

The Antinomies of Globalization: Some Consequences of Contemporary African Immigration to the United States of America.

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The first class carpenters, tinsmiths, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, brick masons and other skilled workmen, made so by slavery, are disappearing and few of their places are being filled. Northern competition has completely shut the skilled Negro workman out from that section, and the continual stream of well-trained European laborers that is continually flowing into the West leaves him no foothold there. We are compelled to admit that he holds his place in the South today, not so much by an over superiority of workmanship as from lack of competition. When the day comes, as it evidently will, when that great train of sturdy Englishmen and Germans begins to fill up the South, unless the Negro prepares himself thoroughly for the conflict, during the interim, his only resort will be in the cotton field. [\[1\]](#)

&every hour sees the black man elbowed out of employment by some newly arrived emigrant, whose hunger and whose color are thought to give him a better title to the place. [\[2\]](#)

If we would reach a degree of civilization higher and grander than any yet attained, we should welcome to our ample continent all nations, kindreds and tongues and peoples; and as fast as they learn our language and comprehend the duties of citizenship, we would incorporate them into the American body politic. The outspread wings of the American eagle are broad enough to shelter all who are likely to come. [\[3\]](#)

Introduction

African immigration is a significant phenomenon that enables scholars to study yet again, the process of becoming American from the perspective of a multi-dimensional and vibrant group. It also makes possible the study of some of the antinomies of globalization. Considering the phenomenon as one ridden with antinomies is especially useful because doing so indicates the possibility of clashes

between perspectives that believe on the one hand in positive ramifications of globalization, and those that believe in the negative ramifications of the same phenomenon. The clashes may not necessarily be limited to the level of perspectives. People may clash when their diametrically opposed interests collide. Thus, nativist xenophobia in the country of settlement may stimulate significant anti-immigrant animus that causes migrants and immigrants to be subjected to attacks, assaults, discrimination, and bias. As well, governments could be quite punitive in their treatment of undocumented migrants and immigrants, both in the country of settlement and also in the home country, where people are made to jump through very difficult hurdles, just to gain access to the intended country of migration, and immigration. This creates significant incentives on the part of the migrants/immigrants to seek alternatives, including sneaking into their intended country of settlement, a process that makes them even more vulnerable to punitive state and or nativist action.

Some of the identified consequences of immigration include the following: development effects, [4] brain drain, [5] attempts by immigrants to influence the foreign policy of their host country and the domestic policy of their home country, [6] remittances that are sent home to family members, and assimilation of immigrants into the society of their host country. [7] There is no information on the total amount of money that is repatriated by African immigrants, but according to President Issaias Afewerki, of Eritrea, \$100 to \$150 million annually is remitted by Eritrean immigrants in the US to their country of origin as gifts and investments. [8] Sylviane Diouf's study of Senegalese immigrants in New York City also shows that huge amounts of money are remitted to Senegal by the immigrants through banks that are owned by members of the community and other networks. [9] Whether immigrants are assimilated, or they maintain cultural aloofness, they contribute to significant demographic changes in the society of the host country. African immigrants have made a considerable impact on their communities of settlement. A visit to a relatively small city like Columbus, Ohio for instance, shows even a newcomer that most of the taxi drivers are either Ethiopian, or Eritrean. There are a lot of Ethiopian and Eritrean restaurants in the depressed inner city of Columbus, and there are indications that sections of the African American community have formed linkages with immigrant, or migrant African scholars, artists, and artisans. [10] These same relationships can be observed in other large and small cities, and metropolitan areas. It is not only useful, it is necessary to document them, and further, to inquire into what the implications are in terms of policymaking by local, state, and federal authorities.

The consequences of migration, immigration, and exile on African societies from which immigrants originate are profound. Out-migration affects the economic growth, democratization, and social structure of the immigrants' home countries. On the communities of settlement in the US, there are significant changes as well. The effects of growing nativism and the related anti-immigrant philosophies, [11] and the fears that the presence of immigrants in significant numbers will have a negative effect on the chances of native-born Americans to find and keep jobs, [12] the mistrust of given groups of immigrants, and the growing wave of second generation Africans, whose forebears migrated only recently, the effects of African immigration on the production of knowledge in the academy, and within the professions. This paper will consider these issues as well as the "brain drain" phenomenon, consequences of immigration on the economic growth, and democratization of African countries, the increased numbers of refugees within and from the African continent to other parts of the world, and the development of increased interest in issues that formerly lay within the domestic purview of African countries, but have now become politicized as global.

Booker T. Washington's and Frederick Douglass' statements above give us a poignant rendition of some of the problems that stalk the terrain of immigration. The reasoning goes as follows: When immigrants come to America, those American citizens who are least able to compete for a share in the national cake lose out because they are thought to be less deserving than hungry immigrants, who in Washington's and Douglass' time were white. Today, immigrants are coming into America from Africa. Some of them consider themselves to be white. Others are black, and because they resent being categorized as part of the underclass, even some of these would rather be called African than black. [13] These recent African immigrants show us that Washington's and Douglass' first statement are still relevant on the one hand, and also that color and hunger are still relevant factors that create classes of privileged and underprivileged in American political economy, but that both color and privilege work in differential ways than those that originally produced these statements. The statements also underline the importance of Esmeralda Simmons' observation about the conscious decision of black immigrants to distance themselves from the 'undeserving underclass,' without consciously apprehending that they are necessarily part of the underclass. It takes events like the Amadou Diallo shooting by the York City Police to send the clarion call to most African immigrants that they are part of the "discreditable, undeserving underclass." Even with this realization, the building of anti-racist and anti-immigrant coalitions

across boundaries of ethnicity and national origin is yet to occur. [\[14\]](#)

Frederick Douglass' second statement also points to an important element in immigration studies: What should be the American response to immigrants? What standards are necessary, what rules should apply? Washington does not directly address this issue in his statement, and neither will this paper. However, Washington gives a sense of the conflictual nature of the politics of immigration, as does this paper. Washington also points to the need for indigenous African Americans to arm themselves with the skills that would enable them to compete with new skilled immigrants. Given the power of his reasoning on possible American responses to immigration, it is remarkable that Washington does not seem to consider the extent to which white skin privilege influences the perception of entitlement and qualification. To the contrary, Douglass' first statement clearly articulates the role of discrimination in perceptions of whose pain and need are more legitimate and deserving of treatment and fulfillment. His observation that skin color gives privileges to whites that blacks are denied counter-posed the need and pain of black indigenes against those of white immigrants as was appropriate in his day.

Today, Douglass' analysis is relevant to the politics of immigration today in a manner that is related, yet more complex because immigrants and indigenes alike are white, black and other. Yet, race relations have not improved, and the animus and stigma that African Americans of Douglass and Washington's day faced is still palpable in many parts of the United States. African immigrants felt this when Amadou Diallo was gunned down in the vestibule of his Bronx apartment building by the Street Crimes Unit of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) in 2000. [\[15\]](#) Some felt it when an Egyptian immigrant who is a medical doctor, but was driving a taxi while studying for his qualifying examinations got roughed up so much by the men of the NYPD that he became brain-damaged. Some felt it when another African immigrant who was a livery cab driver was murdered while on the job.

Frederick Douglass also recommends that anyone should be welcome to the extent that they are willing to learn the language of this country and "comprehend the duties of citizenship." Again, in Douglass' time, the politics of language had not become as complex as it is today. Given that Spanish speaking Americans were incorporated into this country earlier than other ethnicities, given the salience of the politics of identity, what language shall we take to be the one that we require

immigrants to speak? Many would answer that English is the language. Some would dispute this. Some African immigrants are French speakers (the Francophones). Others are Portuguese speakers (the Lusophone). How do we factor their needs into those of the nation? What do we do to ensure that their children are well-educated. The challenge is often posed as that between Spanish and English, thus driving the needs of others into the deep background. Even more complex than this is the fact that there are numerous African languages. If a child is fluent in Yoruba, Wolof, Hausa, Shangaan, or the parent is, how do we ensure that their needs are served? There is bound to be less quibbling about the need to comprehend the duties of citizenship, but the content of those duties may be taken as debatable. Contemporary African immigration to the United States enables us to examine these enduring concerns in new and exciting ways. It also gives us an insight into the enduring issues that have confounded scholars of immigration over the ages. Finally, we are able to consider the implications of the motto: E pluribus unum from yet another vantage point.

Brief Definitions

Classified according to immigration status, those who leave Africa for other continents include temporary migrants, permanent residents, naturalized citizens, exiles, and refugees. These terms will be defined briefly, as they are used throughout this paper. I define immigrants as people who moved from their home countries to the U.S, who are resolved to settle in the United States. Migrants are defined as those engaged in temporary settlement. Exiles are those forced to leave their country by official decree/ for political reasons. Refugees are defined using the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees parameters which says that a refugee as a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country." In essence, refugees are those seeking refuge from war, political, religious and other persecution. [\[16\]](#) The above identified categories will be considered at greater depth, along with those classified as Professional, Technical, and Kindred (PTK) in the section on the demographics of African immigrants.

The Demographic Effects of African Immigration

In sheer numbers, the number of African immigrants is very small when compared

with the total numbers of immigrants in the United States. It is infinitesimal when compared with the population of the entire African continent - approximately 690 million. The 2000 census shows that 10.4 percent, or 28.4 million of the country's population are foreign born. Most of today's immigrants are Latino/Latina. [17] According to the 1999 census, only 364,000 out of 20 million foreign born U.S. residents came from Africa. The numbers increase annually by approximately 15,000 but African immigrants have a higher educational attainment and higher income than do Asian or Central-American immigrants. The per capita income of African immigrants is \$20,100, higher than the \$16,700 and \$9,400 recorded for Asian and Central American immigrants, respectively. Only 50% of African immigrants are black. [18] There are approximately 15 cities and states with heavy African immigrant presence. By 1990, New York and California were estimated to have over 150,000; Texas and New Jersey, 50,000; Maryland, Massachusetts, Virginia and Georgia, 30-50,000. The 2000 census shows that 122,400 people in New York City identified themselves as having Sub-Saharan African ancestry, an increase of 127 percent over the 1990 figures. [19] New Jersey has experienced similar increases.

Initially, most of the immigrants to the United States from the African continent came from the North African countries like Egypt, Morocco, and Algeria. They mostly identify themselves as white. White South Africans who chose to emigrate to the United States came later, particularly after the end of apartheid. They can also be included in this group. Figures from the 1980 census indicated an average annual growth of six percent in the numbers of such immigrants. However, the 1990s census shows an eleven percent (11%) average annual growth in the numbers of African immigrants who self-identify as black. Some African immigrant groups also identify as "other." Their numbers are not statistically significant. The census data on racial composition of African immigrants reveal that, among the 225,000 Africans who were in the United States in 1980, 60 percent (135,000) were whites, 29 percent were blacks (66,000), and about 11 percent (24,000) were classified as others from Africa. According to the 1990 census, there were about 405,000 Africans in the United States. Among these, 47 percent (191,000) were blacks, 44 percent (176,000) were whites, and 9 percent (38,000) for other races. In terms of population growth, these figures represent average annual increases of 6 percent for all African immigrants, 11 percent for black African immigrants, 3 percent for white African immigrants and 5 percent for other African immigrants between the two censuses." Some estimates contend that the balance has swung even more in favor of black African immigrants, who are 50 percent, while white Africans are 40

percent, and Asians, 10 percent of the total number of African immigrants. [\[20\]](#)

Nigeria is the largest catchment area for immigrants identifying as black, and Egypt the traditional largest catchment for "whites." This is because approximately one third of all "black" immigrants are from Nigeria and one third of "whites" are from Egypt (1980 & 1990 census.) Since both countries have a fairly large population size, and English is their lingua franca, it is not surprising that they supply the largest number of immigrants in the two categories.

According to a recent study, immigrants from Nigeria are younger and more scattered in their area of settlement while the Egyptians are older and more concentrated in their pattern of settlement. Both groups have been characterized as "different from native blacks. Both black and white Africans are better educated, and less welfare dependent than native blacks. Moreover, while native blacks' employability rates have declined or registered moderate increases during the last decade, African immigrants' labor force participation rates have substantially increased." It is thus likely that increased African immigration to the United States will cause increased tension among African Americans and new African immigrants either where the two groups compete for the same jobs or where African Americans perceive African immigrants as denying them of opportunities in the country of their birth.

In terms of settlement patterns, "Native blacks are mostly spread across the country; their major states of residence are New York (8 percent) followed by California (7 percent) and Texas (7 percent). Although their major states of residence correspond to these of native blacks, black African immigrants are more heavily concentrated. More than one third of all black African immigrants are found exclusively in three states: New York, California, and Texas. The residential concentration is even higher for white African immigrants. According to these data, more than one third of all white immigrants who come from Africa live in two states: California and New York." [\[21\]](#)

Refugees

The political and economic instability on the African continent has caused large movements of population, both within the continent and without. Wars and environmental degradation are some of the most significant and dramatic causes of spontaneous, large scale population movements. The Zairean and Rwandan

conflicts both generated large numbers of refugees, who deluged the Great Lakes region, and put considerable pressures on the political economy of all the states in the region. There are no reliable statistics on the number of refugees in Africa, but they number in the millions. In the area of the Horn of Africa alone, there are at least 5 million estimated refugees. The huge numbers of those fleeing from war and famine in Africa is not reflected in the migration patterns to the United States. Complete statistics are not available on the total number of applications for asylum by refugees, according to the statistics demographics section of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Only the figures of the total number of refugees admitted from Africa were available. In 1994, there were **5,928** refugee admissions from Africa, and in 1995, **5115**. [\[22\]](#)

The refugee question in the US is part of a growing worldwide phenomenon in the sense that there has been a huge increase in the numbers of displaced and marginalized people as a result of rampant political, economic and ecological instability. Many affluent countries have increasingly become more anti-immigration, more nativist, and more restrictionist in their immigration policies. The United States is no exception. Apart from a substantial lowering of the legal immigrant ceiling, there is also a lower ceiling on refugees in search of political asylum. Further, those American citizens that want to sponsor new immigrants have to meet more stringent financial requirements, and there are increased barriers on family reunification.

States with heavy immigrant presence such as California have come up with punitive laws that single out immigrants for discriminatory treatment. California passed Proposition 187, which provided that illegal immigrants be denied education and non-emergency medical care, and that hospitals, schools and social service agencies report undocumented immigrants to the government. The proposition was challenged by pro-immigration activists as unconstitutional, and its implementation is suspended for the time being. [\[23\]](#)

After the September 11 2001 attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center new refugee admissions, were suspended, and more restrictive immigration laws were passed. The national mood is substantially more nativist. Even new immigrants feel that they must demonstrate their loyalty to the nation by being prejudiced against whichever the pariah group of the day is. Today's spotlight is directed toward Moslem Arab Americans, and anyone whose profile resembles theirs. For African immigrants who belong in the refugee category, particularly those from North

Africa, or those who appear to be from there, the door has been slammed shut. Those immigrants from these countries who are currently in the United States are also subjected to increased scrutiny, surveillance, Refugees whose claims are made on the basis of being displaced by war, such as those from Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Mozambique, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, are bound to be negatively impacted. According to the US Committee for Refugees,

Africa continued to be the world's most volatile continent during the first half of 2000. War between Ethiopia and Eritrea; a regional war in Congo-Kinshasa; civil wars in Sudan, Burundi, and Angola; ruthless armed insurgencies in Sierra Leone and Uganda; violent political chaos in Somalia; and fears of renewed hostilities in Liberia and Congo-Brazzaville. More than 3 million people in 15 African countries were forced to flee their homes because of war, insurgencies, and repression during 1999, driving up the number of uprooted people on the African continent to 13.7 million. At least 1.5 million more have been uprooted in 2000. [\[24\]](#)

The United States Committee on Refugees also reports that in 1999, the African nationalities with the highest asylum approval rates with INS asylum officers were Ethiopians of whom 76 to 78 percent of all applicants were approved, and the Sudanese and Somali, for whom 71 to 75 percent of applicants were granted refugee status. This high rate of approval does not necessarily indicate that there are millions of Ethiopian, Somali, and Sudanese in the United States. The absolute numbers of refugees from these countries depend on the number of those that are able to afford the prohibitive expense of travel to the United States. A larger number of refugees were admitted from various African countries, particularly the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

In October 1999, the U.S. State Department reduced the number of approvals for family-based refugee claims by Africans. These category claimants are designated Priority-Three (close family) applicants. The number of countries eligible for consideration under this category was reduced from 18 to 12 countries. Citizens of Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Congo Brazzaville, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Togo remained eligible for family-based U.S. visas. Guinea-Bissau was granted TPS status by the attorney general on March 11, and maintained for certain nationals of Somalia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Burundi, countries that had the status in previous years.

On September 27, 1999, President Clinton announced DED for 10,000 to 15,000 Liberians, who were consequently granted a one-year extension after the expiration of their TPS on September 28. The rationale for this extension was that if the Liberians were to return en masse to their country and others in the West Africa region, Liberia would be severely burdened. Also, the "fragile peace" that was patched together in West Africa could well collapse. [25] Staten Island in New York City has become a hub for Liberian refugees, a place where former child soldiers mix with other casualties of the Liberian civil war. [26]

From 1999, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is extended by the Attorney General to "foreigners who would be endangered if returned home" The basis for determining TPS status are the following: ongoing armed conflict; environmental disaster; or "extraordinary and temporary conditions" that prevent safe return. TPS is a blanket provision that covers all people from a country that is designated as having qualified. Eligible people must also be present in the United States and register by the date of the designation. Asylum, in contradistinction, is offered on a case-by case basis. The Attorney General is also authorized to grant "Deferred Enforced Departure" (DED) status to given categories of people. DED is like TPS in the sense that it is a mechanism used at the discretion of the Attorney General to allow the temporary stay of the repatriation of a specific group of people. While they have the stay, by law, they can be employed. DED gives more discretionary power to the Attorney General than TPS, but DED is neither backed by any statutory authority, nor is it necessarily based on any clearly stated legal condition that determines eligibility.

Another significant group of African refugees are Coptic Christians Christians from Egypt where they are minorities, and they are discriminated against and persecuted on the basis of their faith. Here in America, they are immigrants from the African continent who introduce an additional element of complexity to the story of African immigration to the United States because they identify themselves as white. Unlike most other African immigrants that are refugees from war, these refugees are fleeing from religious persecution that dates back to many centuries. [27]

Many Copts are critical of the manner in which the Immigration and Naturalization Service determines who gets classified as refugees. To require that victims of religious persecution must show that they have relatives that are willing to support them, and to require that they are part of the same pool with Moslems is to condemn them to the injustices of a more than 1,500 century-old persecution [28] For the

Copts, the political issue that is dearest to their hearts is treated as inconsequential, a veritable sacrificial offering at the altar of the intersection of international politics and the United States' definition of its national interest in the Middle East. When weighed against the losses that could attend the overt support for Coptic Christians: the loss of Egypt as an ally in the Middle East, under President Clinton, the United States preferred not to classify the Copts as refugees that were deserving of any special treatment, and also would not embarrass President Mubarak by mentioning the Copts in a Clinton - Mubarak news conference. Their small numbers cause the Copts to be an insignificant, ineffectual lobby group in American politics and a nostalgic, equally ineffectual and insignificant group in Egyptian politics. [\[29\]](#)

Exiles

The political conditions within Africa have been such that whether as a consequence of authoritarian rule or as a result of unsuccessful political transitions that fail to usher in democratically elected governments, some members of the opposition have either been exiled, or have chosen exile. Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and the Sudan are just a few of the countries from which exiles hail. Concerning Nigeria, Wole Soyinka, Nobel Prize Laureate was one of the most prominent exiles. Soyinka and other pro-democracy activists pushed for the adoption and maintenance of economic sanctions against the Nigerian government for canceling the results of the June 12 1993 Presidential elections, won by Chief M.K.O. Abiola. Political exiles are supported by other immigrants of like mind. They contribute a great deal to raising the awareness of the government and citizens of the United States to those pressing problems that they identify. In recent times, groups of exiles have been responsible for giving testimony to committees in the United States Congress on the details of human rights abuses and infringements on citizens' political rights by the government of their home countries. Many of these individuals are also scholars and activists. They form, or maintain an organizational base that pursues their home governments with differing degrees of tenacity, to argue, and work toward change in the direction that they consider desirable.

Gender Composition

The 1980 and 1990 censuses indicate that there are more men than women emigrating from the African continent. Thus, men outnumber women in the population. The reverse is true for native born blacks where there is a higher rate of mortality among men than women. According to Djamba, more African men than

women have access to, and control of resources that enables them to move from their home countries to target countries. [\[30\]](#) Zeinab Eyega of RAINBO agrees. However, RAINBO statistics show that there is near-parity between men and women refugees. According to RAINBO estimates, African refugee women and female headed households comprise approximately 48% of those granted refugee status in the US. Sometimes, more than 50% of refugee families have female heads of the household. The annual ceiling for African refugees is 20,000. There is no telling whether the ceiling is reached for any given year. [\[31\]](#)

According to the U.S. State Department, the following are some of the conditions under which refugee status will be extended to women

- Forced population control practices
- Fear of Genital Mutilation
- Battered Immigrant women [\[32\]](#)

This means that more women that apply for refugee status will use such justifications as the rationale for their application. Two examples of such cases deal with the issue of female circumcision, and the US desire to protect the human rights, and bodily integrity of selected African women, and/or their offspring, by providing a haven to which these women, and children can escape, since they are perceived, and presented as fleeing egregious harm. Both cases involved the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Two women, Oluloro, from Nigeria, and Fauziya Kazinga were granted amnesty in order to prevent their kidnap, and subjection to bodily and probably, psychological harm that is believed to be involved in the practice of female circumcision. This constitutes a new kind of constitutional protection, and is available to potential immigrants who will seek amnesty in the future.

My interest here is not to contribute to the debate on female circumcision. For my thoughts and analysis on this subject, see Okome, "What Women? Whose Development..." [\[33\]](#) The sole interest is to discuss some of the impact of contemporary African immigration on developing case law, and jurisprudence in the US.

Education

Due to the imperatives of distance from destination and the cost of travel, most of those that are able to afford to emigrate are the affluent to wealthy. For African countries of origin, the loss is immense because a lot of the social capital that was developed using national resources is lost. [34] In addition, most of the immigrants from the African continent were urban dwellers in their countries of origin and may be very cosmopolitan. Among the migrants one can count those who came to the United States for higher education; those in the diplomatic service as well as those engaged in small scale trade both in the United States and African countries. As with the 1980s immigration of elite groups from the poorest Latin American countries, many African immigrants also flee political turmoil in their countries of origin. [35] Wole Soyinka, Nigeria's Nobel Prize laureate and Ngugi wa Thiong'o of Kenya are two prominent examples. Education makes it possible for these individuals to move to virtually any part of the world. Their international status makes it possible for the transaction costs attached to their emigration to be relatively lower than for others.

It is hypothesized that African immigrants tend to be better educated than American blacks. Among African immigrants, the black African immigrants tend to have higher rates of school enrolment than white African immigrants and native born blacks. They are also better educated than both native born blacks and Americans in general. When compared with others in the population, 88 percent of adults who immigrate from Africa to the U.S. have a high school education or higher as compared with 77 percent of native-born Americans, 76 percent of Asian immigrants and 46 percent of immigrants from Central America. [36] These figures make it possible to challenge stereotypes that persist in the American mind about race, accomplishment and achievement. Second, African immigrants are more educated than native blacks. According to these data, among males aged 16 years and older, there were more persons with college education among black African immigrants, followed by white African immigrants and native blacks. There is some indication that there is an increase in the number of non-college educated Africans that emigrate to the United States. The numerical decline of college educated black Africans from 88 percent in 1980 to 79 percent in 1990 is more significant than that for college educated black African women who have decreased from 64 percent to 63 percent over the same decade. The percentages of college educated white African immigrants increased from 66 percent in 1980 to 76 percent in 1990 while the increase was from 23 percent in 1980 to 30 percent in 1990 for native born

black men.

Many studies have confirmed that African immigrants are more educated than most other immigrants groups. [37] Logan gives evidence of the curious situation where Africa exports the cream of the social and human capital that it developed through a variety of post-independent development and educational initiatives. The brain drain and reverse transfer of technology is profound. [38] In contradistinction, educated immigrants can prove to be an asset when they invest, send remittances to family members, and return to their home countries to work, to provide philanthropic assistance or to establish businesses.

Marital Status

Approximately 60 percent of the African immigrants who identify as "white" are married (around 60 percent) while ten percent less of black African immigrants are and twenty percent fewer native born blacks are married. The 1990 census reveals that only among black African immigrants has there been an increase in the numbers of the married. Here there was a two percent increase from 49 percent in 1980 to 51 percent in 1990. While it has been hypothesized that the higher rate of marriage among "white" African immigrants may be due to better economic position as well as having more marriage-age immigrants from the sending countries, [39] there is no conclusive evidence.

Welfare Status and Labor Force Participation

Based on census findings, it has been hypothesized that due to higher levels of education, fewer "white" and black African immigrants will be welfare dependent, while more of them will be employable when compared with native born blacks. More women than men are also expected to be welfare dependent because women and children are the targeted population that ought to receive welfare. [40] At \$20,100, the per capita income of African immigrants outranks the \$16,700 for Asian immigrants or \$9,400 for Central-American immigrants. African immigrants also earn much more than native-born Americans' \$14,400 per capita. [41]

Further, According to Speer, "Among black African-born household heads, average annual income is about \$30,000 just slightly lower than the median household income for all U.S. households. White African-born household heads earn more

than \$50,000, and the Asian-born earn more than \$60,000." [42] Some analysts focus on the white African immigrants from South Africa and Zimbabwe as the very best of the crop of immigrants coming from Africa, thus revealing the extremity of the lack of information that exists and persists about immigrants from the African continent. It is quite possible that the reason why the white African immigrants make more money is that the racist hiring practices and barriers to entering the well paying jobs make it more difficult for black African immigrants to advance as fast as they could if there were no such barriers. In this case, over time, it is quite possible that black African immigrants will surpass their white counterparts in income levels. However, there have also been positive ramifications from the ongoing immigration of Africans to the United States. Finally, as a result of having the clear-cut documentary evidence that census figures provide on the high levels of education and consequently, of income that African immigrants command, some observers are realizing that the image of Africa as the "basket case" of the world, and of Africans as starving, poverty ridden refugees or at least, as the poorest of the poor is inaccurate.

Identity, Race and Ethnicity

Identity politics have become prominent in scholarly works. The question of whether immigrants should be assimilated as anonymous integrators into the melting pot, or remain distinct cultural groups which maintain linguistic, religious, social, and other characteristics that set them apart is an ongoing concern in immigration studies literature. [43] Immigrants have to decide whether they would rather assimilate or maintain cultural aloofness. They also have to devise coping mechanisms and strategies within their communities of settlement to deal with the harshness of immigration. To this end, many Africans of all classes form mutual aid societies, political and economic networks. There are also notable differences in the strategies deployed by affluent and professional immigrants, and the struggling, often undocumented ones who are part of the informal economy. The strategies that are employed change as African immigrants become more successful because the more successful an immigrant is, the wider their informal and formal social networks become, and the more opportunities become open to them to access crucial information.

One question that arises is what the consequence of African immigration would be to the configuration of who is classified as African American. Census figures suggest that African immigrants are still approximately 1 percent of the population

of the United States. If they continue to come in the same numbers or the numbers increase, and the immigrants choose to identify as African-American, they will change not only the composition of the population in the near term but also the nature of politics within the African American community. This is not likely to happen without a struggle. To the extent that African immigrants do not identify as African American, they will antagonize native born African Americans who feel justifiably, that they struggled for the rights and entitlements that foreigners are now enjoying. Some have argued that the effect of this increase in numbers is positive because African immigrants are highly educated and skilled. However, this also could be a negative effect of immigration because there will be tensions and perhaps, even conflicts if majority of African immigrants have good, well-paying jobs while most African Americans who are native born have the exact opposite experience. [\[44\]](#)

Census figures show that African immigrants are not all in the same racial category. [\[45\]](#) Dodoo's 1997 study on African immigration contend that African immigrants may be the best educated immigrants, but that they may also be substantially under-employed. While Dodoo's study may be challenged on the basis of using a statistically imbalanced sample, drawing on Model and Ladipo's 1996 study, he raises important questions on the effects of gender on immigration. These questions include "Will the African female be encumbered by four strikes - race, immigrant status, gender, and national (African) origin - interacting to place her at the bottom of the American stratification ladder?" Ethnicity and race continue to impact on life chances of immigrants in the United States, with the likelihood that female immigrants from Africa would suffer the most harm from discriminatory practices that diminish their chances of upward mobility. [\[46\]](#)

Language

Many African immigrants maintain connections with their national communities from the home country by speaking their language of origins, and others that they may know. One can travel through New York City and hear several different African languages being spoken loudly on the subway, in the bus, taxi, by pedestrians, shoppers in supermarkets and other stores, languages as varied as Mandingo, Yoruba, Igbo, Shangaan, Xhosa, Hausa, Wolof, and Ewe. These may be liberally interspersed with words and phrases from English, Portuguese and French. One influence that African immigrants have therefore, is to enrich the language mosaic of their community of settlement. Some immigrant mutual support

organizations coordinate, and organize language classes for their offspring, which run on Saturdays.

While the majority of African immigrants speak another language other than English in their daily interactions with friends and family, the numbers of those that responded in the affirmative is smaller - 75 percent than the 90 percent of Asian and Central American immigrant respondents. This language advantage is potentially beneficial for purposes of adjustment and coping. [47] The new languages introduced by immigrants in general enriches the repertoire of languages spoken in the United States, but creates the spectre of what Kirstin Downey Grimsley describes as "a modern-day Tower of Babel, presenting multiple opportunities for miscommunication and misunderstanding, as people seek to work together across steep barriers of language, culture, gender and economic class, and racial, educational and religious differences." [48]

There are innumerable possibilities for conflicts in the workplaces that have to deal with such a dizzying array of languages but workers also have an invaluable opportunity to cooperate, learn and develop friendships across the linguistic and cultural barriers. Moreover, many workplaces that rely on the labor of immigrants that cannot speak or understand English have had to introduce innovations into their management and supervision that enable them to accomplish tasks within the assigned time. [49] For non English speaking workers, the adjustment is very difficult, since new skills have to be learned and new cultures accommodated, even if not understood. Many Americans comment on the immigrants' accent. It usually sets them apart. However, Africans that went through certain educational training could well be confused for being anything from the Caribbean, Britain, or in the case of second generation African immigrants, of being African Americans from the area whose peculiar accent they exhibit in their speech.

Religion

Many immigrants continue in the faith to which they were born. Others change either religion, or more often, denomination. Some revel in the anonymity and relative isolation from loved ones that being an immigrant implies, and totally eschew all religious affiliation. Contemporarily, there is a growing tendency for a few African immigrants to affiliate with, or establish houses of worship that belong within the religious umbrella of African traditional religions. Within the Yorùbá traditional religions, there is an observed increase in the numbers of immigrants, or

temporary migrants who claim to be babaláwos (Ifá priest who gives advice on life choices, problems, and provides solutions for present and future.) One Yorùbá of African Caribbean extraction complained about the tendency of Nigerian Yorùbás to "come over and try to take over everything" as though there were no other qualified and capable babaláwos here. No doubt, African immigration has caused many tensions which the heretofore limited reportage and scholarly attention has totally ignored. Regardless, the immigration of more Africans has also enlarged the numbers of adherents to Yorùbá and other African religions. As well, it has increased the possibilities of cooperation and collaboration between recent and contemporary African immigrants and native born Americans of African descent.

Religion impacts on immigration because it is one of the avenues through which immigrants negotiate their integration into host countries. Churches, mosques, and other religious institutions perform the functions of socialization, providing opportunities for networking, political participation, counseling, and leadership. Devout religious observance could also make a group of immigrants more visible, and thus, open to discrimination. In the post-1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, and particularly after September 11 2001, Muslim immigrants are regarded as presenting grave threats to national security due to perceptions that they fit the profile of terrorists. Many such immigrants are from North Africa. [50] Most are not guilty of anything other than fitting a profile created by the law enforcement system in response to perceived threats to national security.

A. Islam

Although they are by no means the only Muslim immigrants, this discussion will focus predominantly on the settlement of Mourides in Harlem, New York City. They have become increasingly visible because of their distinctive language (predominantly French and other West African languages such as Wolof,) their highly enterprising nature, and their creation of a bustling community in the Harlem section of Manhattan. It has also led to a significant amount of institutionalization. New mosques have been established. Converts have joined the Mourides from the Nation of Islam as well as from the larger African American community. Some were attracted by Amadou Bamba's uncompromising stance against European domination. Others admire the self-help ideology that the charismatic leader espoused. Yet others believe in the power of the miracles that he was reputed to have performed. [51]

Due to relatively rapid rate of success of Mouridist Senegalese immigrants, and the prodigious size of their remittances home, they were dubbed the ideal immigrants by Sylvianne Diouf. [52] The stories of the Mouridists give some pointers about what makes the success of the African immigrants possible. However, the stories in no way support the conclusion that they are any more ideal than any other immigrants. Instead, they show that immigrants who go to their host countries armed with skills, networks and can avail themselves of help from supportive networks tend to thrive and succeed economically to a higher degree than others who lack the requisite skills, networks, and resources.

Many Mouridists do not take the initial high social costs of immigration as a permanent disadvantage. Instead, they begin in very humble, sometimes seemingly impossible circumstances, prevail under what they see as the normal impediments of life on earth, often using their faith as an anchor. Remarkably, a large number of them succeed, and even thrive. The case of Moudou Sarr, who arrived in the United States at the age of 17, spoke no English; and immediately proceeded to hawk his wares on the very street corner where he now has a tourist shop-- 42nd Street at Times Square. The 33-year old Mr. Sarr is also an American citizen. His words are recorded in an article in the Economist: "They would confiscated [sic] my goods and arrested me but I managed to save my pennies and keep my faith. I knew that Amadou Bamba prevailed, so so could I." [53]

To go to Harlem is to again, encounter the Mourides, who by establishing various entrepreneurial businesses have contributed tremendously to the urban renewal that is ongoing in the formerly depressed area. These contributions are not going unnoticed in city and state government. According to Randy Daniels, New York State Commissioner for Economic Development in New York State, "African fabric shops, travel agents and telephone call-centres are internationalising the economy." [54] It is clear that a niche economy is developing because a closer look into the Harlem African communities and also into the Bronx shows that the Mourides may be the majority, but they are not the only West Africans. An even closer look reveals the presence of Ethiopians, Eritreans, Camerounians, and South Africans. However, the Mourides have undoubtedly put their stamp on neighbourhoods like 116th Street and Malcolm X Boulevard, where "Little Senegal" has developed - with more than 80% of businesses now owned by Senegalese. A Mouride religious centre is under construction. The city of Manhattan has proclaimed an official holiday in Harlem for Amadou Bamba, as has Cincinnati, another favourite destination for the Senegalese. [55]

One of the most remarkable effects of the murder of Amadou Diallo, a Guinean by the New York police in February 1999 is to clearly present most Americans with evidence of the presence of African immigrants in the United States. In New York City, many began to "see" for the first time that the ubiquitous street vendors were not just "African" but West Africans. Of course, no self-respecting New Yorker would claim not to know about the street vendors. They sell many goods in the busy streets of the downtown shopping areas of Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx. Many have become virtual fixtures in the most popular tourist thoroughfares of the city. The murder of Amadou Diallo generated journalistic interest in finding out more about these relatively new groups, thus revealing clear evidence of what Watkins Owens describes as intra-racial ethnicity. African immigrants are all from Africa, but apart from the distinctions that the census board has helped people realize, that some Africans are black, others white, and yet others Asian, we are now "seeing" more clearly that some are Muslim in a way that is quite distinct from the Islam of the nationalist black Muslims. Among these, the most numerous are the Mouride, a Sufi brotherhood, founded by Cheikh Amadou Bamba in Senegal. Amadou's story also shows us the cosmopolitan nature of these immigrants, who can be found around the world, from Paris to Tokyo, but have decided to concentrate their efforts in New York. [\[56\]](#)

B: Christianity

The impact of African Christian immigrants is not a much-studied subject. Few scholars and analysts probably realize that there is an increasing tide of religious immigration, where ministers and pastors of African churches come into the United States as missionaries. Many of the churches that they head are Pentecostalist. Most of them have exclusively African immigrant membership. [\[57\]](#) More established denominations also make efforts to service their African immigrant population through the sponsorship of the immigration of ministers that would provide pastoral care for African immigrants in their area of operation.

An increasing number of African established churches are springing up in locales with significant numbers of African immigrants. Among these are the Celestial Church of Christ, the Christ Apostolic Church, the Aladura Cherubim and Seraphim Church, and various other denominations. Other African immigrants attend pre-existing churches. The Christ Apostolic Church, First in the Americas was founded over 20 years ago in New York City by Reverend Oyedepo. [\[58\]](#) The church serves

a predominantly Nigerian immigrant population, and now has a big congregation. Liberian immigrants in Staten Island are predominantly resident in the Park Hill and Stapleton sections. The community also has at least three other churches that are established by Liberian immigrants, and cater predominantly to the large Liberian community, including refugees. The New Life Christian Church, pastored by Lorenzo Stevens serves the Liberian Immigrant community. [\[59\]](#)

Again, while Liberian Christians in Staten Island, and the Egyptian Copts are not the only ones in the United States, or even the largest in numbers, this section will largely focus on both groups. Reverend Phillip Saywrayne, is a Mission Developer for the African Immigrant Ministries, Christ Assembly Lutheran Churches. The church makes its outreach to Africans in the communities where the church is located in the area of education, citizenship classes and fellowship with others. [\[60\]](#) Rev. Saywrayne gave some statistics on the numbers of legal African immigrants. He also also enumerated some of the reasons why there are refugee flows from the African continent. These include internal conflicts, civil war, and the consequent displacements. Some of the impacts of African immigrants in their communities of settlement include demonstrating the high value that Africans put on education, networking within the community and with other people of African descent. African immigrants also demonstrate a great degree of economic productivity, indicating that these are not people that are waiting around for a handout, or who are desirous of becoming perpetual beneficiaries of public assistance. Although not overtly stated, Reverend Saywrayne and his colleagues seem to be primarily engaged in servicing refugees from Liberia. From statements made at the roundtable by another Minister who is based in Queens, there is a lack of sufficient information on referrals to agencies that provide social services.

The needs of the community as identified by Rev. Saywrayne include the lack of access to legal documentation. Problems such as the lack of information on Africans by most Americans, causing the perpetuation of stereotypes and consequent discrimination were also identified. Confirming the assessment that Reverend Saywrayne's ministry is geared toward providing support and services for refugees is the fact that his policy recommendation involved a call for more liberal policies on refugees both internationally and in the United States. From the perspective of this minister, the potential benefits that would be engendered by the presence of these immigrants include positively influencing Africa's development and broadening religious outreach.

For the analyst, numerous questions were raised by Rev. Saywayne's presentation, including the following: There is a need for accurate statistics on refugees and asylum seekers, and for databases that directly address this question. On the relationship of Africans and African Americans, what are the possibilities for cooperation? What tensions exist and why? Finally, is it possible for a faith-based organization that is Christian in its belief system, and which emerged out of the need to service a population from one particular country - Liberia, to broaden its scope and perspective such that it embraces people on an interfaith and trans-national basis? According to Reverend Saywayne, this is what his church aims to do, and had done. Systematic assessment is needed to evaluate the extent to which this is an accurate picture, and if so, if the model is replicable. [\[61\]](#)

Coptic Christian immigrants from Egypt are also actively engaged in community building because the norms and values of the community are being passed down to succeeding generations through the most venerable institution in the community, the church. The church does not only serve religious purposes through Father Mina, the Coptic priest that ministers to his flock in a multitude of ways, baptism, religious instruction, counseling, and probably advocacy when needed. It is also a venue where people socialize and exchange news, information, opinions, and ideas. In certain domains, including the sanctuary during worship, segregation according to gender is strictly observed. When social interaction is the goal, food is consumed and conversation occurs in the un-segregated church hall. Old-timers mix freely with newcomers. The food of course, comprises of favored delicacies. Multiple generations of extended families gather to either celebrate the opportunities of their new country of settlement or cast their thoughts nostalgically to the country left behind. Of course, opinions will differ about the extent to which America represents Shangri La. Newcomers are often the more nostalgic among immigrants, probably because they have only recently partaken of the bounties of the home countries. Old timers also tend to cling tightly to the myth of what makes America the land of opportunities. The discussion between Edward and his brother below points to only few of such interactions:

Edward, in the U.S. a decade, was there with his family, and his ex-Egyptian army officer brother, here a few months, was there with his. Edward nibbled an Egyptian sweet while heaping praise on America. The freedom, safety, rationality, size, expertise, generosity, and tolerance of this country made it the only one where he could now imagine living--the fact that he knew of fellow Copts in Brooklyn who had been mugged or whose apartments or businesses had been burglarized worried I

(sic) him very little. Why, look at what the American doctors had done for his son, born prematurely weighing just two pounds! The eight-year-old he called over and lovingly presented was stocky, the picture of health.

To which Edward's brother, the Egyptian patriot, responded by saying that America doesn't have a monopoly on such miracles. His own son, born prematurely in Egypt, had been cared for by Egyptian doctors, and look at him now. This boy was equally the picture of robust health. For seventeen years Edward's brother, who needed a shave on this holy day, served in the Egyptian army. Asked what the fate of the peace treaty with Israel would be if the bearded ones take over, he said over the din, "Straight into the garbage can." Asked what the chances are that the rank-and-file soldiers, uncomplicated Moslems, would mutiny, he shook his head. "They will do as they are told." In other words, Edward's brother was vividly homesick and wished to believe that it will be possible for him to return. His naturalized brother, on whose invitation he, his wife, and their kids were accorded visas, was complacent. "He'll stay. You know the World Trade Center? That's what the Copts in Egypt face every day!" [\[62\]](#)

Many African immigrants become as focused on the political situation in their countries of origin as they are disinterested in American politics. For some, being interested is something that comes not with permanent residence, but with naturalization. The reasoning is that a permanent resident cannot cast a vote even if the individual is extremely interested in politics. What would be the gain in focusing on something that yields absolutely no benefits? Clearly, the brothers whose case is discussed above are at odds about the eventual resolution of their country's political problems. Many also fail to understand the intricacies of the American legal system. Both brothers were not alone in lamenting that the legal system was much too kind to recognized terrorists like those accused of bombing the World Trade Center. Dr. Fayez Guirguis, an obstetrician-gynecologist came to America in 1981, eleven years after graduating from medical school in Cairo, after serving for five years in the army, taking his specialty training, and getting married. He claims that his Coptic heritage worked against him because he was neither able to establish himself private practice nor to take one of the lucrative employment opportunities in the government's employ that would have guaranteed a steady income and a great deal of prestige. Having a relatively painless entree into the American body politic due to being the brother of a naturalized American two offices in Brooklyn, enough affluence to guarantee a seat on the board of St. George's did not prevent Dr. Guirguis from missing his home country, or from

being also oblivious to the fine points involved in administering legal standards such as being innocent until proven guilty and following due process are considered mere irrelevancies by most. What makes the situation more galling for Egyptian Copts is that they all realize that more of their fellow Copts would move to America, if their needs were considered to be more pressing than those of Muslims, and they did not have to meet the condition of family reunification before being allowed to emigrate legally.

Many also know rather intimately that becoming an undocumented alien is the only way out for most who want to flee Egypt immediately. The Copts tell of the difficulties of living under conditions where the fatwas are publicly declared on unbelievers by Islamic Sheikhs whose elimination would guarantee the perpetrator the status of a saint. [63] Interviews with Muslim Egyptian immigrants would of course, be necessary to give a balanced picture of the effect of religion as push and pull factors on immigration. Some, as was the case with Dr. Ezzat Youssef, an oncologist who emigrated to escape discrimination does not understand why the leader of the World Trade Center bombing, Sheikh Rahman had so much coverage in the media, which has not lived up to its reputation of being hard-hitting because it failed to put the spotlight on the multiplicity of human rights abuses and venomous bias that was actively spread by the Sheikh and his followers. [64]

The differences between first and second generation African immigrants are often significant. The case of the Egyptian Coptic immigrants in New York City is instructive. While the second generation has a pride in their heritage, they also want to escape from the customs that accompany it. Attending Mass and Sunday School at St. George's Church in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn as the first generation does with so much devotion and dedication feels extremely oppressive to some of the young second-generation Coptic Egyptian Christians that one creative young woman who wanted to leave ostensibly to make a telephone call questions the teacher that is mandated to ensure attendance thus: "Is this a jail?" The teacher, "A young woman teacher with the cross tattooed on the inside of her wrist" acted as role model in more ways than one, her tattooed cross is a traditional symbol worn by Coptic Christians in Egypt, where the Copts clearly demonstrate their opposition to the predominant Islamic culture by living according to the precepts of their faith, while also clearly defying Islamic injunctions against the consumption of both pork and wine. [65]

Trade and Commerce

Some recent African immigrants to the United States also establish micro enterprises in their communities of settlement. One such example can be found in, but is not limited to the Harlem section of New York City. One observes in areas where African immigrants cluster, the emergence of businesses established to cater to the immigrants' needs for ethnic foods, clothing, music, even socialization. Many African-owned stores have sprung up in metropolitan areas around the United States. New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Houston, are just a few of cities with sizable immigrant communities, and stores established to service them. Other immigrants drive "dollar cabs and vans" in New York City for instance, run informal sector businesses out of their homes, providing services such as catering, dee-jaying, for parties, babysitting, working as housekeepers, home health aides, delivery people in supermarkets, hair braiders (the population of whom have exploded in all major cities), security guards, and other sundry jobs. This kind of intense activity within a concentrated area makes Americans in the community aware of the African presence, and familiar with the social customs, and habits of the new immigrants. Since most immigrants are ambitious, their stay in these areas is often short-lived. They move up to better neighborhoods, but return to purchase food and other creature comforts, and join informal groups in these arena to catch up on gossip, news from home, and current events in the US.

There is evidence of a bustling economy that was constructed de novo in the Harlem section of New York City by African immigrants from the Sahel. This niche economy contributes to renewing the US economy and values. [66] For some, the remittances sent home by the Senegalese immigrant and migrant population, who are mostly vendors, traders and merchants, is so substantial as to be responsible for economic renewal back home. It is also argued that the work ethic, the religious ethos, the characteristic virtues of this population make them especially suited for characterization as the ideal immigrants who relive yet again, the Horatio Alger myth of creating something out of nothing. [67] The presence and contributions of other African immigrants in managerial, professional and technical fields is not so obvious, but it is equally significant.

Many of the Africans that congregate in the urban areas of today's America are highly enterprising, but they have not been as visible as the Sahelians, particularly the Mourides who have also successfully utilized the media to promote their issues. Through their almost ubiquitous presence and increasing dominance of street vending in the New York City metropolitan area, they have visibly demonstrated

their impact on international trade. Their activities have used the mechanism of networks B a strategy used by past immigrant streams. As a measure of the economic success of the Mouride segment of this population, significant financial transfers are being made from the community here to Senegal. These transfers are facilitated through both formal and informal banking arrangements. In an interview by the Economist, Cheikh Seye, the executive secretary of the Mouride Islamic Community of America claims that approximately \$100 million is transferred from New York to Senegal every three months through informal banking arrangements. This, and the information provided above on the remittances of Eritrean immigrants give some weight to the hypothesis that African immigrants are less likely to be welfare dependent and more likely to have employment. That this is a hope that takes a tremendous amount of tenacity is the story that remains to be told in African immigration.

For most new immigrant African street vendors, the cost of entering into this niche economy is prohibitive. Since New York City dispenses the few street-vending licenses through a lottery, those who are not lucky enough to win have to play a cat and mouse game with the police until they eventually regularize their status. The dominance of the Senegalese in this niche economy is confirmed by the unofficial estimate that pegs the Senegalese as 90 percent of an estimated 1,300 police task force arrests annually. [\[68\]](#)

The indomitability of the Senegalese vendors is a reflection of the network of support provided by the Mouride community, which makes the loss of goods to police raids a less costly experience. Thus, police task force members indicate that they keep arresting the same peddlers over and over. To increase the cost of operating on the margins of the law, peddlers are now charged for distributing counterfeit goods, a charge that carries a prison term of up to one year in contrast to the maximum of two days in jail and community service that was imposed before 1992. In addition, the prison term gives the immigrant a permanent criminal record, thus potentially damaging their chances of maintaining immigration status. Also, it is an indicator of the relative political weakness of the immigrants that they are unable to push the city administration to recognize the needs of their members.

Police brutality and harassment are also part of the package of surviving the challenges of street vending. This applies equally to the licensed and unlicensed immigrant vendors. Although community activists like Seydina Senghor, executive director of Afrika Business Community and an advocate for the Mourides in New

York, about the unfairness of these practices, there are very few formal complaints. Many take this situation in stride. "We knew it wasn't going to be easy before we came," said Amadou Thiam, who hawks T-shirts with fake logos. "But this is business." [69]

Another kind of entrepreneurial activity that African immigrants undertake which may have gone under the radar thus far is offered by the example of Mr. Kwabena Smith, President of Ashanti Origins has a four year experience as an entrepreneur in the United States. Mr. Smith got his university education from Nigeria, and hails from Ghana. From his perspective, there is a dearth of statistics that is essential to the ability to engage in business meaningfully. Upward mobility is a strong motivational factor that spurs many African immigrants to work extremely hard. However, in comparison with other immigrant groups, African immigrants are small in number. The level of commercial penetration that they have achieved is limited due to the recent duration of their stay. The extent of spontaneity that is possible is driven by the locality and environment. For this reason there is a large informal sector and service orientation.

It is amazing that while there is a 30-40 year involvement of highly educated professionals, and thus high levels of skill aggregation among African immigrants, the skill aggregation has not been parlayed into the establishment of think tanks and institutions that provide support and advisory services to African immigrants. Numerous disruptions are generated due to technological changes. Therefore, good business persons ought to develop an approach to the marketplace that responds swiftly and appropriately. For Mr. Smith, there has been remarkable progress among African immigrant business people despite daunting challenges. For Mr. Smith, African immigrants are not yet networked enough to strategize for the next phase of establishing a noticeable presence in the US economy. There is no database of information for African immigrant business persons to draw upon. On the question of whether the African immigrant associations that exist are viable, Mr. Smith responded that thus far, there is a very narrow focus due to the tendency to aggregate along ethnic lines. Consequently, many possibilities remain unrealized. [70]

Undocumented Aliens

There is a slowdown in the contemporary world economy. No country, not even the United States is immune from it. However, many African countries are among the

most economically devastated, since they have experienced low, or no growth from the late 1970s. This indicates the existence, and even the persistence of differentials in wages and employment opportunities, which attract people to move across international boundaries in search of a better life. There are many jobs in countries like the United States, which only the most recent migrants would take. Usually, these migrants are also undocumented aliens. According to the USINS, between 1988 and 1992, there were approximately 3.4 million undocumented aliens in the US. Of these, 104,000 were estimated to be Africans. By 2000, it was estimated that there were approximately 6 million undocumented aliens in the United States. [71] Who are these individuals, and what do they do? Most people are familiar by now, with the proliferation of African hair braiding centers. Many of these are owned and operated either by individual African women, or collectively. Many of the women are undocumented. African undocumented aliens also drive the "dollar cabs", work as housekeepers, security guards, home health aides, nannies, delivery persons, maids, and janitors.

African undocumented aliens are no different from others with similar immigration status. They have no legal right of residence in the United States, and could easily be deported, if discovered by the INS. According to the Immigration Reform and Control Act, it is illegal for employers to hire undocumented aliens. However, this has neither stopped the influx of undocumented aliens nor curbed those who employ them. To date, undocumented aliens have the constitutional right to send their children to public schools, and to obtain medical care in public hospitals. Their children, if born in the United States, are automatically citizens. In the current environment of anti immigrant furor, many from the right wing are calling for an end to these benefits. California's proposition 187 is a case in point. Many undocumented aliens were alarmed at these developments. The better organized among them mounted counter-protests against discriminatory laws and administrative practices. However, the overwhelming majority were scared and demoralized. Many feel insecure to the extreme, and actively pursue alternative measures to either regularize their status, if possible, or to evade the scrutiny of immigration authorities. These pressures have ramifications on family well-being, and the psychological health of parents who are already burdened with the tedium of making ends meet. It may be one of the factors responsible for documented cases of abuse, neglect, or family strife that are compiled by the social work community in state and local government agencies for protective welfare.

It is important to identify the stressors that cause friction, or conflict within

families, and second to identify what if anything, cultural differences have to do with differing modes of discipline, and interpersonal relations between spouses. The abuses that are often presented as being attributable to cultural differences are not necessarily defensible on the basis of cultural mores among African immigrant communities, or in their countries of origins.

Professional, Technical, and Kindred Immigrants

The brain drain is a term coined by the British Royal Society in 1962 to describe the migration of British scientists and engineers to the United States. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, [UNCTAD] coined the term, Reverse Transfer of Technology [RTT] to describe the migration of Professionals, Technical and Kindred [PTK] from developing countries to the West. PTK migration can take four basic forms: from one developed country to another; from a developed to less developed country, from one less developed country to another, and from a less developed to a developed country. [72] The last form coincides with the definition of RTT. It is estimated that about one million PTK workers left developing countries for developed countries between 1960 and 1985. The net loss to developing countries is estimated at \$60 billion, or \$60,000 per immigrant. A study by Logan hypothesizes that countries with larger population size will have a higher volume of PTK migration; that experts from pro-Western countries are more likely to get jobs in the West, while those from Marxist or Socialist countries often get classified as political refugees; experts tend to gravitate toward the old metropolitan colonizer of their countries, and to countries where there are relatively few language adjustments to be made. [73]

The push factors stimulating African PTK migration include worsened economic conditions in majority of African countries, which has translated into reduced career opportunities for professionals, as well as reduced efforts by African countries to recruit their indigenes resident abroad. Political and social conditions can also stimulate increases in PTK migration, as the case of exiles indicates. The pull factors are the same for all classes of immigration: the existence of better opportunities for employment and career advancement.

Relative to the total pattern of immigration to the United States in the 1980s, the number of African migrants is small. However, the number of African migrants to the United States has grown at a higher rate than those from the rest of the world. In the 1980s, the African share of US immigration increased from 2.6 percent in the

early 1980s to 2.9 percent in the early 1980s.[See Table 1, Logan] The African share of PTK migration is also small, rising from 4.4% in 1982 to 5.3% in 1989. However, the African share of PTK immigrants is significantly higher than the number of African migrants as a percentage of total immigration [Logan, 1992]. This implies that more African migrants relative to those from other parts of the world are PTK migrants [figure 2, Logan]. The significance of the size of African PTK migration to the US relative to the rest of the world can also be found in the statistics representing the percentage of Third Preference visas [immigrants given a preferential status due to their specialized skills and expertise] from 1980 to 1989, Logan calculates that an average of 5% of total Third Preference visas were given to African experts. Africans got a higher number of these visas than others from other parts of the world [See Table 3, Logan]. The number of executives admitted from Africa is even higher, compared with figures for the rest of the world [Logan, Table 4].

One of the clearest impacts of RTT immigration on African countries is a loss in expert knowledge, which ironically, is intensifying during recent years, due to African economic problems. Given that PTK migration to the US from Africa is likely to be less than the numbers for old metropolises, this points to the possibility of long-term negative effects on African development. This is due to the following factors: the investments made on educational training are lost, the best and brightest indigenes and their knowledge pool is lost, their labor is lost, and these losses have negative ramifications for Africa's ability to participate in, and compete in the international economy. When PTK migrants change their visa status to permanent residency or they naturalize, the likelihood that they will return home is significantly reduced. Their children, who represent the second generation, who also will tend to be highly trained and well qualified, tend to develop fewer linkages with their countries of origin, and may self-identify as citizens and nationals of the country in which their parents have settled. Their potential contribution to African development is thereby lost.

Family members that are left behind at home may benefit from remittances home, and some of them may become immigrants themselves due to help from earlier migrants. Majority prefer to stay in their countries of origin. Contrary to predominant perceptions among even African immigrants, a significant number thrive, and have become prosperous, even in the difficult SAP years. Many of these newly affluent Africans are blatant "nouveau riche" in their lifestyles, and proclivities. Some have obviously made prodigious amounts of money in illegal

ventures, and are in the process of progressive mainstreaming of their business ventures, and social stature. Such mainstreaming is pursued vigorously through the establishment of businesses in the formal sector, huge donations of money to philanthropic organizations, or welfare efforts, and obvious "devoutness" in religious observance. The evidence of these manifestations in social life in many African countries will be recorded, and analyzed.

There is a potential for generational and cultural gaps created between the immigrants, their children, and older generations back home. A lot of psychological and emotional angst also goes along with migration, which are caused by physical separation and the inability to communicate face-to-face across great distances.

Information Technology and the African Digital Diaspora [\[74\]](#)

The transformation of information technology has lowered the transaction costs of immigration tremendously. Virtual communities that transcend national boundaries have been created which agglomerate on the basis of shared interest in a region, nation, ethnicity, profession, or issue. One of the positive consequences of these burgeoning virtual communities is that people are able to obtain and disseminate information on changes in immigration laws via the internet and World Wide Web. The various web groups engage in this kind of interaction as a public service to their members, thus utilizing technological advancement to facilitate the almost cost-free exchange of information that may end up generating increased immigration.

[\[75\]](#)

For Mr. Dayo Ogunyemi, a graduate of MIT, the title Digital Diaspora suggests that Africans online are also Africans outside of the African continent. However, what it ought to suggest is that people are communicating without regard to the limitations imposed by geographical boundaries, time and space. Thus, immigration from one's country of origin is no longer a barrier to real-time communication with those left behind. It is also a much less expensive alternative to the telephone. For many African immigrants, it is dependable and reliable in a way that "snail-mailing" is not.

According to Mr. Ogunyemi, the use of digital communication occurred in two phases - The first is the early internet experience. As a result, USENET was developed. It facilitated communication for small groups. The implication of this was that by 1990 the Africa USENET had the following foci: Society, Culture,

Africa. Those involved were academics and students, some of whom were Africanists (experts who study Africa who may not necessarily be African). The culture and practice within this community stressed the virtues of openness. Anyone could post messages, therefore, racist postings from South Africa were plastered all over. This led to the creation of new USENETS that were largely country email based mailing lists. Those created include Salonet for South Africa, Naijanet for Nigeria, Ochanet, Zimnet and Kenyanet. They were worldwide groups communicating in real time. The purpose was getting news of home countries and exchanges of information that led to offline relationships. One example is the Association of Nigerians Abroad. During the period of the Abacha regime in Nigeria, this association engaged in pro-democracy activities that were a significant part of the efforts to challenge the Abacha regime and fight for democratically elected government in Nigeria. Other communities: Africa Online was formed predominantly by people on Kenyanet , Ochanet and Zimnet. Unfortunately, Africa Online went out of business. In 1993 The World Wide Web was created leading to an increased ease in use and wider range of access. This led to the increased ability to conduct news sources monitoring and access to African newspapers online. In consequence, there was a change from a "many communicating with many" type of interaction to a "many to one" form. [\[76\]](#)

There is a need for accurate statistics on web groups. Today, there are well over 200 information sources on Africa on the WWW , a dramatic increase from approximately 10 in 1993. The Anglophone skew that developed early on is being challenged by the Francophone. One consequence of this new technology is the fracturing the Digital Diaspora. The increased access in Africa also challenges the notion of a Diaspora. [\[77\]](#)

Human Rights

When many people think about the Prison Industrial Complex, they probably do not have African immigrants in mind. However, African asylum seekers may very well end up in a detention center like the Wackenhut Detention Center in Queens where they are kept in a maximum security jail for years. Increasingly as privatization is chosen as the most efficient option for state, local and federal government around the United States, warehouses and other available buildings are transformed into prisons by private profit-making corporations. The recipients of this harsh treatment are refugees who make the mistake of arriving in the United States without proper documentation. According to the 1996 immigration Act, such individuals should be

deported. While the United States is a liberal democracy and its citizens and government declare their support for the Declaration of Human Rights Article 14 provision that "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution", five percent of the 16,000 people that the INS had in detention in February 1999 were asylum seekers. 60 to 65 percent of them are kept in jails with criminals. These jails provide no privacy and do not respond to the dietary or other needs that those in detention have.

Blanket detention is an option that some local municipalities exercise. New York City is one of these. One Somalian immigrant was, for instance kept in custody for four years, after which he won his case, which was strong to begin with. [78] It is indicative of the weakness or non-existence of African immigrant rights groups that most of the advocacy that is done for such individuals is done by faith-based organizations, and they are few and far between. These organizations are also not aware of all the options open to advocacy groups, or resources that they can recommend to their constituents/clients.

The Integration of African Immigrants into the United States

The ideology of the melting pot began in the eighteenth century. It allowed that the emergent American nation would blend European cultures into a unique and new American culture. Initially, it was widely believed that those from Northern and Western Europe were more desirable "melters", and there were debates on whether immigrants from southern and eastern Europe could be regarded likewise.

Cultural pluralism relates to the ability of immigrants to create ethnic enclaves, where it is possible to live among those speaking their own language, and in the midst of a familiar culture. In these environments, immigrants are able to offer one another reciprocal aid, and conserve elements of their past. The fact that cultural assimilation may often take place relatively rapidly, particularly among the offspring of immigrants, while structural assimilation [the incorporation of immigrants into the social structure] may be elusive raises the questions of the achievement of pluralism at the expense of patterned social inequality. The immigrant and those self-identifying as American may have a stand-offish relationship one to the other, with the immigrants being comfortable in their own milieu, and Americans refusing to admit alien newcomers into their own primary group. Immigrants may be able to achieve immediate secondary structural assimilation, by gaining employment, but may not be able to penetrate primary

social structures like friendship cliques. There are also intra-racial tensions [79] among African Americans, Americans of Caribbean descent, and recent African immigrants that arise from competing for the same slice of the economic pie whether it is for employment, or educational opportunity. This prevents the development of alliances between African Americans and recent African immigrants.

There is great diversity among the African immigrant population as to region, nationality and ethnicity. The level and degree of acculturation depends on the professional and educational skills. Low levels of these skills cause limits and exclusion from upward mobility. One interesting question is: Who acculturates faster, men or women? For Ms. Eyega, one of the factors that militate against acculturation is the limited access to information and resources especially given limited language skills. Those who are non-English speaking and those that are non-literate may be overwhelmingly affected negatively.

Immigration transforms the social structure of the country of origin and the receiving country. It also affects the immigrant's perception of the self, and identity. Past efforts to evaluate the outcome of immigration focused on issues of assimilation. Three competing ideologies of assimilation were identified by Milton Gordon in a 1964 study. These are Anglo-conformity, the melting pot, and cultural pluralism. Anglo-conformity refers to the effort to push for the conformity of the immigrants to the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture in the United States. The "one hundred percent American" movement during the First World War was a case in point. The first immigrant quota laws, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1924 carried the "hundred percent" movement to its logical conclusion. Southern and Eastern Europeans were discriminated against, and northern and Western Europeans encouraged to emigrate. Today, the "English only" movement re-awakens the same desire to divest immigrants of their native culture and merge them into the dominant culture.

The distinctive style of dress is another factor that sets the immigrant apart. However, many, not wanting to draw attention to themselves, or feeling that their national clothing is too rich-looking for ordinary wear, may not wear their national clothes on a regular basis, saving these for special occasions. Even at these events, some who want to demonstrate visibly, their level of assimilation into the dominant culture, or superior understanding of the fine points of western dress codes, are fully decked out in the latest designer wear. Most others wear national clothing that

reveal differences in ethnic origin. The children mostly wear western clothing, being resistant to the national conventions from the old country that their parents hold dear. Regardless, over the last ten years, there are more occurrences of African immigrants being encountered on an almost daily basis, decked out in their best national wear. Stores have sprung up, in storefronts, and out of people's homes, of tailors and seamstresses who service the need for the finest, most current clothing from virtually all African communities. It is also becoming a norm to go to church, weddings, and other events and encounter people "dressed to the nines" in the cutting-edge fashions of the day for given African countries.

A spin-off consequence of rich variety of African clothing that has become available is that more and more, African American couples are choosing to have weddings in which they wear African rather than Western clothing. Even more than immigrant Africans, they are having weddings in which the whole bridal party wears Afrocentric, or African clothing. African immigrants on the other hand, are more likely to have the bridal party wear Western clothing, while the guests, friends, parents, and extended family of the African individual, wear African clothing for the wedding. At the reception, the newlyweds may change their clothes up to three or four times, each time wearing matching clothes that are entirely delightful to behold. Close family members, and friends may also change their clothes a few times. All-night parties are held in celebration, where food, drink, and good cheer are in liberal supply.

These parties are distinctive, depending on the national origin of the African in question. Nigerians have a reputation of being extremely hard-working, but also, of being the consummate "party animals", who display significant levels of profligacy at their parties. Some parties are so "rich" as to have live musicians flown in from Nigeria, people invited from Europe, Africa, and places in-between, unlimited food, drinks, and snacks. What sets up the Nigerian party of those who in their own estimation, have "arrived", apart, is the degree to which money is sprayed. Spraying refers to the practice of plastering the dancers and performers at a party with money. The practice was once a preserve of the old nobility, who through spraying, visibly demonstrated their largesse, and open-handedness (for the Yoruba of Southern Nigeria, this means the ability to give generously, and selflessly). The reward to the open-handed is respect, increased followership, admiration. Over time, the practice of spraying has evolved to become *de rigueur* at social events, regardless of the class of the practitioners. Particularly since the heydays of the Nigerian oil boom in the 1970s, spraying has spread like wildfire. It has taken on

epidemic proportions, a phenomenon signifying among Nigerians, the attitude that man pass man (a "my Mercedes is bigger than yours" kind of attitude that has generated crass and ruinous exhibitionism). There are cases where people have made necklaces of highly denominated dollar bills, and hung it on the celebrant. At least one case exists of those who made an agbada (the long, flowing robe that Yoruba men wear) of one hundred dollar bills, and put it on the celebrant at a party.

Quite apart from the wastefulness of spraying, it is notable that although it seems to the uninitiated as though money is being wantonly thrown around, there are conventions that delimit the nature, form, and structure of the spraying episode. This includes the awareness by the sprayed, of the sprayer, as to their particulars, in terms of status, class, the history of the sprayer, and sprayed concerning levels of generosity in the past, the degrees of relationship, whether defined by blood, marriage, nouveau-riche wealth, or ties of friendship.

Many recent African immigrants succumb to the integrationist urge by vigorously, deliberately and single-mindedly pursuing the "American Dream." Many by so doing proclaim their abhorrence for being labeled "black," choosing rather, to be called "African." The upwardly-mobile and successful professionals also choose to live in "white" neighborhoods, and dress as well as speak in ways that would make them virtually unidentifiable as new immigrants. This is nothing new. According to Ronald Takaki, Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe in the 19th and early 20th Centuries went to great pains not to be identified as "greenhorns" by adopting different modes of dress, language, and even by Americanizing their names. Those who became more affluent immediately moved from the cramped tenements that they initially occupied for better neighborhoods, vigorously imbibing elements of middle class American lifestyles such as the acquisition of vacation homes, the domestication of women who were formerly in the workplace, and seeking higher education for their offspring in Ivy League Universities that discriminated against them. [\[80\]](#)

Before the civil rights era, African immigrants suffered from similar restrictions against their access to the better Universities. However, today, the children of upwardly-mobile and affluent recent African immigrants today tend to benefit from the policies of affirmative action. This is a factor that generates resentment from African Americans who believe that recent African immigrants unduly benefit from the long years of struggle of African Americans in a way that restricts access for African Americans, this while refusing to identify as African American. This is an

ongoing source of tensions that may escalate if there is a prolonged economic downturn that pits members of both communities against one another.

Recent African immigrants also grapple with significant pressures from relatives left behind in their home countries to provide differing levels of assistance from financial aid, to help with relatives' immigration, to participation in community development efforts both in the US and at home. Due to the overwhelming expectation by all and sundry in the immigrant's home country that immigration is a sure avenue to success, the immigrant often believes that there is no alternative to spectacular financial and professional success. For those that have children, there is a drive to provide for their children, and to ensure that future generations will be better off. Thus, in spite of holding quite menial jobs that pay inadequate jobs, or jobs where they are underemployed, and oftentimes underpaid as a consequence of being overqualified, the immigrant also feels pressured to hold down as many jobs as it takes to not only "keep body and soul together," but to "save for a rainy day," improve the chances of "making it," and oftentimes, help both fictive and blood relations to settle in when they are new immigrants. The life of an immigrant, even the PTK variety, thus, is not easy.

The pressures from variables such as low-paying, low-status jobs, under supervisors that have less experience, and less qualification than the African immigrant of the PTK variety, the struggle to pay the bills, and have some money left over to take care of extended family obligations back home, to oftentimes, build a house back home, take care of old, and aging parents, siblings who are struggling from the deleterious effects of the economic crisis and possibly the political upheaval that the immigrant escaped, other relatives who are looking to the immigrant for help, and or sponsorship to aid their attempt to "gather the golden fleece", often makes the immigrant professional overburdened, to feel underappreciated, and beset by adversity. Many become despondent, and hostile to family members, particularly their children, who are taking on the culture of the settlement community rapidly, and often, are resentful of attempts by their parents to maintain old forms of discipline, rules of behavior, and often, the maintenance of the original language of their country of origin. The children, who have very little contact with their overworked parents may become rebellious, having been exposed to the culture of the country of settlement, often through popular media. They may feel that their parents are unloving, too strict, too weird. These conflicts may either peter out with time, or generate an intensification of parent-child confrontation. Some frustrated parents resort in cases where they feel that there is no other recourse, to sending the

disobedient child back home for disciplinary reasons, or for cultural immersion. The family thus breaks up temporarily, and parent-child relations may become even more strained, since children may feel abandoned and mistreated.

Other parents may keep their children with them, but require extraordinary efforts from the older ones to take care of younger siblings. Children may often be left in sub-standard care for long periods because the parents are working two or three jobs. Parents that do not use older siblings and are able to afford higher quality childcare must spend a great deal of money on childcare. The more interested they are in integrating, the higher the likelihood that the parents' time is consumed with the demands of single-handedly coping with the pressures of parenting American-style, with after school lessons, sports practices, games, and extra-curricular activities further crowding the already busy schedule. Some lucky immigrants are able to bring elderly relatives to the US to help with childcare. Thus, unpaid extended family labor subsidizes the immigrant's existence.

Some professionals join US organizations with other experts in their field. Others form organizations with compatriots from their home countries. Yet others join both. Few remain isolated, operating out of mistrust of their country women and men, and others. Other kinds of organizational responses mobilized by immigrants include the formation of mutual help organizations which provide avenues to socialize with other people, usually from the ethnic group of the immigrant. These organizations engage in fund-raising for members who are beset by misfortune, for their village, or town back home, for those needing small, or medium-scale loans to do sundry things, including buying houses, establishing businesses, or paying for education. They also meet regularly, usually once a month, circulating between members' residences. On such occasions, the ethnic foods of the group are served, and various self-help projects are discussed. Some such groups become politicized, and polarized, there are sometimes breakups, and new organizations formed, with some immigrants deciding to opt out and not be joiners.

Most Africans are also subjected to heavy demands on their good graces by friends, family, and acquaintances, for hospitality for indefinite periods of time. This could have both negative and positive ramifications. On the positive side, they are able to be in contact with people who understand their predicament of feeling unrooted, unsettled, and beset by adversity. They also may be able to speak their language with someone who is a native speaker, and who is close enough that they do not have to stand on formality. Their children get exposed to the culture in terms of

decorum, and the conventions of behavior toward others, they have a listening ear when they need to vent their frustrations, or share small, and large victories. Regardless, there are often extremely negative consequences to being ever-available, always welcoming host. There is absolutely no privacy between husband and wife, parents, and children. There may be a strain on their finances by those who are unable to get jobs right away, there are potential stressors arising from personal conflicts that may develop. Space may be in short supply, and peace and quiet, which the already overburdened immigrant may find desirable, after their long workdays are virtually non-existent. Some guests also misuse phone privileges, running up huge telephone bills that cause the phones to be disconnected. They may interfere, and takes sides in spousal disagreements, they may overstay their welcome.

Degrees of closeness in kinship, which is often expected to positively affect the immigrant's experiences and struggles during the initial years of settlement do not always imply that an immigrant will be treated well. Husbands have been known to confiscate their spouses' passports to "show who is boss", prevent an "errant, ignorant" woman from running away from an abusive relationship, just "for her own good". Older siblings have been known to demand unquestioned obedience, and labor from younger ones that they helped, who now have to live with them temporarily. Clearly, the immigrant experience can be a grueling one.

Many immigrant Africans also acknowledge the efforts of kinfolk in bringing them here, providing room and board, and often unlimited use of the telephone, which may put the longer-term immigrant in trouble, to the extent that the telephone may be disconnected for reasons of inability to pay bills promptly. Because the earlier immigrant tries to maintain the proper decorum as to what is done, and not done back home when one has a guest, she/he may suffer in silence. Recently among Nigerian immigrants at least, many are insisting on visitors' use of telephone cards.

Some immigrants are subjected to gross exploitation by others who happen to have arrived and settled earlier. While by and large, many African immigrants speak kindly and fondly of those that helped them find their feet during the initial period of settlement, this is not always a relationship where kindness and generosity are always magnanimously extended. It is for example, not unknown for earlier immigrants to demand rapid repayment of the loans that they had "magnanimously" extended, at usurious rates of interest. It also is not unknown for people who consider themselves generous to the extreme, to demand their "pound of flesh"

when the new immigrant arrives, and is trying hard to find her/his feet.

Conclusion

The salience of Frederick Douglass 1853 and 1867 comments cannot be overemphasized. That those who today threaten the employment opportunities of African Americans are black like them, and African like them is small comfort. Many Americans still prefer to extend opportunities to those who are relative outsiders to the poisonous history of racism, segregation and inequality. Thus, when black immigrants came from the Caribbean from the turn of the 20th century, many preferred to employ them, and to explain away the inequality experienced by African Americans in equal economic opportunity as due to some intrinsic lack of desire to excel, a culture of poverty, the lack of a strong family system, and everything else other than the real cause of the problem: racism, segregation, prejudice. Contemporary African immigrants who may be unwilling or unable to understand the deep-seated roots of the problem and the connections between this problem and the colonization and consequent underdevelopment of the African continent, jump, like the Caribbean immigrants at the opportunity to excel. They prefer as all immigrant groups in America are wont to do, to explain away their success as arising out of the determination and will to succeed. [\[81\]](#)

Equally relevant is Douglass' analysis when he talks about the pride and patriotism with which Americans regard their culture and their contribution to the world's history. Equally relevant is his analysis when he talks about the importance of the willingness to assimilate. [\[82\]](#) All immigrants rush to take citizenship classes where the non-English speakers among them learn English, not least because most also want to be regarded as the ideal immigrants who would exemplify the very best of what America desires of its citizens. Like other immigrants, they are encouraged to believe that they are better than the discreditable members of the "underclass" among the citizenry. [\[83\]](#) However, for better or worse, African immigrants will find that the history of African Americans will shape their daily interactions with other Americans. Without any means of distinguishing between Africans from the continent and Africans that are indigenous to America, they may, like Amadou Diallo lose their lives in the effort to live the American dream. They may also like many African immigrants face the experience of police harassment, on the job discrimination, and double standards ad nauseum. These experiences will push contemporary immigrants to go beyond their comfort zones. It will push them to become more politically active. It will even force them to engage the realities of

American history in the effort to understand, and thereby, change the society that they have chosen as their homes today.

African immigration has also had an impact on the development of case law, and interpretations of constitutional protections. Thus far, however, these effects are ignored or scattered in sporadic newspaper accounts, and the personal notes of individual attorneys that have undertaken such cases. The most numerous are in the area of criminal law. Most Americans who are familiar with news coverage in major new media have at least some knowledge of the involvement of some groups of immigrants in "shady deals" or blatant criminal activity. The presentation of such information in the media has identified the Nigerians as the problem in this respect. This study examines this element of Nigerians as the bad immigrants, while also looking, not necessarily at the positive contributions of Nigerian immigrants to the economic, social, and political development of the United States. These positive contributions will become clear in the documentation that is undertaken in this study, where factual accounts of immigrants telling their own stories are combined with statistical presentations of the participation of both PTK immigrants, and those immigrants in the informal sector in US social, political, and economic life. Rather, the effort here is directed at considering the implications of African presence on developing case law.

One interesting case involves a Nigerian who, having been accused of credit card, and other fraud, was subjected to unlawful search and seizure, with his wife and child videotaped over their vociferous objections, for a display on a television program on African criminal tendencies. [84] The judgement against the television station, and law enforcement agencies on the constitutional protections against illegal searches and seizures also contain new innovations, which will affect the prosecution, and defence of those accused of the crimes in question. Thus, unintended though it may be, African immigrants are actively affecting the legal system in the United States. This cases is however, only the tip of the iceberg.

To study the consequences of African immigration to the United States is to develop an insight into the true meaning and the limits of citizenship. The point was made in the companion paper to this one, "Antinomies of Globalization: Causes and Consequences of African Immigration to the United States" that some African immigrants are actively wooed and recruited while others are hounded and pursued as undesirable. Many of the latter are tenacious. They find multiple avenues initially to join the ranks of undocumented immigrants, and later, to regularize their status.

Both groups have profound influences on their communities of settlement, and on their home countries for many of the reasons explored above.

In studying this subject, we also gain an insight into how race, class and gender shape the life chances of immigrants from the African continent in the United States in a socio-political and economic framework that was created by past American history. African immigrants have responded either pro-actively or in a post-hoc manner to the challenges thrown up by their newcomer status in a new country. In doing so, they have contributed to the re-fashioning of the social, cultural, political and economic experiences within the process of globalization. In turn, the process has changed them, their host country, and their countries of origin.

Endnotes

[1] . Statement made on April 7, 1882, by Booker T. Washington, in a speech on industrial education for blacks, warned that mass immigration would have a devastating result for black Americans. See Jeff Diamond, "African-American Attitudes Towards United States Immigration Policy," *American Demographics*, Jan 1994, 16:1.

[2] . Written in 1853 by Frederick Douglass. Quoted by Diamond, *ibid*.

[3] . 1867 statement by Frederick Douglass. Quoted by Diamond, *ibid*.

[4] . Thomas Alexander Aleinikoff, and David A. Martin, *Immigration and Nationality Laws of the United States, Selected Statutes, Regulations, and Forms: As Amended to July 1, 1992*, St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Company, 1992.

[5] .Ikubolajeh Bernard Logan, "The Brain Drain of Professional, Technical and Kindred Workers from Developing Countries: Some Lessons from the Africa-United States Flow of Professionals, 1980-1989," in Horowitz and Noiriél, (eds), *Immigrants in Two Democracies*. New York: New York University Press, 1992.

[6] .Weiner, 1992, p. 452.

[7] .Silvia Pedraza-Bailey, Political and Economic Migrants in America: Cubans and Mexicans, 1985, pp. 2ff.; Mufson, op.cit.

[8] . Steven Mufson "Eritrea Won't Block Food Aid for Ethiopia" Washington Post Saturday, April 8 2000, p. A14.

[9] .Sylviane Diouf-Kamara, with translation by Richard Philcox, "The Senegalese in New York: A Model Minority? / "Senegalais De New York: Minorite Modele?" Black Renaissance / Renaissance Noir 1.2.

[10] .This writer became aware of the existence of the Urban Cultural Arts Foundation in Columbus, Ohio when she attended the 1997 annual meeting of the African Studies Association, and went to dinner at the Marble Gang Restaurant, 1052 Mt. Vernon Avenue, Columbus, Ohio. The Foundation advertised its Seventh Annual Art Auction on postcards which were stacked by the door. The auction was to be held at the Restaurant at 7pm, and the preview from 5-7pm. The caption on the front of the card, which has a picture of a painting with men dressed in gbariye, agbada, kembe, and other Yoruba garb, playing percussion instruments, and dancing, reads "Treasures from Afrika". The back of the card, after announcing the auction, venue, and time, reads: "Featuring the finest art from local, national and statewide artists and a SPECIAL collection of Yoruba paintings, sculptures and wood carvings specially selected by curator Baba Olugbala from his recent trip to Oshgo (sic) State, Nigeria. Preview Exhibition begins at Marble Gang Restaurant on November 10, 1997. Call 614-252-7525 for information." Representative samples of the art for auction were prominently displayed in the restaurant.

[11] . Molly Ivins, "Deportations Rise with INS' Tough New Law," Sacramento Bee January 1999; "Still the Pro-Immigration Party?" by Stephen Moore and Aaron Harris This Just In..., August 26, 1996 <http://www.cato.org/dailys/8-26-96.html>; "America -Whither Goest Thou" by Harry V. Martin, <http://www.sonic.net/sentinel/naij1.html>.

[12] . National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc. series NBER Working Papers number 6265.

[13] . See Esmeralda Simmons, in Julie Quiroz-Martinez, op cit.

[14] . This is the point made by Julie Quiroz-Martinez, ibid

[15] .Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome, "Amadou Diallo: Observations by Another African Immigrant," Ominira: Newsletter of the Department of African and African American Studies Department, Fordham University, 1:1

[16] .This definition of refugees is taken from
<http://www.churchworldservice.org/Immigration/FAQ.html>

[17] . ibid

[18] .Tibbett Speer, "The Newest African Americans Aren't Black," American Demographics, 16 (1), January 1994, pp. 9-10.

[19] . Somini SenGupta, "Liberian Refugees Come Full Circle," New York Times , June 25, 2002, p. B7.

[20] . Speer, op cit

[21] . Doodoo, F. Nii-Amoo, "Assimilation Differences Among Africans in America," Social Forces, 76(2), Dec 1997, pp. 527-546; Djamba, Yanki K., "African Immigrants in the United States: A Socio-Demographic Profile in Comparison to Native Blacks," Journal of Asian and African Studies, 34(2), May 1999, pp. 210-215; Speer, Tibbett, "The Newest African Americans Aren't Black," American Demographics, 16:1, pp. 9-10, Jan.1994.

[22] .These numbers were provided by the US Census Bureau.

[23] .Pamela Schaeffer "Refugee Advocates Hope For Papal Help: Church Workers Say Mere Mention of Issue Would Boost Support" National Catholic

Reporter October 6, 1995 p. 3,
<http://www.mosquitonet.com/~prewett/proimmigration.html>

[24] .http://www.refugees.org/news/crisis/africa_2000.htm

[25] .http://www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/amer_carib/us.htm

[26] . Somini SenGupta, op cit., pp. A1 & B7.

[27] .Edward Norden, "America's Oldest (And Newest) Christians : As Egypt Crumbles Under Fundamentalist Pressure, Where Else Can the Copts Go?" American Spectator, 26 (6), June 1993, pp. 24-28.

[28] .ibid.

[29] .ibid.

[30] .Djamba, op. cit

[31] . At a roundtable discussion sponsored by the Africa America Institute, (AAI,) the subject of "African Immigrants in America: Profile, Prospects and Influence" was addressed. Eyega spoke on the "Challenges Confronting African Women Immigrants." The event took place on December 13, 2000.

[32] . The State Department explains further on the conditions for granting asylum to refugees as follows:

Asylum Based on Coercive Population Control Practices The Immigration and Naturalization Service of the Department of Justice is implementing a new law that would grant political asylum to individuals who have been forced to abort a pregnancy, undergo involuntary sterilization, or persecuted for failure or refusal to undergo such a procedure or for resistance to a coercive population control program.

Asylum Based on Fear of Genital Mutilation The Department of Justice urged

the Board of Immigration Appeals to recognize that fear of being subjected to female genital mutilation may be a basis for asylum, and on June 13, 1996, the Bureau of Immigration Appeals issued a precedent-setting decision indicating that female genital mutilation may be a basis for asylum.

Guidance for Asylum OfficersThe Department of Justice provides guidance to asylum officers on the principles of U.S. asylum laws that bear on gender-related cases, such as domestic and sexual abuse. The Department's guidance also addresses such procedural matters as the desirability of using female interviewers and interpreters in appropriate cases and the need to interview women and their male relatives separately.

Relief for Battered Immigrant Women The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 enables battered spouses and children of U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents to self-petition for lawful permanent residence without the help or knowledge of their abusers. More than 8,000 petitions have been filed with the Justice Department's Immigration and Naturalization Service as of October 1999, and more than 4,300 petitioners have been granted permanent residence. *America's Commitment 2000 Edition*
http://secretary.state.gov/www/picw/2000commitment/human_rights.html

[33] .The paper is available at: [http:// www.geocities.com/ojogbon](http://www.geocities.com/ojogbon)

[34] . Speer, op cit; Logan, op cit

[35] .ibid

[36] .ibid

[37] .ibid Also see F. Nii-Amoo Dodoo, "Assimilation Differences Among Africans in America." *Social Forces*, 76 (2), Dec 1997, pp. 527 -546; and Djamba, op cit

[38] .ibid

[39] .Djamba, ibid

[40] .ibid

[41] .Speer, op cit

[42] . ibid.

[43] .Pedraza- Bailey, 1985, op cit; Elliott Robert Barkan, *And Still They Come: Immigrants and American Society, 1920 to the 1990s*, Wheeling, Illinois: H. Davidson, 1996.

[44] .<http://www.acs.appstate.edu/orgs/afcab/round972.htm>

[45] . ibid.

[46] .Dodoo, op cit

[47] . Speer, op cit

[48] .Kirstin Downey Grimsley, "The World Comes to the American Workplace: Tight Labor Market and a Surge in Immigration Brings New Diversity," *Washington Post* Saturday, March 20, 1999, p. A01.

[49] .ibid

[50] . Steven Emerson, "Immigration Secret Evidence" FDCH Congressional Testimony, House Judiciary Committee May 23 2000.

[51] . "On the Streets of New York: New York and Touba, Senegal" *The Economist (US)*, 351, June 19, 1999, p. 27.

[52] .Sylviane Diouf uses this terminology to describe Francophone African immigrants in New York City. Sylviane Diouf-Kamara with translation by Richard Philcox "The Senegalese in New York: A Model Minority?"

"Senegalais De New York: Minorite Modele?," Black Renaissance/Renaissance Noir 1.2.

[53] .ibid.

[54] .ibid.

[55] .ibid.

[56] .ibid. This point is also made in the film, Taxi to Timbuktu, as well as by Millman, op cit.; and Sylviane Diouf , op. cit.

[57] . Excerpt from Catholic World News (Online) titled: The American Synod- November 20

[58] .Interviews with Pastor Oyedepo at the Christ Apostolic Church, First in the Americas, June and July 2002.

[59] . Somini SenGupta, op cit, p. B7.

[60] .Reverend Saywayne spoke on the subject: "Church Based Outreach to African Immigrants," Perspectives on US Policies and the Impact of African Immigrants on communities of settlement in the area of Education and demographic changes, AAI roundtable.

[61] .ibid

[62] .ibid.

[63] . Ibid

[64] .ibid.

[65] .ibid

[66] .Millman, op cit

[67] . Millman, op cit

[68] .Economist, op cit

[69] .Economist, op cit

[70] . Mr. Kwabena Smith, President, Ashanti Origins spoke on "Private Sector Commercial Activities," AAI roundtable on African Immigration.

[71] . Steven Emerson "Immigration Secret Evidence" FDCH Congressional Testimony, House Judiciary Committee, May 23 2000 .

[72] .Logan, op cit

[73] . see table 2, Logan.

[74] .I owe the terminology, "Digital Diaspora" to the AAI, which used it as one of the areas of inquiry during the above identified roundtable, and to Mr. Dayo Ogunyemi, Director, Lexcape, who spoke on the subject.

[75] .See for example, an email on Naijanews Date: Fri, 22 Dec 2000 10:40:02 -0800 (PST) From: Jerry Anighoro <jeranighoro@yahoo.com> ASubject: Immigration News. It provided information on a proposed Immigration bill that is briefly described below:

The Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2001, which Congress passed on Friday, contains several immigration-related provisions including the reinstatement of Section 245(i) until April 30, 2001. In order to take advantage of the 245(i) grandfathering, individuals must have an immigrant visa petition or a labor certification application on file with the INS or DOL by April 30, 2001.

Individuals wishing to file under the new grandfather date also must show that

they are physically present in the United States on the day the bill is signed by the President. (The physical presence requirement does not apply to 245(i) filings for individuals with pre-January 14, 1998 priority dates.)

We do not know exactly when the President will sign the measure. We do know that he must do so by midnight on December 21, 2000."

[76] . Mr Dayo Ogunyemi, spoke on "The Digital Diaspora," AAI roundtable on African Immigration.

[77] . *ibid*

[78] . Albor Ruiz, "Human Rights Violation: Asylum Seekers Jailed - for no Crime" New York Daily News, Monday, February 22, 1999.

[79] . Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations Caribbean Immigrants and the Harlem Community, 1900-1930*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996.

[80] . Ronald Takaki *A Different Mirror*

[81] . Watkins-Owens, *op cit*.

[82] .Diamond, *op cit*

[83] . Julie Quiroz-Martinez, "Missing Link," *ColorLines: Race Culture Action Summer 2001*, p.1.

[84] .WBAI New York is a case in point. For the last few years, it has featured, and promoted the points of view, activities, critiques, and commentaries of African immigrants who describe themselves as either dissident, or human rights activists, or otherwise, exiles from oppressive regimes on the continent. WLIB also has similar features. However, while the former station presents itself as a leftist, Marxist-oriented alternative to liberal and mainstream media sources, the latter considers itself one of the premier

voices of oppressed and under/unrepresented, but significant African Americans in New York City. These views are usually aired on programs including Gary Bird's "National Black Experience". Pacifica Radio, a national public radio station of which WBAI is part, also features programs that present the perspectives, and struggles of the African immigrant dissidents, exiles, scholars, and human rights activists.

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