"Contemporary Racio-Ethnic Relations in the African Diaspora"

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Introduction

Since 1965, immigration to the United States, especially from non-European countries, has dramatically increased due to changes in immigration laws abolishing national quotas and restrictions. The majority of this immigration has been from Asia and South America, but there has also been a steady increase in migration from Africa. While according to the 2000 U.S Census report African immigrants constitute only about 3% of all immigrants, the number of African immigrants has steadily increased since 1970, now amounting to an immigration rate higher than during the entire era of the Atlantic slave trade.[1] This small yet important trend has prompted a renewed interest in the American experience of the African Diaspora, including among the scholars participating in research with the Diaspora Pathways Project at the Johns Hopkins University.

The Diaspora Pathways Project is a long-term initiative seeking to explore the African Diaspora in the greater Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. In particular, it seeks to better understand the global movement and experiences of black Diasporans, the connections they establish with other blacks in this region, ties they maintain to Africa, as well as ways in which

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[1] Reference needed.

they adapt to and influence blacks in this region. Baltimore, is an "original port city" with a long history of African-American urban communities, and is a site of recent influx of African immigrants. Thus, it provides a data-rich environment to study the African Diaspora and a unique opportunity to study the interconnections between native blacks and African immigrants.

John Arthur (2000) shares the Project's concern for racio-ethnic relations between native blacks and African immigrants. He argues that for African immigrants, the U.S. primarily provides economic opportunities to improve the immigrants' financial status and resources and to help support their relatives who continue to live in Africa. This movement of economically motivated individuals to the U.S. has contributed to the much discussed "brain drain" from African countries; it is argues that the best and brightest of that continent try their fortunes elsewhere. However, Arthur found that many African immigrants consider themselves only "sojourners" in the U.S., with full intentions of returning to their home countries in Africa. Such planned short stays raises issues over the degree to which social incorporation of these African immigrants takes place in foreign lands. Further, Arthur finds that Africans coming from black majority social contexts do not relate, for instance, to the American history of racial discrimination and prejudice. Conversely, black Americans seem to know little of the history of foreign domination and colonization experienced by many black Africans. Lacking such deeply important historical understandings of one another potentially places relations between African immigrants and black Americans in a fragile position. Lastly, African immigrants appear critical of black Americans who are seen as not vigorously pursuing the abundant economic and educational opportunities the U.S. has to offer to develop their human capital, an issue also leading to potential tension between the two groups.

While Arthur's findings provide a useful foundation for understanding potential relational issues between native blacks and African immigrants, The Diaspora Pathways Project sought to press deeper to identify and articulate the views these two groups have of each other and what these views might reveal about the larger context of immigrant adaptation and social incorporation associated with the African Diaspora. Hence, we pursued the following sociological research objective: "To gain insight into how African immigrants view native blacks and how native blacks view African immigrants contemporarily."

The stated research objective begs a method of social inquiry that allows for inductive exploration and analysis. Rather than test a specific set of research hypotheses constructed by the researcher, this qualitative analysis identifies knowledge situated within the actors involved in the study, allows for unanticipated themes and directions to emerge, and provides rich detail and thick description about the research subject. In this way, this work aims to build both our empirical and theoretical understanding of the African Diaspora.

Using interview data collected by a group of trained undergraduates at the Johns Hopkins University in the spring of 2007, we have begun to identify some emerging themes in the interactions between African Immigrants and African Americans in the Baltimore area. Five of those themes are discussed in detail below.

Data

The data for this study was collected by a group of undergraduate students participating in a "Qualitative Research Practicum" during the spring semester of 2007. In this course, students gained hands-on training in interview and observational techniques of data collection, qualitative research design and data analysis, as well as in ethical research issues. The analysis reported here

is based on the interview data. Students completed a total of 27 interviews with a diverse sample that includes African immigrants, native blacks, and "expert" respondents of varying racial and ethnic backgrounds whose professional work directly relates to African immigration or urban black communities. See Table 1 for attributes of the interviewees.

In qualitative research, data quality is a very important element of accurate social representation in the analysis, and is analogous to issues of validity and reliability in quantitative research designs. With interview and observational data, the researcher truly becomes the research instrument. Hence, the data quality is a reflection of the field worker's skills and expertise as well. In general, the students produced a fairly high level of data quality. However, at times students missed the opportunity to probe subjects more deeply, asked leading questions, and veered from a purposeful sampling strategy. Overall, these issues, consistent with learning a new method of research, did not appear to affect the data analysis in any significant way.

Method of Data Analysis

To analyze the interview data, we borrowed from the "grounded theory" tradition. In particular, we created analytic codes that emanated from the data rather than from pre-existing social theories. In the grounded theory framework, open-coding and focused-coding help to identify emerging themes in the data. In the open-coding phase, researchers initially coded each line of each transcript to scrutinize every "utterance" for analytic value. From there, focused-coding generated a thematic understanding of a phenomena occurring in the data. We developed the substance and scope of this particular analysis through writing a series of reflective memos and drawing diagrams in attempts to find relationships between the codes.

We began by grouping categories of open-codes together to see what broader theme might emerge. For example, coding categories referring to race-class, race-ethnic, and immigrant identity/identification came together to clarify a broader theme about demographic "labels" that were important and contested for respondents. In another example, coding categories about conflict and competition between African immigrants and native blacks, experiences as new immigrants, frequency of contact between groups, and Afrocentric businesses gave rise to a broader understanding of immigrant adaptation as a process rather than as a destination. A few direct parallels also appeared in the data, in terms of black American understandings of Africa and African expectations of black Americans, immigrant stereotypes and racial stereotypes, as well as African culture/society and Baltimore neighborhoods. Considering these coding categories in a parallel way helped clarify points of convergence and divergence. Lastly, there were a few coding categories that stood alone to reveal analytic value. For example, African immigrants and native blacks discuss what they consider as comparable issues (e.g. racism versus tribalism) yet "frame" the topic in very different ways. In another example, the data contains narratives about one's national and ethnic origins and the relative importance of one's origins to one's identity.

In addition to developing themes through coding practices, we also identified an undercurrent in the data about the notion of a "black collective." Our initial foray in this topic led us to explore the scope of a possible black collective in the U.S. and identify both encouraging and discouraging signs of such in the data. Yet, as we pursued this theme, what became more apparent was evidence that the very concept of a black collective created an expectation of "similarity" that respondents critically interrogated. Their collective voices instead expressed

chords of variation. Rather than articulating the *scope* for a black collective, the data interrogates an *assumption* of a black collective.

Ultimately, through this method of grounded, reflective, and iterative inquiry, the data revealed a set of patterns about ways respondents drew social boundaries around racial, ethnic, and racio-ethnic identity, and how these boundaries appear to intensify or relax in relation to certain social conditions and experiences. While Arthur's (2000) work provides a historical and economic context for understanding racio-ethnic relations between black Americans and African immigrants, the Project's analysis examines the sociology of the relations between these two groups, and finds variation around the social construction of racial, ethnic, and racio-ethnic boundaries.

The analytic themes that emerge in this data are as follows:

- Generational differences in contact/opportunity for contact between African immigrants and Native blacks. When there is more contact, respondents' narratives suggest more relaxed boundaries around racial, ethnic, and racio-ethnic identity.

- Differences between Native blacks and African immigrants about the relative importance of "origins." When there is greater emphasis placed on "origin," the narratives convey more rigid boundaries around racial, ethnic, and racio-ethnic affiliation.

- Native blacks and African immigrants both discuss issues of inequality, and although the discussion is "framed" in varying social contexts, respondents generalize their particular

experience to the other. As a result, concepts of "race" and "racism" become contested between the two groups.

- Understandings of the social context and social environment of African immigrants' and Native blacks' influence their understanding of themselves and one another, and resulting racial, ethnic, and racio-ethnic boundaries. The data reveals that how Native blacks view Africa and how African immigrants view Baltimore is very important to their understandings of themselves, each other, and racial, ethnic, and racio-ethnic boundaries.

FINDINGS

Several analytic themes emerge in this data. First, constructions of racial, ethnic, and racio-ethnic identity, and the boundaries surrounding such affiliation, are contested between native blacks and African immigrants. Second, generational differences exist in interactions between African immigrants and Native blacks. When there is more contact, respondents' narratives suggest more relaxed boundaries around racial, ethnic, and racio-ethnic identity. Third, native blacks and African immigrants share differences about the relative importance of their origins in Africa. When there is greater emphasis placed on one's origin the narratives convey more rigid boundaries around racial, ethnic, and racio-ethnic affiliation. Fourth, native blacks and African immigrants both discuss issues of inequality, yet have very different interpretations it, leading to varying levels of (dis)comfort with issues such as race and racism. Fifth, understandings of the social context and social environment of African immigrants' and native blacks' influence their

understanding of themselves and one another. Each of these five emerging themes is an area for further scholarly inquiry.

Construction of Racial, Ethnic, and Racio-Ethnic Boundaries

When we began the Practicum, our research objective stated that we were interested in the views that African-Americans and African immigrants held of one another. After very little time in the field, it quickly became clear that terms such as "African-American" and "black" and "African" were distinct terms in the views of the respondents.

Africans objected to the term "African-American" because they felt that description should be reserved for people who could articulate a distinct origin from the African continent. For example, one respondent, who is a black American, is married to an African immigrant and she recently went to Africa to meet her husband's extended family. They were surprised and insulted that she would consider herself "African-American":

When I referred to myself as African American, rather than black, they were insulted. And I would think, "Why are you guys insulted." They said, "Why are you calling yourself African?" And I said, "Well I certainly don't come from Europe and I don't come from Asia." And they were like well okay, what country do you come from? And I had to explain to them that I don't necessarily know exactly because I haven't taken the time to do the research in terms of what country I come from. But I know for sure that my ancestors come from Africa.

So for this respondent, calling herself "African-American" was appropriate while it raised problems for Africans. Another native black adds, "They [African immigrants] described African Americans, myself, as talking real ignorant, and they see themselves as more intelligent then that, which they said was why they didn't like being called African at all." In this example, a black American reports an African immigrant telling him outright that the term "African-American" actually discourages him from preferring to be called "African" due to the parallel he perceives with native blacks.

Within the sub-sample of black Americans, some felt that "black" signaled a socio-political history and struggle unique to native blacks while others felt that there were implied class differences when using terms such as "African-American" and "black." As one middle-aged black American explains:

> As a pride thing, I think we use the term black because it was used so long as a bad thing. I think when we started coming around the whole late sixties, early seventies, and it was "black pride. Say it loud, I'm black and I'm proud," we took that "Yeah we're black people." And we're all African Americans but some of us tend to state "I'm a black man" as part of our pride in our culture, our African culture within….when I hear people say "As an African American…" it's more so people that are college educated…

For this respondent, assuming a racial identity was important because of the social movement associated with racial freedom. A racio-ethnic identity, on the other hand, such as "African-American" actually signified a race-class affiliation. As another respondent, who is a college-educated native black woman, explains:

I consider myself an African American, meaning that my family, my ancestors, were at some point African…I consider myself African American meaning that my skin color represents the people that were before me….When people think of black they think ghetto, they think rappers, they think….I won't say the media…but high profile people are considered African Americans in society.

For this respondent, the racio-ethnic identity, "African-American" was actually a racial categorization that stood apart from "black" because of American class issues. Still others could classify themselves based on what they were clearly not. As one respondent, who was born in the U.S. to African immigrant parents and then returned back to Africa as a child and was primarily raised there, reluctantly includes herself in the category of "black" because as she states, "'cos I'm not white!" For this African woman, the ethnic identity of her family, their country of origin and the culture associated with it, was more meaningful for her personal identity than a racial category commonly used in the U.S.

The dialogue around racial, ethnic, and racio-ethnic labels reveals the contestation involved in constructing boundaries to define such identity. The data strongly questions assumptions that racial, ethnic, racio-ethnic categories are neat boxes where one chooses what they feel fits. Rather, such categories are social constructions that are dynamically navigated by both African immigrants and black Americans. To reflect this understanding emanating from the data, the research objective was correspondingly edited to study views held between "African immigrants" and "native blacks." Future research in this area should be as sensitive to the labels

assigned to respondents, and correspondingly, allow for articulation of racial, ethnic, and racio-ethnic identity and meanings to emerge from the respondent.

Contact

The study sample included both first- and second-generation African immigrants. In other words, there were respondents who initially migrated to the U.S. as well as their children, some of whom were born in the U.S. and others who were born in Africa and arrived in the U.S. as young children. The native blacks in the sample are of varying ages, from young adults to middle-aged, and therefore comprise two generations as well.

The data collected from African immigrants shows that second generation immigrants have more personal contact with native blacks in comparison to the first generation. Second generation African immigrants attend school and share workplaces with native blacks which allows for greater contact and relations between the groups. When asked about views they have of native blacks, the responses were grounded in examples of personal experience. In contrast, first generation African immigrants discuss having the greatest social contact with others of their own ethnic group or Pan-African group. As a result, much of their description about views of native blacks was based less on actual experience and more on broad racial and cultural categorizations.

The narratives of native blacks also indicates that younger people, who have more opportunity to meet and socialize with African immigrants at school or work, discuss views of African immigrants in the context of a personal acquaintances or experiences. In contrast, native

blacks, who are middle-aged or older, report having limited contact with African immigrants, and as a result, discuss their views of relations between the groups more generally.

The generational variation found in the data is important to note because it illustrates how views between the two groups are formed through both social interactions and broader understandings of one another. Further research should incorporate this generational finding, and expect relations between African immigrants and native blacks to vary in this way, based on level, type and frequency of contact the two groups share.

Origins

In the interviews with black Americans and African immigrants, both groups raised the issue of their origins. For Africans, to know from where their family originally descended, "roots" as was often expressed, was very important to developing personal identity. In contrast, while black Americans often acknowledged their ancestors' origination in Africa and a sincere sense of loss over their weak ties to Africa, there seemed to be little evidence to indicate that the loose bonds with Africa influenced their construction of race and ethnicity.

One of the respondents, an African merchant, believes that black Americans should draw more often on their African origins:

Because I think black Americans need a base, they need to have their roots, and not run away from their roots. When I was here, Asian Americans, when you talk to them, they always claim their roots, like, oh, my parents are Asian, I'm Asian. You know what I'm

saying? Like black Americans, are you from Africa? They are like, no! No, no! I am American! You know what I'm saying?

This respondent appears to be indicating that greater affiliation with Africa would bring benefits to black Americans, especially to children, as he continues to explain:

[It is] very important for black America, to um, have more of a base, because I think a lot of times black Americans are angry. They feel like they're floating, that they don't belong to America. But the fact is that America is their home, but they have roots from Africa and they should embrace it. They should embrace it, and know more about it. And I really think that it would help them all, especially the kids growing up.

For this African immigrant, knowing and understanding your social origins influences the present moment. He alludes to "anger" associated with being black in the U.S. and believes greater connection to Africa would remedy such negative feelings. In contrast, when black Americans discuss their African origins, they do articulate little knowledge about African roots, but do not convey that lacking such knowledge impacts racial or ethnic inequality they experience. For example, a middle-aged native black male explains:

Being black and living in the city puts us at a disadvantage automatically, I think. We are mostly uneducated and have minimum wage jobs. They know their part of the African culture but only to a certain extent. Many do not know or understand their culture and heritage or where they come from.

For this respondent, racial categorization and urban poverty come together to produce disadvantage through limited educational and work opportunities. A byproduct of such inequality is little possibility to learn about African origins. Another black American middle-aged male echoes, "there's a sense of homelessness, loss of family" when discussing his ancestral origins. Yet, neither of these native-born respondents suggests that their African roots are integral to their sense of personal identity; rather the proximate circumstances of living in Baltimore and the related social conditions appear to matter more. Further inquiry should investigate the relationship between "anger" over racial inequality and greater/lesser ethnic affiliation as it appears to be an area of incongruence between native blacks and African immigrants. Perhaps ethnic identification and personal history moderate the sense of inequality immigrants feel in the U.S. in comparison to the native born population. How and why that may result is an area for further study.

Interestingly, the spending patterns of native blacks complicate this potential argument. Several of our researchers spent time in a number of afro-centric shops, and the owners, all African immigrants, reported that African Americans make up the majority of their customer base, followed by whites, followed by fellow immigrants. One owner conjectured that most Africans wait to buy their "ethnic" objects in their home countries because the prices are so much lower. For African Americans, however, as a Ghanaian shop-owner commented, most simply come into her store looking for "something that looks African." In fact, "The pastors in the area encourage getting back to their roots. Some of them have never been to an African store before, and don't even know what they're looking for. They just want something to wear to church."

There seems to be a trend that even if native blacks don't articulate their African heritage as being particularly important to their identity, owning a "piece of Africa" is not uncommon behavior. As a further example, one second-generation woman shopping in one of the more expensive Afro-centric stores, where prices for many of the larger objects reach the $1000's, exclaimed that a particular painting would "look great in our African room!" When her husband remarked that his wife was always giving people history lessons, she replied hotly, "most people love to hear about our history and culture!"

Often times in qualitative research, we seek the "negative case" (i.e. the one that does not neatly fit into the analysis) to challenge our emerging understanding of the data and to help develop a more encompassing explanation for the social phenomena. In this data, such a case came up when exploring the "origins" theme. For one black American woman, who married a Nigerian immigrant, and recently traveled to Nigeria to visit his family, knowing her African roots and identifying with them, is very important to her identity. She explains:

Part of the problem with the African American today is that they don't know where they come from. They don't know their heritage. They don't know their culture. And, Africans went through a lot when they got here obviously. And uh it's just in honor of them. It's just in remembrance of their strength and what they had gone through that I proudly call myself African American.

For this respondent, African origins were indeed important to the formation of her racio-ethnic identity, so much so that she has adopted a Nigerian name that she uses when she travels to visit her husband's family. On a trip to Nigeria, she reflected "These are my

people. These are, these, uh, are my ancestors' kids and I am their kid and we're cousins…and I just felt at home." While this respondent is a "negative case" to our trend, she may represent another trend altogether, and to further delve into the question of "assimilation" within transnational native black and immigrant couples would add to the richness of this exercise. In addition, further research is necessary to understand why there may be differences between her experience as a middle-class woman and those of the two working-class native born men.

Framing

Throughout the narratives of native blacks and African immigrants, similar issues would come up, yet they would be cast in a very different way, reminiscent of the Pan-African debate between Du Bois and Garvey discussed in the introduction. In particular, issues relating to race and violence, views about monetary resources, knowledge, and economic opportunity are seen and understood differently by the two groups.

When African immigrants discuss native blacks, a source of puzzlement is over the emphasis (in their opinion) that black Americans place on issues of race and racial inequality. African immigrants explain a long history of tribalism within and across countries in Africa. Such inequality between groups, they contend, is nothing new to the African consciousness. An African immigrant explains:

Racism is everywhere. In Africa, we have tribalism. In that country, it's not racism. Because there, when you talking about someone who's different from you, there's always

going to be a situation where people, a situation where, you, you know what I'm saying? You tell people that you shouldn't dwell on it. When you dwell on it, it pours more on you. You understand what I'm saying? So, that's basically where I stand with that….But I don't deal with racism. Personally, I think that I'm immune to that stuff. Because I came from a country, I told, you um, where tribalism is strong. Tribalism is so crazy, fighting, killing each other. And these are people of the same color, almost no difference. So what would be the big deal if I came down here and you fought me, because I'm a different color? So all of this kind of stuff is what I've had to adjust to, and I was able to deal with it. Because it was nothing in Africa, it was already there.

In this respondent's view, given his exposure to African tribalism, American racism does not surprise him. Furthermore, he feels he should not even "dwell" on issues of racism and that he has "adjusted" to the idea of it. As a result, this African immigrant does not acknowledge racism as a major contemporary problem. Other African immigrants also discuss divisions based on religion instead of race.

In Africa, there is still racism, but it is based upon religion instead of ethnicity as it is here. Religion is a really big deal to them. We talked about violence too, and how here it is more drug influenced and there they have just as much violence it is just religion influenced.

In both the narrative about tribalism and religious differences, violence appears to accompany such issues in Africa. As another native born black respondent shares about a conversation she

had with an African about violence: "We tell them that it's dangerous in our society you know, the violence, and blacks are killing blacks, and…Africans are like tribal people, and there's always a war. And they kinda took it in that kinda perspective. Oh, you know, we always fightin' one another over nothing." Violence, and the "framing" of violence, also emerges as a difference in understanding between native blacks and African immigrants.

The value of monetary resources also becomes "framed" differently for native blacks and African immigrants. As one young black American college-educated woman explains, "Money to them is not a new car, it's helping their grandma live, helping their parents with money, and helping their family members who are in war, versus families over here who are in jail and need someone to bail them out because they got caught selling drugs." The same respondent also articulates differences in current events between the two groups and therefore knowledge itself becomes "framed" differently: "In Africa, it is different. Those kids know who the President of every country is and are more aware. Whereas, over here, kids in Baltimore probably don't know who the mayor is….and actually for the first time it is a black woman and they don't even know that. They should be really proud of this, but they aren't because they don't know."

Many African immigrants discuss the economic opportunities available in the United States in comparison to those in their home countries in Africa. The very same opportunities that African immigrants discuss are examples of challenging life circumstances for black Americans. As the native black woman who visited her husband's family in African explains,

Because when I was in Nigeria and I talked with women, my husband's cousins, women who are my age, and they, they said "Tell us about America." And for some reason, my daughter and I, we really didn't…uh…broach it positive. We um, said you work real hard, you know, you work to the sweat of your bra. Everything you have you work hard to get. You know, we live in a nice fine home, and we have two cars, and kids in private school, and all of the good stuff, but you work to have those things and, and they well "I could do that! I work hard and I have it! So, I could certainly come to America and work hard if I could get those things." So um, they saw it differently. And when they said that to my daughter and I, we both looked at them and said "Wow, didn't think about that." And they told us, they said, "You guys have an opportunity and we don't have opportunities here. I'll work for the rest of my life and I'll still have this. This is what I'll have." So, they made us, you know, oh, ok, let me appreciate working hard.

In this example, work is highlighted as an opportunity for the African immigrant and as part of a challenging life by the native born black. While the difference may seem subtle, it informs varying cultural understanding surrounding work and economic independence in other work (see Arthur 2000). For one group, work is an option pursued of free will, while for the other, work is the only alternative. Such expression of agency by Africans in contrast to the language of constraint expressed by native blacks illustrates structural underpinnings to seemingly cultural differences. Further research may delve into the conflicting cultural and structural explanations for observed differences between native blacks and African immigrants.

One particularly poignantly articulated aspect of this framing theme was over the subject of education. Which each group frames education differently, their conclusions are almost

identical, the overall sentiment being that blacks tend to "take for granted" the system of free education in place in the United States, as opposed to immigrants, who cannot understand such behavior. One African American woman, described immigrants as being "thirsty for education," while "we [native blacks] are so dehydrated." Of the nine African American respondents who commented on this topic, all of them presented similar sentiments. One Baltimore-raised middle-aged man summarized:

And I don't know if it's by the media because to be honest with you a lot of African people view us as being overly spoiled. We don't work hard enough for what we have. And in a sense, they're right. We are spoiled by TV and the things that some of us take for granted that they never had, or had very little of. As far as educational value, they view education as a gift. They don't take it for granted whereas we do. If we show up for class, we show up for class. If we don't, we don't. And it's taken that way, to a degree. They work hard for everything that they do. It's not given o them. They don't want it given to them.

African immigrants in our sample framed the issue of education in the same way, and again, nearly all of our respondents who spoke to this topic gave a similar view as this one:

Because in my culture, whatever you do, we have to get educated. And sometimes it's not so much—you know. Education is not such here (laughs). You know, when you come here, there's just so many different things that you—that can seduce a person away from education. And it happens here in Baltimore! (laughs) Look around the streets and

you see! So it's like, for all the Africans, we can't understand where, you come to this country and you have the opportunity to go to school, FREE OF CHARGE and you don't do it! You know?! So we can't understand why anyone would choose something else! So I guess that's the first thing we can't understand here! You know, education is so important, and you come here, and sometimes you see—it's just not happening. We can't understand that.

It is important to note here that the majority of these respondents have at least a high school degree themselves and at least 17 of the 29 are known to be college graduates or even higher. The lack of variation in our respondent's level of education may be indicative of the opinions regarding the framing of the education question. The urban setting of Baltimore **(discussed further below),** where only about 50% of African American students will graduate from the public school system, may also play a role in the focus on education by these respondents.

Overall, an important emerging theme in this data is that African immigrants and native-born blacks discuss and think about similar social issues that involve race, violence, mobility, work, education, and socioeconomic position yet they are framed very differently. The way in which these important social issues are framed leads to varying understandings about boundaries surrounding constructions of race and ethnicity. When inequality is viewed as an underlying phenomenon in society, there are stricter boundaries around racio-ethnic identity. Perhaps this should not be surprising, as it is often the way in which the dominant group operates. When inequality is not perceived as a problem, perhaps it is because there is some advantage perceived

in its presence. Further research could investigate the ways in which "framing" of social problems and issues impacts personal identity for the African Diaspora.

Social Context

The data reveals that how native blacks view Africa and how African immigrants view Baltimore is very important to their understandings of themselves, each other, and racial, ethnic, and racio-ethnic boundaries drawn.

Native-born blacks share that they have often heard stories about Africa involving hunting, killing, and eating wild animals, and then draining the blood for tribal rituals, living in straw huts without plumbing, AIDS, starvation, or that it must be like the *Tarzan* movie. One respondent sums it up: "Africa is a jungle, and people are runnin' around with no clothes on, and there are wild animals everywhere." Such understandings of Africa color the views native blacks have about African immigrants. As one middle-aged black American male explains,

> I think because of the whole stereotypical edge we're not culturally astute as far as Africans and where they are, where they've come from. A lot of us don't watch PBS. We don't really grasp what it's like. And then a lot of us don't have the money that a lot of these people have that have been over to Africa. We don't have the money or the resources. We have some resources, now with the Internet we have more resources because now we can read the paper over there in Africa and see what's going on in Africa. But that's just a part of that whole separatism. Once we learn how to unite and not

separate then we're fine. But we tend to separate ourselves from one another. "Okay, we

are African Americans, but we ain't African." That whole thing.

In essence, the combination of vast stereotypes made about Africa and limited resources to see

first-hand what Africa is causes native blacks to draw a line themselves from African

immigrants. This metaphorical line is most clearly seen as a division between racial, ethnic, and

racio-ethnic identity, as the respondent states, "Okay, we are African Americans, but we ain't

African."

African immigrants, on the other hand, associate poverty, crime, drugs and violence with

living in Baltimore. The extension of these social problems to the people who reside in Baltimore

is prevalent. African immigrants describes American blacks as "cultureless," as "having a very

different culture," as "lacking motivation," as "getting side-tracked." Many of these pejorative

statements derive from a social environment African immigrants perceive as promoting decline

for black Americans. One college-educated immigrant originally from Nigeria explained the lack

of assimilation between the two communities, "All the drugs and alcohol here—African

Immigrants, immigrants from other countries just stay to themselves. Their children—keep them

away from it. There's not going to be that assimilation." This same respondent, when asked to

characterize the African American in Baltimore, seemed to almost personify the city itself when

she responds, "In Baltimore? When I see this city—it's very depressing. The poverty." As a

result, a tendency develops for African immigrants to personally define themselves as different

from native blacks, often through construction of varied racio-ethnic affiliations.

The setting of this study in Baltimore city is clearly significant as immigrant images of

native blacks are clearly shaped not only by their immediate contact with African Americans, but

by overall perceptions of the city itself. Further research in this area could delve into the particular racial and ethnic constructions the social environment creates for black Americans and African immigrants. That our knowledge of the social environment so deeply influences our understanding of people living in that environment is an important emerging theme to incorporate into future research.

Additional Research Topics

Three additional, primary research questions emerged over the course of our data analysis that were unanticipated at the start, that we now believe may prove to be of equal or greater sociological import, and that the Project intends to pursue as it progresses. 1) Why have scholars had greater concern for the views that African Americans and African Immigrants have towards each other that for other intra-racial groups? 2) What influence does a city like Baltimore have on the intra-black American dynamic we observe? 3) Finally, how might this dynamic play out differently or similarly for other immigrant groups in their interaction with their co-ethnics (e.g. Mexican immigrants and established Mexican Americans)?

In response to the first of these additional questions, we know that despite the fact that African Americans as a whole have few direct or recent ties with the African continent, there persists an assumption that native blacks and Africans nonetheless share similarities and political/affective bonds based in a commonly shared pre-slavery history (Arthur 2000, **Pierre [which year]; Dodoo [which year].** We are particularly drawn to the ideas posed by W.E.B. Du Bois, such as about which he wrote in 1940:

But one thing is sure and that is the fact that since the fifteenth century these ancestors of mine and their other descendants have had a common history; have suffered a common disaster and have one long memory. The actual ties of heritage between the individuals of this group, vary with the ancestors that they have in common and many others: Europeans and Semites, perhaps Mongolians, certainly American Indians. But the physical bond is least and the badge of color relatively unimportant save as a badge; the real essence of this kinship is its social heritage of slavery; the discrimination and insult; and this heritage binds together not simply the children of Africa, but extends through yellow Asia and into the South Seas. It is this unity that draws me to Africa.[2]

The connection between African Americans and the African continent—referred to as Pan-Africanism—and its people had, of course, been a long-stating debate, particularly articulated by Marcus Garvey and Du Bois in the early 1900s. Marcus Garvey, the Jamaican born social activist and founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, called his followers together in an effort to re-colonize the African continent with American Negroes. His goal was to displace white European colonizers and to thereby establish a true homeland for blacks worldwide. Towards this goal, he raised funds for the Black Star Line, a fleet of steam ships that would take African Americans from the United States to Africa. While the project eventually failed due to a poor business sense and bad luck, Garvey's message continued to garner support. While careful not to alienate whites, he preached the superiority of one race over the other, and believed that for blacks to truly overcome the oppression of living in the deeply

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[2] From *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (1940) in Lewis, 1995, 655-6.

segregated United States, they would have to establish themselves independently of the dominant race. He said in 1921, "All true Negroes are against social equality, believing that all races should develop along their own lines. Only a few selfish members of the Negro race believe in the social amalgamation of black and white."[3] For Garvey, Pan-Africanism was the movement of people of African descent back to Africa in order to establish self-leadership.

In Garvey's eyes, one of those "selfish members" was W.E.B. Du Bois, an African American of mixed descent, an intellectual, and the longtime editor of the NAACP journal *The Crisis*. Du Bois and Garvey failed to see eye to eye on virtually any method of uplifting the African American, and their disagreements raged publicly throughout various newspaper articles and pamphlets. Du Bois famously wrote, "Marcus Garvey is, without doubt, the most dangerous enemy of the Negro race in American and in the world. He is either a lunatic or a traitor."[4] Du Bois was primarily concerned with Garvey's insistence that "forcible separation of the races and the banishment of Negroes to Africa is the only solution of the Negro problem" and that none of his methods were encouraging change in the United States that might lead to racial equality.[5] Du Bois saw Pan-Africanism in a very different light; he organized four Pan-African conferences between 1919 and 1925, bringing together African leadership from across the globe in an effort to solve some of the problems of their race. His ideal was that the bringing together of an international group to compliment the "Talented Tenth" of U.S. blacks would help bring about the equality of African Americans.

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[3] Quoted in Rogers 1955, 160
[4] Du Bois in Lewis 1995, 340
[5] ibid.

In addition to his conception of Pan-Africanism, DuBois, in *Souls of black Folk*, articulates a concept of "double-consciousness." He writes:

> After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, --a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,--an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (p8)

In this haunting passage, DuBois explains how society mars the vision that black Americans have of themselves through the practice of relentless racial inequality, leading to a debilitating sense of "double-consciousness" or viewing oneself through the "other's" eyes.

For both Garvey and Du Bois, the idea that African Americans are tied in some intrinsic way to Africa was a given even though each articulated their own ideal what this meant. It seems that we might be able to continue on in this debate, and use Du Bois idea of "double-consciousness," to further understand the trends we are seeing in the relationships between African Americans and African immigrants today.

Returning now the second of our "new" research questions, what, if any, impact might the urban setting of Baltimore have on the relationship between these two groups? Much of the literature suggest that there is a higher level of achievement among African immigrants, especially economically and educationally, than among African Americans, though both groups show lower social status than whites in the U.S. We hypothesize that the cities like Baltimore, which is 65% African American and has a national reputation as a "dangerous" city with high crime rates and poor educational outcomes may explain significantly the trend of African immigrants trying to separate themselves from being lumped into a category with "failing" blacks in the city. We anticipate that different cities may experience different levels of this.

Finally, our last"new" question asks whether the relationships we see between our two target groups are different in any ways from the relationships between other newly arriving immigrant groups and their more established co-ethnics. How do Asian or Latin/Central American immigrants interact with their hyphenated-American counterparts? Little has been done on a large scale in this arena, but research seems to suggest that there is a tendency for these other groups to experience inter-group tensions as well. But more often than not we hear of intra-ethnic cooperation. Irene Bloemraad, for example, concludes that immigrants in the United States and Canada become incorporated into ethnic enclaves by their more established co-ethnics, who help with the assimilation process (2006). Scholars like Bloemraad tend to look only at one or two small case studies of immigrant incorporation and interaction with the host society, however the conclusions that may be drawn from this study could be expanded into a more comprehensive, comparative study of intra-racial dynamics.

Clearly, resolving the latter two of our new questions will require a great deal more theoretical grounding, as will our first. In fact this entire topic of native black and African immigrant relations lacks a cogent theoretical frame. Pursuing such a frame is the next phase of this topic with the Project.

Appendix A

Code Descriptions

AA identity/culture: This category contains respondents' understanding of African-American identity and culture.

AA researcher: This category reflects an interesting pattern of responses obtained by African American students in the class when interacting with African Immigrants.

A-A understanding of Africa: This category encapsulates data that reveals how native-born blacks understand Africa and African immigrants

Adaptation: This category contains information about the process of adaptation African immigrants experienced.

African culture/society: This category contains African immigrants' description of the culture and society in their country of origin.

African expectation of A-A: This category is about African immigrants' expectations of native blacks. Often times, the narratives are about values and beliefs African immigrants associate with black Americans.

African fashion/art: This category gives insight into trends of fashion and art; as consumed by both immigrants and native blacks, often in conjunction with African-owned businesses.

African naming: This category describes the African naming process.

Business: This category is about African-owned businesses

Conflict: This category contains incidences where African immigrants and native blacks have experienced conflict with each other.

Contact: This category highlights differences in contact African immigrants and native blacks have with one another depending on whether they are middle-aged (first generation immigrant) or school-aged (second generation immigrant).

Commonality: This category highlights the use of kin language and a sense of collective identity.

Competition: This category articulates times African immigrants and native blacks felt they were in competition with one another.

Education: There are two categories (one for AA views and one for Immigrant views) regarding thoughts on education.

Framing: This category refers to times when African immigrants and native blacks discuss what they consider as comparable issues (e.g. racism versus tribalism) yet "frame" the topic in very different ways.

ID immigrant: This category captures markers respondents used to identify an individual as an immigrant rather than as native-born.

Immigrant challenges: Separate from the 'adaptation' category, this represents very distinct challenges of the immigration process articulated by respondents.

Immigrant services: This category encompasses many of the immigrant services available in the Baltimore area.

Immigrant stereotype: This category describes instances when African immigrants felt they were stereotyped, sometimes by native blacks, and other times by Americans more generally.

Music: This category encapsulates references made to hip-hop music.

Neighborhood: This category describes the neighborhoods in which the respondents live.

Origin: This category is includes narratives about one's national and ethnic origins and the relative importance of one's origins to identity.

Perceptions of Baltimore: More specifically than the 'neighborhood' category, this category reflects respondents opinions of the city of Baltimore.

Race-Class: This category contains statements that suggest that there are distinct identities within the black community by class groups.

Race-Ethnicity: This category references times when respondents discussed and contested terms such as "African-American" when both race and ethnicity were included in an identity label.

Race stereotype: This category references stereotypes made about blacks.

Reasons for Immigration: This category references conjectured and real reasons for African's immigration to the US.

Religion: This category captures information about the roll of religion in the lives of native blacks and Immigrants.

Remittance: This category captures information about remittances made by respondents back to their families and communities in Africa.

"Sojourner": This category reflects Arther's concept of the perception that many African Immigrants view themselves as temporary sojourners to the US. The concept of 'home' remains rooted in Africa.

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Respondent		Origin	lives currently	Yrs in US	Age	Gender	Education	Occupation
AJ	African American	Baltimore-city	west Baltimore		42	male	college graduate	
Amy	African American	California	Baltimore city			female	college grad	
Eva	African American	Baltimore-city			37	female	high school graduate	
James	African American	Baltimore			early 20s	male	college graduate	
Jennifer	African American	Florida	Baltimore county		late 30s	female	law school graduate	Owns Law office
Mary	African American	Louisiana	Baltimore city		57	female		
Robert	African American	Virginia	Baltimore		54	male		doorman at apartment building near university
Stephen	African American	Portugal	Baltimore	20 years	23	male	college graduate	
Thomas	African American	Baltimore			21	male		student
Jayson	African American (family is Carribean)	New York City	Baltimore city	25 years	33	male	college grad	Literacy Instructor
Kendra	African American (married to Nigerian immigrant)	Baltimore				female		works at Juvenile Justice Center
Nene	African American-second gen.	born in US; 15 years in Nigeria; moved back to US	Baltimore city		30s/40s	female	college	Loan Officer
Mike	African American-second gen. (parents are Nigerian immigrats)	Baltimore	Baltimore		22	male	college grad	professional football player
Afdal	African Immigrant-first gen.	Morocco		12 years	30s	male		
Ama	African Immigrant-first gen.	Nigeria	Washington DC	7 years	mid 30s	female	JD	attorney for Immigration Outreach Service Center
Chinue	African Immigrant-first gen.	Nigeria	Baltimore city	about 10 years	30s	female	BS in pharmacy-Nigerian University	Pharmacist
Esther	African Immigrant-first gen.	Ghana	Harford county	30 years	middle aged	female	college graduate	Owner of Adinkra
Frank	African Immigrant-first gen.	Rwanda	Baltimore-county	<5 years	21	male	hoping to start college next year	aspiring rapper
Greg	African Immigrant-first gen.	Kenya			30s	male		
Ira	African Immigrant-first gen.	Nigeria	Baltimore city	20 years	30s/40s	male	college grad	owner of afro store?
John	African Immigrant-first gen.	Nigeria	Baltimore City	25 years	middle aged	male	college grad	business owner & corrections officer
Marius	African Immigrant-first gen.	Cameroon	Laurel, MD	14 years	25	male	college graduate	works at Afrocentric Store in Towson
Okono	African Immigrant-first gen.	Nigeria	Baltimore county		early 30s	male		works several odd jobs--banker in Nigeria by trade
Lisa	Jamaican	Jamaica			early 50s	female		Director of Immigration Outreach Service Center
Jack	white	US				male	college graduate	ESOL specialist
Kathy	white	US				female	college graduate	volunteer coordinator at ALEP

| Chris | white (married to Esther) | Harford county | 60s | male | college grad | co-owner of Adinkra |