RACIAL DIFFERENCES IN THE TEMPO OF ASSIMILATION FOR WHITE AND BLACK AFRICAN-BORN MEN IN THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

Understanding how immigrants assimilate to the U.S. labor market over time is important, but measuring the true effect of time is difficult. We know little about the assimilation of African immigrants, a group that has recently begun to enter the US in large numbers. The African foreign-born are unique among US immigrants in their racial diversity, with substantial numbers of both Black and White migrants. This paper examines the effect of duration on African immigrant men's earnings between 1990 and 2000. Using Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 5% and 1% sample data from the 1990 and 2000 censuses, it applies a double-cohort method of analysis (Myers and Lee, 1996) that avoids problems presented by trying to measure age-period-cohort effects. The paper examines the differential tempo of assimilation for Black and White African immigrant men. While White African-born men's earnings surpass those of White US-born men over time, Black African-born men continue to experience a disadvantage in earnings that cannot be explained by human capital characteristics. Additionally, while some age-and-migration cohorts of Black African-born men experience steeper increases in earnings over time compared to White African-born men, racial inequities in earnings remain, suggesting that racism continues to depress the earnings of Black African immigrant men despite their advances over time.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of assimilation has generated renewed interest among social scientists, and has been reconceived to no longer rely on past oppressive assumptions (Alba and Nee 2003). Where once the term "assimilation" connoted a colonialist discourse of eradicating home cultures, scholars no longer assume that some forms of assimilation, such as higher earnings attainment, requires eradicating all cultural differences (Alba and Nee 2005; Green 2006; Portes 2000; Portes and Zhou 1993; Rumbaut 1997). The current assimilation perspective on earnings predicts that as the foreign-born population improve their English skills (if they are not already fluent in English upon arrival) and accumulates US job market experience over time, their earnings will converge with those of the US-born population (Kollehlon and Eule 2003; Portes and Rumbaut 1990). Accumulated job market experience is operationalized by the number of years a person has been in the US, or their duration.

There are two prevailing theories of immigrant assimilation (Gans 1992; Portes and Zhou 1993; Waters 1994). The first is the straight-line assimilation theory, which predicts a linear convergence of immigrant earnings with the US-born. The second is segmented assimilation, which predicts that structures of racial inequality shape the opportunities of immigrants of color, so that immigrant earnings will converge with those of the US-born but only within racial categories. This theory suggests that assimilation is not just an individual process but also one shaped by racism in the receiving society. Scholars developed segmented assimilation theory to explain the downward mobility of the children of immigrants as their education and earnings converge with those of oppressed racial minorities (Portes and Zhou 1993; Waters 1994). However, segmented assimilation has also been used to explain how foreign-born persons of

color continue to have lower wages than White people born in the receiving country, despite immigrants being in the country for many years (Skuterud 2010).

In fact, it is the passage of time (and the complexities of measuring it) that lies at the heart of assimilation theory (Green 2006). Time is usually measured as either the number of years a person has been in the US, or by the year in which they arrived. But using either measure conflates duration with job market conditions at time of arrival. Additionally, the effects of aging are rarely considered in immigrant assimilation research. Measures of time of arrival, duration, and aging are all required in order to properly measure assimilation changes over time.

AFRICAN IMMIGRANT ASSIMILATION AND RACE

The existing research on African immigrant economic assimilation is sparse, compared to what is available on Hispanic and Asian immigrants. Most of this literature compares African immigrants to Caribbean immigrants and US-born Blacks at one point in time (see for examples Dodoo 1997, Model 1991, and Poston 1994). None uses more than one data collection time point, and therefore no literature exists on African immigrants that can separate the effects of age, period, and cohort. In part, this absence may be because it was not until 1990 that sufficient numbers of African immigrants in the US existed to make it possible to analyze their assimilation using Census Bureau data (Logan and Deane 2003). But now with sufficient sample sizes in both the 1990 and 2000 Census samples as well as American Community Survey (ACS) microdata, scholars can conduct proper testing of duration effects on African immigrant assimilation.

Extant research on African immigrant economic assimilation generally supports segmented assimilation theory (Lee and Bean 2007; Portes and Zhou 1993), in that their

economic outcomes converge towards those of US-born Blacks rather than towards Whites. Studies examining African immigrants' human capital characteristics (specifically the level of education attained and prestige of occupation) find that African immigrants have high levels of education (Butcher 1994; Dodoo 1997; Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Poston 1994) and occupational status attainment (Butcher 1994; Portes and Rumbaut 2006) compared to US-born Blacks. However, after controlling for human capital variables, Black African immigrant men earn less than Afro-Caribbean immigrant men and about the same as Black US-born men (Butcher 1994; Dodoo 1997; Kposowa 2002). Butcher (1994) attributes this difference to self-selection of migrants, showing that foreign-born Blacks have similar earnings to US-born Blacks who moved out of the state of their birth. Dodoo (1997) argues that this is because the foreign acquired degrees of Africans are not respected, but the foreign acquired degrees from the Caribbean are. Kposowa (2002) also found that Black Africans experienced lower educational returns on earnings compared to White immigrants and US-born Blacks and Whites, attributing this difference to racial discrimination in the labor market.

A few studies have disaggregated African immigrants to look at the diversity within the population. Comparisons of Black and White Africans immigrants found that Blacks earn less than Whites, even when human capital and demographic variables were considered (Dodoo and Takyi 2002; Kollehlon and Eule 2003). Dodoo and Takyi (2002) conducted a decomposition analysis, which showed that Whites earned 80% more than Blacks, with only 53% of that gap explained by human capital characteristics and years since immigration. They conclude that racial stratification in the US remains a key determinant of the earnings of Black African-born men.

Because different countries in Africa have migrant streams with different racial compositions, it is also useful to examine the effects of specific sending countries in Africa. Doing so can parse out the effects of racism in the U.S. labor market versus residual effects of racism in the home country. Poston (1994) showed that men from South Africa (a country with a large White population) had the highest rate of earnings return on their education across the 92 different countries he studied, while Nigerians experienced considerably less return and Ghanaian immigrants ranked near the bottom. Moore and Amy (2002) also found South African immigrant men to have the highest earnings among men from the nine largest African-origin groups, with Nigerians and Liberians at the bottom. This suggests that home country disadvantages, including racial disadvantages, affect the earnings of Africans after they migrate to the US. But the question of how long those home country effects continue to effect migrant earnings remains unanswered.

These studies are important and useful, but they still fail to tell us the effects of duration on African immigrant earnings. While all these studies include a control for either year of arrival or time in the US, none can properly measure the effects of time as they all use cross-sectional data (from either the 1980 or 1990 Census). Of course, nationally representative longitudinal datasets do not exist that include African immigrants in their sample. The solution to this problem is to conduct a double-cohort analysis that creates multiple cohorts from cross-sectional data that can be followed over time.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TWO OBSERVATION PERIODS FOR MEASURING DURATION

As many scholars have noted, identifying the "age-period-cohort" effect is problematic given the limited availability of nationally representative longitudinal data on the foreign-born

(Firebaugh 1997; Mason and Fienberg 1985; Myers and Lee 1996). As Myers and Cranford (1998:75) state, "'duration' in immigration research confounds year of arrival and duration of United States residence, much as birth cohort is confounded with age." Thus, a single measure of time in a cross-sectional sample (such as what has been used in previous studies of African immigrant earnings) cannot disentangle the effects of the time spent in the US from the conditions of the labor market at time of arrival or the effects of aging. As a solution, Myers and Lee (1996) proposed a double-cohort method, in which birth cohorts are nested within immigration cohorts. The double-cohort method differs from other age-period-cohort models in its dual nature, tracking not only age-period-cohort but also duration-period-arrival cohort. The method focuses on separating effects of growing duration from synchronic effects of aging, as well as distinguishing differences in arrival cohorts from these duration effects.

To get around the synchronicity between measures of time, the double cohort method uses interactions between time variables. The variables measuring time are year of observation, arrival cohort, and age cohort. The true effect of duration is separated from aging by using a comparison of US-born individuals, who are assumed to experience similar age-related changes in the labor market compared to the foreign-born. The result is an analysis that shows the changes an immigrant cohort experiences from one time to another, net the effects of the changes that a US-born group within the same age group experience over the same time period. If an immigrant cohort has earnings that get closer to the earnings of the same age group of US-born people over a given time period, the immigrants are thought to be assimilating to the labor market. Using the double cohort method while controlling for human capital characteristics such as education and language ability also allows one to measure if duration is enough to allow earnings assimilation, or whether immigrants of color will never achieve full parity with the US-

born because of racism in the labor market. It is also possible, by including both race and country of origin in the model, to test how much racial differences in earnings can be attributed to one's home country versus racial dynamics in the US labor market. Therefore, this paper answers the questions, 1) what effect does race have on the earnings of African immigrants to the U.S. over time, and 2) to what extent can the effects of race be traced to home country effects?

METHODS

DATA

This paper uses Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), made available by the Minnesota Population Center (Ruggles et al. 2008). The PUMS provides datasets collected by the US Census Bureau, derived from the long form of the decennial census and the American Community Survey (which replaced the decennial long form in 2006). The data collected include demographic information such as sex, race, national origin, and other variables such as income and educational level. This paper uses the 5% sample in 1990 and 2000, selecting males who were born in a country in Africa, not of American parents. This sample of African-born men was combined with a 10% random sample of US-born males from the 1% PUMS sample in 1990 and 2000. This paper focuses only on men because women have very different (and somewhat more complicated) earnings trajectories, so limiting the analysis to men simplifies the presentation of findings on race, nativity and the effects of time.

[1] The analysis is limited to men who were between 25-64 years old, as these are the prime earning years in the life course, and to those who were employed either full- or part-time at the time of the census (having worked for pay or profit during the prior week). The U.S. Census

[1] This is not to say that women's earnings trajectories are less important than men's, and I examine the effects of time on African-born women's earnings compared to their male counterparts in other work.

allows people to self-identify their race, but within particular categories; these are White; Black; Asian and Pacific Islander; American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut; and "Other" category. To limit the complexity of the racial analysis, the paper uses only males identifying as either Black or White. This eliminates from the analysis men who might be phenotypically or culturally similar to Black or White African migrants but who do not identify themselves as solely Black or White (such as Arab men who might identify as either Black or White but instead chose "Other"). Variables were created to measure race (Black vs. White), immigration status (African- vs. US-born), and an interaction term to measure the differential effect of migration status for Black and White men.

The outcome variable is logged annual wage income, adjusted for inflation (in year 2000 equivalent dollars). The paper excludes cases in which individuals reported being employed but had no annual wage income. Control variables include educational attainment (less than high school, high school degree, some college, or college degree or higher), current school enrollment, marital status (married with spouse present vs. other), ability to speak English well, and citizenship status (citizen of the US vs. other). Additional controls are included for country of origin for African-born men (with variables measuring the top 10 sending countries; Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa, Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco, Liberia, Kenya, Ivory Coast, and Sierra Leone).

I constructed four age cohorts (25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64) and three migration cohorts (pre-1970, 1970-79, 1980-89). Age cohorts were constructed based on actual age reported in the census. Migration cohorts were constructed from year of arrival reported in the 2000 census and the interval of arrival reported in the 1990 census[2]. Both age and cohorts replicate the cohort divisions used in Myers and Lee (1996) and Myers and Cranford (1998).

[2] African-born men who reported in the 1990 census that they arrived in the interval 1987-1990 were assigned to the 1980-89 migrant cohort.

The analysis excludes African-born men who arrived in the US since 1990 in order to have two data points for all immigrant cohorts. Variables were created to test the two-way interactions between age and migration cohorts, year of census and age cohorts, and year of census and migration cohorts, and finally three-way interaction terms for each age cohort, migration cohort, and year of census.

ANALYSIS

First cross-tabulations were run to compare variable distribution within the African-born by race. Next ordinary least squares regression was run using variables measuring race, nativity, human capital characteristics, and variables measuring time (census year, age and migration cohorts) with no interactions. The second model includes an interaction term between race and nativity, but no interaction terms for time. The third model is the saturated model using the double-cohort method. This model takes into account not only the separate effects of time of arrival and duration in the US, it also assesses the effects of experienced gained in the labor market. The third model was then repeated, this time including variables for the top 10 African sending countries in order to determine if native country effects were driving race and nativity differences in earnings.

FINDINGS

Table 1 depicts cross tabulations comparing Black and White African-born men. There are no differences between Black and White African-born men in their ability to speak English. Black African-born men were less likely than White African-born men to be citizens, and were less likely to be married with spouse present in the US. Black African-born men were more

likely than White African-born men to be enrolled in school, and to have some college education. They also arrived more recently than White African-born men (even though half of White African men in the sample arrived in the US between 1980-1989), and tended to be younger.

Table 1: Cross tabulations for African-born Men by Race

	Black	White	
Speaks English Well	88.16	89.05	
Citizenship	46.02	69.8	***
Education			
Less than high school	2.32	2.45	***
High School	11.05	13.03	
1-3 years of college	25.40	21.97	
4 or more years of college	61.23	62.55	
School Attendance	20.50	7.67	***
Married, Spouse Present	57.94	72.85	***
Age Cohort			
Age 25-34	28.57	27.98	***
Age 35-44	44.27	35.54	
Age 45-54	22.98	24.8	
Age 55-64	4.19	11.68	
Migration Cohort			
Migrated before 1970	3.26	22.96	***
Migrated 1970-1979	24.83	27.02	
Migrated 1980-1989	71.91	50.02	
***p < .01 level			

Table 2 depicts the nested regression models measuring main effects only (Model 1), the interaction of race and nativity (Model 2), and the interaction of age and migration cohorts with census year (Model 3, the double cohort method). Model 1 illustrates that even when accounting for the effects of English ability, education, school enrollment, and marital and citizenship status, there remains a positive effect for being African-born but a negative effect for being Black.

Older cohorts earn more than younger cohorts, although there is a dip in average wages as cohorts approach retirement (in the 55-64 age cohort). More recent migrant cohorts earn less than earlier migrant cohorts. The variable for Census year 2000 is statistically insignificant, indicating that there is not a significant difference between earnings in 1990 and 2000, net the main effects of age and migration.

Table 2: Regression Models Predicting Logged Adjusted Yearly Earnings: Main effects (Model 1), race/nativity interaction (Model 2), and the double cohort method (Model 3)[a]

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	b		b		b	
African-Born	0.18	***	0.19	***	0.19	***
Black	-0.25	***	-0.22	***	-0.22	***
Black African			-0.10	***	-0.12	***
Speaks English Well	0.18	***	0.19	***	0.18	***
Citizenship	0.12	***	0.11	***	0.07	***
Education						
High school	0.27	***	0.27	***	0.27	***
1-3 years of college	0.44	***	0.44	***	0.45	***
4 or more years of college	0.79	***	0.79	***	0.80	***
School Attendance	-0.22	***	-0.21	***	-0.21	***
Married, spouse present	0.29	***	0.29	***	0.29	***
Census Year 2000 (cy00)	0.00		0.01		0.01	
Age Cohort						
35-44 (ac2)	0.21	***	0.21	***	0.21	***
45-54 (ac3)	0.28	***	0.28	***	0.32	***
55-64 (ac4)	0.17	***	0.17	***	0.19	***
Migration Cohort						
1970-1979 (mc2)	-0.08	***	-0.06	**	-0.25	***
1980-1989 (mc3)	-0.19	***	-0.16	***	-0.25	***
constant	9.37		9.37		9.42	***
Adjusted R-squared	0.18		0.18		0.18	
N	89022		89022		89022	

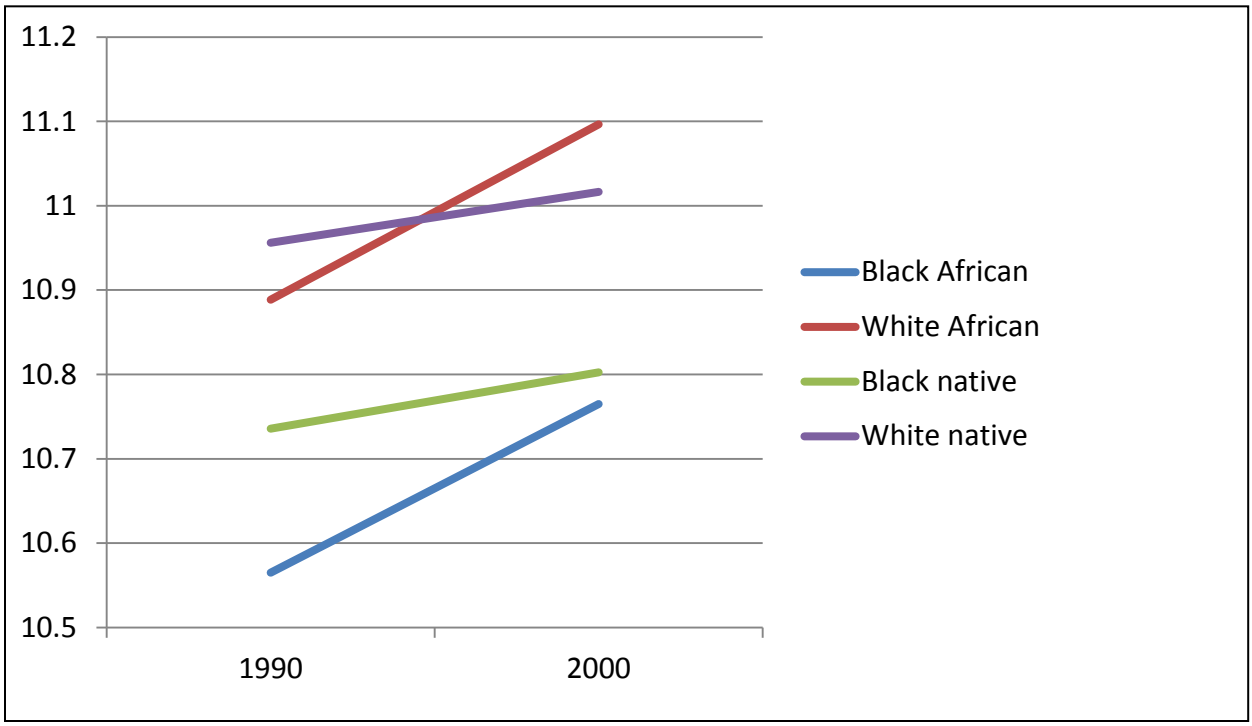
** p < .05 ***p < .01

[a] Model 3 includes two-way and three-way time interactions, not shown

Model 2 depicts the effect of being both Black and born in Africa. While the effect of being African-born remains positive, Black African men experience an additional depression in their wages that can be attributed to the combination of their race and immigrant status. Again, this effect remains after controlling for English ability and education, indicating that those variables do not counteract the effects of the interaction of race and nativity.

While these results provide general support for findings from previous research, the effects of immigrant duration and aging are still not properly specified. Model 3 includes the interaction terms for age cohort, migration cohort, and census year. In the interest of keeping the table from becoming too large, the time interactions were not included, but the three-way interaction terms were statistically significant for all but the oldest age cohort (ages 55-64). The effects of the time interaction terms are most easily understood when graphically displayed. Figure 1 shows earnings estimates from Model 3, predicting earnings for college-educated married men who speak English well, are not enrolled in school, are citizens, and were 35-44 years old in 1990. African-born men are from the 1980-1989 migrant cohort. Figure 1 shows that African-born men have a steeper increase in earnings between 1990 and 2000 compared to US-born men. White African-born men's earnings actually start out lower than White US-born men's, but surpass them in 2000. Black African-born men start in 1990 with a significant earnings disadvantage, and although they make gains between 1990 and 2000 their earnings still fall behind those of US-born Black men. Thus, they are doubly disadvantaged by their race and immigration status, which they do not overcome even after being in the US between 11 and 20 years.

Figure 1. Logged Yearly Earnings Estimates by Race and Nativity, Model 3 Coefficients (Double Cohort Method) (College-educated, speaks English well, not enrolled in school, citizens, 34-44 years old in 1990; African-born men are from 1980-89 migrant cohort)



As previous scholars have noted, trajectories of assimilation of immigrants vary by the period in which they migrated and their age at migration. This variation can be examined by looking at the trajectories of different age and migrant cohorts. Table 4 provides a summary of the changes in earnings between 1990 and 2000 for White and Black African-born men, comparing them to their US-born counterparts. In the most recently arrived cohort (1980-89), White African men start out with lower earnings in 1990 compared to White US-born men but surpass their earnings by 2000. Black African-born men also have lower earnings than their native counterparts but only surpass them in 2000 in the oldest age cohort, largely because Black US-born men's earnings decrease for this age group between 1990 and 2000. In the 1970-79 migrant cohort, Black African-born men do a little better in comparison to Black US-born men; by 2000 they earn the same or more than Black US-born men, even in the age cohort 25-34 in

which their 1990 earnings are lower. White African-born men also have higher earnings than White-native born men in 2000, including the 25-34 age cohort, which starts out with lower earnings than US-born men in 1990.

Table 3: Comparisons of African-born Men with US-born Men within Racial Group, by Age and Migrant Cohort

Migration Cohort	*Ages 25-34*	*Ages 35-44*	*Ages 45-54*
Migrated pre-1970	White African born earnings start out with higher earnings than White US-born in 1990 and remain higher in 2000; Black African-born earnings start out higher earnings than Black US-born in 1990 and remain higher in 2000.	White African born earnings start out with higher earnings than White US-born in 1990 and remain higher in 2000; Black African-born earnings start out higher earnings than Black US-born in 1990 and remain higher in 2000.	White African born earnings start out with higher earnings than White US-born in 1990 and remain higher in 2000; Black African-born earnings start out higher earnings than Black US-born in 1990 and remain higher in 2000.
Migrated 1970-79	White African-born start out with lower earnings in 1990 but surpass those of White US-born in 2000; Black African-born start out with lower earnings than Black US-born in 1990 and do not catch up to Black US-born in 2000.	White African-born start out with higher earnings than US-born in 1990 and remain so in 2000; Black African-born start out higher earnings than Black US-born in 1990 but US-born catch up in 2000.	White African born earnings start out with higher earnings than White US-born in 1990 and remain higher in 2000; Black African-born earnings start out higher earnings than Black US-born in 1990 and remain higher in 2000.
Migrated 1980-89	White African-born start out with lower earnings in 1990 but surpass those of White US-born in 2000; Black African-born start out with lower earnings than Black US-born in 1990 and do not catch up to Black US-born in 2000.	White African-born start out with lower earnings in 1990 but surpass those of White US-born in 2000; Black African-born start out with lower earnings than Black US-born in 1990 and do not catch up to Black US-born in 2000.	White African-born start out with lower earnings in 1990 but surpass those of White US-born in 2000; Black African-born start out with lower earnings than Black US-born in 1990 but surpass US-born in 2000.

In the pre-1970 migrant cohort we see a more consistent pattern of African-born men out-earning US-born men within their racial group. White and Black African-born men earn more than their US-born counterparts in 1990 across all age cohorts, and maintain those higher earnings in 2000. This is true even in the 45-54 age cohort, in which for the first time we see African-born men's earnings decrease in 2000 as these men approach retirement age (similar to the pattern exhibited by US-born men). But it is also important to note that while Black African-born men show a consistent earnings advantage within this migrant cohort, neither in this migrant cohort nor the more recently-arrived migrant cohorts do Black African-born men approach the earnings of White men, whether African or US-born.

Because of the different racial structures in the many sending countries in Africa that might affect assimilation trajectories in the US, the double cohort analysis from Model 3 was repeated, this time including dummy variables indicating the home country of the top 10 sending countries from this sample. Zimbabwe and South Africa had the largest effects by far than other sending countries, so the model was rerun including only these two countries, shown in Table 5. The inclusion of variables measuring sending countries Zimbabwe and South Africa substantially decrease the race/nativity interaction, indicating that much of the differences that we see between Black and White African-born men are not directly related to racism in the US per se but an indirect effect operating through the effects of these sending countries. Both Zimbabwe and South Africa have recent histories of White elite political rule (Zimbabwe's ended in 1980, South Africa in 1994), and both countries sent the largest number of White migrants of all Sub-Saharan African countries in this sample Therefore, the effects of being from Zimbabwe or South Africa are likely a combination of race interacting with the colonial system in those countries that privileges White migrant men from those countries in the US labor market

(such as the greater wealth that White migrant men from these countries bring with them). But the strong positive effects of Zimbabwean or South African nativity on earnings still does not completely diminish the significance of the race/nativity interaction, and it has only a very small effect on the three-way time interactions. Therefore neither Zimbabwean nor South African nativity diminishes the significant barriers that Black African migrant men face in the US labor market, nor the fact that these barriers do not diminish over time.

Table 4: Regression Model Predicting Logged Yearly Wages: Model 3 Adding Country of Origin (South Africa and Zimbabwe)[a]

	b	
African-Born	0.14	***
Black	-0.22	***
Black African	-0.04	*
Speaks English Well	0.15	***
Citizenship	0.09	***
South Africa	0.4	***
Zimbabwe	0.28	***
Education		
High school	0.27	***
1-3 years of college	0.45	***
4 or more years of college	0.79	***
School Attendance	-0.21	***
Married, spouse present	0.29	***
Census Year 2000	0.01	
Age Cohort		
35-44	0.21	***
45-54	0.32	***
55-64	0.19	***
Migration Cohort		
1970-1979	-0.26	***
1980-1989	-0.28	***
constant	9.44	***
Adjusted R-squared	0.18	
N=	89,022	
*p < .10 ** p < .05 ***p < .01		

[a] Includes two-way and three-way time interactions, not shown

CONCLUSION

As previous research has shown, African immigrant men tend to have very high levels of educational attainment, which explains their relatively high earnings compared to US-born men. However, an analysis over time illuminates stark differences by race. When controlling for education, school enrollment, ability to speak English well, and marital and citizenship status, all age and migrant cohorts of White African-born men had earnings that started higher or surpassed those of White US-born men. Conversely, only in the earlier arriving migrant cohorts (1970-1979 and pre-1970 migrant cohorts) did Black African-born men consistently out-earn Black US-born men by 2000. No age or migrant cohorts of Black African-born men earned as much as White men (native- or African-born).

These findings point to significant racial differences in the advantages experienced by immigrant status. For White African-born men, being an immigrant is advantageous, but for Black African-born men, their relative disadvantaged position upon arrival to the US remains for some time. These findings support Dodoo's (1997) assertion that the disadvantage Black African men experience in their earnings cannot be entirely attributed to a foreign-obtained education, as we would expect to see a similar disadvantage for White African-born men. Rather, this research supports the existence of structural disadvantage experienced by Black African-born men due to their race, with an advantage for White African-born men through their privileged position in the racial hierarchy. This privilege appears to begin in their home country, as the two African countries sending the largest numbers of White men (Zimbabwe and South Africa) account for much of the combined effects of race and immigrant status. How much of this privilege is structural (such as access to elite education or the effects of a racially stratified occupational structure) versus individual (such as the absence of racial or nativist discrimination in the

workplace that Black African men face) cannot be determined with these data. However, the results clearly point to racial hierarchy playing a pivotal role in the earnings trajectories of White and Black African immigrant men in the US.

While differences between racial groups persist over time, the disadvantage *within* racial group (comparing African-born to US-born Blacks) may dissipate with time, as indicated by the comparisons within racial group presented in Table 4, and vary according to the age at which one entered the US. All of the men in the pre-1970 migrant cohort arrived as children or young adults; the oldest an African-born man could have been upon arrival was 33 years old, and among the 25-34 age cohort, these men would have arrived as pre-school age children. So we would expect among the youngest age cohort that they would exhibit patterns of earnings trajectories typical of what migration scholars refer to as the 1.5 generation (foreign-born individuals who received some or all of their schooling in the US), in which immigrants have the advantages of their immigrant status as well as their US education. Indeed, these age and migrant cohorts exhibit progressive earnings advantages predicted by theories of the 1.5 generation (Myers and Cranford 1998; Myers, Gao, and Emeka 2009). The 25-34 year olds from the 1970-79 migrant cohort (who came as older children or young adults) do not earn as much as US-born men in 1990 but do surpass the US-born by 2000. And according to segmented assimilation theory, Black African-born men would have earnings more similar to Black US-born men. This holds true in these data, but contrary to segmented assimilation theory this is not a result of having similarly low levels of human capital, as Black African-born men have higher educational attainment than Black US-born men. Rather, it is the persistence of racism that Black African-born men have that they are not able to overcome, despite the success that many age and migrant cohorts have in overcoming the nativity disadvantage.

These findings also point to the importance of more accurately specifying the effects of time when studying immigrant assimilation. By using a double-cohort method, one can see how the conflation of age-period-cohort effects can underestimate the improvement in wages over time for immigrant men, particularly those from recently arrived cohorts. Estimates using a double-cohort method show that it would be easy to underestimate the improvement that all African-born men experience in their earnings over time compared to US-born men, but also the significant advantage that White African-born men experience in the US labor market.

The limitation to all cohort studies is the inability to measure individual-level effects. Findings from this research are limited to the cohort level, and as cohort characteristics can change over time through death and out-migration, interpretation of the findings needs to be limited to characteristics of cohorts rather than to individuals. But from a policy perspective, it is still relevant to know how particular migrant cohorts are faring over time, even if we cannot directly measure the effects of duration on individuals.

Additional study should be directed towards examining the effects of specific African countries of origin, with attention to the factors that might contribute to certain nationality groups being privileged in the US labor market over others. This paper was able to address some diversity among Africans who arrived in the US during different decades, but further research is necessary in order to understand what effects the period of arrival and aging might have on African migrants and what we might expect from these migrants as they age through the US labor market and eventually enter retirement (or perhaps return to their country of origin).

BIOGRAPHY

Stephanie J. Nawyn is an assistant professor in Sociology at Michigan State University. Her research and teaching areas of expertise are in gender and migration, with a focus on forced migration, families, and social incorporation. She wishes to especially acknowledge the Provost's Office of Michigan State University for providing the financial support for the research necessary to complete this article. Dr. Nawyn conducts research on community development among immigrants and the importance of social networks and social capital to immigrant and refugee incorporation, as well as the socioeconomic advancement of African-born immigrants in the United States. She co-edited a book with Steven J. Gold, *The International Handbook of Migration Studies*, forthcoming from Routledge in late 2012.

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