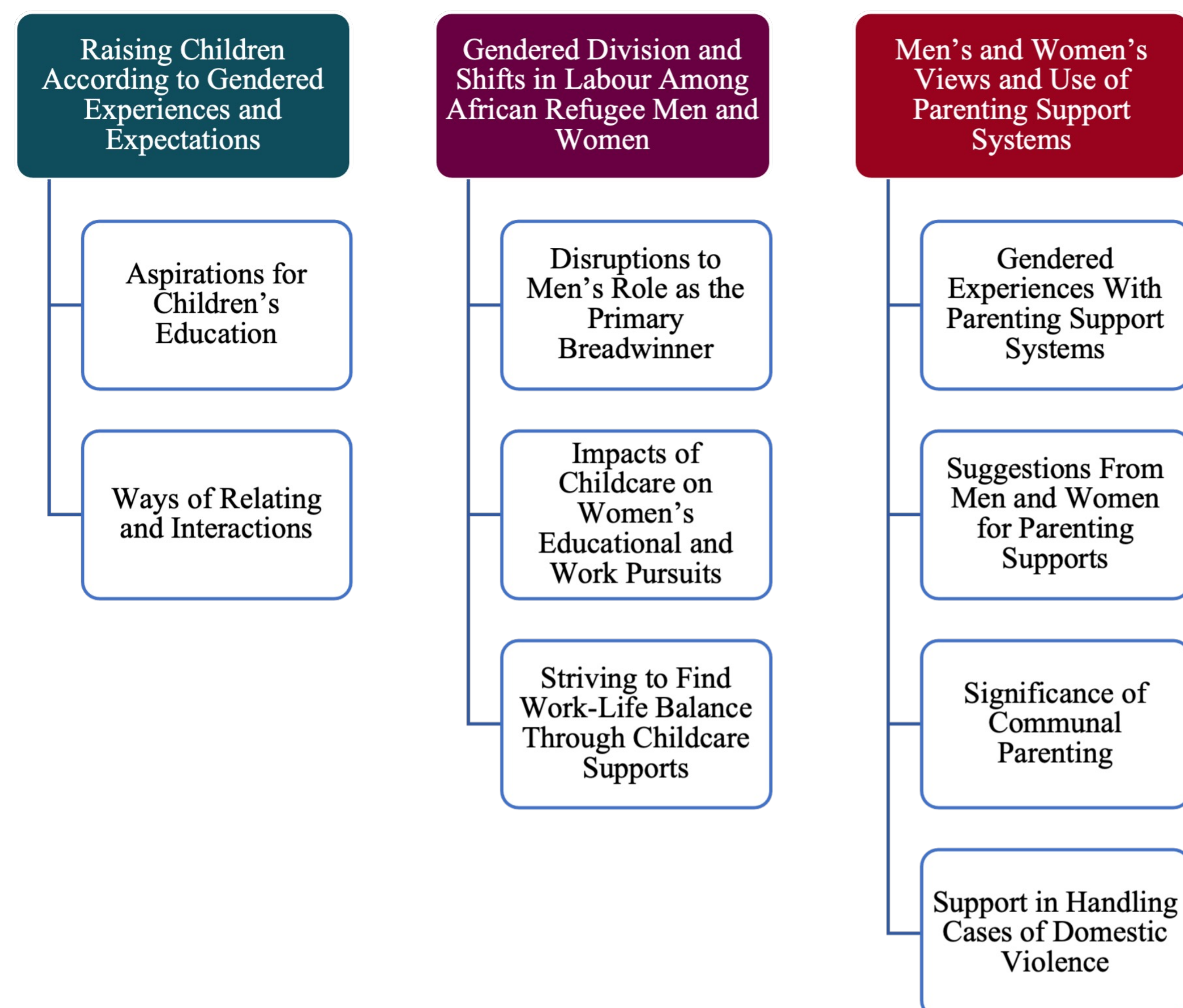
## METHODOLOGY & METHODS

- + **Source of Data:** origin study titled *Understanding Gender Relations in African Immigrant Families: A Participatory Action Research (PAR)*.
- + My study was a secondary qualitative data analysis using data from phase 2 of the origin study (see flowchart). The origin study investigated gender-related challenges among African immigrants and refugees in Canada, in different social areas including parenting.
- + Examined 11 transcripts from semi-structure interviews from the origin study. Each transcript represented the perspective of an African refugee parent in Canada.
- + Used interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) for data analysis. IPA is used to understand and unpack people's lived experiences. It aims to provide interpretative analysis that situates experiences within social, cultural, and theoretical contexts (Larkin et al., 2006; Larkin et al., 2011).
- + **IPA Analysis Procedures:** transcript preliminary reading and selection, stage 1: looked for themes, stage 2: connected themes, and stage 3: analyzed other cases (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Theoretical frameworks guiding interpretation were transnationalism, postcolonial feminism, and intersectionality (Vertovec, 2004; Kerner, 2016; Crenshaw, 1989).

### Flowchart Summarizing the 3 Research Phases in the Origin Study



## THEMES & SUBTHEMES THAT EMERGED IN MY STUDY



"So there was always networks. Down here, ugh, who do you see, who do you talk to? There is nobody...there's a big difference you know, it's a new culture, a new society...Virtually it disappeared, there was no network."

Married father of 3 kids

### Post-migration...

- Loss of typical parenting supports.
- Work-life balance even more difficult to maintain.
- Gendered impacts on women's educational and work pursuits.
- Shifts in gender roles and relations in parenting.
- Single mothers experience more barriers than married parents in securing childcare support.
- Communal parenting still a value but challenging to practice in Canada.
- Traditional African conflict resolution strategies in cases of domestic violence impacted.

## POLICY & PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Findings from my study reveal policy and practical implications for childcare, community, and workplace supports to help African refugees in Canada manage their higher risk of post-migration parenting challenges:

- 1 There is a need for a federal culturally-informed childcare policy specific to addressing the childcare needs of African refugees in Canada. Such a policy should be responsive to the unique experiences of single mothers.
- 2 Programs and services should recruit and train frontline personnel working with African refugee families (i.e., parenting support services and counselling) that are reflective of the African refugee community, their values, and allow for gender-based service options.
- 3 More flexibility in operational hours of parenting and childcare services so that parents can navigate work and childcare responsibilities better. Refugees like the participants in my study are often limited in employment opportunities they have in selecting work times, and this needs to be recognized.
- 4 It is important to consider where existing and future community activities are happening when determining the location of parenting supports such as counselling services.