December 2014

Poverty and Affluence across the First Two Generations of Voluntary Migration from Africa to the U.S., 1990-2012

Amon Emeka
Skidmore College

ABSTRACT:
The first substantial waves of voluntary migration from Africa arrived in the U.S. in the last quarter of the 20th century. The largest number of them haled from Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria and South Africa. Highly select on their educational aspirations and achievements, many of them settled and started families. By 2010 their U.S.-born children had begun to reach adulthood offering us a first look at intergenerational mobility among voluntary migrants from Africa. The racial diversity in this group of immigrants also allows us to gauge the impact of racial stratification on immigrant adaptation. This paper uses 1990 U.S. Census and 2008-2012 American Community Survey data to examine patterns income, affluence, and poverty among young Egyptian, Ethiopian, Nigerian, and South African immigrants in 1990 and U.S. born men and women of those ancestries—the African second generation—twenty years later. White and Black cohorts of U.S. birth and stock serve as additional referents. Despite considerable socioeconomic advancement across African immigrant generations, it is found that racial group membership is at least predictive of financial well-being as specific national origins. Black Africans, and Ethiopians, in particularly, evidenced pronounced disadvantages in the first generation that intensified in the second.

Poverty and Affluence across the First Two Generations of Voluntary Migrants from Africa to the U.S.

Between 1970 and 1990, more than 250,000 Africans migrated to the U.S., but their experiences have been overlooked in much of the research literature on immigrant adaptation. Theirs is an important story for our understanding of racial stratification and immigrant adaptation in the Post-Civil Rights Era U.S. For they represent the first substantial waves of *voluntary* migration of Black Africans to the U.S. And the concomitant migration of their White African (e.g., South African) counterparts make for a unique natural experiment—a chance to compare the intergenerational trajectories of Black and White voluntary immigrants from Africa. This paper gauges the impacts of national origins and racial identity on patterns of income, poverty and affluence among African immigrants in 1990 and their adult U.S.-born children 20 years later.

The earliest waves of voluntary African immigrants came to pursue occupational and (higher) educational opportunities not available to them in their home countries and were, therefore, highly select on social class and human capital (Arthur 2000). The four largest national origins were: Egyptians, most of whom identify as white but who are often identified by others as non-White and/or Arab; Ethiopians and Nigerians, who most often identify as Black; and South Africans who typically identify as white. These varied origins and racial identities may have influenced patterns of adaptation within and across the first two generations of voluntary immigrants from Africa. In this article, I assess socioeconomic advancement across generations of African immigrants by examining patterns of poverty and affluence among *immigrants and the adult children of immigrants from Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and South Africa*. Men and women of the four groups are compared to each other and to Whites and Blacks of U.S. birth and stock in an attempt see how much or little race and national origins bear on patterns of socioeconomic well-being. This is a critical test of whether and how much the well-documented pattern second generation ascent is affected by the Black/White divide in American race relations. In carrying out this test, the following questions are addressed: 1) how much better or worse off are U.S.-born adult children of African immigrants than their African-born parents, 2) how much do the answers to this question vary by race and national origin? And, 3) what does this tell us about the respective roles of race and national origins in shaping immigrant socioeconomic trajectories in the Post-Civil Rights Era?

BACKGROUND: VOLUNTARY MIGRATION FROM AFRICA TO THE U.S.

Due to immigration laws designed, in part, to prohibit Black migration to the U.S. (Bashi 2004) and the selective nature of migration flows from distant locations, the early waves of voluntary migration from Africa were, on average, highly educated and skilled people seeking more educational and professional opportunities (Arthur 2000; Djamba 1999; Gordon 1998; Halter 2007; Kusow 2007; Marrow 2007). Portes and Rumbaut (2001), however, point out that the ability of immigrants to translate their human capital into a commensurate quality of life (and pass it on to their children) depends, in part, on how they are received by the government and by the larger receiving society. On these bases, there is good reason to believe that African immigrants of different national origins will exhibit different socioeconomic trajectories in the in the U.S. despite having similarly favorable human capital profiles.

The Immigration Act of 1965 and its now famous Hart-Cellar Amendments were enacted in 1968 making way for the first ever substantial waves of voluntary migrations from Africa to the U.S. (Reimers 2005). Because legal migration from most African countries had been barred

in the 1920's (Bashi 2004; King 2000), the "family reunification" criterion was of no use for most prospective migrants from Africa. Instead, they relied upon occupational criteria. So early African immigration flows consisted disproportionately of college and university students, highly skilled professionals and, later, their families (Gordon 1998; Arthur 2000; Butcher 1994) from Egypt, Nigeria, and South Africa. This was the first but not the only change to U.S. immigration policy that facilitated new flows of migration from Africa. The enactment of the Refugee Act of 1980 made way for the migration of more than 20,000 Ethiopians into the U.S. in the decade that followed. Most African countries, however, did not benefit from the Refugee Act prior to 1990. Ethiopians' refugee status speaks to the context of their departures from Ethiopia, and the contexts of their reception in the U.S.—both of which may distinguish their patterns of adaptation in the U.S. from those of other African immigrants (Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

All four countries were profoundly influenced by British colonization efforts in the 19th and 20th centuries and the English language has been taught in all four countries since World War II. However, they differ in their historical and geopolitical positioning vis a vis the U.S. in some important ways (Wallerstein 1986; Davidson 1994). The coastal and interior regions of modern Nigeria, for instance, were at the epicenter of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (Rodney 1981) meaning that many Nigerians share distant kin with slave-descended Black-Americans who sometimes acknowledge this link. Because of this link, first and especially second generation Nigerians may more often than others find Black Americans a welcoming proximal host and may less often be differentiated from slave-descended Black Americans than other African immigrants. The degree to which Nigerians and other West Africans find comfort in Black American communities is highly variable, but may generally be greater than is true of Ethiopians, Egyptians, and South Africans whose ties to the slave trade and to Black America are less direct. To the extent that this is true, second generation Nigerian-Americans may more often think of themselves and/or be thought of by others as Black Americans who share the station and fate of their slave-descended brethren (Balogun 2011).

At the other end of the spectrum on this count are South Africans who descend from mainly European settler colonists. Though some of them have fled South Africa in response to repression (of Blacks) that they find morally reprehensible (Marrow 2007), few may feel a strong sense of kinship with or affinity for Black Americans. Rather, they may find themselves least differentiated from and most comfortable with White people of U.S.-born parentage (many of whom are also descendants of European settler colonists). Given their mainly north and western European ancestry, their most obvious proximal host group is White. Egyptians and Ethiopians occupy an intermediate position in this respect—neither population having obvious linkages to the African communities ravaged by the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonization nor to European peoples who perpetrated it. "Neither slavery nor colonialism significantly informs the collective memory of the East African population in the U.S." (Kusow 2007: 305).

In the second generation, many South Africans may think of themselves and be thought of as White, nothing more nothing less, while Nigerians may come to think of themselves and/or be thought of by others simply as Black. Egyptians and Ethiopians may have more ambiguous racial identities, and all of this may bear significantly on their experiences and socioeconomic trajectories since the impacts of racial stratification on life chances in the Post-Civil Rights Era U.S. are well documented (Pager and Shephard 2008; Farley and Allen 1987).

LITERTURE REVIEW: RACE, ORIGINS, AND IMMIGRANT ADAPTATION

In this paper patterns of income, poverty, and affluence are examined to gauge intergenerational mobility among African immigrants in the Post-Civil Rights era, but elaborating thoroughgoing statistical models for those outcomes is not among my objectives here. This review of the literature focuses on the impacts of national origins and racial group membership on life chances of immigrants and not on (other) determinants of poverty and affluence. Ultimately, I attempt to gauge the relative impacts of national origins and race on fiscal well-being with and without controls for widely a few accepted predictors of poverty and affluence (see Iceland 2006).

The U.S.-born children of these Post-Civil Right Era African immigrants are part of the "new second generation" whose prospects for integration into the American mainstream are the subject of much debate. Some argue that assimilation continues to draw immigrants into an ever-evolving American mainstream even as the sources of immigration have shifted away from Europe and toward Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America (Alba and Nee 2003; Alba, Kasinitz, and Waters 2011) while others suggest that race- and class-based patterns of exclusion may shut many members of the "new second generation" out (Bashi and McDaniel 1996; Haller, Portes, and Lynch 2011). The evidence on this question is mixed, and African immigrants have been largely overlooked in the debate. This may be due to their small absolute numbers and the fact that the majority of U.S.-born children of African immigrants are too young to have established their own careers, families, and/or households. However, there is a burgeoning *African second generation* now entering adulthood.

Using data from the 1998 and 2000 Current Population Surveys, Farley and Alba (2002) compared the socioeconomic outcomes of U.S.-born children of several immigrant groups to their native (i.e., '3rd+ generation') White, Asian, Black, Hispanic, and American Indian cohorts. In their study, immigrant groups defined by *regional origins* are compared to native groups defined by *race*. As is discussed above, there is good reason to do so since the experiences of immigrants are surely influenced by where they came from and the characteristics of their particular co-ethnic communities. However, the experiences of immigrants may be no less influenced by racial identities that are often imposed on them than by the national origins more central to how they see themselves (Bashi and McDaniel 1996; Lopez 2004).

The Farley and Alba (2002) study, nonetheless, uncovers a nearly universal pattern marked intergenerational improvement among Post-Civil Rights Era immigrants. Adult U.S.-born children of immigrants (25 to 39 years of age) from Asia, Europe and Canada, South America, Afro Caribbean, and Central American outperformed immigrants (50 years of age and older) of those origins in terms of educational attainment, occupational attainment, and income. However, there at least two important caveats. First, there was less evidence of intergenerational advancement among Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. And, second, while it is clear that second generation 'Spanish Caribbean' men and women between the ages of 25 and 39 outperform—by substantial margins—foreign born 'Spanish Caribbean' men and women 50 years of age and older, it is not clear that this pattern of advancement is equally pronounced among Spanish Caribbeans whose U.S.-born members are identified as 'Black' and those identified as 'White.' Qualitative and quantitative accounts suggest that it is not (Ojito 2001; Golash-Boza and Darity 2008; Denton and Massey 1989). It has been argued that some Latino groups have become "racialized" (see Telles and Ortiz 2008; Massey 2009) in such a way that they will have not only

to overcome structural barriers associated with their typically humble origins but also a prevailing perception of their inherited/immutable incompetence.

Racialization is offered as an alternative to assimilation[i] whereby some immigrants are systematically excluded based on the idea that they are fundamentally unassimilable (Golash-Boza 2006). Bashi and McDaniel (1996) point out that while much of the theoretical and empirical work on immigrant adaptation revolves around the incremental march of *ethnic* groups toward undifferentiated Americanness, *racial* groupings may be more salient as immigrants navigate their new society. They suggest that to assimilate in the U.S. is to find ones place in its centuries-old racial hierarchy, and, for many, "one's place" is not chosen but imposed. Each immigrant group is pushed and/or pulled into a domestic *proximal host* with whom they share (mainly) phenotypic traits—facilitating their integration into certain segments of U.S. society (Kasinitz et al 2008; Waters and Mittelberg 1991). Like assimilation, racialization operates both within and across generations. While Black immigrants may often be seen by others as "not really Black," their U.S. born children will tend to be seen simply as "Black" (Butterfield 2004).

To the extent that this is true, it is reasonable to predict that White South African immigrants will often settle into White contexts and have more or less "White experiences." Nigerians and perhaps Ethiopians may more often settle into Black contexts and face many of the challenges associated with Black-American group membership. Research on other Black immigrants bears this out (Bryce-Laport 1972; Butterfield 2004; Waters 1999). It has been established, for instance, that residential segregation is more pronounced among Black Caribbean immigrants than it is among White Caribbean immigrants (Denton and Massey 1989; Iceland and Scopolliti 2008) often leaving the former in neighborhoods with limited educational and occupational opportunities.

There is also a growing body of research literature that traces the differential monetary returns to education across Black and White immigrant groups. Dodoo and Takyi (2002) found that even when human capital and other pertinent background characteristics are held constant, African-born White men earn significantly more per hour (and per year) than their identically qualified Black African counterparts. The racial earnings gap among African immigrants in the U.S. has, therefore, not been due to Black African deficits but to the subpar "returns" Black Africans receive on their investments in education and other characteristics related to earnings. More recently, it has been shown that the racial wage gap uncovered by Dodoo and Takyi (2002) remains significant even though Black Africans are less often unemployed than others (Djamba and Kimuna 2011). It would seem that Black Africans have relatively little difficulty finding employment—a fact that is probably reflective of employer preferences for immigrant workers in some sectors (Waldinger and Lichter 2003; Moss and Tilly 1999)—but are hard pressed to find jobs whose pay is commensurate with their educational attainments and occupational skills.[ii] Whether this problem has been passed on to Black men of the African second generation is a question yet unanswered.

The disadvantages that Black African immigrants face in U.S. labor markets may bear directly and indirectly on the experiences of their U.S.-born children as they age into adulthood. Members of the African second generation include U.S.-born Whites who were raised in predominately White communities by parents paid commensurately to their background characteristics, and also U.S.-born Blacks raised in predominantly Black communities by parents who often made considerable less money than their educational attainments would have

predicted. These childhood differences may translate into more and better schooling for the children of White immigrants from Africa than for children of Black immigrants from Africa—leading to human capital differentials in the second generation despite first generation human capital similarities. As these young people venture into U.S. labor markets they may be looked upon simply as young Whites and Blacks despite their African origins. To the extent that this is true, documented patterns of Black exclusion in U.S. labor markets (Pager 2007; Wilson 2009) will compound the effects of uneven educational quality and attainment across White and Black members of the African second generation leading, ultimately, to differing levels of poverty and affluence between them.

Finally, a growing number of sociologists have called attention to the *gendered* nature of immigrant adaption (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003; Lopez 2004) and the movement of immigrant women into the paid labor force (Read and Cohen 2007; Schoeni 1998). Immigrant women have tended to arrive with less formal education and less (high status) occupational skill than immigrant men—making upward mobility a stronger likelihood when comparing immigrant mothers to U.S.-born daughters. The very high educational and occupational achievements of immigrant men, on the other hand, leave little room for improvement, and this limitation is only compounded by economic and social trends that have driven joblessness upward for young men of color (Pager 2007; Wilson 2009). All of this may lead to gendered patterns of intergenerational mobility.

HYPOTHESES

Based on previous research it is reasonable to expect that 1) high levels of human capital among the select groups who ventured from Egypt, Nigeria, and South Africa—prior to 1990—will lead to high levels of affluence and low levels of poverty in the first generation *but not uniformly so*. Since "returns to human capital" are often constrained by patterns of Black exclusion in the U.S. (Pager and Shepherd 2008), 2) Nigerian immigrants—89% of whom identify as Black—will exhibit higher levels of poverty and lower levels of affluence than Egyptians and South Africans who more often identify as White. Finally, 3) Ethiopian immigrants who arrived mainly as refugees during the 1980's will have lower levels of human capital than other African immigrant groups, but not significantly more poverty since many were beneficiaries of resettlement assistance programs established under the Refugee Act of 1980 (Holman 1996).

Turning to the African second generation, whatever patterns of intergenerational advancement or stagnation we observe among African immigrants, it is reasonable to expect that they will be "raced" and "gendered"—leading to three additional hypotheses: 4) Women will evidence sharper increases in socioeconomic status with the passing of generations given the relatively low status of immigrant women, the widely recognized pattern of women's' socioeconomic advancement, and the stagnation of male wages in recent decades; 5) Patterns of upward mobility will be more pronounced across generations of "White African immigrants" than across generations of "Black African immigrants;" and, 6) racial identities will have a greater bearing on patterns poverty and affluence among U.S.-born Egyptians, Ethiopians, Nigerians, and South Africans than was true of their foreign-born parents. For these members of the "African second generation" patterns of racial identity will be no less influential than their specific national origins.

DATA AND METHODS

Since people of African birth and/or known African ancestry make up less than 1% of the U.S. population, only the Census yields African samples sufficient for the purposes of this study. 5% Public Use Samples from the 1990 Census as well as a single American Community Survey data file constituted of 1% samples from 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 (Ruggles et al 2014) are used to generate first and second generation samples. From this point forward the 2008-2012 ACS file will be referred to as the "2010" data.

National Origins, Race, and Nativity Measures

The central independent variables in this study are national origins, race, and nativity. The Census long form and American Community Survey ask respondents a close-ended question about their racial group membership and open-ended questions about where they were born (which U.S. state or foreign country) and what their ancestry/ethnic origins are. Answers to the close-ended "race" question are used to fashion a trichotomous measure of racial identity. The vast majority of African immigrants identify as White (only) or Black (only) with a small residual category comprised of those who identify as Asian, "Other," or multiracial. The open-ended questions are used to identify African first and second generation samples—that is, to identify African immigrants and U.S. born adult children of African immigrants.

Since the Census surveys do not ask respondents where their parents were born, precisely identifying the children of immigrants once they no longer reside with their immigrant parents is impossible (Hirschman 1994). But because substantial migration from Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, or South Africa has only commenced in recent decades, any U.S.-born person who identifies with any one of those ancestries is likely the child of an immigrant from one of those countries and, therefore, a member of the African second generation. For the purposes of this study, immigrants who came from Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigerian and South African prior to 1990 are treated as members of the African immigrant generation while U.S. born respondents of those ancestries (observed in 2008-12) are treated as members of the African second generation.

This method is not perfect. It identifies the "2^{nd}+" generation without being able to differentiate the children of immigrants from the small number of grandchildren of immigrants from these countries. Further, some children of Egyptian, Ethiopian, Nigerian, and South African immigrants may not answer the ancestry question at all[iii], and those who do may not offer responses that would logically align with their parents' place of birth. Some children of South African immigrants may say "British" when asked about their ancestry; some second generation Nigerians may say that their ancestry is "African"; and Egyptian second generation respondents may sometimes identify "Arab" rather than "Egyptian" ancestry. All three of these cases would be missed by the method of identification employed here, and little can be done to detect such identificational discrepancies. Such oversights could lead to an overestimation of second generation achievement since more accomplished immigrants and children of immigrants have been shown to more often retain their immigrant (national) identities while their less successful counterparts are more likely to cast off their (parents) national origins in favor of pan-ethnic or racial labels (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Waters 1999) rendering them invisible to studies like this one. I proceed with these possible biases in mind.

Poverty and Affluence Measures

The brunt of the analysis here will consist of the comparing personal incomes and then family incomes across the men and women of the four African nationalities which are translated into rates of poverty and affluence. Individuals in families whose incomes are at or below the federally determined poverty threshold will be treated as "poor" while those in households whose income is five times the poverty threshold value (following Farley and Alba [2002]) will be treated as "affluent." In 2012, the poverty threshold for a family of four was $23,492 (U.S. Census Bureau 2014). Respondents living in families of four with incomes at or below this level are considered poor here. Respondents living in families of four with incomes at or above 5 times the threshold amount--$117,460—are considered affluent. There are different threshold values based on family size and composition (i.e., number of children under 18 years of age). These outcomes are chosen because they take into account family rather than individual income as well as family structure to give a more complete sense of (fiscal) well-being than income alone. In this way, patterns of poverty and affluence are compared across first and second generation Egyptians, Ethiopians, Nigerians, and South Africans with U.S.-born White and Black non-Hispanics as "native" reference groups.

Preliminary analyses revealed a universal pattern of *intra*-generational advancement whereby African immigrant men and women who were between the ages of 45 and 59 in 2010 were considerably more educated, had better jobs and higher annual incomes than they had (between the ages of 25 and 39) in 1990. Given these intragenerational advancements, the most valid *inter*generational comparisons are to be made between young adult (25 to 39 year old) members of the African immigrant generation in 1990 and young adult (25 to 39 year old) members of the African second generation in 2010.[iv] For the purposes of this study, foreign born Egyptians, Ethiopians, Nigerians, and South Africans present in the U.S. in 1990 and in the ages typically associated with early career and family formation (25 o 39 years) are treated as members of the African first generation; and U.S.-born respondents of Egyptian, Ethiopian, Nigerian, and South African ancestry who were between the ages of 25 and 39 in 2010 are treated as members of the African second generation. Table 1 provides sample counts for each national origin across the first and second generation groupings.

*** Table 1 here***

Since racial identities may bear heavily on the experiences of immigrant groups, I compare the outcomes of White, Black and Other African immigrants to those of White and Black (non-Hispanic) U.S. natives ignoring national origins in some of the analyses to follow. Figure 1 shows that most but not all Egyptian and South Africans identify racially as White while most Ethiopians and Nigerians identify racially as Black.[v] This makes it difficult to separate the effects of national origins and racial identity, but we will compare the gross effects of national origins and racial identity on patterns of poverty and affluence.

*** Figure 1 here ***

Analytical Strategy

The analyses will consist, first, of simple comparisons of personal income, affluence, and poverty across immigrant generations in each national origins group. Second, the relative

influences of national origins and racial group membership are assessed by taking a closer look at patterns of affluence and poverty in the second generation. Logistic regressions are run predicting affluence and, later, poverty to assess the impact of national origins on (fiscal) well-being among African first and second generation men and women—with and without statistical controls. Next, the same analyses are performed but with race indicators replacing national origins so that model fit statistics and the magnitude of coefficients can be compared and conclusions reached about which set of indicators—national origins or race—is more influential within and across generations. We can, thereby, answer the question, what are the relative impacts of racial identity and national origins in predicting patterns of well-being among African immigrants and their U.S.-born children?

RESULTS

Before turning the achievements of African second generation men and women, it is instructive to examine the circumstances that shaped their childhoods. Table 2 displays select characteristics of the households and immigrant parents of the African second generation in 1990. As was predicted, there is significant variation across African immigrant groups and native White and Black referents. While about one in twenty U.S.-born children were being raised by foreign born parents in 1990, no less than three-fifths of children with known African ancestry had immigrant parents. While two-parent families are modal for all African immigrant groups, Nigerian American children are considerably less likely to reside with both parents than children of other African origins. The relatively small share of Nigerian American children with foreign-born parents (61%) may reflect a pattern of intermarriage and divorce/separation between African-Americans and Nigerian immigrants.

*** Table 2 here ***

While children of the African second generation were more often raised by college educated parents than was true of other U.S.-born children in 1990, an inordinate number of them were also exposed to poverty. All of this translates into highly variable family incomes across the four immigrant and two native groups. Egyptian and South African children resided in households with median incomes considerably higher than those of native non-Hispanic White families; Ethiopian and Nigerian children resided in households with incomes lower than those of native non-Hispanic Whites but considerably higher than those of native non-Hispanic Black families. Have these disparities followed members of the African second generation into adulthood?

Income, Affluence, and Poverty across African Immigrant Generations

Figure 2 displays median personal income figures[vi] for first and second generation African men and women as well as native White and Black reference groups. For purposes of comparison, all of the income figures are in 2010 dollars. As a rule, the annual incomes of African immigrant groups are higher than those of native Black Americans and in some cases are substantially greater than those of native Whites.

*** Figure 2 here ***

The well-documented pattern of wage stagnation in recent decades (see Morris and Western 1999) is reflected in the intergenerational patterns among U.S.-born White and Black non-Hispanics. Among White and Black men there is no sign of wage growth across the 1990

and 2010 cohorts, and the growth among White and Black women is modest. Intergenerational patterns of earning among African immigrants, however, do not so neatly conform to the stagnation account. Men of the second generation differ widely by ancestry. South African men of the first generation had a median income that was nearly half again (47%) as great as those of their U.S.-born White non-Hispanic counterparts, but men of the South African second generation have been unable to match the incomes of their fathers' generation. This is the most obvious evidence of downward mobility on the personal income measure. But even in their demoted state, members of the South African second generation enjoys a median income that is 28% greater than that of other U.S.-born White men and may reflect a "regression to the [white] mean." Egyptian and Nigerian men made remarkable gains from the first generation to the second—both groups earning about 40% more than men of their fathers' generation 20 years earlier (adjusted for inflation). This growth leaves Egyptian men with the highest earnings of any African second generation group and leaves Nigerian men with annual incomes comparable to those of U.S.-born White non-Hispanics. Ethiopian men of the second generation were not able to improve significantly on the incomes of their fathers—leaving them with incomes that more closely resemble those of U.S.-born Black non-Hispanics than any other group in the study.

Women of the second generation, on the other hand, exhibit remarkable improvements over the incomes of their immigrant mothers' 20 years earlier. In 1990, the median incomes for the four African and two U.S.-born groups were compressed in the range of $21,689 and $26,694. In 2010, that range widened considerably due to the advances of African second generation women. Women of all four African ancestries out-earned women of their mothers' generation by 50% or more and out-earned their U.S.-born White non-Hispanic counterparts by substantial margins. In so doing, they have surely helped to drive rates of affluence upward and rates of poverty downward in their respective communities.

Taking as "affluent" anyone whose family income is five times the federally established poverty threshold, 29% of native White men and 27% of native White women between the ages of 25 and 39 were affluent in 2010. Both of these figures reflect small intergenerational improvements. So too have native Blacks improved on this measure, but affluence was still uncommon among Black men (13%) and Black women (12%) in 2010. Affluence is far more pronounced among Egyptian (50%) and South African (49%) men of the second generation than it is among their native White counterparts. Nigerian second generation (29%) men doubled the affluence rates of their fathers between 1990 and 2010, matching that of native Whites of U.S. birth and stock. Ethiopian men (24%) also improved on the affluence rate of their fathers' generation—pulling away from native Black men but falling short of native White men.

*** Figure 3 here ***

Egyptian (49%) and Nigerian (34%) women of the second generation are far more likely to be affluent in 2010 than women of their mothers' generation twenty years earlier with affluence rates exceeding that of native White women (27%). Interestingly, both South African men and women of the second generation failed to duplicate the very high affluence rates of their parents' generation but remain at a very high levels—49% and 42%, respectively. Ethiopian women of the second generation (18%) seem to have stalled out at the relatively low level of affluence evidenced among their mothers' generation (17%) in 1990. This probably reflects the fact that they are often paired with Ethiopian men who, as a group, have struggled.

Though poverty was more prevalent among U.S. residents in 2010 than it was in 1990, it is reasonable to expect the children of immigrants to avoid poverty in 2010 better than immigrants themselves in 1990 since they are not faced with challenges associated with foreign birth. Some of the groups live up to this expectation. South African men (6%) and Egyptian (8%) and Nigerian women (12%) of the second generation found themselves less often in poverty than did their immigrant parents two decades earlier. Nigerian (19%) and Ethiopian men (39%) of the second generation, however, were more likely to have been impoverished in 2010 than was true of men of their fathers' generation 20 years earlier. Ethiopian (25%) and, surprisingly, South African women (12%) of the second generation also slid back a bit on this measure.

*** Figure 4 here ***

In 2010, we are left with South African second generation men and women experiencing high levels of affluence and low levels of poverty when compared to native White and Black cohorts. Egyptian men and women of the second generation emulate this positive pattern with the highest affluence rates of any group observed here. But while Egyptian women of the second generation exhibit the lowest poverty rate (8%) of any group of women, Egyptian men (14%) are not so fortunate. Poverty is also higher among Ethiopian and Nigerian men of the second generation than it is among women in those groups. These differences are suggestive of a gendered pattern of poverty that runs counter to the prevailing view that poverty has become feminized (see McLanahan & Kelly 1999).

The story is further complicated by the somewhat bifurcated income distributions of Egyptian and Nigerian men who are characterized by high prevalence of affluence—50% and 29%, respectively—but also high levels of poverty—14% and 19%, respectively. Ethiopian men and women of the second generation exhibit patterns that are unambiguously negative—low levels of affluence and high prevalence of poverty. In fact, Ethiopian men of the second generation are nearly *twice* as likely to be poor than were the men of their immigrant fathers' generation 20 years earlier and slightly more likely to be poor than their native Black counterparts.

Race or National Origins?

Are the socioeconomic trajectories of African immigrants shaped any more or less by patterns of racial stratification than by the other characteristics of their national origins groups? Without having sufficient numbers of "White Nigerians" or "Black Egyptians" (for instance) this question is impossible to adjudicate statistically. However, *we can determine how much explanatory power we would miss if all we knew about African immigrants was how they identified racially and knew nothing of their national origins.* To answer this question: 1) the dichotomous measure of affluence is regressed on a set of national origins indicators, and then 2) step 1 is repeated with age, education, and sex added to the model. Next, 3) the first two steps are repeated with the racial identity indicators *replacing* the national origins indicators. Finally, 4) odds ratios and model fit statistics generated in steps 1, 2 and 3 are compared. Steps one through four are repeated with a dichotomous measure of poverty as the dependent variable.

Table 3 about here

Table 3 displays the results from logistic regressions predicting affluence among men and women of African first and second generation cohorts. Though the gross effects of ancestry and race are important, I will focus on their net effects for the purposes of this discussion. The net effects of national origins are pronounced among members of the first generation (in 1990) with Egyptians being less than half as likely (Exp[B]=.45) as likely and South Africans to be affluent. The net effects of ancestry on likelihood of affluence moderate between the first and second generations with the Egyptian second generation matching the affluence levels of South Africans even though their immigrant parents could not. Across the two generations, Ethiopians and Nigerians are significantly less likely to attain affluence than the South African reference group, but their disadvantage moderates a bit from the first generation to the second. The effects of race also appear to moderate across the generations. The Black African odds of affluence are greater in the second generation (Exp[B]=.45) than in the first (Exp[B]=.26) but still less than half that of White Africans.

Turning now to the relative explanatory power of ancestry/national origins and race, the pseudo-r^2 statistics for first generation affluence models suggest that national origins (r^2 = .179) are more predictive of affluence than race (r^2 = .162) when compositional differences (age, sex, and education) are accounted for. However, race (r^2 = .217) appears to be more influential than specific national origins (r^2 = .207) in the second generation. In the African second generation, patterns of affluence are influenced as much or more by racial group membership than by specific national origins.

Table 4 about here

The story that emerges from analyses of poverty rates (Table 4) across African immigrant generations is less optimistic. The net effects of both national origins and race actually intensify with the passing of generations. There is a significant South African advantage in the first generation, with members of the other three African groups 48% to 84% more likely to be poor. Even more pronounced differences emerge in the second generation; Ethiopians are four (Exp[b]=3.94) times as likely as South Africans to be poor and Nigerians twice (Exp[B]=1.96) as likely. Racial distinctions also gained importance across the generations where poverty is concerned. Black African immigrants were 1.57 times as likely as White African immigrants to be poor, but Black members of the African second generation were more than 2 times (Exp[B]=2.08) as likely to be poor. Fit statistics suggest that racial group membership was slightly more predictive of poverty in the first generation than was national origins, but the reverse was true in the second. In any case, our ability to predict poverty among African immigrants and their adult children is diminished little if at all by not knowing what country they (their parents) hale from—so long as we know how they identify racially.

In all, logistic regression analyses of affluence reveals the waning but still significant effects of race and national origins across generations of African immigrants. Analyses of poverty, however, reveal that second generation Ethiopians were *more* different from other African groups than was true of their immigrant parents, and Black African second generation men and women were *more* different—worse off—from White Africans than was true of their immigrant parents. Rather than waning in their influence, national origins and race seem to have mattered more in the second generation than in the first where poverty is concerned.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Because African immigrant groups are among the fastest growing in the U.S. it behooves us to pay close attention to their patterns of adjustment. In this paper, intergenerational mobility within and across African immigrant groups is assessed by comparing patterns of affluence and poverty among Egyptian, Ethiopian, Nigerian, and South African immigrants between the ages of 25 and 39 in 1990 to those of U.S.-born persons of those ancestries and of those ages in 2010. In all, there is cause for optimism with regards to the socioeconomic prospects of the second generation Egyptians and South Africans and cause for concern in the case of Nigerians and especially Ethiopians.

As predicted, immigrants from all four countries had high average levels of human capital but the extent to which that human capital could be translated into a high quality of life in the U.S. varied across groups. Despite having educational attainments higher than any group—native or immigrant—in the study, Nigerian immigrants were characterized by low levels of affluence and high levels of poverty in 1990. Ethiopian immigrants who arrived mainly as refugees during the 1980's had less education than other African immigrant groups but were still more highly educated than U.S.-born white men. Despite their higher than average educational attainments, few Black African immigrants were affluent and a disproportionate share were poor. Poverty may have been even more prevalent among Ethiopians were it not for resettlement assistance programs established under the Refugee Act of 1980.

Turning to the second generation (in 2010), there were impressive intergenerational gains in income for all four groups of women. Among second generation African men, however, the story was more mixed. Men of the Egyptian and Nigerian second generation out-earned men of their fathers' generation by wide margins, but South African and Ethiopian second generation men did not. There is little cause for concern for second generation South African men, however, as their incomes remained relatively high level despite being lower than those of their fathers' generation. Second generation Ethiopian men, on the other hand, seem to have stagnated at low level of income similar to that of Black Americans of native stock. Accordingly, Ethiopian men and women of the second generation more often lived in poverty and less often live in affluence than men and women of the other African origins. In fact, second generation Ethiopian men and women were considerably more likely to have been poor than men and women of their parents' generation twenty years earlier.

There are good reasons to expect that racial group membership would become more pivotal in the lives of U.S.-born Egyptians, Ethiopians, Nigerians, and South Africans than it had been in the lives of their parents, and that for them patterns of racial identity would come to be no less influential than their specific African origins. Results support these predictions but with important qualifications. When examining the prevalence of poverty across generations of African immigrants it is clear that there is a more pronounced black disadvantage in the second generation than there was in the first which would suggest that racial stratification is more central in shaping outcomes with passing of generations. But the effects of ancestry also increased across generations due mainly to the intensification of Ethiopian disadvantage. So we can say with some certainty that the effects of racial stratification on patterns of affluence and poverty are comparable to the effects of national origins and in some cases greater, but it is not necessarily because race is *supplanting* national origins as a prime stratifier.

Pulling the effects of national origins and race apart poses some difficult methodological and interesting substantive questions that go unanswered here: Are Ethiopians and Nigerians disadvantaged because they are disproportionately Black? Are Black Africans disadvantaged because they are disproportionately Ethiopian and Nigerian? The fact that race and national origins have similar statistical influence when considered in the absence of one another suggests that the answer to both questions is yes, but we cannot be certain without considering the experiences of White Ethiopians, White Nigerians, Black Egyptians, and Black South Africans all of whom are in short supply in available data sets and in the "real world." Observed differences between Ethiopian and Nigerian Black men suggest that racial identity and national origins have effects that are independent of one another. Those differences may boil down to the very different circumstances under which they left their respective countries and the quality of their reception in the U.S.—one as a group of self-selected students and highly skilled workers and the other as refugees.

In all, we are left with results suggestive of persistent patterns of Black disadvantage and White disadvantage in U.S. that are impervious to nativity. White African immigrants are less likely to be poor than their Black African counterparts and this racial disparity has only intensified with the passing of immigrant generations. All of this speaks to the continuing significance of race for both natives and newcomers in the contemporary U.S.

WORKS CITED

Alba, Richard and Victor Nee. 2003. *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Alba, Richard, Philip Kasinitz, and Mary Waters. 2011. "The Kids Are (Mostly) Alright: Second-Generation Assimilation." *Social Forces* 89(3): 763-73.

Arthur, John. 2000. *Invisible Sojourners: African Immigrant Diaspora in the United States*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Balogun, Oluwakemi. 2011. "No Necessary Tradeoff: Context, Life Course and Social Networks in Second-Generation Nigerian Immigrant Identity Formation in the USA." *Ethnicities* 11(4): 436-466.

Bashi, Vilna and Antonio McDaniel. 1996. "A Theory of Immigration and Racial Stratification." Journal of Black Studies 27(5): 668-82.

Bryce-Laporte, Roy. 1972. "Black Immigrants: The Experience of Invisibility and Inequality." *Journal of Black Studies* 3: 29-56.

Butcher, Kristin. 1994. "Black immigrants in the United States: A Comparison with Native Born Blacks and Other Immigrants." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 47(2): 265-284.

Butterfield, Sherri-Ann. 2004. "'We're Just Black': The Racial and Ethnic Identities of Second-Generation West Indians in New York." Pp. 288-312 in *Becoming New Yorkers: Ethnographies of the New Second Generation*, edited by Philip Kasinitz, John Mollenkopf, and Mary Waters. New York: Russell Sage.

Cancio, A. Silvia, T. David Evans and David Maume Jr. 1996. "Reconsidering the Declining Significance of Race: Racial Differences in Early Career Wages." *American Sociological Review* 61(4): 541-56.

Davidson, Basil. 1994. *Modern Africa: A Social and Political History*. New York: Routledge.

Denton, Nancy and Douglas Massey. 1989. "Racial Identity among Caribbean Hispanics: The Effect of Double Minority Status on Residential Segregation." *American Sociological Review* 54:790-808

Djamba, Yanyi. 1999. ""African Immigrants in the United States: A Socio–Demographic Profile in Comparison to Native Blacks." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 34: 210–215.

Djamba, Yanyi and Sitawa Kimuna. 2011. "The Influence of Race on Employment Status and Earnings of African Immigrant Men in the United States." *International Journal of Population Research*.

Dodoo, Francis Ni-Amoo and Baffour Takyi. 2002. "Africans in Diaspora: Black-White Earnings Differences among America's Africans." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25(6): 913-941.

Farley, Reynolds and Richard Alba. 2002. "The New Second Generation in the United States." International Migration Review 36(3): 669-701.

Golash-Boza, Tanya. 2006. "Dropping the Hyphen? Becoming Latino(a)-American through Racialized Assimilation." *Social Forces* 85(1): 27-55.

Golash-Boza, Tanya and William Darity. “Latino Racial Choices: The Effects of Skin Colour and Discrimination on Latinos' and Latinas' Racial Self-Identifications.” Ethnic and Racial Studies 31(5): 899-934.

Gordon, April. 1998. "The New African Diaspora: African Immigration to the United States.” *Journal of Third World Studies*. 15(1): 79-103.

Haller, William, Alejandro Portes, and Scott Lynch. 2011. “Dreams Fulfilled, Dreams Shattered: Determinants of Segmented Assimilation in the Second Generation.” *Social Forces* 89(3): 733-762.

Halter, Marilyn. 2007. “Africa: West.” Pp. 283-94 in *The New Americans: A Guide to Immigration since 1965*, edited by M. Waters and R. Ueda. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Hirschman, Charles. 1994. "Problems and Prospects of Studying Immigrant Adaptation from the 1990 Population Census: From Generational Comparisons to the Process of 'Becoming American'." *International Migration Review* 28: 690-713.

Holman, P. 1996. “Refugee Resettlement in the United States.” Pp. 3-27 in *Refugees in America in the 1990s: A Reference Handbook*, edited by D. Haines. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette, ed. 2003. *Gender and U.S. Immigration: Contemporary Trends*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Iceland, John. 2006. *Poverty in America: A Handbook.* Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Iceland, John and Melissa Scopolliti. 2008. “Immigrant residential segregation in U.S. Metropolitan areas,1990-2000.” *Demography* 45(1) 79-94.

Kasinitz, Philip, John Mollenkopf, Mary Waters, and Jennifer Hollaway. 2008. *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*. New York: Russell Sage.

King, Desmond. 2000. *Making Americans: Immigration, Race, and the Origins of the Diverse Democracy*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Kusow, Abdi. 2007. “Africa: East.” Pp. 295-306 in *The New Americans: A Guide to Immigration since 1965*, edited by M. Waters and R. Ueda. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Lopez, Nancy. 2002. *Hopeful Girls, Troubled Boys: Race and Gender Disparity in Urban Education.* New York: Routledge.

Marrow, Helen. 2007. “Africa: South Africa and Zimbabwe” Pp. 307-18 in *The New Americans: A Guide to Immigration since 1965*, edited by M. Waters and R. Ueda. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Massey, Douglas. 2009. “Racial Formation in Theory and Practice: The Case of Mexicans in the United States.” *Race and Social Problems* 1(1): 12-26.

McLanahan, Sara and Erin Kelly. 1999. “The Feminization of Poverty: Past and Future.” Pp. 127-145 in *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender*. J. Chafetz (Ed.). New York: Plenum.

Mittelberg, David and Mary Waters. 1992. "The Process of Ethnogenisis among Haitian and Israeli Immigrants in the United States." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15: 412-35.

Morris, Martina and Bruce Western. 1999. "Inequality in Earnings at the Close of the Twentieth Century." *Annual Review of Sociology* 25: 623-657.

Moss, P., & Charles Tilly. 2001. *Stories Employers Tell: Race, Skill, and Hiring in America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation

Ojito, Mirta. 2001. "Best of Friends, Worlds Apart" in *How Race is Lived in America.* New York: Times Books.

Pager, Devah. 2007. *Marked: Race, Crime, and Finding Work in an Era of Mass Incarceration*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pager, Devah and Hana Shephard. 2008. "The Sociology of Discrimination: Racial Discrimination in Employment, Housing, Credit, and Consumer Markets." *Annual Review of Sociology* 34:181–209.

Pager, Devah, Bruce Western, and Bart Bonikoswki. 2009. "Discrimination in a Low Wage Labor Market: A Field Experiment." *American Sociological Review*. 74:777-799

Portes, Alejandro and Ruben Rumbaut. 2001. *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*. New York: Russell Sage.

Read, Jen'nan and Philip Cohen. 2007. "One Size Fits All? Explaining U.S.-born and Immigrant Women's Employment across Twelve Ethnic Groups." *Social Forces* 85(4):1713-34.

Reimers, David. 2005. *Other Immigrants: The Global Origins of the American People*. New York: New York University Press.

Rodney, Walter. 1982. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press.

Ruggles, Steven, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. 2014. *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

Schoeni, R. 1998. "Labor Market Outcomes of Immigrant Women in the United States: 1970 to 1990." *International Migration Review* 32(1):57-77.

Telles, Edward and Vilma Ortiz. 2008. *Generations of Exclusion: Mexican Americans, Assimilation, and Race.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2014. https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/.

Waldinger, Roger and Michael Lichter. 2003. *How the Other Half Works: Immigration and the Social Organization of Labor*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1986. *Africa and the Modern World*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Waters, Mary. 1999. *Black Identities: West Indians Immigrant Dreams and Realities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wilson, William J. 2009. *More than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Table 1. Sample Sizes by National Origins and Nativity

	Men		Women	
	1st Generation	*2nd Generation*	*1st Generation*	*2nd Generation*
	Foreign-Born, 25 to 39 Yrs Old, 1990	**U.S.-Born, 25 to 39 Yrs Old , 2010**	**Foreign-Born, 25 to 39 Yrs Old, 1999**	**U.S.-Born, 25 to 39 Yrs Old , 2010**
Egyptian	711	350	432	343
Ethiopian	442	71	345	57
Nigerian	1,064	231	464	276
South African	324	68	278	66
	2,541	720	1,519	742

Data Source: 1990 U.S. Census 5% Public Use File and American Community Survey 2008-12 (Ruggles et al. 2014)

Table 2. Household and Parental Characteristics of U.S. Born Children (0-17 yrs) of Specified African Ancestries, 1990

	% living with one or more foreign-born parents	% living w/ one or more college educated parents	% living in poverty	Median Family Income	N	Weighted N
Egyptian	90%	70%	9%	$62,495	919	19,230
Ethiopian	76%	43%	18%	$35,432	177	3,899
Nigerian	61%	57%	30%	$31,327	1,211	28,117
South African	80%	76%	11%	$77,533	158	3,217
US-Born Non-Hisp White	5%	31%	12%	$43,234	2,734,785	85,638,466
US-Born Non-Hisp Black	4%	11%	41%	$24,283	482,635	17,710,091

Data Source: 1990 U.S. Census 5% Public Use File (Ruggles et al. 2014)

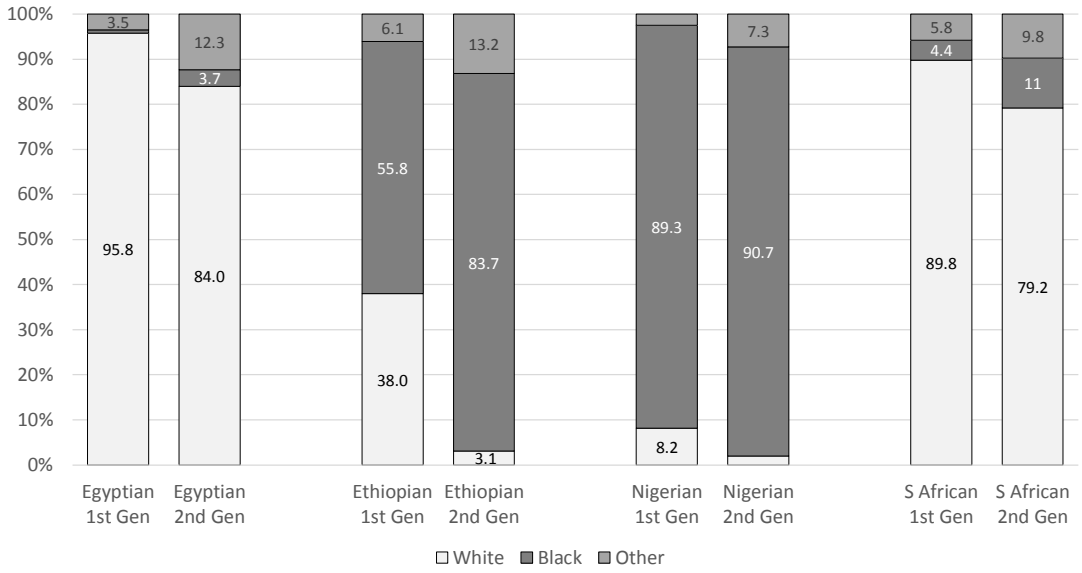
Table 3. Gross and Net Effects of National Origins and Racial Group Membership from Logistic Regressions Predicting Affluence* among Members of the African First and Second Generations

	Affluence																	
	1G, 1990									***2G, 2008-12***								
	Gross		**Net**		**Gross**		**Net**			**Gross**		**Net**			**Gross**		**Net**	
Egyptian	0.47	***	0.45	***						1.17		1.06						
Ethiopian	0.19	***	0.23	***						0.32	***	0.39	**					
Nigerian	0.16	***	0.14	***						0.57	**	0.57	**					
South African	*1.00*		*1.00*							*1.00*		*1.00*						
White					*1.00*		*1.00*								*1.00*		*1.00*	
Black					0.25	***	0.26	***							0.40	***	0.45	***
Other					0.53	*	0.58								0.31	***	0.40	***
Age			1.04	***			1.04	***				1.07	***				1.06	***
Sex (Male=1)			1.06				1.12					0.77	*				0.79	*
No Diploma			*1.00*				*1.00*					*1.00*					*1.00*	
HS Diploma			3.34	**			3.22	**				7.78	*				8.62	*
BA Degree			6.55	***			5.67	***				21.99	**				24.14	**
Advanced Degree			9.22	***			8.22	***				44.00	***				48.15	***
Constant			0.05															
N	4,060		4,060		4,060		4,060			1,462		1,462			1,462		1,462	
Pseudo r^2	0.127		0.179		0.114		0.162			0.055		0.207			0.071		0.217	
BIC	4,115		3,998		4,143		4,044			1,943		1,797			1,918		1,777	
Data Source: 1990 U.S. Census 5% Public Use File and American Community Survey 2008-12 (Ruggles et al. 2014)																		
*Respondents residing with families whose total income are five times the federally established poverty threshold (based on family size and composition) are treated as affluent here.																		

Table 4. Gross and Net Effects of National Origins and Racial Group Membership from Logistic Regressions Predicting Poverty* among Members of the African First and Second Generations

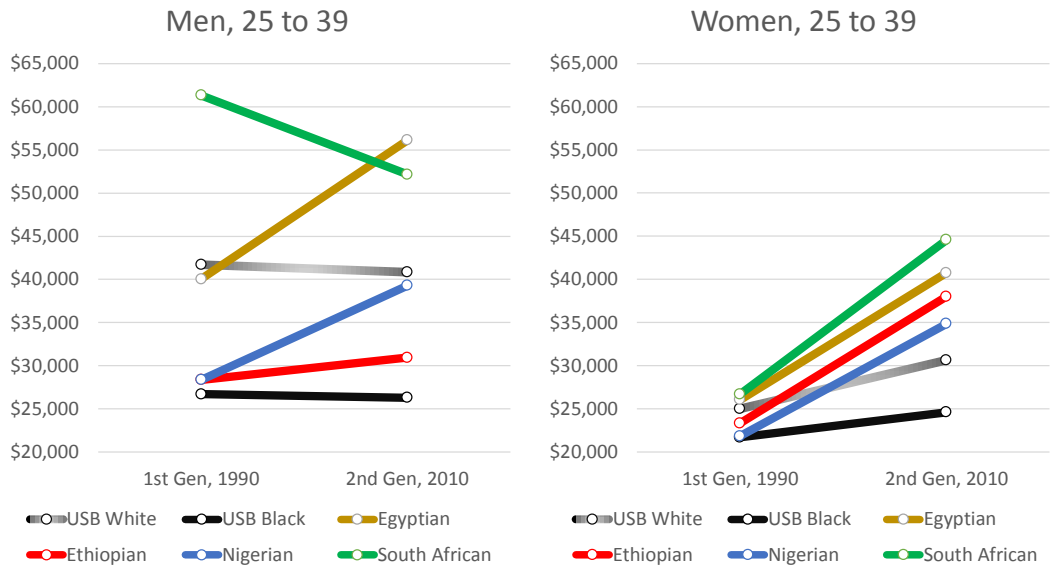
	Poverty																	
	1G, 1990										***2G, 2008-12***							
	Gross		**Net**			**Gross**		**Net**			**Gross**		**Net**			**Gross**		**Net**	
Egyptian	1.48	*	1.48	*							1.27		1.42						
Ethiopian	2.26	***	1.71	**							4.97	***	3.94	***					
Nigerian	1.89	***	1.84	***							1.88		1.96	*					
South African	*1.00*		*1.00*								*1.00*		*1.00*						
White						*1.00*		*1.00*								*1.00*		*1.00*	
Black						1.75	***	1.57	***							2.28	***	2.08	***
Other						1.00		0.95								1.96	*	1.48	
Age			0.94	***				0.94	***				0.99					0.99	
Sex (Male=1)			0.79	*				0.78	*				0.75					0.73	
No Diploma			*1.00*					*1.00*					*1.00*					*1.00*	
HS Diploma			0.31	***				0.32	***				0.24	***				0.20	***
BA Degree			0.21	***				0.21	***				0.08	***				0.07	***
Advanced Degree			0.20	***				0.20	***				0.08	***				0.07	***
Constant	0.10		3.66								0.098		1.25			0.107		1.37	
N	4,060		4,060			4,060		4,060			1,462		1,462			1,462		1,462	
Pseudo r^2	0.013		0.055			0.016		0.058			0.046		0.141			0.034		0.138	
BIC	3,414		3,357			3,399		3,343			1,194		1,149			1,197		1,144	
Data Source: 1990 U.S. Census 5% Public Use File and American Community Survey 2008-12 (Ruggles et al. 2014)																			
*Respondents residing with families whose total income are at or below the federally established poverty threshold (based on family size and composition) are treated as poor here.																			

Figure 1. Racial Identification by National Origins across First and Second Generation African Immigrant Cohorts



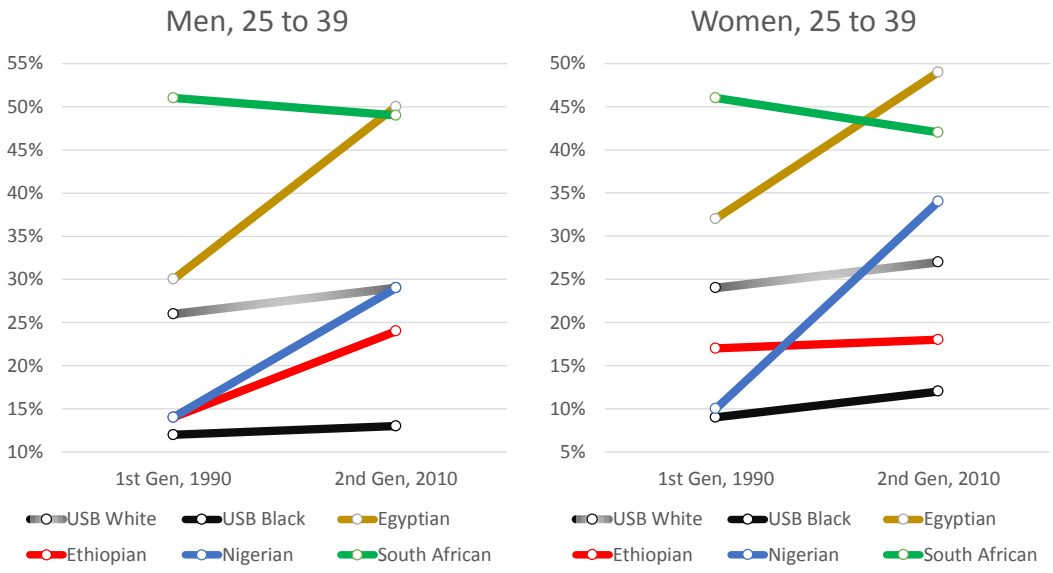
Data Source: 1990 U.S. Census 5% Public Use File and 2008-2012 American Community Survey Cumulative File (Ruggles et al 2014)
Notes: The first (immigrant) generation comprises men and women 25 to 39 years of age who were born in African countries but immigrated to the U.S. before 1990; the second generation comprises men and women 25 to 39 years of age who were born in the U.S. but who identified a specific African ancestry in 2008-2012.

Figure 2. Median Personal Income across Generations of African Immigrants, 1990-2010



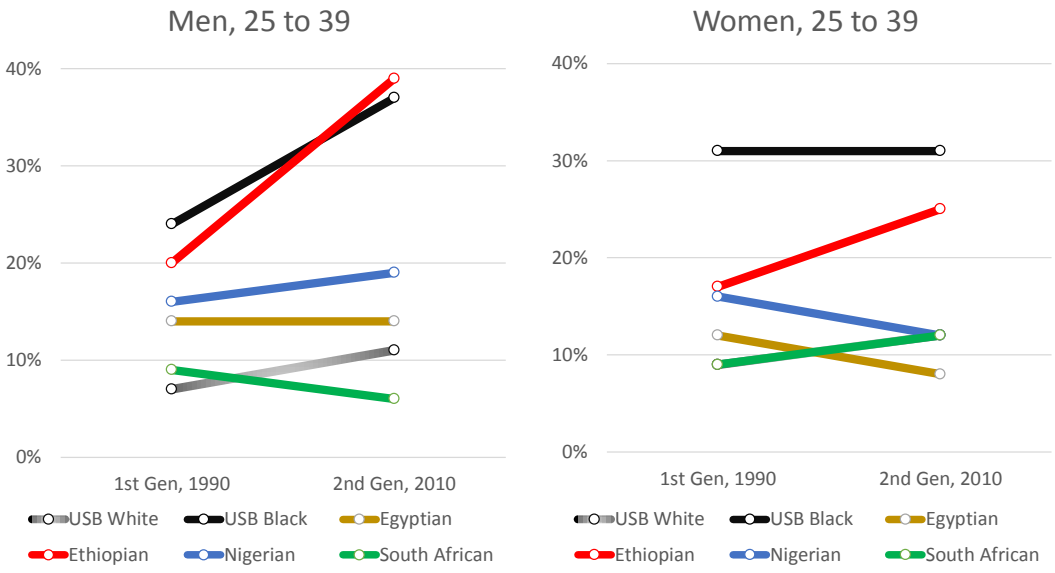
Data Source: 1990 U.S. Census 5% Public Use File and 2008-2012 American Community Survey Cumulative File (Ruggles et al 2014)
Notes: The first (immigrant) generation comprises men and women 25 to 39 years of age who were born in African countries but who immigrated to the U.S. before 1990; the second generation comprises men and women 25 to 39 years of age who were born in the U.S. but who identified a specific African ancestry in 2008-2012; U.S. born White and Black non-Hispanics serve as reference groups.

Figure 3. Affluence across Generations of African Immigrants, 1990-2010



Data Source: 1990 U.S. Census 5% Public Use File and 2008-2012 American Community Survey Cumulative File (Ruggles et al 2014)
Notes: The first (immigrant) generation comprises men and women 25 to 39 years of age who were born in African countries but who immigrated to the U.S. before 1990; the second generation comprises men and women 25 to 39 years of age who were born in the U.S. but who identified a specific African ancestry in 2008-2012; U.S. born White and Black non-Hispanics serve as reference groups.

Figure 4. Poverty across Generations of African Immigrants, 1990-2010



Data Source: 1990 U.S. Census 5% Public Use File and 2008-2012 American Community Survey Cumulative File (Ruggles et al 2014)
Notes: The first (immigrant) generation comprises men and women 25 to 39 years of age who were born in African countries but who immigrated to the U.S. before 1990; the second generation comprises men and women 25 to 39 years of age who were born in the U.S. but who identified a specific African ancestry in 2008-2012; U.S. born White and Black non-Hispanics serve as reference groups.

[i] Bashi and McDaniel (1996) argue that racialization is an inherent part of assimilation.

[ii] To this point, little research has been done on racial earnings gaps among African immigrant women in the U.S.

[iii] 10.7% of American Community Survey respondents did not respond when asked the open ended question, "What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?"

[iv] This is favorable to comparing the 25 to 39 year old members of the African second generation in 2010 to the 45 to 59 year olds of their parents' generation who, by 2010, had benefitted from 20 additional years to boost their socioeconomic attainments or return migrate.

[v] The very interesting intergenerational shifts in racial identification (particularly among Ethiopians) are beyond the scope of this paper.

[vi] The 1990 income figures are adjusted using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index to reflect 2010 values for purposes of comparison.