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Similar is Not the same: Worldviews and Relationships between African-Americans and African Immigrants in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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SIMILAR IS NOT THE SAME:
WORLDVIEWS AND RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN
AFRICAN-AMERICANS AND AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS
IN MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

By

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A Professional Project submitted to the Faculty
of the Graduate School, Marquette University

In Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for
the Degree of
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As with many decisions in life, the thought of enrolling for a Master's degree at Marquette University came to my mind with a series of "what ifs?" Neither of my parents ever had the chance of even visiting a college campus, much less graduate from one. In many respects, therefore, I consider myself an example of the "anything is possible" cliché, and those who know my life story can clearly attest that it has been a unique and rugged journey for me. I have hitch-hiked with countless numbers of people along the way; for whom words are never enough to thank them for compromising their comfort, in the process of lending me a helping hand. One such set of people is my cousin and his wife Boima and Jumanatu Morrroy. Before anyone here in the United States knew about my tiny role and passion in this complex puzzle of humanity, this couple helped me migrate to Milwaukee and try out on the enormous opportunities which the United States offers hardworking people. I have not regretted a minute of it.

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PREFACE

If there is one thing true and unique about what holds the United States together as a prosperous nation, it is the fact that apart from Native Americans, everyone else in this country is an immigrant of some sort. Beside these “original Americans,” every ethnic group in this country has its own distinct story about who its people are, and how the forefathers found their ways into this land of plenty. The happy ending to each of these stories is that, as it has always been the case, we all have our eyes set on the same goal of making the United States the best she can be. With that said, it is relevant to note the beauty of such enormous diversity which this country enjoys, from historical, contemporary and possibly futuristic perspectives.

From my own personal experience, mutual negative perceptions seem to be growing between African-Americans and African immigrants in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Examples of such negative perceptions range from some African immigrants focusing largely on the social vices perpetrated by few African-Americans in the community, to using those acts as justification for their exaggerated assessments of the social, economic, and religious values of African-Americans. Some African-Americans, on the other hand, also seem to stand accused of distancing themselves from their African immigrant counterparts, whom they see as uncivilized savages and opportunists, and whose intelligence is as unclear as their accents. Given the two situations, it comes as no surprise that both groups miss out on the opportunity of learning about the richness in the living traditions and human relationships from each other. In this study, therefore, the researcher wishes to find out the worldviews and perceptions between African immigrants and African-Americans in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The researcher hopes that some findings in the study will facilitate community sensitization programs that address the underlying factors which cause such worldviews of one group by the other.

CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Although African-Americans and African immigrants in the United States share the same historical background, there seem to be difference in their relationship, largely because of perceptions about each other. The purpose of the study is to find out what similarities and differences in perceptions, if any, exist between African-Americans and African immigrants about each other in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with respect to their worldviews. Given the purpose of the study mentioned above, the researcher hopes to identify some causes of the situation and hopefully encourage community education for mutual understanding between African-Americans and African immigrants in Milwaukee.

Chapter 1 opens with a section entitled Background which states the researcher's personal observation of relationships and perceptions between African-Americans and African immigrants in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The portions entitled Voyage to the United States, Assimilation and Social Challenges, in the chapter both focus on a summary of research related to the arrival and acculturation of two immigrant groups (German and Irish immigrants) into the United States, for similarities or differences between or within those groups. Those findings are compared with historical findings reported in Chapter 2 for African-Americans and their African immigrant counterparts. The chapter concludes with Research Questions for African-Americans and African immigrants, an explanation of the Limitations and Delimitations encountered during the study, and a Glossary.

Background

As with many parts of the world, the United States had prior contacts with foreigners for a long period, before it became law in 1819 that record-keeping was necessary for anyone entering into the country. When discussing migration, two common factors which majority of sociologists agree upon---push-pull factors, need to be taken into consideration. Simply put, a push factor is that situation which forces a group of people to migrate from their home country into a new environment. On the same note, pull factors are those circumstances which attract migrants into a country with the expectation of a better life and something good to hope for. Unlike African-Americans whose ancestors came here as slaves, German and Irish Americans and majority of other Europeans immigrants for that matter, fled religious, economic and other forms of persecution, and sought freedom into a country they perceived to offer better opportunities.

German immigration to the United States

Voyage to the United States

One may be wondering whether Europeans (Germans in this case) came under the same circumstances, as those of enslaved Africans. Obviously there was a huge difference between the two groups. By comparison the Europeans may well have been on cruise ships during their voyage(s) to the United States. The “cruise ship” comparison made here is within the context of the brutal circumstances under which captured African slaves were shipped to the United States (as seen in photo to follow), versus German immigrants who willingly boarded vessels bound for the “New World.”



Source: Nigel Sadler (2009)

As disturbing as the images above might be, historical accounts suggest that the “storage,” beatings, markings with hot iron, rape, and voyage conditions of the slaves across the Atlantic Ocean were even worse. There was no respect for age or gender of the slave cargo in this business; neither was there respect for the willingness of the captured slaves on whether or not they wanted to make the journey.

On the other hand, a large number of German immigrants who voluntarily came to the United States were poor young peasant men (and some women). Their voyages were often financed by rich merchants, with an agreement of them performing cheap labor for their financiers for any number of years.

While it is true that this “New World” did not turn out to be paradise for some of the German immigrants, majority actually did find life more comfortable and promising than it was back home. Portions of lands were given out to those who expressed desire in farming, as well as money to those with business interest. Such opportunity was fast-tracked by President Abraham Lincoln’s 1862 “Homestead Act,” which offered as much as 160 acres of land (for \$ 14) to any citizen and eligible immigrant. All applicants received the pieces of lands, with the understanding that it could become theirs after five years of consistent and productive utilization--mainly in the form of agribusiness. As time went on, word started going back across the Atlantic Ocean that indeed the United States was much better than Europe. As University of Michigan-Ann Arbor Sociologist, Professor of American Culture, and immigration expert Silvia Pedraza, together with University of California-Irvine Sociologist Ruben G. Rumbaut put it simplistically: “Most of these emigrants set out for the frontiers of Illinois and Wisconsin, where land was available. Their letters home and the eyewitness accounts of visiting missionaries fanned the flames of discontent back in Old Country and provoked new waves of emigration” (Pedraza S. and Rumbaut R.G., 1996 p. 5).

Assimilation and social challenges

Although German immigrants evidently made good use of the opportunities offered them as they settled in rural areas, their presence was still felt in urban towns such as Milwaukee’s

northwest side in Wisconsin, south St. Louis in Missouri, and Buffalo, New York etc. Given those successes, it is tempting to conclude that assimilation was the least of challenges that German immigrants had to face in their adopted home. The truth, though, is that prejudice and rejection were almost part of the package which came along with the opportunities that the United States offered them. As their population increased, they seemed to have carved a powerful political force for themselves, and therefore mattered in their different environments. The Germans held firmly on to their heritage and hard work from the Old World to a point that by 1880, 27 percent of farmers in Wisconsin were of German background. Similarly, Kansas, Minnesota, and Nebraska accounted for between 14 and 19 percent of German immigrants. Such strong influence saw condemnations and nasty comments that were not made secretly, as Pedraza and Rambaut quoted an 1857 Buffalo Commercial Advertiser publication:

The fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh wards are as little American as the duchy of Hesse Cassel; their population speaks a foreign language, reads foreign newspapers, isolates itself from the American element, and steeped in ignorance of American politics, it clings on the bald name of Democracy, and claims the right to subject the sons of the soil to the despotism of the brute of numbers. (Pedraza and Rambaut 1996 p. 152-153).

It is clear, from the above, that although majority of German immigrants indeed benefitted from the goodwill of the United States administration, certain individual Americans at that time were less impressed with such rapid successes of a group of people who otherwise deserved less attention and opportunities.

The outbreak of World War I particularly made life difficult for German immigrants in the United States, because opposition to their seemingly-growing influential presence in the country was placed within the context of Germany's role in the war. Repeated violence against German immigrants was therefore a common occurrence, and in most cases authorities turned a blind eye to those glaringly unfair treatments. As bad as things were, the Germans were resilient enough to find a way to live with such discomfort perpetrated by their hostile neighbors. As Timothy Walch, Director of Herbert Hoover Presidential Library in Iowa highlighted in his book, *Immigrant America* (1994), German immigrants knew how to walk the fine line of survival:

In matters where economics and other considerations did not militate against their being of German ethnicity, however, they tended to exhibit their Germanness more casually or at least to mask it less well---accordingly, the Germans in America took advantage of the pride or shame that world opinion heaped on imperial Germany during the nineteenth and early twentieth Centuries. Having contributed beyond their proportion of the total population in the Civil War, the Germans in America for the balance of the nineteenth century could at least allege that they had played a major moral role in ridding the nation of slavery and preserving the Union (Timothy Walch, 1994 p. 205-206).

The above assessment paints a different picture of the German immigrants, compared to what they were thought of and described by their native neighbors.

In spite of the numerous challenges that German immigrants faced in many parts of the “New World,” their resilience was so consistent and impressive that at the time of the introduction of the national quotas immigration law in the 1920s, they had already advanced in the acculturation of the United States. It must be noted that such success was around the same time as Polish and Czechoslovakian (now called Czechs for short) immigrants were openly welcomed into the United States for their support of the allied troops during the Great War. Such welcome or compensation offered an annual quota system wherein both countries were allowed 6,500 and 2,800 immigrants respectively to come and live here in the United States. Interestingly, even as those countries were enjoying such amount of welcome, German immigrants had entrenched themselves into the American society so much that 26, 000 of their compatriots were coming here as well.

In contemporary United States, of course, there is little or no visible evidence of the huddles and hoop jumps that the early German immigrants went through in this country. Their past has never been a reason to hold back on being “American”. Instead, stories of such struggles are told to younger generations as a way of motivating them into embracing the culture of hard work and “Americanism”, their culture and heritage remain intact; their entrenchment into the American society almost a given; and the relationship between old and new immigrants can best be described as phenomenal. Politically, German immigrants’ role in the American society is worthy of admiration for many reasons. During, and after World War II, German immigrants enjoyed a great deal of American generosity through the open-arm welcome extended to Jewish refugees from Germany and other European countries. A prominent German immigrant who

comes to mind in contemporary American politics is Henry Kissinger. Born and raised in Furth, Bavaria, Germany, he migrated to the United States in his late teens. He held several important positions in American public service, after a successful military career: then as National Security Adviser and Secretary of State under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford.

Irish immigration to the United States

It seems like the farther one digs into the immigration history of the United States, the more evident and intriguing it becomes for an “outsider” to cast a wider curiosity net into the ocean of diversity that this country represents. Another ethnic group which has seen its own share of rejection, mockery, challenges, and (eventually) success is the Irish community. Among all European immigrants, the early Irish immigrants probably felt the “push-pull” factors of migration more than anyone else. Their migration to the United States dates back to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries when they came to the then British colony and joined the early White settlers, to contribute into making it “American” and less “English” from Britain. It is important to note that the United States and Ireland were both British colonies in about the same period; but life seemed to be comparatively better on the United States’ side of the Atlantic Ocean, hence the reason for the massive exodus of Irish nationals into the “New World”.

Voyage to the United States

Irish immigrants came to the United States under several circumstances and in different batches, in what many immigration historians later dubbed as “wave.” The wave-induced migration lasted for a long period, and they all describe the harsh realities of what the Irish went through in their home country. Each succeeding one seemed to be harsher than the previous,

thereby creating different generational experiences. In the timeline presented by Pedraza and Rambaut:

The Irish immigration in America can be divided into four eras: pre-1840s-that is, pre-famine: a famine immigration of the late 1840s and early 1850s that saw men and women fleeing the devastation of the potato blight; a post famine migration that reflected the revolution in Irish society wrought by the aftershocks of the famine, which stretched from 1850s through (but actually continues until the 1920s); and after a lull between 1920 and 1960, a new migration of the 1970s and 1980s (Pedraza and Rambaut 1996 p. 161).

With the above explanation of the Irish people's experiences, one would be inclined to understand why they risked everything to not only leave their home, but also help relatives and friend leave a country which offered no sign of hope for its citizens.

Unlike the Germans, politics seem to have played a minimal role in the push factor which propelled Irish immigrants toward the United States. Instead, the grinding poverty aggravated by famine and limited land ownership fuelled the no-turning-back decisions which most of them made to create a new home in a foreign land. Similar to German immigrants, though, is the fact that majority of Irish immigrants who came to the United States were indentured laborers to the wealthy financiers who paid their way. Worthy of note as well is that some of them were brought (along with their dependants) here as prisoners. Just as is the case with many other immigrant

groups, harbor states such as New York, Virginia, and New Jersey, naturally served as hub for Irish immigrants, at least until they found jobs which took them to other towns. Many residents in states like South Carolina and Maryland initially frowned at the presence of Irish immigrants and passed laws in 1698 and 1699 (respectively), restricting the presence of immigrants in their communities. But it turned out to be a vain attempt at stopping a group of people that was willing to do anything anywhere for whoever paid them.

Assimilation and Social Challenges

In almost every city and state where Irish immigrants settled, a centerpiece of their survival skill was to stick to their homogeneity and support for one another. They established churches and other faith-based groups, which doubled as meeting points to share information about news and events back home as well as scoop on job opportunities---majority of them were unskilled laborers and farmers. Their female folk largely monopolized household chore jobs such as cleaning, babysitting, etc. and made good money out of it. Such settlement patterns encouraged more family members and friends to brave the voyage into the United States. As their numbers increased, congestion, crime, disease, drunkenness, and filth became part of what locals complained about in the different neighborhoods which they lived in. It was not surprising therefore, that public dislike for the Irish was at times violent, including open physical assault on priests and nuns inside their Churches. Such permanently-fixed negative opinions about their life style were seen in many urban cities, where job postings clearly stated: **“No Irish Need Apply”**.

Socially, it was difficult for the Irish to interact with their host communities, so it came as no surprise that anyone who showed signs of understanding their needs was guaranteed to win block Irish political favor or vote in elections. In New York City and Boston, for example, the

Democratic Party counted on the Irish constituency during almost all elections. There were accusations from several quarters that the “Irish vote” was a compensation scheme for social services and jobs offered to an otherwise undeserving group of immigrants. It can be argued, though, that the growing city responsibilities made it impossible to ignore the cheap labor-ready workforce which the Irish immigrants provided. Careers such as garbage collection, fire men, and railroad work were not quite attractive to local residents, so the Irish took advantage of the labor vacuum and made it into a win-win situation. Political and press criticism of the Irish community as prime cause of such social vices was not uncommon, especially by people with interest in holding public office. One might imagine that some locals could understand their new neighbors’ conditions as reason for their desperation to survive, but Pedraza and Rumbaut describe the Irish’s experiences differently:

Stereotyped as primitive and stupid, the Irish were caricatured in cartoons with simian-like features, sporting protruding forehead, prominent jaws and bulging eyes---American hostility to the Irish received further ammunition as the new arrivals from Eire jumped into the American political process relatively quickly (Pedraza and Rumbaut 1996 p. 199).

Such fear of Irish “takeover” among locals got to a point that politicians who supported anti-Irish groups were elected into offices in many towns and states around the country, with the hope that stricter policies will be introduced in their respective jurisdictions. The Know-Nothing (or American) Party, for instance, supported, funded, and ensured that some like-minded governors and congressmen won elections. In fact, it went further and supported former President Millard Fillmore to run for office in 1856. Even in the midst of such open criticism and dislike, Irish

immigrants rapidly became the largest European immigrant group in the United States, as evident in the 1790 population census which states that 400,000 residents claimed to be Irish-born.

Even as the United States offered Irish immigrants better reason to hope for a bright future, there was no doubt that the early days of their settlement saw a semblance of continuation of the poverty which they left behind; but given that majority of them were able-bodied men and women ready and willing to work hard, things gradually changed for the better. The presence of Irish immigrants became more noticeable in the United States during mid-nineteenth century, especially between 1840 and 1880 when their involvement in education and politics became prominent in urban cities. Additionally, the Irish established very successful businesses, charitable and labor-focused institutions (primarily in New York City's Sixth Ward) which rapidly moved them from bottom-rock class of society into a force to reckon with. Given these successes, new arrivals did not have to go through the uncomfortable settlement challenges which their earlier compatriots faced, because they stayed with relatives who showed them the survival skills and what it takes to live in the United States.

By the end of the Nineteenth Century and beginning of Twentieth Century, it became clear to native-born Americans and Protestants that the Irish had indeed become an integral part in the American society---and therefore could not be ignored and taken for granted any longer. Given Irish immigrants' involvement and prominence in important social and development issues like theater (John Drew), education (Louise Bogan), business (Pat Powers), sports (Paddy Ryan) and public life (Aedanus Burke), the age-old stereotype about them being never-do-wells began to fade away and be replaced by acceptance into the American identity. Examples of such success stories abound, but prominent among them is former United States President John F.

Kennedy, who served from 1961 until his assassination in 1963. In spite of criticism from opposition quarters about his Irish origin and the fact that he was Catholic, President Kennedy won the election anyway, and is clearly renowned for his emphasis on Americanism by all.

As the researcher has pointed out earlier, the first Irish immigrants made the bold decision to migrate to the United States. Most had no marketable skills, but with a high determination to succeed and make life better in their adopted country. Evidently, that determination and never-fading sense of community held them together, even in the face of disrespect, rejection, and discrimination. Several decades later, Irish culture still remains intact in this country; and most importantly societal mindset about: “No Irish Need Apply” has faded away, now communities nationwide proudly celebrate Saint Patrick’s Day. Apart from the older generation which tries to maintain the traditional (and possibly conservative) aspect of Irish culture, it is hard to find any form of animosity or difference between the two groups in America. Their Irish identity is made known in numerous ways such as Irish-themed restaurants, dresses, dances, and family-oriented ways of life, etc. In fact, a good number of Irish-Americans take delight in making vacation trips to Ireland whenever they can afford to do so.

Given the above historical accounts of both European immigrant groups and how they relate with their counterparts, it is important to mention that the negative worldviews and relationships between African-Americans and African immigrants did not seem evident among German immigrants/German Americans and Irish immigrants with their Irish American counterparts. The actual reason(s) for such apparent cohesiveness cannot be confirmed, therefore, the researcher is only left with the option to conjecture that it may have been as a result of many European immigrants already having some prior contacts with each other before migrating to the United States. Having said so, the researcher holds the view that on a larger

scheme of things, this “melting-pot-of-a-nation” seems to miss out on the opportunity of melting all the ingredients with the same attention to the details of what role(s) everyone plays. Above all, there is also a missing link to both African-Americans and African immigrants being active participants in the melting pot. The “melting pot” metaphor is used here to emphasize the United States’ diversity, and promised opportunity of reaping rewards for participation and hard work.

Purpose

The overall purpose of the research was to focus on Milwaukee-resident African immigrants and African-Americans, vis-à-vis their perceptions and relationship(s) about each other in a city they share together. The study was intended to generate community leadership interest from both groups, into discussing the outcomes or opinions expressed during the research interviews. The two ethnic groups obviously have a lot in common and could learn about each other’s cultural and social values, if they worked together to develop understanding and mutual respect.

Research Questions

As stated earlier in this chapter, the mutual negative perceptions between African-Americans and their African immigrant counterparts, seems to be largely based on both groups focusing solely on the vices of one another. It is no surprise, therefore, that these perceptions have not only narrowed how they view each other, but they miss out on the opportunity of knowing what values and positive aspects of their living traditions and human relationships exist about the other. With respect to the purpose of the research, therefore, the following interview questions appeared warranted and were asked of each participant, the context of which depended on whom it was directed at.

Questions for African-Americans/African Immigrants

1. What are the values of African immigrants/African-Americans for work, family, religion, money, education, religion?
2. What are African immigrants'/African-Americans' perceptions of the values of African-Americans/African immigrants?
3. What do African immigrants/African-Americans report as their sources of their perception of the values of African-Americans/African immigrants?
4. In what ways could African immigrants and African-Americans improve their perceptions, of one another?

Research Methodology

In order to gather data to address the research questions, the researcher applied the triangular approach involving three overall steps:

- Research scholarly works on the subject, in order to identify relevant information on the research questions.
- Conduct interviews with African-Americans and African immigrants related to the research questions.
- Conduct a focus group to determine the validity of the findings from the interviews.

The above research interviews were conducted with African immigrants at the Pan-African Community Association Center, while the African-American participants agreed to meet at the New Testament Central City Church in Milwaukee; where all participants felt safe and comfortable to express their views openly and honestly. An initial 25 potential research subjects

were contacted for the study, but considering that schedule conflicts might arise, the principal researcher interviewed the first available ten; five African immigrants and five African-Americans of both sexes between the ages of 18 and 60 years. In the interest of diversity of opinions, it was hoped that both sexes and the above age range from the two groups would provide enough relevant and diverse information pertaining to the topic. Without a doubt, using the above approaches were very relevant tools in the study, because the African immigrants identified with the researcher as one of their own, looking for clues into issues that their community deals with on a daily basis. African-American participants, on the other hand, would also be curious about why the study is conducted, as well as wanting their thoughts heard about a group of people who (supposedly) hold permanent negative perceptions about them.

Glossary

The following key terms were defined with respect to the purpose of the study and its research questions.

African immigrants: Within the context of the study, the term refers to people born on the African continent. Generally, African immigrants in the United States are referred to as “Africans” for short. The number of African immigrants in Milwaukee, and by extension the United States, is hard to quantify particularly because they are often times only counted as “Black”. Milwaukee, being the largest city in Wisconsin, has the highest number of African immigrants in the state. The Milwaukee-based Pan-African Community Association claims: “there are between 7,000 and 10,000 African immigrants in Wisconsin” (PACA 2007).

African-Americans: The term describes black Americans of African slave ancestry. The United States population census conducted in 2000 lists “Black persons” as 5.7% of the state of

Wisconsin, and 37.3% of residents in Milwaukee (US Census Bureau, 2000). It is difficult to determine what percentage of the above figure represents African immigrants in Milwaukee; because most official statistics normally lumps the two ethnic groups in the same category.

Values: Issues of both social and cultural worth to someone, or a group of people. In the cases of African-Americans and African immigrants, they both place high importance on family and faith.

Perceptions: Views held by people from both groups about each other, and how those views shape one person's opinion about the other. Examples of such perceptions include the lazy and never-do-well mindset that some African immigrants hold about some African-Americans in Milwaukee. On the other hand, some African-Americans also view African immigrants from uncivilized and opportunistic points of view.

Limitations and Delimitations

It must be stated here that as with any other research, the study has both limitations and de-limitation. One glaring de-limitation here is that the study focused only on African-Americans and African immigrants resident in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The interview process and focus group depended on who was willing to participate, as well as their level of availability when needed. Additionally, even the number of people studied, the number and content of the questions, may not necessarily reflect relationships between African-Americans and African immigrants in other parts of the United States.

It is also fair to say that the researcher's personal subjectivity can be evident in the study, particularly because the researcher is part of the community studied. On few occasions, some

participants were hesitant to express their feelings on the subject, either because they are familiar with the researcher, or they did not want to be seen as waking up the proverbial sleeping giant. There are some inherent weaknesses, therefore, in some of the methods used in the research; including the fact that some of the questions were close-ended and did not provide room for the participants to elaborate on their opinions.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

“They refused to call me by my name on the slave ship, their minds told them to call me Nigger and that was the end of it---” Reggae singer and songwriter Joseph (Culture) Hill, 1949-2006.

Introduction

The overall purpose of the research was to focus on Milwaukee-resident African immigrants and African-Americans, vis-à-vis what similarities and differences exist in their worldviews and relationship(s) about each other in a city they share together. The study was intended to generate community leadership interest from both groups, toward discussing the outcomes or opinions expressed during the research interviews. It was hoped that these outcomes could lead them to working together and developing both an understanding and mutual respect for each other’s cultural and social values. With reference to the research questions, the section entitled African immigrants contains important information about slavery, who African immigrants are as a community in Milwaukee-Wisconsin, and by extension in the United States as a whole. In discussing the four research questions for African immigrants, the review of literature provides some, but limited information on the following two questions:

- What are the values of African immigrants/African-Americans for work, family, religion, money, education, religion?
- What do African immigrants/African-Americans report as the sources of their perception of the values of African-Americans?

The first half of Chapter 1 focused on relevant literature for African immigrants. Perhaps it makes sense to mention that research question four (In what ways could African immigrants and African-Americans improve their perceptions, of one another?) for African immigrants, could be related to their experiences both in their home countries, and adjustment in the United States. African immigrants' reason(s) for migrating to the United States range from bad governance in their home countries, natural disasters, conflicts, to legal migration. It may come as no surprise, therefore, to recognize (and sometimes misinterpret) their determination for success as a negative treatment of other people. These people may have seen their presence here in the United States as the last opportunity to take advantage of a promised share in the "American Dream," especially for their dependents and relatives back home.

With respect to the four research questions for African-Americans, the review of literature provided some, but limited information for the following two questions:

- What are the values of African-Americans for work, money, education, religion?
- What do African-Americans report as the sources of their perception of the values of African immigrants?

The second half of Chapter 2 focuses on relevant literature for African-Americans in Milwaukee. Just as their African immigrant counterparts, African-Americans' life experiences here in the United States (slavery, segregation, etc.) seem to have played a role in their mindset about who they are as a community; hence the difficulty for positive worldviews and perceptions about other people with whom they trade suspicion.

Background

African immigrants and African-Americans did not just show up in the United States out of an imaginary vacuum. As we discuss the presence of and relationship between African Americans and African immigrants in modern day United States, it makes sense to attempt a historical account of how and when Black people found themselves in this country. Of course, we can only imagine the circumstances and differences under which both African slaves and modern day African immigrants found a home here in the United States—away from their ancestral homes, cultures and traditions.

Therefore, it is important to mention that for the purposes of this study, works by several African history and slavery scholars were researched, for diverse opinions on the subject and Africans' immigration into the United States. Given that majority of the early historical accounts on slavery were written by European/Western historians, some aspects of it have been challenged by contemporary Afro-centric scholars over the years. Better yet, some African-American historians have also weighed in on the topic, from the angle of slavery's effects on African-Americans and the American psyche as a whole. In an effort to bring such diversity of opinions to light, it is imperative to mention that contributions from eminent scholars such as African-American historians Dr. James O. Horton and Dr. Lois E Horton; Slavery Historian Dr. Nigel Sadler; Milwaukee Historian Professor Joe William Trotter, Jr. added relevance to the study. Additionally, former Guyanese political activist and historian Dr. Walter Rodney; late reggae musicians and uncompromising champions of equality and slavery reparation Robert Nesta (Bob) Marley, and Joseph (Culture) Hill, etc. all make up this rich information reservoir from which the researcher tapped for part of the study. For the purposes of consistency in the study,

vis-à-vis the United States' involvement in slave trade and the presence of African-Americans and African immigrants here, 1492-1865 were the most productive years of relevance. The time period mentioned was important, because it pointed to European contact with the United States, as well as slavery's official prohibition in the United States.

The study was precipitated by the mutual negative perceptions between African-Americans and their African immigrant counterparts in Milwaukee, which seemed to be largely based on both groups focusing solely on the vices of one another. These perceptions have not only narrowed how they view each other, but they were also missing out on the opportunity of knowing what values and positive aspects of their living traditions and human relationships exist about the other. In the chapter, therefore, the researcher reviewed some literature on works by both slavery and African-American historians. He traced the arrivals of both African slaves and contemporary African immigrants into the United States, and documented the assimilation and social challenges faced by African immigrants in Milwaukee. As well, he highlighted the presence of African-Americans in Milwaukee.

Africans' Immigration to the United States

Every historical account about these two groups of people has pointed to slavery as the primary source of accessing Africans to the United States. Be that as it may, the researcher must hasten to state that slavery is an uncomfortable topic to discuss in certain quarters nowadays, especially because Blacks still feel the agony and pain that their ancestors went through and the accompanying feeling of dehumanization which haunts them today. For clarification purposes, and in the interest of full understanding, African-American historians James O. Horton and Lois E. Horton propose that as a nation, the United States need to maintain this topic in our discourse:

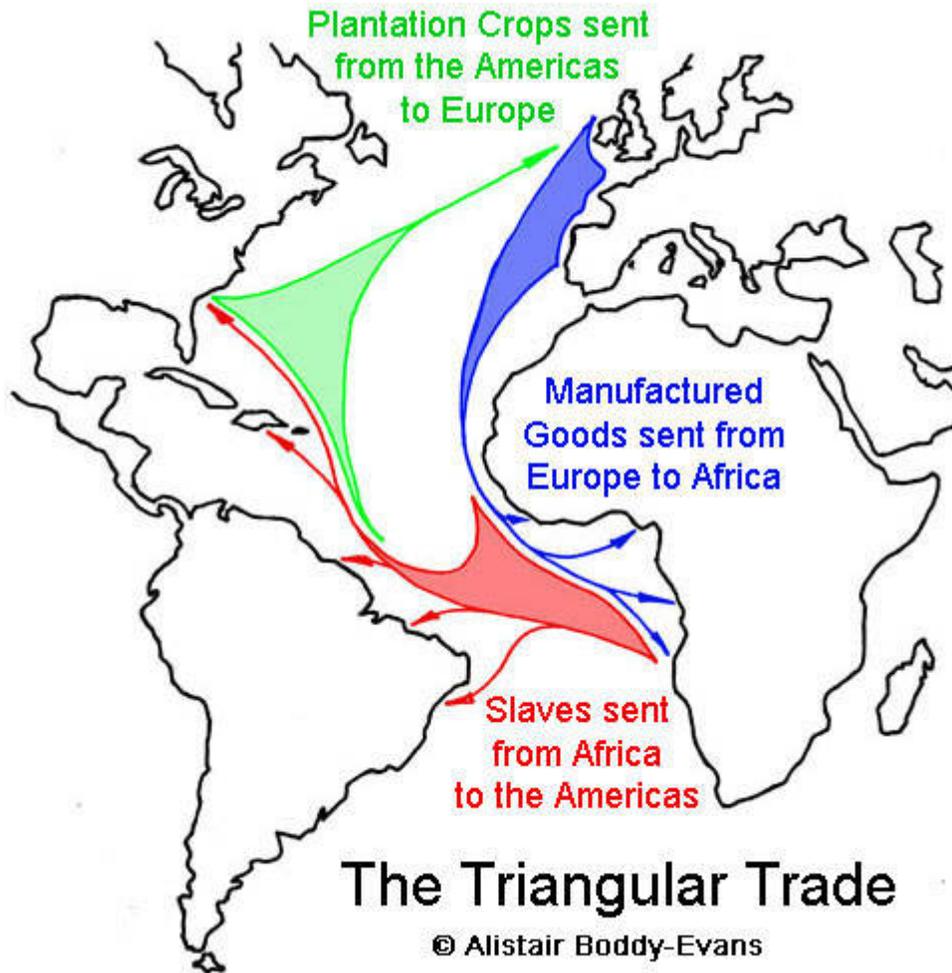
It would be comforting, perhaps, to conclude that a recognition of slavery's importance has driven the American people to the history books. But there is more to it than that. There is also a recognition of often back-handed and indirect, sometimes subliminal or even subconscious belief, that the United States' largest, most pervasive social problems is founded in the institution of slavery---slavery is the ground zero for race relations (Horton and Horton 2006 p. 3).

A fear among many Black Historians was that the more we as a nation consider slavery a politically incorrect topic to discuss the easier it is for memories of what their ancestors went through to fade with time. If such trend continued, they argued, it will reduce the chances of upcoming generations the opportunity of knowing that important piece of their history.

The early Fifteenth Century saw the dawn of European contacts with Africa, primarily for trade in gold and ivory. As the trade expanded, so also was Europe's interest in the quest for more colonies until they eventually discovered the United States in 1492. The acquisition of more territories created opportunities for trade, agriculture and other activities. By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Britain, France, Spain and Portugal realized that they needed more labor to maintain their new territories---especially on the plantations and large farms in their "New World." The United States, which was their New World, grew crops such as cotton, coffee, rice and sugar cane among other cash crops. The larger these American towns grew, the more evident were need for strong, reliable, and cheap labor force to work on those farms and plantations. Given their initial contacts and knowledge of Africans, European (notoriously the

British) traders added another layer of “products” to their inventory to and from Africa. Within a short period, Britain dominated the trade which eventually came to be known as the “Triangular/Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.”

In just five years, modern day Sierra Leone, for example, single handedly supplied 1,200 slaves to the market (not counting those who died on the way, and others who were smuggled). Thanks to John Hawkins who made four round trips between Sierra Leone and then Hispaniola (modern-day Haiti and Dominican Republic), between 1562 and 1567. The first leg of this cruel and inhuman trade started with European merchants exporting goods such as low quality guns and gunpowder, tobacco, alcohol, glass beads etc. to Africa and exchanging them with local Kings for slaves. Alcohol was particularly instrumental in the negotiation process, because the merchants were smart enough to ensure that these Kings and Chiefs were often intoxicated during the negotiation processes. The second phase of the trade involved the transportation of the captured slaves from Africa, to the different markets in the Americas and the Caribbean. In exchange for the slaves, these merchants received both cash and goods such as rice, cotton and any other products that American plantation owners were willing to barter, which could be desired in Europe. Such was the theory and practice of the notorious “three-legged trade.” The map below illustrates the routes and destinations of slaves, manufactured goods and plantation crops, as they went back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean.



Source:

<http://africanhistory.about.com/gi/o.htm?zi> . Accessed 09/10/11

It must be noted here that slaves were the main source of labor for the manufacturing of the goods, as well as for the planting and harvesting of the crops mentioned above. Little wonder, therefore, why the trade took so long and expanded to end.

As we take a quick mental and historical journey of slave trade within the context of the study, it is important to reinforce the point that these people were not brought to the United States in any friendly way. Even the word “cargo” ought to explain the derogatory and dehumanizing mindset which the merchants had for their fellow men/women during the four

hundred and twenty five year period of this business. The brutality meted on the slaves during the voyage from Africa to the United States or other destinations is generally described as inhumane; hence Reggae artist Bob Marley once said: “Every time I hear the crack of a whip, my blood runs cold---I remember on the slave ships, where they brutalized our souls” (Bob Marley, *Catch A Fire* 1973). Slave Historian Nigel Sadler (2009), counts among the scholars who have consistently argued that slavery destroyed many otherwise viable institutions among Africans than reported---and particularly that it made Africa vulnerable to subsequent exploitation efforts by outsiders. After the abolition of slavery, the exploitation of Africa by Western countries continued under the guise of colonialism. Over the past centuries, the continent has been ravaged of precious mineral resources, oil, timber, etc., but most importantly its human capital. Every region in Africa has had its share of misery at one point or another, and along with those came some devastating effects on families the social norms of the people. In Sadler’s assessment:

At the start of the transatlantic slave trade, Africa was a continent of numerous cultures with well-developed political and religious systems in place. However, instead of recognizing this wealth of diversity, early European explorers depicted the Africans as pagans and savages--- for many, this provided adequate justification for their interference (Nigel Sadler 2009 p. 7).

The statement above is not limited to what an opposing school of thought might just want to take for face value, and consider it a vain effort in bringing to life what we as a nation have put behind us for over one hundred years. It resonates with a vast range of Afro-centric scholars. An example of such opinion pool on the inadequacy of available facts about slavery is the

assassinated Guyanese political activist and historian, Dr. Walter Rodney. During his career, he challenged numerous assertions made by European Historians, and once said:

Many things remain uncertain about the slave trade and its consequences for Africa, but the general picture of destructiveness is clear, and that destructiveness can be shown to be the logical consequence of the manner of recruitment of captives in Africa. One of the uncertainties concerns the basic question of how many Africans were imported. This has long been an object of speculation, with estimates ranging from a few millions to over one hundred millions---The Atlantic crossing, or “Middle Passage” as it was called by European slavers, was notorious for the number of deaths incurred, averaging in the vicinity of 15 to 20 per cent. The conclusions that could legitimately be drawn would confound those who attempt to make light of the experience of the rape of Africa from 1445 to 1870 (Walter Rodney 1974 p. 95-96).

Perhaps it makes sense to imagine that given Africa’s size, population, and the duration of the slave trade, Dr. Rodney’s addition to the number of voices who make such claim could be an area of future study.

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, slavery was not a comfortable topic to discuss within contemporary American society. Even our policies and the history books we read seem to

agree with this argument, because the information and context of what really happened during slavery days continue to be based on what position each writer holds. For such seeming disservice to succeeding generations, Horton and Horton again argued that the United States (and by extension the West) remains in denial of confronting the facts, and thereby watering down the relevance of knowing the truth about slavery. It was no surprise, therefore, that they consistently point at our educational system's failure to emphasize this piece in the history of the United States' diversity puzzle. With such fear of the watering down of slavery's reality, Horton and Horton stated:

The difficulty that most Americans experience when discussing the history of racial slavery in the United States can be traced---to the inadequate textbooks that they are compelled to read while in high school. The authors of those volumes generally recount the dramatic events of America's formation in such bland diction that these books become the printed equivalents of "mumbling lectures". Further, by being so committed to positive and uplifting portrayals, these writers unwaveringly follow a "progress as usual" story line and thus treat our long history of slavery as merely a temporary aberration that had no lasting consequence (Horton and Horton p. 57).

If the above statement were placed within the overall purpose of the research, one may be tempted to imagine that such practice could have played a role in the inadequacy of knowledge of slavery

within the United States, and by the same token how little African-Americans and African immigrants know about each other.

In the interest of putting human and contextual faces to African-Americans' contribution to both historical and contemporary United States, the above statement was undoubtedly sounding an ominous bell for future generations of African-Americans' identity. Millions of slaves soiled this country with their blood, sweat, and tears for hundreds of year. The United States continued to be the only Western country in the world which has the embarrassing history of having to fight a war over the abolition of slavery. For any group of people, therefore, to appreciate and be proud of their ethnicity or identity, it was important for them to have an understanding of what their ancestors actually went through. Just as with every ethnic group in this country, there was a compelling need for full disclosure of the slavery aspect of African-American history.

Voyage to the United States

Since the purpose of the research was to find out what world views and relationships exist between African immigrants and their African American counterparts in Milwaukee, it was important to walk down a short historical path for an understanding of why Africans continued to come to the United States after the abolition of slavery.

After the Trans-Atlantic slavery era which saw Africans arriving in the Americas as cargo, Africans started migrating to the United States in the early Nineteenth Century, as students brought for educational and cultural exchange purposes. Of particular note was the fact that the United States did not merely stretch out this goodwill gesture to African students because of guilt from slavery. Rather it was also a strategic political move to compete with

European governments (especially Britain, France, and the Soviet Union) and spread American political ideology in Africa. After World War I, western powers saw a growing desire among African nations to seek independence. In an effort to continue their involvement and prominent (some would say dominant) roles into the affairs of African nations, these western powers devised a neo-colonial idea that was shrouded in the guise of scholarships. Much as these scholarship schemes succeeded in creating puppet governments back in Africa (e.g. Soviet Union agent Ahmad Sekou Toure of Guinea), a good number of those educated Africans continued with the desire to break the shackles of colonialism which had dragged the dignity of their people into the mud for centuries (e.g., Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal). Even with these examples of those prominent African scholars who returned to their various home countries after their academic sojourn, it must be noted that majority also chose to stay and take advantage of what opportunities were available for them here in the United States.

Fast forward to late 1960s and early 1970s, Africa started experiencing sporadic conflicts in different regions, both between and within countries. All of these conflicts (man-made and natural), produced waves of refugees, majority of who migrated to different parts of the world, the United States being one major host. In addition to war refugees the United States has attracted a huge number of legal immigrants, especially through the visa lottery system which allow winners to have accompanying relatives settle with them in their new “home” across the Atlantic Ocean. Unlike other ethnic groups such as Asians, and Hispanic, etc., African immigrants cannot simply be identified with any specific geographic area within the United States. They can be found in every state, from Alaska to New Hampshire, and North Dakota to Florida; and in every profession---from University Professors, Engineering, and Health Care delivery, to cab driving. In addition to raising their families in a relatively safer environment and

one with otherwise hard-to-find opportunities, African immigrants consider education as one major phase of the “American Dream”. The fact that African immigrants were already in this country was a bold step closer to attaining that American dream; they are therefore ready and willing to do whatever it takes to share in the pie of opportunities in this land of plenty.

Assimilation Challenges in Milwaukee

The United States is undoubtedly the most diverse western nation on earth, and every state in this union has its own unique history about how it came into being, its social and cultural make-up, etc. Wisconsin became a part of the union in 1848, and although the German community accounted for a greater portion of this state’s ethnic picture, it was still considerably diverse---in comparison to other states like North Dakota, South Dakota, Alaska, etc. Milwaukee, being the largest city in Wisconsin, is tagged as having the highest number of African immigrants in the state. The Milwaukee-based Pan-African Community Association stated that: “there are 7,000 to 10,000 African immigrants in Wisconsin” (PACA 2007). Until the last two decades, though, the number of African immigrants in Milwaukee was very small---mainly because of a claim among African immigrants that the city offered them comparatively less opportunity in those days; and the feeling of a lack of acceptance by their kind into a community where they were equally making positive contributions.

One example of an African immigrant, who benefitted from the United States’ scholarship and cultural exchange program mentioned earlier, Mr. Emerson Morray, has lived in this city since 1971. He said: “the absence of other Africans in the Milwaukee area was a harsh reality I had to deal with for a long time”. Evidently, there is a change in the landscape today, but what was most admirable about these people is the way they multi-tasked with the issues they faced in their ‘new’ environment on an almost daily basis. Almost all African immigrants who

participated in this study expressed dissatisfaction over the negative treatment they receive from their African-American compatriots. There is a feeling among African immigrants that the majority of African-Americans in Milwaukee hold a permanently negative perception, dehumanization and disrespect for their ethnicity, culture, and by extension their very being as a people. Assimilation had therefore been the most difficult challenge for African immigrants in Milwaukee, even as they can be found in almost every profession. In many respects, African immigrants consider themselves a faceless minority in the Milwaukee community.

African-Americans in Milwaukee

Compared to African immigrants, African-Americans have lived in Milwaukee for generations, and although they are considered a minority group on a larger scale of state and national population, they outnumber all other minority groups in this city. Their contributions, of course also spans across all spectrums of society, including politics. According to History Professor Joe William Trotter, Jr., African Americans' first contacts with Wisconsin dated back to the early revolutionary era; and that even after gaining statehood, Wisconsin still witnessed the enslavement of Black people, disenfranchised them and prevented them from occupying any public office. In his book, *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat 1915-45*, Trotter, Jr. stated that even with their presence in Milwaukee for such a long period, African-Americans started off (and stayed) at the bottom of the social class of the city for a long time:

Although Milwaukee emerged as one of the top industrial centers in the nation by World War I and ranked twelfth in size, African-Americans were almost totally excluded from this dynamic industrial expansion. Blacks, almost

exclusively, entered the city's expanding domestic, personal service, and common laborer positions. Five occupations (porters, waiters, servants, cooks, and common laborers) made up of 67.9 percent of all black jobs in 1880. The percentage remained largely the same in 1900, when 68 per cent of the men and 73.0 percent of black women worked in domestic and personal service pursuits (Joe William Trotter, Jr., 2007 p. 9).

Given the above short history, it was evident that generations of African-Americans in Milwaukee have come a long way in the city, facing both individual and collective challenges and triumphs as a people in different aspects over the years. The major reason for studying these two groups together was because contrary to the expectation that their shared historical and racial backgrounds could be a factor for them to work together, personal observation points to a wide gap between them. The absence or limited skewed knowledge about African-Americans and African immigrants (of each other) has certainly played a role in the differences between the two groups. As the study progressed, it was hoped that the researcher will find evidence (or lack thereof) of what worldviews or relationships exist between African-Americans and the African immigrant community in Milwaukee.

Chapter 3

PROCEDURES

Introduction

From an outsider's expectation, African-Americans and African immigrants in the United States may seem to have more in common than skin pigmentation---especially given their shared historical and ethnic connections. It may be possible that the relationships between these two groups point to a different disturbing reality in Milwaukee. The purpose of the study, therefore, was to find out what worldviews and perceptions, if any, existed between African-Americans and African immigrants about each other in Milwaukee-Wisconsin. The Chapter opens with a section entitled context, which contains basic demographical and cultural information about Milwaukee. Next, the section entitled Subjects in the study provides basic geographic data for African-Americans and African immigrants are provided. Then, the chapter concludes with a section entitled Data Collection and Treatment based on the interviews with fourteen subjects and the focus group comprised of five community members.

Context

The context of this study was based within Milwaukee-Wisconsin. Milwaukee is the largest city in Wisconsin, and located in the southeastern portion of the state. It also features prominently at many levels in the history of the state. The city's history, therefore, cannot be complete without mention of its ethnic make-up and some highlights—among other things. Milwaukee enjoys a pleasant blend of multiple cultures with a highly family-oriented community where one can enjoy an adequate dose of a larger city life. With a winter season which notoriously over-stays its welcome in the state, the short summer experience in Milwaukee is a

huge explosion of events whereby every ethnicity has the opportunity to participate in the other's festivities. As a matter of fact, there is no summer ethnic festivity in Milwaukee that one can attribute exclusively to merely one ethnic group. People from other ethnic groups, no matter how small, will patronize for various reasons. An example of such events is the "African World Festival" held at the Maier Fest Grounds which patrons attend for reasons ranging from music, African art, drums, clothing, etc.

A historical study of Milwaukee would not be complete and meaningful, without mentioning renowned local scholars who have made it their career to tell this city's rich history. One such prolific and celebrated Milwaukee author, John Gurda, provides additional insight and information into our discussion of the city, as well as some background on the African-American community.

In discussing Blacks/African-Americans in Milwaukee, it makes sense to note that although they only make up 37.3% of the city's population (according the 2010 U. S. Census Bureau) their roots in the city go far back as 1835 when the first African-American, Joe Oliver, cast a ballot in the city's first election. Beyond that history-making ballot cast, African-Americans had their franchise restrained until a railway porter, Ezekiel Gillespie's 1865 lawsuit against the city's Election Commission. That lawsuit saw the state's 1849 "Negro Suffrage" referendum upheld. By an interesting twist of politics and race relations, Alabama native Lucien Palmer won an election in 1906, as the first African-American voted into the State Assembly---thanks to the above-mentioned "Negro Suffrage". Milwaukee historian, John Gurda, says: "Although he was a prominent citizen and political activist, Palmer's victory was, in part, a case of mistaken identity; voters apparently confused him with a white politician named Palmer" (John Gurda, 2007, p. 39-40). Clearly, even as African-Americans comprised less than one percent of the population in the

city at that time, it is evident that they had already started laying the foundation stones of what their off springs enjoy today. Today, they are the largest minority population in Milwaukee, and have for the most part held on to their heritage, as evident in the Bronzeville community. Although that part of town has had its own share of consistent challenges over the decades, including poverty aggravated by massive unemployment, construction of a freeway which literally tore the community into two, African-Americans still hold on to whatever is left of their community.

Subjects

In comparison to the two European immigrant groups studied in Chapter 1, the researcher tried to identify the sources of those perceptions between both African immigrants and African-Americans in Milwaukee, and possibly to encourage mutual understanding between the two groups. The research focused on finding out what worldview(s) or perception(s) exist between African immigrants and African-Americans in Milwaukee.

Considering the goal the of the research, 20 potential research subjects from two local community organizations which each works with one of the groups were contacted for interviews. Only 14 male and female (seven from each group) participants between the ages of 18 and 60 years were eventually selected for interview.

Table 1- Demographic data of African-American and African immigrant participants

	African-Americans	African Immigrants
Gender	Four females and three males	Four males and three females
Age	35yrs, 39yrs, 42yrs, 47yrs, 51yrs, 59yrs, 60yrs.	20yrs, 27yrs, 33yrs, 35yrs, 40yrs, 52yrs, 58yrs.

	Average age of participants: 45 years	Average age of participants: 37 years
Number of years in Milwaukee	20yrs, 30yrs, 35yrs, 35yrs, 39yrs, 42yrs, 59 yrs. Average years in Milwaukee: 30 years	5yrs, 7yrs, 13yrs, 17yrs, 19yrs, 20yrs, 40yrs Averages years in Milwaukee: 17.5 years
Occupation	Milwaukee Public Schools administrator Cashier at Walgreens Social Worker Unemployed Retired Truck driver Medical Doctor Community Advocate	Occupational Safety Engineer Registered Nurse (2) Unemployed University Student Retired city employee Church Minister
Citizenship Status	All United States Citizens	Permanent Resident (2) Naturalized United States citizen (3) Undocumented Resident Refugee

In forming the two groups for the interviews, particular attention was paid to the age and gender diversity, thereby creating an opportunity for a wide array of social and economic worldviews and essentially adding richness to the research.

Data Collection and Treatment

Given the purpose of the study, and based on the literature review in Chapter 1 about the German American and German immigrant as well as the Irish American and Irish immigrant populations, this chapter involves seven steps for gathering and treating the data:

Seeking permissions

The researcher secured permission from Marquette University's Institutional Research Board (IRB) on June 23, 2011, to conduct the study.

Prior to the interviews, the researcher sent both community organizations a formal letter (See appendix B), requesting recommended subjects for the study as well as permission for use of their facilities to conduct the interviews. The researcher also provided each of the subjects with a confidentiality agreement form, which the researcher made sure they read, understood, and signed before the interviews. The recording device was kept in a locked drawer in the researcher's office and will remain there for a period of three years. The code sheet for matching the names of the participants with their research code names were also locked in a drawer in the researcher's office. All participants were coded in alphabetical order (e.g. Mr. A/B or Mrs. A/B), as in interview sequence. As stated in the IRB proposal approved on June 23, 2011, all participants read the consent forms and signed them, before commencement of the interviews.

Organizing interviews

It took nearly one month trying to have all participants of each ethnic group together for the interviews, largely due to conflicting work schedules and family commitments. Some participants, it must be stated, initially resisted the idea of an interview for the study because they could not see the "benefit" of discussing such seemingly deep-seated problems in the city.

However, their fears were allayed when the researcher explained the purpose and potential benefits to both groups and by extensions to the Milwaukee community. The researcher maintained telephone communication with all participants to confirm the date time and place for the interviews, and to ensure that there were no last-minute changes of mind. The interviews were held at the New Testament Central City Church and the Pan African Community Association (PACA) for both African-Americans and African immigrants respectively. In order to ensure that the interviews were organized and stayed on schedule, the following agenda was created and handed out to all the interview participants:

- Welcome and introductions
- Purpose of the study
- Sequence of the interviews

The interviews at both sites proceeded as scheduled.

Preparing the interview questions

The interviews involved four similar questions asked of each participant. The questions were constructed essentially on the researcher's personal experience and research interest.

Table 2 - Interview Questions

Research Questions for African-American Subjects

1. What are the values of African-Americans for work, family, religion, money, and education?
2. What are African-Americans' perceptions of the values of African immigrants?
3. What do African-Americans report as the source(s) of their perception of the values of American immigrants?

4. In what ways could African-Americans and African immigrants improve on of their perceptions of one another?

Research Questions for African Immigrant Subjects

1. What are the values of African immigrants for work, family, religion, money, and education?
2. What are African immigrants' perceptions of the values of African-Americans?
3. What do African immigrants report as the source of their perception of the values of African-Americans?
4. In what ways could African immigrants and African-Americans improve on their perceptions of one another?

The researcher printed an individual page of interview questions for the participants.

Conducting the interviews

The researcher confirmed the interview venues with all participants by making follow-up phone calls to confirm the place, date and time for the interviews. The interviews for the African-American subjects were conducted at the New Testament Central City Church on July 3rd 2011, from 4:00pm until 7:00pm. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. The agenda for the interview was as follows:

- Welcome and introductions
- Purpose of the study
- Sequence of the interviews

Each interview was conducted privately, to ensure confidentiality and encourage freedom of expression. The researcher thanked each subject at the end of the interview.

Forming the focus group

The researcher invited fellow graduate students and various community members whose expertise and interest in the research study he valued. Eight persons were invited to participate in a focus group to review data gathered during the interviews with the African-American and African immigrant subjects. The researcher selected the five (three females and two males) focus group members because he trusted them and knew they had relevant backgrounds for the purpose and questions of the research study.

Male, graduate student, 29 years old, African-American, United States Citizen

Female, graduate student, 32 years old, African-American, United States citizen

Male, community member, 54 years old, African immigrant, naturalized United States citizen

Female, community member, 45 years old, African immigrant, naturalized United States citizen

Female, co-worker, 54 years old, African-American, United States citizen

The researcher attempted to get diversity of gender, ethnicity and age for the work of the focus group.

Conducting the focus group

The focus group and the researcher convened on August 5th 2011, at the researcher's office. The most common or major themes from the interviews were presented to the focus group

for discussion before the researcher wrote the analysis of the data gathered for each of the research questions. The issues highlighted in the interviews were discussed within the context of every focus group member's understanding of the subject, and identifying key points which needed discussion. The focus group members met at the researcher's office, considering that it is neutral environment and allowed for an intellectual analysis of the topic.

Treating the data

The findings from the interviews are recorded in Chapter 4. In preparing the analysis for the findings related to each of the eight questions were combined into four tables. Questions 1 and 5 related the worldviews of both groups of subjects are presented side-by-side. Similar tables were constructed for the remaining six questions. Then the researcher reviewed the literature in Chapter 2 and considered the discussion of the focus group for the findings in preparing the analysis. The researcher's analysis included major themes, surprises, and relationships to prior research as possible.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

African-Americans and African immigrants in Milwaukee and by extension the United States, generally share mutual historical origin. But, in comparison to other ethnic groups such as the German and Irish immigrants mentioned in Chapter 1, the growing negative perceptions between these two groups of people in this city leaves much to be admired. It should come as no surprise to an observer from another ethnic group, therefore, that both groups certainly miss out on the opportunity of knowing about the richness in the living traditions and human relationships among the individual groups. In the study, therefore, the researcher attempted to find out what worldviews and perceptions exist between African immigrants and African-Americans in Milwaukee-Wisconsin.

In Chapter 1, the researcher did a literature review on German and Irish immigrants in the United States. Chapter 2 involved tracing historical footsteps of both African-Americans and African immigrants in Milwaukee. In Chapter 3, the researcher conducted interviews with a total of fourteen randomly-recruited African-Americans and African immigrants on their individual worldviews and perceptions about each other respectively. A total of fourteen people (seven African-Americans and seven African immigrants) from both groups participated in the interviews. After the interviews, a focus group of five people from diverse backgrounds was set-up, in order to analyze the outcome of the interviews. The focus group eventually reviewed the findings from the interviews, and the researcher wrote analysis for the research questions based on the research in Chapter 2, input from the focus group, and personal critical thinking.

Findings and Analysis

Before getting into the interpretation/analysis phase of the research, it is important to remind the reader that the interpretations/analysis are based on the worldviews and perceptions between African-Americans and African immigrants in Milwaukee-Wisconsin, as mentioned in Chapter 2. The questions below were asked of each ethnic group, based on which group they represented. Their responses appear below their respective questions.

Table 2 - Self-described values of African-Americans and African immigrants in Milwaukee:

African-Americans	African immigrants
Question 1. What are the values of African-Americans for work, family, religion, money, and education?	Question 5. What are the values of African immigrants for work, family, religion, money, and education?
<p>Responses to question 1:</p> <p>The major themes were . . .</p> <p>We need to work to take care of ourselves.</p> <p>Family is the greatest source of emotional support.</p> <p>Religion was a source of support during slavery and segregation in the United States,</p>	<p>Response to question 5:</p> <p>Work defines your sense of responsibility in a society.</p> <p>Family is more of a community affair, than just a nuclear system. Every known adult has the responsibility to discipline the younger ones.</p> <p>Religion is a channel to a higher power who</p>

<p>but the younger generation seems to have drifted away.</p> <p>Money is needed for everything we do, but we need to know that it can break a relationship.</p> <p>Education is important nowadays, because almost all jobs need some form of education, but we still need to catch up with other ethnic groups.</p>	<p>provides and cares for us as human beings.</p> <p>Money is essential to everyone, but human relationship is more important.</p> <p>Education brings pride to the family, and everyone else affiliated with the person.</p>
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The participants' views on the above questions were almost similar, except for a slight difference in their interpretation or definition of a family. While African-Americans consider family within the context of a nuclear system, African immigrants had no qualifier for describing a "family member." Typically, the quality of a relationship largely defined a family for African immigrants. Two African immigrant participants in the study referred to their step-mothers as parents, simply because she played a parental role in his/her life. It is also not uncommon to hear two African immigrant cousins refer to each other as brothers or sisters, because Africans have a much broader concept about what makes up a family.

Table 3- Perceived values of African-Americans and African immigrants about each other:

African-Americans	African immigrants
<p>Question 2.What are African-Americans’ perceptions of the values of African immigrants?</p>	<p>Question 6. What are African immigrants’ perceptions of the values of African-Americans?</p>
<p>Answer to question 2:</p> <p>Jungle and uncivilized, opportunistic immigrants coming to take what is otherwise inadequate for citizens who are already struggling to make ends meet.</p> <p>Down-play the struggles of African-Americans, and have no clue about the trauma of slavery and segregation.</p>	<p>Answer to question 6:</p> <p>A group of people who are less enthusiastic to take advantage of opportunities, and play blame games instead.</p> <p>Focused of instant gratification, and have misplaced priorities, in a “land of plenty”.</p> <p>View every African immigrant from the same angle of job-taker, and miss the point about what it means to be an immigrant.</p>

The above questions drew sharp contrasts in opinions, from both within and between the two groups on what each participant considered as a value. Some older African-Americans claimed that African immigrants receive free education here in the United States, as well as grant money from the government to buy houses. By the same token, however, some of those African-

Americans also stated that majority of their folk pay more attention to instant gratification and the glamour, thereby losing sight of personal responsibilities such as education. African immigrants, on the other hand, claim that they are being unjustly criticized for taking advantage of an opportunity available to every legal resident in the United States. With reference to the rewards available here for hard work, an African immigrant participant alluded to their African-American critics as “walking on the beach complaining of not seeing sand.” For African immigrants, there seemed to be an extra desire for personal success, because majority of them share those successes with family members, especially the extended families mentioned earlier. In terms of values, therefore, they considered most African-Americans as inward-looking and caring only about themselves.

Table 4 - Sources of perceived values of African-Americans and African immigrants:

African-Americans	African immigrants
<p>Question 3.</p> <p>What do African-Americans report as the source(s) of their perception of African immigrants?</p>	<p>Question 7.</p> <p>What do African immigrants report as the source of their perceptions of African-Americans?</p>
<p>Answer to question 3:</p> <p>Largely from the Media, especially Television documentaries and movies with distorted themes or story lines. A show on National</p>	<p>Answer to question 7:</p> <p>The media, particularly documentary Television channels. Prison-themed shows on MSNBC, for example, create the illusion of</p>

<p>Geographic channel, depicting the social lives of Massai people in Kenya, for example, is generalized as depiction of all Africans.</p>	<p>criminality being part of the African-American life style, simply because of the large African-American population in the prison system.</p>
<p>Personal relationships or encounters at work places and grocery stores and stores.</p>	<p>Prevalent violence in African-American communities, personal relationships or encounters in public places and on the city bus.</p>

Almost all participants in both ethnic groups mentioned the media (especially television images) as their primary source of the information they receive about one another. While African-Americans pointed at TV documentaries on the Discovery Channel and National Geographic Channel, there was also mention of fund-raising commercials for international non-profit organizations such as World Vision. They (African-Americans) said that the haggard children shown in TV commercials scavenging in garbage dumps have hardly allowed them to imagine anything differently about Africans. African immigrants on the other hand, claimed that shows such as “Cops” on Fox Network confirm their never-do-well mindset of majority in the African-American community.

Table 5 - Recommendations for improving perceptions and understanding between African-Americans and African immigrants:

African-Americans	African immigrants
Question 4.	Question 8.

<p>In what ways could African-Americans and African immigrants improve on their perceptions of one another?</p>	<p>In what ways could African immigrants and African-Americans improve on their perceptions of one another?</p>
<p>Answer to question 4:</p> <p>Not to rely on the media as the only source of information on Africa and African immigrants.</p> <p>Try to learn some history about Africa, slavery, and post colonial Africa.</p> <p>Improve on interaction with African immigrants.</p>	<p>Answer to question 8:</p> <p>Not rely solely on media reports as criteria to judge the general African-American community.</p> <p>Encourage community leaders' involvement in cross cultural awareness programs.</p> <p>More opportunities to interact and know about one another, including joint social and cultural activities</p>

Contrary to the previous two questions, participants in both groups agreed that inadequate information about each other has played damaging roles in creating a wedge between them. As a remedy, therefore, they proposed the following:

1. Community leaders from both groups to consider including positive information about commonalities between African-Americans and Africans in their messages.
2. A cultural center where people can go and learn about the different cultures and countries in Africa.

3. African-Americans to look beyond the “warnings” in some media reports and on State Department website about African countries.
4. Jointly organize cultural events, such as African World Festival, African Community Annual Summer Picnic.
5. Members of both groups read history books to find out how far each has come, within the context of their identity in Milwaukee and the United States.
6. Encourage those African-Americans who can afford it, to visit Africa for firsthand experience about the Continent and its peoples.

As illustrated in the table above, participants from both ethnic groups in the study shared a lot in common. However, they were also found to have exhibited tremendous amount of negative worldviews and perceptions about each other, largely based on often-exaggerated media coverage, some twisted historical accounts, and sheer lack of personal curiosity to know more than what they get from the media. Contrary to German and Irish Americans mentioned in Chapter 1, African-Americans and African immigrants in Milwaukee were still lacking on the opportunity to roll up their sleeves and put their shoulders to the wheel of solidarity. While majority of African immigrants and their children point at African-Americans as notorious offenders in terms of making mockery of their ethnicity and background, African-Americans also accused African immigrants as condescending of their (African-Americans) values and identity as a people.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In all of the above four Chapters, the researcher attempted to find out what worldviews and relationships exist between African-Americans and African immigrants in Milwaukee about each other. In Chapter 1, the researcher summarized the migration patterns and experiences of German and Irish immigrants into the United States. Chapters 2 and 3 traced the history of African-Americans and African immigrants within the context of slavery in the United States, as well as demographic data of both ethnic groups in Milwaukee. Chapter 4 summarized the research interviews of both African-Americans and African immigrants and commentaries from the focus group. In Chapter 5, therefore, the findings and analysis for the research questions are summarized. In addition, Chapter 5 contains three recommendations for follow-up steps to the study.

Summary of Findings

In general, the study found that the worldviews and perceptions between African-Americans and African immigrants in Milwaukee were worthy of study. Even the few subjects from both ethnic groups who claimed “knowledge” about each other, appeared to have inadequate understanding of the cultures and lifestyles of their counterparts. As a result, both groups of subjects appeared to have lost sight and respect for cultural similarities.

Both ethnic groups were found to share more similarities than differences. Unfortunately, the study also revealed that significant factors created misinformation and distortions of one

another's worldviews and perceptions. Africa, for example, comprises of fifty-four countries, with millions of cultures and most importantly several different western colonial orientations. Most African-Americans, it was found, do not understand the length, breadth, and depth of Africa. African immigrants are often disappointed in this lack of understanding by their fellow African-Americans. Conversely, African immigrants do not feel safe with their African-American counterparts. They feel threatened by violent acts that some African-Americans resort to as solution to problems. Evidently, the opportunity for both African-Americans and African immigrants to learn from each other cuts across generations.

African-Americans, on the other hand, have also been on an uphill liberation journey in the United States for hundreds of years. From slavery, segregation, to a minority group which still feels short-changed by a country built partly with slave blood, sweat and tears, African-Americans have more to deal with (perhaps rightfully so) than considering their heritage as a priority. With that being said, there are several African-Americans who have undertaken the mental journey of identifying with their African ancestry. It would therefore be unfair, to paint every African-American with the same brush of "anti-African immigrant". There are also evidences of some relationships between some members of the two groups here in Milwaukee. In fact, one of the African-American respondents to this study is married to an African immigrant. She claims that because of the high level of negative views and mistrust between the two ethnic groups, she and her husband are frequently put in a co-defendant position---in terms of African cultural and social issues. An African immigrant respondent also claims that she was adopted and raised by an African-American woman, but has always had to maintain a fine balance on social and cultural differences between the two ethnic groups.

A further insight into the perceptions of each other's values came from one of the participants who served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ghana (West Africa). She admitted that prior to leaving for her assignment, she thought she was going to help destitute and hungry Africans, but was amazed at the depth of the people's cultural and social lives, and particularly the similarities in the way of life that Africans share with African-Americans.

Recommendations

When subcultures who share the same ethnic heritage take parallel paths that lead to misperceptions, misunderstandings, and lack of respect and even contempt between the two cultures, even basic communication can lead to change, deep and permanent for uniting their pathways. Based on the findings in the study, the relationships between African-Americans and Africans immigrants in Milwaukee could benefit from communications based on the following recommendations.

First, both African-Americans and African immigrants owe it to themselves to learn about the one another's worldviews and their sources. It would be helpful if the two groups could organize joint community programs, focusing particularly on shared cultural and social values. For example, the model of a faith community and an ethnic community used as settings for the interviews in the study could make such meetings possible.

Second, support groups are recommended for newly-arrived African immigrants to Milwaukee. Once again, a model of a faith community and an ethnic community could form an alliance to plan and implement support groups when the immigrants arrive in Milwaukee. In addition, as mentioned in Chapter 1, German and Irish immigrants benefited tremendously from such support system.

Other non-profits, city and county departments, and local academic and technical colleges could form similar collaborations to help immigrants integrate with their cultural counterparts as well as other citizens. For example, the Office of International Education at Marquette University matches foreign students with faith communities that share their values and heritage.

Beyond holding community meetings for both African-Americans and African immigrants, the United States educational system could encourage in-depth study of the history of slavery and its effects on African-Americans. A comparative model to this idea is the persecution of Jewish people, and their experience during the holocaust. The researcher expects that such knowledge would enable both African-Americans and African immigrants to have more understanding, empathy, and respect for each other.

In addition, the younger generation particularly, could take advantage of the numerous available school-related studies about each other, for unbiased scholarly information beyond the regular portrayal in the media. Being here in the United States is not only a dream-come-true for many first generation African immigrants to make a (comparatively) good living, but also a chance to offer their children a seat at the table of opportunities in this country. It should not be surprising, therefore, that adult African immigrants tend to invest extra effort in their work, as part of their responsibility for the opportunity they enjoy here in the United States. Apart from the notion of taking advantage of such opportunities, a majority of African immigrants provides financial support to extended relatives back home. They therefore see a good education as one sure guaranteed way to adequately lend that helping hand to their compatriots.

APPENDIX A

Participant Interview Invitation

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Request for Interview

I am writing to request your participation in a research interview for my Master's research project. The focus of my research is on the worldviews and perceptions between African Americans and African immigrants in Milwaukee. You will be one of seven male and female participants between the ages of 18 and 60 years old, who will be interviewed on different dates within a period of three months, beginning July 2011. Each interview session is expected to last no more than 30 minutes.

I hope that your personal experience and knowledge on the topic, would serve as good addition to the pool of opinions expected during the interviews.

Should you have any questions relating to this research, please do not hesitate to contact me at Matthias.seisay@marquette.edu or 414-288-7593.

Thank you very much for your kind participation.

Sincerely,

Matthias A. Seisay

APPENDICES

APPENDIX B

Interview Venue Request Letter

Mr. Fassahaye Mebrathu
Executive Director
Pan African Community Association (PACA)
6222 West Capitol Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53216

Dear Mr. Mebrathu,

Re: Request for Interview Site

I am writing to request use of your facility to conduct interviews for a study for my Master's research project. The focus of my research is on the worldviews and perceptions between African Americans and African immigrants in Milwaukee. A maximum of seven male and female participants between the ages of 18 and 60 years old will be interviewed on different dates within a period of three months, beginning July 2011; each interview session is expected to last no more than 30 minutes.

My hope is that your quiet environment would encourage my subjects to freely and honestly express their views on this subject.

Should you have any questions relating to this research, please do not hesitate to contact me at matthias.seisay@marquette.edu or 414-288-7593.

Thank you very much for allowing me to conduct these important interviews in your facility.

Sincerely,

Matthias A. Seisay

Pastor Michael Harden
New Testament Central City church
2400 West Center Street
Milwaukee, WI 53206

Dear Pastor Harden,

Re: Request for Interview Site

I am writing to request use of your facility to conduct interviews for a study for my Master's research project. The focus of my research is on the worldviews and perceptions between African Americans and African immigrants in Milwaukee. A maximum of seven male and female participants between the ages of 18 and 60 years old will be interviewed on different dates within a period of three months, beginning July 2011; each interview session is expected to last no more than 30 minutes.

My hope is that your quiet environment would encourage my subjects to freely and honestly express their views on this subject.

Should you have any questions relating to this research, please do not hesitate to contact me at matthias.seisay@marquette.edu or 414-288-7593.

Thank you very much for allowing me to conduct these important interviews in your facility.

Sincerely,

Matthias A. Seisay

APPENDIX C

AGREEMENT OF CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Similar Is Not the Same: World Views and Relationships between African Immigrants and African-Americans in Milwaukee-Wisconsin

Matthias A. Seisay

College of Professional Studies Marquette University-Milwaukee, WI.

You have been invited to participate in this research study. Before you agree to participate, it is important that you read understand the following information. Your participation is absolutely voluntary; please ask me questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether participate.

PURPOSE: The research is intended to investigate what similarities and or differences exist between African Americans and African immigrant on issues relating to work, family, etc. It will be used for a Capstone research, and possibly community sensitization purposes. The researcher hopes that some findings in the study will facilitate community sensitization programs that address the underlying factors which cause such perception(s) of one group by the other. You will be one of ten participants in this study.

PROCEDURES: You will be asked five pre-determined questions regarding your worldview about the other group. In order to ensure accuracy, your responses will be recorded on a digital audio tape, and the file will be deleted after transcription by Matthias A. Seisay. For confidentiality purposes, your will be identified as “Mr. or Ms. A/B”. Also, transcripts from this interview will later be shredded in a professional manner, in order to avoid compromise or disclosure of any information.

DURATION: Your participation in this study will not exceed a thirty-minute interview.

RISKS: Participation in this study is absolutely voluntary and confidential. Risks are no greater than each participant would normally face in their daily lives.

BENEFITS: It is hoped that this research will identify some causes/reasons for the negative world views by one group of the other, and hopefully encourage community education for mutual understanding between African immigrants and African-Americans. One potential direct benefit to all research subjects is their participation in this very important study.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All participants in this study will be identified as “Mr. or Ms. A/B”. A separate sheet will be maintained, with names of participants in codes, filed in two separate drawers; one drawer for each of the two groups studied. When and as necessary, Marquette University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) or its designees may have access to this interview or data collected during this research.

COMPENSATION: There is no compensation (financial or otherwise) for participation in this interview.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF PARTICIPATION: All participants in this study are doing so on voluntary basis, and may withdraw at any time during the course of the research. In the event of a decision to withdraw from participating in this study before its conclusion, your responses will be replaced by the next willing and available subject. On the other hand, your responses will still be considered valid to this research, if you decide to withdraw after all interviews are conducted.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Should you have any questions/concerns relating to this research, please contact:

Matthias A. Seisay at 414-288-5345, 414-807-2262 or Matthias.seisay@mu.edu

Dr. Robert Pavlik at 414-288-3886 or Robert.pavlik@mu.edu

Questions/concerns about your rights as a participant in this research can be directed to the Office of Research Compliance at Marquette University at 414-288-7570.

I HAVE READ THIS CONSENT FORM, OR HAD IT RERAD TO ME. I UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENT AND PURPOSE, AND I AM WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH.

Participant's Signature

Date

Participant's Name

Participant's consent was audibly recorded

Researcher's Signature

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