
Setting the Context

IMMIGRATION, ASSIMILATION VERSUS RACIALIZATION, AND THE AFRICAN AND NIGERIAN DIASPORAS IN THE UNITED STATES AND BRITAIN

Titi Ajayi, a twenty-nine-year-old researcher with a PhD, came to the United States when she was twelve years old. She learned to think of herself in racial terms only after her arrival. She experienced “culture shock” because, she said, “it was really my first time of thinking about white. I knew that there were white people and Asians in the world, but I didn’t know that people actually called [other people] white. I was surprised that the color white is what you called somebody. That was a foreign thing to me. Because before wherever I lived people were just different, but it was never, you never just called somebody white.” Titi continued, “I remember I had to learn, oh, when you say white you mean a person, that’s actually a person. That black means a person. So, that was one of the big things I had to learn in the United States.” Even as she has learned to think of herself as black, Titi also identifies as Nigerian as well as Nigerian American.

British respondents shared similar stories of racialization. Adex Malik, a thirty-year-old pharmacist, told me he was not treated as racially different when he was a child growing up in Britain. As he put it, “Everything was hunky-dory.” But then: “As my friends used to say, when you are young, before the age of ten, you are a cute little boy. But when you become eleven you become a black person.” When asked why he thought this happened, he told me: “You begin to get more aware of what is going on and you start to have different experiences at that point. You begin to feel the difference in the way people view you. Before I was no threat to anybody. I was just a little kid.” Now, as a black man, he is perceived racially, as scary, hypersexual, and prone to violence:¹ “White people cross the street to avoid me. Elderly white people riding on buses look at me ‘funny.’” As a child he “had no full understanding of race,” but he does now. Like Titi, Adex is aware that racially he is

black while simultaneously identifying in other ways, as Nigerian and African.

These vignettes underscore the importance of ethnoracial contexts in the process of identity formation among the Nigerian second generation. The objective of this chapter, then, is to delineate both the national contexts and the contexts of reception in which the Nigerian second generation form ethnic identities. Next, I turn to a discussion of the predicted assimilation outcomes for the black second generation that flow out of racialization and segmented assimilation theories and their conception of black identity and blackness that the experiences of the Nigerian second generation in both the United States and Britain have led me to challenge. Overall, the focus of this chapter is to understand how history, politics, and immigration shape the national context for black natives and black immigrants and how the composition of Nigerian communities in the United States and Britain impact the assimilation outcomes of their second generation.²

THE UNITED STATES AND BRITAIN AS COMPARATIVE CASES

When studying identity formation among the Nigerian second generation, the United States and Britain provide an ideal comparison of national contexts. Both are advanced, English-speaking, Western democracies with racially and ethnoculturally diverse populations—populations projected to grow increasingly diverse due to immigration.³ In both the United States and Britain, racial hierarchies exist, with white people placed at the top as the presumably superior race and black people placed at the bottom.⁴ Racial boundaries are normally drawn on the basis of physical markers such as skin pigmentation, hair texture, and facial features, while ethnic boundaries are normally drawn on the basis of cultural markers such as language, religion, and shared customs.⁵ Although notions of race as a meaningful biological category have been debunked, as has also racial science, which linked social outcomes to biological traits, race and racial categorization still hold great social and political power in contemporary British and American society. Consequently, race can be defined as “a concept, a representation or signification of identity that refers to different types of human bodies, to the per-

ceived corporeal and phenotypic markers of difference and the meanings and social practices that are ascribed to these differences.”⁶ Both nations have long histories of racism and discrimination against black people. In the United States, antiblack discrimination has its roots in the ethnoracial traumas of trading and possessing enslaved Africans and legal segregation (Jim Crow). In Britain, the roots of antiblack discrimination are traced to the imperial history of slavery, colonialism, and color segregation. All of these practices were maintained and given legitimacy by the ideologies of white supremacy and black inferiority. The one big difference between the United States and Britain is that African Americans endured slavery and segregation on American soil, whereas black people in Britain are mostly immigrants from the West Indies, Africa, and other former British colonies. For Britain, trade in enslaved Africans and the practice of slavery occurred far away from the British motherland. Even though significant racial progress has been made since the abolition of the slave trade and slavery, with many laws being passed banning antiblack discrimination in public spaces and organizations, black people in both countries still experience significant racial prejudice and discrimination.

Past and present social policies and societal arrangements, such as the persistence of institutional racism in both countries, the ghettoization of inner cities in the United States, and mass incarceration that affects more ethnic minorities—and especially more blacks than whites—have created and maintained significant racial inequality in both societies. Black people on the whole lag behind whites on many measures, including education and health outcomes, employment and labor market experiences, housing and residential segregation, income and wealth, and judicial experiences and sentencing. Despite the prediction of traditional assimilation scholarship, which holds that social mobility is correlated with social acceptance, racism affects even middle-class blacks.⁷ In the United States, the black middle class face housing segregation just like the black poor, with the average middle-class black person living in a neighborhood worse than those inhabited by the white poor. Thus the returns on socioeconomic status for blacks in terms of neighborhood quality are much lower than for other groups.⁸ In both Britain and the United States, blacks do not perform as well as whites in school, are more likely to be in prison, have lower employment rates, have less wealth, have children as teenagers or out of wedlock, and are less likely than whites to marry.⁹ These dreary statistics, when taken together, are evidence of racial discrimination and the deleterious effect of racism on black people’s life

chances. In short, in both countries antiblack racism still profoundly affects many aspects of black people's lives. And in both countries, the state is rearticulating these racialized ideologies, retreating from policies designed to relieve racial inequality.¹⁰ And in both countries, many whites refuse to see how racial barriers and institutional racism in many sectors such as law and the judicial system maintain racial inequality between blacks and whites.¹¹ Their refusal to confront these issues also saps the political will to bring about change.¹²

Yet there are key differences between the two countries in terms of how race politics are articulated. While both the United States and Britain have color lines separating blacks from whites, the latter's ethnosomatic stratification system is not as rigid as the one found in the United States. Britain's ethnosomatic stratification system is described as one of proletarian incorporation, where society is not organized along racially constituted lines, whereas the United States has a dichotomous/binary code restricting blacks to one side of the color line.¹³ There is no consensus among scholars on whether the U.S. color line has evolved from black/white to black/nonblack or a tri-racial system similar to those found in Latin America, but within this debate, black people are usually understood to be at the bottom of the racial hierarchy.¹⁴ The less strict rigidity of Britain's ethnosomatic stratification system is revealed in the political usage of "black" as a broad category encompassing African, Caribbean, and South Asian groups in postwar Britain up until its reduced usage in the twenty-first century. The term has been the subject of some controversy, but it was used to call attention to ethnic minorities' "outsider" status, their similar proletarian structural position within British society "as workers performing predominantly unskilled and semi-skilled jobs on the lowest rungs of the economy," and to mobilize resistance to their treatment in Britain that is attributable largely to their non-whiteness.¹⁵ Being black was an expression of political solidarity among Africans, Caribbeans, and South Asians. The emergence in Britain of the term *black* demonstrates the influence of the U.S.-based Black Power movement on British ethnic minorities and their fight for civil rights.¹⁶ Similar political alliances between racialized groups in the United States where they fight under the umbrella term *black* have not occurred in the United States. While some nonwhites organize politically under the category "people of color," it has been argued that over the course of U.S. history, immigrant groups who have assimilated have done so at the expense, or on the backs of, native blacks.¹⁷ As a result of these differing ethnoracial systems, I expect that

British respondents would draw less sharp boundaries between themselves and their proximal hosts than would U.S. respondents.

The United States and Britain hold differing views on the role of immigrants in their societies. Though both nations have long histories of immigration and are top destination countries for immigrants, they hold dissimilar views on the place of immigrants in their national identities. Immigration is part of the charter myth of the United States, which, despite its peaks of nativist sentiment and xenophobia, likes to claim it is a “nation of immigrants” and thus more welcoming to the foreign-born. Conversely, Britons are generally more hostile to immigrants, especially from its former colonies in Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa, with many white Britons perceiving immigration “as being akin to war and invasion.”¹⁸ Because of these differing views on immigrants and their role in nation building, my U.S. respondents should feel more welcomed in the United States than their counterparts do in Britain.

In both the United States and Britain, many of the native-born harbor anxieties about the new immigrants in their country: in the United States the fear is of the “browning,” or Hispanicization, of America; in Britain the fear is the rise of nonassimilating ethno-Islamic groups and radicalized Islamic minorities who purportedly pose a threat to security and whose communities serve as breeding grounds for domestic terrorists. In Britain, Islam has become the immigration fault line, whereas in the United States Latinos are the immigration fault line.¹⁹ Immigrants who represent these fault lines experience increasing xenophobia and hostility to their presence. Right-wing movements influence the politics of immigration and engender an environment for multiple racisms to occur. In Britain, the National Party runs on an anti-immigration policy platform. In the United States, the Republican Party on the whole and the Tea Party, which leans Republican, oppose any immigration law that includes a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, which disproportionately affects immigrants from Mexico. This comparative structural analysis of race relations is key to understanding the similarities and differences in the experiences of the Nigerian second generation in both countries. In short, national contexts of reception matter.

ETHNICITY AMONG BLACKS

There exists a view that that ethnic differences among blacks are of minimal sociological importance. This view is related to the prominence of the

ethnicity paradigm as one of the major schools of thought in assimilation scholarship.²⁰ The ethnicity paradigm emerged as a challenge to the biologicistic explanations of race and beliefs about racial superiority and inferiority.²¹ Ethnicity theory, which was based on the experiences of white immigrants from Europe to the United States, sought to understand how these ethnic groups were assimilating and becoming American. *Assimilation* is the process whereby immigrants and their descendants become integrated into, and more like members of, their host society via prolonged exposure to and socialization in their institutions. It can also be viewed as the decline in ethnic differences.²² The sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant argue that ethnicity theory “operated on cultural territory” and treated “race as a matter of ethnicity,” pushing an understanding of race “in terms of culture.”²³ This paradigm has been critiqued for promoting an image of an egalitarian society, rather than a discriminatory one, because it is suggested that all groups, irrespective of race, religion, or color, can succeed in the new country and become full citizens depending on their willingness or ability to acculturate.²⁴ The flipside of this belief is that if a certain group is not doing as well as others it must be due largely to deficiencies within the group—its cultural practices, family structure, lack of goal-oriented identities, attitudes, and so on. Consequently, according to the ethnicity paradigm, the significance of race and institutional racism is underplayed because race and thus racial inequality are reduced to being cultural phenomena.²⁵

According to this logic, all black people are to be lumped into a single ethnic group, with race and ethnicity treated as interchangeable. The persisting significance of race, what blackness means in these countries, and the structural barriers imposed by racism that adversely affect black people more than all other groups, including other nonwhite groups who also experience forms of discrimination and exclusion, are underplayed. While the ethnicity paradigm is often employed to ethnicize whites, thus downplaying race when it comes to whites, black ethnic differences are generally treated as insignificant due to race. As Omi and Winant conclude, “The ethnicity approach views blacks as one ethnic group among others. It does not consider national origin, religion, language, or cultural differences among blacks as it does among whites, as sources of ethnicity. . . . [T]here is in fact, a subtly racist element in this substitution—in which whites are seen as variegated in terms of group identities, but blacks ‘all look alike.’”²⁶

Studies using ethnicity theory propose cultural explanations for why black people fail to fully assimilate.²⁷ These arguments are widely used to

explain why African Americans, whose ancestors arrived in the United States long before those of white Europeans, who came in the great immigration wave of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, continue to lag behind according to most socioeconomic indicators of assimilation. Similar arguments are made about British blacks lagging behind other ethnic minorities in education and occupational outcomes.²⁸ Black people have come to be viewed as having “one recognizable set of behaviors and cultural practices that render them unassimilable”: a pathological culture—a culture of poverty—characterized by “a sense of resignation or fatalism, an inability to delay gratification and plan for the future, low educational motivation, low social and economic aspiration, a trend toward female centered families, and an inadequate moral preparation for employment.”²⁹ And in both the United States and Britain, blackness is seen as emblematic of criminality and economic disadvantage.³⁰

Many scholars have critiqued this portrayal of black people where blackness connotes poverty and criminality. Some do not reject the conclusion that a culture of poverty exists but argue instead that the deleterious cultural behavior found in black communities is an adaptive response to key structural factors limiting economic opportunities.³¹ These scholars point to institutional racism, residential segregation, and the concentration of poverty, poor-quality public schools in black neighborhoods, and a changing economic system in which well-paying manufacturing jobs have been replaced by poorly paid service jobs as key structural factors perpetuating black disadvantage and imperiling upward mobility among blacks.

Despite growing acknowledgment that ethnicity theory cannot satisfactorily explain the challenges to assimilation of nonwhite groups, including blacks, Asians, and Hispanics, many studies on the children of black immigrants operate with the assumption that native blacks possess a deleterious set of attitudes and behaviors.³² One of the most notable examples of this in assimilation scholarship is segmented assimilation theory.

This view that black people are a single ethnic bloc with a deficient culture is also shared in Britain. Britain does not have as influential a theory of second-generation assimilation as segmented assimilation theory, but Tariq Modood, a premier immigration and race and ethnicity scholar in Britain, suggests that the theory is applicable. In an article examining why Indians, Pakistanis, and Chinese are overrepresented in higher education compared to white Britons and British blacks, he argues that “the motor of the British South Asians and Chinese overcoming of disadvantage lies in migrant

parents getting their children to internalize high educational ambitions and to enforce appropriate behavior.”³³ In contrast, he posits that British blacks have a working-class culture that fails to intergenerationally transmit goal-oriented identities to children. Black youth culture, in Modood’s assessment, is characterized by “Hollywood, soap operas, music, clothes fashions, celebrities, football, pubs, clubs, and binge drinking.”³⁴ He adds that British blacks not only personify this dominant working-class culture but also impress it on others, as they have “come to be a leading-edge presence, quite remarkable for a group that is less than 2 percent of the population, stigmatized, and economically disadvantaged.”³⁵

Like the authors of segmented assimilation theory, Modood conflates race and ethnicity for black people in Britain by not distinguishing between Caribbeans and Africans or the different national groups that fall under these broad regional and continental categories. As in the United States, national origin, specificity of the country and its historical links with Britain, ethnicity, religion, and social class status (for the group and the individual) are not seen as factors that can lead to disaggregation within the black category. Overall, Modood treats British blacks as a single ethnic group with a working-class culture that undermines their socioeconomic success in a way similar to the oppositional culture of American blacks. And similar to how Asian immigrants in the United States are depicted by segmented assimilation scholars as possessing social capital, Modood concludes that Asian parents “have little credence in this [working-class culture] domain and try to limit their children’s exposure to it.”³⁶ Modood implies that the working-class culture found among the black British is contagious, and while it is found predominantly among black Caribbeans, it negatively impacts black Africans too. Hence Modood’s failure to distinguish between black Africans and black Caribbeans. His statements also indicate a theoretical conceptualization of blackness that, just like in the U.S. literature, connotes a disadvantaged class experience.

Taken together, it is presumed that just like in the United States different ethnic minority groups in Britain exhibit different modes of cultural assimilation due to competing cultural values. The high levels of university enrollment among South Asians and Chinese can be purportedly explained by their having a “better culture” than British blacks, a culture that passes on goal-oriented identities. Asians’ high levels of educational attainment are reportedly explained by the social capital available in their ethnic communities, forms of social capital that promote high educational attainment, which are not found among the black British. In sum, British blacks eschew educa-

tion, leading them to lower achievement, while South Asians and Chinese reject British working class culture—often racially depicted as black—and thus achieve socioeconomic success.

Segmented assimilation theory has been criticized for failing to recognize the existence of a black middle class. It has also been challenged for ignoring minority cultures of mobility among blacks that may foster assimilation. Minority cultures of mobility are “a set of cultural elements associated with a minority group . . . that provides strategies for managing economic mobility in the context of discrimination and group disadvantage.”³⁷ Finally, it fails to recognize that being a member of a racialized minority offers not just disadvantages but access to certain programs, most notably affirmative action policies, that facilitate the black second generation’s upward social mobility.³⁸

Despite this particular view of blackness that informs key studies on the black second generation, we know very little about the identity formation process and ethnic identities of members of the black second generation in the United States or elsewhere.³⁹ Segmented assimilation theory’s prediction that identity formation among the black second generation results in a reactive black ethnicity characterized by oppositional culture⁴⁰ was formulated at the turn of the twenty-first century when African immigrants and their children were not as significant a presence in both size and cultural impact in the United States and Britain.

In this book I take a different approach. First, I conceptualize the context of reception, a key dimension of segmented assimilation theory, to include additional factors affecting assimilation outcomes. In the course of my investigation, I discovered that each country’s history, both general and specific to the immigrant group, is an extremely important aspect of the context of reception. Another set of important factors is a country’s colonial history, national identity, and national myths. I found that Britain’s colonial history was a critical element in understanding the racism Nigerians experience in Britain, as well as how the Nigerian second generation related to the nation and fashioned their ethnic identities. The Nigerian second generation in the United States were also affected by that country’s history with black people and attempts to redress its racist past. The presence of a proximal host and interactions with this group are additional and important aspects of the context of reception for the black second generation. It is not just race that affects the identity formation process of the second generation. Interethnic relations between the groups, even as they all reside in countries that racialize them as black, is a key determinant of how the black second generation identifies.

Second, I extend segmented assimilation theory and the racialization framework by identifying several mechanisms that show how ethnicity and class matter in the assimilation outcomes of the black second generation, even in racialized societies such as the United States and Britain. The theory of segmented assimilation has been criticized for coming dangerously close to labeling some cultures as bad and others as good and for reproducing commonly held stereotypes that Asian culture is good and black and Hispanic cultures are bad.⁴¹ But culture is not intrinsic to members of an ethnic group. Rather, culture develops out of structural arrangements within the ethnic community and in interaction with the wider society. Therefore, it is necessary to study different black immigrant communities to uncover whether, and in what ways, ethnicity is deployed as a resource and form of capital as it reportedly is by some Asian groups. In this book, I show how ethnic resources in Nigerian communities in the United States and Britain affect the identities and assimilation trajectories of the Nigerian second generation. In so doing, I extend the ethnicity-as-capital framework to the black second generation. Finally, as almost all the respondents in this book are middle-class professionals, their experiences add to our knowledge about the ethnic diversity of the black middle class.

THEORIES OF SECOND-GENERATION ASSIMILATION

The defining characteristic of contemporary migration to the United States, which began after the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act abolishing the national origins quota system and replacing it with a preference system focusing on immigrants' skills and family relationships with citizens or U.S. residents, is that most immigrants are nonwhites from Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa. A compelling question for immigration scholars is whether these immigrants will assimilate in the same manner as the earlier wave of white immigrants from Europe. For white immigrants who came into the United States between the eighteenth century and the early twentieth, assimilation occurred in generational steps, with subsequent generations becoming economically more successful and integrated into the American mainstream as they increasingly shed their ethnic cultures.

Immigration researchers doubt that nonwhite immigrants will have a similar assimilation experience. Some conclude that nonwhite immigrants, especially blacks and Hispanics, will be racialized and discriminated against

because they are not white and thus will experience blocked mobility or downward trajectories.⁴² The theory of racialization for the second generation developed from a study of second- and third-generation Mexican Americans and posits that “the strong force of assimilation in American society may be slowed or even halted by the counterforce of racialization.” Further: “Today racial distinctions continue to be popularly accepted as natural divisions of humanity with an implicit racial hierarchy that largely defines one’s place in society. The accumulation of racially discriminatory treatment disproportionately sorts those stigmatized into the bottom strata of class even as it privileges others.”⁴³ Segmented assimilation theory, which sought to understand how race along with other factors complicated the pathway of assimilation—a pathway heretofore thought to be straightforward, at least for white immigrants, took a similar tack, arguing that children of black immigrants because of racial proximity to native American blacks, racial prejudice, and residing in places with high unemployment, were at risk of downwardly assimilating into a rainbow underclass.⁴⁴

A large-scale study of second-generation adults—Russian Jews, South Americans (specifically from Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador), West Indians, and the Chinese—found no evidence of a second-generation decline, with the exception of Dominican men. The authors argue that there was in fact a second-generation advantage, which was facilitated by the key mechanism they term cultural creativity. The second generation are able to choose which aspects of a given cultural model to adopt—from their parents’ culture or the cultures found in their new country—and their selective and creative combination of the two are highly conducive to success.⁴⁵ The study found that ethnic identities of second-generation adults are “situational, variable, and hybrid” and that “rigid census or survey questions” asking the second generation about their race and ethnicity are seriously flawed because they “clash with the multiple and complex origins and layers of meaning available to these young people when they think about racial and ethnic identity.”⁴⁶

Recent studies on second and subsequent generations of Mexican Americans find conflicting evidence on whether or not they are experiencing a downward decline. A large-scale study in California found that while there was no second-generation decline among Mexican Americans, there was a third-generation decline.⁴⁷ Another study concluded that the fears that second- and third-generation Mexican Americans would not experience progress across generations, as was the case among Europeans, are unwarranted. This study found that “second and third generation Hispanic men

have made great strides in closing their economic gaps with native whites.”⁴⁸ Other studies have found that some Mexican Americans are experiencing upward mobility and have assimilated into white mainstream America. However, despite their advances, they are becoming a racialized minority in the United States because of growing nativist sentiment among segments of the American population in response to increased Mexican, and specifically illegal, migration.⁴⁹

Among Asian groups, many second generations have done very well academically and professionally. As a result, they are viewed as the model minority in the United States. The term *model minority* is used to refer to a minority group (racial, ethnic, or religious) that successfully adapts despite experiencing discrimination. A model minority is associated with high achievement on measures such as education and income or low crime rates. This concept has been critiqued because it homogenizes and racializes Asian Americans while obscuring the fact that not all Asian groups are doing better than the U.S. national average.⁵⁰ And despite their socioeconomic success, second- and subsequent generation Asian Americans are still racialized as distinct from whites and thus as perpetual foreigners.⁵¹

Various studies have looked at how race and class affect the assimilation outcomes of second generation Latinos and Asians, but not much is known about how the intersection of race, class (both parental and individual), and ethnicity affects the assimilation outcomes of the black second generation. And this is especially true for the adult African second generation. Racialization, the process and practice of it, still leave open the possibility that racial status will matter more than social class status for black people, and ethnicity for black immigrants and their children. The predictions of a second-generation decline for blacks and darker-skinned Hispanics, as well as statements that Mexican Americans’ experiences are becoming analogous to that of African Americans,⁵² assume the existence of only poor blacks. These influential theories in the field of immigration give short shrift to how social class intersects with race, how ethnicity can be a source of capital, and how the interactive effects of these factors have an impact on groups of the black second generation.

Thus what I argue in this book is that for black, especially African, immigrants and their children, of whom very little is known in the United States and Britain, it is necessary to examine how the resources black immigrants bring with them—human, social, and financial capital—might make a difference in their children’s assimilation pathways and in how they navigate the

ethnoracial contexts of American and British society. Furthermore, segmented assimilation theory does not adequately theorize the roles ethnicity and class play in the assimilation outcomes of the black second generation. It is not clear whether the theory's prediction that a reactive black ethnicity and black identity as the mode of identity formation is equally applicable to second-generation blacks of all social class backgrounds. The theory acknowledges that most nonwhite children with middle-class and entrepreneurial parents will be able to meet the challenges of the structural barriers of race with some equanimity.⁵³ But it is silent on how children of black immigrants will do this and also whether variations in class backgrounds among the black second generation will lead to different modes of identity formation. The question thus becomes, is the prediction of forging a reactive black ethnicity and black identity applicable to second-generation blacks from middle- and upper-class backgrounds? Some studies seem to suggest so.⁵⁴ Empirically we don't know much about the identity formation process for black immigrants and their children from a certain class background who are not Caribbean. My study addresses this void by looking at children of Nigerian immigrants, most of whom are well educated and /middle class. Examining the experiences of the Nigerian second generation will answer these questions and ultimately provide a more nuanced consideration of how race, ethnicity, immigration, and class intersect for black people in American and British society.

How Do the Black Second Generation Identify?

A number of studies have investigated the question of how the black second generation identify and proffer a number of answers. A seminal study on second-generation West Indian youths found three options: a black American racial identity, whereby they see themselves as being in the same situation as African Americans; an ethnic or hyphenated foreign national identity, based on their parents' foreign identities and which involves some distancing from African Americans; or an immigrant identity, which was viewed as temporary.⁵⁵ Those who identified as black Americans were more likely to believe that their opportunities were constrained because they are black, whereas those with an ethnic identity were more likely to believe that if one strove hard enough one would be successful. There was a class difference: the majority of youths from middle-class backgrounds, 57 percent, ethnically identified, whereas just 8 percent of youths from poor families and 20 percent of

youths from working-class families ethnically identified. But even among youths from middle class families, over a third (36%) identified as black American and the plurality of the youths from poor and working-class families (46 and 45 percent, respectively) identified as black American.

The study linked ethnic identity to mobility, finding that youths who ethnically identified were more successful.⁵⁶ Youths who ethnically identified believed America had made some racial progress. They felt that the white people they came in contact with were aware of their ethnic distinction from black Americans, and they went out of their way to signal their difference from black Americans. For the large number of youths from all social class backgrounds who chose to identify as black Americans, the stance of opposition that was an integral component of this identity was “in part a socialized response to peer culture” but for the most part came about as “a reaction to the teens’ life experiences, most specifically, their experience of racial discrimination.” The author concludes that “the lives of these youngsters basically lead them to reject the immigrant dream of their parents of individual social mobility and to accept their peers’ analysis of the United States as a place with blocked social mobility where they will not be able to move very far. This has the effect of leveling the aspirations of the teens downward.”⁵⁷ A few studies argue that being American identified and/or choosing the black American identity is not linked to mobility.⁵⁸

A key theme emerging from the study of second-generation ethnicity is the notion of “hybridity” that the second generation is creating new ethnic identities and new cultural content that are a mixture of their parents’ homelands and cultures and the cultures found in their countries of birth or receiving countries.⁵⁹ Thus they are ethnic hybrids, whose ethnic content is a mixture of their parents’ and their receiving country’s cultures. Several studies argue that the black second generation (both African and Caribbean) are bicultural—identifying with both their parents’ country of origin and their receiving country.⁶⁰ Most simultaneously hold both racial and ethnic identities.⁶¹ Some others hold gendered identities.⁶² A study of middle-class Haitians found that they had three ethnic identity options: (1) they could become American blacks, giving up their ethnic identity for a racial identity; (2) they could keep both racial and ethnic identities; or (3) they could adopt a “stance of racelessness.”⁶³ The authors of this study argued that the three alternatives open to middle-class Haitian immigrants are indicative of the alternatives that other middle-class black immigrants (first and second generation) will face. A new concept, situational ethnicity, captures the

complexities of second-generation ethnic identities and is used to explain how an individual possesses multiple ethnic identities and deploys them at different times based on his or her reading of what the situation demands.⁶⁴

In Britain, all ethnic minorities are said to choose between four strategies of self-identification.⁶⁵ These are the dissociative strategy, where categorization is in terms of ethnic minority membership, not the majority group; the assimilative strategy, where self-categorization emphasizes the majority group and denies ethnic minority roots; the acculturative strategy, where the self is categorized approximately equally along both dimensions; and the marginal strategy, where neither dimension is salient to self-categorization but other social categories are used, such as student or squash player. Some people may consciously decide not to choose an ethnic or majority group identity.⁶⁶ Second-generation black Caribbeans are found to largely identify as British, black British, or a combination of black, British, and Caribbean.⁶⁷

While these studies on ethnic identities of the second generation have increased our knowledge on the ethnic options and choices of the second generation, they overlook two important factors that affect identity formation among the black second generation: the importance of the relationships between the second generation and their proximal hosts for identity formation and the assimilation process; and how the class status of the second-generation individual affects how they identify. In this book I detail how social class affects the formation of racial and ethnic identities among the Nigerian second generation in the United States and Britain, paying particular attention to how class identities become entangled with the ethnicity and racial and ethnic identities formed.

I further extend what we know about the ethnic identities of the second generation, especially the black second generation, by showing that they have more ethnic choices available to them. First, for the black second generation, to be American identified does not mean only taking an oppositional stance that lowers aspiration and effort and signals disillusionment with America; it can mean espousing beliefs and holding attitudes that locate the individual in the mainstream. Second, a pan-African identity is emerging among the Nigerian second generation that is meaningful in both countries but especially in Britain. This is a made-in-the-receiving-country—made in the USA, made in Britain—identity that is different from or in addition to the black, African American, or black British pan-ethnic identities existing theories predicted for the black second generation. Last, I find that the Nigerian second generation have developed a multifaceted identity that combines

multiple meaningful identities into one, which captures the full complexity of their lived realities and how these individuals see themselves and want others to see them.

It is important at this point in the book to clarify concepts of blackness and how I define and use *blackness* and *black identity*. Blackness and the rules that define who is black are socially constructed. In the United States, the “one-drop rule” was institutionalized to determine who was black. This is a rule of hypodescent that defines as black any person with an ancestor hailing from the African continent, no matter how distant the relation, who provided a single drop of black blood to all descendants.⁶⁸ Consequently, black people in the United States who have ties to the African continent—old ties like those of African Americans descended from enslaved African Americans and more recent ties among contemporary (post-1965) black immigrants from the Caribbean and Africa—are all regarded as black. In Britain, even though blacks were not enslaved in the motherland but in British colonies, a racial hierarchy, similar to that found in the United States, was established that places whites at the top and blacks at the bottom. However, in both countries, but especially in the United States, numerous studies point to the increasing diversity within the black racial category based on class,⁶⁹ sexual orientation,⁷⁰ ideology, and ethnic differences,⁷¹ which is chipping away at the notion of a monolithic blackness or undifferentiated mass of black people.

I take the position that there is no monolithic blackness in these countries, if we are conflating race, ethnicity, and identity into a single matrix. I critique the prevalent view found in key studies in the field of second generation assimilation that black identity and blackness is characterized by a black culture that is reducible to an oppositional culture that devalues schooling and work and stresses attitudes and behaviors antithetical and often hostile to success in the mainstream economy.

My use of the term *black racial identity* is narrowly conceptualized to emphasize two key points: the power of assignment into the black racial category and the implications of said assignment. I view the black identity as a black racial identity, which means that an individual is assigned to the black racial category and understands the implications of this ascribed racial group membership and its low placement on the racial hierarchy on the life chances of black people. The black racial identity can and often does unite all blacks and mobilizes them in a fight against racism and racial inequality.⁷² Because the color lines of both Britain and the United States are in flux largely

because of continued large-scale migration from nonwhite parts of the world and increasing bi- and multiracial populations,⁷³ I argue that individuals and groups in the black racial category in both countries have space to construct their own meanings of blackness, that is, what being black means to them outside of, or in addition to, being assigned to the black racial category.

NIGERIANS AND AFRICANS IN THE U.S. AND BRITISH DIASPORAS

A Brief Note about Nigeria

Before describing the Nigerian, or generally the African, diasporas in the United States and Britain I want to turn to the nation of Nigeria itself, briefly sketching its demographics, culture, geography, and economy. Located in West Africa, Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa and the seventh most populous nation in the world. Nigeria's population in 2015 was estimated at 181 million, which constitutes 15 percent of the total African population.⁷⁴ Nigeria gained independence from Britain in 1960 and has since gone through a mix of democratically elected and military governments. It is on its fourth successive civilian government, the longest period of civilian rule in Nigeria since independence. Ninety-five percent of Nigeria's revenue, is from oil and gas exports.⁷⁵

The Federal Republic of Nigeria has an area of 923,769 square kilometers, which makes it slightly more than twice the size of the state of California. The country is bordered on the west by the republics of Benin and Niger, on the east by Cameroon, on the north by Niger and Chad, and on the south by the Gulf of Guinea. There are 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria, with the three largest being the Hausa/Fulani (29 percent), Yoruba (21 percent), and Ibo (18 percent). Together they comprise 68 percent of the total Nigerian population.⁷⁶ Five hundred twenty languages are spoken in Nigeria, but English is the nation's official language, a bequest from its British colonial roots.

Nigeria's ethnic divisions correlate with regional partitions. Northerners are predominantly Hausas and Fulanis, while southerners and easterners are predominantly Ibos, Yorubas, Edo, Ijaw, and Itsekiri. The northern groups are predominantly Muslim, while the ethnic groups in the South are predominantly Christian. The southern groups are significantly more educated than the Hausas and Fulanis, which has led to the southern part of Nigeria having significantly higher educational levels than the northern regions. The adult

literacy rate among Nigerians in the north is 35 percent, while the adult literacy rate in the south and southeast is more than twice that, 74 percent.⁷⁷ This educational gap shows up in who emigrates. Nigerian immigrants in advanced, democratic, Western countries are predominantly southerners and easterners from the most educated regions. The national literacy rate as reported by the 2006 Nigerian census is 67 percent.⁷⁸ While only 7 percent of Nigerians over the age of 25 have at least a bachelor's degree,⁷⁹ 61.4 percent of first-generation Nigerians over the age of 25 in the United States have at least a bachelor's degree—an educational profile that is even more striking when compared to the U.S. national average of 29.3 percent.⁸⁰ In the United Kingdom, 61 percent of first-generation Nigerians over the age of 25 have at least a bachelor's degree, compared to the U.K. national average of 28 percent.⁸¹

Most Nigerian immigrants are social and economic migrants. Nigerians did not begin to migrate in large numbers outside the region until after independence in 1960. The stream of largely highly skilled migrants to the United Kingdom continued after Nigerian independence, and an increasing number soon began to migrate and settle in the United States. As a result, the Nigerian diaspora in the United Kingdom is on the whole older than that in the United States.⁸² From the 1950s through the 1970s, emerging Nigerian elites moved mainly to the United Kingdom because of the colonial relationship. Most relocated to pursue further studies and, during the 1960s and 1970s, returned to Nigeria and took up middle-class jobs in the Nigerian civil service, the booming oil industry, and the growing private sector.

After a report reviewing the state of education in Britain's colonies in the 1920s found that Africans were poorly educated and the educational facilities inadequate, several U.S. foundations began to sponsor Africans to study in the United States.⁸³ Many Nigerians took advantage of this opportunity. One of the first to do so was Nnamdi Azikiwe, who entered the United States in 1925 and attended Storer College, Lincoln University, and Howard University. After graduating, Dr. Azikiwe returned to Nigeria and became the nation's first governor general and then its first president.

Observing the success of the returned migrants, other Nigerians realized that having a college degree was a direct path to having a good job, a middle- or upper-class standard of living, and, for some, shaping policy in government. Individuals began to seek out foundations and organizations that could give them scholarships for further studies overseas. Members of various ethnic groups came to believe that educating a few members of their group would help improve the lives of all members and lead to positive develop-

ment; consequently, they began to tax themselves to send some of their young men to the United States and Britain.⁸⁴ During this period, a steady stream of Nigerian students to the United States and Britain was established.

The rate of migration to countries in the West, especially the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada, spiked sharply in the 1980s and has remained high because of economic and political instability in Nigeria. The collapse of the petroleum boom in the early 1980s and the roll-out of austerity measures mandated by the International Monetary Fund to bail out Nigeria from its debt and budgetary crisis in the mid-1980s devastated the Nigerian economy. These factors, coupled with the opportunity for self-advancement, better jobs, and security (both economic and personal), pushed Nigerians in large numbers out of Nigeria to Europe, the United States, and several Arab states. This led to what is commonly called the “brain drain”—the loss of highly skilled professionals, among them doctors, nurses, and teachers. Current economic hardships, political unrest in northern and southern Nigeria, and worsening security has kept the rate of migration out of Nigeria high. In 2011, the unemployment rate was 23.9 percent, and over 70 percent of the Nigerian population lives below the poverty line.⁸⁵

The highly restrictive immigration policies used to vet Nigerians seeking entry into Western advanced democracies, combined with the push and pull factors mentioned above, have created a culture of professional migration among the Nigerian middle and upper classes. For most educated Nigerians, the United States and the United Kingdom have been the top destinations. But even as these countries have tried to restrict entry to Nigerians and people from other developing nations, they have created policies that grant permanent resident status to well-educated and highly skilled migrants. The United States issues H-1B employment visas, which allow employers to obtain work permits for immigrants who fill a need that purportedly cannot be drawn from the domestic labor market. The federal government also runs the Diversity Visa Lottery program, which grants permanent residence (green) cards to educated individuals and skilled artisans. In 2011, the United Kingdom, under the conservative government of Prime Minister David Cameron, ended its highly skilled immigrant visa program, a point-based system very similar to the one operated by Canada. All of these programs have been used by educated Nigerians as a “get-out-of-Nigeria” card. It is not uncommon for Nigerians in the United Kingdom to have family members and friends scattered across the United Kingdom, the United States, and, less so, Canada.

Nigerian migrants have become an important source of development for Nigeria via remittances—whether financial, technological, skill based, or networks. One major benefit of out-migration is the large amount of money immigrants send back to their home countries, money that supports families and spurs economic growth.⁸⁶ From 2007 to 2012, Nigerian immigrants all over the world sent payments totaling \$178 billion to people living in Nigeria.⁸⁷

Since the return of democracy in 1999 with the election of President Oluwasegun Obasanjo, the Nigerian government has shifted from a hands-off to a hands-on policy toward its citizens in the advanced democratic countries in Europe and North America. They are now recognized as important to Nigeria's development goals, and the government is instituting policies to tap into their resources, with a special focus on Nigerians living in the United States and United Kingdom.

In September 2000, President Obasanjo met in Atlanta, Georgia, with Nigerians living in the Americas. Later that year, he held a similar meeting in London with Nigerians living in Europe. The purpose of these meetings was to engage Nigerians in the diaspora and create a mechanism through which they could effectively be mobilized and participate in Nigeria's development. The Nigerians in the Diaspora Organization (NIDO) was established in 2001, with the mission of being a stronger partner in Nigeria's economic development. The Nigerian National Volunteer Service (NNVS), as part of the office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, was established in 2002 to mobilize Nigerians at home and in the diaspora to participate in volunteer activities complementing the government's development efforts. Another outcome of government-diaspora interaction was the 2002 decision to allow Nigerians to hold dual citizenship.⁸⁸

The Nigerian federal government also established the Department of Diaspora, with plans to upgrade the department to a Diaspora Commission in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Former President Goodluck Jonathan announced in April 2010 that the new commission would comprehensively harmonize the contributions of Nigerians abroad with a view to ensuring proper documentation of their input. As a commission, the organization will have more resources and powers, as well as a board of directors to oversee its affairs. The government has also established an 80 billion naira (about US\$500 million) investment fund so that the diaspora can invest in the Nigerian economy. According to the proposal, any Nigerian citizen interested in furthering the country's industrialization but who lacks the means to do so can draw from the fund, which is part of the larger National Resource

Fund meant for local capacity building, technology transfer, and product standardization to boost the country's export of manufactured goods. July 25 has been designated Nigerian Diaspora Day, celebrating the individual and collective successes of Nigerians abroad and recognizing their contributions to nation building. All these initiatives are in the very early stages, and while their full impact is unknown, they seem to have resulted in getting some highly skilled Nigerians to return home.

The African Diaspora in the United States

Africans are the fastest growing black population in the United States, but the Caribbean population is larger and has been in the country about a generation longer. Together, the presence of these groups is increasing the ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity of blacks in the United States. According to the 2013 American Community Survey, Caribbeans comprise 9.3 percent (3.73 million) of the foreign-born population, compared to 4 percent for Africans. Of the approximately 1.9 million foreign-born Africans in the United States, 1.4 million are black Africans.⁸⁹ In 2000, there were 881,300 Africans in the United States, meaning the population grew at a rate of 82 percent in the first decade of the twenty-first century. According to the 2013 American Community Survey (ACS), the largest populations of first-generation African immigrants hail from Nigeria (228,000), Ethiopia (195,000), Egypt (183,000), Ghana (150,000), and Kenya (121,000).⁹⁰

Putting these numbers in context, since the liberalization of U.S. immigration policy in 1965, the number of first-generation immigrants has climbed from 9.7 million, which was 5.4 percent of the total U.S. population in 1960, to 42.2 million in 2014, which is 13.2 percent of the total U.S. population. All nonwhite immigrant groups, and not just Africans, have grown significantly in population size since 1965. The number of immigrants from Asia has grown from 825,000 individuals in the United States in 1970, or 8.6 percent of the total immigrant population, to 12.75 million in 2014, or 30.1 percent of the total immigrant population. The number of immigrants from the Americas has increased from 2.6 million in 1970, or 27.1 percent of the total immigrant population, to 22.7 million in 2014, or 53.6 percent of the total immigrant population. The number of immigrants from Africa has grown from just 80,000 individuals in 1970, or 0.8 percent of the total immigrant population, to 1.93 million in 2014, or 4.6 percent of the total immigrant population.⁹¹ The number of immigrants from Europe fell from 59.7 percent

of the total immigrant population (5.74 million) in 1970 to just 11.2 percent of the total immigrant population (4.76 million) in 2014.⁹²

Nigerians in the United States

Nigerians are the largest national group from Africa in the United States. They comprise 19 percent of all first-generation black Africans in the United States, a significant size given that forty-eight countries make up sub-Saharan (black) Africa.⁹³ A report on the Nigerian diaspora by the Migration Policy Institute calculates that there are 376,000 first- and second-generation Nigerians in the United States. They estimate that there are 163,000 U.S.-born (second-generation) Nigerians with at least one Nigerian-born parent in the United States.⁹⁴

Nigerians are the most educated group of all immigrants in the United States.⁹⁵ According to the 2014 American Community Survey, 63 percent of Nigerians have at least a bachelor's degree, compared to the national average of 29 percent, 32 percent for whites, 47 percent for Asians, 12 percent for Hispanics, and 19 percent for African Americans.⁹⁶ They are very well educated, due to the type of immigrants who migrate out of Nigeria and the highly restrictive immigration policies put in place by the U.S. government to control migration from (especially black) developing countries. Many who migrated to Britain between the 1960s and 1970s for further education returned to Nigeria. Yet most Nigerians who migrated to the United States came intending to remain permanently.⁹⁷ Since the 1990s, a significant number of Nigerians have come into the United States under the Diversity Visa Lottery system, which was passed by the U.S. Congress in the late 1980s to balance the racial mix of new immigrants.⁹⁸ A total of 50,000 permanent resident (green) cards are awarded each year, and Nigerians are frequently one of the top recipient groups. In 2010, for example, 6,006 Nigerians were successful in getting green cards through this program. Turkey, with 2,826 recipients, came in second, and Iran, with 2,773 recipients, rounded out the top three.⁹⁹

The median household income for Nigerians living in the United States is \$61,289, compared to the median household income of \$53,482.¹⁰⁰ In 2010, Nigerian men who worked full-time earned a median income of \$50,000, compared to \$46,000 for all U.S.-born men. Almost 25 percent of Nigerian U.S. households make over \$100,000 a year, compared to 10.6 percent of African American households; and over 5 percent of Nigerian households earn over \$200,000 a year, compared to 1.3 percent of African Americans.¹⁰¹

The top three regions where Nigerians are located are New York City, Maryland-Washington, DC-Virginia, and Texas.

The majority of Nigerians in the United States live in urban areas. They tend to be found in low- to middle-income neighborhoods that are extremely diverse, composed of significant numbers of other African immigrants as well as Hispanic and Caribbean immigrants. I use data from Boston and New York, which provide information on immigrants' residential patterns by national origin, to illustrate Nigerians residential patterns in cities. In Boston, Nigerians are found in the diverse neighborhoods of Dorchester and Hyde Park, which are majority minority and home to large numbers of African Americans and other black and Latin American immigrant groups. In New York, Nigerians are found in extremely diverse neighborhoods that have significant numbers of immigrants and especially in neighborhoods with sizable Caribbean, other African, and African American populations.¹⁰² A sizable community of Nigerians (approximately 28 percent of Nigerians in New York) live in the Bronx, along with other Africans (especially Ghanaians), Caribbeans, and immigrants from Latin America.¹⁰³ Another 28 percent of Nigerians in New York live in Brooklyn, in neighborhoods with large numbers of Caribbeans, even though, overall, Asians are the dominant foreign-born immigrant group in Brooklyn. A third of Nigerians live in Queens in Caribbean neighborhoods and about 10 percent live in Staten Island.¹⁰⁴

The African Diaspora in Britain

The 2011 U.K. Census revealed a major shift in the origins of the majority black group in Britain. In 2001, Afro-Caribbeans were the largest black group, but Africans soon became the larger group. From 2001 to 2011, the number of black people from Africa rose from 0.9 percent (484,783) to 1.7 percent (989,628) of the general U.K. population. During the same ten-year period, the black Caribbean population remained steady at 1.1 percent, increasing by only 29,204 people (a 3.3 percent increase). The black African population has doubled because of refugees and new migration patterns from many former colonies of Britain, where push-pull factors of political and economic stability have interacted with the perception of better opportunities and safety in Britain. The growth in the black African population is also due to those who settled and started having children. It is unclear whether the face of black Britain will change from black Caribbean to black African

now that the latter are the larger group. In the same time period, 2001 to 2011, the Indian population grew from 1.05 million to 1.45 million, a growth rate of 37.82 percent; Pakistanis grew from 747,285 to 1.17 million, a population increase of 57 percent. Bangladeshis grew from 283,063 to 451,529, a growth rate of 59.5 percent; and the Chinese grew from a population of 247,403 to 433,150, a growth rate of 75 percent.¹⁰⁵ In short, Britain is becoming increasingly diverse ethnically and racially. Between 1993 and 2014, the foreign-born population in the United Kingdom doubled from 3.8 million to around 8.3 million. And in 2014, 13.1 percent of the U.K. population was foreign born, up from 7 percent in 1993.¹⁰⁶

Nigerians in Britain

Nigerians are the largest national group from Africa in Britain. In 2001, there were 88,105 first-generation Nigerians living in the United Kingdom. By 2011, that number had risen to 191,000. Roughly one of every five black Africans in Britain is Nigerian. The number would be even greater if we added second-generation Nigerians, which we cannot do because it is impossible to identify them from the census data. Nigerians are the most educated immigrant group in the United Kingdom, and their educational advantage has carried over to the second generation.¹⁰⁷ Nigerians in Britain earn more than the national average income.¹⁰⁸

The majority of Nigerians, three quarters of them, live in London. They are dispersed across the city, but most reside in the South London boroughs of Southwark and Lambeth and the London boroughs of Hackney and Camden. Most African immigrants live in neighborhoods with high concentrations of other African immigrants, but they are not trapped in these neighborhoods; many every year move into neighborhoods in London and Britain generally that have a lower concentration of Africans.¹⁰⁹ Thus, unlike in the United States, Nigerians as well as other Africans are not living in highly segregated neighborhoods in Britain.

Peckham in South London is home to the highest concentrations of Nigerians. It has become known within the community as the Yoruba heartland or mini-Lagos, and many of its businesses—hair salons, radio stations, butcher shops, newspaper vendors, real estate offices, and boutiques—are owned and run by Nigerians. Peckham is a low- to middle-income neighborhood. It is a majority minority neighborhood: whites are 29.2 percent of the neighborhood population, compared to 9.1 percent Asians, 7.1 percent mixed

ethnic groups, and 50.4 percent blacks/Africans/Caribbeans. Among individuals of working age in Peckham, 34.5 percent are economically inactive and 19.7 percent receive welfare. Just 22 percent of Peckham residents own their own homes, which is 33 points lower than the national average. Fifty-nine percent of residents live in social housing, compared to the national average of 18 percent.¹¹⁰ The borough of Southwark, which includes Peckham, falls in the bottom half of all thirty-two London boroughs on indices of poverty and neighborhood disadvantage.¹¹¹ And Peckham is more disadvantaged in terms of home ownership rates, proportion of welfare recipients, and proportion living in social housing than the borough as a whole. It is also more residentially segregated, with 40 percent fewer whites than in England generally.¹¹²

With the majority of Nigerians in the country living in close proximity, these London neighborhoods contain many ethnic Nigerian shops and businesses. Diners can choose from among more than three hundred Nigerian restaurants in London. There are numerous Nigerian shops that sell Nigerian goods such as clothing like *adire* (tie-dye) and *aso-oke* (a woven cloth indigenous to the Yoruba) and groceries.¹¹³ Boroughs such as Lewisham and Southwark have a flourishing trade in “Nollywood” films. Nigerians in London practice a wide range of religions: an array of Christian Pentecostal churches—including the Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim and the Celestial Church of Christ (so-called white garment churches), the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), and Christ Embassy—in addition to many Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, and Baptist churches and Islamic mosques.

The interracial marriage rate between Africans and whites in Britain is much lower than the intermarriage rate between black Caribbeans and whites. For black Africans, it stands at 13.6 percent for males and 8.4 percent for females. For black Caribbeans the black-white intermarriage rate is 35.9 percent for males and 22.5 percent for females.¹¹⁴ A possible explanation for this is that over half the black Caribbean population in Britain is British born, whereas the great majority of the African population in Britain is still first generation. By the 1990s over half of all black Caribbeans were British born, and these individuals have increased the overall intermarriage rate of the group. Indeed, we see the influence of assimilation: both second-generation black Africans and black Caribbeans intermarry at much higher rates than their first-generation coethnics.¹¹⁵

Nigerians in Britain are the most educated immigrant group, with over 61 percent of the first generation over the age of 25 having at least a bachelor's

TABLE 1 Educational Qualifications of Major Ethnic/Racial Groups in the United Kingdom

	Whites	Chinese	Bangladeshis	Indians	Pakistanis	Caribbeans	Africans (without Nigerians)	Nigerians
High school diploma or less	60.9%	41%	74.4%	40.3%	64.7%	69.8%	56%	29.8%
Associate's degree or less	7.3%	4.6%	5.7%	5.4%	5.1%	8.5%	10.5%	0.7%
Bachelor's degree and higher	31.8%	54.4%	19.9%	54.4%	30.2%	21.8%	33.5%	61.1%
Total	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

NOTE: All columns are for first-generation immigrants over the age of 25. Data computed from the 2014 British Labor Force Survey.

degree.¹¹⁶ See table 1 for the educational profile of the main racial and ethnic groups in the United Kingdom using the 2014 Labor Force Survey. Using a pooled sample of the 2005–6 General Household Survey, which was discontinued in 2007 and which was the only national British data set that allows identification of Nigerians by generational status, 65.4 percent of second-generation Nigerians over the age of 18 had at least a bachelor's degree.¹¹⁷

In summary, Africans in the United States and Britain are transforming the economic, cultural, and ethnic landscapes of these countries. In addition to starting a variety of businesses, they have established a niche in the health industry—working as doctors, nurses, certified nursing assistants, and lab technicians—in both countries. They are a significant presence on college and university campuses in both countries. In the United States, many Africans are entering the military.¹¹⁸ Most maintain transnational ties with their home countries and send significant remittances to their home countries, to the point where monetary remittances in most African countries have surpassed foreign direct investment. And as they maintain these transnational ties, alongside strong national and ethnic identities, and introduce their diverse cultures into their new countries, Africans are diversifying and enriching black spaces and black communities, expanding the range of black identities that can be and are being formed and transforming wider British and American society.

THE RESPONDENTS

Education and Occupation Outcomes

As I mentioned in the introduction, the question that initially motivated me to do this study was how the children of well-educated African immigrants are doing compared to their parents. After narrowing my target population to the Nigerian second generation, I found that they are doing very well. Over 95 percent have at least a bachelor's degree, and almost all of them are professionals. These outcomes are consistent with social stratification and mobility literature. That is, a child whose father has a bachelor's degree is more likely to also have a bachelor's degree compared to a child whose father has minimal schooling.

In Britain, 78 percent of my respondents' fathers have at least a bachelor's degree (60.6 percent have a bachelor's degree, 14.1 percent have a professional degree, and 7 percent have a postgraduate degree). Seventy-one percent of their mothers have at least a bachelor's degree (55.6 percent have a bachelor's

TABLE 2 Summary of Respondents' Educational and Occupational Intergenerational Mobility (count, not percentage)

	Education		Occupation	
	<i>Britain</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>Britain</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
Maintained Father's Class (Stable)	27	17	52	36
Upward Mobility	29	15	10	15
Downward Mobility	6	17	3	5
Horizontal*	11	19	1	2

* In a different occupational class from father but in the same class stratum.

degree, 9.7 percent have a professional degree, and 6 percent have a postgraduate degree). These figures reveal that the majority of my respondents' parents are or were elites. Among the respondents, 91 percent have at least a bachelor's degree (48.6 percent have a bachelor's degree, 21.6 percent have a professional degree, and 21.6 percent have a postgraduate degree). The positive difference of 13 percentage points between fathers and children who have at least a bachelor's degree indicates that upward educational mobility has occurred. None of the 75 respondents in my study was illiterate; only 6 had less than a bachelor's degree, and of these 6, only 2 had less than some college. The educational attainment levels of my respondents and their parents are significantly higher than the average national educational attainment distribution for black Africans in Britain.

My respondents living in the United States are also extremely well educated. Eighty-four percent of their fathers and mothers have at least a bachelor's degree (of the fathers, 44.1 percent have postgraduate degrees, 8.8 percent have professional degrees, and 30.9 percent have bachelor's degrees; of the mothers, 32.9 percent have postgraduate degrees, 5.5 percent have professional degrees, and 45.2 percent have bachelor's degrees). That the parents of my U.S. respondents are highly educated is typical of highly skilled migration streams. Ninety-three percent of my respondents have at least a bachelor's degree (18.7 percent have postgraduate degrees, 21.3 percent have professional degrees, and 53.3 percent have bachelor's degrees). Table 2 summarizes how well the second generation in my study did educationally and occupationally compared to their fathers. Most were either stable, meaning that they replicated their fathers' class positions, or upwardly mobile, meaning that they improved upon those positions. A minority did worse than their fathers;

for all but three cases this was because of the class typology used.¹¹⁹ There is a great deal of pressure on the second generation in Nigerian communities in the United States and Britain to do very well in school because being successful is increasingly defined as part of their ethnicity (see chapters 2 through 4 for a more detailed discussion). In both countries, Nigerian immigrants have had significant educational advantages—advantages that they have successfully transmitted to their children.

Neighborhood Context

Most respondents in the United States grew up in racially mixed or predominantly black neighborhoods. Studies on residential segregation in the United States find that black immigrants tend to live in close proximity to African Americans, either in the same neighborhoods or in neighborhoods surrounding poorer African American neighborhoods.¹²⁰ In Britain, the older second generation grew up in predominantly white neighborhoods because there were not many Africans or Caribbeans in Britain, especially outside of London, in the 1960s and 1970s. However, the younger second generation, those who grew up in the 1990s and 2000s, said they lived in racially mixed neighborhoods. Because Britain is not as residentially segregated as the United States, respondents who grew up in London and its suburbs were more likely to have had some racial mixture in their neighborhoods. Those who grew up in the northern cities of Liverpool and Manchester grew up in mostly white neighborhoods and in them had significant racial conflict with their white peers.

The majority of respondents in the United States and Britain went to neighborhood public schools that were predominantly black or racially mixed, although some older respondents, who grew up during the 1960s and 1970s, attended predominantly white schools. In the United States, some of the second generation went to magnet or public charter schools. Their parents wanted them to attend good schools but could not afford private schools; they viewed magnet schools as an excellent alternative. A few respondents who grew up in Britain went to posh private schools.

Family Life

Research shows that growing up with two parents is an advantage because it increases the number of adults who are available to provide support, both

material and nonmaterial, to the child. Studies show that children who grow up in single-parent households or with absent fathers are disadvantaged in numerous ways. These children are more likely to drop out of high school, less likely to attend college, and less likely to graduate from college than children raised by both biological parents. Girls whose fathers are absent are more likely to become sexually active at a younger age and to have a child outside of marriage. Boys who grow up without their fathers are more likely to have trouble finding (and keeping) a job in young adulthood.¹²¹

Data from national surveys show that second-generation Africans are more likely to grow up in two-parent households than their African American and Caribbean peers.¹²² Most of the second generation in this study grew up in two-parent households. For some, it took a while for one parent to join the family in the United States or Britain. Some (20 percent) had divorced parents, but I was unable to determine if there is a higher rate of divorce among first-generation immigrants compared to nonmigrants in Nigeria because the data are unavailable.

Transnational Social Fields

Immigration researchers define *transnationalism* as the “processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement.”¹²³ These relations are maintained through economic contributions, such as sending money back home or starting businesses; engaging in social activities, often sponsored by ethnic organizations; or political participation. Most parents of the second generation in this study engaged in transnational activities. Over 70 percent of these parents belonged to ethnic associations, and they often took their children along to the social gatherings sponsored by them. The parents saw doing so as a way to expose their children to their ethnic cultures and traditions. Most parents traveled frequently back to Nigeria but usually did not take their children with them. However, many of the second generation did visit Nigeria at least once. Despite minimally engaging in transnational activities themselves (see appendix B), the second generation is embedded in transnational social fields because of their parents’ transnational activities and concerted efforts to expose and immerse their children in their ethnic cultures.

I asked respondents if their parents had shared stories with them about their reactions to life in Britain and the United States on arrival. Some parents had done so, and most of their stories shared themes of how unprepared they

were for the cold winters and their experiences of racial discrimination. Most parents had come to pursue further education. Some of them found it difficult to secure jobs and housing in Britain. Those who came to the country in the 1950s and 1960s told their children about seeing signs in windows declaring, “No Irish, No Dogs, and No Coloreds Allowed.” Many respondents’ mothers in the United States had to retrain as nurses because they could not get good jobs using the skills and educational qualifications they obtained in Nigeria.¹²⁴

CONCLUSION: THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

For the second generation of Nigerian ancestry, the racism of British and American societies is an important aspect of their contexts of reception. While the racialization processes in these countries differ significantly, there are a few striking similarities. We see the similarities in the settlement and treatment of racialized immigrants and in terms of the discrimination, racism, and hostility directed at them. We see it in how the state manages the entrance of racialized ethnic minorities as well as the resistance and resilience of racialized minorities in their efforts to survive and succeed. But even within these largely similar ethnoracial systems that have placed black people on one side of the color line, their demographic profiles differ, as do the broader historical and current political contexts. Thus the way race is framed in the two countries differs and is reflected in how the Nigerian second generation form their racial and ethnic identities.

The contexts of reception consist of other elements. The Nigerian second generation belong to diasporic communities that are the largest of all African groups in both the United States and Britain. The Nigerian migration into both countries is characterized by the movement of elites. This has created diasporic Nigerian communities in which the majority of first generation immigrants are well educated. The second generation of Nigerian ancestry in both countries had early family experiences that existing research tells us will give them some advantages into adulthood. They were more likely to grow up in two-parent households, and with parents who were highly educated. As adults, almost all have replicated or improved on their fathers’ educational level. However, despite acknowledging the advantages possessed by these adults because of their parents’ class location and high levels of human capital, not all came from affluent backgrounds, which was more common in Britain than in the United States.

The influential studies of the black second generation employing the racialization framework have posited blackness as disadvantaged. Yet these studies pay scant attention to how social class intersects with race and ethnicity and how these intersections for the black second generation lead to different social outcomes than predicted. Also, the framework of racialization elides the theoretical and empirical point of interest: how ethnic diversity among black people is playing out on the ground in British and American society. Three main research questions are asked in this book: *How does the national context of the United States and Britain affect ethnic and racial identity formation among the Nigerian second generation? How do the proximal hosts in each country influence ethnic and racial identity formation among the Nigerian second generation? How does the ethnicity of the Nigerian second generation interact with their racial status, and how does the interaction, along with social class, affect their identity choices?* In seeking answers, I hope to increase our theoretical insight into the complexities of racial framings and the intersections of race, class, and ethnicity for black people in British and American society.