

African Immigration and Naturalization in the United States from 1960 to 2002: A Quantitative Determination of the Morris or the Takougang Hypothesis

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Abstract

Employing a quantitative methodological approach, this essay tests whether or not there is a statistical relationship between the number of Africans migrating into the United States, and the number of those who become naturalized American citizens. The exercise was prompted by a desire to test for the tenability of either one of the following two hypotheses: the first hypothesis by Morris (1985) is that a smaller proportion of the eligible lawful immigrants in the United States seek naturalization; the second hypothesis by Takougang (1995 & 2003) is that unlike Africans who migrated to the United States in the 1960s and the 1970s that were anxious to return home after acquiring an American education in order to contribute in the task of nation building, an overwhelming majority of recent African immigrants are more interested in establishing permanent residency in America. After analyzing the relevant data, covering the period from 1960 to 2002, at both the univariate and bivariate levels, the substantive findings seem to support the Takougang hypothesis.

Keywords: 1. Immigration, 2. Naturalization, 3. Africa, 4. United States.

Introduction

A number of scholarly works have been published on African immigrants in the United States. An overwhelming majority of these works is comprised of descriptive case studies on the causes for migrating, demographics and social conditions of these African immigrants in America (e.g., Apraku 1991, Djamba 1999, Arthur 2000, Nesbitt 2002, Obiakor and Grant 2002, Okome 2002a & 2002b, Takougang 1995 & 2003). Two scholars offer hypotheses for a possible connection between African immigration and naturalization in the United States. The first of these scholars is Morris (1985). Drawing from earlier works on United States immigration (e.g., Bernard 1950, Bailey 1955) Morris proffers the hypothesis that a smaller proportion of the eligible lawful immigrants seek naturalization. He even estimates the number to be less than one

third (1985:126). The second scholar is Takougang (2003), who hypothesizes that unlike the Africans who migrated to the United States in the 1960s and 1970s who were anxious to return home after acquiring an American education in order to contribute in the task of nation building, an overwhelming majority of recent African immigrants are more interested in establishing permanent residency in America. However, both Morris and Takougang do not offer incontrovertible statistical evidence to support their hypotheses. Thus, the current essay seeks to test for a possible relationship, or the lack thereof, between the number of Africans migrating into the United States and the number of those naturalizing.

The major operative factors in this essay are immigration and naturalization, because there could be a relationship between them. Thus, if it is hypothesized that if the number of African immigrants in the United States increases, the number of those naturalizing will increase. This will in turn encourage more Africans to migrate into the United States.

The temporal context of this research covers the last 43 years (1960-2002), because this time frame allows for a better overall testing of both the Morris and Takougang hypotheses given the time both authors published their studies. It is also the time frame for which complete data are available for both immigration and naturalization of Africans in America. The geographical context which the current research covers is the entire African continent and the United States.

Research Methodology

The research methodology that guides this work is quantitative, meaning that numerical values are emphasized. Given the preceding discussion, the theoretical framework for this research can be diagrammatically represented as follows:

African Immigration → African Naturalization

The variables in the preceding theoretical framework are African Immigration and African

Naturalization. African Immigration is the independent variable because it is hypothesized as the measure that is thought to influence or cause African Naturalization, the dependent variable.

Based on the preceding theoretical framework, the hypothesis of this research is H₁: The larger the number of Africans migrating into the United States, the greater the number that will naturalize. This hypothesis is linear directional. The measures of the variables of the hypothesis are bound to increase in size over time to show a direct relationship.

The hypothesis is exemplary of an empirical statement, because it is a phenomenon that can be objectively observed by looking at the raw data from the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service that actually reports the number of immigrants and those who naturalize in the United States. It implies generality, because it is a hypothesis that seeks to explain a relationship between immigration and naturalization. Plausibility is apparent in the hypothesis, because it is a logical induction that naturalization will increase as immigration increases. The hypothesis is quite specific, because it simply suggests a relationship between immigration and naturalization. Finally, the hypothesis is testable because the data will either support the idea that there may be a relationship between increase in immigration and increase in naturalization, or allow one to reject the idea.

The unit of analysis, African immigrants in the United States, is at the micro level. This is due to the fact that only one group of immigrants in the United States is studied.

Given the hypothesis of this study, a simple time series design is employed. It tests the impact that African Immigration has on African Naturalization in the United States over time (i.e. from 1960 to 2002). The research design is diagrammed as follows:

$$X \quad O_{1960, \dots, O_{2002}}$$

The preceding research design expresses the relation between two variables. The X represents

the effect African Immigration (independent variable) has on the O, which represents the observation of African Naturalization (dependent variable or outcome).

Both the independent and dependent variables are operationalized at the ratio level. Thus, the actual number of African immigrants and those of them who naturalize are counted for each year from 1960 to 2002. This requires classifying, ordering, setting a standard unit of distance and locating the absolute zero for each variable.

The data for this study were collected from the Statistical Yearbooks of the United States Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, covering the years from 1960 to 2002. The samples for both variables were convenient, because the data for all the years were available. The document analysis technique was used to collect the data, because they were already documented. This data collection technique was the least costly and least time consuming, making it the most appropriate.

Data Analysis

The data collected for this study were analyzed in two stages. The first stage is the univariate, which means examining one variable at a time. The second stage is the bivariate, meaning that both variables are examined in relationship to each other at the same time. The computer package utilized to process the data collected is the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Univariate Analysis

Two statistics were used for analyzing the data at the univariate stage: Mean and Standard Deviation. The Mean is the sum of the value of a variable divided by the number of the values.

The Standard Deviation is the square root of the variance. The results generated after the computer runs for the univariate stage are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 reveals that the mean for African Immigration into the United States from 1960 to 2002 is 42,610 Africans, with a standard deviation of 56,947 Africans. The mean for African Naturalization is 18,222 Africans for the same period, with a standard deviation of 12,633 Africans. These results show that the variations over time for both variables were quite significant, but the most significant is the variation for African Immigration with a standard deviation that is larger than the mean. The results seem to reflect the fact that it takes more time to become a naturalized American citizen than it does to migrate into the country. This is not surprising because American immigration laws do not permit a person to acquire citizenship before five years of permanent residence. There is a significant number of Africans who are undocumented. They are unable to apply for citizenship, even when they are willing. There are also a significant number of students, and those who hold other visas that do not allow them to apply for naturalization. Finally, some African immigrants may not necessarily desire citizenship.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
African Immigration	42,611	56,947
African Naturalization	18,223	12,633

Bivariate Analysis

The statistical procedures used for the bivariate analysis are Simple Correlation and Simple Regression. Simple Correlation measures the strength of a statistical relationship between two

variables. More specifically, the Pearson correlation statistic, r , was employed to measure the strength of the linear relationship between the number of Africans immigrating into the United States and those who naturalize as American citizens. Simple Regression indicates the direction of the relationship between these variables. Accordingly, the coefficient of determination, r^2 , was used for this. The unstandardized partial slope, β , was also employed to determine the amount of change in the scores of African Naturalization for a unit change in the scores of African Immigration. The equation for both the correlation and regression procedures for this study is represented algebraically as follows:

$$\text{African Naturalization} = \alpha + \beta \text{African Immigration} + \varepsilon$$

where:

African Naturalization = Dependent Variable

African Immigration = Independent Variable

α = Y-intercept

β = slope of the line

ε = error term

The results generated after the computer runs for the correlation and regression procedures are presented in Tables 2 and 3, respectively.

Table 2: Correlation

	African Naturalization
African Immigration	.914** (.0001)

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

As can be seen from Table 2, there is a positive, strong, and linear statistical correlation between African Immigration and African Naturalization at the .01 significance level. An $r =$

.914 explains approximately 91 percent of the cases.

Table 3: Explained Variance in African Naturalization (Dependent Variable)

Model	Unstand- ardized β	Unstand- ardized Std. Error	Standard- ized β	t	Signifi-cance
1 (Constant)	9579.561	1617.974		5.921	.0000
African Immigrant- ion	.203	.023	.914	8.747	.0001

$r^2 = .836$

According to Table 3, there is a positive and significant statistical relationship between African Immigration and African Naturalization at the .01 level. An $r^2 = .836$ explains approximately 70 percent of the cases. Table 3 also shows that for every two of those Africans who migrated into the United States (unstandardized $\beta = .203$), one became a naturalized American citizen. In addition, the unstandardized standard error of .023 implies that there is very little deviation from the mean and greater frequency of African naturalization.

In sum, the preceding findings seem to suggest that the hypothesis of this study should be accepted: H₁: The more the number of Africans migrating into the United States, the greater the number of them that will naturalize. Consequently, the Takougang hypothesis must also be accepted as being tenable, but the Morris hypothesis must be rejected, at least for the case of African immigration and naturalization in the United States.

Conclusion

The accepted prediction, the more the number of Africans migrating into the United States, the greater the number of Africans that naturalize as American citizens, seems to suggest that Africa is being drained of its brightest sons and daughters. The only way to stop this brain drain

is for African nations to improve their quality of education, increase higher educational opportunities, increase economic opportunities, and increase the opportunities for political participation. For future research, one could consider investigating whether the naturalized Africans do go back to Africa after some time, and what they do once they return home.

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