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OMOLÚÀBÍ: THE WAY OF HUMAN BEING: AN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY'S IMPACT ON NIGERIAN VOLUNTARY IMMIGRANTS' EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER LIFE ASPIRATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the cultural influences in school success as perceived by Nigerian voluntary immigrant parents and their adult children. The participants of this qualitative research credited their successes in education and in life to an African philosophy known as *omolúàbí*: the way of human being. The participants consistently expressed this worldview during the interviews without being prompte*d. Omolúàbí (Yorùbá* origin, can serve as a noun as well as an adjective) connotes respect for self and others. An *Omolúàbí* is a person of honor who believes in hard work, respects the rights of others, and gives to the community in deeds and in action. Above all, an *Omolúàbí* is a person of personal integrity. We can also define an *Omolúàbí* as one who is dedicated to the service of a just community and is dedicate self-actualization. More importantly, the concept of *Omolúàbí* encapsulates or distils the Yorùbá sense of the critical elements in the positive essences of a total/holistic self and being. A paragon of existence that is measureable across a wide spectrum in the unlimited dimensions of life and existence.[1]

KEYWORDS: *Omolúàbí, Ubuntu, cultural norm, effort beget luck, personal integrity, voluntary immigrants, multicultural education, Yorùbá, Nigeria*.

INTRODUCTION

This study describes and examines the experiences and worldview of Nigerian immigrants and their adult children as they traversed the United States' educational system and society by adhering to an African philosophy of "*Omolúàbí: the way of human being*." *Omolúàbí* connotes respect for self and others. An *Omolúàbí* is a person of honor who believes in hard work, respects the rights of others, and gives to the community in deeds and in action. Above all, an *Omolúàbí* is a person of personal integrity. Okome &Vaughan note, the concept of *Omolúàbí* encapsulates or distils the Yorùbá sense of the critical elements in the positive essences of a total/holistic self and being. *Omolúàbí* denotes a paragon of existence that is measureable across a wide spectrum in the unlimited dimensions of life and existence.[2] This study results in portraits and stories of participants' relationships with parental expectations, school community, immigrant community and the larger society. Immigrant or voluntary minorities are people who have migrated essentially voluntarily to the United States or any other nation because they wanted more economic mobility, or better life in general, and/or political freedom.[3] I used phenomenological design as the theoretical frameworks. Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences.[4] The Yorùbá of western Nigeria say that a person is not merely human by being born, that we are human beings because of the deeds and actions that connect us to others: to families to friends to community to nation. They call such a person an *Omolúàbí;* in other African countries South of the Sahara, they call such persons *Ubuntu.* Archbishop Desmond Tutu in his book, *No Future Without Forgiveness,* states:

> *Ubuntu* is very difficult to render into a Western language. It speaks to the very

> essence of being human. When you want to give high praise to someone we say, "Yu, u nobuntu;" he or she has *ubuntu*. This means that they are generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate. They share what they have. It also means that my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in theirs. We belong in a bundle of life. We say, 'person is a person through other people' (in Xhosa, *Ubuntu ungamntu ngabanye abantu* and in Zulu, *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye).* I am human because I belong, I participate, and I share.[5]

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o noted,

> Sharing stories is the oxygen of the human spirit. But the stories told here are not fictional but rather stories of personal encounter in the quest of the truly human embodied in the term *Ubuntu*. Every individual no matter the culture and community they come from has experienced reality in a unique way and therefore each person has something unique to contribute to the common spirit of our being. Such stories then become like the streams that make up rivers that flow into the common Sea.[6]

The stories of the participants can be likened to the analogy described above; this is the essence of this study, the phenomenological framework is not unlike the fireside chat or moonlight hours shared by African ancestors. The means by which Africans share their worldview with their progeny and the hopes of the present and the past usually enlighten their future and provide a road map to that future, the way of human being. The individuals involved in this study interpreted their world according to the worldview they brought with them from their culture and taught this to their children who in turn internalized them and used them to navigate their daily experiences including their education. The participants reported calling upon known cultural constructs from their past to serve as beacons used navigating a new life, and new social dimensions, which included education as well as their social milieu. At the center of the philosophy of *Omolúàbí* is the people's deep understanding of their culture and how relationships should work in order for it to be beneficial for all involved. The Yorùbá philosopher and eminent scholar, Akinsola Akiwowo, notes social relations among people is ever evolving and changing, and the Yorùbá philosophy that brings this to the fore is that of "*Àjobí*" (consanguinity/blood relations) and "*Àjogbé*" (co-residency).[7] And an *Omolúàbí* balances these ideals to the best of his or her ability in order to bring harmony to all relationships including work, school and home, so that a personal goal of self-actualization can be reached.[8] When we talk about relationships in Yorùbá worldviews, there are two basic tenets followed by five inalienable social values that motivate and guide social relations: *àjobí* (consanguinity/blood relations) and *àjogbé* (co-residence): (1) *ire àìkú* (value of good health to old age), (2) *ire owó* (financial security), (3) *ire oko-aya* (the value of intimate companionship and love), (4) *ire omo* (the value of parenthood), and (5) *ire àborí òtá* (the value of assured self-actualization).[9] These values are human values that resonate in the aspiration of West African immigrants in the age of globalization.[10] These are the foundation of the *Omolúàbí* philosophy of ways of being.

OMOLÚÀBÍ AND EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

Ogbu's studies of over two decades (1991-2003) are one of the anchors of this study. Participants were asked if their cultural outlook, namely the norm of *Omolúàbí*, had anything to do with their educational success. This is a crucial question because Ogbu found that the relative success of the children of immigrants and non-immigrant students of color and linguistic minorities in education is linked to their cultural frame of reference.[11] In his study, *Cultural Problems in Minority Education*, Ogbu aimed to separate the issue of cultural diversity or representation from cultural problems, and focus solely on "cultural problems." He introduces the term, *cultural frame of reference* to the discourse on minority education in order to bring to light the difficulty experienced by some minorities with the cultural and language milieu of the classroom. He states that all minorities face cultural and language differences; however, their ability to overcome such differences and succeed in school is contingent on their cultural frame of reference, which is how they interpret the differences. Ogbu concludes that voluntary minorities, who do not have an oppositional frame of reference, are more successful in school partially because they interpret learning the school culture and language as a plus and not counter to their cultural and language identity.[12] In the narratives of the participants in this study, a non-oppositional *cultural frame of reference* highlighted is that of strong resilience in the face of obstacles, as well as the participants' own creation of a folk theory that hinges on the belief that success is possible, success is expected.

CROSS CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT

A number of factors are identified which bear on the performance of the immigrants' children born and educated in the United States. All the children in this study are high achievers in U.S. schools, up through their college and postgraduate years. All are from educated families (see Table 1). Factors that have a bearing on the performance of these individuals have been identified in the results. This study traces factors back to their cultural roots--and it is the fusion, or more precisely, the interactive dynamics of these factors, that can be connected to academic achievement.

Studies on sociostructural theory find that immigrants' children confront the same sociostructural issues as their parents.[13] This is true for the participants in this study as well. The cultural characteristics of the Nigerian immigrant families that bear on the upbringing of children include hard work, discipline, importance of education (which can lead to a better life for the children than that of their parents), and sacrifice for a commitment to education, and the support of parents, siblings, extended family members and the community.

Several studies assert indigenous African learning is inseparable from the peoples' daily lives.[14] Indigenous education plays a vital role in the transmission of values that Africans consider essential in experiencing life in a holistic way. This is critical to the African's way of life; therefore, indigenous education is not divorced from traditional African norms and values. Thus, for Africans, the educational institution is not separate from life. There is no distinction between formal, non-formal and informal education. The entire community is ever engaging in continuous learning and teaching. Among the Yorùbá of Western Nigeria, the education of a child begins at the "naming ceremony," seven days after birth. During this process, the baby is introduced to the ancestors, family, friends and community, and various food items such as salt and honey are dabbed on the tongue of the newborn, thus its education in becoming *Omolúàbí* begins.[15]

Menkiti states,

> In African thought persons become persons only after a process of incorporation. Without incorporation into this or that community, individuals are considered to be mere danglers to whom the description 'person' does not fully apply. For personhood is something which has to be achieved, and is not given simply because one is born of human seed . . . Whereas Western conceptions of man go for what might be described as a minimal definition of the person - whoever has soul, or rationality, or will, or memory, is seen as entitled to the description 'person' - the African view reaches instead for what might be described as a maximal definition of the person. As far as African societies are concerned, personhood is something at which individuals could fail, at which they could be incompetent or ineffective, better or worse. Hence, the African emphasized the rituals of incorporation and the overarching necessity of learnin***g*** the social rules by which the community lives, so that what was initially biologically given can come to attain social self-hood, i.e., become a person with all the inbuilt excellencies implied by the term.[16]

Thus for the participants of this study, learning is not left to the educational institution alone. Learning that happened at home is expected to be demonstrated at school. It is very important to the parents that their children demonstrate the art of human being at all times particularly at school because they believe that their children's successes and failures hinge on their behavior and their beliefs about educational attainment.

PRINCIPLES OF TRADITIONAL EDUCATION AMONG THE YORÙBÁ PEOPLE

The principles of Yorùbá (African) traditional education, according to Akinyemi[17] and Awoniyi,[18] are based on the concept of *Omolúàbí*. In other words, the product of Yorùbá traditional education is to make an individual an *Omolúàbí*. In essence, the main idea of Yorùbá traditional education has always been to foster good character in the individual and to make the child a useful member of the community. Therefore, traditional education embraces character building as well as the development of both physical and mental aptitude. Education in Yorùbá culture is a life-long process and the whole society is the school.[19]

METHODS

This qualitative research is informed by phenomenological perspectives/philosophy as established by Husserl[20] and the European philosophers Sartre, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, who were also the pioneers of phenomenological studies of existence. Phenomenology as defined by Husserl is the study of how people describe things and experience them through their senses. The assumption is that we only know what we experience by attending to perceptions and meanings that awaken our consciousness.[21] In phenomenological research, the researcher identifies the "structure and the variations of structure, of the consciousness to which anything, event or person appears."[22] "In phenomenological inquiry the reflection of lived experience is necessarily recollective: it is reflection on experience that is already passed or lived through."[23] viewed through socio-cultural perspectives, lenses and realities. Furthermore, "phenomenology is a philosophy as well as a method: the procedure involves studying a small number of participants through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning."[24] I would add that it is also a reflection on the individual's present experience. My role as the researcher is from an "emic" (insider) perspective. I am a member of the community that I study, and I have an "extensive and prolonged" insider's view of the issues experienced and discussed by the participants. Since the purpose of this research is to make meanings out of the lived experiences of the participants, the phenomenological method is appropriate.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this qualitative research consisted of eight Nigerian voluntary immigrant families and their adult children (students) residing in New York, Vermont and Michigan: (N = 20, Men = 7, Women = 13, including 5 adult children). The main criterion for participants was that the Nigerian parents be voluntary immigrants and have adult children (18 years or older) who have gone or are going through the United States' elementary, secondary and or college educational systems. The method of selection of the subjects was by "network" sampling, where one participant leads to another. The network sampling technique is suitable for interviewing in-depth, observations, case histories, and for life history interviews as used in this study. The method is naturally limited to a small number of participants.

The study was conducted using personal interviews, life history interviews, participant observation, field notes and journals. I focused on Nigerian immigrant parents residing in the United States and their children.

INTERVIEWING PROCESS

Many of the participants were interviewed in their homes, others in office locations after establishing fairly good rapport with participants. The information obtained in the interviews was grouped, analyzed and interpreted as it relates to the research questions; other questions emerged during this process. Because of this, it was possible to obtain a fairly consistent picture of the feelings, attitudes, knowledge and beliefs of the participants. Special effort was made to establish rapport with the participants; this was essential to help overcome most defenses such as disclosing “family business to an unknown individual.” The selection of the subjects, the approach to them, and the interview environment and technique were designed to help strengthen rapport, I visited and established a friendly relationship with each participant before requesting an interview. Further, it is important to point out that in no instance did the interviewer mention the word *Omolúàbí*. It came up frequently, but only voluntarily from the participants without prompting. This is why I decided to take a second look at this African philosophy as viewed by the participants.

There were three interviews for each parent participant: life history interview, interviews on parental expectations and an exit interview or participant co-evaluation of data. There was one interview for the adult children. No interview was longer than 90 minutes. Below is the demographic data of participants, stating age, education, occupation, and length of time in residence in the United States at the time of the interviews.

TABLE 1. Participants' demographic data

Letter codes	Age	Education	Occupation	Length of time in the United States (years)
BM (F) AM (M) 2 Daughters 1 Son	50 44 19^ (in college), 13 17	Education includes post-secondary school certifications (F) Baccalaureate Teaching Certification and other job specific certifications (M)	Production supervisor (F) Teacher/Social Worker (M)	6
BE (F) (Widowed) 4 Daughters	61 32^ 30 28 27	*PhD. ^* PhD *MD BA BA	State Bio Engineer Medical Doctor	38 All children born in U.S.
SB (M) (Separated) 1 Daughter	44 17	BsN.	Nurse	1
BO (M) O (F) 3 Daughters Or (18) EO (29)	53 67 33^, 29, 18^	*B.A. *RN, *MS ^*BA, MA	Business Anesthetist ^Asian languages/Business	35 40 All children born in U.S.
MU (Single parent) 3 Daughters 1 Son	60 38,36,26 32	*RN All are pharmacists	Nurse	36 All children are born in the U.S. except the last daughter.
SN 2 Daughters 1 Son	58 23, 22, 19	PhD (All are in college)	Consulting Engineer	18

TABLE 1 ***(continued).*** Participants' demographic data

Letter codes	Age	Education	Occupation	Length of time in the United States (years)
OA (F) SO (M) 3 Daughters	49 45 19^, 17, 14	*PhD *BA (^ In college.)	Criminologist Counselor/Social Worker	25 24 All children born in the U.S.
SA 3 sons	55 18, 20, 21	*MD (All are in college)	Medical Doctor	48 All children born in the U.S.

Notes. M = Mother; F = Father; * = degree or certification obtained in the United States
^ = Adult Child interviewed (Adeniji-Neill, 2009).

DATA ANALYSIS

A folk theory of Nigerians emerging from their narratives became the base for the discussion. Wong and Rowley postulate that a well-designed single group study may provide more informative data than comparative studies to enhance our understanding of minority children's schooling.[25] Folk theories are significant because they largely reflect common knowledge in a particular culture, and function as guiding principles in everyday practice.[26] A folk theory represents ordinary people's worldviews that are shaped by their cultural and life experiences.[27] An open-ended question interviewing method was employed to help uncover the reality beneath the surface. Patton notes that quotations from interviews reveal the respondents' levels of emotion, the way in which they have organized the world; their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions.[28]

In this research, taped in-depth interviews were transcribed verbatim, field notes and journal entries were reviewed regularly. Data were analyzed through descriptive analysis.[29] The aim of descriptive research is to gather knowledge about the focus or object of study; but to avoid bringing about any changes in the focus or object. The results of this study were verified by returning transcribed interviews to participants via email or post. Time was also spent with the participant families by visiting them at their homes and was involvement in some family outings and recreation activities. Open-ended interview data provide important contextual background for analysis. Data were also organized into categories and connective themes identified. Actual quotes from the participants (see Appendix) served as the basis for the results.

THE VOICES

The sociocultural norm, *Omolúàbí*, plays an important role in how the participants view themselves and how they use *Omolúàbí* as a compass for navigating various areas of life including education. The participant below noted tenacity as one of the principles of *Omolúàbí*. Archbishop Desmond Tutu called it "engagement." In education as in life, the participants believe in engagement, trying hard and not giving up. An *Omolúàbí* is not lazy; he or she is engaged, in the context of the participant below referring to how she tells her children to approach their schoolwork:

> **OA (parent):** I would like to touch on another Nigerian trait: tenacity, the ability to put in one's all and focus on the task at hand rather than be divided and be all over the place. One simply focuses and finishes a task because procrastination to many Nigerians is not an endearing trait. They think that is laziness and an *Omolúàbí* is not lazy. Life is all about working hard and staying focused.

All the voices in this study talk about tenacity, the ability to be present, to commit to the task at hand as one of the folk theory *of the way of human being*. Education or studying require concentration, those who succeed usually possess this trait. Listening, is another common theme that surface in the discussion with the participants: they talk about how their culture emphasizes listening, not talking back especially to adults until you have had the wisdom of response (these parents say they have a hard time enforcing on their children in the United States, they say they have adapted; they also listen to the children's point of views). Parents, however, still believe the act of listening makes for a well-grounded person who will succeed in learning, because listening allows an individual to observe, to be a better student of culture and human behaviors. A parent puts it this way:

> **OA:** Our cultural heritage makes you well grounded in all aspects of your life. It keeps our children well grounded. This one that just went back to Nigeria (pointing to her first daughter); she didn't speak the language. She listened very well, and now she speaks it fluently. Now she has a lot of Nigerian friends. She is into computers and she will check out some of the jokes--there are American/Nigerian jokes. Like one boy she knows who will joke about jollof rice and *eba* [translation: cassava meal]. You know, he is just trying to be funny but these are the subtleties of language; if you don't observe you don't learn much. We demand that our children listen in order to learn a lot.

Another folk theory that emerges in this study is material frugality is not poverty of the spirit. The participants talked a lot about the culture of commercialism that the children encounter in schools as a distraction to their education. They believe that Nigerian culture helped them in teaching their children that it is okay not to have all the material things they wanted as long as they have what they need. They say that sometimes the children came home from school and wanted designer this or that because they see other children with them. A parent's response below is used to summarize the others:

> **JO (parent):** If you were raised that way (Nigerian culture), you don't loose it. If you have a cup of water you will feed everyone. We weren't rich but we were

> able to manage. Even without much money, you can survive. That was the training we had from home [Nigeria], so were able to use it to our advantage. The way we were raised at home was the way I raised my children. I tell them that I will give them the best that I can, but when I cannot give them things they should be satisfied with what they have. We tell them everybody is not rich; there are people who are worse off than you. This is something from my upbringing that helps me to survive.

They also talk about human potential, what is possible. All the participants hung to the possibility on attainment of education and the importance of self-confidence that is not attached so much to material things but to potential:

> **BO (parent):** Today, I tell my children, 'we look at human potential as opposed to what they do not have.' . . . It is self-confidence that helped us make it in America. If you already believe in yourself, the rest is minor detail.

The second generation interviewed also seemed to have internalized the spirit of *Omolúàbí*. Below are some of the excerpts from the interview where they discussed how they view the world and how they think the world sees them. They talk about respect for the self and for people as one of the philosophies emphasized by the family; and families also put a huge value on education as the means to a successful life. Even though the second generation said their parents do not tell them what to major in or what career they should focus on; they said they still feel the obligation to do well and choose careers that their parents will be proud of. The tension to conform to parental expectations is strong even with the absence of explicit instruction.

> **EJ:** I think as we said earlier, you are not just representing yourself or your family, even your countrymen, you are representing all Black people as a whole. Even when I travel to other countries, I am sort of a representative. Others might feel the need to treat Black people better because they've known me. I don't feel any pressure; it is cool to feel that you are not just serving yourself; you are doing something for others. It also means I change how people view us.
>
> **LO:** . . . Most of my friends were White or Asian. I knew that the way they were acting with their families is different from the way I was acting with my family. I understood why our Nigerian culture deals with respect and elders and education in a different way: basically, respect for people. And now I realize that it's all to make me a better person, because I can respect people in a different way. I also hold a higher value for family and education. I'm trying to improve myself and better myself. I noticed in high school, that some of the families had a lot of money. The grandparents would give them things, and they could travel to wherever they wanted. It has made me more humble and more proud of all that I do have, and that my family has.

All the participants including their adult children talk about advantages and disadvantages of their cultural heritage. The following are the adult children (students) views of how *Omolúàbí* affects their life and education.

LO (student): Basically, in anything we do they just want us to try our hardest, no matter what we do. It's never really been about the grades, but the effort. I always know I have to try my hardest, not that I always do. If they notice that I don't, that's when the problems occur. This is my third semester in the university. I am typically an A student, but when I do have a bad grade, it's never about the bad grade but how much effort I put into my classes.

NO (student): Education was a priority. I don't think it was explicit. They were not telling me that you have to study and get all A's and stuff. It was more just implicit. I don't think I remember ever being told. They had high expectations. I was self-motivated. I never needed intervention; I studied on my own. In college, there was (parental) pressure to get into a more technical field. I was an engineer. I remember when it was time to apply to college I ended up only applying to Michigan State. When you applied you apply to different colleges within the school like Literature, Sciences and the Arts, as well as engineering school. I remember thinking that I just wanted to do business, but I remember my mom saying 'No, you need to go into engineering.' And I could remember my dad saying, 'let her do whatever she wants.' I guess it wasn't like such a big deal to me so I did engineering [laughs]. Now I am back to Business. I will be done with my MBA in June.

CONCLUSIONS

PARENTAL CULTURAL DYNAMICS

Parental-child cultural dynamics stand out prominently in the narratives. The parents in their narratives tell of doing their best to link their children to Nigerian culture. They take holidays in Nigeria, attend Black churches, and take their children to gatherings of Nigerians and African Americans. They try their best to instill pride of their homeland in their children while also supporting their own and their children's positive acculturation in U.S. culture. They do not deny their past (Nigeria) nor refute their now and future (U.S.) in favor of the other. Berry hypothesized that acculturation strategies in plural societies, cultural groups and the individual members in both dominant and non-dominant situations, must grapple with the issue of how to acculturate.[30] Strategies to navigate these issues are usually a dance between cultures and the people involved. The participants in this study have chosen an *integration* option of acculturation while holding on to some of the best norms from their country of origin to participate in the larger network of their new country, and by doing what it takes within the boundaries of their original country culture dictum. They reported maintaining active interests in both the original culture (Nigeria) as well as participating fully in their new culture's larger society. They called upon known African philosophy that advocates using the strengths of the many to bring out the best an individual can be. They reported using their cultural construct from the past to serve as a beacon to navigate a new life and new social dimensions, which include schools and other relationships.

STUDENTS' CULTURAL IDENTITY DYNAMIC

The goal of making an *Omolúàbí* of oneself and one's offspring is the foundation for these parents, who then proceed to leverage their means of communicating with and supporting their children in school and in the community (see Figure 1).

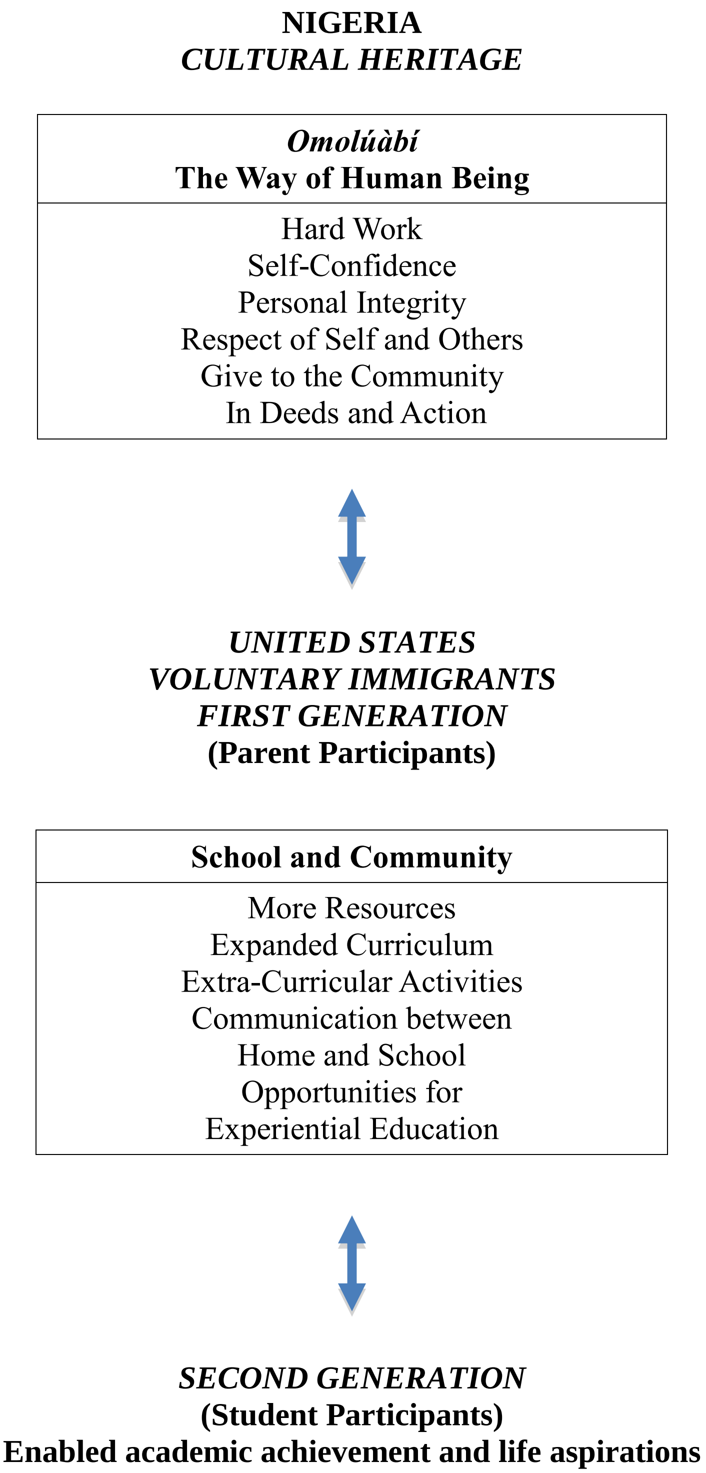
NIGERIA
CULTURAL HERITAGE
Omolúàbí
The Way of Human Being
Hard Work
Self-Confidence
Personal Integrity
Respect of Self and Others
Give to the Community
In Deeds and Action
UNITED STATES
VOLUNTARY IMMIGRANTS
FIRST GENERATION
(Parent Participants)
School and Community
More Resources
Expanded Curriculum
Extra-Curricular Activities
Communication between
Home and School
Opportunities for
Experiential Education
SECOND GENERATION
(Student Participants)
Enabled academic achievement and life aspirations

FIGURE 1. *Omolúàbí* influence on second-generation voluntary immigrants: academic achievement and life aspirations.

Figure 1 illustrates the cross-cultural factors and the process involved in shaping the students in their search for academic achievement and in developing their career objectives and life aspirations. This process is rooted in the cultural heritage of Nigeria as reflected in the attributes of *Omolúàbí*. It then carries through to their new country – the United States – where it is intermingled with the new attributes of school and community, reflected in the attitude and behavior of the second generation (the student participants in this study).

TENSION

It is not easily apparent that tensions exist between the two generations in their internalization of the African philosophy of *Omolúàbí*, but there are some tensions. The second generation feels the pressure to conform to the cultural norms practiced and expressed by their parents and their immigrant community. One expressed that she had to behave better than other children at school and at home. One received a degree in engineering to please her mother even though all she wanted was a degree in business administration. She later went back to school to get a masters degree in business. Nearly all expressed the need to be a model human being because they expressed that they are not just representing themselves but all Black communities in the eyes of the world. These are enormous burdens for anyone to carry around.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Findings and conclusions may be useful to educators to help understand their students' cultural frame of reference, cultural inheritance, and to strengthen communication between school and home. The results also show that the student participants are a product of two systems of education: the Nigerian indigenous education system and the American, western education system. The sociostructural foundations upon which all participants credit success are hard work and perseverance. They all believe that “effort begets luck.” The second-generation students have successfully and positively internalized their parents’ expectations for them and have grown to be self-motivated and purposeful people as indicated by their narratives. Upon further reflection, one can assume that the narratives are also about all human yearnings: striving for personhood or becoming an *Omolúàbí*.

SCHOLARLY OR SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

On the basis of their experiences, the participants ascribed a large portion of their success to a norm that they brought from their cultural past, an ideal of hard work and respect, caring for the self and others known as *Omolúàbí*. Parent participants have chosen to adapt to their new environment while retaining the best of the culture they brought with them. They have also made good use of the human, social and cultural capital[31] available to them in the United States. This study adds information and theory to understanding the U.S. diverse and multicultural population, especially the newcomers; it offers a way to see Nigerians through Nigerians' eyes. Findings and conclusions may be useful to educators to help understand their students’ home culture and how these students straddle twin cultures: that from the parents’ past and that of America. The philosophy of *Omolúàbí* is neither a panacea for everything nor a cure all for all that ails education or life aspirations; but rather at the core is a Zulu saying: *Umuntu ngumuntu ngubantu* - a person is a person through other persons.

LIMITATIONS

This study was limited because of its small sample. Another limitation was that I did not look at adult children's school report cards or other documents specifically concerning their academic grades nor were teachers and close associates interviewed. Given the newness of this territory in research and with few foundational grounds to build on, any conclusion must necessarily be tentative, and subject to revision. Nevertheless, the findings contribute knowledge to fairly an uncharted territory and open up an important discussion. Moreover, because this research deals exclusively with first generation African middle class families, I cannot generalize outside this particular group. Further study might also examine *Omolúàbí* through quantitative research methods.

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ENDNOTES

[1] This quote will appear in the upcoming edited book: Mojúbàolú Olúfúnké Okome and Olufemi Vaughan, (eds.) *West African Migrations: Transnational and Global Pathways in a New Century*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan Publishers, 2011 in press).
[2] Email conversation with Mojúbàolú Olúfúnké Okome (June 22, 2011). This quote will appear in the upcoming edited book: Mojúbàolú Olúfúnké Okome and Olufemi Vaughan, (eds.) *West African Migrations: Transnational and Global Pathways in a New Century*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan Publishers, 2011 in press).
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LIBERIAN IMMIGRANTS IN RHODE ISLAND: THE TRAUMA, THE BLISS, AND THE DILEMMA

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the history of Liberian migrants in the US, and traces its genesis specifically, to the strife between the Americo-Liberians and the various indigenous groups. Exploring the enduring effects of the historical origin of the Republic of Liberia, it argues that ethnic intolerance is largely responsible for the dislocation of the Liberian state and consequently the migration of at least 15,000 of its citizens to the US, and many more to other West African states. This paper locates Rhode Island as the hub of Liberian presence in the US and explicates the basis of their concentration in that region. It recognizes the complexity of the dilemma that Liberian migrants face in the US, and silhouettes this against the backdrop of poverty and insecurity of lives and property in Liberia. The election of 2005 notwithstanding, it is not yet *Uhuru* for majority of Liberians. The Liberian migrants, this paper observes, seem undecided about returning to a country still smarting from the trauma of the civil war, and at the same time are not content with remaining in the US where threats to their Temporary Protected Status (TPS) have become persistent and ominous. It identifies the factors which could serve as basis for Liberians' return to their homelands, as kinship and communality; guaranteed security, nationalism and nationhood. It concludes that any attempt by the U.S. to deport Liberians would have devastating effects on the already traumatized State of Liberia. It would also have an impact on the possibility that other host nations could turn out Liberian refugees.

KEYWORDS: *Liberians, temporary protected status (tps), immigrant networks, Rhode Island.*

INTRODUCTION

Freed American slaves established Liberia, the small West African country, as a modern nation in 1847, in a coastal territory in the land of the Kpelle, Bassa, Gio, Kru and Vai peoples. In 1872, the Americo-Liberians declared their colony a free republic, and they adopted a system modeled upon the constitution of the United States. However, they replicated the same injustices as they had suffered in America against the indigenous population. Although the U.S. did not recognize independent Liberia until after the Civil War, after recognition in 1862 under the Lincoln administration, the United States soon became Liberia's leading trading partner and major aid donor. Although there was mutual resentment between the Americo-Liberians, who make up only 5 percent of the population, and the indigenous peoples of the country, Liberia remained independent and stable for well over 100 years until the dissension between the Americo-Liberians, and indigenous peoples culminated in a coup.

In the period leading to the 1980 coup, economic conditions deteriorated in the 1970s, and the Liberian population suffered from high unemployment and steadily rising inflation. Liberian commodity exports declined drastically, while the cost of imported energy rose. Liberia was barely able to maintain a positive growth rate in this period. Open opposition to the political establishment escalated, fuelled by the economic problems. Liberians in the Diaspora were not immune from the crisis. Organizations of Liberians abroad, including student groups engaged in various kinds of activism that protested conditions at home, while suggesting solutions that were hardly heeded by the parties to the conflict at home. Back in Liberia, demonstrations broke out, initially to protest the high cost of food. As conditions became more dangerous, many Liberians began to flee, becoming internally and externally displaced. Finally, in 1980 Sergeant Samuel

Doe (a member of the Krahn ethnic group) led a successful coup against President William Tolbert (an Americo-Liberian).

Liberians were optimistic. They expected substantive changes for the better. However, Sergeant Doe became dictatorial, mistreating non-Krahn indigenous ethnic groups, including the Gio and Mano. In December of 1989, Liberia was plunged into a civil war when a small group of dissidents led by Charles Taylor (an Americo-Liberian) began to campaign to overthrow Doe. Eventually, Liberia was engulfed in full-scale ethnic and armed conflict, with Doe's Krahns fighting different warring groups, including Charles Taylor's NPFL (National Patriotic Front of Liberia) rebels, Prince Yormie Johnson's Independent National Patriotic Front, fighting Roosevelt Johnson's United Liberation Movement (ULIMO-J), and Alhaji Kromah's United Liberation Movement (ULIMO-K). The conflict raged on for seven years causing well over 150,000 deaths. Over one-half of the population was displaced. Approximately one-third of the Liberian population fled to neighboring countries including the Ivory Coast, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. Others took refuge in nearby West African countries like Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau, and the Gambia. Many also fled to Europe, but a large percentage fled to the United States and specifically to the state of Rhode Island.

Although they continue to increase in number, Africans constitute a small proportion of the immigrant population in the United States. Especially, in the last two decades, the number of Africans in the U.S. has increased to the degree that at present, they constitute a significant component of the cultural and ethnic fabric of the United States. This is noticeable, especially in major metropolitan areas like Providence, Boston, New York, Newark, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis. Therefore, African migrants deserve to be studied both as an aggregated whole and as distinct ethnic or national groupings.

This study provides a baseline data (e.g. age, gender, marital status, etc.) for Liberians living in Rhode Island; reference information concerning their stay in the United States; analysis of family and country ties maintained through remittances; reasons for migration, and continued stay in Rhode Island; and possible factors that could influence their return to Liberia.

PROFILE OF LIBERIAN IMMIGRANTS IN RHODE ISLAND

Since the coup of 1980 led by Sergeant Doe, and the two civil wars that engulfed the whole country (1989-2003), many Liberians have sought economic opportunities, safety, political freedom, and the means for a peaceful existence elsewhere. The civil wars it is estimated had claimed over 700,000 lives, caused internal displacement of more than half a million, and made more than 300,000 refugees (ARC 2011).[1] In 2001, when the data used for this study were gathered from a field work that was conducted, President Charles Taylor continued to be one of the most destabilizing forces in West Africa. Under his rule, Liberia, a former, foremost modern West African nation-state, degenerated to one of the most backward nation-states in the sub-region. Monrovia, the capital, lacked basic infrastructure like electricity, pipe-borne water, hospitals, sewers, telecommunication, and schools. They were all pillaged, and there were no efforts on the part of the Taylor government to restore such structures. Taylor and his ever growing number of supporters grew rich at the expense of the country, which was literally impoverished and the citizenry, pauperized. In short, the Republic of Liberia had practically collapsed. Respite and hope came with the historic election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in 2005, when conditions in that embattled state began to improve in Monrovia and the rest of the country. However, in spite of this remarkable turn of events, the war’s devastation on infrastructure was so enormous as to continue to pose serious challenges to the state.

The unsavory psychosocial-cum economic setting made many Liberians leave Liberia for a relatively peaceful West, through legal and illegal means. Although many of them migrated to surrounding West African countries (i.e. the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Guinea-Conakry, and Nigeria), many found their way to American soil since the beginning of the civil war, with an overwhelming majority located in the state of Rhode Island (LCARI 2011).[2] By 2003-2004, Liberians constituted the second largest group of refugees in U.S. (DHS 2006).[3]

LIBERIANS IN THE UNITED STATES

At present, there are an estimated 200,000 Liberians legally residing in the United States, on the bases of political asylum, permanent residency, citizenship, as tourists and/or as students. Many have settled in Massachusetts, Illinois, Washington D.C., North Carolina, Minnesota, California, New York, and Rhode Island. Many of them have integrated in all aspects of American society. Like most other Africans, Liberian migrants also contribute to the development of America. For example, several are college professors and high school teachers, while others are church ministers and community leaders.[4]

Liberian migration to the United States is not a new phenomenon, rather it dates back to the early and mid-twentieth century, when some of them entered the United States on student visas, and attended institutions of higher learning, earning advanced degrees in medicine, law, politics, etc. Indeed, education has been factorial of established contact of African migrants, including Liberians, in the United States. In the 1960s, Washington, D.C. witnessed an influx of migrants from Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa. They joined a very visible Afro-Caribbean community in the capitol, and many Africans also had their national embassies located in Washington, D.C. As a result of the enactment of the 1965 Immigration Act, which allowed existing citizens and permanent residents to sponsor immediate relatives, the African community, including the Liberians in the U.S. Diaspora, were able to sponsor their parents, children, and spouses for U.S. residency. The population of Africans in the Diaspora also increased following the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), which was designed to slow the migration of Mexicans to the U.S., but grant permanent residency to undocumented immigrants, including those from Africa, living in the U.S.

It was not until the 1980s and 1990s that Liberians came into U.S. in large numbers. According to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), more than 9,000 Liberians were legally admitted into the United States between 1980 and 1993. This figure excludes those who entered illegally. Within the same period, Liberians accounted for nearly four percent of Africans admitted; the country ranked eighth out of the thirty-eight African countries recognized (Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1998).[5] As noted above, more than 15,000 Liberians have entered the United States since 1991, under the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) something federal officials have extended on an annual basis,[6] and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED). Many Liberians on TPS include opposition politicians, ex-service men, student leaders, journalists, and ordinary people who also experienced oppression because of their ethnicity. Many Liberians were forced to flee their country due to civil war and widespread violence, and it is due to these difficulties that the United States has provided Liberians with TPS. Although the civil war in Liberia ended in 1996, the political and economic situation has remained fragile, and violence and extra-judicial killings are commonplace. Thus, Liberians continue to flee their country to join family and friends in the United States.

LIBERIAN STATUS

Although the majority of Liberians in the U.S. are permanent residents or citizens, many of the 15,000, or so, who migrated since 1991, have often faced the possibility of deportation. In 1999, then U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno announced that she would let the TPS expire, because of official reports that the Liberian war had ended. This was in spite of a report issued by the State Department in 1999, describing the human rights abuses, and unstable conditions in Liberia as reasons why the U.S. government would not want Americans to visit the republic.

To prevent the expiration of TPS, several Liberian advocacy groups and friends of Liberia gathered on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol to stage annual Liberian National Immigration Fairness Rallies, designed to urge members of Congress and the President to grant them a reprieve by changing their immigration status to that of permanent residency The demonstrators supported the passage of the Liberian Immigration Acts of 1999 introduced by Sen. Jack Reed (D-Rhode Island) and Rep. Patrick Kennedy (D-Rhode Island). The Liberian Community Association of Rhode Island played an integral role in these rallies.

The Liberian Immigration Act of 1999 included S. 656, “the Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act,” and House Resolution 919, “the Liberian Refugee Protection Act.” A similar bill was introduced in 2001. The purpose of such bills was to provide for the adjustment of status of nationals of Liberia under the Temporary Protected Status to that of lawful permanent resident. However, the bills faced major obstacles, for many feared that letting Liberians remain in the U.S. would encourage other refugees to exploit America’s generosity, and this might threaten national security. For example, Rep. Lamar Smith, the former Chairman of the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims refused to support any new immigration to the United States. Nonetheless, the proposed legislation was not without precedence, for Chinese following the riots in Tiananmen Square were granted permanent status, as were Nicaraguans who fled the country's civil war.

As Liberians continue to push for permanent resident status, their Temporary Protected Status has been renewed on an annual basis by the INS and, after 2003, the Department of Homeland Security. Former President George W. Bush and current President Barack H. Obama both extended TPS for Liberians. However, TPS for Liberians is set to expire once again on September 30, 2011. Deporting Liberians also posed the risk that it might cause other West African countries (i.e. Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria and Guinea) to force thousands of Liberian refugees to repatriate, thus destabilizing Liberian efforts at reform, and crippling the fragile process of nation-building.

Even though the deportation of Liberians was postponed on an annual basis and many Liberians, fearing return to their war-ravaged Republic, could remain in the U.S., their sense of security was tenuous. Also, without permanent residency or citizenship, many employers loathe hiring Liberians who face deportation. At the time of the study, many Liberians were optimistic about their chances of obtaining permanent resident status and raising their children,-many of whom are U.S. citizens, in the United States. Today, this optimism has seemingly waned given the unwillingness of the U.S. government to grant Liberian migrants permanent citizenship.[7]

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

The project sample consists of 105 Liberian immigrants 10 years of age and older, all resident in Rhode Island. All candidates were selected using non-probability sampling, more specifically, snowball sampling and purposive sampling. Snowball sampling is widely used in community studies, difficult-to-find populations, and urban migrants, and thus proved ideal for this project. The other method in which data was collected was through purposive sampling, more specifically key-informant sampling. The key-informant was identified in two ways; one, others may have named them as likely sources or valuable informants; and two, they were selected as a result of preliminary data collection.[8]

METHODOLOGY

This paper will first present a detailed outline concerning Liberian emigrant characteristics in Rhode Island. Then it will analyze the complex set of factors and influences that lead to international migration. Third it will analyze the factors that are regarded as important to these Liberian emigrants in their decision to either return or remain in the United States. Finally, it will examine the data to see if there are any significant differences between Liberian emigrants who plan to resettle in Liberia or elsewhere in Africa, and those who plan to stay permanently in the United States.

FIELD SURVEY RESULTS[9]

A demographic survey of Liberian immigrants was conducted in Providence, Pawtucket, Cranston, and Warwick. The result showed that 56 percent were female and 41 percent male. The ethnic composition of the immigrants was as follows: Kpelle 23 percent, Bassa 18%, Americo-Liberians 13% and Krahn 11%. Nearly 14 percent of the respondents chose “other”, which, given the ethnic composition of Liberia, is taken to include Loma, Gola, Dei, and Kissi.

Surprisingly, no respondents were identified as Mandingo, an ethnic group that was targeted during the conflict. This does not, mean that some Mandingo-Liberians[10] did not migrate to the United States and settle in Rhode Island, but that members of this ethnic group may have feared that they may be targeted or persecuted, even away from home. Fifty percent of those surveyed were married, while 19% were widowed. Of the respondents who were married or widowed, 18% had spouses that were Bassa and 13% had Kpelle spouses. Majority of respondents were married prior to migrating to the United States, accounting for the lack of heterogeneity. At the same time, the lack of heterogeneity among married couples could be due to the Liberian-based immigrant clusters that have developed in Rhode Island and other parts of the U.S. Cross-tabulations also suggest that 85% of the respondents who were widowed were female. 58% of male respondents were married, while 73 percent of female respondents were single.

In terms of age, Liberian immigrants were fairly evenly distributed. The survey showed that nearly 19% were below 29 years old. By far the largest numbers of Liberian immigrants were between 30-39 years old (18%) and 60-69 years of age (21 %). Respondents between 40-49 years old comprised 16% and 50-59 years old formed 16%. Those in the age group of 70 and over were 10%. Further analysis revealed that 45% of Liberians ages 30-49 were married, while 40 percent of those 70 years old and older were widowed.

The survey showed that approximately 32% of Liberian immigrants in Rhode Island had one to two children, while 15% had none. Nearly 36% had three to six children, however, 17% had seven or more children. The analysis indicated that 71% of those between 20-39 years old had two children, while 50% of the population between 30-39 years old had four children. Those 60 years old and over were more likely than any other age aggregate to have seven or more children (76%). Also, approximately 49% of married couples had one to three children, whereas 42% of those who were single had none.

The demographic survey results also showed that Liberian immigrants were a relatively educated group in comparison to most other nationals, according to immigration statistics. Approximately 45% of respondents completed high school. Conversely, only 16% of all immigrants had completed high school. Only 8% of Liberian immigrants had no formal education or had elementary education while 23% had the baccalaureate degree. This is identical to the percentage of all African immigrants earning baccalaureate degrees in the United States. Those who have earned a technical degree comprised another 10%. Of all male and female respondents, 15% and 7% respectively had technical degrees. In addition, 12% of Liberians in Rhode Island had a post-baccalaureate education. Of this percentage, 16% of female respondents received a graduate education, whereas only 7% of all male respondents had post-baccalaureate training. Surprisingly, 25% of respondents with a graduate degree were either homemakers or unemployed and only 16% were considered to be professionals as defined by the researcher, that is, those who are members of a vocation founded on specialized training. It is also worth noting in this context that advanced degrees, especially from other countries do not translate into professional employment or high status.[11] Yet, the relatively high percentage of educated Liberians testifies to the central role that education plays in their lives. Therefore, like many other African immigrants, Liberians came to the United States with a rich tradition of, and commitment to, education.

According to the survey, Liberian immigrants in Rhode Island ere distributed across various occupational categories. The percentage of Liberians employed as professionals (i.e. lawyers, teachers, professors, etc) in Rhode Island was 9%. Of the respondents, 11% were homemakers, and 11% were students. By far the largest numbers of Liberian immigrants surveyed were employed in the social service sector (23 percent), which could be attributed to the abundance of social service employment opportunities in the United States. According to a respondent, “they are easy jobs to get, for there is a great demand.” Only 7% of the immigrants in the survey held managerial or technical positions, while 6% were in manufacturing and 3% in clerical positions. The unemployed accounted for 15% of the respondents, which many Liberians attributed to the lack of recognition and respect the United States job market had for training and education received in Liberia. In other words, many diplomas, such as law degrees and certifications obtained in Liberia or elsewhere in Africa, were said not to be valid or applicable in the United States. This accounted for many underemployed Liberian migrants. Those who checked “other” made up 11%, many of these were recent retirees, and no respondents were employed in trading or farming.

Further examination of the survey data showed that job positions and description in Rhode Island differ from those previously held in Liberia, in the sense that there had been increases and/or decreases in some occupational categories. For example, 8% of respondents were professionals in Liberia; a slight increase was indicated, with nine percent so employed in the U.S. Approximately 20% held managerial or technical positions and 10% held clerical positions; a substantial decrease was indicated. Only 6% were employed in the social services and manufacturing. There were around 5% who were homemakers. Over 20% were students, and only 3% were unemployed. There were about 22% percent that claimed to be employed in other professions, such as politics and law enforcement.

In regards to the migratory process, 56% of Liberian immigrants in Rhode Island did not leave Liberia and go to another African country. For many who came directly to the United States the common port of entry was New York. Nonetheless, 43% did migrate to one of the Republic’s neighboring countries (i.e. Sierra Leone, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, and the Ivory Coast). The majority of those who migrated to another African country prior to their arrival in the United States were said to have migrated to the Ivory Coast.

The earliest year of migration indicated by the respondents was 1970, with the most recent being 2001. Between 1970-1980 an estimated 5% of the Liberian immigrants migrated to America, whereas 20% migrated between 1981-1990. The overwhelming majority (72%), however, migrated during and after the civil war (between 1991-2000), and only 3% in 2001. Interestingly, 30% migrated from 1999-2000, a time that Liberia was supposedly recovering from the war trauma, and U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno deemed it fit to remove the immigrants' TPS, and deport them to their home country. In other words, the high number of Liberian migrants in the US and elsewhere (during the same period), could only have meant that the Republic of Liberia was still in a state of turmoil and infrastructural decay (Amnesty International 2001).

A very important feature that characterized the migratory process of Liberians in Rhode Island had been remittances especially of money to the Republic. A respondent said, "Western Union is used a lot." Nearly 82% sent money to Liberia, of which 74% was for family members, 3% for friends, and 4% for investment. Many Liberian immigrants claimed that large portions of their weekly and monthly salaries were sent to family in West Africa. Others stated that their remittances were the only source of income their families and friends had back home. One respondent, a social service worker, said she sent over $500 a month to her mother and brothers, which paid for their food and medical expenses. Another young Liberian immigrant, a student, stated that she worked full-time while attending college full-time to help support her family members in a refugee camp in Ghana. Others noted that such a practice was commonplace among several young migrants. In many respects it can be concluded that remittances from the United States could make a lot of difference between survival and starvation for families back home.[12]

As for the respondents' reasons for leaving the Republic of Liberia, over 72% claimed that the civil war was responsible. Eleven percent left their homeland to pursue a higher education. Others (13%) claimed it was the economic and political situations that were a major cause for migration. Only 4% left due to family pressure, an extremely low percentage considering that Arthur[13] noted that 40% of African immigrants came to the US due to pressure from family members. However, the majority of respondents (87%) chose to migrate to Rhode Island and not to New York or California, in order to reunite with family and friends, while (2%) came to Rhode Island to develop professionally. The data also revealed that (4%) migrated to Rhode Island because their spouses were from the area, and zero percent claimed economic prospects as being a sufficient cause to come to Rhode Island. A more extensive study of Liberian immigrants in Rhode Island, however, would likely show a correlation between migrants from the 1970s and 1980s and economic reasons for migration.

Other reasons why Liberians preferred Rhode Island to other places like New York, New Jersey, or Minnesota, included the fact that it reminded them of home. That is, people were able to live in close proximity, thus making it easy to create and establish social networks that engendered kinship and strong bond. Being able to establish close-knit communities, made and still makes the adjustment process easier and more manageable. As one respondent stated, “instead of driving one to two hours to friends and family, I drive five minutes.” Equally important is that the educational system of Rhode Island is seen as exceptional in comparison to most other states. Also, churches and religious organizations such as Pond Street Baptist Church, Rhode Island United Methodist Association, and the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island have been extremely receptive.

The demographic survey also paid attention to the subjective feelings of Liberian immigrants towards the United States in general and towards Liberia. An overwhelming 95%

missed Liberia. What respondents missed most were family (49%), with 3% missing friends. It also indicated that 31% missed the sense of belonging to a wider community and 13% missed the African atmosphere. For many, American culture and values were extremely different from Liberian culture and values.

Some respondents specifically lamented that they missed meals prepared from iron cooking-pots over hot coals. Other expressed feelings of alienation as well as a lack of recognition. Although more research is needed in this whole aspect, the respondent's feelings of alienation might have been the result of racism and discrimination, but more importantly, it could be traceable to their immigrant status. In other words, their sense of alienation might have arisen from the ambiguity of their temporary protective status.

The event and phenomenon that respondents (48%) most disliked about Liberia was the civil war. Others (15%), indicated that they disliked dictatorship, and 15%, ethnic conflict. There were 14% that disliked the corruption, and only 2%disliked the economic crisis. What Liberian immigrants liked most about the United States were the opportunities available to them (48%), but many were quick to point out that access could be greater if permanent status or citizenship was granted.

The results also showed that Liberians enjoyed the political freedom (32%) and educational opportunities (17%) the U.S. offered its citizens. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents (62%) disliked the high crime and violence rates in the U.S. According to many respondents, crime and violence in Liberia before the 1980s was somewhat of an anomaly, rarely experienced or witnessed. However, following the Doe coup of 1980, crime and violence became integral Liberia's society. Around 22% disliked the ambiguity of TPS, for many were living in a state of uncertainty and anxiety. Many felt that permanent status should be granted, for it was granted the Chinese and, most recently, the Nicaraguans, people who did not have any historical ties like Liberians have always had with the United States. Such ambiguity, as a respondent elaborated, “is like a slap in the face. Many of us have paid taxes and obeyed the laws.” Others expressed the idea that the U.S. cared very little about Liberians in particular, and Africans, in general. Surprisingly, (10%) of Liberians disliked racism and discrimination experienced in the United States, as opposed to 89% of African respondents in a separate study conducted by Apraku ,[14] who condemn such discrimination. This may be attributed to the close-knit Liberian immigrant clusters that have developed in Rhode Island, isolating them from the larger community. That is, the strong community, which Liberians have forged among themselves, ironically led to mass isolation of Liberian migrants, because it served to impede their psychosocial integration with the larger American society. Or, as Waters (1994), observed of black immigrants from the Caribbean, Liberians, aware of their “racial” identity might not be as sensitive to race as were native-born blacks. Nevertheless, it is suspected that black-white polarization and the pervasiveness of institutionalized discrimination troubled some Liberians. However, their preoccupation with immigrant issues might preclude their ability to see the deep-seated racism and discrimination in the United States. Those that expressed dislike for the alienation experienced in America accounted for four percent.

On such decisions as return or repatriation to Liberia, the respondents were almost evenly divided, 43% wished to return and resettle in Liberia and 44% wished to remain in the US. The analysis further indicated that 45% of immigrants between the ages of 40-59 wished to return to Liberia, whereas 40% between the ages of 20-39 did not anticipate returning to Liberia. However, several Liberians in their twenties expressed a desire to return to West Africa, preferably, Ghana, some, the Ivory Coast. This was due to the countries’ relative political and economic stability. Those who were 60 years or above who did not want to return accounted for 35%, while 32% anticipated a return. Fatigue both mental and physical were said to have informed the reason for their lack of desire to return. Their desire was to retire and, eventually, die in peace. Many, however, wished to be buried in Liberia.

The tabulations also showed that nearly half of immigrants (45%) with a secondary education wanted to return, as opposed to 47% who wished not to repatriate. Immigrants who had completed post-secondary education and wished to return comprised 36%. Numerous migrants cited the desire to help Liberia develop as the impetus for return. Other tabulations suggested Bassa and Kpelle, that 45% were more likely to return, whereas the ethnic groups central to the conflict (i.e. Americo-Liberians and Krahn) were least inclined to return. As for the latter, only 16% wished to repatriate. The survey results also showed that roughly a quarter of the respondents (21%) planned to resettle in Liberia within the next ten years. Those planning to resettle in 11 or more years comprised 12%, while those not sure accounted for 12%.

From the available data, three observable variables emerge as major factors that could inform a Liberian’s decision to return: family ties in Liberia, restoration of political freedom in Liberia, and the desire to help Liberia develop. For example, the factor cited as most common was family ties in the republic, an estimated 46% felt this to be very important. Conversely, racism and lack of opportunities in the U.S. ranked lowest of the variables. The data suggests that racism and discrimination, as stated above, may not be a factor because of the manner in which Liberian communities are established.

Further, the data suggests that personal freedom in Rhode Island and political instability in Liberia are the most important factors in the decision to stay. Seventy-two percent felt the personal freedom experienced in Rhode Island was very important in their decision to stay, while

62 percent felt the latter as being very important. Almost equally important were economic prospects and professional development in Rhode Island. At the same time, many of the respondents who planned to continue living in the state of Rhode Island and the United States said they hoped their stay was temporary, and that they would like to return. A few others would like to stay long enough to take advantage of educational opportunities for themselves, and, especially, their children. It seems as if the dynamics of repatriation is a bit more complex when children are involved, especially those born in the United States.

It is evident, although some of the field results may contradict such a statement, that the majority of Liberian immigrants surveyed wished to return to Liberia. One observes a genuine interest on the part of many Liberians regardless of age, or level of education, to return. Many reminisced on how things used to be, the "good old days." And if a return to those days was or is possible the question concerning repatriation would not be an issue, for the overwhelming majority would return happily. The African way of life, more precisely the Liberian way of life, was more desirable than what obtained in America. In other words, the desire to repatriate was often punctuated with feelings of nostalgia about home. Nonetheless, the economic and political problems that led to the initial flight from Liberia persist. As one respondent indicated, "Liberians know how to live a good life, whereas Americans all they do is work. When do they take the time to enjoy what the world has to offer?" Many would simply like to obtain a good education and a secured lifestyle, not a life of anxiety and uncertainty, while their beloved country redevelops. For numerous Liberian migrants, migration was temporary; that is, they are better regarded as sojourners and not migrants.

LIBERIAN IMMIGRANT NETWORKS IN RHODE ISLAND

For the Liberian immigrants in Rhode Island, the establishment of mutual aid associations has been important (this also includes some religious institutions). The associations serve a number of functions by providing cultural, political, psychological, and economic support. They have assisted during periods of emergency, while creating an outlet for socialization. They also serve as avenues for disseminating information on available job opportunities as well as health care issues. Furthermore, these associations affirm group solidarity by creating a distinct cultural community that, among other things, engenders interpersonal bonds. For some, these immigrant associations are what sustained them while their stay in the United States lasted. In short, the Liberian immigrant networks in Rhode Island foster unity and provide support for members. As Haines[15] observed, immigrant associations are like a family, giving assistance and guidance on such issues as economic, psychological, social, or cultural.

The largest and most influential Liberian immigrant association in Rhode Island- (other groups are of less importance), is the Liberian Community Association of Rhode Island (LACRI), a non-profit and community-based organization located on Broad Street in Providence. Formerly known as the Liberian Students' Association of Rhode Island (LSARI), the LACRI was founded in the 1970s. Initially, it served as a support group for members who pursued degrees in higher education. It also served as an advocacy group for Liberians in Rhode Island and was, especially, concerned with social justice issues. Meanwhile, as the number of Liberian immigrants increased in the state of Rhode Island, the LACRI expanded its mission and sought to cater more for the social, political, and economic needs of the Liberian community.

Today, the LACRI's duty and purpose is to seek and advance the general well being of all, while promoting Liberian culture. The objectives of LACRI are:

- To assist Liberians in the adjustment to life in the United States.
- Promote Liberian culture.
- Help Liberians at home and in the United States to become self-sustained.
- To ensure that Liberians in the United States appropriately tap into available opportunities and sensitize them on their civic and legal responsibilities to the country.

The association has also been the recipient of grant funding, which has led to the development of a community learning center and elderly and youth programs aimed at educating fellow Liberians on current social, cultural, health, political, and economic issues concerning the community. For example, health clinics for the elderly are held monthly, to inform members about diabetes, heart disease, medical service, and other issues. LCARI has also been fundamental in the push for legislation to grant permanent residency to eligible Liberians living in the United States, and has supported immigration rallies in Providence and Washington, D.C.

Other associations that do not transcend ethnicity like the LCARI include the Sons and Daughters of Liberia, the Kru Association, Bomi County Association, Maryland County Association, Grand Bassa Association, Nimba County Association, Kissi Association, and the Gentlemen's Association. Each of these associations which, by no means, compare to scale and scope of the LCARI, represents either village, ethnic or religious affiliations. Again these groups are parochial and do little to serve the greater Liberian community of Rhode Island; their purposes are more social in nature.

Religious organizations, however, do play an important role in the Liberian community of Rhode Island, because many Liberians are extremely religious and tend to incorporate prayer and sermons in most public and private events or gatherings. Like most mutual aid organizations, churches and other places of worship foster unity and cultural identity among Liberians. While most churches in the Greater Providence area have some type of Liberian contingent, those with a majority are the Grain Coast Fellowship (strictly Liberian), Pond Street Baptist Church, St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Trinity United Methodist Church, and Tabernacle Baptist Church West Side. Other churches that have substantial Liberian membership are the Cathedral of St. John, Calvary Baptist Church, Mathewson Street United Methodist Church, and St. Matthew Trinity Lutheran Church.

DISCUSSION

The field survey results in this essay have focused on demographic characteristics and subjective feelings of Liberian immigrants towards the U.S. and Liberia. They also emphasize the question of possible repatriation, and the factors considered as important in their decision to either return or stay. No doubt, the present study on Liberian immigrants in Rhode Island has revealed some interesting results.

First, we have learned that a fairly large portion of the respondents identified as being Bassa or Kpelle. I have been informed, however, that there is a substantial Gio population in Rhode Island which further research might reveal. The results also show nearly half of the respondents are married, while a low percentage is married to African-Americans and non-Liberian Africans. It can thus be assumed that the Liberian community of Rhode Island is rather insular and close-knit. Also the majority of respondents were between the ages of 30-39 and 60-69, and over a quarter have one to two children. Those 60 years old and older tended to have seven or more children.

Second, it appears that the Liberian immigrants surveyed are an educated group. An overwhelming majority had a secondary education or beyond. However, we have come to learn that an advanced degree (i.e. graduate degree) does not mean the respondent is professionally employed in the United States, although we did see a slight increase in professional positions held in the United States as opposed to those held in Liberia. Future research may reveal that such a slight increase is due to age and training. That is, many of the respondents may not have been of age or educated enough to have obtained professional jobs in Liberia. The data also shows that technical and managerial positions were much more common amongst respondents in Liberia than here in America. Furthermore, respondents are much more inclined to hold social services positions in the U.S. than in Liberia, and they are also more likely to be unemployed. Approximately 90 percent of respondents send remittances to family members, who would suffer otherwise. As mentioned above, remittances are, for most, the only steady income, serving as the difference between survival and starvation.

Third, nearly half of the Liberian immigrants surveyed are transnational, many of whom came from refugee camps in the Ivory Coast and Ghana. The earliest migrant among the respondents came to America in 1970, while some have come as recently as 2001. Of the majority, we learned that civil war was largely factorial of their migration. However, it is possible that subsequent study may like to explore a fairly large population of Liberian migrants who came to America due to economic crisis, especially those who migrated in the 1970s and early 1980s. Such migrants were not included in the current study, and would have made for interesting comparisons. The handicap could be due to the manner and period in which the data was collected, because the majority of the data were collected at immigration rallies, and monthly meetings and programs. It is likely that those Liberian immigrants who came to the U.S. in the 1970s and early 1980s, have socially integrated with the wider American community, and might not consider it necessary to participate in such events that help latter immigrants with the adjustment process.

Fourth, the results show that most of all the respondents missed the Republic of Liberia, and the “African atmosphere.” However, many deplored the civil war and dictatorship that have become part of Liberia’s recent history. In contrast, several of the respondents enjoyed the political freedom experienced in the United States. And many take pleasure from the opportunities available here in America (e.g. educational opportunities). Furthermore, many of the respondents wish to repatriate and resettle in Liberia, although many are pessimistic and believe that a return is unlikely. Their return to Liberia is predicated upon economic, social, and political forces at home. Of those who wish to return, family ties and the desire to help the country modernize and redevelop are the motivating factors for a return.

As mentioned above, the present study is only a beginning. There is yet a lot to be done in this area of research. It would be interesting for future research to build upon what has been done, that is, creating a larger sample to compare and contrast results. Also, it would be interesting for future research to examine Liberian immigrant business formation and self-employment, gender roles, political participation and social activism, as well as, Liberian immigrant relations with native-born blacks. Other research may include a comparative analysis between different African populations and Liberians.

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BIOGRAPHY

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[6] According to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 14 other nationalities have received temporary protected status in the last decade, but only Liberians have had their status revoked and then extended conditionally for a year.
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[8] The author is aware that data complied by key-informant sampling may be biased in some way. Therefore, it was important to check for bias by contrasting what was said with comments obtained from other key-informants. On the other hand, it is imperative that insider knowledge was compiled, supplying the kind of data, which is unlikely that others would be able to provide.
[9] The author conducted all field survey research between April-July 2001.
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WHY MAINE? SECONDARY MIGRATION DECISIONS OF SOMALI REFUGEES

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ABSTRACT

Since 2001 a steady stream of Somali secondary migrants have been leaving their initial places of resettlement and moving to Lewiston, Maine. Drawing from in-depth interviews, focus groups, and observations, this article addresses several questions: Why do Somalis move in and out of Maine? What are the agentic dimensions of secondary migration decisions among Somalis? What role does social capital play in facilitating migration to and from Maine? The findings illustrate the ways in which secondary migration decisions are motivated by changing agentic orientations and actualized by social capital. In my analysis, I explain the nuances and complexities of secondary migration decisions and illustrate the ways in which agentic dimensions of secondary migration decisions interpenetrate with social structure.

KEYWORDS: *secondary migration, Somalia, refugees, Maine.*

INTRODUCTION

Maine is now home to more than 6,000 Somalis, at least 3,500 of whom live in Lewiston and neighboring Auburn.[1] Although their migratory paths are as varied and interconnected as the people that have traversed them, most Somalis share a common past of having lived in other places in the United States before relocating to Maine.[2] A small percentage of Somali refugees were resettled in Maine through refugee resettlement programs—mostly in Portland—however, the majority of Somalis in Maine chose it as their home. In fact, municipal officials in Lewiston, Maine, estimate that secondary migrants account for 95 percent of the city's Somali refugee population.[3]

Many ask, "But why Maine?" And "Why Lewiston?" At first glance, it is perplexing. After all, Maine is cold, it is overwhelmingly white, there are few Muslims, wages tend to fall below national averages, and the economy is struggling. But closer observation reveals many reasons for this secondary migration to Maine. This article addresses several questions: Why do Somalis move in and out of Maine? What are the agentic dimensions of secondary migration decisions among Somalis? How do the agentic dimensions of migration decision interpenetrate with social structure? What role does social capital play in facilitating migration to and from Maine? To answer these questions, I examine the secondary migration patterns of Somali refugees moving in and out of Lewiston/Auburn, Maine, and analyze the ways in which agency and social capital mediate and facilitate the secondary migration decisions of those Somalis. This article aims to go beyond the view that individuals are simply pushed and pulled by macro level factors. Thus, I argue that to understand why Somalis move, it is essential to also understand not only the macrostructural factors but also the agentic processes that undergird secondary migration decisions. I contend that while social capital mediates and facilitates the secondary migration decisions, individual actors need to use agency in order to utilize social capital. Considering the agentic dimensions of secondary migration patterns of Somalis helps shed light on the complex and dialectical relationships between structure, culture, and agency.

This article proceeds in five sections. I begin with an overview of Somali refugee resettlement in the US. This followed by a review of the literature and the theoretical framework. I then describe the research context of Lewiston, Maine, and discuss the particular research methods used. In the findings section, I first discuss the macro-structural push and pull factors that contribute to why Somalis move in and out of Maine, and outline the ways in which the agentic dimensions of secondary migration decisions are associated with social capital.

SOMALI RESETTLEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

Since the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act in 1965 and the Refugee Act in 1980, African immigration to the United States has steadily increased. Between 2004 and 2007, refugees from Africa constituted the largest number of arrivals in the U.S., and the majority of those were Somalis. In fact, between 2001 and 2007, the US admitted close to 400,000 refugees, of which 47,302 were Somalis.[4]

The rise of Somali immigration has its roots in the Somali civil war, which began in 1991. Given the continued violence and turmoil in Somalia and the tens of thousands of Somalis still residing in refugee camps in Kenya, Somali immigration to the United States is expected to continue growing. While many will arrive as refugees, increasing numbers of Somalis will arrive via family reunification programs, sponsored by relatives who have become permanent residents or US citizens. Somali refugees have been resettled in every state except seven.[5] Somali settlement in the United States is characterized by both concentration and dispersion. The majority of Somalis are concentrated in large metropolitan areas such as Minneapolis, Minnesota; Atlanta, Georgia; and Columbus, Ohio, but they are also dispersed around the country.

However, Somalis seldom remain where they are resettled. Lidwien Kapteijns and Abukar Arman point out, “even after resettlement Somalis do not sit still.”[6] Since 2000, “a great deal of secondary and tertiary migration has occurred as Somalis relocate in search of various types of opportunities (e.g., affordable housing, employment, education and health care)."[7] Indeed, many Somalis relocate to find jobs and refugee services.[8] Increasing numbers of Somalis have been drawn to meatpacking jobs in small cities and rural towns in the Midwest.[9] The estimated Somali population in Minnesota ranges from 15,000 to 30,000.[10] And according to one study, 60 percent of Somalis living in Minneapolis-St. Paul moved there from elsewhere in the United States.[11]

Somalis have a tendency to settle in communities with other Somalis.[12] Some relocate to large metropolitan areas with established Somali communities, but others move to small metropolitan or rural areas whose populations are racially homogeneous and where the Somali refugees are often highly visible. For example, Somalis account for 10 percent of the population in Lewiston, Maine, and thirteen percent of the population in Barron, Wisconsin.[13]

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research indicates that the most important determinants of secondary migration include the existence of an established ethnic community,[14] socioeconomic factors,[15] educational opportunities,[16] the possession of human capital,[17] and access to social capital.[18]

There is ample evidence that new immigrants and refugees gravitate to geographic areas where there is an existing concentration of compatriots[19] and that the majority of secondary migrants move to large metropolitan areas with concentrations of foreign born residents.[20] Research also indicates that the key socioeconomic factors affecting secondary migration include social class status, employment opportunities, local economic conditions, and availability of resources. In his work with Laotian refugees, Zakir Hossain determined that refugees with the most financial resources were likely to relocate.[21] According to Zimmerman and Fix, employment opportunity is one of the most important reasons for relocation.[22] Buckley points to a relationship between secondary migration and welfare availability particularly among refugees.[23] Zimmerman and Fix also reported that welfare generosity influences refugees' migration decisions, although to a lesser extent than jobs and family ties.[24] Yet, as Dianna Shandy points out, while some Sudanese refugees do move to obtain access to resources that will help them improve the situation for their families, reducing secondary migration to welfare generosity ignores its complex social dimensions.[25] Madeline Zavodny ascertained that state economic conditions influence relocation choices and that new refugees are unlikely to move to states with high unemployment levels.[26]

Research indicates that human capital characteristics such as age, language proficiency, education level, employment, and skill set influence immigrants' propensity to relocate. Several scholars found that those with a higher level of education are more likely to migrate[27], whereas others found that some immigrants cross state lines to advance their human capital through educational opportunities.[28] Gurak and Kritz found that Africans and Indians show the highest interstate migration propensity.[29]

Most of the US secondary migration literature has focused on Southeast Asians and has overlooked the secondary migration patterns of other groups, particularly Africans.[30] This is not surprising, given that Southeast Asian refugees account for more than half of the approximate two million refugees resettled in the United States since the 1970s whereas the majority of African refugees arrived in the past two decades.

Moreover, the existing literature on factors affecting secondary migration focuses primarily on macro-structural economic ones. While this focus has yielded important findings about determinants of secondary migration, questions remain about micro-level processes and the interplay between macro and micro level factors. This article addresses this gap by focusing the agentic dimensions of secondary migration decisions and on the ways in which secondary migration decisions are made within specific temporal and structural-historical contexts.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The literature on social capital spans multiple disciplines and is conceptualized in a variety of ways. Social capital generally refers to both economic and non-economic resources and benefits which individuals' access and exchange through their membership in social networks. The concept has a long history, which some date back to John Dewey and Karl Marx. Alejandro Portes points out that despite recent wide usage of the term social capital; it is not a new idea as the meaning behind it has deep roots in sociology. "That involvement and participation in groups can have positive consequences for the individual and community is a staple notion, dating back to Durkheim's emphasis on group life as an antidote to anomie and self-destruction and to Marx's distinction between an atomized class-in-itself and a mobilized and effective class-for-itself."[31] Bourdieu and Wacquant define social capital as "the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.[32] While the majority of immigration scholars do at least consider the ways social capital supports migration, a few have argued that migration disrupts social networks and leads to a decline in social capital.[33]

The mainstream literature on social capital has been criticized predominantly on four fronts including: 1) inconsistency in defining social capital which has led to much ambiguity about its meaning and application;[34] Portes writes, "the point is approaching at which social capital comes to be applied to so many events and in so many different contexts as to lose any distinct meaning;"[35] 2) overemphasizing the positive aspects of social capital while overlooking the negative ones;[36] 3) favoring quantitative research methodologies which ignore the intersubjective and micro-level contextual processes and social dynamics involved in understanding social capital;[37] and 4), for being tautological, treating social capital as both a cause and effect.[38] This article aims to address the third criticism by examining the ways in which social capital intersects with temporal dimensions of agency that operate on the micro level.

Despite these challenges and ambiguity over its definition, most scholars agree on at least three key features of social capital: *social networks*, *trust*, and *bounded solidarity or relations of reciprocity*. In my working concept of social capital, I begin with the basic definition put forth by Alejandro Portes, who defines social capital as "the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures."[39] Drawing from the work of Bourdieu and Coleman, Portes points out that social capital has an "intangible character…Whereas economic capital is in people's bank accounts and human capital inside their heads, social capital inheres in the structure of relationships."[40] I also incorporate the theories of those who have challenged and expanded on Portes' definition. Hellermann argues that Portes does not clearly distinguish between social capital and social networks and Fuglerund and Engebrigsten broaden Portes's definition of social capital by problematizing his and other scholars' lack of attention to the wider context and historical depth of social capital among immigrant populations.[41] They argue that such an approach tends to view "processes taking place in country of origin and country of settlement as empirically and analytically separate" rather than interconnected.[42] "In order to understand the life and situation of immigrant groups there is a need to take into account broader issues and more deep-seated traditions than the encounter with a particular new society. In particular, when discussing migrants, we need to understand how the people concerned conceptualize space and their own communities within it."[43]

In migration research, scholars have examined the relationship between social capital and a variety of variables including social mobility, entrepreneurship, assimilation, educational achievement, ethnic identity, and human capital. With few exceptions, most immigration scholars have focused on how social capital facilitates international movement while overlooking the ways in which social capital facilitates internal migration within a particular nation.[44] Moreover, most immigration scholars analyze the links between social capital and specific outcomes (e.g., employment, social mobility, assimilation, educational advancement) rather than examining the patterns and processes involved.

A number of studies have examined social capital and migration patterns, but with few exceptions, this literature has failed to consider secondary migration within a specific country. Although some scholars have noted the importance of social capital in secondary migration, most have focused on the economic dimensions of social capital as well as the adaptive functions and outcomes of social capital while overlooking the micro-level dimensions and dynamics of social capital. In this article, I aim to demonstrate the ways in which social capital is a relational process that involves cultural specificities, structure and agency. It is also important to recognize that human capital and social capital are inextricably linked. Social capital influences the accumulation of human capital and vice versa. For instance, people learn about opportunities to improve their skills through their social networks and in turn, their investment in human capital leads to an expansion of social capital. I argue that secondary migration decisions are strongly influenced by both access to social capital and temporal dimensions of agency. In doing so, I aim to enhance the existing literature by shedding light on the micro-level processes and locating secondary migration decisions within the larger historical context of Somali history and culture. It is well established that refugees rely on social capital for help and support during migration.[45] In fact, Laura Simich refers to secondary migration as a "support-seeking behavior."[46] However, what remains unexamined is how social capital is related to the agentic dimensions of secondary migration decisions. This article seeks to fill this gap by paying close attention to the agentic dimensions of secondary migration. My analysis draws upon Emirbayer and Mische's conception of agency and Alejandro Portes's and Robert Putnam's conceptions of social capital.[47] I argue that secondary migration decisions are made within specifically temporal and structural-historical contexts and that these decisions are both associated with access to social capital and are located within specific temporal and structural-historical contexts. Specifically, Emirbayer and Mische conceptualize agency as a "temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its 'iterational' or habitual aspect) but also oriented toward the future (as a 'projective' capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a 'practical-evaluative' capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment."[48] Accordingly, I assess the ways in which Somalis' decision to move to and from Maine are embedded within multiple temporalities at once and are simultaneously informed by the past and oriented toward the present and future.

SOMALI REFUGEES IN LEWISTON, MAINE

The research site of this study is Lewiston, Maine. As the largest state in New England with a population of 1.3 million, Maine is known for its long, cold winters and heavy snowfall.

Maine's second largest city, Lewiston, is located forty miles from the largest city, Portland. Lewiston is predominantly white, Roman Catholic, and Franco American, and has been dubbed "the most Franco city in the US" At the time of the 2000 census, 96 percent of Lewiston's 35,690 residents were white.[49] An estimated 28 percent of the population speaks a language other than English at home, and of those, the majority speak French.[50] The residents of Lewiston tend to lag behind the rest of the state in education and socioeconomic status. Lewiston contains two of the poorest census tracts in Maine; according to the Maine Department of Labor, the city's 15 percent poverty rate exceeds the statewide average; and the median household income falls below the statewide average.[51]

Somalis began relocating to Lewiston at an historical moment when population decline was at its most severe and the availability of housing was correspondingly high. In 2001, there was a newly established Somali population in Portland, but given that city's housing vacancy rate of less than 3 percent, Somali families were resettled instead to Lewiston, where the vacancy rate was then 20 percent (declining to 7 percent by 2008). Between 2001 and 2005 the majority of secondary migrants to Lewiston were ethnic Somalis, and in 2006 and 2007 Somali Bantus made up the majority of secondary migration relocations.[52]

Today, many of the vacant apartments and stores are occupied by Somali families and Somali-run businesses and organizations. On Lisbon Street, the primary thoroughfare in downtown Lewiston, a store-front mosque is in the midst of retail shops selling Somali food, clothes, books, and videos. Somalis stroll along the street wearing traditional colorful *hijabs* ranging from the more conservative two-piece *jelaalbib* to the looser *maser*. Many of the men wear long, loose tunics (*ma'awis*) or embroidered caps called *kooiyad*. However unlikely, and perhaps to its surprise, Lewiston has become a Somali community.

METHODS

The findings presented in this article are based on five years of data collection and observations compiled by the Somali Narrative Project (SNP), an interdisciplinary collaborative documenting and examining the experiences of Somali refugees in Maine. Data includes twenty-seven interviews with individuals (fifteen women and twelve men), eight focus groups comprising a total of thirty individuals (twenty-one women and nine men) and many hours of participant observation in Somali homes and neighborhoods, stores, cultural celebrations and festivals, school events, a wedding, and other public spaces.[53]

Following the example of community-based research,[54] we enlisted the help of Somali students and community members to conduct a community forum as a vehicle through which Somalis could tell us their interests and needs. Within the parameters of our collective areas of expertise – sociology, women's studies, history, communication, and Maine studies – we subsequently worked with community members to develop a community-based research project to document the immigration stories and experiences in Maine. We utilized the snowball method of sampling to find research participants for the interviews and focus groups through our established contacts. With research funding we hired two Somali community members – a man and a woman – to consult on the project and to help coordinate and schedule the interviews and focus groups. We trained and paid three Somali students to conduct interviews, and with their help, we did half of the interviews in Somali language.

Focus groups took place in community centers and office conference rooms, whereas the majority of the interviews took place in the homes of participants in Lewiston and Auburn, Maine. Two of the interviews took place over the phone with Somalis who had moved out of

Maine. The interviews and focus groups lasted between one and two hours. Participants were offered the option of speaking in Somali, English, or a combination, and trained bilingual interviewers were present.

The interviews and focus groups were semi-structured, based on a list of predetermined questions. In the interest of fostering subjects' active participation in the dialogue, the sequencing of the questions varied, depending on the situation. Somalis are known for their storytelling and as such, it was not uncommon for participants to tell stories throughout the interviews and focus groups. In addition, during the interviews and focus groups, people often showed up after an interview or focus group was underway, sometimes flowing in and out of the room and the conversation. This occurred more often in people's homes which were fluid environments characterized by children, extended family members, or neighbors coming and going. Only those who participated in the dialogue were included as subjects.

At the beginning of the interviews and focus groups, participants drew their migration histories on maps of the Horn of Africa and the United States. Participants were then asked to relate their decision to move to Lewiston, their experiences living in Maine, and if applicable, to explain why they now want to leave.[55] Participants in this study ranged in age from eighteen to seventy-one, had arrived in Maine between 2000 and 2008, and were interviewed between 2006 and 2009. Prior to moving to Lewiston, all of the participants lived elsewhere in the United States, and most had moved several times.[56]

SOMALIS ON THE MOVE: COMING TO MAINE

Migration is not a new phenomenon for Somalis. Participants in this study reported complex migration histories even before war prompted a mass exodus. For many, mobility with the changing seasons was a way of life. Most participants or their parents had moved within Somalia, typically from the North to the South in search of better economic opportunities after independence in 1960; across borders to neighboring Kenya, Ethiopia, or Djibouti to join extended family; to other countries, such as Yemen, Saudi Arabia, or Italy to work or go to school; or had moved in with relatives in another area of Somalia to attend school or find work.

Movement within Somalia was common and elastic, taking place within dense kin and clan networks, with the orality of Somali culture and gender norms sustaining the connections and linking people together. Like Fuglerund and Engebrigsten, who found among Somalis "a tendency towards dispersal and of managing tasks through long-distance networks,"[57] I discovered that relations among Somalis exist within a wide web of social connections spanning the US and global diaspora. Almost every participant reported regular contact with immediate and extended family throughout the United States and the world, in places like Canada, Kenya, Ethiopia, England, Australia, Sweden, and the Netherlands. Somalis in this study migrated internally for a variety of reasons, but most actualized their move through their membership in social networks.

Initially, the bulk of Somali secondary migrants moved to Lewiston from Clarkston, Georgia, a city ten miles northeast of Atlanta,[58] but since that time, Somalis have been relocating to Lewiston from many different locations including Columbus, Ohio; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Boston, Massachusetts. According to the City of Lewiston, Somalis who applied for public assistance between 2001 and 2007 came from thirty-five US states, three countries, and one hundred cities and many had lived in several different states. The paths of the following three men are typical. Mohammed moved to Maine almost two years ago from Vermont where he had lived for twenty months. Prior to that he had spent six months in Atlanta, where he was initially settled after eight years in two refugee camps in Kenya. Guleed had been in Lewiston for eighteen months. Prior to that he lived in Chicago for eight months, where he was initially settled after eight years in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. Khalid lived in Dallas, Texas for three years before moving to Maine.

WHY LEWISTON?

According to city officials, more Somalis are moving into Maine than are leaving. During an interview, one city official commented, “since the end of 2001 I don’t think we’ve ever seen a month where we haven’t had an average of twenty-five to thirty relocations.”

For Somalis in Lewiston, economic incentives cannot be the primary factor for secondary migration, given the extremely limited job opportunities there. Phil Nadeau writes, “What confounded most refugee resettlement experts about Lewiston’s secondary migration relocation activity was the absence of any resettlement activity or industry that might have influenced their relocation decisions to the city.”[59] This economic reality has contributed to the widespread public perception that Somalis are moving to Maine to use welfare benefits. Rumors circulate that tax dollars are used to give Somalis large cash sums and free cars.[60] Several participants pointed out that when people see Somalis congregating on Lisbon Street in Lewiston, they assume that they are on welfare. Omar challenged this. “If you see a Somali standing at Lisbon Street it doesn’t mean that the Somali is idle. That Somali will be at Lisbon Street because that is the center of information for the community . . . Maybe he came from night shift, passed through the *halal* [store] to pick his meat, he will pick up a calling card, and then go home and sleep for the rest of the day.”

Closer examination indicates that while some Somalis may be attracted to the social services provided in Maine, such services are not the singular motivating factor driving secondary migration. The most common reason given for moving to Maine was to improve quality of life. Although welfare is one aspect of such an improvement, more frequently cited macro-level aspects included safety and increased social control, good schools, and affordable housing. As Muna put it, “Atlanta was hard, you know, a big family, it is really hard to raise kids in Atlanta.” In these ways, Somalis resemble other secondary migrants who seek a better life for their families.

Several of the participants in this study did specifically mention welfare benefits as a reason for moving to Maine.[61] Sufia, who arrived in Lewiston with her family in 2001, said:

> I moved to Lewiston because in Atlanta, where I lived for about nine years, I had two jobs. I used to work at a factory and I owned a little store. One day my son was somewhere and I was looking for him when I fell and broke my leg. In Atlanta they don’t give adults Medicare or any type of medical plan. So I moved to Maine because I was told that the adults get Medicare and medical expenses would be paid for.

Similarly, Cawo, a woman in her early twenties, reported that her large family moved from Decatur, Georgia, because her father heard that “there would be better assistance here.”

> The majority of Lewiston’s early wave of secondary migrants left Georgia, which has one of the lowest levels of welfare benefits in the United States (ranked

> fortieth) to move to Maine, which is among the highest (ranked thirteenth).[62] Georgia also has one of the harshest lifetime limit policies on welfare benefits in the United States at forty-eight months (a year less than the sixty-month limit established by the federal government in 1996).[63] In contrast, Maine has no lifetime limit and, unlike Georgia, allows benefits to continue to children when their parents are no longer receiving assistance.[64]

The data suggest that welfare benefits may be a macrostructural factor affecting some Somalis' decision to relocate to Maine; however, it is important to point out that this widespread perception appears to be exaggerated in the media and other factors tend to be overlooked. Although many secondary migrants do come from states with middle or low level benefits, such as Georgia and Texas, many others come from states that actually offer equal or higher benefits than Maine, including New York, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Minnesota.[65] The data indicate that a significant number of Somalis leaving Lewiston are headed to states with either lower monthly benefits (Utah and Arizona) or harsher lifetime limits (Minnesota, Washington, and Utah) than Maine.[66] This illustrates the ways in which agentic dimensions intersect with social structure (i.e., welfare benefits) as well as the fluid nature of agentic orientation. Those who are drawn to Maine because of the relatively better welfare benefits are often responding to the inadequate resources available in their initial places of settlement. In trying to attend to their basic needs they are temporally oriented toward the present. Whereas, as I will discuss below, those who leave Maine for states that offer fewer benefits are more likely to be oriented toward their future (e.g., in search of economic opportunities).

SAFETY AND INCREASED SOCIAL CONTROL

Many of the study participants were initially resettled in large, inner city neighborhoods characterized by high crime, drugs, gang activity, substandard housing, and grossly underfunded schools. Some participants expressed dissatisfaction with the macro-level structures in these neighborhoods such as housing and schools, while others referred to the tensions and conflicts that occurred on the micro-level in these communities. Omar, a Somali man in his thirties, points out:

> Many…refugees are [re]settled in are very deprived communities. So by the time you come and realize where you are, it is like, “Oh, my God. Where am I living in the US? Is this the country I was coming to?” . . . It’s these very tough neighborhoods where even the front doors have gates and the whole night what you hear are police sirens and gun shots and murders.

Cawo’s family moved to Maine from Atlanta because her kids were being bullied. “There was a lot of violence in the community I lived in.” Similarly, Halima cited the conflicts that ensued between African Americans and Somali immigrants: “African Americans usually inhabit the dilapidated neighborhoods; like most people, they react to the new immigrants and therefore tensions begin.” Halima’s observations were echoed by several interviewees who described being harassed and beat up by African Americans at school.

Safety, especially for raising children, was the most persistent reason given for moving to Maine. To understand why safety is paramount, it is important to remember that unlike many immigrants who move to the United States for economic opportunities, Somalis were fleeing war and poverty in Somalia or harsh and unsafe conditions in refugee camps. One young woman stated, “my mom moved us [to Lewiston] since she was the only one with us…My father did not come with us—he is still in Kenya—so that’s why we decided to come here because it’s quiet and smaller and less crime.”

Some Somalis moved to Maine to have more social control over their children’s religious and cultural behaviors and dress, as well as to keep closer tabs on their whereabouts. Some parents expressed heightened concern for teenage sons, whom they viewed as being at higher risk than daughters for being drawn into oppositional cultures in inner cities. Many participants noted that it was easier to exert parental control over their children in Lewiston compared with other places they had lived. This was often attributed to the small size of the city as well as to more religious conservatism among Somalis in Lewiston than the Somali population in nearby Portland. One young woman, Aman reported that:

> “We joke all the time when we see someone and say, ‘how much do you want to bet that my mom’s gonna call me knowing where I am right now?’ . . . It’s kind of a joke . . . They can keep a closer eye on us because it’s a small town and everybody knows each other.”

For some parents, the desire to have more control over their children was especially acute when their children were young and in school. Relative to other places they had lived, Somalis viewed Lewiston schools as safe places where their children could get a good education.

GOOD SCHOOLS

It is well documented that educational opportunities are a determinant of secondary migration for immigrants, and for the participants in this study, education was essential. This is not surprising since Somali culture tends to have “strong positive attitudes toward, and expectations of, modern education.”[67] As one young woman stated, “school was definitely one of the biggest reasons why we moved here.”

Most Somali families moved to Maine when their children were young, but two participants moved to Maine as adults because they had heard good things about Maine colleges. When describing the importance of education among Somalis, Halima explained, “one thing you need to understand is that, religious or not, …. teaching [their children] and encouraging getting a higher education is one thing that is common for all parents.” Most participants had positive things to say about the schools in Lewiston, especially compared to their experiences elsewhere. Eighteen-year-old Aman reported, “in contrast [to Boston] we definitely have gotten our education. I just graduated and we have been a lot safer here and the schools have been more structured, more serious, and more willing to help us . . . [Here] there are more caring people who want to see you succeed.”

For many parents with young children, access to educational opportunities temporarily outweighed the availability of jobs. These parents regarded education as an investment in the future. From Khalid’s perspective, “it is very hard to find a job in Lewiston but I think it is good place to get an education, for our children to go to school. When we get enough English we have to move out to find a good place to work.” Similarly, Guleed, a father of five, stated, “that’s why we moved to Lewiston. We wanted to improve our education. I think if we get a good education maybe we will move to another place where we can have a good job.”

HOUSING

Many participants cited cheap, affordable housing as a factor in their decision to move to Lewiston. Because the vacancy rate hovered around 20 percent when Somalis first started arriving, rents were extremely low. A Lewiston city official reports, "the rents have increased… [but] in Lewiston you can still have 350 dollar-a-month apartments . . . The market will demand that that kind of price be in place because there are still landlords that are looking to fill the units." Caaliya puts this in perspective: "in California even though we had jobs they weren't able to sustain us . . . Rent for a two-bedroom apartment was $1200 . . . here in Maine [it] was $462." Along these lines, Faadumo stated:

> We were in Atlanta for three years. . . My mom was working at two jobs and my father was trying to get his degrees back and all of his papers and he was also working. I was working, my sister was working, and still it wasn't enough because our rent was really really high . . . We moved a lot . . . And then finally my parents were like, "We have to go somewhere else because the housing here is really expensive."

Housing is further complicated by the size of Somali families. Most apartments in the United States are not designed to accommodate large families. In California, Caaliya's family of sixteen could not afford housing sufficient for all of them, so she and some of her siblings lived with other families. Such arrangements were common.

Some participants reported that federal Section 8 housing vouchers are more available in Maine.[68] One Somali case worker observed, "there is no waiting line in getting subsidized housing or Section 8 in Lewiston…The grapevine is that once most get their Section 8 vouchers they move out to other states. I know of five families that have moved to Arizona." While some of our participants did allow that they moved to Maine to obtain better public assistance benefits such as welfare and Section 8 housing, this reason by itself cannot explain the quality of life issues—safety, schools, housing—that drew Somalis to Maine. As noted earlier, many of those who are leaving Maine are moving to places that offer fewer welfare benefits.

In sum, the secondary migration decisions of Somalis who moved to Maine were embedded in multiple temporalities at once. Decisions were simultaneously shaped by orientations toward the past (war, unsafe neighborhoods in the US), the present (the desire to preserve culture and religion, and their immediate needs for safety, affordable housing and good schools), and the future (their interest in obtaining a quality education to improve future opportunities, pursuit of the American Dream). Emirbayer and Mische point out that in any given moment, one orientation may dominate but they are all simultaneously present. Moreover, they stress the fluidity of agency: "the key to grasping the dynamic possibilities of human agency is to view it as composed of variable and changing orientations within the flow of time." [69] The participants in this study illustrate that when one's situation changes so does one's agentic orientation. For example, participants reported that safety was the paramount concern that prompted relocation to Maine and as such, the initial decision to move was oriented toward the past and present. Many did not give much thought to what they would do after they settled in Maine; many assumed that they would find a job. After settling in Maine and learning that it was difficult to find a full time job, those who decided to leave tended to shift their primary orientation from the past and present toward the present and future. The agentic dimensions of the migration decisions interpenetrate with social structure. While the decisions took place and were carried out within social networks on the micro level, macro level factors, such as social services, crime, schools, and housing, formed the backdrop that precipitated the decision to relocate.

WHY DO SOMALIS LEAVE MAINE?

Participants cited a variety of reasons for leaving or wanting to leave Lewiston including "the winter," "all the trees," "sometimes there's nothing to do," "we can't find housing to accommodate our growing family," and "[I'm] disappointed with the school system." Although many left or desired to leave because they were dissatisfied with life in Lewiston, many others spoke highly of living in Maine, and several of those who left reported that they missed Maine and hoped to move back one day. Farham, a fifty-five-year-old man who moved to the Southwest with his wife and seven children, expressed a strong desire to return. He said "one leg of mine is still in Maine. I like Maine. It was the first place that gave me an opportunity to be where I am today. I have to pay that back and will return to Maine." When describing life in Maine, he said, "the water is very sweet in Maine. Once you taste it you'll never [want to] leave." Overall, three persistent and recurring themes about leaving Maine emerged from the data.

LACK OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

The most commonly reported reason for leaving was joblessness. Many Somalis struggled to find full-time work, and those who graduated from college left for other states with stronger job markets. Halima's observations are echoed throughout the interviews: "I see the young college-educated leaving the state because of unemployment. I was talking to some of the students, and they are all planning to leave right after graduation."

Many adult participants who did find work reported working seasonal jobs or having to travel long distances to work. Guleed said, "it is very hard to work in Lewiston for the refugee migrants . . . One day I applied for twenty jobs for different companies. No one called me." Another man stated, "[Somalis] go to work in Freeport, they go to work in Augusta, they go to work in another city, but not in Lewiston." Aman, whose family is in the process of relocating to the west coast, said, "my family is leaving because there are not enough jobs here. There's not enough . . . I don't see that there are a lot of options for people like us [here]."

Many of the younger participants reported plans to leave Maine after college, in part because they have seen how hard it is to make a living in Maine. Omar reported, "I finished college. I stayed here but I could not get a job." Another reported, "two of my siblings have graduated from college and they stayed here for a year just looking for a job and they can't find anything so they have to look outside the state." The following responses were typical among Somali college students: "I'm going to leave Maine as soon as I am done with college," "I'm planning on staying here until I graduate and get my master's degree," and "there is not much in Maine for me. As soon as I graduate I'm leaving. *Inshallah* (God willing)."

Libaan, who is pursuing his master's degree and hopes to stay in Maine, observed that the out-migration of Somalis is similar to the out-migration of other college-educated Mainers: "I mean it's well known that even Mainers, when they graduate from college, they leave." While this may be true, a key difference between native-Mainers and Somalis is that among Somalis, the entire family tends to move, either in stages or all at once, whereas native-Mainers are more likely to move on their own. This reflects a key difference between US culture, which emphasizes individualism and Somali culture which places more value on the group over the individual.

The educational opportunities in Maine seemed to outweigh the lack of jobs, at least until family priorities shift. Libaan noted that "when people with young kids move here they don't worry about their kids getting jobs until they get to the point that they have to pursue jobs." Yet, even those who were quite satisfied with the educational opportunities in Maine also reported experiences of racism or expressed some dismay over the lack of racial and cultural diversity within the schools, the second most important reason given for leaving Maine among my participants.

RACISM AND LACK OF RELIGIOUS AND RACIAL DIVERSITY IN MAINE

Some participants reported coming to Maine either to escape racialized experiences in other urban areas or because they believed that the North would be more accepting of racial and religious diversity than the South. Several young Somalis reported being beat up or harassed by other racial minorities prior to moving to Maine. Thirty-four-year-old Omar reported: "I came [to Lewiston] from the South which was totally a different world. When I arrived in Atlanta … I saw all the big trucks with the confederate flag on top of it, and I was going like 'My God!'" He continued that Somalis "want to go places where they are no longer in the limelight, but once they arrive here they come to realize that you cannot take one step without being identified as a Somali…Oh my God, this place is not even diverse!"

Some participants had only positive things to say about their experiences in Maine. Halima, reflecting about the "Many and One Rally" that drew an estimated 4,000 people,[70] stated:

> I love Maine . . . I don't know if you remember January 11, 2003, but people from Lewiston clearly stated that they would not welcome racism in their communities. I remember going to the rally against my mother's will. There were so many people from all over Maine. I remember thinking, "Well, there you go; after all, we are welcomed here. I remember this one incident at a gas station where an old Caucasian woman walked up to me and said, "We love to have you here." It was early in the morning, like 4 AM, and I was going to work in Freeport. Lewiston is a great city and most of the Somalis there don't face racism. This does not mean that racism is not an issue. There is always that one person or group in every community in the United States.

Ladan, a woman in her late twenties stated, "Here most of the people are white so I thought they would discriminate because I'm wearing a head scarf or because I'm black but actually it was different . . . One day I went to Sam's Club and this lady was asking me about my *hijab* and she said, 'Oh, I like your scarf. I would like to have one like that, too, you know.'" And Farham stated, "I have not experienced discrimination on the basis of race or religion in Maine. Lewiston people are very polite and very respectful, but slow to open up to new immigrants. This is due to most of them having lived here since their birth. They already have all the friends they need."

More commonly, however, participants reported more nuanced and often negative experiences about being racially and culturally different. Living in Maine has taken a toll on Caaliya, a recent college graduate who is leaving Maine to attend graduate school in a large city:

> It’s exhausting . . . being Somali and living in Lewiston because it’s not just limelight, it’s kind of like a shining, beaming spotlight that goes with you wherever you go . . . because if I go to Boston, I go to New York people at most will go, “Oh there goes an African-American Muslim.” . . . It’s almost like a craving for invisibility.

For Hibo, a young woman in her early twenties, “the lack of diversity in Maine is mostly what I dislike about being here . . . It sucks to be a minority in a state where almost 99 percent of the population is white.”

After praising the education she received in Maine, Aman qualified her experience. “The racial and cultural tensions are a major reason why I want to leave. I mean education-wise–books, studying, academics–it’s been good but I think socially it hasn’t been. People don’t understand about our religion and our culture…they kind of back away because they just don’t understand.” For thirty-four-year-old, Ahmed, who moved to Lewiston in 2001:

> I was working in this company in Brunswick with this guy and we were sitting down just talking back and forth and he was like, “When Somalis come over here, they are paid by the taxes…and Somali people just keep coming over here because they find free housing and food stamps…They want to take over the whole Lewiston city.” He hates Somalis so bad.

And for Rashid, a forty-year-old Somali man, “many times what I find difficult is that even though Mainers are fairly nice people and down to earth, they also came from a small town [and] they have a small town mentality.”

Experiences of racism and issues of diversity are complex and contextual. Some Somalis chose to relocate to Maine from larger, urban areas like Atlanta, in part, to escape the tensions and conflicts between themselves and other racial minorities.[71] Many participants reported that they had not experienced racism or identified as “black” prior to immigrating to the United States. Once here, they quickly learned that they were defined as “black” by others and what this meant, including the fact that African Americans are subject to racism and largely viewed as being at the bottom of the racial hierarchy in the United States. Moving to Maine was one way of simultaneously distancing themselves from the stigma of being labeled as African American and preserving *soomaalinimo* or being Somali—something that is viewed as essential to live a “secure and dignified life.”[72] However, some Somalis do leave Maine because of racism, and even more often, because of the state’s lack of religious diversity.

CONSTRICTING EFFECTS OF RELIGIOUS CONSERVATISM AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Omar, who has a fairly liberal view of Islam, reported that the Somali community in Lewiston is “very conservative,” explaining, “one woman told me that in Lewiston you have to toe the line or else you will be reprimanded and called names until you’re driven out of town [by other Somalis].” He went on to say, “in some circles Somalis have been referred to by other Muslims as ‘the Muslim police’” and have “behaved in ways like the Moral Police of Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan.” Other interviewees stated that if a Somali woman walks down the street in Lewiston without a *hijab*, she will be repudiated by other Somali women.

Some participants were more subtle in their criticism of social control and pointed to generational tensions between parents and children. For example, Aman wanted more freedom and anonymity in her life:

> When I think about living here, I think of living under my mom's eyes I guess, and I just want to be able to go out and be able to go somewhere without somebody judging me or without somebody giving me an eye. When somebody sees you somewhere they call your mom and they say, 'Oh, I saw your daughter here.' Or whatever…I feel like in Seattle you could walk around all you want and nobody says anything."

In sum, those who decided to leave Maine were responding to present conditions (lack of jobs, racism, lack of freedom) but were more oriented toward the future and their desire to find work, experience upward mobility, live in a place that was more racially and religiously diverse, and experience more freedom by escaping the constricting effects of religious conservatism and social control. Thus, given the many and nuanced reasons why Somalis move in and out of Lewiston, it is clearly problematic to reduce secondary migration to economic factors alone. The voices of Somalis in Maine highlight how agentic orientations change over time and interpenetrate with the surrounding social structures.

ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Perhaps most people living in poor urban areas are dissatisfied with their quality of life and the lack of economic opportunities available for them and their children. Hence, it is not enough to just point to the factors outlined above to explain secondary migration. Rather, to understand why Somalis are able to pick up and move out of such places while the native born tend to stay, it is necessary to probe more deeply into the ways in which social capital facilitates secondary migration.

A closer examination of the forces facilitating secondary migration among Somalis reveals that the secondary migration decisions also intersect with social capital. Importantly, the Somali networks extend far beyond the impoverished areas of their primary settlement. This networking distinguishes Somalis from poor minorities living in inner-cities, who tend to live in a more isolated context with highly localized social ties.[73] The movement of Somalis is thus actualized by their involvement in dispersed social networks. Decisions to move in and out of Maine are located within the macrostructural and microinteractional worlds of multiple sites—Somalia, Maine, and the diaspora. Whether Somalis move to or from Maine in search of jobs, education, or safety, the way they learn about new places and opportunities is through their expansive social networks. Furthermore, in most cases, the social networks facilitate and buffer the transition from one place to another. There are always people on the other end to provide food, shelter, and assistance once they arrive in a new place. As Caaliya elaborates, "you are given rides to where you need so you have all that social support so there is no real cost in your moving . . . The only thing you are asked to do is *pay it forward* for the next family who comes" (italics added). For many Americans moving from one place to another is a costly endeavor, financially and psychologically, but Somalis' social connections enable those with few resources to pick up and move, needing only the means to get there.

Somalis go to great lengths to help one another. There is a strong tradition of hospitality in Somali culture in which Somalis are obligated to host and help each other. Ladan, a twenty-nine-year-old woman, stated, “in Somalia, our relatives most of them are nomadic so when they come to you, to your house, you give them food . . . Hospitality over there is different, so we like to receive guests, and that way you just feel happy about it and that you have helped so many people.” Grounded in deep historical traditions, social capital is primarily exchanged through familial and clan ties. Somali families are large and complex. Most Somalis know and can even verbally recite their family genealogy back fifteen to twenty generations, in many cases tracing their family tree back to Samaale, who is considered the founding father of Somali people.[74] Galad, a sixty-three-year-old man stated, “I can count all my ancestors up to thirty generations . . . Every day I tell my children . . . First of all they have to know their relatives, and second they have to know that they are from a great country with great culture.”

Although kin and clan continue to take precedence in the United States, Somali networks are expanding and transforming within the US context where social exchange may be extended on the basis of national (Somali) or religious (Muslim) identity. When describing this process, Omar said often people initially help each other on the basis of their Somali identity (oriented toward present), and once the newcomers have been properly received in the new setting (e.g., picked up at the airport, fed), phone calls are made to find a closer clan or kin match (oriented toward past). He stated:

> The Somali coming into town, no worries. We’ll go there to receive you, then once we’ve received you we take you home. Then you rest. Then after that we’ll discuss where you are going . . . then I hand you over . . . The Somali mindset is when somebody sees you, he sees you as a Somali. Then, of course, one or two days later he will have to pass you on to a more closer immediate family member.

> It’s a natural, right thing to do. We are all Somalis, but when it comes to a certain level of comfort or details you must have a name of a person . . . That’s why genealogy works positively in terms of [how] you identify yourself, then people figure out who is your closest relative.

Caaliya stated, “my mom has always told me you’re a Somali first, always. It doesn’t matter…When you’re in airports and you see another Somali person you won’t pass them because their clan at that point is irrelevant . . . We could be killing each other in Somalia, [but here] it really doesn’t matter.”

Robert Putnam’s concepts of “bonding” and “bridging” social capital are useful in understanding the shifting identities and changing social relations among Somalis in the diaspora. Social capital in general refers to social networks that are based on mutual trust and reciprocity. One dimension of social capital, bonding social capital, connects people to their own social group in which social networks are built around homogeneity (e.g., within religion, race, class, ethnic group), and trust is limited to others within the group. Another dimension, bridging social capital, occurs when social networks extend outside one’s primary group (e.g., outside of family, clan, religion, race) and trust is more general. This form of social capital can transcend group divisions and links people to the broader social structures in a particular society.[75] In the US context, what characterizes bonding or bridging capital for Somalis is fluid and evolving. For instance, in one context relations among Somalis from different clans might be oriented toward the past and be considered bridging capital; whereas in another, where identities are shifting and clan affiliations are fading with new generations, this very exchange could be oriented toward the present and future and viewed as a form of bonding capital, helping their “brothers” and “sisters.” My findings indicate that in the Lewiston/United States context new identities and allegiances are being forged, particularly for the 1.5 and second generations of Somalis,[76] to create more levels of bonding and bridging capital that fall along lines of clan, family, religion, and ancestry (Somali or African).

The remaking of social networks is also related to shifting identities among Somalis. Somalis express who they are in numerous ways. Some participants view themselves as Somali first, Muslim second. Others are very clan-identified and will only shop in stores owned by members of their clan. Still others prioritize their Islamic identity and align themselves with Muslims of other nationalities. Some see themselves aligned with other Africans, even those who are not Muslim. Regardless of how individuals self-identify, Somali identities are being transformed in the US context, and with these changes temporal dimensions are shifting, particularly for younger Somalis, and social networks are expanding in ways that include both bonding and bridging capital.

As Somali identities become more fluid, their radius of networks extends, and their agentic orientations change. For some participants, these networks are oriented primarily toward the past and present and thus, confined to members of their own racial, ethnic, or religious group. Yet others—particularly Somalis who obtain a college degree and regularly interact with non-Somalis—are more likely to be future oriented and rely on social capital resources both within and outside of their primary group. With time and new generations identities will continue to shift and change.

CONCLUSION

This article addressed two central questions: 1) why do Somalis move in and out of Lewiston, Maine? And 2) in what ways are the secondary migration decisions of Somalis embedded in agentic processes and social capital? I relied on Emirbayer and Mische's conception of agency to interpret the secondary migration decisions of Somalis in this study who moved in and out of Maine.[77] My analysis of social capital was based primarily on the work of Alejandro Portes and Robert Putnam.[78]

The most important factor pulling Somalis to Lewiston was the opportunity to improve their quality of life (i.e., safety, good schools, housing, and public assistance) and live among family and kin in accordance with their religious and cultural beliefs. The small size of Lewiston was particularly attractive in that Somalis were able to live in close proximity with one another and keep a close watch on their children. In the aftermath of a brutal civil war and years living in the harsh conditions of refugee camps, Somalis' main priorities are safety and security. In this way, Somali refugees are unlike immigrants who come to the United States in search of economic opportunities: Somalis who initially move to Maine are influenced by past experiences and are primarily oriented toward their present concerns about safety. Having fled the violence of war and the instability of refugee camps, many Somalis were not willing to accept their placement in crime and drug-ridden neighborhoods in the US. After the basic needs of safety and security are met, there is more space for their agentic orientation to shift toward the future. This is what propels Somalis to leave Maine, in search of greener pastures. The major reason Somalis leave Maine is the lack of jobs. Finding a job was not a reason given for many Somalis who moved to Lewiston, but as Somalis acquire education and skills (i.e., human capital) and as children grow up, jobs and economic opportunities take on more importance, and

Somalis become more future-oriented. In other words, as Somalis become more acculturated their agentic orientations change and their field of options expands.

The findings presented in this article highlight the nuances and complexities of secondary migration decisions and call attention to broader structures as well as micro-level processes. Specifically, the broader social structures (e.g., US refugee policy, social services, schools, labor market) clearly influence Somalis decisions to move from one place to another. The findings illustrate the ways in which secondary migration decisions are motivated by changing agentic orientations that interpenetrate with social structure. Calling attention to the deficits within larger structures reminds us that micro-level processes are best understood in relation to macro-level structures. For instance, if refugees are settled in safe areas with good schools and jobs, they may not want to move. When Somalis pick up and move away from their initial places of resettlement, they rely on social capital when deciding when and where to move.

Lewiston may be a stepping stone for Somalis, a safe place in which to raise children and accrue human capital through educational opportunities before pursuing better economic opportunities elsewhere. Lewiston offers an escape from the harsher places of initial resettlement and satisfies a yearning to belong to a tight-knit community where bonding capital and “thick trust” prevails. However, Lewiston does not offer much for those who long for the American dream. Beyond obtaining an education, there are few opportunities for upward mobility. Once Somalis obtain an education, extend their social networks and human capital they can become more future-oriented and rely less on bonding capital and more on bridging capital and the expanding radius of networks and “thin trust” that comes with it.[79]

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Using maps of the horn of Africa and the United States, trace the migration route of the interviewee. Establish a timeline:
    a. Where were you born?
    b. Where have you lived in Somalia? How long did you live in each place? Why did you move?

   c. When did you leave Somalia? (year, age)
   d. Where did you go? How long did you live in each place?
   e. Where have you lived in the US? How long did you live in each place? Why did you relocate?

2. Please tell me about the decision to move to Maine
   a. How did you family hear about Lewiston?
   b. Who made the decision to move here?
   c. How long did your family consider moving to Maine before doing so?
   d. What factors did you find attractive about Maine?
   e. Was everyone in your family in agreement about moving to Maine?

3. Please describe the proves of moving. How did you to Maine (by car, plane)? How did you transport your belongings?

4. How does the housing in Lewiston compare with other places you have lived in the US (affordability, availability, quality)?

5. Have you had any experiences with public assistance or section 8 housing in Maine? How has this compared with other places you have lived?

6. Have you experienced discrimination on the basis of race or religion in Maine? In other places you have lived?

7. Please describe your experiences with practicing your religion in Maine and how this compares with other places you have lived in the US?

8. Did you know anyone in Maine before you moved here?

9. Are you happy about your decision to move to Maine? Why?

10. What do you find most appealing about living in Maine?

11. What do you find least appealing about living in Maine?

12. How long do you plan on staying in Maine? Why?

13. If you plan on leaving, where do you want to go? Why?

14. Do you see yourself living permanently in one place at some point? Where would you like that place to be?

15. Has it been difficult or relatively easy to pick up and move?

16. Demographics: # in household, Age, Marital Status, Number and age of children, Education, Occupation, Gender

BIOGRAPHY

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ENDNOTES

[1] In 2008 it was estimated that 3,300 of the estimated refugee population of 3,500 Somalis were secondary migrants. The small remainder were direct refugee resettlements (see Phil Nadeau, "The Flawed US Refugee Workforce Development Strategy for Somali Economic Self-Sufficiency in Lewiston," *Race, Ethnicity and Place Conference IV,* Miami, Florida, November 6, 2008). The hub of Somali activity is in Lewiston, although many Somalis also reside in neighboring Auburn. Current estimates suggest that there are more than 4,000 Somalis in Lewiston today.

[2] The legal term "secondary migrant" refers to individuals who are initially resettled in one geographic location in the United States but decide to relocate to another location within the first eight months of settlement. When refugees relocate to a new location within the first eight months of settlement, they are still eligible for refugee resettlement benefits. After eight months they are no longer eligible for refugee benefits but can apply for public assistance. See Sharon E. Timberlake, "Municipal Collaboration in Response to Secondary Migration: A Case Study of Portland and Lewiston," PhD diss., University of Southern Maine, 2007). In this chapter, the term secondary migration is used to apply to refugees who move to a new location regardless of the amount of time that has passed.

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[4] US Department of Health & Human Services. "Fiscal Year 2001 Refugee Arrivals." Ed. The Office of Refugee Resettlement: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Administration of Children and Families, 2001 – 2007/ http://www.hhs-stat.net/scripts/topic.cfm?id=237.

[5] Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Hawaii, Montana, West Virginia and Wyoming. See US Department of Health & Human Services. 2001-2007; "Fiscal Year 2001 Refugee Arrivals,"The Office of Refugee Resettlement: U.S Department of Health & Human Services' Administration of Children & Families.

[6] Lidwein Kapteijns and Abukar Arman, "Educating Immigrant Youth in the United States: An Exploration of the Somali Case," *Bildhaan,* Vol. 4. (2004). 18.

[7] Franklin Goza, "The Somali Presence in the United States: A Socio-Economic and Demographic Profile," in *From Mogadishu to Dixon: The Somali Diaspora in a Global Context*, ed. Abdi M. Kusow and Stephanie R. Bjork (Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 2007). 262.

[8] Goza, "The Somali Presence in the United States: A Socio-Economic and Demographic Profile", 255-275. Jessica Schaid and Zoltan Grossman, "The Somali Diaspora in Small Midwestern Communities: The Case of Barron, Wisconsin," in *From Mogadishu to Dixon: The Somali Diaspora in a Global Context*, 296-319.

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[53] Focus groups took place in community centers and office conference rooms, whereas the majority of the interviews took place in the homes of participants in Lewiston and Auburn, Maine. Two of the interviews took place over the phone with Somalis who had moved out of Maine. The interviews and focus groups lasted between one and two hours. Participants were offered the option of speaking in Somali, English, or a combination, and trained bilingual interviewers were present. Six additional interviews were conducted after data for this article was analyzed.
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[55] The English interviews and focus groups were transcribed in full by trained research assistants. Those interviews and focus groups conducted in Somali or both Somali and English were first translated verbatim by trained bilingual student research assistants and then transcribed in English. Quotations used in this chapter were minimally edited for clarity and readability. Excessive redundancies such as "you know" and "um" were eliminated; passages and phrases—marked by ellipses—were abridged in the interest of condensing and clarifying; and grammatical changes were made to improve the flow and clarity of the subjects' stories. In addition, pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity of the interviewees.
[56] The findings of this study are not generalizable; they are specific to the local context in which the data were gathered. Moreover, those findings are limited by our particular contacts in the Somali community. The diverse Somali community is cleaved along a number of social, political, and cultural lines, and given our limited contacts; we were unable to access entire segments of the community. For example, this chapter does not necessarily represent the secondary migration experiences of Somali Bantu, a minority group that has migrated to Lewiston in recent years.
[57] Fuglerund, Oivind and Ada Engebrigtsen. "Culture, Networks and Social Capital: Tamil and Somali Immigrants in Norway," p. 1126.
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[61] See Francis H. Buckley, "The Political Economy of Immigration Policies," *International Review of Law and Economics* 16 (1996, pp. 81-99), who points to a relationship between secondary migration and welfare availability particularly among refugees. See also Wendy Zimmerman and Michael Fix, "Immigrant Policy in the States: A Wavering Welcome, in *Immigration and Ethnicity: The Integration of America's Newest Arrivals*, ed. Barry Edmonston and Jeffrey S. Passel, pp. 287-316 (Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press, 1994) who reported that welfare generosity influences refugees' migration decisions, although to a lesser extent than jobs and

family ties.

[62] Dianna J. Shandy, *Nuer-American Passages: Globalizing Sudanese Migration* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2007).

[63] Nailah Macarthy, “Significance of Race: Comparative Analysis of State Time Limit Policies Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996” (PhD diss., Howard University, 2006).

[64] Ibid.

[65] See Shandy, *Nuer-American Passages: Globalizing Sudanese Migration*, 170, Table A.6. Resettlement States by Level of Welfare Benefits for more details. See Macarthy “Significance of Race: Comparative Analysis of State Time Limit Policies Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996” for an analysis of time limits and racial composition of states. See also Ihuto Ali, “Staying off the Bottom of the Melting Pot: Somali Refugees Respond to a Changing US Immigration Climate,” *Bildhaan* 9 (2009, pp. 82-114); and David Peterson, "African Immigrants Set Pace to Get Off Welfare" StarTribune.com (December 27, 2006), who both provide evidence that counter the perception that large numbers of Somalis are on welfare.

[66] Macarthy Nailah. “Significance of Race: Comparative Analysis of State Time Limit Policies Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996”; Shandy, *Nuer-American Passages: Globalizing Sudanese Migration*.

[67] See Kapteijns and Arman, “Educating Immigrant Youth in the United States: An Exploration of the Somali Case,” p. 28.

[68] Section 8 housing vouchers are a form of financial assistance that is provided by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled so they can rent homes or apartments in the private market. Voucher-holders are permitted to move and use their vouchers anywhere in the United States.

[69] Emirbaryer, Mustafa and Ann Mische. “What is Agency?,” 964.

[70] The “Many and One Rally” was organized by a community-based coalition in response to a poorly attended rally organized by the neo-Nazi group National Alliance, who came to Lewiston after the mayor of Lewiston published an inflammatory letter in the local newspaper asking Somalis to stop moving there, see Rabrenovic, “When Hate Comes to Town: Community Response to Violence Against Immigrants.”

[71] Somali immigrants are sometimes perceived as a threat to native-born racial minorities, which is not unfounded. In her research with immigrants and employers in New York City, Nancy Foner, in *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000).found that employers were more inclined to hire minority immigrants over native born Blacks and Hispanics, largely because of racist attitudes toward Black and Hispanics and the perception that immigrant workers would be more docile and harder working than native born Blacks and Hispanics.

[72] See Mulki Al-Sharmani, “Diasporic Somalis in Cairo: The Poetics and Practices of Soomaalinimo,” in *From Mogadishu to Dixon: The Somali Diaspora in a Global Context*, pp. 71-94.

[73] See Alejandro Portes, “Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology”, 1-24.

[74] Somali clan structure is extremely complex. There are six main clan-families with numerous subclans. The majority of Somalis trace their lineage to the four main pastoral nomadic clans (the Dir, Darod, Isaq, and Hawiye), whereas the minority trace their lineage to the two major agricultural clans (the Digil and Rahanweyn). See I.M. Lewis, I.M. 2002. *A Modern History of The Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*. Fourth ed. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press. for more detail.

[75] Robert Putman, *Bowling Alone*: *The Collapse and Revival of American Community.*

[76] 1.5 generation refers to immigrants who grew up in two cultures—born outside of the United States and immigrating to the United States at a young age. Second generation refers to children who were born in the United States to immigrant parents.

[77] Emirbaryer and Mische. “What is Agency?”, 962 – 1023.

[78] Portes, “Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology,” 1-24; . Putman, *Bowling Alone*: *The Collapse and Revival of American Community.*

[79] See Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 136.

“'YO, JOSE DUPARD, PARDO LIBRE NATURAL Y VECINO DE ESTA CIUDAD': MASCULINITY, RACE AND RESPECTABILITY IN SPANISH NEW ORLEANS. "/"JOSE DUPARD, A FREE MAN OF COLOR IN SPANISH NEW ORLEANS"

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the methods free men of color used to assert their masculinity in Spanish New Orleans. Jose and Carlos Dupard were free, mulatto brothers living in New Orleans in the late eighteenth century, at a time when Spanish officials attempted to force new laws, like *coartación*, on resistant French masters. *Coartación* was a Spanish law that allowed for slaves to buy their freedom or self-purchase and views on the French population. Thus at the same time that new opportunities opened up for free people of color, challenges appeared as French masters attempted to enforce their hegemony by limiting the social and economic aspirations of New Orleans’ free people of color. Free men of color like the Dupard brothers fought against this and solidified their claims to masculinity and respectability through land ownership, slave ownership, patronage, and participation in the colonial militias.

KEYWORDS: *New Orleans, Slavery, Spanish Colonialism, African Diaspora*.

INTRODUCTION

From its beginning in 1718, New Orleans was filled with a mix of people of European, Indian, and African descent, some free and some enslaved. Due to the heterogeneous nature of the settlement, the small number of settlers, and the myriad potential threats the frontier settlement faced, a complex racial hierarchy developed over the years. This was further complicated by the transition from French to Spanish control in 1768. The social ideal the French ruling elite planter class envisioned and enforced had the white male patriarch at the top and the slave of African descent at the bottom. The complex relationships that developed between people of different races meant that reality often challenged this ideal. And while the upper and lower echelons of this hierarchy were firmly established, the place of free people of color in society was much more ambiguous. Throughout the era of Spanish control in New Orleans, the community of free people of color continually tested and negotiated its place in society. This was especially true of the free men of color, whose claims to full citizenship, masculinity and social respectability were often challenged by the ruling class. Two men who embodied this struggle in Spanish New Orleans were Jose and Carlos Dupard, two mulatto brothers who both typified the successes and struggles of the free community of color. Free men of color like the Dupard brothers solidified their claims to masculinity and respectability in the same way that white men of Spanish New Orleans did: through land ownership, slave ownership, patronage, and participation in the colonial militias.

Jose and Carlos Dupard, living in New Orleans in the late eighteenth century, were descended from Pedro Delille Dupard, a French patriarch and plantation owner.[1] In the mid-eighteenth century, Pedro Delille Dupard lived with his wife Jacquelina Michel and their children on St. Anne Street in New Orleans.[2] His brother, Pierre Joseph Delille Dupard, was also a prominent landowner in New Orleans and lived with his wife and children at their large cattle ranch at Cannes Brulées above Tchoupitoulas. Both the Delille Dupard men owned slaves and the cattle ranch at Cannes Brulées was home to 69 slaves by 1763. [3] As the patriarchs of elite wealthy Creole families Pedro and Pierre Delille Dupard embodied the ideals of masculinity in colonial Louisiana. They had all the necessary titles, possessions and duties that made a man honorable and respected in colonial Louisiana: they were *vecinos*, or citizens of the city of New Orleans, owned large properties, served in the militia, were the masters of numerous slaves, and heads of their families.

Land and slaves were concrete markers of wealth and prosperity in colonial New Orleans. But illegitimate mulatto sons of respected white men, such as Pedro Delille Dupard's sons Jose and Carlos, faced great challenges in establishing and maintaining their masculinity. While some mulatto sons inherited homes or slaves from their white fathers, most had to start from scratch in their accumulation of wealth. In their business dealings and in society in general, mulatto and Black men faced the racism of a slaveholding society that equated darker skin with slavery.[4] Society viewed the masculinity of these free men of color as a threat and a challenge to the traditional patriarchy of white men. Despite these challenging social conditions, Jose and Carlos Dupard were able to accrue many of the markers of masculinity and respect, such as land ownership and slaves, and proudly called themselves *vecinos* of New Orleans.[5]

Much has been made of Louisiana's French colonial heritage in both academic scholarship and popular culture. The American antebellum period from 1803-1860 has also been intensely studied as well, but the period of Spanish rule over New Orleans, 1763 –1803, and its influence on the city is often ignored, despite the fact that this era was a crucial time in the development of New Orleans' distinctive society. The city grew from 6,375 people in 1766 to

12,000 total residents in the beginning of the nineteenth century. At the close of the French period there were about 200 free people of color. By the end of the Spanish era, there were around 1,355 were free persons of color, roughly one-fifth of the city's population.[6] In fact, recently scholars such as Jennifer M. Spear, in her comprehensive and groundbreaking work, *Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans,* have shown that the introduction of Spanish slave laws and attitude helped strengthen and solidify the position of free people of color in New Orleans.

Interracial sexual relationships and the system of *plaçage* in colonial New Orleans are aspects of New Orleans's history that have received much attention from both scholars and popular media, but the focus of most of this scholarship is on the mulatto or quadroon woman, her relationship with white men, and her place in society. On the other hand, the history of the sociological status of free men of color has often been overlooked. Comparing and contrasting the lives of the Dupard men and the white Delille Dupards can illuminate the ambiguous and multifaceted roles that free men of color played in Spanish New Orleans society.

RACE AND MASCULINITY IN COLONIAL NEW ORLEANS

The French settlers of Louisiana and New Orleans brought their existing conceptions of masculinity and race with them to the Americas. Of course, those conceptions were shaped and changed to some extent by the unstable nature of a frontier society. But the seeds of the gender and racial hierarchies that eventually developed in the colony had germinated in France. Several international factors converged in the sixteenth and seventeenth century that shaped France's and the wider Atlantic world's notion of masculinity. The rise of imperialism and colonization fueled the growth of commerce and mercantilism and contributed to the new ideal of individualism. Men began to value themselves more as individuals and the accumulation of material possessions became an important measure of that. At the same time, the necessity of warfare as a means to colonization and the acquisition of wealth led to the professionalization of armies so that valor on the battlefield was further proof of a man's masculinity.[7] All these trends led men in the Atlantic world to view property ownership and service in the military as markers of masculinity.

At the same time that this was occurring throughout Europe, there was a rising concern and unease over threats to masculinity in France. This was the result of several factors, among them changing property laws and ideas about women's place in society. Throughout the seventeenth century more and more elite French women became literate.[8] Over time, the French courts began to protect the property rights of wives as well as protect them from physical abuse by their husbands.[9] The Catholic Church was able to reduce the occurrence of concubinage in France, which slightly improved the status of women. All these factors led to an increased concern over masculinity, and a feeling among many in the early eighteenth century that they had to establish control over their wives and families.[10] Thus many of the colonizers who came to New Orleans arrived with heightened concerns about their masculinity.

Another factor that affected French masculinity in the 17th and 18th was the exploration and colonization of foreign places and peoples. The French encourted people who looked and acted very different from themselves and as their empire expanded there was a need to determine these new peoples' place in French society. This was especially true of the millions of Africans transported and enslaved in France's American and Caribbean colonies. French art and popular culture of the mid eighteenth century tended to depict Africans as either acculturated yet alien servants in France or as enslaved workers on distant colonial plantations. And in both types of these depictions, it was usually implied that these were not fully "men." Instead they were "boys" because of their supposed inherent and inferior nature, or because of their lack of freedom.[11]

The changes and subsequent anxiety seen in French society in the eighteenth century were exacerbated for the settlers of France's colonies. As scholars like Gwendolyn Midlo Hall have pointed out, French Louisiana was an incredibly dangerous and constantly changing place. And as she and others have argued, this meant that the French had to rely, intermingle, and even work alongside their slaves in a way that was not necessary in France's other colonies.[12]

In addition to masculine anxiety, the early French colonizers of New Orleans faced a severe lack of respectable white women who were suitable for marriage. In fact, the French Mississippi Company that was responsible for bringing settlers to the colony neglected to import any women until the 1720s.[13] This meant that even respectable men chose to couple with women of a lower class or even of a different race, in both informal sexual liaisons and in formal marriage, which led to the rapid development of a mixed race population. Although social relations in New Orleans started to stabilize as the colony developed throughout the eighteenth century, the influx of numerous immigrants from diverse backgrounds and the change in colonial ownership of the colony meant that there were constant threats and pressures on the social hierarchy.[14] One such pressure came from free men of color, who tried to secure their place as respected citizens of New Orleans.

One impediment to free men of color establishing their respectability and masculinity was the dehumanization and the demasculinization of African men in the Atlantic slave system. Throughout the Americas, the elites of slave owning societies continually emasculated African slaves as part of the process of maintaining the traditional patriarchy of white men. According to the previous white racial views, African men were both beasts and boys. Because planters needed African slaves for labor they conceptualized them as beasts of burden, with the strong bodies, simple minds and the soulnessness of an animal. At the same time, in order to suppress and oppress African slaves, white society always saw African men as boys regardless of their age or size.[15] White planters also had no regard for slave families when economic gain was at stake, and were more than willing to separate families to make a profit. Slave husbands also faced the threat of sexual advances on their wives by their masters.[16] These factors meant that male slaves' positions as heads of households were completely negated by the conditions of chattel slavery. While some men of color in New Orleans were able to gain their physical freedom, they were not equally able to escape from the racial denigration of their masculinity.

THE FREE BLACK COMMUNITY IN NEW ORLEANS

Africans, both free and enslaved, arrived in New Orleans as some of the city's earliest residents, including two free Africans who arrived in the city in 1719: Marie, a paid servant, and Jean-Baptiste César, a manual worker. Several free people of African descent chose to immigrate to the new colony from various places near and far in the African diaspora: Simon Vanon from Senegal, Thomas Hos from Jamaica, and Jean Baptise Raphael from Martinique.[17] The community also grew in these early years when slaves were emancipated in gratitude for their fighting American Indians in the area. This was the case in 1729, when Étienne Périer emancipated a small number of African slaves as a reward for their killing of Native Americans in the area.[18] This also marked the beginning of the use of free Black men in combating rebellious Native Americans and slaves, which would continue through the rest of the century.

In general, the free Black community of French Colonial New Orleans was very small and very weak. Slaves were sometimes freed by their masters, but there were no systematic legal guarantees for self-purchase as there would later be in the Spanish era. And labor of any kind was in such demand, that slave labor was especially valuable. Around 150 slaves were manumitted during the French period and in 1769 there were approximately 200 free people of color living in New Orleans. According to Thomas Ingersoll, their status was closer to slaves than to poor white men.[19]

Over time the community slowly grew, as some slaves were able to save and earn money to purchase their own freedom or were freed by their masters in return for loyal service. When slaves were freed they were given certain rights of white men: property ownership and the ability to enter into contracts. This gave former slaves some freedoms, but they were still constrained by the social rules of the colony, which prevented them from truly living their lives like white men.[20] Because of the possible challenge to the established patriarchy that free Blacks presented, the French, and later the Spanish enacted laws that limited the rights of this class. The basis of much of the French law that governed free people of color as well as Indian and African slaves was the Code Noir. This decree initially issued in 1685 was supposed to govern separate communities of free whites and Black slaves.[21] But because Africans and Europeans in actuality lived closely together in the colonies and produced numerous multi-racial progeny, the Code had to be modified over time and for different colonies to adapt to the reality of the colonies. As a community of free people of color developed in New Orleans, the Code Noir also imposed restrictions such as larger fines for abetting fugitive slaves, prohibitions on marriage with whites, and requiring freedmen to respect their former masters.[22] Because of these types of constraints, free men of color had to work especially hard to establish themselves as reputable, upright citizens of New Orleans.

The popular assumption is that the free Black community of New Orleans grew due to the numerous liaisons between women of color and white men as embodied in the *plaçage* system and the quadroon balls. While the balls certainly did take place in New Orleans, they did not begin until the nineteenth century, by which time New Orleans already had an established free Black population.[23] The quadroon balls did grow out of the long tradition of white men having liberal sexual access to women of color in colonial Louisiana. Yet scholars such as Thomas Ingersoll make powerful arguments that the domestic relationships between Black women and white men were not the main cause of growth for the community of free people of color. According to both French and Spanish law, children inherited the status of their mother. Thus children born to an enslaved mother were themselves slaves. And while some white fathers did make efforts to free their enslaved children and their mothers, scholars like Ingersoll have found that the majority of emancipations in colonial New Orleans do not appear to be linked to romantic relationships or patriarchal duty. Mulatto and Black women were only slightly more likely than mulatto and Black men to receive gratuitous freedom. Ingersoll also asserts that there were more Black and mulatto women who purchased their own freedom than those who had it granted to them, though this is refuted by other scholars.[24] The most likely scenario, as historians like Kimberly Hanger and Jennifer Spear have asserted, is that being young, female, and having lighter skin would greatly increase one’s chance of gratuitous emancipation, but there were other pathways to freedom that enslaved peoples of all skin tones sought.[25]

Thus mixed racial heritage did not automatically lead to freedom. Masters did not necessarily free the mulatto children of their slaves as can be seen in the baptismal records of the

Delille Dupard slaves. There are 15 baptismal records of slaves belonging to Monsieur Dupard ranging in date from 1777 to 1799. The first name of the slave owner is never listed, but in every case the man was given the honorific title "Monsieur," so it can be inferred that the slave owner is one of the white Delille Dupards and not Jose or Carlos Dupard, who always appear in the records without the Monsieur title and with "mulatto libre" following their names. All of the mothers' first names are listed, but the paternal parentage is always listed as "padre incognito" or "padre no conocido." Of the 15 baptisms of slaves of Monsieur Dupard, eleven are clearly listed as "negrito" or "negrita," one as "grifo," two are listed as "mulata," and one as a "quarterona."[26] It cannot be assumed that all these children of mixed race parentage were in fact children of the white Delille Dupard men. But it is possible, and some would argue likely, that they may have indeed been their children. There is no indication in the archives that the children's white fathers, whoever they were, made any effort to obtain their freedom.

The existing baptismal records hold only one case of any of the Dupards' slave children being freed at birth. On March 27, 1799 twin mulatto boys, Juan Francisco Dupard and Juan Pedro Dupard, were baptized at St. Louis Cathedral. They had been born on December 15, 1798 to Maria Morine, a "negra esclava" of Monsieur Delilsle Dupard and an unknown father. The twins, though, were not listed as slaves, but instead as "mulato libre" and were given the last name Dupard. The record also specified that Monsieur Delisle Dupard was giving the children their freedom. The godfather of Juan Francisco was Jose Dupard, who in other records listed himself as the illegitimate son of Pedro Delisle Dupard. Juan Pedro's godfather was Carlos Dupard, mulatto libre.[27] There is no concrete proof that Juan Francisco and Juan Pedro were indeed the sons of Delilse Dupard. Still, it seems unlikely that a slave owner would be willing to free two potentially very valuable slaves for reasons other than fatherly obligation. But as the other mulatto children who were born as slaves demonstrate, being born the mulatto child of a wealthy, white planter did not guarantee freedom.

The ultimate cause for the rapid growth and solidification of the free Black community in the second half of the eighteenth century is this: the introduction of Spanish laws and judicial system, which allowed for owners to easily manumit their slaves when they desired and tended to support the ability of slaves to purchase their freedom through the right of *coartación* or self-purchase. The French laws regulating slavery legally restricted avenues to manumission such as self-purchase as well as discouraging gratuitous manumission by masters.[28] According to the *coartación* custom, which had developed in Cuba and was introduced to Louisiana in the early 1770s, the slave and owner agreed on a price, and the slave then paid that price through money earned in the markets or by hiring out their labor on Sundays. When there was a disagreement in this process between slave and master, slaves had the right to appeal to the Spanish courts.[29] During the Spanish period, half of the slaves who gained their freedom did so through *coartación* and French plantation owners repeatedly tried to restrict the process.[30] As previously stated, the free Black community was made up of approximately 200 people at the end of French rule in 1763; by 1803 when the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory, there were more than 1300 free people of color living in New Orleans who made up approximately one fifth of the city’s population.[31] This new guarantee of the right to self-purchase led to the flourishing of the free community of color in Spanish New Orleans.

The free Black population grew rather quickly in the Spanish era, mostly through this system of *coartación.* Under the new Spanish legal system 1,100 men and women of color purchased their freedom in New Orleans between 1769-1807.[32] All the archival records of Jose and Carlos Dupard indicate that they were born free, to a free mother, so while it is true that they did not purchase their own freedom, it is very possible that their mother had purchased her freedom.[33]

The explanation as to why Spain's laws and customs granted slaves more access to the courts and the right to self-purchase is another contentious historical debate. But one basic explanation lies with religion: Spain's colonial policy had been fundamentally shaped by the Catholic Church. The Church's rulings on slavery changed over time, but typically insisted that African slaves must be instructed in the Catholic faith and all efforts should be made to convert them. A similar policy existed in all French colonies, but numerous accounts of visitors to French Louisiana noted that very little effort was given to slave religious instruction and Spanish priests also complained of the French settlers' failure in this.[34] Modern scholars agree with this assessment and have found that it was one of many official laws and policies that French Louisiana settlers routinely ignored.[35] But because of the greater number of priests and colonial officials in Spanish colonies, a greater effort was made to enforce policies and instruct slaves in the Catholic religion. And since even slaves were members of the Catholic Church, they too had a right to ecclesiastical courts and by extension, secular ones as well.

Yet this should not be viewed as a Tannenbaum-esque interpretation of history: slavery was not inherently more benevolent in Spanish colonies. Spain simply allowed for some legal avenues to freedom and gave slaves access to Spanish courts. The Spanish state, its officials, and its citizens, for the most part, fully believed in their moral and legal right to enslave people of African descent, gain profit from them, and treat free people of African descent as lesser citizens. In fact, under the Spanish Crown, the number of slaves imported greatly increased and the buying and selling of people of African descent flourished.[36] While some were able to gain freedom in the Spanish era, thousands more lived under the grueling and demanding bonds of enslavement.

For those men that were able to gain freedom, they quickly sought to establish themselves as respectable, honorable citizens. They did this through protecting their families, owning land and slaves, and serving in colonial militia. Securing their respectability and masculinity were especially important to free men of color because of the numerous threats and restrictions on their rights and their manhood. Laws prevented people of color from dressing a certain way, marrying whites and owning white indentured servants. People of color were also banned from many social clubs and at times even prevented from engaging in elite sports such as fencing.[37] As other avenues to respectability closed, familial protection, land ownership, slave holding and service in the militia became the primary ways of establishing the manhood of free men of color in Spanish New Orleans.

MASCULINITY AND THE FAMILY

One clear source of masculine identity for men in colonial New Orleans was their role as the head of the household. Both white and Black men drew power from their control of the family. Protection of the family was especially important to free Black masculinity, because their role as fathers had been completely disregarded and devalued under slavery. The disregard of slave fathers began when a child was born. As the Delille Dupard slave baptismal records indicate, the father of slave children was almost always listed as “incognito” or “desconocido.”[38] Because they were not legally acknowledged as fathers they had no right to protect their children and were routinely separated from their children.[39] Therefore many free fathers of color like

Jose and Carlos Dupard valued and treasured their ability to exercise authority in the home and protect their families.

The origin of this authority, of course, was marriage. A man's status could be judged by his ability to secure a wealthy and respectable bride. For pardo men like Jose Dupard, this usually meant marrying another free pardo woman. Dupard had numerous "hijos naturals" with slave and free women. But when he decided to marry in 1797, his bride was also a pardo, and like him, she was the illegitimate, mixed-race child of a prestigious white planter.[40] Free men and women of color tended to marry someone with their same racial and social classifications. And because of the fact that children of slave mothers would also be slaves, men sought out free partners. Of the 109 marriages of slaves and free Blacks recorded at the St. Louis Cathedral between the years 1777 and 1800, 91 of them were between people of the same racial classification and the same status in freedom. Unions between mulattos account for 25 of these marriages, 33 were between "negros libres," 6 were marriages of quadroons, and 27 were between Black slaves.[41] Thus the union of Jose Dupard and Maria Suave, two pardos libres, was a representative match of the marriages in the free community of color in Spanish New Orleans.

After marriage a man protected his masculinity and honor by protecting his family. And once a man's father died, he often assumed control over his sisters and widowed mother. Jose Dupard also sought to protect his family, as well as his property, when soldiers damaged his home near the English Turn in 1813. He and his wife Maria Suave had bought the land in 1805 and began growing sugar. In 1809 the U.S. military decided to build a fort on the Dupard property and later purchased two arpents of land from Jose, then going by the Anglicized version of his name, Joseph. When the soldiers' activities disrupted his sugar fields, he appealed for help to the governor, William Claiborne.[42] Formal appeals and petitions such as these were ways that men sought to protect their families.

There is a popular and erroneous belief that free parents of color wanted their daughters to become the mistresses of white planters. Instead many free fathers of color wanted their daughters to enter into happy and legitimate marriages with men from their own social and racial standing. This was certainly the case when Carlos Dupard's daughter Maria married the *mulatto libre* Basilio Salio on November 4, 1800. Carlos was obviously proud of this match and the wedding itself, as shown by the fact that Noël Carrière, a respected leader in the free Black militia and Carlos's brother Jose Dupard were witnesses.[43] Free men of color knew that if their daughters entered into the *plaçage* system, their daughters and their children would have no legal rights to inheritance.[44] Thus it is likely that men like Carlos and Jose wanted to make sure that their daughters found legitimate husbands.

Illegitimacy was very common among slaves and New Orleanians of mixed racial heritage. Of the 29 Black, mulatto, and quadroon Dupard children baptized between 1777-1799, twenty-two of the children are listed with unknown fathers. Because of this, free fathers of color were very careful to make sure their own children were listed as legitimate sons or daughters. The baptismal records of the children born to free Dupards of color always specify "mulata libre y legitima" or "hijo legitimo."[45] In order to stress the legitimacy of the child the records often include the grandparents, such as the record of Carlota Dupar. The record states that she was the legitimate daughter of Carlos Dupar and Carlota Belem and her maternal grandmother was Maria Belem, while her paternal grandmother was simply listed as "Dupar."[46] Married men of color were careful to make sure that the priests and the community at large knew that their children were the product of a legitimate marriage.

Free fathers of color also sought to give their illegitimate children freedom. This was the case when Marcial Dupard was baptized in 1790. Marcial was the illegitimate child of Jose Dupard and Margarita and although his baptismal record lists the father as unknown, Jose acknowledged Marcial as his child in his 1797 marriage contract with Maria Suave. And when Marcial's younger brother was baptized in 1792, Jose was listed as the child's father. Both baptismal records list Maragarita as a free mulatta, although at this point she was actually Jose's slave.[47] Jose emancipated Margarita, Marcial, Augustin and her child from a previous relationship on September 23, 1793.[48] Through the earlier misleading statement that Margarita was free and her later emancipation it is clear that Jose Dupard had a strong desire for his natural children to be free. Securing a child's freedom or legitimacy were important ways that free men of color could protect their families and thereby protect their own honor and respectability.

LAND OWNERSHIP

One right the community of free people of color in New Orleans took seriously was the right to own property and the concomitant right to enter into contracts. Property ownership was a key component of masculinity, because it gave a man a certain degree of status and allowed for participation in politics and society. Without property, a man could not be a *vecino*, or citizen of the city. Members of the elite planter class owned large tracts of land in both the countryside and the city and saw property as an essential element for respectability. The Delille Dupard men owned a large number of slaves and several prime pieces of land including a cattle ranch near Tchoupitoulas and a house on St. Anne Street in the heart of the Quarter.[49] All men in New Orleans saw property as an essential element for respectability.

For much of his life, Jose Dupard was a carpenter, which was a reliable, but not hugely lucrative, trade.[50] However, the fact that he was both industrious and enterprising was evidenced by the fact that between 1788 and 1799 he was able to purchase three small pieces of property from various landowners.[51] One of his purchases was from a white man, but the other two pieces of property were purchased from free women of color. It was not uncommon for free women of color to transcend traditional racial and gender roles by owning land and engaging in land sales. In fact, as Kimberly S. Hanger notes, free women of color proportionally engaged in more business transactions than either free men of color or white women.[52] Jose's marriage to the free mulatta Maria Sauve no doubt enhanced his income and enabled them to purchase more land, as they did with the acquisition of 11 arpents near the English Turn in 1805.[53]

The other important element of acquiring property was the ability to enter into contracts. This was especially important for free men of color like Jose Dupard because of the social and economic constraints placed on them. Contracts were a crucial component of eighteenth century business negotiations and allowed a man to mortgage his current property in the hope that he would acquire more property. When Jose Dupard bought land from Francisco Fleury in 1788 he mortgaged his property.[54] Free men of color were especially proud of their right to enter into contracts because it set them apart from slaves.

Yet free men of color were also aware that their rights to property could be attacked and infringed upon by white men. One free family of color was expelled from their land by white neighbors because the family did not keep up the stretch of public road that went by their land. In another case, the heirs of a free Black man tried to preserve their inheritance rights, but were prevented from getting the property they should have inherited by the Ursuline nuns, who had given it to a white man in return for his service to them.[55]

Land was such a vital component of masculinity because it opened up further possibilities for citizenship and economic ventures. With land, a man could call himself a *vecino* and without *vecino* status one could not truly gain esteem in society. With land ownership, a man of color could legally mortgage existing property in the hopes of gaining even more land. For free men of color like Jose Dupard, property ownership was one of the few concrete ways in which they could establish their masculinity and citizenship and, at the same time, improve the economic security of themselves and their families.

SLAVE OWNERSHIP

Another component of masculinity in eighteenth century New Orleans was slave ownership. Being a master of slaves contributed to a man's masculinity both as a symbol of his wealth and a symbol of his ability to exert authority and power over other men and women. A man who had numerous slaves was seen as prosperous and respected.[56] Slaveholding built upon the existing notions of patriarchy and family: the slave owner saw himself as the father of his plantation, who worked his slaves, but also took care of them.[57] Slaveholding fit within and confirmed the society's paternalistic and patriarchal nature, so it is not surprising that many ambitious men of color like Jose Dupard owned slaves.

Many slaveholders did envision themselves as compassionate and generous masters. Certain records indicate that this was how the Delille Dupards saw themselves. In 1774 Pierre Delille Dupard was called to testify in a case concerning slaves' rights to work or rest on their free days. He was called to testify because of his respected place in the community as a patriarch and slaveholder. Delille Dupard testified that he believed that slaves were customarily entitled to free days on which they could work for others or rest and did not need permission from their masters to work for someone else.[58] Delille Dupard clearly saw himself as beneficent master who allowed his slaves to have one day a week to themselves.

The issue of slave ownership by free men of color is especially complicated because of the links between the free Black community and slaves. Slaves and free people of color were united by the prejudices and racism of the white community, who saw all descendants of Africans as inherently lesser and unequal beings. At the same time, they were also often connected to the slave community through familial ties. In the case of Jose Dupard, the relationships that developed between himself and his slaves seem similar in some ways and different in others from the relationships between white masters and their slaves.

Both white and Black slaveholders occasionally granted freedom to their slaves. Some masters, including many of the Delille Dupards, emancipated slaves in return for their years of loyal service. This appears to have been the case in 1775, when Catalina Dupard and her husband Pedro Deverges freed their 80-year-old slave Catin. But this manumission should be viewed with a certain amount of skepticism because the records of this event make no mention of monetary or housing support for Catin. An eighty-year-old former slave would certainly have a very difficult time supporting herself.[59] In any event, it impossible to know the precise motives behind these emancipations, regardless of whether they were granted by Black or white slave owners.

Like many white masters, Jose Dupard engaged in sexual relations with some of his female slaves. He openly acknowledged his children with his slave Margarita; as previously mentioned, her children were listed as free in the baptismal records, and she was eventually freed herself.[60] While Dupard acknowledges his “amor y cariño” for Margarita and the children in the emancipation, he clearly did not see her as a social equal.[61] Dupard was single and eligible to marry Margarita when they had their two children in the early 1790s. But Dupard did not marry until 1797 and then it was to a different woman who had been born free and was classified as a parda.[62] Like the elite planters, Jose Dupard used his authority as a slaveholder to gain sexual access to his slaves without feeling any responsibility to legitimize their relationship.

Jose Dupard also owned several male slaves. Unlike the traditional stereotype of a slaveholder who used his slaves for labor on a plantation, Dupard probably worked alongside his slaves in his carpentry shop. In 1794 Dupard paid Don Geromo LaChiapella, a prominent slave merchant, seven hundred pesos for a male slave skilled in carpentry.[63] Dupard made only one other purchase of slaves from LaChiapella.[64] Unfortunately, the archives cannot reveal whether or not Dupard and other free men of color felt conflicted about their role as slaveholders of color; they only indicate that Dupard was a willing participant in the slave economy.

MILITARY SERVICE

In colonies throughout the Americas, service in militias came to be seen as a symbol of masculinity. It was a way for men to protect their families and their community from threats such as hostile Native Americans, *cimarrones*, and competing colonial powers. In the militia a man could showcase his bravery and honor through exemplary service. In the 1763 Census several white Dupard men are listed as militiamen, although their first names are not included, so it is impossible to tell which Delille Dupard.[65] In addition, Francisco Delille Dupard, legitimate son of Pedro Delille Dupard, was a Brigadier in the Compañia de Carabineros de la Provincia de la Luisiana.[66] But colonial militias were also an important avenue for upward mobility for the lower and middle classes. As scholar Kimberly S. Hanger notes in her book *Bounded Lives,* *Bounded Freedom* this was especially true for free men of color in colonial Spanish New Orleans.

The special militia of free men of color began in the French period. During this time planters also engaged in organizing more informal groups of free men of color for the specific purpose of capturing runaway slaves.[67] In fact, the Black militia was primarily engaged in catching and controlling the runaway slave community, although they also fought in battles against Native Americans and colonial enemies as well as doing more mundane tasks like repairing levees.[68] While these militias show a certain degree of trust and alliance between whites and free Blacks, the militias were not respected in the same way as white militias, and were proportionally smaller than the Spanish militias.

Because of the small size of colonial Louisiana's population and the numerous threats the colony faced, the Spanish Crown had a strong need for free men of color to man the militias. In fact, under Spanish rule, New Orleans' militias of free men of color grew dramatically in size. In 1779 there were 89 free men of color in the militia, while by 1801 there were 469 militiamen of color. These are especially large numbers when one considers that in 1778 New Orleans had a population of approximately 121 free men of color and that in 1805 there were still only 624 men of color residing in the city.[69] Joining militias was an attractive option for free men of color not only because of the monetary benefits, but also because of the military *fueros*: exemption from tribute, possible retirement and death benefits, the right to bear arms and the right to be tried in military courts.[70]

While free men of color were wanted and welcomed in the militia, they were excluded from serving alongside white men. In fact, the militias of free men of color were divided into *pardo* and *moreno* units. The militiamen of color were also often assigned more unpleasant tasks, more dangerous military assignments and even mundane manual labor such as levee repair.[71] Nevertheless, the militia served to unite the free Black population and create a unified community. The list of men belonging to the militia is in Havana, Cuba and therefore it cannot be definitively determined whether Jose and Carlos Dupard did indeed belong to the free Black Spanish militia. Local records do show that the two were very closely connected socially to many of New Orleans' most prominent militiamen of color.[72] At Jose Dupard's 1797 wedding to Maria Suave, Josef Favrot, Carlos Brulé, and Noël Carrière served as witnesses.[73] Favrot and Brulé were members of the militia and respected and propertied members of the free community of color.[74] Carrière served as a second lieutenant of the moreno militia and later as the unit's commander and eventually received recognition and a reward from the Spanish Crown for his service in the militia.[75] Carrière also served as a witness at Carlos Dupard's daughter's wedding in November of 1800.[76] Perhaps the most respected and well-known militiaman of color was Francisco Dorville, Commander of the Mulatto Militia.[77] He served as a witness at the wedding of Jose Dupard's natural son Joseph Dupard; the record of the wedding specifically states that the witness was the "comandante de las milicias de mulatos."[78]

The biggest military issue in colonial New Orleans was that of runaway slaves. Black, white and mulatto men saw it as their duty to monitor, capture, and control marronage. In 1747 Nicolas Delille Dupard, seventeen years old at the time, traveled to Havana and returned to New Orleans with information that several runaway slaves were living as free people in the Spanish colony. His information eventually led to the capture of two of these slaves.[79] Not only did marronage threaten the labor supply and economic stability of the colony, but it also threatened security. This was the case in the summer of 1784 when a group of cimmarrones known as the San Maló Band stole from plantations and generally terrified the colony. One of the Delille

Dupard brothers captured six slaves.[80] Perhaps the Delille Dupards felt obliged to capture slaves, as one of the fugitives captured was Sambo Dupard.[81] The pardo and moreno militias also helped search for the San Maló Band, most notably Carrière, the witness at several Dupard weddings.[82] Serving in the militias was a way for the free community of color to earn not only monetary benefits, but also to earn the trust and respect of elite, white New Orleanians. Free people of color continued to serve in militias through the American period. Through their own probable service in the militias, Jose and Carlos Dupard would have gained esteem and proven their masculinity.

CONCLUSION

During the Spanish period Jose and Carlos Dupard were able to accumulate land, slaves, and a certain modicum of status through their hard work, business acumen and probable service in the militias. The Dupard brothers were not unique in this era; many free men of color followed this same path to respectability, establishing themselves as respected *vecinos* of New Orleans and thereby securing their masculinity. Establishing themselves in this manner was critical for free men of color because other avenues to wealth and status were closed to them either by law or custom.

Free men of color also felt the need to secure their manhood because they were living in a slave society that constantly dehumanized and emasculated men of African descent. White men felt the need to protect their patriarchy through racism against all men of color, whether or not they were slaves. And in turn, men of color challenged this patriarchy through their economic and social successes. This is not to say that men of color were trying to radically change this slave society, as can be seen in the fact that many free men of color owned slaves themselves or participated in military expeditions to capture runaway slaves. Free men of color typically only wanted to change the system so that they would be allowed entry into the upper echelons of society.

By the end of the Spanish period, leading white citizens were becoming increasingly concerned about the growth of the free Black population's size, prominence and wealth, especially in light of the Haitian Revolution. It was at this time that the window of opportunity for free people of color to negotiate their place in society closed. Once the city came under United States control in 1803, the Spanish practice of *coartación* was soon prohibited, stunting the growth of the free community of color.[83] However, due to the industriousness and success of men like Jose and Carlos Dupard during the Spanish period, free men of color in New Orleans had established their masculinity and a continuing claim to a place of respect in society.

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BIOGRAPHY

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ENDNOTES

[1] Marriage Contract of Jose Dupard and Maria Suave, 7 June 1797 New Orleans Notarial Archive (NONA) Ximenez 12:174; Marriage of Basilio Salio and Maria Dupart, St. Louis Cathedral Book of Marriages of Slaves and Free People of Color, book 2, 4 Nov 1800, Archives of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

[2] Delille is alternatively spelled in the various records as Delisle and Dupard as Dupar, Dupars, Dupare and Duparc. Jose is sometimes referred to as in the records as Josef or Joseph. Carlos is sometimes referred to as Charles or Charle.

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[5] Marriage Contract of Jose Dupard and Maria Suave, 7 June 1797 New Orleans Notarial Archive (NONA) Ximenez 12:174; Emancipation of Margarita et al, 23 September 1793, NONA, Pedesclaux 18:759.

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[18] Ingersoll, *Mammon and Manon*, 77.

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[24] Ingersoll, *Mammon and Manon*, 226-230.

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[71] Ibid, 123.
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[75] Ibid, 120-122, 124.
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[79] Ingersoll, *Mammon and Manon,* 88.
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[81] Din, 258-259.
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ECONOMIC IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION ON AFRICAN AMERICANS

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ABSTRACT

Before the end of the Second World War Washington, DC did not attract many immigrants from outside the United States. By 1990, the foreign-born population represented 9.7 percent of the District's total population; and by 2000 it accounted for 12.9 percent of the total population. The foreign-born population, which grew by 24.9 percent between 1990 and 2000 is the major source of the District's population growth. This paper explores the economic impact of immigration on the African American population in Washington, DC from 1950 to 2000. I hypothesize that immigration has a net positive economic effect on all racial groups, especially African Americans.

KEYWORDS: *Immigration, African Americans, Washington DC, economic performance*.

INTRODUCTION

Before the end of the Second World War, Washington, DC did not attract many immigrants from outside the United States, perhaps because the economic opportunities in the District are less diverse than other metropolitan areas. By the 1950s, African Americans began to outnumber Whites in the District; with no one else around, the economic competition was between Whites and African Americans. With the baggage of institutional racism and discrimination and the fact that many African Americans were confined to low wage employment, while Whites were in the professions; Whites easily outperformed African Americans in the economy.[1]

The cultural configuration of the city began to change in the 1960s, as Hispanics began to arrive from Central America and the Caribbean.[2] The population continued to diversify in the 1970s, as Southeast Asians began to seek refuge in the District. By 1990, the foreign-born population represented 9.7 percent (or 58, 887) of the District's total population; and by 2000 it accounted for 12.9 percent (or 73, 561) of the total population.[3] The 2000 US Census revealed that Washington, DC, treated as a state equivalent, was the only state to experience population decrease (down 5.7 percent from 1990). Therefore, the foreign-born population, which grew by 24.9 percent between 1990 and 2000, is the main source of the District's population growth. The Census Bureau also reports that more than 50 percent of the foreign-born population in DC entered the US between 1990 and 2000.[4] Although more than 50 percent of the foreign born in the District are from Latin America, the foreign born population is heterogeneous, even within the Latin American group, El Salvador, the single largest sending country in 1990 and 2000 only accounts for 10% of the incoming immigrants.[5] With 17.6% from Europe, 17% from Asia, 12.5% from Africa, 11.4% from the Caribbean and 1.7% from North America, the foreign stock in the District is much more diverse than other metropolitan areas.[6] As the foreign born population increases, the impact of immigration on Washington, DC will increasingly demand the attention of policy makers, social scientists and community activists alike as the sheer volume and the related social, political and economic demands and dislocations are experienced or intensified.

This paper explores the economic impact of immigration on the African American population in Washington, DC from 1950 to 2000. The purpose of this paper is to analyze whether or not increases in the foreign born population negatively affects the economic well being of African Americans (and others). The four major questions under consideration: (1) Does immigration decrease the earnings of African Americans? (2) Are African Americans being displaced by immigrants in the labor market (as reflected in unemployment rates)? (3) Are immigrants making poverty more severe for African Americans? (4) Are African Americans being pushed out of schools by increased immigration? I hypothesize that immigration has a net positive economic effect on all racial groups, especially African Americans. Washington, DC is an important site for this discussion because it has a majority African American population and because it is a relatively new receiving city with not much research focus on the impact of immigration on the native-born African American population or the city in generally.

AVAILABLE PERSPECTIVES

The literature on the economic impact of immigration in Washington, DC is sparse. The District is a relatively new receiving area for foreign born immigrants, as a result, studies analyzing the economic impact of immigration on American cities have tended to ignore the District. The available literature on immigration in Washington, DC emphasize the overall migrant experience, that is, their efforts at acculturation, assimilation,[7] economic mobility and their residential patterns in the city and surrounding areas.[8] The continued growth of the foreign born population demands that analysts and policy makers evaluate the overall impact of immigration on the city and on the existing population.

In the general discourse on immigration, there are at least two broad frameworks in which the literature presents the issue: the open versus closed border theses.[9] Within these broad frameworks are cultural arguments (including integration and assimilation arguments, multiculturalism and nativism) and politico-economic arguments (including economic advantages and disadvantages, issues of political representation and pressures on social services, the criminal justice system and the environment).

There is no shortage of debate as to whether or not immigrants should be allowed to enter the United States, the type of immigrant that should be allowed entry, and how many should be allowed from particular countries at particular times. The cultural framework in which immigration is understood allows old-timers, that is, the native-born population, to decide who the desirable and undesirable immigrants are.[10] Martin and Midgley note that those who prefer no immigration (closed borders) tend to see immigrants from non-European countries to the United States as a recipe for disaster. It is certainly within the rights of states to decide who to admit and the conditions of the admittance. Walzer argues that it is the right of political communities to exclude in defense of their sovereignty and to preserve their national “distinctiveness,” which is in part a function of formal exclusion. However, Carens sees no justification for restricting immigration and maintains that people should generally be allowed to migrate, “subject only to the sorts of constraints that bind current citizens in their new country.”[11] Carens supports this position especially with reference to migration from the Third to the First World. He concedes that immigration would change the character of the community (or its distinctiveness) “but it would not leave the community without any character.”[12] A new national character, a new national distinctiveness would emerge fused with old and new ways of life.

Nozick on the other hand, sees immigrants as threats to territorial space, although it does not necessarily give governments the right to exclude non-citizens.[13] Security concerns and protecting the homeland from foreigners are currently high priorities. Especially in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 the territorial threat presented by immigrants has been emphasized in US domestic and foreign policies. Similarly, the constant influx of Latin American immigrants, especially Mexicans, is seen as a threat to the territorial space of states like California, Texas and Arizona. Furthermore, the institutional framework of the receiving state must be such that it can absorb new immigrants in schools, the labor market, social services and residences; because if it cannot, then immigrants are seen as a burden on the functioning of the state, and therefore a threat to the space.[14]

Within the context of the open versus closed border thesis in the United States, cultural arguments have persistently focused on immigration integration and assimilation, which is premised on tolerance and accommodation of the native-born population and the unlearning of old ways by immigrants.[15] Assimilation was seen as the only way new immigrants could benefit from the "American way of life" which is to say the Euro-American way of life. Immigrants were expected to "shed their own cultures, as if these were old skins no longer possessing any vital force, and wrap themselves in the mantle of Anglo-American culture."[16] Alba and Lee contend that the old way, the Eurocentric idea of assimilation must now make room for different types of immigrant incorporation and the potentially positive role of ethnic groups on American culture,[17] which is forcefully argued by those committed to multiculturalism.

The growing trend towards transnationalism and multiculturalism has challenged the premises underlying, assimilationist arguments. Multiculturalism advances that ethnic loyalties, cultural values and institutions can be beneficial to both the ethnic group and the larger society so that assimilation is a matter of choice rather than necessity. In many immigrant communities in the United States, assimilation and immigration are simultaneous processes. For instance, while an immigrant family is assimilating into American society, they are also receiving new immigrants into their family and/or the wider community and seemingly are always in the process of "becoming" assimilated. Alba and Lee conclude that new theorizing on assimilation must recognize that it "does not require the disappearance of ethnicity; and that the individuals undergoing it may still bear a number of ethnic markers."[18]

Not everyone is as optimistic about the positive role of immigrants on American culture, especially as the sheer volume and concentration are perceived to disrupt the old ways of life.[19] In fact, many analysts in favor of assimilation criticize that multiculturalism is premised on the retention of divided loyalties and hostility toward the new culture. The ability to maintain enclave ethnic institutions, especially in regionally concentrated areas, is seen as a threat to American culture and identity.[20] Huntington argues that regional concentrations slows or retards assimilation, which affects not only the American identity, but also the immigrants' economic potential.[21]

The consistent increases in the foreign-born population (legal and illegal), as well as territorial and cultural insecurities, have instigated a backlash on immigration by native-born Americans. The trend toward increased nativism is evident in public opinion, national lobbies, recent laws enacted, state initiatives[22] and political platforms.[23] Recent legislations have sought to limit the civil rights of immigrants, eliminate some forms of assistance to immigrants, including education to children of illegal immigrants.[24] Nativists argue that immigrant enthusiasts have been quick to celebrate diversity, exaggerating the benefits and ignoring the downsides.[25] McGowan concedes that immigrants have revived inner cities and the economy but there are still causes for concern. Strains on the social fabric, on schools, hospitals, the social services and the protective and criminal justice systems should not be ignored. Moreover, he argues, Third World immigrants are slow to assimilate, which further exacerbates the problem. New immigrants lag behind native-born and the tendency to emphasize their "economic dynamism often obscures their impact on native-born workers."[26] McGowan is critical of the multiculturalist paradigm because it encourages divided loyalties and treats new immigrants as groups rather than as individuals. He prefers that immigrants shuck "off the foreign customs, practices, habits of thinking and values that were – and still are – at odds with 'progressive' American ideals of democracy, economic upward mobility and middle-class life."[27]

The open versus closed border thesis as articulated in cultural arguments, explicitly and implicitly have political and economic undertones. Politico-economic arguments cover an array of issues including political representation, (minority marginalization versus inclusion), educational policies regarding languages of instruction, pressure on and access to social services, health care, housing and political rights. Economic arguments have tempted to assess the economic consequences of immigration on American society, especially on low-skilled workers. The arguments and the findings are contradictory. Those in favor of immigration tend to focus on the positive economic impact of immigrants on the American economy. They see immigrants as bringing skills and money, revitalizing cities, reviving the economy and raising the overall level of wages of native-born workers.[28] On the other hand, other observers focus on the negative impact of immigration on select states and urban centers, arguing that immigrants impose economic burdens rather than alleviate them.[29] These analysts emphasize that many of the new immigrants are low skilled or undocumented workers who depress wages and displace native-born (especially low-skilled) Americans in the labor force. This group also argues that low skilled immigrants add pressure to the welfare system because they are more welfare dependent and add pressure to the criminal justice system because of increased criminality perceived among immigrants.

Moore's 1997 study concluded that cities with a higher percentage of foreign-born immigrants tended to have a more positive economic outlook,[30] with higher income, higher employment, lower poverty rates, low crime rates and lower tax burden.[31] Furthermore, Moore argues that the foreign born population contributes to population growth as natives migrate[32] and contribute to the expansion of the economy by forming their own "ethnic business ventures."[33] Moore argues that despite the overall positive impact of immigrants on American cities, there are possible negative impacts especially on lower-skilled, lower-income inner city residences such as African Americans.[34] Similarly, Kposowa and Chiswick argue that non-whites are negatively affected by increases in immigration, resulting in decrease in minority earnings[35] and displacing minorities in the labor market "especially in places where employers are racially insensitive to non-whites."[36]

Chiswick's research (based primarily on foreign born whites and those entering the US with transferable skills) concludes that in eleven to fifteen years the income of immigrants catch up with and eventually exceed the earnings of native-born Americans. Skilled immigrants obviously fare better than low-skilled immigrants and have a more positive impact on the wages of the native population and the overall economy.[37] Similarly, the Center for Immigration Studies, which advocates immigration reform and limits on immigration, released a study in 1998 that concluded that low-skilled immigrants, as substitutes for low-skilled native-born, tend to depress the wages of the native-born population and displace the working poor,[38] especially within the African American and other native-born minority communities. This is a view that is also held in public discourse.[39] This is exacerbated by the fact that minority immigrants discriminate against African Americans in hiring for their small businesses located in African American communities. Furthermore, research has shown that white employers show preference for hiring immigrants to hiring African Americans.[40] It is not simply a matter of immigrants as such displacing African Americans as it is that the persistence of racial and cultural stereotypes and prejudices put them at a structural disadvantage when there is an availability of alternative sources of low-wage laborers.[41] In his testimony before the US Congress, Frank Morris argued that high immigration rates are not in the national interest of the United States and hurt the most vulnerable sections of the population including poor and working class Americans but especially African Americans. He contends that African Americans are negatively affected not only in depressed wages but also in reduced educational attainment especially at the college and graduate levels. Morris argues for a reduction in immigration flows of both low skilled and educated migrants because he sees both groups as limiting the economic opportunities of African Americans. Alternatively, Shulman argues that although there are economic dislocations in the short run, in the long run, immigration will benefit African Americans.[42]

The economic literature on immigration tend to focus on how immigrants negatively or positively affect the economic well being of the nation and assumes that the economic outlook of the immigrant is always positive relative to others. National statistics on the foreign born population shows that in 1990 and 2000, while the foreign born population had comparable college graduation to native-born, they had considerably lower proportion of high school graduates with Asians being better educated than Latin Americans on average.[43] Similarly, in 1990 more than fifty percent of the foreign born population was below the poverty level.[44] In 2000 the situation was no better as the foreign born were twice as likely to fall below the poverty level than native born.[45] The literature also overwhelming concludes that at the national level and in many metropolitan areas, increased immigration has had a positive impact for whites and a negative impact for African Americans resulting in decreased earnings, lower levels of educational attainment, (especially that the college level), increased unemployment and poverty. This paper challenges these assumptions with reference to Washington, DC.

DATA ANALYSIS

The focus of this section is to analyze the effects of immigration on African Americans in Washington, DC and to determine whether or not immigration has harmed or benefited African Americans and others. Using data from the 1950 to 2000 US Population decennial censuses, extracted for the District of Columbia, I explore the following question: Has the increase in the non-European foreign born population negatively affected the economic well being of African Americans and others? To answer this question I look at four economic indicators: median household income, educational attainment (percentage of high school and college graduates), unemployment rate and level of family household poverty. These four indicators will help me assess whether the increase in the foreign stock has: (1) decreased African American income (depressed wages); (2) increased African American unemployment (labor market displacement); (3) increased the poverty level of African Americans (making poverty more severe); and (4) decreased the educational attainment levels of African Americans (crowding out effect).

Detailed and specific economic information on the foreign born is not available for all Census years and the micro data on the Washington, DC foreign born is mostly demographic. Consequently, I have used race categories of non-white, non-black as the proxy variable for the foreign stock. This can be done with the DC data because the non-European immigrant population is relatively new to the city. In addition, the detailed information available on the places of birth of the foreign born indicates that the increase in the non-white, non-black racial categories, specifically the Hispanic, Asian and 'Some Other Race' categories can be attributed to the increase in the foreign born population (see Table 1). The variable "other non-European races" in this study combines the population and economic statistics of Hispanics, Asians and Some Other Race racial groupings. The foreign stock therefore refers to the foreign born and first generation American born to foreign and mixed heritage parents.

There are two caveats: First, Blacks from the Caribbean and Africa have been ignored as their statistical data are not differentiated in the Census from the larger African American category. Second, the Asian group, more than any other immigrant group will contain third generation native born Americans since the small but notable presence of Chinese and Japanese immigrants have been recorded in the DC censuses since 1890. It is also important to note that although Filipinos, Chinese, and Japanese were numerically counted in the DC population censuses since 1890, there was no discussion of their social or economic characteristics as a separate category until the 1980 Census. The Hispanic population or "Persons of Spanish Origin" were not counted in DC until the 1970 Census.

Table 1: Effect of Change in the Foreign Born on the Population

Variable	Effect of Change
Native born	-.843*
White Pop.	-.362
Black Pop.	-.575
Other Race	.947**

** Significant at the 0.05 level* *** Significant at the 0.01 level*

In order to determine the impact of immigration on the racial diversity of the population I correlated the foreign born population with the native-born population, black, white and other races populations. The results displayed in Table 1 shows strong negative correlation between the foreign born and the native born population at -.843 (.035). In other words, as the foreign born population increases the native population has decreased. The results also shows a strong positive correlation between the foreign born and other races at .947(.004) indicating that as the foreign born population increases the other race population also increases. No correlation is observed between the foreign-born population with either the Black or White populations. This is not an indication that the Black and White populations have not benefited from increased immigration but that the percentage have been small and statistically insignificant. The raw data indicates that of all the race groups, the Black population is the least represented among immigrants while Hispanics receive a much larger share of immigrants. Subsequently, the net lose in the native-born population of both Blacks and Whites have not been offset by net gains in the percentage of foreign born who identity themselves in either category. The growth in the population of other races (Hispanics, Asians and Some Other Race) is a reflection of the diversity in the place of birth of the foreign born, no longer only drawn from Europe and North America.

A preliminary glance at the descriptive statistics in Table 2 indicates that for the economic variables of concern (income, unemployment, poverty and educational attainment – high school and college), on average other non-European races outperform African Americans for all indicators. The only notable exception to this is in 2000 when Blacks recorded 70.3% who had completed high school or higher, compared to 55.8% of Other non-European races (and 94.4% of Whites).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics		
Variable	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
FORGNBRN	48046.67	15132.040
WHITEPOP	267410.67	139008.449
BLACKPOP	391502.50	93538.654
WHITEHS	78.487	16.2775
BLACKHS	49.150	17.1908
OTHERHS	65.125	6.7357
WHITECOL	46.217	25.6529
BLACKCOL	10.933	4.7614
OTHERCOL	32.200	7.0583
WHITHINC	26156.83	24643.453
BLAKHINC	13906.67	11456.570
ORACHINC	21867.50	12099.916
WTFAMPOV	3.325	.9106
BKFAMPOV	18.125	2.7035
OTRACPOV	14.025	2.5250
WHITUNEM	3.117	.9432
BLAKUNEM	7.083	2.1349
ORACUNEM	4.925	.7365

In order to determine the impact of immigration on the economic health of African Americans, I correlated the variables foreign born, other races, Black poverty, Black unemployment, Black income, Black high school and college. The results, displayed in Table 3, shows that there are strong positive correlations between the increase in the population of other races and Black high school, college, and income, all statistically significant at the 0.01 level. There is a positive correlation between the increase in other races and an increase in Black poverty and unemployment however, neither is statistically significant (p>0.10). The same patterns are observed with reference to the increase in the foreign born population. However, the foreign born population has a negative (although not statistically significant) relationship to Black high school completion. This difference may be due to the fact that the foreign born category includes both whites and non-whites.

Table 3: The Effect of Other non-European races and the foreign born population on African American Economic Welfare		
	OTRACPOP	FORGNBRN
BLACKHS	.923 (.009)**	-.753 (.084)
BLACKCOL	.975 (.001)**	.861 (.028)*
BLAKHINC	.984 (.000)**	.889 (.018)*
BKFAMPOV	.797 (.203)	.751 (.249)
BKUNEM	.712 (.112)	.631 (.179)
** Significant at the 0.05 level*	*** Significant at the 0.01 level*	

In order to add a measure of comparability to the analysis I correlated the foreign born population and the economic variables for the non-Black racial groups – Whites and Other non-European races. The results, shown in Table 4, support my hypothesis that immigration has had a positive impact on the economic well-being of all concerned, including the foreign born. There is a strong positive correlation between the incomes of all race categories and the increase in the foreign born population (see Table 3 for African Americans). As the foreign born population increases, the median household income increases for Whites .924 (.009), for blacks .889 (.018), and for other races .996 (.004). The results also show that increase in the income of other races has a strong positive correlations with White income .995 (.005) and African Americans .998 (.002) so that contrary to national findings, African American income has not decreased with increased immigration. There is no statistically significant relationship between immigration and unemployment for any of the groups. However, as Table 4 shows, the relationship is positive rather than negative for all groups. Intuitively as the population increases, unemployment increases for all groups since there are more people in some job sectors competing for fewer jobs. However, the research shows that immigration cannot be said to be *the* cause of increased unemployment. More importantly, the findings indicate that White unemployment, (rather than African American) increases as the foreign born population increases. Although the findings are not statistically significant, of the three racial categories Blacks seem the least affected by an increase in unemployment as the foreign born increases. In other words, the increase in immigration has not resulted in increased unemployment of African Americans; it seems that they have not been displaced in the labor market as previously assumed.

Table 4: The effects of the foreign born on the economic welfare of Whites and Other races	
WHITHINC	.924 (.009)**
ORACHINC	.996 (.004)**
WHITUNEM	.806 (.053)
ORACUNEM	.918 (.082)
WTFAMPOV	-.475 (.525)
OTRACPOV	.974 (.026)*
WHITEHS	.650 (.162)
OTHERHS	.802 (.198)
WHITECOL	.770 (.073)
OTHERCOL	.468 (.532)
** Significant at the 0.05 level*	*** Significant at the 0.01 level*

The relationship between immigration and family poverty is only statistically significant for other non-European races. Therefore, the contention that immigration increases the poverty level or makes African American poverty more severe is not supported. However, the results do show that an increase in the population of the other non-European race is positively correlated to their increased rates of poverty. The impact of immigration on educational attainment is interesting. As already mentioned, there is a strong positive (statistically significant) correlation observed between foreign born and Black college attainment but not high school completion rates. Growth in the foreign born population is also positively correlated with White high school completion and college, although neither is statistically significant (p>.05). On the other hand, increases in the foreign born population is negatively correlated with other races high school completion at .802 (.198) although it is not statistically significant (p>.05). This negative correlation is indicative of the fact that many of the new immigrants are low or unskilled workers from non-English speaking countries, and perhaps lack the English proficiency necessary to succeed in public schools that provide very little accommodation for new English language learners.

CONCLUSION

There are other (candidate) variables that are important to evaluating economic well being that were not discussed here, yet remain important to the discussion, those variables include: rate of house ownership, labor force participation, age in the labor force, family size, female headed households, and rate of incarceration and other institutionalization. Since we are provided with a wealth of demographic (and not much social or economic) information on the foreign born in Washington, DC, the increase in the non-European foreign stock is useful for assessing the economic performance of African Americans in an exploratory analysis such as this. Future research and continued focus on Washington DC will begin to make the discussion on the relationship between immigration and African Americans less exploratory and more comprehensive. And will demand that more detailed microdata be gathered.

In sum, the data shows that the foreign stock on average is faring better economically than native born African Americans in the District, with higher median household incomes, higher educational attainment at the college level, lower unemployment and lower family poverty rates. The higher income levels of the foreign stock may not necessarily have anything to do with the so-called stricter work ethic of immigrants but may be a result of a variety of other factors including larger family structures, more households with working aged adults who can pool their incomes, ability to navigate available economic opportunities because of structural inequalities and institutional prejudices against African Americans and the fact that many immigrants to the District come as educated, skilled workers or came to pursue their education in the area and remained.

There are two additional points necessary to this discussion. The first is that although the median household income is reportedly higher for immigrants over African Americans, it does not capture the fact that their actual spending power might be considerably lower than African Americans' because of remittances to the home country. Second, not all immigrant groups are created equal. In other words low skilled workers do not fare as well as higher skilled immigrants. Moreover, the Asian foreign stock fares better than other non-European immigrant groups, especially the Hispanic foreign stock. Although the foreign stock in the District is generally faring better than African Americans; the growth of the foreign stock has had a positive (rather than negative) impact on the population as a whole, including African Americans. Immigrants outperforming Blacks may have little to do with immigrants displacing Blacks in the labor market and more to do with Blacks being marginalized by the dominant group, which it contributes to comparatively lower African American economic performance.

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THE AFRICAN IMMIGRANT FAMILY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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INTRODUCTION

The Africans who migrated into the United States of America in the 20th Century came unencumbered by the strictures of enslavement and bondage. Unlike their predecessors who were enslaved, and came to the United States via the Middle Passage, these Africans came to the U.S. to some degree, voluntarily, being only compelled by unrelenting economic crisis, political turmoil and the deleterious effects of natural disasters. There were also a few who were not compelled by such dreadful strictures, and these immigrants had widely disparate motivations. Even without any reliable data from interviews of these men and women who left their homes in Africa in search of education, fortune, refuge or adventure, one can identify four categories among them. The first were the students who came in the late nineteenth century, sometimes with the support and assistance of American missionaries who hoped that they would later return to establish Christian missions, and collaborate with like-minded Christians to extend the message of Christ to their fellow Africans. This group of Africans went primarily to historically Black colleges and universities. Many came from West and Southern Africa. There were also a few from East Africa. The second group was African students who came during the 20th century for both secular and sacred education. Some of these entered into conjugal relationships with

White American and African-American women and decided to stay permanently in the country. The third group consists of seamen and stowaways who found their way to American seaports such as New York City or New Orleans, Louisiana. Many of these men who sailed on American or foreign ships settled in the New York-New Jersey area. Their activities in Harlem attracted the attention of some of their contemporaries. The fourth group of Africans who entered the history books, as part of the growing African immigrant community, are the political refugees. Most of these African immigrants are the victims of the civil wars fought, either as a result of the Cold War, in pursuit of national liberation, or in pursuit of national or sectional interest in border conflicts, or on the domestic front.

This paper will address the challenges and opportunities facing the African immigrant community and the African immigrant family. Its first objective is to identify the building blocks that contribute to the development of the African immigrant community in the United States of America. The second is to explain how changing times, conditions, and circumstances have combined to define the nature of the relationship between the African immigrant and the larger American society. The third is to identify the main issues facing the African immigrant communities around the United States of America. Working on the assumption that the African immigrant community is not monolithic, and that cultural background has differential impact on immigrants, this paper argues that African immigrants could either embrace or eschew assimilation. For those that desire it, the assimilation process would depend on several critical variables: the ease of functioning in a society that speaks an intelligible language, the social class, and the socio-cultural origins of the immigrant, the immigrant's political and psychological position, as well as the level of interest and dedication to the idea of settlement in a host country. Even where settlement is desired, increasingly, there is the realization that immigrants could be transnational and thus disinterested in assimilation. The fourth objective is to give a synthesized conclusion based on my assessment of the evidence gathered while investigating this subject matter.

THE MAKING OF THE AFRICAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY

African immigrants began coming to the United States of America voluntarily not long after the Civil War and the abolition of slavery. During the first thirty years after the Civil War, the number of free Africans who ventured to this part of the world was very small. The accounts of Africans from the continent who visited the United States during the last three decades of the nineteenth century show that many of these men and women were Liberians and other West Africans from other points along the coast. There were also African-Americans who settled in Liberia and established linkages between the two African peoples (in the continent and the U.S.) and created travel opportunities for many continental Africans who previously had neither dared nor were welcome as free immigrants to this part of the Atlantic in the era of the slave trade.[1] One African immigrant, whose activities have now become a significant chapter in the history of Pan Africanism and African immigration to the United States, was Chief Sam from Ghana. Professor Jabez Ayodele Langley’s book on the Pan African movement in West Africa tells the story of how Chief Sam came to the United States in the late nineteenth century and settled in New York. His business ventures enabled him to prosper and to establish networks of friendship with African-Americans. In the early part of the 20th century, when race relations between Blacks and whites in the United States were at their worst, and lynching was prevalent in the South, Chief Sam offered his services to Black families in Oklahoma and Kansas, who wished to emigrate from the United States to the African continent. His efforts failed not because of his inability to organize and lead his followers into the Promised Land, but because the colonial authorities conspired to stymie his efforts. They saw as clear and present danger, this massive migration of New World Blacks, into their newly pacified colonies.[2]

Although we do not know much about the lives and times of the other African contemporaries of Chief Sam in New York and in other spots within the borders of the United States, there is circumstantial evidence from the writings of others that point to an African immigrant presence in Harlem during the first three decades of this century. Ras Makonnen, a Trinidadian activist of the global Pan African movement, spoke of some African residents in New York during the inter-war period.[3] Many of these Africans were Somali men who reached this part of the United States, either as seamen or stowaways. Many settled in Harlem and started new lives. In my investigation of Islam among the African-Americans, data from my interviews with some of the earliest Muslim activists in Harlem, suggest some Moroccan, Somali, and West African presence among the Blacks settling in New York. Moving Westwards from New York, we have records on the appearance in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, of Muhammad Majid, a Sudanese who came to the United States to work with African-American converts to Islam. According to FBI records obtained under the Freedom of Liberation Act by Professor Robert Hill of UCLA, Editor of the Marcus Garvey Papers, Muhammad Majid attracted the attention of the authorities who saw him as part of a Japanese propaganda campaign against the U.S. He had to leave the United States in 1928.[4] Details about Muhammad Majid and his activities are presented to the scholarly community by Professor John Hunwick and a Sudanese collaborator. The two scholars stumbled upon a scholarly gold mine when they located a box of files relating to the life and times of this Sudanese immigrant who had settled in Pittsburgh some seventy years ago.[5]

Besides the records on these immigrants, there is also the story of Duse Muhanutiad Ali, a Sudano-Egyptian journalist, playwright, and activist who came to the United States of America in the 1920s and settled for some time in Detroit before his relocation to West Africa, where he founded newspapers and contributed to the Pan African discourse. Prior to his appearance in the United States, Duse Muhammad Ali was the editor and publisher of the *African Times* and *Orient Review* in England. Because of the nature of this publication and the manner in which it dealt with the events of the times, one can make the case that Duse was the doyen of Afro-Asian journalism in England. One of his protégés, who would later enter history as a great Pan Africanist, was Marcus Garvey. This Jamaican immigrant crossed paths with many Africans in Europe and in the United States of America.[6]

Besides the figures who made history, there were many unknown African immigrants who melted into the ocean of names and faces in America. Their stories are parts of anecdotes told by individual family members, and passed from one generation to the next. Today, modern families can reconstruct their past with the aid of official documents and even scientific innovation. However, those whose ancestors never experienced the horrors of degradation and humiliation of the Middle Passage, may be able to reconstruct their histories more easily.

The composition of the African immigrant community changed in the 1930s and 1940s, when a growing body of African students began to come to the United States for higher education. Among these men and women, those from former British colonies were breaking with tradition by choosing American schools over British ones. The vast majority of these students of the interwar period returned to Africa. Some of them made a significant impact on world history; others simply faded away into the mist of historical time. We learn much from the autobiographies of several of these men and women who wrote about their experiences in the

United States. In many respects they portrayed a picture of life in the U.S. as experienced by continental Africans. One early account came from the pen of Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, who had studied at Lincoln University and later became the first President of Nigeria.[7] Some of his contemporaries from West Africa who came to America remained in the United States. Of these, particularly remarkable is the saga of Dr K. W. Aggrey of Ghana, whose activities in the United States are legendary. Married to an African-American, and being one of the first generation of African professors in America, this educator from Ghana returned home to teach at Achimota College. He also straddled the continent and its Diaspora in his family relations. Aggrey's children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren are now a part of the African-American community. One of his children rose to the rank of U.S. ambassador in the State Department and also served as the Director of the Howard University Press in Washington, D.C. for many years.[8]

The generation of Kwame Nkrumah followed the first wave of Africans coming to the United States in the 20th century. Like the earlier cohort, the students who came at the same time as Nkrumah, also witnessed the settling of some who decided to remain permanently in America.[9] The African students, who for one reason or the other, stayed on, became part of the Black community. Their descendants have now become an integral part of Black America. The composition of the African immigrant population has become more complex in the post colonial period. Two factors were responsible. In the first instance, African independence opened the floodgates of Americanism in the continent, and African peoples saw this as a new opportunity to seek firsthand experience of the U.S. Many belong to the category I have called elsewhere "The children of the Cold War." In essence, they were the beneficiaries of the ideological rivalry between the Soviet Union and the West. These two contending powers offered generous scholarships to young Africans for higher education. Chosen purposely, to serve as ideological proxies in the Cold War, most returned home to obtain lucrative jobs in their countries of origins.[10] However, a tiny faction decided to remain in the U.S. This body of Africans gradually made up a significant building block in the house of "Samba Africa" in America.

The gradual but significant development of an African immigrant community was due to the state of African governance in the post colonial period. Although the arrival of political freedom in Africa spelt success for many of those with Western education, the political battles for a piece of the African pie soon led to political instability and conflict. The challenges of nation-building meant that many Africans found their countries transformed into battlegrounds, and their careers stymied by the political breakdown and chaos in their countries. Many of these men and women fled to abroad, and some of them returned to the Western countries where they had received higher education, including the U.S. Most of them have engaged the struggle to become acclaimed and as a result the African immigrant population became diversified, because those who had stayed behind due to marital ties were joined by refugees from political crises and conflicts.[11]

The diversity of the African immigrant community has been manifested in several ways, including gender, regional origin, and socioeconomic class. Until the postcolonial era, the African immigrants were overwhelmingly male and single. This distribution pattern changed with political independence. By the time Africa achieved her political freedom, a large and growing body of women had Western education. They were also beginning to compete with their male counterparts for opportunities to study in colleges and universities abroad. Some of these women returned home just like their male counterparts; others were married to African men who decided to remain in the United States; a small percentage also decided to stay due to marriage to American men.[12]

The attainment of political independence also contributed to the diversification of the population of African immigrants. Until the early 1960's, these men and women were mainly from the English-speaking African countries and were interested in navigating the stormy waters of American society. The post independence period created many opportunities for Africans from other colonial territories to venture outside the continent, mostly in quest of higher education. Owing to the diversification process that resulted in increased settlement of migrant Africans in the U.S., the African immigrant community now includes permanent residents from virtually every country in the continent regardless of the language inherited from their experience of colonization. The numbers vary from country to country. The African states that have experienced political stability since independence are less likely to have many permanent residents in the United States. When such African countries combine steady economic growth with political stability, the numbers of their indigenes that choose permanent migrant status in the U.S. is even more minuscule. Thus, the largest concentrations of Africans in the United States are the Nigerians, Ethiopians, Ghanaians, Sierra Leoneans, Liberians, South Africans, Somali, Senegalese, and Kenyans, (all citizens of countries that have experienced considerable political turmoil and/or conflict since their independence). There are also sizeable numbers of Zairois, Sudanese, Egyptians, Eritreans, Ugandans, Cameroonians, Algerians, Moroccans, Libyans, Malians, and Cape Verdeans in the U.S. The African immigrant population also includes immigrants from smaller states like the Gambia, Togo, Mauritius, and Lesotho. Many of these are students who initially came to study, but have decided to stay on in the U.S. Some of these African immigrants had at some point returned home to take lucrative jobs, but because of changed political fortunes in their countries, relocated from their original home countries.[13]

The most recent additions to the growing list of African immigrants are the Somali and Rwandans. The collapse of the Somali state and the much televised bloodletting that followed the crisis attracted the attention of many Americans. Thousands of Somali now live in the U.S. They are scattered in various parts of the country. Some are in the Greater Washington area, especially in northern Virginia; others are in the West Coast, especially in San Diego, California; yet others are in the Mid-West, particularly in Minnesota and parts of Illinois. In the northern Virginia region of the U.S., according to figures from the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS), three thousand Somali took up residence in the jurisdiction. Many of these are women and children seeking reunification with their husbands and fathers.[14]

As with the Somali case, the Rwandan genocide triggered a series of migrations to other countries. The Hutu were the largest number of migrants to flee Rwanda. Majority took refuge in other African countries, and a small fraction sought refuge in the U.S. However, African refugees have not benefited from U.S. immigration as much as refugees from other countries. The Rwandans who were in the U.S. at the time of the genocide managed to stay on in the U.S. because they made a case for their continued stay. In return, they received the U.S. government’s bureaucratic wink, rather than an open invitation to remain in country until the political situation improved in their home country. This was the same response given to the Ugandans and Liberians when their countries became embroiled in turmoil.

THE AFRICAN IMMIGRANT FAMILY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Several issues confront the scholar studying the African immigrant family in the U.S. However many such issues are not peculiar to Africans. Most immigrants contend with them. The first issue concerns identity and self-definition. Coming to a White and Christian majority society, how have African immigrants fared thus far? This question cannot be answered conclusively. There is need for more research on African immigrants from each of the continent’s countries. There are already studies on the Nigerians, Ethiopians, and Senegalese living in various parts of the U.S. These studies show that the new immigrants are juggling with multiple identities. Their American experience has made both the individual and family members take a hard look at their circumstances and conditions in American society. In a society where people define themselves racially, ethnically, economically, and linguistically, members of African families have multiple identities, and each is meaningful depending on the context in which they find themselves. At one level, she/he is a Black person in a sea of whiteness. At another level, there are religious and denominational differences with other Africans and Americans. The same African may be in one instance, the only restaurant owner at the Parents/Teachers Association meeting, and in another instance, a parent from Ethiopia as opposed to Gambia or Ghana. Within the smaller universe of continental Africans, the immigrant may be one out of thousands of Nigerians, Sierra Leoneans, South Africans, or Kenyans living within a given city. Under these conditions, the African immigrant may find out that the process of splinterization of the original African community in that city, has reached what I have called elsewhere the “islandization” process. This is to say, at this juncture, the immigration now witnesses the clustering effects of culture, language, and the increase in the number of "homeboys" and "homegirls." This process of islandization may lead to the rediscovery of their ethnic, subethnic, and African high school affiliation as the bases of the identities they choose to embrace or reinforce as new immigrants. Many African organizations were created as a result of such acts of self-definition among the African immigrants.

The process of self-definition can also take on a religious character. In their study of the Ethiopian communities in the United States of America, the husband and wife team, Professors Gactachew Metaferria and Maiginet Shifferew demonstrated how the Ethiopian Coptic Church now plays an important role in the adjustment of Ethiopian immigrants to American society.[15] The Nigerian, Ghanaian, Sierra Leonean, and Liberian Christian churches are also playing similar roles in their communities. One of the African Protestant leaders that has received a lot of media attention is Rev. Dr. Darlingston Johnson from Liberia, who now serves as the Apostolic General Overseer of Bethel World Outreach Fellowship, with its headquarters in Liberia. Dr. Johnson is a founding Senior Pastor of the Bethel World Outreach Ministries in Silver Spring, Maryland. According to a piece written in the April, 1998 issue of *The Christian Times International*, a monthly published by Nigerian-born journalist, Chuks Anyanwu, Rev. Dr. Johnson's Church in Washington was established in 1990 when the Liberian crisis forced some of the Christians to pray for peace and stability in their country. The Christian pastor told this Africa-oriented Christian publication that he and seventeen others gathered to set up this ministry among their people. They saw themselves not as refugees but as missionaries.

The African Christian communities include the highly organized Nigerian Catholics, whose organization has led to the offering of religious services in Igbo, and some Eastern African Catholics who have their services in Swahili. There are also various branches of the Christ Apostolic Church, Aladura and Celestial Church of Christ whose services are held in Yoruba. These steps are taken largely because, the congregations that introduced these innovations have reached a critical mass as linguistic communities in the U.S., and they are responsive to the demands of their congregation for worship in their indigenous languages.

Among the Protestant groups that are also organizing are the African Initiated Christian churches, which have also responded to the challenge of aiding African family adjustment to American life and culture. The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) was founded in Nigeria in 1952 by Pa Josiah Akindayomi, is and now led by Pastor Enoch A. Adeboye, as the General Overseer. With over 6,000 parishes worldwide, 431 of them in the U.S., the RCCG has its North American headquarters in Dallas, Texas[16]. The Brotherhood of the Cross, founded by Olumba Olumba Obu in Calabar, Nigeria (OOO), [17] now has a branch in several American localities. With about two million followers worldwide, this religious group caters to its African flocks in those U.S. cities where sizable populations of Nigerians and Cameroonians live. The Cherubim and Seraphim Church, International House of Prayer for All People also has a chapter in Washington, D.C. Founded by Reverend (Dr.) Fred O. Ogunfiditimi, this church now has followers all over the U.S. According to Chike Anigboh, the church has staked a claim for itself in the realm of healing and spirituality. With the ever-growing challenges of daily stress and pain, many African immigrants, including those with limited financial and emotional means, are drawn to these churches. The churches are socializing agencies that respond to the material and spiritual needs of tormented humanity in the jaws of city life. For example, Reverend (Dr.) Ogunfiditimi’s church states its mission as sheltering stranded Nigerians, and first-time Nigerian sojourners to the United States. These stranded Nigerians could stay at the church for two months, to enable them to sort out their problems. These efforts of the African Initiated Christian churches are also evident in the activities of the mainline Protestant African Christian Churches.[18] The news report on Rev. Dr. Johnson of Liberia cited above stated that the "building hosting the church is concise and spiritually uplifting. The outside does not easily tell the hidden treasures inside. It has a day care center, a Bible College, Computer Learning Program, and

Christian books and supplies." The paper enumerates other agenda items of this African Christian Church in the Greater Washington area. Among the projects planned is the dream of establishing a Daily Bread Community Action Program to help the homeless and the needy and counseling programs to rehabilitate drug addicts and alcoholics. According to the newspaper article, they also plan to establish a cafeteria, and have set up a facility to handle the financial, immigration, legal and other problems of their members.

Muslim African immigrants have also embraced their religion to offer security and meaning to them in their new environment. There are Senegambian, Sierra Leonean, Ghanaian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, Sudanese, and various North African Muslim organizations. The African immigrant Islamic groups are inspired either by the traditional Sufi orders back home, or by the Islamic revivalism that presently hold sway in certain parts of the Muslim World. According to Sylvaine Diouf-Kamara, in an essay on Senegalese immigrants living in the U.S., particularly in New York City, African immigrant women are increasingly independent. This she attributed to the influence of the prevalent gender relations in their new environment, part of which is due to the imperatives of the need for daily survival in an industrial society, which make it difficult for families to survive on one income. In addition the number of highly educated women emigrating from Senegal to the U.S. has increased in recent years. There is evidence that African Muslim immigrants are changing their attitudes and perceptions. These changes and the manner in which they are received and perceived by African immigrant Muslims would have serious consequences in shaping family values among African immigrant Muslims.[19]

Another issue that confronts African immigrants is the "myth of return." All immigrants entertain the notion of leaving their home countries for countries of settlement, striking it rich, and then returning home with enough resources to live well in their countries of origin. Often, this does not happen. Instead the single immigrant marries a local woman or man and ends up with a family and children. The immigrant may then feel compelled to stay long enough to ensure those children's education and autonomy, but more often than not, the children establish their own families and what was originally meant to be short term migration becomes permanent. Due to the myth of return among the African immigrants, there is a serious gap between ideals and realities. Most have grand ideas about what they would like to contribute to the transformation of their home countries. Because of their procrastination and ambivalence, they focus on their home countries, while neglecting to socialize their children to cope with life in their countries of origin. It is owing to this neglect that there is a growing body of young Africans who do not speak any African languages. Many thought that these languages would be acquired, as if by osmosis, through the child's interaction with members of the family. Given these challenges, it is appropriate to raise the question of socialization and the need for social and moral agency in the education of African immigrant children. There is a serious gap between the ideals of the first generation of African immigrants and the needs of the second and subsequent generations. However, the research data is still very limited, and more scholarly attention should be devoted to the study and understanding of this phenomenon.[20]

Connection with the embassies of their countries of origin in the US is an avenue through which some support could be garnered in support of the efforts by African immigrant families, both to cope with the adjustment problems encountered in the U.S., and with the linguistic and other cultural resources that could support them in the socialization of their children. It is not an exaggeration to say that most African immigrants have little or no contact with their embassies. The only time these immigrants visit their embassies is when they need to replace their expired passports. Otherwise they try their best to keep them out of their business. There are several reasons for this ambivalent relationship. The first is that the political conditions in the immigrant's home country may be such that he or she does not want to get too close to those in power. Sometimes this is due to the fact that immigrants belong to a losing party, and the post-electoral political crisis and/or other related reasons decided to seek political asylum in the U.S. Another possible reason is that African immigrants may feel that their countries' embassies do not have much to contribute to their welfare, and that the officers running it are ethnically or regionally biased against them. These ethnic or regional biases have often poisoned and muddied the waters of African solidarity abroad. Besides the myth of return, there is the issue of sending remittances to relatives back home. Because of the extended family system in Africa, the African immigrant families cannot think solely in terms of nuclear family arrangements. Since, on the average, the African immigrant hails from a large extended family, the opportunity to live in America is a boon or a bane, depending on the personal circumstances of the immigrant family. The African immigrants who have close social and familial ties back home have the constant ritual of going to American banks, money transfer agencies, African-managed foreign exchange bureau, and to returning compatriots to deposit monies intended for relatives back home.[21]

Another issue that increasingly affects African immigrant families is the spread of negative values into the African immigrant community. These include the rise of criminal activity and embrace of the drug culture by some African immigrants. The drug culture deserves proper historical treatment. There are many gaps in our knowledge about this phenomenon. New research is necessary. Some African immigrants are now confined to U.S. jails and prisons as a consequence of involvement in the narcotic trade.[22] Some have become homeless due to complications from uncontrollable drug use, mental illness, alcoholism, and spiraling financial downturn. There remains such a dearth of information about the causes and consequences of homelessness among African immigrants, that scholars must engage in research and share their findings. Data and information on African immigrants in the U.S. could also be useful in shaping public policies to better meet the needs of the homeless.

CONCLUSION

Five points are worth remembering about the new waves of African immigrants in the United States of America. First, Africans have now decided to settle in the U.S. voluntarily over one hundred years after the Civil War, and over two hundred years after the American abolition of the slave trade. This is a historical watershed in the sense that the diversity of Africa that characterized the first waves underwent transformation in the colonial era. Whereas the first wave of Africans came as citizens and subjects of ethnic nationalities, kingdoms, and empires, of the pre-colonial era, their brethren who came here during the last one hundred years arrived as citizens of nations that did not exist in 1619 or 1865. Secondly, the new Africans are transnational, and they carry multiple identities that will affect their relationships with African-Americans, and other Americans, with fellow African immigrants and with persons living in their home countries. This is part of the new reality of globalization. The African immigrants who can successfully juggle these multiple identities effectively are qualified to call themselves transnational. Many are not only comfortable in their culture of origin, but able to operate meaningfully and effectively anywhere in the global environment. Thirdly, the African immigrant family faces the same difficulties as other immigrant families. The problems of identity and self-definition will remain issues that individuals and communities must address. Fourth, the role and place of religion in the lives of the African immigrants is of great consequence. The African tendency to hedge their metaphysical bets is most evident in the loving embrace of Abrahamic faiths, while simultaneously pouring libations at weddings, baby showers, public events, and funeral rites. Finally, African immigrants are now a part of American society, and their children and grandchildren will most likely be driven by similar impulses that as propel other Americans.

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BIOGRAPHY

Sulayman Nyang teaches at Howard University in Washington, D.C. where he serves as Professor of African Studies. From 1975 to 1978 he served as Deputy Ambassador and Head of Chancery of the Gambia Embassy in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Following his diplomatic stint, he immigrated to the United States and returned to academic life at Howard University, where he later assumed the position of department chair from 1986 to 1993. He also serves as co-director of Muslims in the American Public Square, a research project funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts. Professor Nyang has served as consultant to several national and international agencies. He has served on the boards of the African Studies Association, the American Council for the Study of Islamic Societies and the Association of Muslim Social Scientists. He is listed on the editorial boards of several national and international scholarly journals.

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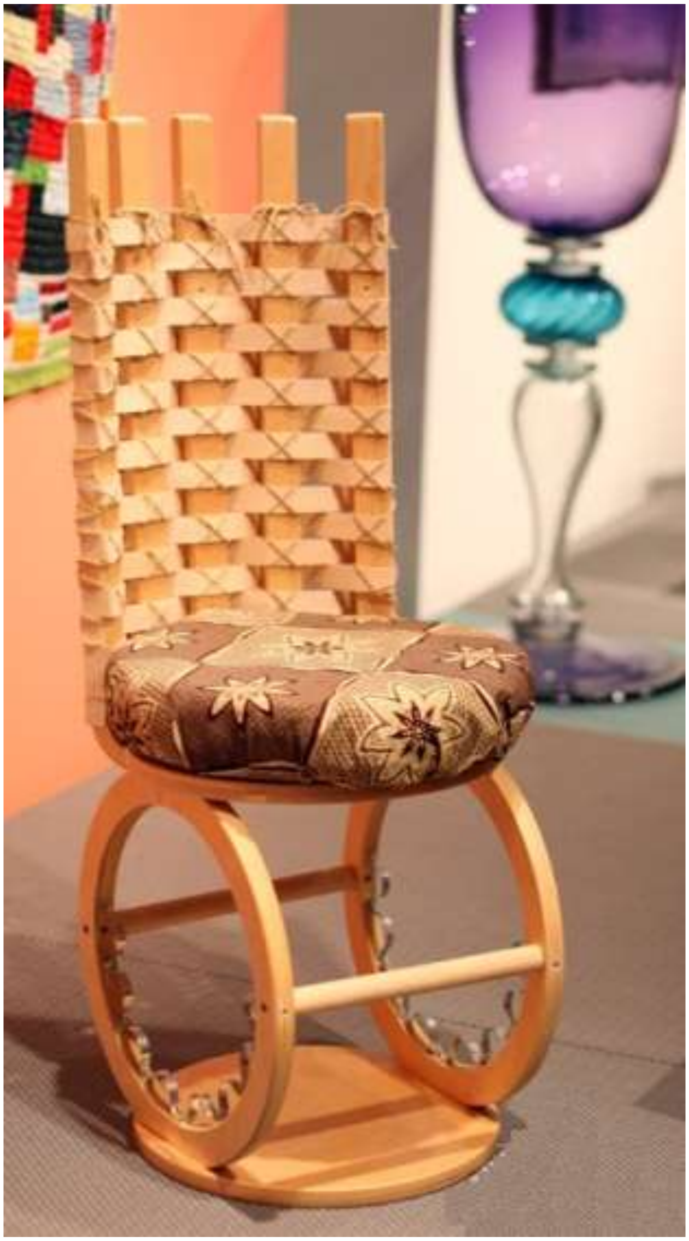
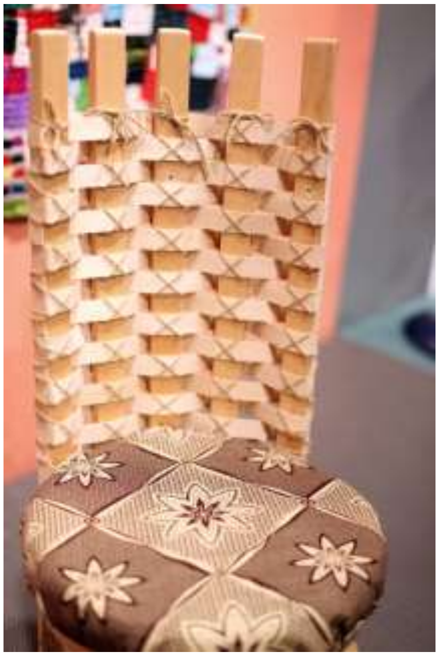
AFRIKEA (2009)

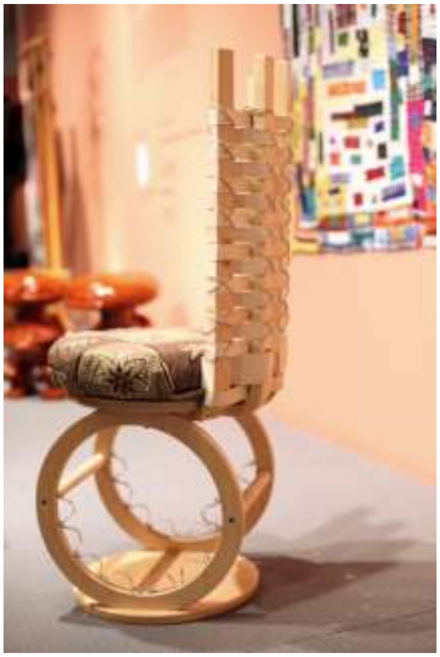
ADEJOKE TUGBIYELE



Medium: Recycled IKEA Stools, West African fabric, basswood, and twine.



By reconfiguring two IKEA stools, I critique mass-standardization and conformity in Western culture - an affordable, one-size fits all approach to design. I also play with fabric taken from African print, which became part of Nigerian attire as a result of the evolution in aesthetics and style that began with African inclusion in international production chains that came with increased trade with Europe, and European mass production of fabric that copied African and Asian indigenous patterns in Java and other arena of European imperialism from the 16th century. By the 19th and 20th centuries, some of the production was done in European textile mills[1]. The imperatives of competitiveness and profit later caused relocation of some of the production to Asia, (including India and China), and by the early 20th century, to Africa. They also compelled European producers to be highly sensitive to African tastes and preferences[2]. Africans who purchase European and Asian-origin fabric did so sometimes because it was less expensive, because it was color-fast, as compared with African fabric's tendency to "bleed" and color the bodies of wearers with the dyes; and also because of the allure and prestige of owning something exotic and foreign[3]. In the 20th Century, the Lome Convention gave preferential access to the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries' exports to European countries, while discriminating against non-ACP exports, and allowed the ACP to impose tariffs on European exports[4]. During the Uruguay Round negotiations, under the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) regime, The Multifibre Agreements, made it more profitable to produce in Africa, because textiles exported from Africa to Europe and the United States were not subjected to tariffs while very high tariffs were imposed on textiles from



Asia. Consequently, more production moved to Africa[5] that departed once the Multifibre Agreement expired in January 2005.

This piece organizes shapes in ways that resemble traditional African thrones. A new story is thus formed about the importance of sitting through what is now a conceptual piece of sculpture. As described in the publication "The Global Africa Project," co-authored by Sims and King-Hammond, AFRIKEA is a "reconstruction and customization of prefabricated furniture from the furnishing and lifestyle giant IKEA."

Images are courtesy of the artist taken at the exhibition, The Global Africa Project at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY.

AFRIKEA is on loan from the private collection of Patricia Bell. It will be on exhibit next at the Reginald Lewis Museum in Baltimore, Maryland in January 2012, as part of the traveling exhibition The Global Africa Project.

For reviews of this work when exhibited, see:
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lia-petridis/global-africa-project-in-_b_786167.html
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/03/arts/design/03mad.html

BIOGRAPHY

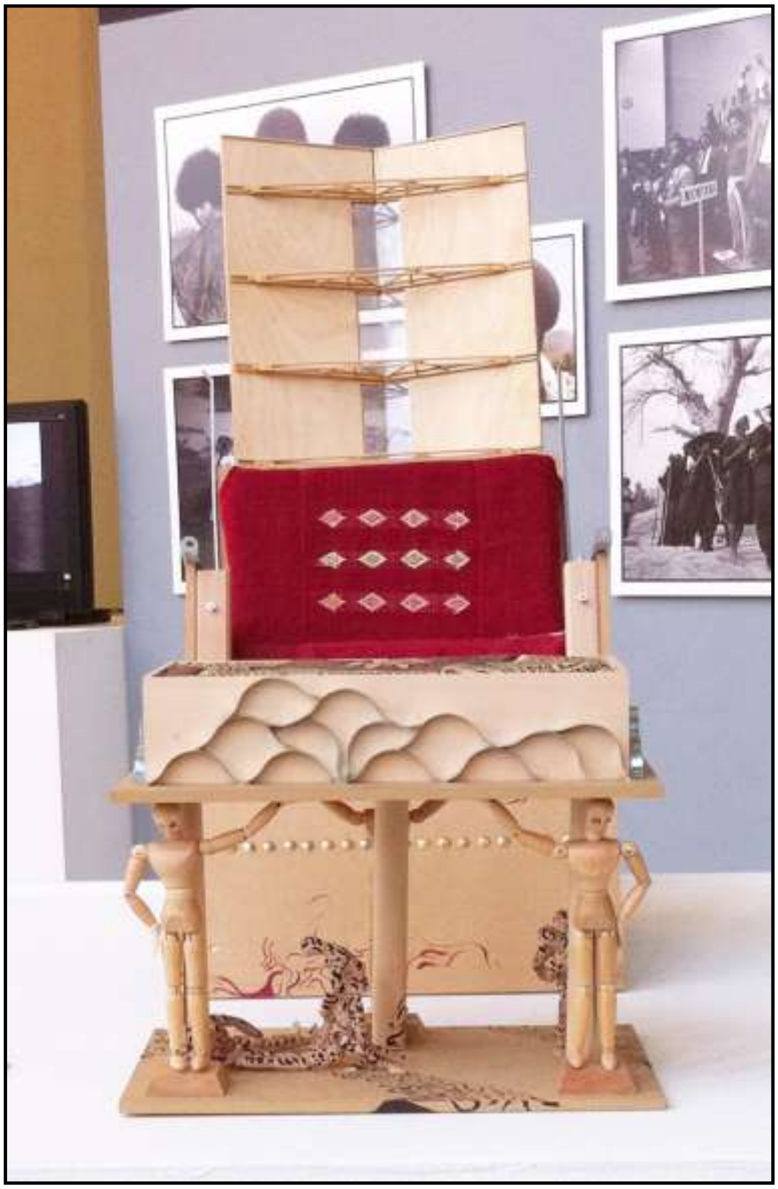
Adejoke Tugbiyele is a Brooklyn-born artist of Nigerian (Yoruba) parents. She was raised in Lagos, Nigeria during seven of her formative years. In 2002, Tugbiyele received a Bachelor of Science in Architecture at the New Jersey School of Architecture at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. She ceased PhD study in Urban Systems at the same institution in order to pursue a Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), Reinhart School of Sculpture. Her work has been exhibited at The Museum of Arts and Design, Centre for Contemporary Art (CCALagos), and the United Nations Public Gallery. Recent awards include a Maryland Institute College of Art Merit Award in 2011 and first place in the Newark Arts Council, Art & the City, Sculptural Fine Art Competition in 2006.

END NOTES

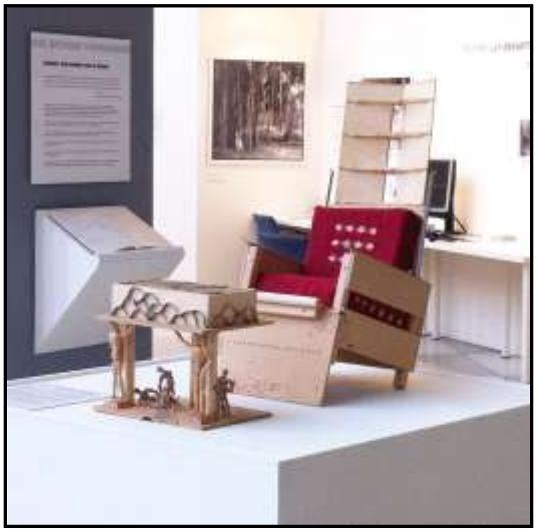
[1] Christopher B. Steiner "Another Image of Africa: Toward an Ethnohistory of European Cloth Marketed in WestAfrica, 1873-1960" Ethnohistory, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Spring, 1985), pp. 91-110
[2] Tunde M. Akinwumi "The “African Print” Hoax: Machine Produced Textiles Jeopardize African Print Authenticity" The Journal of Pan African Studies, vol.2, no.5, July 2008; Tunde M. Akinwumi The European "“African print” and the direction of authentic African print design efforts in Nigeria” *Journal of Cultural Studies* Vol 8, No 2 2010;
Boatema Boateng “Symposium: Walking the Tradition-Modernity Tightrope: Gender Contradictions in Textile Production and Intellectual Property Law in Ghana” *Journal of Gender, Social Policy & the Law* Volume 15 Issue 2 2007
[3] Elisha P. Renne "Aso Ipo, Red Cloth from Bunu" African Arts, Vol. 25, No. 3, Special Issue: West African Textiles (Jul., 1992), pp. 64-69+102
[4] Richard Gibb "Post-Lomé: The European Union and the South" Third World Quarterly, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Jun., 2000), pp. 457-481
[5] Peter Gibbon "Present-Day Capitalism, the New International Trade Regime & Africa" Review of African Political Economy, Vol. 29, No. 91, Sovereignty, Democracy & Zimbabwe's Tragedy (Mar., 2002), pp. 95-112.

ALTAR AND THRONE: THE LAST FUCK AND THE SWEET TASTE OF VICTORY (2010)

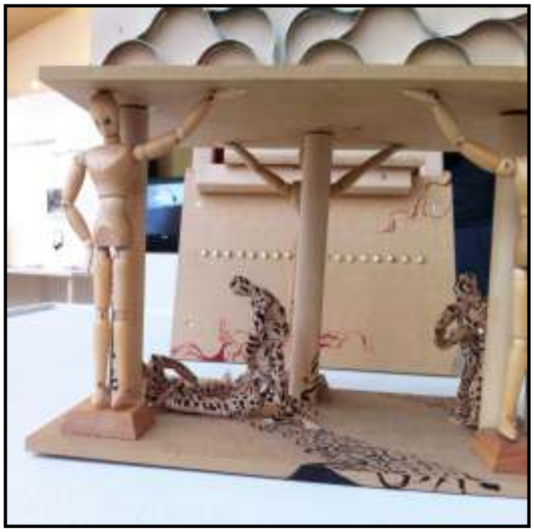
ADEJOKE TUGBIYELE



Collection of the artist: *The Altar and Throne* is currently on display at the United Nations headquarters in NYC as a part of the "The African Continuum: Celebrating Diversity, Recognizing Contributions of People of African Descent" exhibit, held in observance of the International Year for People of African Descent 2011. The show runs from the 8th through November 23 in the Public Gallery of the UN headquarters in NYC
Medium: Recycled IKEA stools, West African fabric, basswood, foam, and mannequins.



In many African societies one’s rank often determines where one sits. The seat can also be a vehicle for idea-sharing or story-telling. Using the African seat as a point of departure, recycled IKEA stools are merged with other materials to form a new narrative about sitting. The throne's back takes the form of a detached roof and the seat, covered in vibrant fabric, is tilted on an angle as if ready to fall at any moment. However the empty seat can also be a metaphor for hope.



Is it possible to consider the earthquake as Haiti's last 'fuck'? If this is a throne for future leaders of Haiti, how would they govern considering the earthquake's trauma and Haiti's socio-economic history?

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For more information, please visit: http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/note6326.doc.htm

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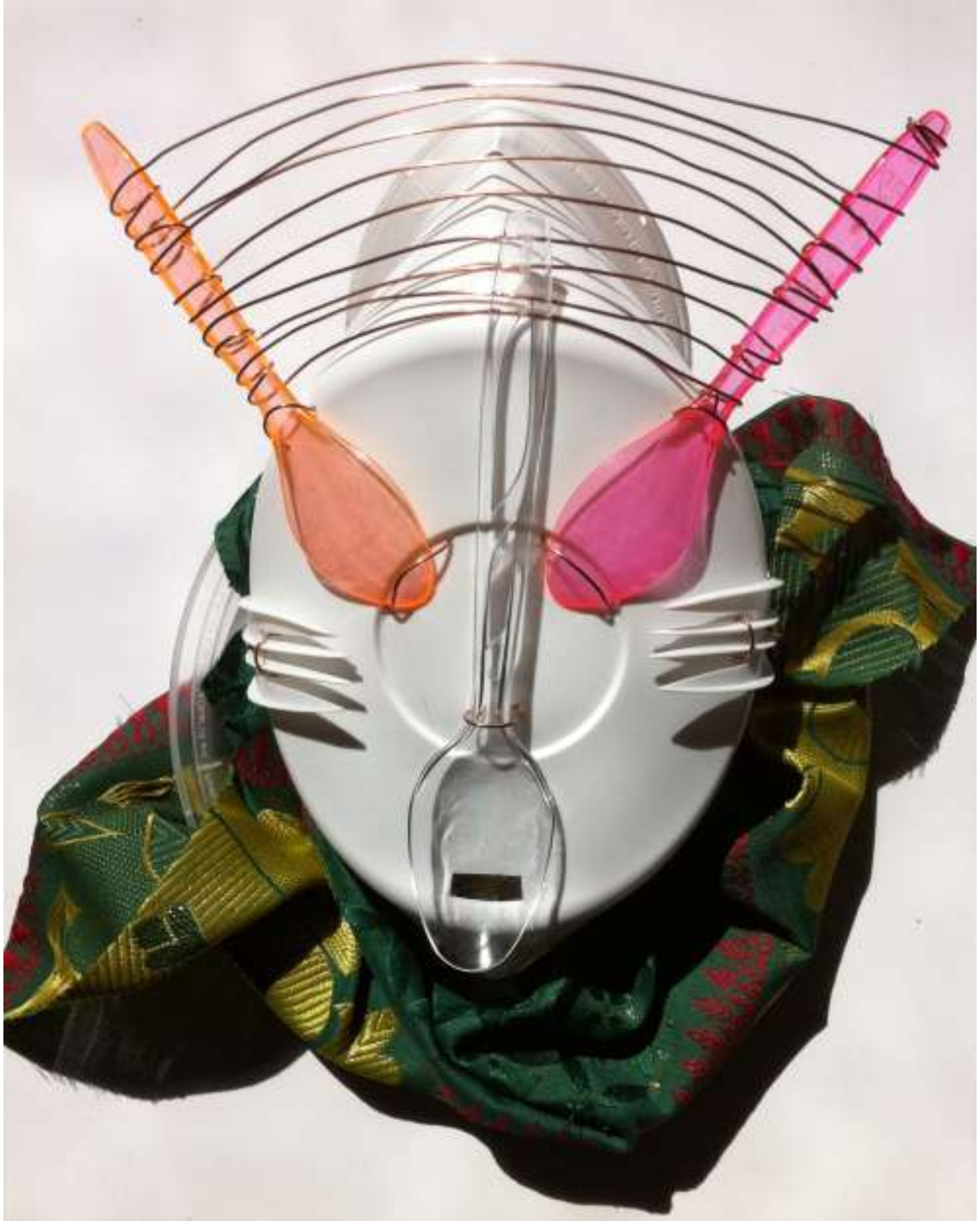
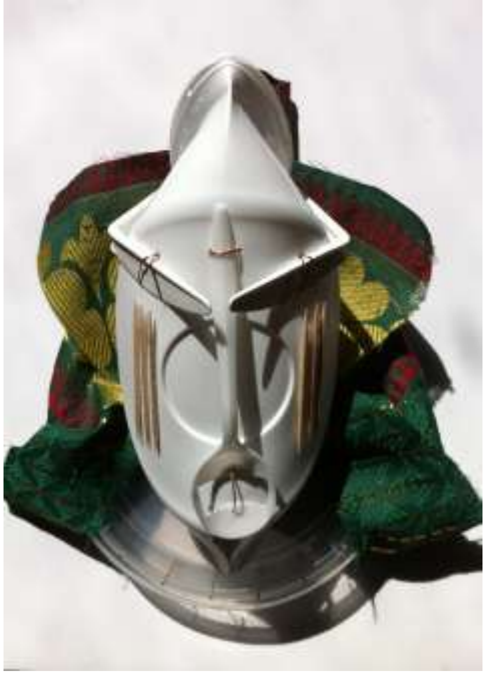
GÈLÈDÉ TUPPERWARE PARTY

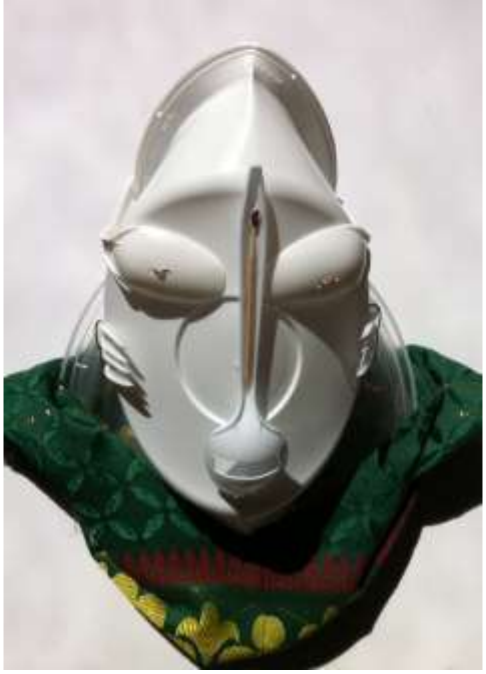
ADEJOKE TUGBIYELE



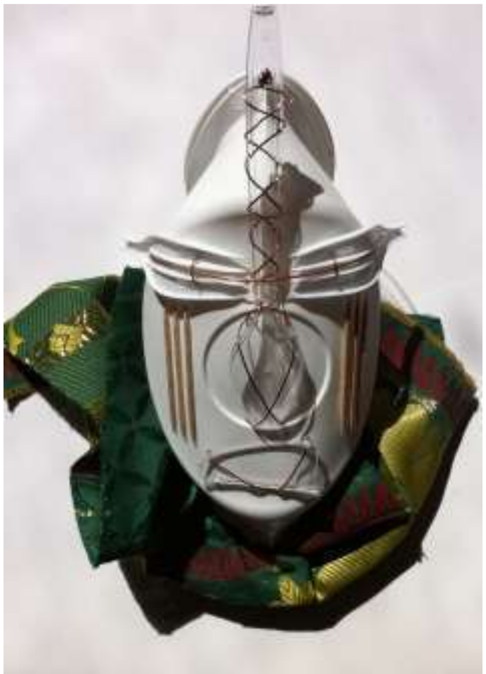
Medium: Tupperware bowls, plastic forks, spoons and knives
Size: Varies



Gèlèdé is a Yorùbá masquerade dedicated to the praise, adulation and propitiation of "*Ìyá Nlá*" (the great mother), also called "*Ìyá wa*" (our mother) and *"Yéwájobí*" (Mother of us all), the first mother who was endowed by Olodumare the creator, with formidable powers, including witchcraft, fertility, and power over life and death[1]. Gèlèdé is thus in the first place, recognition of the latent power of all women to wield the powers conferred on *Ìyá Nlá*, that can only be actualized if one becomes a devotee of *Ìyá Nlá*. Secondly, its reference to "our mothers" alludes to the command of women over the mysteries of creation, fertility and fecundity. The masquerades use *èfè* (jest and satire) as social commentary to tease the powerful and critique abuses of power as well as social, political and economic excesses. Yorùbá masquerades are also referred to as "*ará òrun"* (heavenly beings) who are a physical manifestation of the spirits of the ancestors that connect the living to the dead and the unborn. Gèlèdé masquerades use a great deal of improvisation, irony, and symbolism in vibrant displays that weave together the spiritual and temporal, the musical and the poetic and the dance form.[2]



The Second World War required that women leave their homes to work, mainly to make up for lost income of husbands who left for war. Upon the war's end women were told, as is now commonly known, to "go back to the kitchen." It was around this same time, 1940's and 50's, that the use of Tupperware, the plastic home product line, became widespread. Inventor Earl S. Tupper's famous Tupperware parties were held in homes across the United States as well as Europe. As their popularity grew, the product slowly came to symbolize the liberation of women from the kitchen or home.



While women in the west enjoy new freedoms, people in oil producing nations - from which plastic originates - often do not get to reap the benefits of inventions like Tupperware. In some cases the lack of other competitive industries, help to sustain underdevelopment and poverty. Women and children are disproportionately affected due to a lack of education and limited chances for upward mobility. While the use of plastic is on the decline, it is mostly due to our shift towards sustainability - the so- called green revolution. We less often want to admit that our actions help to limit the freedom of others in parts of Africa or the Middle East. This subject also resonates with me on a personal level. My mother is one of many African women living in the United States who consume Tupperware to make life easier. She refrigerates meats and vegetables for extended periods of time so that her role as wife/mother is not compromised by her nine-to-five job. Plastics make it easier for her to cater large Nigerian parties such as birthdays and weddings. In fact, she has an entire kitchen cupboard dedicated to Tupperware of all colors, shapes and sizes. I still have memories of trying to find the best arrangement to prevent them from toppling over. More importantly, this aspect of my mother's move to the West highlights either (a) the insignificance of cultural boundaries with regards to the global economy or (b) the emergence of a new cultural hybrid. It may also speak to the powers of women to create and preserve while juggling multiple responsibilities.

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END NOTES

[1] Babatunde Lawal "New Light on Gelede" African Arts, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Jan., 1978), pp. 65-70+94, p. 66.
[2] Bode Omojola "Rhythms of the Gods: Music and Spirituality in Yoruba Culture" *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.3, no.5, March 2010, pp. 30-50; Babatunde Lawal "New Light on Gelede" *African Arts*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Jan., 1978), pp. 65-70+94.

BLACKLISTING OF NIGERIA AS THE NEW DEN OF TERRORISTS? THE PERSPECTIVE OF A NIGERIAN STUDENT IN THE U.K.

OLUGU UKPAI

ABSTRACT

On December 25, 2010, a Nigerian attempted to bomb an American airliner en route to Detroit, Michigan from Amsterdam. The plane had 290 passengers and 11 crew members. This article presents the perspective of a Nigerian student who also studies in the U.K. where Abdulmutallab studied. My central thesis is that U.S. blacklisting of Nigeria in the watch list of terrorist countries is an instance of "payback" and it lacks objectivity. This is an isolated case and the suspect should be treated in as an individual that allegedly perpetrated an unlawful act without essentializing Nigeria(ns) as terrorist suspects. More importantly, the focus should be the systemic failure in Western society and the concern of parents and students have about possible exposure to radicalization while studying abroad. This case is also about Al-Qaeda's absolute ruthless brilliance in selecting a *modus operandi* that defies easy analysis and response. In thinking about solutions, we should also consider what previously unimaginable angle Al-Qaeda will use next. We will neither understand the most important issues nor be able to make the most effective possible contribution to the realization of a terrorist free world without taking seriously an historical perspective, and the perspectives of students themselves. While working swiftly to address the security breakdown, efforts should be made to ensure that it solutions do not get tainted by imperialist dreams.

KEYWORDS: *Abdulmutallab; terrorism; Al-Qaeda; Nigerian immigrant students in the UK; US-Nigeria relations; terrorism; western media*.

INTRODUCTION

"An apology for the Devil: It must be remembered that we have only heard one side of the story. God has written all the Books."[1] Umar Farouq Abdulmutallab's failed attempt to blow up a U.S. airliner put Nigeria, my country of birth on the list of 14 nations whose nationals will be singled out for special checks if they want to fly to the United States. Nigeria has become a uniquely insecure travel terrorism hub, they say.[2] The objectification and homogenization of Nigeria(ns) as "terrorists" and the "dangerous Other,"[3] especially by the less responsible elements of the Western press, following the botched attempt to blow up a Detroit bound U.S. airliner is neither new, nor deserving of an emotional response. Even prior to the failed bombing, the political scientist, Professor Mojúbàolú Olúfúnké Okome contends that in focusing almost exclusively on "blatant criminal activity"[4] the "[Western]-media has always identified the Nigerians as the problem," and "not necessarily [focused on] … the positive contributions of Nigerian immigrants to the economic, social, and political development of the United States."[5] Thus, the present issue has not only contributed further to stereotyping Nigeria(ns), but also appears to be an opportunity by most of the Western nations, especially the U.S./U.K. to pay back Nigeria. Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab would seem to have drawn more influence from the U.K. and the Middle East, especially Yemen, considering that when nationals of Britain, Germany, Venezuela, Ghana, and other countries were involved in acts of terrorism, their home-countries were not so categorized. Why should the U.S. arbitrarily place Nigeria on the watch list of terrorist states? Is such categorization a suggestion, albeit unfounded, of tacit support of terrorism by the Nigeria state or any group in it? Does the U.S. categorization not amount to double standards and imperialist hegemony?

The “one size fit-all” approach to the failed December 25th bombing by Abdulmutallab should be subjected to critical scrutiny and re-interpreted. It should as well, be considered from an historical standpoint, from the perspective of Nigerian parents whose children are studying abroad, and that of Nigerian students studying in the U.K. We must be prepared to tell the world the bitter truth; state our concern and set the record straight for posterity; so that our children will have the record of our response to what happened. It was Dorothy Hammond and Alta Jablow who argued, “four centuries of writing about Africa have produced a literature which describes not Africa but the British response to it.”[6] As a Nigerian student studying in the U.K. where Abdulmutallab also studied, this article is positioned to challenge such hegemonic, ahistorical and lopsided perspective by exploring it from an historical point of view, inclusive of other Nigerian students’ point of view, and the concerns that our parents and family might have about the implications of the December 25 incident.

In this essay, my thesis is that first, U.S. blacklisting of Nigeria as a hotbed of terrorists is an instance of “payback” that lacks merit. The December 23 incident is an isolated case and should be treated in its own merit without homogenizing Nigeria (ns). Second, the action of the terror suspect’s father--Mr. Umaru Mutallab, by reporting his son’s new found religious fundamentalism to the U.S. Embassy in Abuja, Nigeria to avert a possible danger, denotes considerable thoughtfulness, selflessness and virtue, which should be applauded. Third, the struggle against terrorism “will not be won or lost at the [inter]national level.”[7] Until historical perspectives and careful case by case analyses are given serious attention, we will neither understand the most important issues nor be able to make the most effective possible contribution to the realization of a terrorism free world.[8] Fourth, the U.S., U.K., and most Western nations’ name calling or demonizing of Nigeria on this issue should be challenged and deconstructed. To reiterate, I contend that U.S. blacklisting Nigeria is payback. Given the overzealousness of Western media frenzy on this issue, the U.S. appears to have been waiting for an opportunity to carry out pre-meditated action against Nigeria.

One commentator argues that, “Nigeria had been on the U.S. radar for quite a while, but the Abdulmutallab episode only served to worsen the situation. First, the U.S. “had been warning the Nigerian government to put its house in order lest something of this nature would happen,” [9] following the incessant religious crisis in some Northern parts of Nigeria and it has now happened. Second is the manner which Nigeria’s immediate past ambassador to the U.S., General Oluwole Rotimi was removed. This may not have bode well with the Americans. Third, his replacement, Professor Tunde Adeniran, cleared by the Senate, was rejected following the alleged involvement of his son in Baltimore, Maryland. He was replaced by Professor Ade Adefuye. At the time of Abdulmutallab’s arrest, there was no ambassador representing Nigeria in the U.S. Fourth, when U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton visited Nigeria in 2009, she excoriated the Nigerian government on issues of accountability, transparency and corruption, which she said eroded its legitimacy. “The official response was to lambast her and essentially tell her to mind her business.”[10] Fifth, was the unanswered question posed by Todd Moss, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs during the Bush administration: “where in the world is the Nigerian President?” President Umaru Musa Yar’adua left Nigeria for medical treatment in Saudi Arabia, and was not seen for so long that the country was cast adrift under a cloud of uncertainty.[11] By the time his death was acknowledged, there was constitutional crisis resulting from the fact that the President did not hand over to his Vice President. Late Edward Said use[d] the term “orientalism” to refer to the discourses that structure Westerner understands of the Orient. He emphasize[d] the extent to which the identity of the colonial and post-colonial West is a rhetorical achievement. For him, in a series of imperial gestures, we have reduced "the Orient" to a passive object, to be known by a cognitively privileged subject-ourselves, "the West."[12] Homogenizing Nigerians constitutes a sort of orientalism. It also obscures and legitimates U.S. /U.K. and Western cultural hegemony and domination throughout the world.

Both as a concerned Nigerian student currently studying in the U.K., and as a parent, I address the issue from the heart, rather than as a mere intellectual, academic, and philosophical exercise. I also am a firm believer in challenging the status quo when necessary. I believe in my own ideas, even if everyone is getting on the band wagon, to borrow the words of Abraham Lincoln in a letter to his son's teacher. I believe that accepting something simply because it is a dominant cum hegemonic view is one of the greatest threats to progress. To conform and to follow convention is not only an act of cowardice but it is unpatriotic. Some may find this piece radical, but my father once told me that a man who does not have or is not known by any distinctive attribute is a coward.

In the interest of posterity, it is pertinent that I clarify my own position on terrorism. Without wading into the debate about the justification, or otherwise, of terrorism, I abhor terrorism in its all ramifications. Terrorism is not something to be proud of or to support under any circumstances. No civilized society can tolerate the killing of innocents and consequent uncertainty and insecurity. Terrorism violates the principle of immunity of non-combatants from direct attack. Unlike conventional warfare, which is primarily directed against combatants or military targets, terrorists' main targets are the civilian population. Terrorists employ indiscriminate violence. They intend that the massacre of innocent civilians should sow panic, give them publicity, and cause social destabilization. Applying the ethics of consequentialism, which judges human action solely in terms of its consequences, terrorism should be judged in terms of its intended consequences; causing pain, suffering, death, and destruction. I therefore contend that all terrorist networks in Nigeria and elsewhere should be shut down, and the Nigerian suspect should be subjected to legal proceedings, and if found guilty, made to face the full wrath of the law, to serve as a deterrent to others.

I will approach this essay from four angles. First, I will examine the historical, geographical, and economic antecedents of the Nigerian government's commitment to the war against terrorism and global peace. Second, I will explore U.S. and Western media discourse on the issue. Third, I will present what I believe to be the right approach. An analysis of the systemic failure in Western society, and the concern of Nigerian students over their demonization is presented in the fourth section. This is followed by the conclusion. But first, a brief look at the definition of terrorism.

WHAT IS TERRORISM?

From the etymological concept, the word terrorism comes from Latin and French words: *terrere*, and *terrorisme*, meaning "to frighten," and "state rule by terror*"* respectively. There is no generally accepted *medulla operandi* of terrorists, also there exists no generally accepted definition among terrorism experts. Angus Martyn notes that at present, the international community has not succeeded in coming up with "an accepted comprehensive definition of terrorism."[13] Similarly, Bruce Hoffman, who has been described as one the world's foremost experts on the subject, signifies that the word "terrorism" is politically and emotionally charged, and this makes it difficult to arrive at a consensus definition.[14] He contends that people may have a vague idea or impression of what terrorism is, but lack a more precise definition of the word. In an attempt for a definition, Hoffman states that terrorism is: "political in its aim;

violent or threatened violence; designed to have psychological reparations beyond the immediate target; conducted by any organization with an identifiable chain of command or conspiratorial cell structure; perpetuates by a sub national or non-state entity."[15] But Hoffman omitted "the adverse moral connotation" of the word "terrorism", which as Ivan Eland contends that "no one can take out."[16] Eland further argues that while attempting a definition of "terrorism," the focus should be on the act of violence rather than the perpetrators or the political cause they are promoting.[17] In 2004, a United Nations Security Council report defines terrorism as any act "intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act."[18] Arthur Garrison describes the U.N. definition as "lofty rhetoric," which he contends does not take us closer to a world free of terrorism, rather he advocates a need to "understand the differences in cultures, religious beliefs, and human behaviors,"[19] that contribute to the development and propagation of the phenomenon.

THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE ANTI-TERRORISM WAR

Although it may need to constantly refine its efforts in light of the dynamic nature of terrorism, the Nigerian government has always been, and is still an active player in championing anti-terrorism, both nationally and within the African geographical region. The war against terrorism has been in the top agenda of the Nigerian government. The Nigerian government's policy on terrorism reads: "Nigerian government … [is committed to] making the country unattractive for global terrorism sponsors who are seeking to recruit willing folks to swell their ranks," the government declared a "zero tolerance policy towards all forms of terrorism and terrorism acts."[20]

Historically, successive Nigerian governments have rolled out various policies against terrorism. For instance, the 1983 and 1987 terror incidents that started in Kafanchan and spread to Kaduna, Zaria, Funtua, Malumfashi, and Katsina, were addressed by the government, then under General Ibrahim Babangida, which tried to sever its roots. Apart from setting up the Justice Donli commission, the government formed the Karibi-Whyte tribunal to try suspects and sentenced those found guilty to prison, in accordance with the existing law. That action checked religious fanaticism to some extent. Under Olusegun Obasanjo's administration (1999-2007), documents in the Senate between February 2005 and sometime in 2006, showed two different anti-terrorism bills, "Membership" and "Executive," were sponsored by Senator Benjamin Obi and President Obasanjo. Senator Benjamin Ndi Obi sponsored the anti-terrorism bills: SB 192 "Nigerian Anti-Terrorism Agency Bill" and SB 193, "Anti-Terrorism Bill." The bills were meant to signal Nigeria's response to, the war on terror. The primary aim of the bill was for an "Act to Prohibit Terrorism" and it sought to:

- Prohibit all forms of terrorism
- Prohibit all forms of financial transactions aimed at aiding terrorism
- Prohibit conspiracies in Nigeria to commit terrorism abroad
- Provide federal jurisdiction to prosecute acts of terrorism carried out within Nigeria
- Provide for appropriate penalties for offenders, etc.[21]

The Anti-Terrorism Agency Bill sought to reduce the risks of terrorism by:

- Preventing terrorism through actions to tackle the factors which encourage and facilitate recruitment, and
- Pursuing terrorists and those that sponsor them by better understanding terrorists' networks in order to track and disrupt and, where we can bring justice,

- Enhancing Nigeria's ability to withstand terrorist attack by: Protecting Nigerians and preparing thoroughly to respond to any attack so that we can reduce the consequences if one occurs."[22]

However, these bills suffered a setback due to lobbying and party politics, an inherent problem in a democratic government not unique to Nigeria, but also present in other democracies including the United States of America. President Obasanjo sponsored an Executive Bill: the "Prevention of Terrorism Act 2006," which sought to undermine the Obi bills, and it did. Moreover, by the end of the last senate in 2007, the issue of engineering a third Obasanjo term (described in Nigeria as "tenure elongation") had become the main issue and, therefore, none of the bills were passed into law. Like his predecessor, President Umaru Musa Yar'adua (2007 – 2010), presented another anti-terrorism bill before the National Assembly. The bill had not become law before Abdulmutallab's allegedly attempted suicide bombing of December 25th 2009.

In addition, when Nigerian Vice President Goodluck Jonathan played host to the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State for Homeland Security, Ms. Jane Holl Lute in Abuja, he enumerated of the efforts being made by the Nigerian government in direct response to the terror threat. Jonathan said, "some of the measures include, but are not limited to, having special air marshals on U.S. bound flights, the purchase of 10 3-D body scanners to be installed at the nation's airports, as well as Nigeria's ratification of nine of the 16 anti-terrorism treaties."[23] When President Obama called on the world to employ peace and dialogue in accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, he said, "violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem: it merely creates new and more complicated ones. As someone who stands here as a direct consequence of Dr. King's life work, I am living testimony to the moral force of non-violence."[24] The Nigerian government followed embraced Obama's "moral force of non-violence" call by eschewing violent approaches to curbing terrorism, and rolled out an amnesty program which was favorably received by well over 100,000 freedom fighters, or the so called “militants” in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. In response to the upheaval caused by a religious crisis that erupted in January 2010 in Jos, a state in the Middle Belt of Nigeria, on February 6, 2010, 108 suspects were charged with terrorism before a Federal High Court in the Capital territory, Abuja.

Speaking on Nigerian economic commitment to stomping out terrorism in the world, Maduekwe retorts, “is it not incongruous that the country that is doing all this, making huge sacrifices in Sierra Leone and Liberia alone, we put $10 billion, spending a lot of our own lives, lives of our young men and women should now be on the security list.” However, the recent threat in rash bombing by the Boko Haran sect threat in the Northern part of Nigeria has put into question the practical implications of the counter terrorism measures put in place by the Nigerian government in curtailing terrorism. Boko Haram, meaning ‘western education is sinful,’ commenced operation in the country in 2009 when it was launched. Since then, the group had launched vicious attacks on government properties, churches, relaxation centers, and police formations while claiming responsibility. Recently, it pledged a ceasefire if 12 states in the Northern Nigeria can adopt the strict Sharia legal system. The Movement for New Nigeria has called for a new constitution to replace the 1999 document, as one of the ways to tackle insecurity and similar challenges facing the country. The President of the group, Chief Fred Agbeyegbe, has noted that this was in view of the fact that the 1999 Constitution had failed Nigeria. Agbeyegbe further contends that since the Boko Haram had expressed loss of confidence in the document and opted for Sharia, the need to take another look at the document has become expedient. Agbeyegbe recalled that when the Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) bombed Abuja last year, it equally faulted the Constitution. Rising up this challenge, the “Nigerians have launched an important conversation in examining how constitutional processes” can be used to deal with her internal security challenges. The Nigerian government was also congratulated on her efforts so far: “we commend these efforts and their pursuit through appropriate Nigerian democratic institutions to address its citizens’ concerns”.[25] Including Nigeria with countries to be watched for terrorism, (such as Afghanistan Algeria, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Saudi Arabia) and subjecting its innocent citizens travelling to the U.S. to extra search and scrutiny is an unfortunate application of double standards because the country does not fit with the other countries with which it is grouped.

Imperialism, payback, and the costs and negativities associated with power-seeking seem to be at play. Instead, the entire world should unite to deliberate on building a larger tent to include us all, and address old and new injustices. Selectively subjecting entire nations to closer scrutiny in such an unfair manner is to also fail to understand the nature of our global world, and the irrelevance of nation-bound profiling. It is also to misunderstand the intent and reach of those recruiting suicide bombers. Rather than making scapegoats of Nigeria (ns), the U.S. and world powers’ challenge should be undermining and eradicating Al Qaeda’s ruthless brilliance, and foiling its next attack.

AL QAEDA’S RUTHLESS BRILLIANCE: THE WORLD’S CHALLENGE

Despite the many hullabaloos of the U.S. and U.K., or the “much ado about nothing,” involved in demonizing Nigeria (ns), the Abdulmutallab case is an example of a providential act of God because the 290 passengers and 11 crew members aboard Northwest Airline Flight 253 landed safely, and the alleged would-be bomber was taken into custody. The challenge before the world powers, especially the U.S. and U.K., is to decode Al Qaeda’s absolute ruthless brilliance in selecting Abdulmutallab, whose profile who does not fit any in the databases of international intelligence services, including the C.I.A., Britain’s MI6, France’s Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure (DGSE). The reality is that Al-Qaeda is evolving and it engages in opportunistic and expedient moves to make an impact. Western societies are amidst a systemic failure. It is unclear how and when Al-Qaeda will attack at any given time, or which hitherto unimaginable strategy Al-Qaeda will use next. Criminalizing or blacklisting Nigeria as a terror country of interest does not contribute to solving the Al-Qaeda problem. Eminent Nigerian scholars and U.S. senators alike have clearly pointed this out. For instance, speaking to VOA news, the ebullient, irrepressible Nigerian-American Professor of political science, Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome argues that:

> To assume that just because somebody of Nigerian origin did such a thing, one could stretch this to the possibility that all Nigerians are going to be potential terrorists, is to misunderstand the nature of what has happened and the extent to which the world has become a global place.[26]

Similarly, the Nigerian Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka insists that the:

> United States of America’s decision to include Nigeria in the watch list of terrorist countries is irrational and lacks objectivity. Places where terrorism schools are located outside Nigeria… are the countries where people are indoctrinated. Nigeria has nothing to do with terrorism except for one aberrant lad who attempted to blow up a plane and he is already paying for it.[27]

Indeed, Nigerians are not the only ones condemning the decision of the executive arm of the U.S. government to add Nigeria’s name to the security and terror list of countries of interest. The action has been described as “less objective” by prominent U.S. Senators as well.

According to Senator Mike Hammer, “U.S. opinion writers [are] pointing out …that the decision would only affect innocent Nigerians, and it might not be an effective tool to counter-terrorism.”[28] Similarly, Senator Patrick Leahy warned, that “adding names of some countries like Nigeria to the watch list might even alienate allies of the U.S. in the global war on terror.”[29] He contends that, “our response to this incident must be swift, but also thoughtful. I am concerned that simply adding a handful of countries to heightened security lists does not prevent terrorists from coming into this country and may alienate those we need as allies.”[30] Leahy, a veteran of the U.S. Senate, added, just like many U.S.-based Nigerian professionals had argued in the past several weeks, that “after all, Richard Reid was a British national and did not fit a general profile until he became known as the attempted shoe bomber.”[31] “No single individual has caused more deaths by terrorist action in the United States than Timothy McVeigh, and he fit no ethnic or religious profile.”[32] “A ‘one size fits all’ mentality will only ensure that we will miss different threats in the future.”[33]

HEGEMONIC WESTERN MEDIA DISCOURSE: TUG-OF-WORDS

The headlines tell us over and over again that it could well be a crime to be a Nigerian.[34] For instance: “Mutallab: Man Who Shamed Nigeria,” “Mutallab: The Nigerian Agent of Al-Qaeda,” “Boy who blew Nigeria’s image,” “Bombing Hell,” “…Al Qaeda or terrorist connections in Nigeria,” are just a few of the negative headlines.[35] How do Nigerian parents whose children are studying abroad, and the Nigerians studying abroad, see the story of “the boy who blew Nigeria’s image?”

Similarly, I am also worried about some of my African-American brothers’ approach. For instance, “After the Failed Bombing, a Chance to Clean House in Nigeria” was the title of an article in the *Washington Post* of January 1, 2010 in which Lekan Oguntoyinbo, a Nigerian-American, blamed Nigerian "police officers [who] don't protect and serve; [whose]…uniforms allow them to exploit, extort, and oppress,"[36] for their failure to apprehend Abdulmutallab. While I have no problem with the corruption theory, Oguntoyinbo's argument is weak, and failed to present a persuasive justification and rationalization for his conclusions. Oguntoyinbo has the burden to answer three questions: First, how much did Abdulmutallab pay the C.I.A., to prevent them from acting on the tip from his father, Mr. Umaru Mutallab? Second, how many Euros did the terror suspect use to bribe the Schippol's (Amsterdam) airport security officers, whom he also outsmarted? Third, how many U.S. dollars did the White House security operatives collect from Michaele and Tareq Salahi, the celebrities who crashed President Obama's first state dinner party? These uninvited guests managed to sneak in, get their pictures taken with among others, Vice President Joe Biden and President Obama himself amidst tight security. I therefore contend that the corruption causation is not convincing enough. Oguntoyinbo could not present a critical appraisal of the issue as a journalism professor. He also played to the gallery. Oguntoyinbo's analysis could be improved if he considered systemic failure in Western society and explored any terrorist connections that Abdulmutallab might have had since he left Nigeria in his teens, since he has been more abroad than at home from the age of twelve.

Christian Purefoy of CNN reports that "Farouk was born in London (as shown in the document that his Primary school principal, in Kaduna, presented to the reporter)."[37] Abdulmutallab never studied in Nigeria. He did not have "terror connections" in Nigeria. Instead his initiation into terror clubs happened abroad in the countries where he was sent to study. Abdulmutallab went to a British high school in Togo. He studied in Dubai, Yemen, and Egypt. Above all, he studied mechanical engineering at University College, London, one of the oldest, most competitive and most distinguished tertiary institutions in England. During C.I.A. interrogation, Abdulmutallab himself has confirmed that he obtained the bomb in Yemen. Indeed, there has been no concrete evidence that al-Qaeda exists in Nigeria. Abdulmutallab's transformation into a self hating suicidal extremist was shaped in the crucible of the vast British Al Qaeda network. Many participants in this order are ready to blow themselves up. A CNN anchor, Andrew Stevens pointedly told Christian Purefoy: "but Nigeria is not known for this kind of act; is this a one off?"[38] In a press conference on January 7, 2010, Yemen's Deputy Prime Minister for Defense and Security, Rshad al-Alimi, said that AbdulMutallab "joined al-Qaeda in London" and "trained in Yemen" when he said:

> The information provided to us is that Umar Farouk (AbdulMutallab) joined Al-Qaeda in London….AbdulMutallab had also met with Moslem preacher Anwar al-Awlaki during his time in Yemen, referring to an English-speaking cleric linked to a gunman who ran amok in a U.S. army base in Texas….The alleged U.S. plane bomber met the radical Moslem cleric in Yemen, after being recruited in London…Rshad al-Alimi, (Yemen's Deputy Prime Minister for Defense and Security).[39]

I was saddened to read Western media reports attributing Abdulmutallab's desperate and extreme act to his being Nigerian, while the countries where he studied and got connected with his terrorist cults are seemingly absolved of responsibility. I agree with Okome in her work, "'Either You Are With Us, Or You are with the Terrorists': US Imperial Hegemony at the Beginning of the 21st Century," that there is inherent, [c]ontradiction in U.S. foreign policy, as it dichotomizes the world into those who are “with us” and those “with the terrorists”….It identified allies and enemies on the basis of a definition of national interest that is geared at enhancing and maintaining its imperial hegemony. It needs to control the sources of strategic commodities on which it depends, and has driven an aggressive foreign policy stance that uses events such as the 9/11 attacks as an excuse to define the states that it seeks to discipline and domesticate to an “axis of evil.” As a result, measures, including blacklisting, will be taken to create a world that fits better with the U.S.’ global goals,…a long standing belief that it should be the dominant power in the world.[40]

While efforts should be made to step up the security apparatus in the Nigerian airport, it was the West and the overzealous U.S. that issued visas to the terror suspect. In addition, it was Amsterdam where the 23 year old terror suspect also reportedly outsmarted airport security. They should be more wary, and step up their security as well. Kudos to the U.K. border services that tactically turned down his visa application. The suspect was already listed in the C.I.A. terrorist database, following the tip off from his father. What on earth could the father have done to demonstrate his concern and determination to prevent his son from doing harm U.S. and the world?

While the world, especially the dominant West is bent on homogenizing Nigerians as “terrorists,” Nigerians and lovers of Nigeria both home and in the Diaspora should celebrate Mr. Umaru Mutallab’s singular virtue. I do not know of any other country where a parent has done what the father of Farouk Umar Abdulmutallab did in advance: reporting his son to both the United States and Nigerian security agencies in hopes of averting danger. The CIA operatives must have imagined that Umaru Mutallab was an overzealous father who wanted to use American tax-payers money to locate his errant son. The logic being that, sooner or later, the young man would get tired of running from home and show up. Well, we now know how stupid that line of thinking was, and how it almost cost 290 passengers and crew members their lives. The CIA is filled with policy wonks, by which I mean people who follow certain logic and not always think outside the box. Thus, it will be “dead wrong” to demonize Nigerians to borrow the phrase of American Vice President, Joe Biden. It will not only amount to playing the usual gallery with the so called gullible Third World security by the world powers, especially the U.S. and U.K., but also a hegemonic structured discrimination to homogenize and to single out Nigeria as a uniquely insecure travel terrorist hub. Imagine what trauma it would mean for my one year old son growing up to learn that he was already classified with citizens of nations where bomb-carrying is a norm, and dangerous arms and ammunitions are auctioned like fairly used clothes at a “bend-down-and-pick-boutique,” for a crime his parents and grandparents would not commit even at gunpoint. It is an insult on the intelligence of 150 million Nigerians. There is need to re-interpret the U.S. imperialist hegemonic approach to this issue.

THE RIGHT APPROACH: RE-INTERPRETING HISTORY

What then is the right approach? Okome has called for a re-interpretation of history from colonial history because realities exist, but the ways in which this reality is interpreted are decisive for the ways in which strategies are developed.[41] Contending on historical significance, Deborah Gray White states that:

> History is supposed to give people a sense of identity, a feeling of who they were, who they are, and how far they come. It should act as a springboard for the future. One hopes that it will do this for [the black race], who have been given more myth than history. The myths have put the black [race] in a position where

> they must prove…their… [race]. Despite all that [the black race] has accomplished, the American black [man/woman] is still waiting for an affirmative answer to the plaintive question asked over a century ago: "can anything good come out of the black race?"[42]

Correspondingly, Okome avers that "examining the historical origin of … contemporary [issues] reveals a more nuanced picture."[43] For it is the nature of this exploration, that informs the way in which future proactive measures are developed.[44] Likewise, Professor Chinua Achebe holds this view when he questions to unravel the mystery why:

> Our own [brothers] have joined the ranks of the stranger… and …help uphold his [imperialist] government….How can we fight when our own people [Such as some of the African- American commentator(s)] who are following their way have been given powers [resources]? They are now "outsider[s] who wept louder than the bereaved.[45]

Late Professor Ogbu Kalu laments on the influence of Western missionaries orientation that informed a variety of responses to African issues by some African-Americans when he reports:

> Some resisted incursion and stuck to the ideology of their fathers wavered; first parleying with the missionaries and later recovering their balance and bolting back to their customs. But some [African-American commentators] accepted literarily what they had heard… in the preaching of the early missionaries.[46]

This is due to most Western scholars like Isabelle Gunning who are now beginning to acknowledge their "arrogance" in (mis)representing Africa. For instance, Gunning submits that "our sincerity and vision are continually being impeded and clouded by our own historical context and perspective." Adamant Gunning insists that while "we" are wise to reject the notion that African or "Other" are so different and distant from "us" that we have nothing to say or share, "we would be all too arrogant and even imperialistic to assume that these 'Others' are so exactly like us such that our judgments can be easily substituted for theirs."[47] "Why not let the true…African[s] involved [speak on the issue]?"[48] Gunning retorts by stating that any approach apart from this was seen as "refusing to see the sun in the middle of the day" and ignoring the fact that "they" [Westerners] bequeathed on Africans whatever they are today.[49] This calls for a different perspective besides the U.S. hegemonic imperialist approach. This raises the question of agency legitimacy: Who has the knowledge and capacity to put the issue in the right perspective?

The "Others" scholars are the only ones saddled with the responsibility to lead and re-interpret history. Of course that qualifies me to comment on the issue. It was Professor Willie Okowa who signifies that: "the desire to say the truth [speak one's mind] is one condition for being an intellectual. The other is courage, readiness to carry on rational inquiry to whatever it may lead, to undertake ruthless criticism of everything that exists; ruthless in the sense that the criticism will not shrink either from its own conclusions or from conflict with the powers that be."[50] Likewise, I agree with Wayne Booth when he wrote that: "the scholar is the only person charged by society to carry the burden of thought to its extremes, even when thought hits back."[51] Correspondingly, I agree with Amu Djoleto when he wrote, "I don't say what I am expected to say. I am no Christ and I do not wish to be. There are enough Jews; but do you think if Christ [a symbol of change] had said what he was expected to say the church would have been in existence?"[52] More than likely, it would not have been. I am no Christ, but I owe to my country, Nigeria an obligation. What then is that obligation? French philosopher, Albert Camus readily has the answer when he professes that "the scholar should always remember that the highest devotion we can give is not to our country as it is but to a concept of what we would like it to be."[53]

Thus, I write to condemn the American/Western hegemonic imperialism, and exceptionalism of terrorism on Nigeria. By exceptionalism, I mean the tendency of homogenizing Nigerians as "either terrorists or den or terrorists"? In addition, I condemn the tendency to assume that the U.S. is different from and better than other nations, that they are innocent, and that they are the land of well-motivated freedom terrorism fighters who must take the battle to other lands.

By the way, is terrorism not one of the by-products of Americanization, globalization and neo-colonialism? Okome rather contends persuasively that African nations in general and Nigerian state in particular "did not spring de novo from its environment."[54] "Rather, it has roots in the imposition of draconian forms of colonial rule on African peoples."[55] She regrets that "the tragedy of the contemporary African state is that, it still fails to rise above colonial detritus of wanton disregard of people's rights."[56] America should be bold enough to look into her backyard to see how her shortcoming perpetuates terrorism. Akintokunbo Adejumo rightly discerned American shortcomings when he wrote that:

> What we are seeing with the hypnotized Nigerian is the work of Western psyops that has been at play since the beginnings of their "War on Terrorism." I say it's

> their war on terrorism because they are the ones who created it and continue to sustain it. What we are witnessing is a massive psychological operation that is in operation outside the laboratory, feeding the engine that keeps you and virtually all of those you know transfixed on what these people want you to see. They want you to see chaos and, therefore, they create chaos, and do it while convincing you that they will bring or sustain peace, prosperity and continued democracy, and even the spread of democracy. We have seen the opposite in Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Gaza, Somalia, Yemen and now Iran.[57]

Professor Ifi Amadiume submits that it was the British colonial masters, those who have turned around to demonize Nigeria (ns) as "terrorists" that bequeathed violence on Africa. Africans were "peaceful" in their struggle to oppose British colonial rule in Africa. "They [British] shot and killed African[s] who protested against colonial rule."[58] This is evident and variously known as "the Women's Riots of 1929" or "the Aba Riots," but more correctly as *Ogu Umunwanyi*, the "Women's War" in which the British colonizers spilled the blood of innocent women demonstrators. As a point of elucidation, she further reports that:

> Gun salutes [were] a symbolic act of performance, and part of the means by which the colonial power demonstrated their *power of weaponry* [emphasis]. This was done in order to *terrorize* [emphasis] and *instill fear*, [emphasis] and therefore paralyze the African masses, stopping them from rioting and overthrowing dictators in our traditional fashion. With repetition, these acts of performance became a ritual [emphasis]. The African elite today use the same

> rituals to demonstrate their legitimacy. They are, when demystify, actually acts of violence of the rights of the masses. They are rituals of domination by violence. The fundamental structures …have not changed…[59]

Indeed, as Amadiume rightly noted above, things have not changed for better for the African people since the end of colonial era. Such ritual performance has persisted. Nigeria swims in the legacies of colonialism. Reiterating this fact, the CBN Governor holds the same view that the Nigerian state is a wayward child of British colonialism when he wrote: "We're all victims of colonization" which was the caption of the *punch* newspaper of Friday, November 20th, 2009. The Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mallam Sanusi Lamido Sanusi was quoted to have said that the ills of the country (including but not limited to terrorism? if any?) should not be blamed on any ethnic group. According to the CBN boss, "every Nigerian [including the alleged terrorist, Abdulmutallab?] is a victim of colonialism."[60]

Professor Chinua Achebe's world acclaimed classical works, *No Longer At Ease* and *Things Fall Apart* cannot be more significant than at this moment. Recollecting and lamenting on the wanton destruction and transformation of African virtue by the West, he wrote:

> Does the Whiteman understand our custom….How can he [Whiteman] when he does not even speak our tongue? But he says that our customs are bad; and our brothers who have taken up his religion also say that our customs are bad. How do you think we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us? The Whiteman is very clever. He came quietly and peacefully with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our

> brothers and sisters, and the clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife through the things that held us together and we have fallen apart.[61]

Indeed, what other evidence do I need to present to prove my point? Abdulmutallab could well be the African young man that Chinua Achebe portrays in his book, *No Longer at Ease*. He traveled abroad to acquire a Western style education, but in his quest to acquire the "whiteman's" education, he became detached and disentangled from his African roots and virtues, and began to dance to a foreign, radicalized, hip-hop, and extremist tune. My heart bleeds that Al-Qaeda, a "foreign religious" network, experimented its brilliance through Abdulmutallab, by manipulating and deceiving him. But my strangled nerves and imagination soon calmed down when I found solace in Fareda Banda's work. Banda argues that the "whiteman's manipulation and deception is not new by presenting some persuasive antecedent. For instance, she recounts a saying among Africans that explains the colonial masters' trick in gaining access to African's lands: "when the white man came to Africa…he held the Bible in his hand, and the Africans held the land. The white man said to the Africans 'Let us bow our heads in prayer'. When the Africans raised their heads, the white man had the land and the Africans had the Bible."[62] Similarly, Ola Rotimi reports of the "whiteman's trickery" when he gained access to, and subsequently overthrew the Benin Kingdom when the protagonist, the Oba (King) Ovonramwen Nogbaisi, laments how he was deceived:

> I said to him: "White One, show me your hand'. And he showed me his hand.
> 'White One …give me that hand'. And he held out his hand. The right hand.
> Then I said to him: "White One your face shows love, but does your heart?

> Because to love someone who does not really love you, is like…shaking the giant iroko tree to make tiny dew-drops…fall'. I had opened my mind to the Whiteman. But minds do not meet like roads.[63]

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LAMENTATIONS TO OLUOROGBO

ADEMOLA ARAOYE

In the thundering cracklings
Of the night's fireball
Oluorogbo
I hear your footfalls
Crush the crumbling land.

Oluorogbo
You measure the length of our shrinking shadows
Our bent and burdened selves
wearing the old pangs
Flaunting the cicatrices from the lacerations
in the crucifixes
of our castrations
in the unceasing tremors
of our tribulations
of the long beginnings to these new moons
dangling over our anti-diluvian homeland.

The old moons lap
these brackish shores of home
as we dress our wounds in shea butter

Our baked and burnt backs
Scouring the land of mucus
And the stench of defecations
our baptismal talcum from the native dung
in this infinite Eucharist of pain
trailing the long long nightfall.

Oluorogbo, Ol-u-o-r-o-g-b-o
You lioness bestriding the nakedness of all moons
And daring the sun to rise
And daring the cockerels to trumpet their chords
And daring the rivers to still their songs
And daring fools to tread the sacred pathways
To new shores
I found your imprints
At the portals to the grove
Left ajar;
only some stray lambs munched
red peppers at the high noon.

Ol-u-o-r-o-g-b-o, Ol-u-o-r-o-g-b-o
I sniffed your imprints
in the warm embraces with Oko Oya
And sneezed three times!
But see how you have treated me

Olurogobo,
See how your drowsy gate keepers
Have let gone the horses
to roam the tall savannahs
their bones finally roll in dirt
in the dens of hyenas;

and now
they burn the raffia stretches across the sacred ponds
And have kept you stranded
In the rafters beyond our reach.

I await the beaten returnees
under the baobab
Striking the tough hide of the last elephant
And pouring swishing froth
Foam drips from the tallest palm in Igbo Irunmale
I am draped in the fronds of the Sekete
And feasting on alligator nuts
All through the moons; the quarter noon, the half moon, the rotund moon
Wayfarers to the night market
There and yonder
You wear the dirty hallo of your intransigence
Me, a home supplicant, holding on to the calabash
fresh palm wine to quench your thirst

From your road trudge

Your janitors reek of foreign brew
And brood in strange noises
in tongues
Wallowing in their lost memories
of the chants of the sacred grove
the land is afflicted; accursed.

Oluorogbo, O-l-u-o-r-o-g-b-o
The horses have bolted away from the barn
Swift in their soaring flights
like birds that have learnt not to perch
The conclave has gone cold
In the frittered effervescences
Of the evanescent essences
Of this famished land
The incantations melt from my lips
In ineffectual spouts
And I munch alligator peppers
To brace the horses of our lamentations in flight
through this twilight
To the chagrin of the new prophets
Stuck to their old yonder.

In the chilling breathe

of the harmattan dusk

in the roaring flames

of the night's fire

I sniff your imprints

Oluorogbo

Still stalking the ancient land

wincing the sleep out of homesteads

of our brackish shores.

Ademola Araoye is a former Nigerian diplomat. His poetry has appeared in various publications, including the *Defunct* West Africa journal and the California based *Drumming Between Us*. He currently lives in Monrovia, Liberia, where he is Chief, Political, Policy and Planning for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).