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Blackness is not a monolith: Deconstructing Black Identities in the Higher Education Setting

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**Blackness is not a monolith:
Deconstructing Black Identities
in the Higher Education Setting.**

(Sociology of The Black Experience)

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Abstract

A Pew research study found that one in five Black people in America are immigrants or are children of immigrants. We see the rise of immigration, but the vast majority of studies still treat Black people as a monolith. Much research on the “Black experience” never specifies the ethnic background of those they are interviewing and when speaking about race it conflates the experiences without giving context to why those experiences are different. Much research uses Black people or African Americans hide behind the clear distinction of those they interview. For my project I am studying, How Black immigrants and Native Black Americans experience higher education differs and why. I highlight three main ideas that occurred regularly within the literature I researched. 1. These ways that American societies view these two groups and how it affects their experience in higher education. 2. The discussion around high admission and attainment rates of Black immigrants in higher education and the low rates of Native Black Americans in higher education. 3. The way both communities individually see themselves and the impact of the first two points on these communities. I review 20 sources on where research about these communities is currently at academically, how well the studies are conducted, and the value of the information that we learn from it. With that information, we can start the conversation and later systematic change, on how to give different groups of Black people the different support that is needed to be successful in higher education.

Introduction:

The Hart-Cellar Immigration Reform act of 1965 helped to partially get rid of the preference for European immigrants. It also restricted the number of immigrants from North and South Asia. This led to preference being shown for East Asian and African immigrants who had “professional skills”, causing the rise of the Black population to increase by 25% between 1990-2000 solely because of African immigration (Bennet and Lutz, 2009). A lot of African immigrants at that time were well-educated and held to a higher standard, especially when compared to Native Black Americans (Pierre, 2004). Later on, Black immigrants were entering from all over for several reasons such as being refugees coming from harsh conditions. Between 2000 and 2019 Pew Research conducted a study that showed that the top five places that Black people immigrated from were Jamaica, Haiti, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and the Dominican Republic. About 10% of Black people in the U.S. are immigrants, and 58% of Black immigrants immigrated in 2000 or later. At the time of the study, there was an influx of Black immigrants in

America, between 70,000 and 76,000. The majority of these communities settled in the Southern region of America (42%), 36% immigrated to the Northeast region, 11% went to the Midwest, and 10% to the Western region. Another Pew research looked at the areas with high demographics of Native Black Americans. The data showed that the places Black immigrants settled in were in alignment with where Black people already resided. The study shows that 56% of Native Black people live in the South and 17% live in Northeast America. Despite this many studies about Black people and their experiences with race often do not mention country of origin, immigrant status, or ethnicity. In my search for sources, I found that it was rare for academics to distinguish a person's place of origin. The 65 sources I have looked at so far rarely mention a participant's ethnicity, even when studying Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This is problematic because despite living in similar areas and having some intersectional racial experiences Black immigrants and Native Black Americans have differing experiences. These experiences are not limited to and include, racial, familial, historical, and academic.

In the 1960s elite schools in the United States began to prescribe “affirmative action” in order to increase minority enrollment in higher education. This included women, Latinx people, Asian people, and Black people. Right after the brinks of the civil rights movement that fought to get rid of the oppressive Jim Crow laws. Affirmative action quickly not only was supporting those oppressed for generations but those who immigrated to this country for an array of reasons. According to the U.S. Bureau of the census in 2004, 25% of all Black immigrants 25 years and older have a bachelor's degree compared to 16% of Native-born Black people. Furthermore, one study that interviewed Black students on their ethnicity and identity (working on this part) revealed that within their sample size for Native-born Black college students, racial incidents are motivators for success and college graduation while for Black immigrants it is the success of the “American dream” and their ethnicity that motivates them. Due to the lack of a historical relationship between American slavery and the oppressive systems that came after in America, Black immigrants have an alternate understanding of racism and racial experiences in contrast to Black Americans, which in turn affects their academic experience and success.

In the 1960s elite schools in the United States began to prescribe “affirmative action” to increase minority enrollment in higher education. This included women, Latinx people, Asian people, and Black people. Affirmative action was a reaction to many of the issues that the Civil rights movement brought attention to. One was the horrible Jim Crow laws that segregated and

subjugated Black people to a permanent second-hand status within American society. This segregation was prominent within education and it was not until integration and later affirmative action that America witnessed Black people in predominantly White institutions(PWI).

Affirmative action, although started with racial issues, formed into an executive order that supported anyone who was a minority under the eyes of the law. This included Black immigrants. Although later Black immigrants would benefit from a lot of race-based programs that were created to close the opportunity gaps between Native Black Americans, their experiences in America were proven to have a different lens when compared to Native Black Americans.

According to the U.S. Bureau of the census in 2004, 25% of all Black immigrants 25 years and older have a bachelor's degree. compared to 16% of "Native-born Black people". One study that interviewed Black students on their ethnicity and identity revealed that within their sample size for Native-born Black college students, racial incidents are motivators for success and college graduation while for Black immigrants it is the success of the “American dream” and their ethnicity that motivates them(Pierre, 2004).

Due to the lack of a historical relationship between American slavery and the oppressive systems that came after in America, Black immigrants have an alternate understanding of racism and racial experiences in contrast to Black Americans, which in turn affects their academic experience and success in higher education.

This lit review is solely to look at the resources that have taken time to look at and compare these two groups. Black people are often seen as a monolith but individual experiences vary. Higher education is a space where Black students need varying levels of support to succeed and yet there is little insight into the varying needs of foreign-born Black students compared to Native Black Americans.

Approach

I am doing a preliminary lit review of the sources that I have collected. I started with 70-plus sources. To collect these sources, I used Jstor and Dubsearch and other internet resources provided by my college Whittier College. The majority of these sources were peer-reviewed journal articles, a couple is Pew Research and one is a conversation collected by Times

Magazine about a Reunion at Harvard. I used Keywords such as *Black immigrant, African American, Black American, native-born Black American, higher education, colleges, attainability rates, impacts of race in higher education in the US, assimilation, code-switching, undergraduates, success rates, degree attainable, mental health effects of racism* When conducting my research and combinations of these keywords.

Within the 70 I eliminated most of them. The biggest reason for the elimination was that the articles were not specific to my topic. Often the journal articles would be researching other grade levels, topics, and other countries. Another reason that I eliminated sources was that they were too old. I attempted to use sources that were done after 2000 and before that were eliminated. The last few were eliminated due to the sample size and relevance to my research questions.

Framing questions and Review

When looking at articles many questions guided my review

1. What works are out there that discuss college attainability rates and degree attainable rates for these different communities? Are there reasons for this within these works?
2. Have Scholars looked to see if there are significant differences in how Black immigrants and Native Black Americans see race? How do these racial points of view affect academic success? How does it affect mental health?
3. What studies look at the support needed for these communities separately in higher education?

The overall question I used to frame my search and in turn my review was

"In what ways do the experiences of Black immigrants and Black Americans in higher education differ and what can we learn from these differences?"

Analysis

The Journal articles I found bring attention to many intersections of Black Immigrants and Black Americans in higher education. Multiple sources will start by stating the fact that Black immigrants compose 9% of the black population in America which is 3.8 million black immigrants in the USA. More than 1 million Black people have at least one immigrant parent. 12% of Black undergraduates are immigrants(Daoud Et al. 2018). This is important to gain a scope of the vast amount of Black immigrants in America which allows us to see that this topic is

not a light conversation and that there is a significant impact. While analyzing the sources I found many recurring themes but I limited it down to three main subjects;

1) The way American society and white systems see and treat Black immigrants and Native Black Americans; and the effect that these views/actions affect these communities.

2) There is a constant recurrence and conversation, and frustration about the over-representation of Black immigrants within higher education and beyond.

3) How Native Black Americans and Black immigrants see themselves and their identities is different from how society sees them. The impact stereotypes have on these communities' view of themselves.

1)

Critical Race Theory Methodology brings attention to the fact that every system in America is created through a white lens. Every system in America was created to benefit White men. This leads to my main point that the perception of these communities is not solely based on what they think of themselves but instead heavily based on how society views them. A study that looks at the employability of Native-born Black American names, Black immigrant names, and white names in a factor of employability shows us that there is bias against Native Black Americans. The study found that Black American names are less likely to be selected for an interview and employed. The study shows that a stereotype of Black immigrants is that they are seen as more hard-working and less entitled than native-born Black Americans.

Furthermore, specifically in this study, it is shown that Black Africans are seen as superior. The study gave an example of this stereotype in actuality. Compared to white people Black Americans are seen as having less academic ability and being less qualified. In contrast, Black Africans are seen as hardworking and to some less entitled than Black Americans (Howard, Bogella, 2020). Although this study is not in college it brings attention to stereotypes that show up throughout my sources in different manners, it highlights the lifelong implications caused by the way that Native Black Americans are seen in comparison to other groups. A study that looks at the correlation between attendance and the perception of Native Black Americans and Black immigrants corroborates the theme of how white people perceive Black immigrants. The journal article states that White people have a better relationship with Black immigrants than

Native Black Americans which can be the cause for the decrease in jobs available for Black immigrants in the labor market(Bennet and Lutz, 2009).

Another study looked at the dynamics between Black immigrants and Native Black American college students in STEM. The study had students react to each other's work habits and many of the Native Black students reported that Black Immigrants worked harder academically. In comparison, Black immigrants pointed out that the Asian immigrants in their opinion did the best work (Mwangi Et al, 2023). Another study that looked at the reasons for the high amount of Black immigrants at selective colleges in comparison to Black Natives brought attention to the possible reasons for such high rates of Black immigrants in higher education. This Journal article highlighted the fact that researchers who have studied the integration (assimilation) of Black immigrants have shown that white people have greater comfort around Black immigrants in comparison to Native Black Americans. The study goes as far as saying that white people and Black immigrants seem more polite, attentive, and pleasant (Massey Et al, 2007).

The same study also highlights that Black immigrants tend to live in more diverse areas and attend private school before college which then leads to an easier time assimilating to whiteness(Massey Et al, 2007). It was found that Black immigrant culture has a big impact on their education. So much so that Black immigrants were More likely to strive to attend Harvard due to their family's immigrant heritage (Mwangi, English 2017). What we also see in the study by Howard and Bogella is that Native Black Americans view Black immigrants as hardworking but this does not deter them from believing they are hardworking too. This study shows the cohesive work and ways that these two communities are learning from each other when whiteness is not the main focus or viewpoint. The study shows that Black American STEM students despite seeing Black immigrants as harder working or smarter did not see themselves as less capable. The New York Times article "Top colleges take more Black students but which ones?" by Sara Rimer and Karen W. Arson even described Black immigrants as a "highly motivated, self-selected group"(Rimer, Arson,2014) when discussing if Black immigrants should be beneficiaries of Affirmative action.

During my research, this brought up the question of how much of the inequality between these communities is another model minority issue where white supremacy is holding Black immigrants on a pedestal which in turn creates resentment and misinformation within these

communities, or do Black immigrants truly believe they are better? The journal article “Immigrants and African Americans” states that immigrants are achieving whiteness by separating themselves from Black Americans (Waters, Kasinitz, and Asad, 2014).

In the journal article "Black Immigrants in the United States and the ‘Cultural Narratives’ Pierre dives into the ways that the narrative of Black Americans and Black immigrants are being compared in a way that is surface level and the many complexities of these communities are not being tackled. Pierre refers us to a conservative economist news magazine that used the ways that Black immigrants have been successful as a weapon against Native Black Americans when proving his argument. The article asks the reason why Black immigrants do better than Black people born in America and then continues to respond to its question by stating cultural values that Black immigrants have to make them more likely to be entrepreneurial is the reason behind this gap. This Magazine article according to Pierre was a spark of many other articles that complimented African and Black immigrants for the success that was being highlighted in America. This journal article beautifully explains the ways that a Black immigrant's ethnicity is used as a weapon and an example to reiterate racist systems and pit Black Native Americans against Black immigrants.

The monolithic way of Lumping Black people together is rooted in a system that was created for white people. When White people started immigrating here ethnicity was very distinct and the closer you got to whiteness (culturally) the more privileges that came to be. The Irish and Jewish people in America learned that assimilation is a privilege and they had the white skin to pass and eventually have the privilege their English peers were born with. Black people have a very different history and by lumping all Black people together there is a level of erasure of the history that happens based on a system of assimilation that Black immigrants and Native Black Americans will never benefit from. Black people will never be white but by clumping these groups together and highlighting certain success stories of Black immigrants painting the portrait of progress, accountability can be removed. This also leads to the idea that assimilation for European immigrants equated to upward mobility but if you are Black in America your race is not erasable, assimilation is an unlikely success, no matter how hard you try to assimilate. For Black immigrants, assimilation was not an option because assimilation would be closer to Native Black Americans and it is downward mobility. Black immigrants, if assimilating to Native Black Americans would according to this article adopt the internalized racist system(Pierre, 2004. We

can see this in second-generation immigrants who grow up within the system. Black immigrants come to America learning about the negative stereotypes so assimilating with Black Americans according to this study means adopting negative behaviors about the American system and getting further away from the American dream. This article also shows that even Black Americans who assimilate and are able to build a better economic life for themselves tend to have to shed anything cultural and assimilate into white culture. This further reiterates that success does not equate to Blackness, but by getting as close to whiteness as you can by shedding your culture which is a “culture of poverty” Black immigrants can get closer to privilege (Pierre,2004).

Black immigrants and Black Americans are working against oppressive systems but the oppressive systems at times work harder to pit them against each other. The article gives the example that “Black immigrants are simultaneously racialized and inscribed also as culturally deficient”. This is done by the depiction of the countries Black immigrants are from. When being praised for the success that is found in America it is done as an almost “model minority” jab at Black Americans and Black immigrants are used as success stories. Used to create a narrative that embeds the idea that Black immigrants came from horrible poverty, and no rights and came to America to find the American dream. A narrative that is heavily internalized within the community. This narrative also voids the implication of colonialism and imperialism. Many Black immigrants have been affected by these historic atrocities and attempted ones, but giving them a model minority withdraws America from any wrongdoings and paints a success story that simultaneously can be used to compare and shame Native Black Americans.

Black immigrant ethnicity is an undercoated language to distinguish the cultural norm and in turn, reinforces Black Americans' perceived inferiority. Pierre then brings up that despite this Black people are seen as hegemonically and all the systems are based upon race in America so even with cultural distinctions are being affected by the racist systems in America.

2)

Another recurring topic I found within my sources is the attention to the disproportionate amount of Black immigrants in higher education in comparison to Black Americans. Many sources today applaud colleges for the rise in diversity within the last decade but race is the sole measurement. The fact is that out of all high school graduates, 75.1 % of Black immigrants are

enrolled in college, 72.5% of whites, and 60.2% of Native-born Black Americans (Waters, Kasinitz, and Asad, 2014). Additionally, when looking at selective colleges Black immigrants are disproportionately more represented. Despite this colleges count these changes as systematic and historical changes. National Longitudinal Survey of Freshman (NLSF) showed that within 28 colleges Black freshmen were attending 27% were first or second-generation immigrants which is double their share within the Black population. This study sample size included 1,052 Black people, 949 white people and 998 Asians, and 916 Latino people. These students were followed for four years 200-2003 and there was a 95% rate of follow-ups the first year, 89 the second, 84 the third, and 80 the last year. This study highlights the ways that Black immigrants are overrepresented showing that in private colleges specifically, 29% of Black students entering college were of immigrant origin and 23% in public colleges were of immigrant origin. In the 10 most selective colleges Black immigrants made up 36% of all Black students. In comparison in the least selective colleges Black immigrants made up 24% of all Black students. Furthermore, this disparity increases when looking at ivy league schools that are shown in the NLSF survey showing that Black students with immigrant origin make up 41% of all Black students in colleges such as Yale, Princeton, and Columbia(Massey Et al, 2007).

In 2005-2009 28% of Black African immigrants had some college degree, 23% had a four-year college degree, and 15% post a graduate degree. In comparison, Black Caribbean immigrants have 26% some college degrees, 13 % four-year college degrees, and 7% post-graduate degrees. Native Black Americans have 31% of some college degrees, 10% of four-year college degrees, and 5% of post-graduate degrees (Waters, Kasinitz, and Asad, 2014). Furthermore, according to Pew Research in 2013, Black immigrants' median household income was 43,800 compared to Black Americans' 33,500; 42% of Black Americans were homeowners compared to 40% of Black immigrants, and 19% of Black immigrants live below the poverty line compared to 28% of Black Americans. These findings draw a correlation between education and success. These findings also show that active parts of Black people's lives in the Americas are affected by how long they have been in America including the historical experiences of each community.

Many institutions that were put in to close the gap between Black and white communities post-civil war are being used by Black immigrants. Frustration over this idea is shared by many. Water, Kinintz, and Asad bring up the ways that Black immigrants, although experiencing the

daily hardships of racism “inherit the scars and handicaps of a long history of racial exclusion and discrimination ”(382). I am an immigrant and have benefitted from resources that were created to support Native Black Americans close the equality gap. Y-scholars prepared me and other Black students for college but it was made to close the education gap at my High School.

Another study that highlights college attendance within these communities found using data from NELS, a nationally representative sample generated from 1000 schools and 24,000 plus students found that 88.1% of Native Black Americans went to college but all the Black immigrants within that study went to college. They also found that first-generation and second-generation Black immigrants are 7.6 times more likely to go to selective colleges. Like the previous studies mentioned, this study also corroborated the theory that a way of getting social mobility for Black immigrants is accessing “minority cultures of mobility” which is using Native Black American institutions and support systems to access selective colleges (Bennet and Lutz, 2009).

Another study looks at the benefits of Black immigrants and if they should be beneficiaries of resources such as affirmative action. Some findings were that Black immigrants do benefit from the fact that they are more likely to have one parent (usually the father) that went to college. Despite this, the privilege of that according to the study is not prominent in higher education. The study also looked at the achievement college students had. Both Black immigrants and Black Americans have significantly lower grades compared to white people in their sophomore year and almost identically less. This shows that having higher educated fathers is not an advantage once in college. The writers of this study concluded that in terms of most indicators Black immigrants and Black Americans are identical. (Massey Et al, 2007). This argument was contradicted by another study “WE DON’T ALL LOOK: The Academic Performance of Black Student Populations at Elite Colleges” which argues that Black immigrants no matter the generation perform better than Native Black Americans and one reason could be because of parents' prior education. The study states that students with parents who had advanced college degrees had higher GPAs in high school and college. Other important factors that affected a student's GPAs are; Black students who went to segregated high schools had lower GPAs, and Black students who had more Latino, Asian, and white friends had higher GPAs. This study also disagrees with Massey on the impact level of going to a private school on the success of the college, where this study shows that if you had access to a better school you will have a

better GPA in college. This study also shows that if you live in a segregated area that is predominantly minority you will most likely have a lower GPA, and African students were 23% less likely to live in predominantly minority homes compared to 40% Afro-Caribbean and 36 % Native Black American (Byrd, Brunn-Bevel, and Sexton, 2014).

The influence of family and community is not limited to just the latter. Family is an indicator of success and familial support is a huge indicator of college achievement. Not only is the education level affirmative to success but family economic status impacts college attainment and the environment that students grow up in. One study that looks at the influence of poverty on Black immigrants, Black Americans, and Non-Black immigrant families found that Children of Black immigrants are more likely to live in two-parent households than Native Black Americans. The study also found that Native Black Americans are about twice as likely to live in a single-parent household than immigrant groups as a whole and also are more likely to live in poverty than immigrant groups. Children that are Black immigrants that have a single parent have the highest risk for poverty, the likelihood is double Black Americans, but Native Black Americans are more likely to have single parents (Thomas, 2011). This corroborates the previous study which shows that Black immigrants have more access to private schools which in turn benefits them in college. (Massey Et al, 2007). This is not to say Black immigrants do not suffer from poverty. When looking at just the immigrant groups there are more single parents among Black immigrants than among other groups. Poverty in America is not monolithic just like the Black immigrant experiences Black children living in refugee families have a higher risk of poverty than non-refugee families which means the circumstance of immigration affects your success in America.

According to the US Bureau of the Census in 2004 Black immigrants who were over the age of 25 had a 25% chance of attaining a bachelor's degree compared to 16% of native-born Black Americans. African immigrants are achieving a lot more than other Black ethnicities. The median income is over 45 thousand dollars, compared to 41 thousand for afro Caribbean and 36 thousand for Native-born Black Americans. Black immigrant groups comprise 43.1 percent Caribbean, 28.6 percent African, 7.4 percent Latin American, and 20.8 percent other (Massey Et al, 2007). The reason for these findings is unclear. The only hypothesis I have is that the longer that you are in America the more harm is affected by racial systems. This is corroborated by a study that looks at the role of social identity and academic outcome. In this

study, they found that race is not as effective for someone who is a first-generation immigrant, and racism does not affect a first-generation immigrant's academic drive. Compared to second-generation Black immigrants and Native Black American racial incidents affect academic success (Daoud Et al, 2018).

The discussion about who Affirmative action was designed for and should be included is a theme in itself that came up in multiple sources. At a college reunion in 2004, Sara Rimer and Karen W. Aronson's professors bring up the fact that although 8% of Harvard students in 2004 were Black $\frac{2}{3}$ of these students were West Indian, and African immigrants or second-generation immigrants and children of biracial couples. $\frac{2}{3}$ of about 530 students is 353/530 leaving only 116.6 from families where all four grandparents were born in America. These students were descendants of slaves (Rimer, Arson,2014). The reunion that was discussing these disparities highlighted the fact that one-third of students were the ones who were descendants of slaves and in turn were affected generationally by the legacy of Jim crow, segregation, mass incarceration, and the decades of racism that was repackaged in different names and in turn who were supposed to benefit from affirmative action. This conversation brought to light the fact that most institutions have said that they do not look into the origins of their Black students and treat them monolithically as Black.

Not only does this article urge higher education to not allow Native Black students to be left behind but it holds colleges accountable for the fact that they accept Black immigrants with higher SAT scores. The article brings in Mary C. Waters a chairman of sociology in the department at Harvard who has studied west indian immigrants and she lays out some of the reasons for the higher success rates when compared to Black Americans. One of the reasons is that many black immigrants come from majority-Black countries which means they are less “psychologically handicapped” by the generational impact of race. The discussion on who should benefit from affirmative action is part of a larger conversation that highlights the limited resources for Black people as a whole. Affirmative action is Non existent in many states but there are programs to support Black students which are used by Black immigrant students. Many feel that programs created for Native Black Americans should stay to support that demographic only, due to the over-representation of Black immigrants in higher education.

3)

The different point of view on these communities was significant but more significant was how these communities saw themselves. Racial identity is foreign to a lot of us before coming to America. This is not to say there are no effects of racism in our countries. We are indoctrinated by colorism through the media and many other Black immigrant countries have suffered the fate of colonization, but being in a homogenous country we do not experience the everyday effects of our race in society. It is a culture shock when we immigrated here. For many Black immigrants, there is no acknowledgment that our race impacts the way others treat us, and it's not until something bad happens that we are hit with the weight of our skin. We see this in the article by Violet Johnson which highlights the experiences of Black immigrants who are having to come to terms with racial violence. In this article, three racial incidents happened:” an Ethiopian man was attacked by a skinhead”, “a Haitian security guard was tortured by the police” and an “unarmed West African gunned down by a special unit”. Johnson brings attention to the fact that the racial aspect of these incidents is not mentioned when being reported in the Newspaper. The fact is that looking at this article would not have been offensive to any of these men because ethnicity is something that Black immigrants are more identified by before race (Johnson, 2023). According to a different study that measures ethnic and racial identity and how it plays a part in the way Black immigrants and Native Black Americans see themselves and in turn their success; Black immigrant students according to this article understood the concept of race almost sociologically but did not speak as often the impacts that race had on them compared to their second-generation immigrants and Native-born Black students. These communities in contrast spoke heavily on how the racial dynamic has affected them and the challenges they faced due to their racial identity. This study looks at academic identification which is the relationship between self-esteem and academic outcomes. Those who have higher levels of academic identification value academic achievement more and in turn are more motivated academically. Black students' racial identity can affect their academic identification and in turn their motivation and then their success. Academic achievement is also affected by stereotype threat so if first gen immigrants are more removed From their racial identity a stereotype relating to their race may not impact them as much as native-born students and in turn, will not affect their academic achievement when compared to Native Black Americans or second-generation immigrants(Daoud Et al, 2018). The effects of racism are harmful, the Journal of Negro Education brings attention to the effects of campus racial climate and the effects of

microaggressions. Not only does it affect your academics but it instills feelings of self-doubt and isolation; furthermore a study done by this journal article found that multiple Black students were so affected by racism and microaggressions it would lead them to leave the school.(Solorzano, Ceja, Yosso, 2000). The effects of the racist system are very internal even when it comes to grades. Black immigrants tend to compare their academic achievement to students in their home countries while Black Native Americans compare their academic achievement to white people in the USA because of the historical impacts of racial inequality. This allows Black immigrants to be somewhat removed from race, especially on the impact of their academics(Byrd, Brunn-Bevel, and Sexton, 2014).

Students' drive and motivation were often connected to their race and ethnicity although the way in which it played a part was different. Native-born black students' race was a motivator to overcome racial bias and barriers. Native-born black students tended to want to go against stereotypes (external forces). Students with an immigrant background there was a strong connection to an immigrant identity and the motivator was to achieve the American dream. All participants born in the U.S. saw race as a significant part of their identity and in turn a strong motivator for success (Mwangu, English, 2017). The study “Being All of me: Black students negotiating multiple identities” also corroborated Black American students' views on race. Stewart researched through interviews how Black students navigated college in predominantly white institutions and how their identities informed them but also limited them through their junior and senior years of college. This study was to see how race, gender, and class intersected for these students. Despite the sample size being five students, Stewart was able to learn that race was a motivator for success for these students. Stewart also found how harmful racial incidents affected the students' academics(Stewart, 2018). In contrast, many second-generation and native-born students felt the extra burden to perform well to prove that they are just as good as their white counterparts. Many first-generation immigrants saw succeeding in school as a cultural value that is instilled within the community(Daoud Et al, 2018). A different approach is that Black immigrants experience racism but like Black Americans and second-generation black immigrants in the previous study leads to educational success (Mwangu, English, 2017).

Even among Black immigrants access to privileges is not monolithic. Black immigrants; who came from privileged backgrounds were more likely to succeed within the education system

as a whole compared to Black immigrants who came to this country as a refugee (Mwangu, English, 2017).

This historical impact on students before college impacts their experiences at college. Since the year 2000 60% of black Americans live under segregation and 40% live in hypersegregation. Black Americans have had high levels of violence and exposure to stress-induced cognitive development due to long-term exposure and dimension, memory attention, and frustration (Charles, Dinwiddie, and Massey, 2004). A study that looks at the correlation between segregation, family stress, and academic performance found that the level of segregation affects your grade point average. Using the national longitudinal survey of freshmen, 4,000 Black Americans, Latinos, and whites from 2000-2001 into the first 2 years of college, the greatest exposure to death happened to Black Americans from segregated areas within those two years. 9% reported the death of an immediate family member, 37% distant relatives, and 19% a friend. Over 44% of Native Black Americans have to deal with death compared to 36% of those in integrated neighborhoods and 30% of white students. The study also looked at stress levels such as a family member being harassed by the police. The study found that 57% of Native Black Americans from segregated neighborhoods have to deal with stress compared to 49% of Latinos, 37% of Asian, and 43% of white. They also intersected the level of integration which showed that 55% dealt with stress from a mixed neighborhood and 50% dealt with stress from an integrated neighborhood. They then intersected stress and segregation with grade point averages in college. White students had a 3.33-grade point average, Latinos had 3.11 African Americans had a 2.98 after three terms of college (Charles, Dinwiddie, and Massey, 2004). By not looking at Black immigrants this study was able to highlight the correlation between a historically oppressive system and the effects that the aftermath has today. More so it highlights the ways that Black immigrants can limit the level of impact they receive due to being removed from these systems. The previous studies showed that Black immigrants are more integrated than Black Americans and the effects of that are different benefits.

Many of the studies that have been referenced above have brought attention to the fact that Black natives and Black immigrants live different experiences not only within America but specifically in higher education. One way studies have shown this is by highlighting the higher rates of Black immigrants in higher education. Although education is a small part of the experience of life it's a good indicator of the kind of life you are able to live. A study conducted

by Andre Perry (a professor at Washington University and expert on racial issues in America) and the Brookings institution, a public policy think tank in DC with colleague Jonathan Rothwell and the NAACP did a study to figure out the places where Black people are doing well in America to learn from them. Using a Black progress Index created by them to push the non-monolithic thinking that is so important in this review. This review has found that Black adults 25 years and over with a bachelor's degree have longer lives. The more degrees the merrier their lives will be. This is because higher education leads to higher income, safety, government policy, and more resources. Areas with high college attainment such as the DC area, and Virginia which have higher rates of college attainment have shown life expectancy for Black adults. Howard county in Maryland has a 54 percent college attainment a has a life expectancy of 70.4 years and Loudoun county in Virginia which has a college attainment rate of 51% has an average lifespan of 82.4 years. When comparing it to places of low attainment such as Florida baker county which has an attainment rate of 4.4% with a black life expectancy of 76.4 and Butts county Atlanta which also has a 4.4% attainment rate has a life expectancy of 73.8 years. Further, this study shows that areas that have Black fathers in the home tend to have more prosperous households. According to the census bureau, 57% of Black children are not living with their fathers and Black fathers who have the same situations as white fathers spend the same amount of time but when away their kids tend to engage in less positive opportunities. Lastly, this study showed us Foreign born Black adults have longer life expectancies one reason being that they spend less time living within the American system is shown to be the reason. Racism in America has been shown to reduce Black Americans' lives so less time in it results in a higher life expectancy (Perry, and Rothwell, 2022).

This study highlights two crucial ideas within this lit review. A pattern we have seen is that Black immigrants have higher rates of college attainment and of having a father in the home. This in turn through this study is shown to have a high life expectancy. This further proves the point that these communities' struggles are not monolithic, that the benefits of college are clear as day, and that living within a racist system is slowly killing Native Black lives. Black Americans are having different experiences in college leading to lower attainment which affects how long they live.

Conclusion

The big questions I wanted to answer at the beginning of my lit review were as follows,

In what ways do the experiences of Black immigrants and Black Americans in higher education differ and what can we learn from these differences? Within this big question, I wanted to focus on college attainability, the viewpoint of race in higher education among Black Americans and Black immigrants, and what studies are out there that promote individual support for each community.

Within the first weeks of researching it was clear to me all my questions would not be answered. This caused me to change my focus to what information I am learning about Black immigrants and Native Black Americans in higher education. This research taught me about where our studies and literature on Black immigrants and Black Americans in higher education stands today.

Reading this lit review I hope you learn that, These communities exist under White supremacy. The success and the lack of success are deliberate and it showcases that the American system is working in the way it was created. I was able to analyze using the Journal articles How Black immigrants and Black Americans are viewed and how that viewpoint is through a racialized/colonial lens. A significant takeaway from this lit review is the complexities that cause Black immigrants and Black Americans to have little power and are pitted against each other to fight for bare minimum status within our society.

Black people are not a monolith There is a disparity between Black immigrants and Black Americans not only in education but in general. There is also a disparity between Black immigrants and white people. Both these communities deserve structure put in place that allows them the same chance that many white people in America benefit from. Instead many are fighting over the same support systems and due to many factors Black immigrants are succeeding while Native Black Americans are falling behind. Black people in general and in multiple different communities need different things. Another takeaway from this lit review is that historical context matters and the academic world has not come as far as we think. Mary Waters, the chairman of the sociology department at Harvard pointed out when speaking about affirmative action that “ If it's about getting black faces at Harvard, then you're doing fine. If it's about making up for 200 to 500 years of slavery in this country and its aftermath, then you're not doing well. And if it's about having diversity that includes African-Americans from the South or

inner-city high schools, then you're not doing well, either.” Black Americans deserve the promises that were made for racial and ethnic equality.

A limitation I ran into during my Lit review is there is not enough good research out there. I emphasize the good because there is limited research out there but not all of it is good. For example, in *Being All of Me: Black Students Negotiating Multiple Identities* although a good attempt and having the right ideas were little help. The study itself held so much importance and yet their sample size was five students. The information gained from these students felt too much like a singular narrative instead of a case study. We can always learn from a case study but many studies on this topic are very minimal like this. Another limitation I ran into is the lack of research that has been conducted about certain intersectionalities of this topic. Black immigrants although the most educated immigrant group are the least studied immigrant group. Black American although studied in higher education and the intersection of race the studies rarely specify ethnicity and only race. This is harmful and is monolithic thinking. There are few studies on the experience of Black immigrants and black Americans in higher education. The research was strenuous and I read a lot of research that was irrelevant because of the specificity of this topic; and the lack of research. Lastly, a lot of my sources used the same sources to argue their points. I would find the same sources over and over again, the same studies. This further highlights how little research has been done within this study.

This research is so important. Many institutions of higher education promote diversity and hope to create a space with many different points of view that can be heard and learned. This mission is not plausible if the experience of Black students is being reduced to a very limited experience. The lack of research on these communities and the lack of action on giving Black immigrants and Native Black Americans the support system needed for their communities shows the lack of value these communities are held to. Colleges are promoting a kind of diversity that is not well-rounded, rarely seen and instead is performative.

In the future, I hope to conduct my study with a diverse array of participants. I want to conduct interviews but also a large quantitative data set to answer larger questions. The core of this work is to learn the ways these communities want to be supported so they can have the most success in academia. We know some information already which is resources but before those resources are made I believe data needs to directly show the impact that can be made and the dire

need for resources that support Black immigrants and Native Black Americans separately with a goal for both to succeed in attaining higher education.

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