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# AN EXPLORATORY STUDY: COMMUNICATIVE DISSOCIATION BETWEEN BLACK AMERICANS AND AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS

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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY: COMMUNICATIVE DISSOCIATION BETWEEN  
BLACK AMERICANS AND AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS

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A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
Communication Studies

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by  
Melody Ajoke Adejare  
June 2019

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Approved by:

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## ABSTRACT

The relationship between Black Americans and African immigrants can be described in many ways, and one of those descriptions is distant. Due to a number of reasons, relationships between the two ethnic groups sometimes result in dissociation. In understanding the dissociation between Black Americans and African immigrants, this study takes a look at cultural identity, ethnic identity, avowal and ascription, and how they connect to the issue of dissociation between the two ethnic groups. This study uses social identity theory and mediated intergroup conflict as its theoretical foundation. Narrative approach and grounded theory approach are used as the study's methodological approaches, and the study also analyzes its findings using three phases of data analysis; memo-writing analysis, narrative analysis, and hermeneutic analysis. Only a few studies concerning the dissociation between Black Americans and African immigrants have been conducted, and it is this study's objective to add to the current literature. It is important to note that this study is an exploratory research on the dissociation between the two ethnic groups. Overall, the study's findings indicate that the dissociation between Black Americans and African immigrants is due to the cultural differences between the two ethnic groups and how those differences are communicated.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
Cultural Identity.....	6
Ethnic Identity .....	7
Avowal and Ascription.....	8
Differences Between Black Americans' and African Immigrants' Cultures .....	10
Mediated Intergroup Conflict.....	13
Social Identity Theory .....	14
Belonging.....	16
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS .....	18
Research Question .....	18
Methodological Approach .....	18
Narrative Approach .....	19
Grounded Theory.....	20
Participants .....	21
Age and Origin .....	21
Gender and Biological Sex Ratio .....	22
Parents' Educational Level and Social Economic Status .....	22
Recruitment.....	24
Data Collection .....	24

Institutional Review Board .....	25
Data Analysis.....	26
Reliability .....	27
Validity .....	28
Internal Validity.....	28
External Validity .....	29
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS.....	31
Accent.....	31
African Immigrant Participants' Perspective .....	31
Black American Participants' Perspective .....	34
Comparison of African Immigrant Participants and Black American Participants .....	35
Deference .....	36
African Immigrant Participants' Perspective.....	36
Black American Participants' Perspective .....	41
Comparison of African Immigrant Participants and Black American Participants .....	45
Education and Career.....	45
African Immigrant Participants' Perspective.....	45
Black American Participants' Perspective .....	51
Comparison of African Immigrant Participants and Black American Participants .....	56
Stereotypical Beliefs About African Immigrants .....	57
African Immigrant Participants' Perspective.....	57
Black American Participants' Perspective .....	60



Comparison of African Immigrant Participants and Black American Participants .....	62
Stereotypical Beliefs About Black Americans .....	63
African Immigrant Participants' Perspective .....	63
Black American Participants' Perspective .....	65
Comparison of African Immigrant Participants and Black American Participants .....	68
Othering .....	69
African Immigrant Participants' Perspective .....	70
Black American Participants' Perspective .....	72
Comparison of African Immigrant Participants and Black American Participants .....	74
Ethnic Identification.....	75
African Immigrant Participants' Perspective .....	75
Black American Participants' Perspective .....	76
Comparison of African Immigrant Participants and Black American Participants .....	77
 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS	
Implications, Limitations, Future Research, and Conclusion.....	79
Implications .....	79
Limitations .....	86
Further Research .....	86
Conclusion .....	87
APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM .....	89
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS .....	93
APPENDIX C: TABLE OF RESULTS .....	100

REFERENCES..... 102

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Many may believe that all Black Americans and African immigrants share a similar culture; this belief is not accurate. There are cultural differences between these ethnic groups (Nsangou & Dundes, 2018). In addition, intercultural relations between the two ethnic groups have frequently created issues resulting in intergroup dissociation. Authors such as Bondarenko, 2015; Bondarenko, 2016; Nsangou and Dundes, 2018; Takougang, 2003; and Uwah, 2002 have referenced issues of dissociation concerning Black Americans and African immigrants in their articles; however, there is a gap in the literature concerning this matter.

As an African immigrant, I have encountered dissociation when trying to forge relationships with Black Americans. Most of the dissociation issues I experienced were in high school and, although I have no negative feelings towards Black Americans, my high school experiences still impact my relationships with some Black Americans today. The same is true for the majority of my African immigrant friends, having endured the same experiences. Even though I and my African immigrant friends occasionally discuss our experiences of dissociation with Black Americans, it never struck me to conduct a study regarding the matter until I watched the 2018 blockbuster film, *Black Panther*.

*Black Panther* is an action-packed film loved by audiences because of its depiction of centuries of non-African writers' evolving imaginations of what a perfect Africa looks like. Certain aspects of the film also highlight issues of dissociation between Black Americans and Africans from a Black American's standpoint (Wanzo, 2018). Influenced by the film's content on Black Americans and Africans' dissociation, I decided to conduct a study on the dissociation issues that plague Black Americans' and African immigrants' Intercultural communication relations.

In chapter two of this study, I present the literature review, which includes cultural identity, a social creation that helps individuals construct their identity distinctiveness (Yep, 1998), and ethnic identity, a person's attachments to his or her ethnic group (Bleakley et al., 2017). These concepts are used to understand the differences in both Black Americans' and African immigrants' cultures and ethnic backgrounds. I also explain the concept of Belonging, which is the process of forming a connection to a social group (Girard & Grayson, 2016), to understand why Black Americans and African immigrants choose to identify with their individual ethnic groups. In addition, I expound upon avowal and ascription to explain how Black Americans and African immigrants identify themselves. Since avowal is the presentation of one's identity to others, and ascription is the identity given to one by others (Collier, 1997; Chen & Collier, 2012; Hansen & Milburn, 2015), the concepts help us understand how Black Americans and

African immigrants view one another in relation to how a large number of the public perceive members of the two ethnic groups.

Social identity theory and mediated intergroup conflict are theoretical foundations used in the study. Social identity theory is a theoretical foundation used in the study because it helps us understand how people define social boundaries and how they self-categorize themselves into social groups (Tajfel, 1981). Mediated intergroup conflict is a theoretical foundation used in the study because of its explanations on the separation of racial groups through media-induced conflict (Stewart, Pitts, & Osborne, 2011).

In the third chapter (methods and procedures), the study's methodological approaches are discussed. One of the methodological approaches is a narrative approach, which is an approach that connects a series of narration to form a cohesive interpretation of incidences in the narration (Josselson, 2011). The other methodological approach is grounded theory approach, which is a systematic but flexible procedure used to analyze data, arrive at theories and expound upon theories that are grounded in the data (Charmaz, 2006). These methodological approaches are used to explicate and clearly present the study's findings. I discussed the participants' demographics, which consists of eight Black Americans and eight African immigrants. I also discussed the data collection process and the institutional review board procedures. In addition, I explain the data analysis portion of the study, which includes three phases of

analysis: memo-writing, narrative analysis, and hermeneutic analysis. Finally, I discuss the study's reliability and validity.

In the results chapter, I present the study's findings using the communicative and behavioral patterns found in the data set of the two groups of participants. It is important to note that in this study, the found communication and behavioral patterns are testimonies of participants who are members of the African immigrant and Black American groups. Thus, I am not claiming that the communication and behavioral patterns found in the study are representative of all members of the African immigrant and Black American group. In the final chapter, I discuss the study's implications with some theoretical perspectives. I also present the study's limitation, suggested future research, and conclusion.

Online Google Dictionary (2018) defines dissociation as the separation or disconnection of something from something else. Building on Google's definition, this study defines communicative dissociation as the disconnection of behavioral and verbal communicative harmony between two or more people, or groups. It is vital to study the dissociation between Black Americans and African immigrants because more information is needed for the expansion of the study's literature. Studying the dissociation between the two groups will shed more light on the communicative intercultural differences and conflicts between them. In this study, I explore the issue of dissociation between Black Americans and African immigrants and, specifically, the ways the two ethnic groups differ in their communicative dissociations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Dissociation, an occurrence that explains disharmony between two or more persons, groups, cultures, situations, and so on, has been at the center of Black Americans' and African immigrants' relations since the 1960s (Reddick, 1998). These issues not only continue to shape Black Americans' and African immigrants' relations, they also play significant roles in the division between the two ethnic groups. *The Tampa Tribune* newspaper reports in an article written by Reddick (1998), a Nigerian business owner Eromosele Oigbokie's comments concerning his experiences with Black Americans. He said, "I caught a lot of hell from the frat boys [Black Americans] at Tuskegee University, a historically black college in Alabama...[and today] not much has changed," African immigrants and Black Americans often fail to form relationships (para. 1-4). Bondarenko (2015) also stated that "deep differences of all kinds between the black natives of the two continents [African immigrants and Black Americans] had formed over the centuries of separate existence" (p. 454).

Many respondents seem to believe that the integration of the two groups in the U.S. will never happen (Bondarenko, 2015). Other authors (e.g. Bondarenko, 2016; Nsangou and Dundes, 2018; Takougang, 2003; Uwah, 2002) also concur in their literature concerning the lack of harmony between African immigrants and Black Americans. The authors mentioned multiple reasons for

the dissociation between the two groups, however, their findings did not share a sole reason behind the phenomenon. Bondarenko's findings, Oigbokie's comment, and other authors' writings give insight into the reality of dissociation concerns between Black Americans and African immigrants. In attempts to find tangible causes of dissociation between Black Americans and African immigrants, the concept of cultural identity and the connection it creates between the two ethnic groups is explored.

### Cultural Identity

According to Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012), culture is a "learned meaning system that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, meanings, and symbols that are passed on from one generation to the next and are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a community" (p. 16). Pawar (2018), also define culture as a set of schemas and ideologies, "which human being[s] practice" (p. 312). Many paths can lead to the establishment of cultures, however, Philipsen (1987) indicates that the most common paths leading to the establishment of cultures are the formation of communities, the creation of conversational or communicational patterns, and the development of codes and systems that people abide by.

With the establishment of cultures comes the awareness and personalization of cultural identities. This is because cultural identities are formed based on differences in sexuality, ethnicity, class, race, gender, and social



exclusion (Yep, 2004). According to Yep (1998), cultural identity is a “social construction that gives the individual an ontological status and expectation for social behavior” (p.79). Thus, people’s conformity to their cultural approved social behavior becomes the symbol of their cultural identity. Bradford, Burrell, and Edward (2004) further explain the concept of cultural identity by stating that a person’s “cultural identity may be both a product of a person’s identity with national origin” and ethnic background (p. 314); since cultural identities mirror the collective historical experiences and cultural norms of people’s practices within their civilizations (Hall, 1994). In reference to Black Americans and African immigrants, ethnic background or identity play an important role in the awareness and personalization of the two ethnic groups' cultural identities.

### Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identities are the attachments people have to their ethnic groups (Bleakley et al., 2017). A person’s ethnic identity is distinct from the person’s cultural identity in the sense that cultural identity “gives the individual an ontological status and expectation for social behavior” (Yep, 1998, p. 79), and may also be “both a product of a person’s identity with national origin” and ethnic background (Bradford, Burrell, & Edward, 2004, p. 314). A person’s ethnic identity consists of two elements, which are ethnic loyalty and cultural awareness. Choi and Berhó (2016) explain cultural awareness as “the knowledge that individuals possess of their own ethnic culture,” and ethnic loyalty as their

commitment to happenings concerning their culture and in-group members (p. 3). They emphasize that the knowledge people possess concerning their ethnic groups are their groups' behaviors, language, values, and history (Choi & Berhó, 2016). Whereas, ethnic loyalty is emphasized as people's communicative and interactive efforts to uphold their commitment to their ethnic identities (Choi & Berhó, 2016).

Peoples' ethnic identities are developed as they age and advance in knowledge. "Just as a person formulates a self-concept through adolescence and adulthood, the development of one's ethnic identity grows in a similar path" (Choi & Berhó, 2016, p. 3). With this understanding, it comes to no surprise that the concept of ethnic identity "is particularly relevant for" some Black American youths because it helps them define who they are (Bleakley et al., 2017, p. 132); this explains why some Black Americans view their ethnic identities as a core aspect of their culture and can also explain why some African immigrants view their ethnic identities as a core aspect of their culture.

#### Avowal and Ascription

According to Collier (1997), avowal can be defined as the presentation of ones' identity or what makes individuals who they are to others. On the other hand, ascription is others' understanding of peoples' identities or what makes individuals who they are. When individuals avow their identities, they may choose to self-identify using their cultural labels, ethnic identity, and national identity

(Hansen & Milburn, 2015). People may also self-identify using their affiliated organization, their age group, career status, educational level, and, even, their skin tone/color. For example, there are many people who identify as Black. These people may be of different races, cultures, and nationalities but, instead of identifying by their individual ethnicities, they choose to identify themselves by their skin tone/color.

The avowal of identities can also result in others' identity ascription. In this sense, people may choose to ascribe others' identities based on how others avow their identities or based on the assumptions and stereotypes that may have some type of resemblance to how others avow their identities (Pinkney, 2004). For instance, when people of different cultures, nationalities, or ethnicities, with a similar skin color, choose to identify themselves by the color of their skin, it could lead to others making generalized attributions and stereotypes to all people of that skin color. African immigrants and Black Americans are examples of people with different cultural, national, and ethnic backgrounds who have members that choose to identify themselves as Black. Thus, it is easy to make the same attributions and stereotypes to the Black natives of the groups and, sometimes, those generalized stereotypes could be attributed to other natives of the group with different shades of skin tone/color.

Chen and Collier (2012) imply that the ascription of others' identity may influence the avowal of one's identity. In this sense, if group A ascribes group B as having a different identity, separate from group A, this may result in group A

choosing to avow its identity by distinguishing itself from group B. This may also result in group A acting in ways that separates itself from group B. In respect to Black Americans, if members of the ethnic group choose to distinguish themselves from African immigrants by avowing their cultural identity as American Black, and ascribing African immigrants as having a different identity from them, this could strengthen Black Americans' resolve to embrace more of their own culture than they would African immigrants' culture. Likewise, this can work the same way for African immigrants' avowal and ascription of their cultural identity, thus increasing the differences in the two ethnic groups' cultures.

#### Differences Between Black Americans' and African Immigrants' Cultures

The world's ethnic groups are often categorized into individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Individualism, according to Zaharna (2016), "privileges the individual perspective, actions, and goals" over the group's actions and goals, while collectivism "privileges the group perspective, actions, and goals" over the individual's actions and goals (p. 194). The world's collectivistic cultures are primarily non-Western cultures that originate from Asia, Africa, etc., while the world's individualistic cultures are Western cultures that have roots in America, Great Britain, Western Europe, etc. (Zaharna, 2016). The culture of African immigrants in the U.S. is a mixture of individualistic and collectivistic cultures, due to their immediate connection to Africa, their newly formed connection to the U.S. (Westerik, 2011), and their cultural identity negotiation with the U.S. cultural identity. At the same time, although America is considered to be an individualistic

culture (Zaharna, 2016), according to Carson (2009); Brown, (2013), Black American culture is collectivistic. The reason: Black American cultural roots are influenced by African culture (Brown, 2013). According to Brown (2013), Black American culture is a combination of the Black American historical experiences, which includes slavery, racism, segregation, and more, with varying degrees of influences from various African cultures. Although slavery restricted Black Americans' practices of their African cultural traditions, some of their ancestral values and beliefs survived over time.

In terms of African immigrants, Okonofua (2013) stated that the immigrants come to the United States with a “fundamentally different systems of social classifications,” which continues to influence their “conception of the self and structures the way(s) they interact with others in the United States” (Okonofua, 2013, p. 3). Okonofua (2013) further capitalize this notion by stating that “African immigrants are questioning their racial categorization as Black, which they see as a metonymic device for the inferior position of African [Black] Americans relative to Whites” (p. 2). In other words, some African Immigrants may only choose to identify as Black as long as that identification does not link them with Black Americans or as long as the identification does not cause them to reap and negative consequences of being labeled as Black Americans, which is the stigma of inferiority or the unofficial norm of being classified, second-class citizens. As a method of separating themselves from Black Americans, African immigrants hold on to the notion that their close attachment to their African

countries, societies, communities, culture, and relatives, largely define their identity (Mwangi, 2016; Nsangou & Dundes, 2018; Okonofua, 2013). Other differences between Black Americans and African immigrants are the two ethnic groups' "nationalism, language, adaptation to life in the United States, and economic interests"; these differences "are increasingly manifesting and creating enmity and competition instead of friendship and collaboration between the two ethnic groups" (Okonofua, 2013, p. 2). Regardless of their different cultural identities and communicative ways (Okonofua, 2013), Black Americans and African immigrants share a few cultural similarities (Brown, 2013).

Existing research is scant in the discussion and investigation of the difference in norms, values, beliefs, and, particularly, communication styles between Black Americans and African immigrants. Articles that relate to the differences between the two ethnic groups discuss employment rates, marriage rates, and educational status in which African immigrants have higher rates than Black Americans (Djamba, 1999; Dodoo, 1997).

Unable to find sufficient articles that showcase differences between African immigrants' and Black Americans' cultures, mediated inter-group conflict (MIC) is examined in order to gain more understanding of the two groups' differences and how those differences relate to their dissociation. The reason MIC is examined is that of its ability to explain the media's influences on how people perceive racial groups and how mediated conflict between in-group and out-group members of racial/ethnic groups are induced.

## Mediated Intergroup Conflict

MIC explains the increased division of racial groups through mediated conflict (Stewart, Pitts, & Osborne, 2011). As an extension of conflict theory, which suggests that diversity cultivates out-group distrust and in-group solidarity, and the more people are brought into physical proximity with others of different race or ethnic background, the more people stick to their own kind and distrust others (Putnam, 2007), MIC is generally connected with media-based mediated intergroup conflict. An example of this is exhibited when Stewart et al. (2011) explained that “many U.S. Whites have few direct interactions with Latinos,” therefore, their “perceptions and attitudes toward Latinos will largely be shaped through local and national media” (p. 9). If the media portrayals of Latinos are negative, then U.S. Whites perceptions of Latinos will most likely be negative. This example gives an insight into why certain racial groups may come to feel threatened or rejected by other racial groups (Stewart et al., 2011). When individuals feel threatened or rejected by others, they have the tendencies to identify themselves to groups that accept them and, as a result, sometimes reject out-groups in order to strengthen their in-group identity (Stewart et al., 2011; Putnam, 2007).

In reference to Black Americans and African immigrants, if members of Black Americans or African immigrants should feel rejected or threaten by the other group’s members, in all likelihood, there will be tendencies for the rejected or threaten group members to stick and identify only to their individual ethnic

groups; this phenomenon, as a consequence, can lead to or significantly increase the existing dissociation between Black Americans and African immigrants. Keeping this in mind, social identity theory (SIT), which explains how individuals identify with social groups, is examined to understand how Black Americans and African immigrants solidify their in-group identities and how their solidified in-group identities can relate to dissociation between the two ethnic groups.

### Social Identity Theory

According to Tajfel (1981), Social identity is a "part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his [or her] knowledge of his [or her] membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 255). Gundlach, Zivnuska, and Stoner (2006); Harwood (2010); Tajfel and Turner (1979) also elucidate that SIT is used to explain the conceptualization behind individuals distinguishing their own membership in their groups by identifying the social margins surrounding their groups and categorizing themselves as belonging to their groups or not belonging to other groups. The theory also helps comprehend how the emotional and physical connections people have to their social groups, aid in conveying their identities (Hornsey, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Three factors contribute to SIT, and they are cognitive, emotional, and evaluative factors (Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Tajfel 1981). According to Tajfel (1981) the



cognitive factor refers to individuals' membership awareness to their social groups, the evaluative factor refers to individuals' negative and positive assessment of outcomes of belonging to their social groups, and the emotional factor refers to individuals' emotional involvement to their social groups.

In order to enhance a sense of value, pride, and self-esteem, individuals would strive to reach a higher in-group status in their social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). An example is stated in Kaba's (2007) commentary on African immigrants in the U.S. residing in more White Americans' communities than Black Americans' communities. The evidence of the above statement is shown in Chan's (2005) Detroit Free Press article, which reports that African immigrants dwell in cities that have 45% White American inhabitants in comparison to Black American who inhabit cities with 17% White American dwellers. Perhaps, African immigrants choosing to reside in more White American communities than Black American communities are attempting to increase their in-group's status as first-class citizens.

In another instance, individuals who are dedicated to their social groups may choose to abide by their social groups' doctrines, whether they agree or not. If those individuals' social groups' doctrines dictate or instigate that they exclude out-group members, then those individuals may choose to do so as a way of proving their loyalties to their groups. The same could be said for Black Americans and African immigrants in the sense that if members of the two ethnic groups should believe it to be a spoken or unspoken rule to exclude the other

group's members, members of each group may choose to do so, thereby creating dissociation between the two groups.

According to Tajfel and Turner (1986), a very important aspect of people's social identification in groups is to increase their sense of belonging. In this manner, social groups "provide their members with an identification of themselves in social terms. These identifications are to a very large extent relational and comparative: they define the individual as similar to or different from, as 'better' or 'worse' than, members" of outgroups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 283). This idea can further help us understand the reasoning behind, some African immigrants' choice to socially identify to White Americans more than Black Americans. Understanding the importance belonging play on African immigrants' social identification with White Americans, the concept is examined.

### Belonging

"Belonging is a perception that one is rationally connected to other significant human beings or social groups" (Bradford et al., 2004, p. 315). Individuals' relational belonging can be formed culturally, biologically, or socially, and it is significant to our social identity construct (Girard & Grayson, 2016). According to Girard and Grayson (2016) "our social identity is an intertwining and intermingling of relationships of belonging so numerous and diverse that together they constitute something unique" (p. 2), which is a uniqueness that is individual to each of us. However, our relationship of belonging is never fully unique to

each individual since belonging is only possible through the formation of relationships with others, and others share aspects of that belonging with us (Girard & Grayson, 2016). For this reason, “most relationships of belonging—even the most humble—involve some form of exclusion, rejection, and, consequently, violence” (Girard & Grayson, 2016, p. 4). Exclusion, rejection, and violence in belonging relationships intensify based on degrees of relationship desirability; as a rule, the harder “a relationship is to acquire, the more desirable it appears to be” (Girard & Grayson, 2016, p. 4). In the case of Black Americans, their relational belonging to their group is a good indicator for some of the causes of their dissociation with African immigrants. Likewise, in the case of African immigrants, their relational belonging to their group (Mwangi, 2016), as well as other groups e.g. White Americans (the desire to be treated as first-class citizens in the United States), is a good indicator for some of the causes of their dissociation with Black Americans.

This literature review and the integrating of SIT and MIC theories, avowal and ascription, cultural identity, ethnic identity, and belonging, provides a launching pad to begin investigating the communicative dissociation between Black Americans and African immigrants. Since few articles have been published in this area of concern, this study aims to contribute some valuable insights in understanding this phenomenon.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

#### Research Question

This research focuses on understanding how Black Americans and African immigrants may or may not differ in their communicative dissociation between one another. This study is designed to gain knowledge on the nature, processes, and dynamics of the communicative dissociation between the two ethnic groups. Since very little has been published on this phenomenon, this current study aims in contributing intercultural communication insights to have a better understanding of the communicative exchanges between Black Americans and African immigrants. This thesis aims to investigate the following research question:

RQ1: What are the intercultural communicative dissociations between Black Americans and African immigrants?

#### Methodological Approach

A fundamental principle guiding this study is that cultures that have different communicative ways are likely to have diverse ways of understanding and relating to one another (Yoshitake, 2014). To understand the intercultural communicative dissociation between Black Americans and African immigrants,

the narrative communication approach and the grounded theory communication approach were used to investigate this study's phenomenon.

### Narrative Approach

The narrative approach is a "mixed genre" in the sense of integrating systematic analysis of narrated experience[s] with literary deconstruction and hermeneutic analysis of meaning" that aims to "explore and conceptualize human experience as it is represented in textual form" (Josselson, 2011, pp. 224-225). In other words, the approach interlaces sequence of events together to form a cohesive interpretation of the occurrences. The narrative approach involves capturing the truth of people's lived experiences, not in "a factual record of what 'really' happened," but with a focus on how they understood and organized their experiences (Josselson, 2011, p. 225). The approach also allows us to use the "contextualized stories that people [participants] tell to mark and understand their actions, to construct...identity, and to distinguish themselves from others" (Josselson, 2011, p. 240), as a tool of interpreting the testimonies they give in studies.

There are two aspects of the narrative approach; the holistic approach and the categorical approach (Josselson, 2011). In this study, the categorical approach is used in the sense that I analyzed abstract "sections or words belonging to a category," using a coding strategy (Josselson, 2011, p. 226). To further explicate, I grouped repeating or similar patterns of data from the study's interview sessions into individual categories and I interpreted or assigned

meanings to those narratives, thus allowing me to decipher cultural meaning in the narratives. In addition to the categorical approach, I utilized the hermeneutic circle, a process of analyzing data from each participants' interview sessions. With the hermeneutic process I cycled back and forth and to and fro from my observation in order to make sense of what the data is revealing in the ongoing investigated phenomenon. This allows me to explain the meaning behind the participants' responses by matching some of the participants' descriptions to the rest of the participants' descriptions; the hermeneutic circle is further expounded in the data analysis portion of this chapter. It should be noted that a narrative approach does not aim to generalize its findings because "one cannot offer generalizations based on small samples that are not gathered to be" a proper representation of the population (Josselson, 2011, p. 238). After I utilized the narrative communication approach, selected aspects of the grounded theory communication approach were used for the theoretical aspect of the study.

### Grounded Theory

A grounded theory communication approach is a research method that "consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2). I utilized this approach by conducting interviews to collect participants' narratives, explanations, and perceptions of the intercultural communicative dissociation between Black Americans and African immigrants, while also using existing scholarly documents to support the grounded theory

found in the interviews' data (Charmaz, 2006). I also used memo writing, a feature of grounded theory, to take down observations after each interview data was transcribed; memo writing is further expounded in the data analysis portion of this chapter.

Next, I will describe the participants, data collection, institutional review board, and the data analysis procedures of the study. Within this chapter, I also discuss the research techniques used to increase validity and reliability in the study.

## Participants

### Age and Origin

The participants consist of eight Black Americans and eight African immigrants between the age of 18 to 36. The African immigrant participants (AIPs) are between the age range of 20 to 36, and the Black American participants (BAPs) are between the age range of 18 to 27. The AIPs immigrated to the United States from all the geographic (East, West, Northern, and Southern) regions of Africa and they were raised in one of six locations: Algeria, Cameroon, Kenya, Kenya-Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe. Fifty percent (4 of 8) of the AIPs are originally from West Africa, 75% (3 of 4) of the West African participants are from Nigeria, and one AIP is from Cameroon. Twenty-five percent (2 of 8) AIPs are from Kenya and Kenya Ethiopia in East Africa, one of the East African participants is from Kenya, and the other from Kenya Ethiopia.

Another 12.5% (1 of 8) AIPs is from Zimbabwe, which is located in the southern region of Africa. The remaining 12.5% (1 of 8) is from Algeria, which is located in the northern region of Africa. The BAPs are all residents of California.

#### Gender and Biological Sex Ratio

Fifty percent of the AIPs and BAPs are females and they identify as females, while the remaining 50% are males and they identify as males. Seventy-five percent (3 of 4) of the male AIPs are from West Africa. Sixty-seven percent (2 of 3) of the male participants are from Nigeria and the other 33% (1 of 3) is from Cameroon. The remaining 25% (1 of 4) of the male participants is from Kenya, East Africa. Fifty percent (2 of 4) of the female AIPs are from East and West Africa, with 50% (1 of 2) from Kenya/Ethiopia (East Africa) and 50% (1 of 2) from Nigeria (West Africa). The remaining 50% of the female AIPs are from North and South Africa, with 50% (1 of 2) from Algeria (North Africa) and 50% (1 of 2) from Zimbabwe (South Africa).

#### Parents' Educational Level and Social Economic Status

Highest Level of Education. AIP 1's (Nigerian); AIP 8's (Algerian) mothers do not have an educational degree and AIP 2's (Kenyan); AIP 4's (Cameroonian) mothers have associate degrees. In addition, AIP 5's (Nigerian); AIP 6's (Nigerian) mothers have bachelor's degrees and AIP 3's (Kenyan Ethiopian); AIP 7's (Zimbabwean) mothers have master's degrees. Additionally, AIP 2's (Kenyan) father has no educational degree, AIP 4's (Cameroonian); AIP 5's (Nigerian) fathers have bachelor's degrees, and AIP 7's (Zimbabwean) father has a



master's degree. Furthermore, AIP 1's (Nigerian), AIP 3's (Kenyan Ethiopian), and AIP 8's (Algerian) fathers all have Ph.D. degrees. AIP 6 (Nigerian) did not comment on his father's highest level of education.

In terms of the BAPs, BAP 11's; BAP 12's mothers have high school degrees, BAP 9's; BAP 10's mothers have one to two years of college education. BAP 14's; BAP 16's mothers have associate degrees, and BAP 13's; BAP 15's mothers have master's degrees. In addition, BAP 14's father has no educational degree, BAP 16's father's highest educational level is middle school, and BAP 9's; BAP 12's fathers has a high school diploma. Furthermore, BAP 15's father has one to two years of college education, BAP 11's father has a technical trade degree, and BAP 13's father has a master's degree. BAP 10 did not comment on her father's highest level of education.

Social Economic Status. AIP 4's (Cameroonian); AIP 8's (Algerian) parents are of the lower middle-class social economic status and AIP 1's (Nigerian); AIP 2's (Kenyan); AIP 5's (Nigerian); AIP 6's (Nigerian) parents are of the middle class social economic status. Additionally, AIP 3's (Kenyan Ethiopian) and AIP 7's (Zimbabwean), parents are of the upper middle-class social economic status. In terms of the BAPs, BAP 12's; BAP 14's parents are of the lower class social economic status and BAP 9's; BAP 10's; BAP 13's parents are of the middle class social economic status. Furthermore, BAP 11's; BAP 15's; BAP 16's parents are of the upper middle-class social economic status.

## Recruitment

Purposive sampling was used to obtain participants from churches and university campuses. Also, participants made referrals that were included in the study. In this process, the participants were asked to refer people they believed would want to participate in the study and would meet the requirements. To decipher if they qualify to partake in the study, the referred BAPs were asked if they had any dissociation with African immigrants, and the referred AIPs were asked if they had any dissociation with Black Americans. Participants who qualified for the current study were Black Americans who experienced communicative dissociation with African immigrants or African immigrants who experienced communicative dissociation with Black Americans.

The study obtained its participants through purposive sampling because the selection process allowed for the utmost choice of reliable candidates to answer the study's research question. Another reason is I did not have the access to obtain the population list and contacts of Black Americans and African immigrants dwelling in the United States; in this situation, purposive sampling was my best option.

## Data Collection

Participants were individually interviewed, and audio recorded for 60 to 90 minutes, depending on the amount of disclosure each participant was able to share. Thereafter, all the interviews were transcribed, and an initial analysis

determined that a point of saturation was achieved; this means there are numerous repetitions of the same information, and no new data concerning the research question can be gathered from the participants (Saunders et al., 2017). Some of the participants were contacted for a follow-up interview for approximately 15 to 30 minutes in order to be consistent in the questions asked and clarifications made (see Appendix B for a copy of the interview questions). I also took notes during the interviews to record my observations to further investigate in the interview session. As a researcher, I was compassionate towards the participants' emotional states during the interview process, and I provided a positive and supportive environment when conducting the interviews (Ashton, 2014).

#### Institutional Review Board

This study followed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) procedures by ensuring that all the participants, as well as the study's process, were treated according to the IRB ethical guidelines. Each participant was asked to sign informed consent forms. The forms were geared towards explaining the study's process, potential benefits and risks of the interview process, and it requested the participants' permissions to use their participation in the interviews as part of the study's data analysis. The forms also gave a detailed description of the participants' privacy protection. The purpose of the consent forms was to ensure the participants that their safety and privacy in the study is a top priority. To

maximize privacy protection, each participant was given a code number as their participant identification, the numbers were written on their forms and their signed forms were kept in a locked cabinet. A copy of the consent form is attached to this study and labeled under appendix A.

### Data Analysis

The study consists of three phases of data analysis. The first phase of the analysis is memo-writing analysis. Unlike the initial way of conducting a memo-writing analysis, which includes simultaneously listening to interview recordings and taking down memos (notes) prior to data transcription (Maxwell, 2013), I conducted an immediate transcription of data after each interview and took down memo (notes) of my observations after the transcriptions. The reason was to notify myself of interesting observations that warranted a follow-up interview session.

The second phase of analysis is narrative analysis. This involved my observation and analysis of the data in which I found categorization and patterns that gradually emerged. Essentially, I clustered similar informants' comments together which developed a repeated occurrence or pattern of behavior. I also provided a label to describe each category that the pattern of data supported. I displayed participants explanations to present their insiders' view of experiences of intercultural dissociative interactions in each category. The purpose of the narrative analysis was to explain the contextual, general, and circumstantial

meanings attached to the participants' testimonials in the interview sessions. As a result, of my narrative analysis of participants' data I was able to discover a basic structure of the intercultural phenomenon that is displayed in Appendix C.

The last phase of analysis is the hermeneutic analysis, a method of interpreting the meanings that participants attach to their responses (Smith & Heshusius, 1986). According to Smith and Heshusius (1986), the hermeneutical process has no exact beginning or ending point, it is "a never-ending process (hermeneutical) of interpreting the interpretations of others" (p. 9). This is a continuous back and forth, to and fro, process of the interpretation of narration in the context of other narrations, thus the understanding of narrations is influenced by other narrations (Gadamer, 1989). In the study, I utilized the hermeneutical process by simply explaining the meanings behind the participants' responses in the context of their narration in order to make sense of the study's findings. Thereby, helping me present clear research findings that are textually detailed and gives full explanations of the study's results and implications.

### Reliability

To increase reliability, I made sure that reliable participants who were capable of giving full accounts of their experiences during the interview process were chosen to be in the study. I also made sure that all the participants were consistently asked the same interview questions. During each interview, my focus was centered around listening to the participants' responses, having a

clear understanding of the participants' discussions, and asking further questions to clarify their comments and any cultural implications that may be attached to the comments. I made sure that all the participants answered the interview questions to the best of their abilities. As a researcher, I remained faithful to the data set and simply reported "what is there?" (G. Philipsen, personal communication, month [N/A] day [N/A], 1994; M. Fong, personal communication, August 1, 2018). I also remained neutral in my data observation, and in my analysis of the study, thus I was able to report a pattern that was sufficiently supported.

## Validity

### Internal Validity

According to Coryn, Hobson, and Mathison (2011), "internal validity is the approximate truthfulness or correctness of an inference or conclusion regarding whether a relationship between two variables is, in fact, causal" (p. 32). To increase internal validity, I guided the interview sessions in ways that made certain that quality data are collected, and in ways that made certain that I accurately measured what the study intended. To achieve this goal, I made sure that all questions asked during the interview process were not bias driven and were not directed towards any preconceived notion I might have had concerning the study's outcome. I used negative case analysis, a method used to examine elements of research findings that contradicts patterns that emerge through data

analysis (Creswell, 1998) to make sure that my research findings were accurately gathered. In this sense, I looked for patterns in the study's findings that contradict findings from other researches that relate to the study. There was no contradictory pattern found in the study's findings. To make certain that I accurately interpreted the participants' testimonies, I was sensitive to the participants' view of their cultures. In this sense, I tapped into the participants' explanations of their experiences, and used those explanations to interpret the meaning of their testimonies in relation to the view they have of their cultures.

#### External Validity

To increase external validity, I used triangulation, a concept whose origination is inspired by the mathematical, geometric shape, triangle (Denzin, 1970; Thurmond, 2001). The process of triangulation involves validating research findings by warranting that they support data from two or more methods of verification. Wilson (2016) also defines triangulation as a method of "using more than one particular approach when doing research in order to get richer, fuller data and/or to help confirm the results of the research" (p. 1). The technique is not only used to warrant validity but is also used to guarantee a "comprehensive and deeper understanding" of data (Klein, & Olbrecht, 2011, p. 343). There are five types of triangulation (Begley, 1996) and, out of the five, data triangulation, which includes "using different sources of data" for verification (Wilson, 2016, p. 1) and investigator triangulation which is a "systematic comparison of different ... results" from research related to the study (Flick, 2002, p. 226) is used for this

study. Theoretical triangulation, an approach that investigates the validity of research finding by corroborating that they align with theoretical perspective (Wilson, 2016), is also used to ensure external validity since some of the patterns found through my data analysis are grounded in theoretical categories.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

The study's findings show that Black Americans and African immigrants perceive their groups to have distinct types of communicative dissociation that creates a racial divide between them. Participants from the two ethnic groups provided multiple reasons for their dissociations, thus patterns that emerge from their responses are categorized under seven topics: Accent, deference, education and career, stereotypical beliefs of African immigrants, stereotypical beliefs of Black Americans, othering, and ethnic identification. First, I will present the AIPs' perceptions of their intercultural communicative dissociations with Black Americans. Thereafter, I will present the BAPs' perceptions of their intercultural communicative dissociations with African immigrants.

#### Accent

##### African Immigrant Participants' Perspective

In relation to communication style, 50% (4 of 8) AIPs reported that their African accents are a significant factor in their dissociation with Black Americans. AIPs explained that they have been made fun of by many Black Americans because of their apparent accents when communicating verbally. As AIP 1 (Nigerian) stated,

I got teased a lot for my accent.... I am fully Nigerian, I have a full Nigerian accent, but to be able to go through living in the U.S. without wanting to feel like I am different from everybody, I had to start making up an American accent.... Getting made fun of for my accent made me feel really demoralized.

Another informant, AIP 3 (Kenyan Ethiopian) said,

During my earlier college days here in the U.S., when I was in my freshman and sophomore year, I was made fun of by some Black Americans because of my accent, because I was an outsider, and because I was an immigrant. My initial interaction with Black Americans was not positive. I remember taking a history class ... and asking questions during class. When I would speak, Black Americans would laugh at me, and they would make fun of my accent. There was a group of Black American students who would sit behind me and they would mimic the way I pronounce or enunciate my words. It was not just this one incident, there were many incidences all along the class sessions. Black Americans were not the only race of people who would make fun of me, but in my experiences, the Black American students made fun of me, more than students of other races.

AIP 2's (Kenyan) report of Black Americans' reactions to his African accents is consistent with AIP 6's (Nigerian) comment as follows, "In high school, Black American kids would make fun of my accent, they would mimic me, and they

would mock me by trying to speak with what they think an African accent sounds like.” The remaining AIPs did not report that their accents were a factor in their dissociation with Black Americans. AIP 7 (Zimbabwean) and AIP 8 (Algerian) gave different reasons for not having a dissociation with Black Americans because of their accents. As AIP 7 (Zimbabwean) stated,

Some Black Americans actually think I am American until I say that I am an African immigrant. When I tell them that I am from Africa, Black Americans always say, “Oh I thought you were American” [respond] “No, I am not”. They never made fun of me because my accent sounds like an American accent to them, but then, my accent is not really an American accent. It is just not the typical African accent that people are used to because the media represent Africans as having certain types of accents like Nigerian accents, South African accents, and other well-known African countries’ accents.

AIP 8 (Algerian) also stated,

I did not speak to anyone in middle school until I lost my accent so, no one made fun of my accent. I lost my accent purposely and very quickly because I saw that people who had an accent were made fun of by both Black Americans and White Americans...

In addition, AIP 4 (Cameroonian) and AIP 5 (Nigerian) explained that Black Americans never made fun of their accents, but they did not state any particular reason why their African accents is not a cause of their dissociation with Black

Americans. AIP 4's (Cameroonian) comment is similar to AIP 5 (Nigerian) who said, "I was never made fun of for my accent."

### Black American Participants' Perspective

Although some of the AIPs, explained that their African accent plays a major role in their dissociation with Black Americans, BAPs reported another perspective. In the study, BAPs (100%, 8 of 8) reported that African immigrants' accents created a noticeable difference in the communication style between them and the ethnic group, but none of the BAPs stated that the African accent was not a source of discord between the two ethnic groups. As BAP 12 said

The African accent, sometimes, causes an imbalance because you cannot understand each other. That will create a difference or, for me, can create a bond too because I love accents.... So, I think it is really cool when someone speaks with an African accent.

BAP 13 also said, "African immigrants have accents and Black Americas do not have accents or they have American accents; that does not cause any problems in our relationships." BAP 9's, BAP 10's, BAP 11's, and BAP 14's comments are similar to BAP 15 who said, "You can tell an African immigrant by the accent. There is no Black American that has an accent.... [and] I don't have any problems with African immigrants' accents." Lastly, BAP 16 stated, "I know some Black Americans have problems getting over African immigrants' accents and stuff like that, but their accents does not bother me."

### Comparison of African Immigrant Participants and Black American Participants

Though participants from the groups made comments that related to the African accents in the interviews, all the BAPs reported the African accent was not a source of dissociation between them and African immigrants. That said, BAP 16 mentioned that he knows some Black Americans have a problem getting over African immigrants' accents. Half of the AIPs explained that their experience of Black Americans making a mockery of their accents is one of the reasons for their dissociation with the ethnic group. In addition, one of the AIPs who did not report being made fun of because of her accent mentioned that she chose not to speak to anyone when she was in middle school until she lost her African accent. Thus, she was able to avoid being made fun off. AIP 7 also commented that people perceived her African accent to be an American accent, which is the reason her accent was not mocked. With the exception of BAP 16's statement, the BAPs comments indicate that the African accent may not have much of an effect on the dissociation between Black Americans and African immigrants, therefore, more research with additional participants is needed to gain further insights on this matter. Nevertheless, AIPs and BAPs also explained that how they were raised and the values they were brought up with are factors in their communicative dissociation.

## Deference

### African Immigrant Participants' Perspective

Deference is the respect and humble submission one shows to an elder or someone of authority (Online Google Dictionary, 2019). Many cultures classify deference as part of their cultural value, however, the significance those cultures hold towards showing deference to elders and people of authorities vary. In other words, some cultures may place showing deference to elders and authorities more highly than others. African cultures are examples of those cultures. In the investigation, AIPs reported that there are dissimilarities in the way they show deference and in the way Black Americans show deference. AIPs commented that these dissimilarities create frictions in their intercultural interactions. Eight of eight AIPs (100%) gave accounts of those differences, however, many of the participants' comments regarding the variances of deference between the two ethnic groups, were in reference to their upbringing. For example, AIP 1 said,

I think the ideas of discipline between African immigrants and Black Americans are very different and I will see it time and time again. When we were in a classroom, I would see the Black American kids talk back to the teacher, they would be disrespectful ... I would sit in the classroom thinking, they are going get whooped, and they need to stop. I later realized that they do not whoop anyone here in the U.S. I noticed that discipline was lacking in that regard. I think the style of parenting creates a disconnection between Black Americans and African immigrants....

AIP 2 (Kenyan) said,

Black Americans say whatever they want to say to anyone, even if it is disrespectful. Black Americans also say whatever they want to say, regardless of the age difference between them and someone older. For example, when I visited my Black American friends' houses, I would notice my friends curse at their parents and use profanity when speaking to their parents. African immigrants' do not do that; it is against the African culture. Growing up, I know that I had to give respect to anyone older than me, even if the person is not my family. I learned to never talk back to anyone who is older, to always listen to my elders, and to show interest in whatever they tell me. It is very important in my Kenyan culture and other African culture to never say any profanity to anyone you know, to anyone older, or to anyone in general. Also, I cannot talk back to my parents and I cannot walk out on my parents when they are having a conversation with me; this is similar for all African immigrants

AIP 3 (Kenyan Ethiopian) said,

In college, I have witnessed some Black Americans talk disrespectfully to some professors and peers. For example, in my freshmen year, I took a statistic class and I saw some Black Americans make fun of the professor because he had a Chinese accent. They would not listen to him, they would ignore him, they would talk throughout the lesson, and they would make fun of his accent. Sometimes, when the professor would speak, they

would make him repeat certain words only to make fun of his pronunciation. African immigrants do not do that because we come from a culture where we have to show deference to elders and to anyone of authority. African immigrants do not make fun of their elders. It is the African culture to show respect to people that are older than us or that have more of an authority than us. For example, African immigrants cannot just call anyone older or anyone of authority by their first name, we have to call them using their title or call them by using honorifics. We always have to let the older person talk first before we speak. We have to humble ourselves when hearing our elders' opinions and views because they have more experiences in life than we do. For example, if we are having a debate with our elders, we have to listen to what they say and pretend or make it seem like whatever they say is more agreeable than whatever we think, even if we do not necessarily agree with them.

AIP 4 (Cameroonian) stated,

Black Americans have the tendencies to speak out and say exactly how they feel to anyone and, sometimes, the way they choose to speak may be disrespectful to others, even older people. I have witnessed Black Americans speak disrespectfully to people that seem older than them at the grocery store, and places like that. When they spoke, they were outlandish, loud, and, sometimes, they would insult whomever they were speaking to. I am not saying all Black Americans are like this, this is just



what I have witnessed. Most African immigrants are not like that, although you may see some outlandish African immigrants, for the most part, we are laid back, we follow the rules, we respect older people, and we do not insult anyone older than us. Many times, we choose to not say how we feel, if the person we are speaking to is older or of authority.

AIP 5 (Nigerian) said,

Black American are more outspoken than African immigrants. I feel like sometimes as African immigrants, if something is bothering us or if we have opinions ... I feel like we hold it in for the fear of, maybe, being judged. Black Americans are very opinionated, they will let you know how they feel regardless of if you are older than them or not. I have also noticed that some Black Americans speak disrespectfully to others; they are not afraid to curse at people that they are angry with, and they are not afraid to stand up for themselves. African immigrants are brought up to respect and keep quiet. We are more afraid to speak up for we fear being seen as disrespectful. Especially, when it comes to having disagreements with people that are older than us, we do not say how we feel, and we do not talk back. Many of us just agree with them or pretend to agree with them because of our culture of always giving respect to elders and always listening to our elders. Coming to America, I have learned how to stand up for myself and speak up a little.

AIP 6 (Nigerian) said,

The way African immigrants are brought up to show respect is different from how Black Americans are brought up to show respect. For example, in high school, you have Black American students making jokes at teachers and they find it funny, but I did not find it funny.... I am not sure, but I don't think Black American children are disciplined the way African immigrants were... I think that is why I saw many Black American kids disrespecting and making fun of teachers in high school. African immigrants do not disrespect teacher or elders.

AIP 7 (Zimbabwean) said,

I feel like I do not belong with Black Americans because we are different, and we were raised differently.... The way Black Americans talk to their parents, that is not really how we talked to our parents back home in Africa, nor is it how we talk to older people.... Even though we are both Black, our cultures are different. Here [U.S.], Black Americans can really talk about their feelings ... back home, it is okay to have feelings but there are rules you need to follow, and you need to do what your parents say. For example, if an African immigrant's parent tells him or her to go to college, the person will not have a choice but to go to college, even if the person does not want to go to college. Here in the U.S., if a Black American's parent tells him or her to go to college, the person can choose to not do what his or her parents say and not go to college. Another example.... One day, I saw a girl talking to her mom. I guess she did not

agree with what her mother was saying, but all of a sudden, she started yelling and cursing at her mom. African immigrants don't do that because it is disrespectful to our parents.

Finally, AIP 8 (Algerian) said,

African immigrants tend to have a lot more respect for their elders than people in the Black American communities. For example, African immigrants do not argue with their parents. If my parents tell me that they are coming over to stay at my place for a week, I cannot object and, even if I am very busy, I cannot argue with them and tell them that they cannot come. I would have to reschedule my plans and accommodate my parents. This is the same for many African Immigrants....

#### Black American Participants' Perspective

BAPs also reported noticing dissimilarities in the way Black Americans and African immigrants show deference. In the interview, 87.5% (7 of 8) BAPs gave accounts to the dissimilarities of deference between the two ethnic groups.

As BAP 9 said,

African immigrants are more respectful in the way they treat others than Black Americans. Black Americans are more lenient when they show respect. For example, African immigrants tend to call people by their title, while Black Americans tend to call people by their first name.

BAP 10 also said,

Kids who were not born in America tend to be more respectful than kids who were born here [U.S.]. I see that a lot of African immigrants show more respect than Black Americans. I say this because I noticed the way African immigrants talk to people is not the same way Black Americans talk to people; this is because we were raised differently. African immigrants talk using good mannerisms, they are respectful to their elders, and they never say anything disrespectful. Black Americans, we have ways, you can talk to Black Americans and they will kind of give you the standoffish vibe like “Why you are talking to me?” or if you walk up to them they are going back up or take steps back; I find that to be disrespectful. A lot of Black Americans grew up on the streets, so they grew up learning to be disrespectful. For example, I have seen many Black American kids talk back to their teachers disrespectfully.

BAP 11 stated,

Even though my family raised me and siblings to show respect to people that are older than us, I also see that my African friends show a lot of respect when talking to people that are older than them. I feel like African immigrants show more respect than Black Americans because I see that the younger generation of Black Americans is more lenient in showing respect. In college, I notice that everyone, both Black Americans and African immigrants show respect, but in middle school and high school, I notice that Black Americans are a lot more disrespectful to teachers. For

example, I have seen Black American students in high school and middle school not follow their teachers' directions. If their teachers tell them to quiet down, they would not quite down.

BAP 13 said,

Although Black Americans show respect by calling people by their last names, I think Africans are more respectful than Black Americans.

Whenever I am around the African immigrants.... they greet people properly. For example, whenever my African Immigrants friends would greet me, they would say, "Hello (name) how are you doing?" Versus some Black Americans who would say "Hey what's up men?"

BAP 14 said,

I see that my African immigrant friends show more respect to people than Black Americans do. Personally, I give respect to others, but I have seen many Black Americans curse and disrespect others. I have never seen any of my African immigrant friends curse or disrespect others.

BAP 15 said,

I cannot speak for everyone, but for me, I have to respect my elders. I cannot speak when I am being spoken to by my elders, I cannot curse around my parents, and I have to watch my language. I believe African immigrants' cultures is similar to the way I was raised, but I believe that in recent times, Black American culture has changed. Black Americans are a lot more casual when speaking to their elders. For example, I have visited

some of my Black American friends' houses, and I have noticed that they would curse in front of their parents or at their parents. I also notice that they would talk back to their parents, and ... they would be disrespectful to their parents.

Finally, BAP 16 said,

Based on what I have seen, African immigrant has a better level of respect for their elders than Black Americans. As for me, I am a little less cautious for my elders. I am not saying that I do not respect my elders, but I treat everyone, regardless of age, the same. However, my African immigrant friends are a little humbler. They use titles to address someone older than them, they show more respect to their professor, and they call people Miss, Mrs., or Mr.

Though majority of the BAPs' commented that they notice a variance in the level of deference between Black Americans and African immigrants, BAP 12 reported that he did not think there is a dissimilarity in the way the two ethnic groups show deference; as he said,

I honestly think both cultures have some similarities in how they show respect to their elders. I think both sides have high regards and show great respect. I know that in my family, we hold our elders in high regards because they helped raised us. I and my sibling have lived with my grandmother and she helped raise us. She taught us to never talk back to people, and she taught us to always say please and thank you, especially,

to older people. I have also seen that African immigrants never talk back to people older than them. They always show respect to people older than them and they always say please and thank you.

### Comparison of African Immigrant Participants and Black American Participants

All the AIPs and majority of the BAPs reported that the variances in showing deference between African immigrants and Black Americans relate to African immigrants showing more deference than Black Americans. With the exception of BAP 12 who commented that he does not think there is a dissimilarity in the way, Black Americans and African immigrants show deference, both BAPs and AIPs comments indicate that the variances in the way Black Americans and African immigrant show deference causes the two ethnic groups' dissociation. In addition to the dissimilarities in the way the two ethnic groups show deference, AIPs and BAPs also reported that there are differences in the importance Black Americans and African immigrants place on their education and career.

### Education and Career

#### African Immigrant Participants' Perspective

AIPs reported that getting an education and having a good career is a significant part of African immigrants' culture. They explained the importance of achieving academic excellence and the significance it holds for having a good career. In the study, AIPs (100%, 8 of 8) commented that they noticed a

difference in the way African immigrants and Black Americans perceive educational and career achievements. As AIP 1 (Nigerian) stated,

In Africa, we were raised to do our best to achieve excellence. In America, as an African immigrant, if you are not one of the top three careers, lawyer, doctor, or engineer, you are not really praised for anything in the African immigrant community. You have to do your best to be one of the tops in your career. Africans, because of where we are from, we know that we don't have as many opportunities as others, so we tend to be go-getters, we tend to accomplish things, we just get it done, and we tend to use our opportunities more. I think that Black Americans don't really see that they have better opportunities than Africans. It is not to say that there are no inequalities in the U.S. because there are, but Black Americans definitely have opportunities that they do not take advantage of. African immigrants see those opportunities and they take advantage of them.

AIP 2 (Kenyan) also said,

African immigrants are more resilient, ambitious, and they have a strong work ethic. Coming to America is a rare opportunity that I and many African immigrants cannot afford to waste. Coming here [U.S.] gives me the opportunity to change not only my life but also my families' lives for the better. I have to push myself to always be the top. This is the same for many African immigrants.... Depending on their social economic status, I notice that some Black Americans push education, but from my



perception, they do not push education as much as African immigrants do. African immigrants really push education. I have noticed that many Black American parents push their children more towards playing sports than education. Also, I noticed that a majority of Black Americans I saw in high school and college did not do well in their classes. In the classroom, I always notice that I am more involved in asking questions, and answering questions, than other Black Americans. I also notice that in my college classes, all the people of African ancestry [Black Americans and African immigrants] that were at the top of the class were Black African immigrants and non-Black African immigrants.

AIP 3 (Kenyan Ethiopian) reported,

I have a Black American female work acquaintance and ... as she claims, I did not grow up in a White world so, I would not understand Black Americans' struggles. But I have grown up here [U.S.], I came here, and I have moved here. I have experienced this place [U.S.], and from my personal experiences, a lot of the African immigrants I am around, not just my people [Kenyan Ethiopians], but African immigrants as a group, are very successful, are very driven, and are go-getters. They are in the STEM field, in the science field, and they are engineers. I have relatives who are engineers and a lot of them are in the medical field. The system of racism that does exist has not kept them from achieving their goals. As an African immigrant, I should be at the bottom of the totem pole. If this

[U.S.] system really never worked, I would not have made it, none of the immigrants I know would have made it.... So, it is not a matter of race as it is a sense of who you are as a person and knowing your worth. It might sound biased, but I think Africans have that resilience; maybe it is a cultural thing. I think Africans have a very ambitious attitude because we come from places where failure is not an option and no matter what obstacles we come across, we have to jump across, there is no excuse.

AIP 4 (Cameroonian) said,

From what I have observed in college, Black Americans like to have a social lifestyle, they like to party, they like having fun, and things of that nature, more than African immigrants do. It is not like African immigrants do not like to party or have fun, but when it comes to knowing when to go to work or when to go to school, African immigrants are much more able to prioritize what is important in their life, compare to Black Americans. In my observation of Black Americans in college, they are more likely to live for the moment rather than plan for the future, while African immigrants are more likely to plan for the future rather than live for the moment. I have been told by some Black Americans in college that they chose to go to parties, to go on dates, and things of that nature, instead of studying for an upcoming exam. I would later find out that they failed their test or received a low grade on the test. All the African immigrants I know do not do that; they will do whatever they can to make sure that they get good grades in

their classes. I think it is because we were raised differently from Black Americans and, also, because many of us come here [U.S.] for the opportunity. Therefore, we do not play around, and we do whatever we can to achieve our best. Most of us do not complain, we just jump over whatever obstacle we need to, so we can reach our dreams.

AIP 5 (Nigerian) said,

When it comes to education, African immigrants always want to be on top of their education, they always want to get their masters, and their PhDs. It is just who we are, education is very important in Africa. In Africa, we were brought up to do our very best to be successful because it is our tradition and duty to take care of our parents and family members when we get older. Not to say that Black Americans do not value education, but I just want to say that it is something that is embedded in us as African immigrants since we were kids in Africa. This is why you will see more African immigrants than Black Americans trying to be the top of their classes in school and trying to be in one of the top careers like law, the medical field, and others.

AIP 6 (Nigerian) said,

African immigrants pursue education more than Black Americans because of the struggles many of us faced before we got here and the struggles many of us face to get here. Although some African immigrants come from wealthy families, back home, many of us do not come from wealth and we

struggled financially. If you are poor in Africa, you are poor; there is no such thing as government aid or free insurance. Coming to America created a better road to success for us because there are a lot more opportunities here than back home. That said getting here was not easy. My parent went through hell to relocate our entire family to the U.S. We had to deal with immigration and my parent struggled to get us visas and green cards. If you are not a child of a citizen here [U.S.] getting a green card will become a very long and difficult process. Getting our green cards was difficult because neither my parent or any my siblings were American citizens; many people get rejected and do not even receive their green cards. So, pursuing education and doing well in school is not an option. We have to try our best because of the struggles that we went through. My parents encouraged me to study a STEM major like engineering, medicine, and so on because that will give me the best opportunity for financial security.

AIP 7 (Zimbabwean) said,

The honest truth, African immigrants are more hardworking than Black Americans when it comes to their education and careers because African immigrants know the type of situation they were in, back home. Back home, many of us came from a place of little opportunity to be successful. For example, in Africa, we have to pay for education and although education is very important in Africa, paying for it is not easy for many

people. Here in the U.S. education is free, and that is an opportunity that many people wished they had back home. I know Black Americans also want to make it and become successful but, for African immigrants, it is not a matter of choice. It is more of a matter of I am here in America and I have to make it, I have no choice or else I will have to go back home and face the possibility of not becoming successful. This is why you see many African immigrants doing well in school and in their careers.

Lastly, AIP 8 (Algerian) said,

As someone who is part of the African immigrant group, I know that we have to strive for higher education, we have to plan ahead for the future, we have to be successful in our careers, and we have to get a good job that will sustain us and will help our families and parents in the future. Whereas I notice that many Black American do not plan ahead for the future, they live for the moment, their priority is about caring for their individual selves, and socializing.... African immigrants are more likely to push for educational excellence, and we are more likely to push for higher education than Black Americans would....

#### Black American Participants' Perspective

In the interviews, BAPs (100%, 8 of 8) also reported that they noticed a difference in the degree of importance African immigrants place on their education and in the degree of important Black Americans place on their

education. They explained that African immigrants are more focused on education than many Black Americans. As BAP 9 stated,

From what I have seen, African immigrant kids don't have a choice but to do all they can to become successful. I think this is because African parents are hardcore on their children's education. Black American parents are more accepting of their children doing their own thing, even if it means their children will take a different route other than going to school to achieve their goals....

BAP 10 also said,

Growing up in America as a Black American, I feel like our education is not that important to us. When people come from places like Nigeria, I notice that they are a lot smarter than Black Americans or other Americans. I have African immigrant friends who are 16 years old and they are already in college. My cousin's African roommate is also 16 years old and she is already a sophomore in college. African immigrants are always pursuing higher education, they work a lot harder than most Americans. Black Americans do not pursue higher education and I think this is because we are used to having things handed to us; education is not a norm in the Black American community....

BAP 11 said,

From what I have noticed, African immigrants are more focused on education than Black Americans. All the African immigrants that I have

spoken to say that their parents are very strict about getting good grades and going to college. One of my African immigrant friends told me that he wants to be a music major but if he tells his parents, they would not allow him to be a music major. He told me that his parents want him to be a biology major so, he is a biology major; even though he does not like biology. In my experience Black American parents let their children choose their dream and choose whatever major or career they want for their future. Although I want to become a doctor, my parents never forced me or imposed being a doctor on me. They let my siblings and I choose whatever we want to be.

BAP 12 said,

I see differences between Black Americans and African immigrants. Those differences are the exact things that help create a divide between the two groups. Obviously, if your values are different, you will have different beliefs and different practices. African immigrants focus more on education and having a good career than Black Americans. When I talk to my African immigrant friends, they would tell me that their parents told them to be a doctor, pharmacist, engineer, and other careers that are held in high regards, and they pursue those goals. On the other hand, I have seen Black Americans study careers like marketing, kinesiology, business, or nursing. I also noticed that African immigrants have a high educational

standing and they get high grades in school, but Black Americans get average grades in school.

BAP 13 said,

Black Americans push education, but not as much as African immigrants. A lot of Black Americans are more focused on keeping their Black Americanness, even if they are going to school. In some Black American communities, when you get a college education, you are seen as Uncle Tom, [and] you are seen as a traitor who has rejected the Black American pride and is assimilating to the White American culture. When I was in college, my Black American friends did not try to achieve academic excellence, I saw a lot of them fall by the wayside and dropped out of school, but a lot of my African immigrants' friends were always so serious in school, they go to class, they always do their work, and they are at the top of their classes. I also do well in school, I have a high GPA, and some of my Black American friends encourage me, when they see me achieving good success, but I noticed that none of my Black American friends took school seriously. African immigrants, on the other hand, they all get good grades and they take their work seriously.

BAP 14 said,

African immigrants are more into education, they are crazy about education, and they are more prioritize when it comes to school. They are all bright, and they are all at a higher level of education. African



immigrants are ahead of the game [education], and they outshine me and all my Black American friends in school. For example, I have an African immigrant friend who is about to graduate college with a bachelor's degree and this person is two or three years younger than the average age B.A. college graduates are supposed to be.

BAP 15 said,

African immigrants have more of a strong academic dynamic than Black Americans. For example, my African immigrant friends are 20 years old, and they are either graduating with a BA degree or in grad school, but a Black American would still be in their second or third year at 20 years old. I know that many African immigrants start their college education at 16 years old, but many Black Americans are still in high school at the age of 16. I feel like African immigrants have more aspirations to go into the medical field or to become lawyers. They are trying to improve themselves and trying to improve the lives of their families.

Lastly, BAP 16 said,

Based on the demographic at my college, Black Americans have lower GPAs, half of the Black Americans who enroll in my school either dropout or they take longer to graduate. When I look at the African immigrant demographic at my college, I notice that many of them take education more seriously, they have good grades, and a lot of them tell me that their family pushes them to be successful.

### Comparison of African Immigrant Participants and Black American Participants

Both AIPs and BAPs reported that African immigrants pursue more educational success than Black Americans. In the study, Both AIPs and some of the BAPs gave explanations for African immigrants' pursuit of educational success. AIPs commented that African immigrants strive for high academic performances because the U.S. has more opportunity to advance in education and career than Africa does, and they take advantage of those opportunity. AIPs also commented that African immigrants strive for high academic performances because they were brought up to work hard and to do their best in school. In addition, half of the BAPs commented that they noticed, or they were told by their African immigrant friends that African/African immigrant parents instruct their children to strive for high academic achievements.

In reference to Black Americans, AIPs and BAPs both reported that Black Americans do not pursue educational success as much as African immigrants do. BAPs did not give a unified reason for many Black Americans' choices of not pursuing academic success. Nonetheless, BAP 9 and BAP 11 commented that the reason Black Americans do not pursue academic success as much as African immigrants is Black American parents give their children the freedom to choose or not choose to pursue educational aspirations. Though all the AIPs and BAPs both agree that African immigrants place a greater degree of importance on education than Black Americans do, the participant's comments on the

difference in degree of importance the two ethnic groups place on education is not a good indicator for the disconnection between the two ethnic groups.

## Stereotypical Beliefs About African Immigrants

### African Immigrant Participants' Perspective

AIPs (100%, 8 of 8) reported that they have experienced Black Americans communicate many forms of stereotypical belief about Africa to them. They reported that the way Black Americans communicated their stereotypical perceptions of Africa and/or Africans sometimes causes tensions between them and members of the Black American ethnic group. As AIP 1 (Nigerian) said,

When I first moved to the U.S., I felt like I did not belong with Black Americans. One of the reasons is not being able to talk like a Black American ... I couldn't talk the slang because I have an accent; it won't sound right ... Black Americans would make clicking noises at me, they would ask me, "What language do you speak or what does your language sound like?" When they asked me, I was excited, and I showed them how I spoke my language, but they mimicked me and would start making clicking noises. I did not understand it at first, I didn't know why they were clicking, I have never heard any clicking done in my life and I don't know anybody who clicks in Nigeria.... None of the Black Americans were willing to search the web and see if Nigeria had people that clicked. I have been called a monkey, a few times, and the weird thing is all these came

from Black Americans. I think this is because of how the media portrays Africa, or how they show Africa on TV

AIP 2 (Kenyan) also said, “Black Americans would ask me, did we wear clothes [in Africa], and did we speak English [in Africa]? They would tease me because I am not like them, and that made me feel excluded.” In addition to AIP 2’s (Kenyan) comment, AIP 3 (Kenyan Ethiopian) said,

I have experienced that outsider feeling when I socialized with Black Americans. I have seen it, and I experienced it in some of my college classes when I was with certain Black Americans peers. When they ask me about where I am from, ... they do not ask me in a way of wanting to know more about my country, but in the style of the Eurocentric ideas. For instance, them saying, “I hear you guys ride lions or you guys live in a jungle”; there have been Black Americans who came up to me and said those things. It was not something I laughed at because it was an insult, it was a put-down, it was their way of saying you are lesser than me, you are what I see on TV., you are the naked kid, you are the hopeless woman, you are the person who does not speak proficient English, you are the one with an accent...

AIP 4 (Cameroonian), AIP 5 (Nigerian), and AIP 6 (Nigerian) accounts of Black Americans communicating stereotypical beliefs about Africa and Africans are similar to AIP 7’s (Zimbabwean) statement as follows:

Black Americans are... [ill-informed] about Africa and I feel like it comes from how some News outlets only show the bad stuff that happens in Africa; they never really show the good that happens in Africa. When I first came here, people, including Black Americans, were like “Oh my gosh, how did you get here?” I was like, “I swam across the ocean”. They would ask if I lived in a hut back home, if I had lions and giraffes in my backyard, or things like that.

Lastly, AIP 8 (Algerian) said,

In the mid-west, the Black Americans would ask me if I saw elephants, and monkeys walking around in Africa, they would ask how often I saw lions, and tigers in Africa, they would ask if we lived in villages, and that would close the door for further communication between me and them...people do not live in the forest in Africa...it is not *The Lion King* [A animated movie]...they think that we are living like *The Wild Thornberrys* [an animated TV. series].

Alongside AIPs reports concerning their experiences of Black Americans communicating stereotypical beliefs about Africa and Africans, AIPs also mentioned that the portrayals of Africa in the media is a major reason for Black Americans' stereotypical communication towards them, thus the media influenced the dismemberment between the two ethnic groups.

### Black American Participants' Perspective

None of the BAPs reported communicating any stereotypical beliefs about Africa to African immigrants, however, 37.5% (3 of 8) BAPs reported that the media's portrayals of Africa had an influence on their perceptions of Africans. As BAP 13 stated, "When I was younger, the [U.S.] media influenced my perception of Africans and African immigrants, but now that I am older, I know more about the culture." BAP 15 also said,

I feel since many of us, Black Americans, have never been to Africa, we believe what we see in the media as what Africans or what African immigrants are. I also believed what the media display about Africans, however, I did not let what I learned from the media influence the way I interacted with African immigrants when I first met them, and to this day.

Lastly, BAP 16 said,

When I was growing up watching the News media about how things are on the continent of Africa, like watching Rwanda, I thought, "Man this country is jacked-up, I do not want any part of this country, and I am glad that I am an American." That is why it was a trip when I saw people coming from the continent of Africa to the U.S., and they do not look vagrant and impoverished. The African immigrants spoke eloquently, they spoke well, they only had an accent, and that made me feel like I had to do my research on Africa. The media, to this day, continues to spoon-feed Americans this misconception about the continent of Africa, the people,

and history. Just by what I learned from the media, I used to think Africans were trying to sneak out the country, trying to escape the continent and they were trying to come to the U.S. on boats. I used to wonder, how do Africans have enough money to leave the continent? Do they have airplanes? Is food growing in Africa?

The remaining BAPs reported that the media did not influence their perceptions of Africa and African immigrants. As BAP 9 said, "I am not sure if the media's portrayal of African immigrants influences Black Americans perceptions of them. As for myself, I do not pay much attention to the media, so it does not influence me." BAP 10 also said,

Even though the media portrays Africans on TV. as starving and poor, it does not affect the way I see African immigrants because there are people starving and poor everywhere, but the media make it seem like everyone in Africa is starving and poor. This is obviously not the case, but the media only tell this one-sided story.

BAP 11 stated,

I think the way the media portray African immigrants can influence Black Americans' perceptions of them, but in my opinion, I don't think the way the media portrays African immigrants influences the way I and other Black Americans see or treat them.

In addition, BAP 12 said, "I only search for positive media content on Africa..."

Lastly, BAP 14 said,

The media did not influence my perception of African immigrants, because one, I know the media is probably lying. Two, the vibe and chemistry I received from African immigrants was different when I actually met people of African descent [African immigrants].

#### Comparison of African Immigrant Participants and Black American Participants

Although AIPs reported that Black Americans communicated mediated stereotypical beliefs of Africans and Africa to them, none of the BAPs reported communicating any mediated stereotypical beliefs of Africans and Africa to African immigrants. That said, BAP 13, BAP 14, and BAP 16 commented that the media influenced their beliefs of Africans and Africa. Based on AIPs and BAPs reports, it is unclear if Black Americans communicated mediated stereotypical perceptions of Africans and Africa to African immigrants. Nevertheless, a few BAPs and all the AIPs agree that the media's portrayal of Africa influenced Black Americans to have a one-sided view of the continent and, thus, may be a reason for the communicative dissociation between the two ethnic groups. While BAPs did not report communicating any stereotypical comments about Africa to African immigrants, some AIPs reported that the media's portrayal of Black Americans influenced their perceptions of the ethnic group.



## Stereotypical Beliefs About Black Americans

### African Immigrant Participants' Perspective

In the investigation, 62.5% (5 of 8) AIPs reported that the media's depictions of Black Americans influenced their perception of the ethnic group. As AIP 1 (Nigerian) stated,

The media's portrayal of Black Americans influenced the way I see them because through the media, I was able to understand the injustice that Black Americans face in the U.S. I used to not understand why Black Americans would mention the whole police brutality thing. I used to be like well, if the cop tells you to do something, then you just have to do it. In Africa, if somebody tells you "Do this," just do it, and then it is done. I used to think Black Americans just need to be respectful to cops and nothing bad will happen to them because the media would show Black Americans being disrespectful. But then, I later found out and researched the Trayvon Martin case. I also watched *Fruitvale Station* and saw Michaël B Jordan as Oscar Grant, get shut on his back, handcuffed behind, and laying on the floor.... When I finally saw that, I felt like I could truly say "I get the Black Americans experience in America," and it made a lot more sense to me. This is why I participate in the Black Lives Matter marches.

AIP 2 (Kenyan) said,

The media portrays Black Americans as violent, as people who are unemployed, who are on food stamps, and who are lazy. For a while, in

high school, I associated what I saw in the media about Black Americans to the Black Americans I saw. Especially since in high school, Black American boys were aggressive to me.

AIP 6 (Nigerian) said,

When African immigrants see Black Americans been portrayed as thugs, violent, aggressive, and dangerous on TVs and movies, it causes them to have this misconception that Black Americans are thugs, even if that is not the case. For example, movies like *Boyz n the Hood* portray images of Black Americans as hardcore aggressive people. When African immigrants see that, it may cause them to be afraid of Black Americans or it may cause them to have a mistrust of Black Americans. I know this because I and some of my African immigrant friends used to think most Black Americans are thugs because of how the media made them look like. Of course, we now know that is not true, but the media does influence African immigrants' perceptions of Black Americans.

AIP 7 (Zimbabwean) said,

The media's portrayal of Black Americans influenced my perception of them. I used to think Black Americans were ghetto, they were rude, and they would cuss you out. The media would always portray Black Americans as villains and as terrorists, but they would portray people of different races as kind and gentle. Because of what I saw on the media, I was afraid and uncomfortable to be around Black Americans. I was

worried they would be aggressive towards me and I was worried that if I offended them, they would pull out a gun on me. After meeting them, I realized that the media's portrayal of them is false and not all Black Americans are violent.

AIP 8 (Algerian) said,

When I first met Black Americans, the media's portrayals of them made me act carefully and vigilant around them because they portrayed Black Americans as dangerous people; this is not how I feel today. I now know that the media does not portray Black Americans truthfully. Because of the media, I used to believe that anyone who is young, male, Black American, and wearing pant that is sagging, equals trouble; this is not true because I have met many young Black American males who sag their pants and they are good caring people.

AIP 3 (Kenyan Ethiopian) and AIP 4 (Cameroonian) commented that the media did not influence their perceptions of Black Americans. Their responses are consistent with AIP 5 (Nigerian) who said, "The media portrayal of Black Americans did not influence my perception of them."

#### Black American Participants' Perspective

BAPs also gave accounts to the media's depiction of Black Americans and the influences those depictions have on African immigrants' perceptions of them. in the study, BAPs (87.5%, 7 of 8) reported that they believed the media's

portrayal of Black Americans influence the perceptions African immigrants has of the ethnic group. As BAP 10 stated,

I think the U.S. media influences the way African immigrants see Black Americans because all the media show on TV about us are Black Americans are getting arrested, going to jail, joining gangs, and all that. The media makes Black Americans look bad.

BAP 9's comment of the media's influences on African immigrants' perceptions of Black Americans is similar to BAP 12 who said, "I think the media's portrayal of Black Americans influences African immigrants' perceptions." BAP 13 also stated,

I have not met all the Africans that live in the U.S., but I feel like the media influence African Immigrants' perceptions of Black Americans because I see African immigrants exclusively grouping together with other African immigrants, and that makes me feel like an outcast. I feel like the way the media portrays a minority of Black Americans' is not necessarily the true image of all Black Americans. Those images affect the way African immigrants look at Black Americans, and I feel like it also affects the way African immigrants treat Black Americans; this is also why I think African immigrants only stay and hang out with their exclusive groups of African immigrants.

BAP 14 said,

I think the media's portrayal of Black Americans influenced African immigrants' perceptions of us. I know this because one of my African immigrant friends told me that the media influences the way African immigrants see Black Americans. My African friend told me that when he first got here, he thought there was unity in the Black American community because of what he saw in the media. When my friend got to know Black American culture, he saw gangs and segregation in the Black American community, and his expectation of a unified Black American group was not met.

BAP 15 said,

I feel like the initial perception of who I am to African immigrants, especially now with the media, is Black American girls are just, "Oh yeah," shaking booty, [and] we are all sexualized. We portray that ... it's just how we act, so it becomes like, "Is she one of those girls?" I can feel that, and I feel like I have to prove myself. "No, I actually go to school, I am learning, I want to help my community, I want to help the other community, and I want to give back." ... I understand that they want to know who I am and, when they see how we act in the media, of course, they are going to wonder "Who is this woman, who is this girl? She is not even really from Africa, but she looks like us" and you can feel that....

BAP 16 said,

A lot of my African immigrant friends consumed a lot of social media. They watch a lot of TV shows about Black Americans and that affects their behaviors and the way they see Black Americans. For example, my African immigrant friends would see a new type of dance created by the Black Americans on social media, or a new style of dressing and they would try to do it, thinking that Black Americans would think it is cool. I do not think everything my African immigrant friends see Black Americans do on social media is cool. A lot of my African immigrant friends look ill-advised when they try to copy Black Americans on social media.

Contrary to most of the BAPs reports, BAP 11 commented that she did not think the media influences African immigrants' perceptions of Black Americans. As she said, "I don't think the image of Black Americans in the media influences the way African immigrants see Black Americans because I have never heard any of my African friends say anything bad about Black Americans."

#### Comparison of African Immigrant Participants and Black American Participants

Most of the BAPs and AIPs commented that they believe the media's portrayal of Black Americans influence African immigrants' perceptions of them. Some of the BAPs did not give any explanation as to why they believe the media influences African immigrants' perception of Black Americans. Most of the BAPs who gave explanations as to why the media's portrayal of Black Americans influences African immigrants' perceptions of them explained that the media's depictions of Black Americans cause African immigrants to have a negative

perception of Black Americans. Except for, AIP 1 (Nigerian) who reported that the media not only caused him to have a negative perception of Black Americans, it also influenced his perceptions of Black American in a way that enable him to understand Black American struggles in the U.S., most of the AIPs who reported that the media influenced their perceptions of Black Americans explained that the media swayed them to have a negative perception of the ethnic group. Based on the reports, we can conclude that the media's portrayals of Black Americans and the negative effect it has on some African immigrants' perceptions of them causes dissociation between the two ethnic groups.

### Othering

Othering is the identification and separation of one's self or group from another through the means of selective boundaries (Guttormsen, 2018). These selective boundaries are used to limit certain interactive privileges to one's self or group members and increase the exclusion of out-group members. As a result, one's self or group may hold or may be perceived to hold a higher degree of power in comparison to the excluded out-group members (Guttormsen, 2018). In relation to the study, AIPs and BAPs both explained that they experienced incidences where members of the other ethnic group communicated otherness to them.

### African Immigrant Participants' Perspective

In the investigation, AIPs (75%, 6 of 8) reported that they experienced being othered by Black Americans. For example, AIP 1 (Nigerian) stated,

It is all about body language. Let's say you walk in a room and there is a group of Black Americans and you say something; their body language automatically closes away from you. You can tell from their facial expression that they are thinking, "What do you know?"

AIP 5 (Nigerian) also said,

As a new employee at my job, there is this Black American manager and [Black American] educator at my job. I noticed that they are not as open with me as they would if another Black American or White American comes around them. When I walk into the room, they get quiet, and it is like they are trying to feel me out.... Or maybe I am not as open with them as I would if I met another African immigrant.... However, the manager and educator get along with other new employees and they include those employees in their conversations, except me.

AIP 2 (Kenyan) and AIP 3 (Kenyan Ethiopian) statements are similar to AIP 6 (Nigerian) who said, "In school, some Black Americans had their own click who they hang out with, they would not allow African immigrants to sit with their click for different reasons here and there..."

In addition, AIP 8 (Algerian) said,



In 2008, when I applied as an undergrad to my university, I checked African American or Black in my application and right away, I was put into the email list of the African Student Union on campus. When I got involved with the African Student Union... I realized that the organization does not include everybody in Africa; it was exclusive to mainly Black Americans here in the United States. They made me feel like I did not belong with the organization because I was different.... I have gotten the disgusted look, I have gotten the stare-down, I have gotten the up and down look, and I have gotten the eyes rolling look from Black Americans, even though I smiled back.

AIP 4 (Cameroonian) and AIP 7 (Zimbabwean) reported that they did not experience being othered by Black Americans, and each participant gave different explanations as to why. For example, AIP 4 (Cameroonian) said,

It is true that I feel a dissociation between me and black Americans, but they never communicated exclusion to me. Most of the time, I exclude myself from Black Americans because I am into the African community here, [U.S.] and they are not part of that community.

AIP 7 (Zimbabwean) also said,

Black Americans have never really made me feel like they rejected me or anything, but I just do not feel like I am the same as them. I am not saying it in a proud manner, or like I am better than them, I just feel like we grew up in different places, and we went through different struggles.

### Black American Participants' Perspective

In terms of the BAPs, 50% (4 of 8) BAPs reported that they experienced occurrences of being othered by African immigrants. As BAP 10 stated,

Even though us, Black Americans, we communicate differently, when my African immigrant friends are together, they connect because they actually have this thing in common and I feel left out. I do not really know about their culture and the way they speak ... I would try to follow in their conversation and they would look at me like I am stupid, and I am just like, it is not my fault. They would exclude me from their conversation since I cannot really relate to them. They will be talking about something in their slang, laughing, and I do not get it. I am just sitting here like, I want to laugh too. I would ask them, "What happened?" But their response seems like they are treating me like a stupid person for not understanding. So, I choose not to be around them because I do not want to feel like I am stupid for not knowing what they are talking about.... A lot of African Immigrants look at me like you are American, you don't have that background. I took a lift one time and the driver was talking to me about how things are so different between him and I. I said, "How are they different? I don't understand how they are different". Just cuz you have a more understanding of the background, and stuff like that, doesn't make us two different people. We all still come from the same place. The driver is from Nigeria, and he made it seem like they were better than us, Black

Americans. I was just like, I don't understand, we are practically the same, we look the same. He kind of made me feel like I was not smart, because a lot of Nigerians are smarter, he kind of belittled me, and he kind of made me feel like he was better because he was Nigerian.

BAP 12 said,

There was a time when I walked into a room full of Africans or a group of African immigrants and, when I did, I can feel the atmosphere of the room change. When I went in, the flow of the room was kind of uninviting. It was more like the African immigrants are trying to say, "We are doing something here, it is cool if you come in later, but we are having our thing, come back later," that type of thing. They were just talking amongst themselves and I think it has to do with something from their own culture, back home. I think it was something that they felt like only they could relate to at the time, but their behavior hurt my feelings...

BAP 13 said,

I see many African immigrants congregate in groups that only have African immigrant people. When I see them, the vibe I get from them is they have their own thing and anyone who is not an African immigrant will not be able to fit in with them. When they gather like that, it makes me feel like an outcast, and I feel like they do not want me hanging around.

BAP 15 said,

With one of my African immigrant male friends, I would try to understand the African culture, but he kind of shut me down. I was like “I want to know more,” and he was like, “She just does not understand.” When I tried to pronounce his name for the first time, I would try because I really want to learn, but he said, “You are just not fit for it, that is it, you will never understand, you can’t ever speak my language, you can’t ever learn.” That made me feel...like an outcast, and I could not really fix that.

The remaining BAPs reported that they did not experience being othered by African immigrants. As BAP 9 said, “I was not treated as an outsider by African immigrants but, sometimes, I feel like I do not belong with them.” BAP 11 gave a similar account to BAP 14 who said, “I get along with all my African friends, they are nice to me.” In addition, BAP 16 said,

I have not experienced African immigrants communicate exclusion to me. For a couple of Sundays in a row, my family went to an African church ... it was a cool experience, they were welcoming, and they gave us boxes of food afterward. They were very welcoming, they were very happy for us to be there, they were really cool about everything.

#### Comparison of African Immigrant Participants and Black American Participants

Half of the BAPs and most of the AIPs reported that they have been othered by members of the other ethnic group. While the other half of the BAPs and a quarter of the AIPs commented that they did not experience othering from the other ethnic group’s members. In the study, both AIPs and BAPs explained

that they were excluded by members of the other ethnic group in certain gatherings where the other ethnic group's members held a higher degree of social influence or power. BAP 10 and BAP 15 also explained that they felt othered by African immigrants because members of the ethnic group pointed out the differences between them and African immigrants. Although there is a difference in the total otherness experiences between AIPs and BAPs, the findings indicate that othering is a possible reason for the two ethnic groups' dissociation.

## Ethnic Identification

### African Immigrant Participants' Perspective

AIPs explained that they felt a stronger sense of belonging to the African immigrant group than they did towards the Black American group or any other group. In the study, 100% (8 of 8) AIPs reported that they have a stronger sense of belonging to the African immigrant group because of the relatability they have with the group concerning various Africans' and African immigrants' traditions and struggles. As AIP 1 (Nigerian) stated,

In high school, the [U.S.] media portrayed the child soldier and Joseph Kony, and Black Americans would tell me, "Your dad is on TV., your dad is terrorizing Africa ... Look at your brother and sisters." It is nothing that I asked for...you kind of feel like you can't be around people who make fun of you, so you want to be around people who understand you, and who

are just like you. Being around other Nigerians and other Africans, we have that understanding ... and we would always have more of a type of a connection.

AIP 2 (Kenyan) also said,

I have been to a couple of events where there were Black Americans and, also, a small group of Africans. I connected easier with the Africans at that event. It was kind of nice talking about where we are from, things of that nature, and talking about what is going on in different countries in Africa.

AIP 3, AIP 5, AIP 6, AIP 7, and AIP 8 comments are similar to AIP 4

(Cameroonian) statement as follows:

Being a member of the African immigrant group gives me a sense of community and continuity ... in the sense that, there are things that we could talk about because of the things we have in common... I relate better with them because they understand me.

#### Black American Participants' Perspective

Similar to the AIPs, BAPs explained that they felt a stronger sense of belonging to the Black American group than they did towards any other group. In the interview, 100% (8 of 8) BAPs reported that they have a sense of belonging to their groups because of their cultural similarity and comfortability. BAP 9, BAP 10, BAP 12, BAP 13, BAP 15, and BAP 16 comment are consistent with BAP 14's who said, 'Black Americans all share the same views, we feel the same way

about certain things, and we all are comfortable around each other.’ Another informant, BAP 11, stated,

I have Black American friends cuz it makes me feel more comfortable to ... hang out with people that also look like me and come from the same type of background. We all have a mutual understanding of how life is in our household and within our families. It’s just a comfortability thing for me.

#### Comparison of African Immigrant Participants and Black American Participants

All participants from the two ethnic groups explained that they identify and have a stronger connection with their individual ethnic groups than any other group. They also reported that their connection to their individual ethnic groups is strengthened by their relatability to their ethnic groups. As a result, we can conclude that the sense of belonging African immigrants and Black Americans have towards their individual ethnic groups could lead to members of the two ethnic groups choosing to only associate with their individual ethnic groups, thus leading to an intentional or unintentional manifestation of dissociation between the two ethnic groups.

Overall, AIPs and BAPs responses regarding their relationship or lack thereof with the other ethnic group points out multiple concerns between the two groups. All the same, the two ethnic groups’ concerns have some commonalities, which involves their cultural differences, and how the two ethnic groups communicated those differences to the other ethnic group’s members. Patterns

in the study also indicate that both Black Americans and African immigrants have limited knowledge and familiarity with the other ethnic group's culture. Thus, further study is needed to determine the gap in the variance of limited knowledge and limited familiarity that the two ethnic groups have concerning the other's culture. That said, the study's findings are further elaborated in the discussion portion of the study. See Appendix C for the result table.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSIONS

#### Implications, Limitations, Future Research, and Conclusion

In the following section, I summarize the study's findings and discuss their implications in light of the limited literature on Black Americans' and African immigrants' dissociation. Next, I discuss the limitations and suggested direction for future research. Qualitative research method was used to investigate and analyze testimonies of relational dismemberment from participants belonging to the two ethnic groups.

#### Implications

In the study, both AIPs and BAPs reported there are dissimilarities in Black Americans' and African immigrants' accents, how each ethnic group show deference, and the importance they place on education and career. The participants also reported that they have been othered by members of the other ethnic group. In addition, AIPs and BAPs commented about the media's influence on how they were perceived by the other ethnic group. Lastly, they reported that they have a stronger sense of identification to their ethnic groups than other groups. In the following paragraphs, I expound upon these findings.

Cultures and ethnic groups have their communicative differences; however, those differences can manifest into dissociation between their members. Black Americans and African immigrants are no different. In the study,

AIPs (50%) explained that one of the reasons they dissociated themselves from Black Americans is members of the ethnic group made fun of their African accents. On the other hand, BAPs did not report making fun of African immigrants' accents. Instead, BAPs (100%) mentioned that they noticed a difference between the African immigrants' accents and the American accents in which (BAP 12) mentioned that he likes the African accents. AIPs (100%) also mentioned that there are variances in the way they show deference and the way Black Americans show deference. In this sense, AIPs explained that African immigrants show more deference than Black Americans because showing deference is a significant aspect of the African culture. Their reports indicate that the variances in deference between them and Black Americans are another reason for their dissociation with the ethnic group. Similar to the AIPs, most of the BAPs (87.5%) reported they have noticed that African immigrants show more deference than Black Americans. However, the BAPs comments did not indicate that the variances in deference level between them and African immigrants is a cause for their dissociation with the ethnic group. The participants' comments imply that Black Americans' and African immigrants' divergences in their accents and level of showing deference could be an aspect of the two ethnic groups' communicative dissociation, however more research is needed to further understand this phenomenon.

Both AIPs (100%) and BAPs (100%) explained that a noticeable difference between the two ethnic groups is their cultural outlook towards

education and career in which African immigrants place a higher importance on educational success than Black Americans. The participants' comments are supported by Djamba, (1999); Dodoo, (1997); studies on the differences between African immigrants' and Black Americans' educational achievements. In their studies, the authors found that African immigrants have a stronger educational foundation than Black Americans. In this study, both AIPs and BAPs commented that African immigrants place a higher importance on educational success and having careers in the law or STEM field than Black Americans. Some of the BAPs explained that the reason African immigrants have a stronger foundation in education than Black Americans is African immigrants' parents instruct their children to pursue certain careers and to have high academic achievement. That said, the BAPs did not give a uniform reason as to why Black Americans do not place as high of an importance on education as African immigrants. The AIPs explained that the reason African immigrants pursue academic excellence and pursue careers in the law and STEM field is not only due to their upbringing but is also due to their determination to succeed. Nevertheless, the participants' comments do not indicate that the differences between the two ethnic groups' outlook on education are reasons for their communicative dissociation.

In terms of othering, AIPs (75%) reported that they have been othered by members of the Black American ethnic group in social gatherings, but the informants did not give a uniformed reason as to why they were othered. On the other hand, BAPs (50%) who reported that they have been othered by African

immigrants explained that they were othered for not having the African background or for having a non-African culture. BAPs also reported that they have been excluded from social gathering conversations that involved a majority of African immigrants. The intercultural communicative othering experiences that AIPs and BAPs endured from members of the other ethnic group indicate that an aspect of the two ethnic groups' communicative dissociation is the othering behaviors that they exhibit to one another. Authors (e.g. Jackson & Moshin, 2010; Kim, & Ebesu, 2007) have written articles on the concept of othering and its relations to intercultural communication studies. In their articles, the authors explain that othering plays a significant role in intercultural communication since many people's intercultural communicative experiences with other cultures/races/ethnic groups involves them othering members of the cultures/races/ethnic groups or being othered by members of other cultures/races/ethnic groups. The authors also explained that the othering of other cultures/races/ethnic groups leads to lacking an understanding of them. This study adds to the current literature by providing Black Americans' and African immigrants' narrations of their intercultural communicative experiences of othering with members of the other ethnic group. It should be noted that BAPs' and AIPs' othering experiences with members of the other ethnic group mostly involved certain social occurrences where members of the other ethnic group held a higher degree of influence and power. That said, more research is needed

for an in-depth understanding of the othering occurrences between the two ethnic groups.

Theoretical Perspective. In the interviews, BAPs and AIPs not only explained that they have been othered by members of the other ethnic group, they explained that they also have a stronger connection to their individual ethnic groups than any other groups. Taking this into account, social identity theory (SIT) is used as a theoretical foundation for the study. SIT helps us understand how people identify themselves by the membership and attachment they have to their social groups (Hornsey, 2008; Tajfel, 1981). SIT is also used to understand the reasoning behind people choosing to differentiate themselves from others by labeling social borders that categorize them to their social groups, while also classifying others as not belonging to the groups (Gundlach et al., 2006; Harwood, 2010; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In other words, people connect themselves to the social group that they identify with, and once they have become a member of the group, people may not only form a strong attachment with the group, but they may also choose to exclude others who do not fit the group's identity. This concept is applied to Black Americans' and African immigrants' dissociation.

In this study, SIT is used to explain why members of the two ethnic groups have a strong connection to their individual ethnic groups, and why they choose to sometimes exclude members of the other ethnic group, thus leading to their dissociation. In addition, the exclusion of members of one ethnic group from the

other ethnic group could be one of the reasons why AIPs and BAPs have a stronger connection to their individual groups. SIT also explains that people assess the positive and negative consequences of belonging to their social groups (Tajfel, 1981). Keeping this in mind, we can further understand why BAPs (100%) and AIPs (100%) commented that they identify with their individual ethnic groups more than any other group. We can also further understand why Black Americans and African immigrants may choose to identify with their individual ethnic groups since identifying with their individual ethnic groups gives members of the two ethnic groups the benefit of belonging to a group.

In the investigation, AIPs (100%) reported that they have experienced instances where Black Americans communicated stereotypical beliefs about Africa to them. AIPs explained that the reason members of the Black American group communicated stereotypically to them about Africa is the media's one-sided portrayal of the continent and its native citizens. AIPs (62.5%) also reported that the media's negative depiction of Black Americans cause them to have a negative perception of the ethnic group. In terms of the BAPs, a few informants (37.5%) reported that the media influenced them to have a one-sided perception of African and its native citizens. In addition, most of the BAPs (87.5%) commented they believe that the media influences African immigrants' perceptions of Black Americans. Since the participants' comments show that the media plays a significant role in the two ethnic groups' relational dismemberment, mediated intergroup conflict (MIC) is used as a second theoretical foundation for

the study. MIC is used to understand how media influences the division of racial groups through its portrayal of racial groups (Stewart et al., 2011). Authors (e.g. Flores, 2003; Khrebtan-Hörhager & Avant-Mier, 2017; Poole, 2011; etc.) have written articles on how the media's portrayals of racial groups influence people's perceptions of them. This study adds to the literature by using MIC to theorize the phenomenon behind the media's influences of Black Americans' and African immigrants' perceptions of the other's ethnic group.

In this study, MIC is used to understand how the media's portrayal of Africa and Black Americans influences the dissociation between the two ethnic groups. MIC explains that if the information one has about others that are not of one's race/culture/ethnic group is obtained from a mediated source like the media, then one is likely to perceive others that are not of one's race/culture/ethnic group the way the media depicts them (Stewart et al., 2011). In this regard, if the media depicts people of other races in a negative manner, then one will have negative perceptions towards them and may even treat them negatively. If the media depicts people of other races in a positive manner, then one will also have positive perceptions towards those people and may treat them positively. This same concept applies to Black Americans' and African immigrants' relationship in the sense that all the AIPs and most of the BAPs commented that the media exhibits a one-sided portrayal of Africa, Africans, and Black Americans; those one-sided portrayals influence the two ethnic groups' perceptions of the other. Thus, the media's one-sided depiction of Africa,

Africans, and Black Americans may be a driving force behind the two ethnic groups' communicative dissociation.

### Limitations

As this study consists of a few purposely selected, participants from both the African immigrant group and the Black American group, it is not without its limitations. For instance, the study's result is not generalizable to all Black Americans and African immigrants, since testimonies from 8 BAPs and 8 AIPs do not accurately represent all Black Americans' and African immigrants' communicative dissociative experiences with members of the other ethnic group. Apart from the ungeneralizable nature of the study's finding, there is also the possibility that unknown external factors may have influenced some of the participants' responses in the interview sessions, thereby manipulating the study's results. Such external factors may include some of the BAPs and AIPs not being able to accurately recall their past dissociative experiences with members of the other' ethnic group. One limitation to consider is the fact that, as the researcher of this study, I am an African immigrant; having this knowledge, both BAPs and AIPs could have been compelled to limit the amount of information they chose to share during the interview sessions.

### Further Research

Suggested research is to expand the study by increasing the AIPs and BAPs sample size, by gathering the participant from different locations, and by equalizing the male to female ratio of participants in each location. Further



studies on MIC and how it helps us understand African immigrants' and Black Americans' perceptions and behaviors towards one another should also be considered. Another research suggestion could be to investigate the African traditional languages, and how African immigrants' use of those languages could affect the relational divide between Black Americans and African immigrants. Scholars should also investigate the extent to which African immigrants understand Black American culture, and if their understanding or lack thereof of Black American culture contributes to the two ethnic groups' dissociation. They should further investigate the extent to which Black Americans understand African culture, and to what degree the level of their understanding contributes to the two ethnic groups' dissociation. One suggestion is to have someone who is not of the African immigrant or of the Black American ethnic group conduct the study, thus reducing the possibility of data finding limitations. The study can be expanded into examining the communicative dissociation between American born Latinos/Latinas and Latino/Latina immigrants, American born Asians and Asian immigrants, and American born Middle Easterners and Middle Eastern immigrants.

### Conclusion

It is my hope that conducting this research will not only bring more awareness to the dissociation between Black Americans and African immigrants but will also give us some insights of the reasons behind the communicative behaviors that led to the two ethnic groups' dissociation. By having some

understanding behind the communicative behaviors that led to African immigrants and Black Americans dissociation, we can hope to bridge the relational division between the two ethnic groups. Bridging the relational gap between the two ethnic groups, will not only strengthen and unify the Black racial group, it will also be beneficial for constructing a more harmonious society for all; for when we come together in unity, we will achieve greatness for all (Mandela & Clark, 1993).

APPENDIX A  
INFORMED CONSENT FORM



College of Arts and Letters  
*Department of Communication Studies*

### INTERVIEW INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate investigates the communicative dissociations between Black Americans and African immigrants. The study is being conducted by Melody Adejare, under the supervision of Dr. Mary Fong, Professor in the Department of Communication Studies, California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

**PURPOSE:** The objectives of the study are to better understand the communicative dissociations between Black Americans and African immigrants. By understanding the communicative dissociations between both cultural groups, this study hopes to find new information that will add to the general knowledge of Black Americans' and African immigrants' relationships. This study also hopes to bring awareness to new information found.

**DESCRIPTION:** This study will be conducted through a face-to-face interview, however a phone, Skype, or Zoom interview, which only your audio responses will be recorded, can be arranged if you are unable to interview face-to-face. The interview will be audio recorded in order to make sure that your words will be accurately understood and represented. At the end of the interview, you will be asked to identify colleagues that may also be willing to participate in this study, however, doing so is not required. After the interview, you may be contacted at a later date for a follow up interview. If you are unable to participate in a face-to-face interview, the researcher will personally meet with you prior to participating in any future phone, Skype, or Zoom interview to ensure that the study's consent form is filled.

#### **AUDIO:**

I understand that the interview will be audio recorded: Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW:**

I understand that I will be contacted for a follow-up interview: Initials: \_\_\_\_\_



**PARTICIPATION:** To participate in this study, you must be and must show proof that you are 18 years of age or older. You must also identify as a Black American who has experienced communicative dissociation with African immigrants, or as an African immigrant who has experienced communicative dissociation with Black Americans. No participant will be excluded from this research on the basis of class, socio-economic status, sex, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, and educational level.

**VOLUNTARY:** Your participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. You may withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

**DURATION:** All interviews will be conducted between 11/1/2018 and 3/31/2019. The interview will last roughly around 90 minutes, but no longer than 2 hours. Follow-up interviews will also be conducted between 11/1/2018 and 3/31/2019 and will last roughly around 10 minutes, but no longer than 30 minutes.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** Your participation in this study is confidential. The audio recording of your interview will not be heard by anyone except the researcher. Your real name will not be used in any publication of this study, nor will the real names of any person or organization mentioned in the interview. Should you identify colleagues that may also be willing to participate in the study, you are encouraged not to share that you have done so with anyone other than the researcher. That way, your colleagues' participation can also remain confidential. The researcher will not share with your colleagues or anyone that you have participated in the study (thus maintaining your confidentiality as a participant). Your recorded audio discussions will be stored in a USB flash drive and locked in a safe, private, filing cabinet that only the researcher can access. The researcher will also be the only person to know the location of the USB flash drive. Your recorded audio discussions will be destroyed 3 years after the study has ended.

**RISK:** If you choose to participate in this study, the risk to you is minimal. The researcher has taken the confidentiality precautions described above to minimize the risk of sensitive discussions being traced back to you, personally. However, if during the interview you feel particularly sensitive or distressed about certain matters, you are welcome to not discuss those matters. Before we begin the



interview, you are strongly advised to withdraw from the study if you foresee getting upset and not being able to mediate your distress during participation. Before we begin the interview, you are also strongly advised to not disclose yours or others' immigration status.

**BENEFITS:** This study will contribute to society's understandings of Black Americans and African immigrant's relationship. Other benefits that can be gained is the potential for the study's findings to create a pathway than can lead to the mending of both groups' relationships.

**CONTACT:** For more information concerning the study and your right as a participant, please contact Dr. Mary Fong, Professor in the Department of Communication Studies, at the following: Phone-(909) 537-5891, email-[mfong@csusb.edu](mailto:mfong@csusb.edu).

**RESULT:** The results of this study can be obtained at <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu>.

**CONFIRMATION STATEMENT:**

I have read the information above and agree to participate in the study:

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

As the researcher, I constructed all questions asked during the interview sessions. Question guidelines that were asked during the interview sessions are as follows:

#### For Black Americans

1. What is your ethnicity? (if the participant is confused, then I will ask if he or she identify as Black, Black American, or African American).
2. Do you have friends who are Black Americans? Why or Why not?
3. What does it mean to you to be a member of the Black American ethnic group? Or what does it mean to you to be a Black American?
4. Do you receive privileges from the Black American society as someone who is part of the Black American ethnic group?
5. What are some of the privileges you experienced?
6. Do you think, being a Black American, there are disadvantages that you have experienced?
7. What is your definition of a disadvantage?
8. Give me an example of a disadvantage you've experienced
9. What is a meaningful event, cause, movement, cultural practice, and so on that is significant to you as a Black American? (If participant do not respond adequately, then I will give them examples of events, causes, and cultural aspects [e.g. Black movements, Black lives matters, racism, etc.] to get them talking)



10. Give an example of a time you expressed your emotions in support of the Black American ethnic group.
11. Give an example of a time you did not express your emotions in support of the Black American ethnic group.
12. Do you have African immigrant friends? Why or Why not?
13. Can you name a few of them?
14. In your experience, do you get along with African immigrants? Please give an example of your experience. Also, what are the specific African immigrants' origin?
15. Have you experienced instance where you were unable to get along with African immigrants? Please give an example of your experience.
16. What do Black Americans do and say that gives you the impression that they are Black Americans?
17. What do African immigrants do and say that gives you the impression that they are African immigrants?
18. Do you see differences between Black Americans and African immigrants? Please give some examples of those differences. (I will listen to their answer, then I will guide them to discuss cultural differences [values, beliefs, etc.] and, particularly, communicative differences in style).
19. Being in the US, have you experienced African immigrants communicate exclusion towards you? In other words, do you feel that you are treated

differently or treated as an outsider or that you don't belong? Please give me an example from your experience.

20. From your experience, describe one way that African Immigrants verbally and/or nonverbally communicate that makes you feel excluded as a Black American.
21. Why do you think they do this? (What do you think their intentions or motives are?)
22. Being in the US, have you ever communicated exclusion towards African immigrants? (in other words, have you ever treated African immigrants differently or an outsider or as people who do not belong with your ethnic group?)
23. From your experience, describe one way that you verbally and/or nonverbally communicated that made African immigrants feel excluded.
24. What are your reasons for doing this?
25. Do you have any other insights regarding the communication differences between the two ethnic groups and why?

#### For African Immigrants

1. What is your ethnicity? (if the participant is confused, then I will ask if he or she identify as Black, Black American, African American, or African Immigrant).
2. Do you have friends who are African immigrants? Why or Why not?

3. What does it mean to you to be a member of the African immigrant group?  
Or what does it mean to you to be an African immigrant?
4. Do you receive privileges from the African immigrant group as someone who is part of the African immigrant society?
5. What are some of the benefits you experienced?
6. Do you think, being an African immigrant, there are disadvantages that you have experienced?
7. What is your definition of a disadvantage?
8. Give me an example of a disadvantage you've experienced
9. What is a meaningful event, cause, movement, cultural practice, and so on that is significant to you as an African immigrant? (If participant do not respond adequately, then I will give them examples of events, causes, and cultural aspects [e.g. immigration movements, African traditions, African unity, etc.] to get them talking)
10. Give an example of a time you expressed your emotions in support of the African immigrant group.
11. Give an example of time you did not express your emotions in support of the African immigrant group.
12. Do you have Black American friends? Why or Why not?
13. Can you name a few of them?

14. In your experience, do you get along with Black Americans? Please give an example of your experience. Also, what are the specific Black Americans' background? (E.g. biracial Blacks, non-biracial Blacks, etc.)
15. Have you experienced instance where you were unable to get along with Black Americans? Please give an example of your experience.
16. What do African immigrants do and say that gives you the impression that they are African immigrants?
17. What do Black Americans do and say that gives you the impression that they are Black Americans?
18. Do you see differences between African immigrants and Black Americans? Please give some examples of those differences. (I will listen to their answer, then I will guide them to discuss cultural differences [values, beliefs, etc.] and, particularly, communicative differences in style).
19. Being in the US, have you experienced Black Americans communicate exclusion towards you? In other words, do you feel that you are treated differently or treated as an outsider or that you don't belong? Please give me an example from your experience.
20. From your experience, describe one way that Black Americans verbally and/or nonverbally communicate that makes you feel excluded as an African immigrant.
21. Why do you think they do this? (What do you think their intentions or motives are?)

22. Being in the US, have you ever communicated exclusion towards Black Americans? (In other words, have you ever treated Black Americans differently or as outsiders or as people who do not belong with your ethnic group?)
23. From your experience, describe one way that you verbally and/or nonverbally communicated that made Black Americans feel excluded.
24. What are your reasons for doing this?
25. Do you have any other insights regarding the communication differences between the two ethnic groups and why?

APPENDIX C  
TABLE OF RESULTS

<u>Communicative</u> <u>Dissociation</u>	<u>BAP</u> <u>Perceptions of</u> <u>African I.</u>	<u>AIP</u> <u>Perceptions of</u> <u>Black A.</u>	<u>BAP</u> <u>Perceptions of</u> <u>Own Culture</u>	<u>AIP</u> <u>Perceptions of</u> <u>Own Culture</u>	<u>Point</u> <u>of</u> <u>Conflict</u>
<b>Accent</b>	African Accent	American Accent	American Accent	African Accent	Point of conflict for AIPs
<b>Deference</b>	High deference	Low deference	Low deference	High deference	Point of conflict for AIPs
<b>Education</b>	Highly important	Moderately Important	Moderately Important	Highly important	No Point of conflict
<b>Career</b>	Highly important	(N/A)	(N/A)	Highly important	No Point of conflict
<b>Stereotypical Beliefs About African Immigrants and Stereotypical Beliefs About Black Americans</b>	87.5% said AI has a mediated perception of BA	100% said BA has a mediated perception of Africa	37.5% said BA had a mediated perception of Africa	62.5% said AI had a mediated perception of BA	Point of conflict For BAPs & AIPs
<b>Othering</b>	Separation from Black Americans	Separation from African immigrants	N/A	N/A	Point of conflict For BAPs & AIPs
<b>Ethnic Identification</b>	N/A	N/A	Strong connection to Black Americans	Strong connection to African immigrants	No Point of conflict

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