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Abstract

Why do some immigrant minorities in the developing world integrate into their host societies whereas others face exclusion and hostility? This article offers new insights on the determinants of political identity and group relations in ethnically diverse societies through the lens of South-to-South migration. Using original data from surveys and interviews collected during 12 months of field research in West Africa and a unique empirical strategy that allows for single-group cross-country and single-country cross-group comparisons, this article tests the relationship between cultural proximity and immigrant exclusion. The analysis indicates that cultural similarities between immigrants and their hosts may limit immigrant integration because they motivate community leaders to highlight group boundaries. The results shed light on immigrant exclusion in Africa and contribute to the debate on the determinants of political identity in ethnically diverse societies.

Keywords

ethnicity, migration, violence, Africa

Half of all international migrants settle in the developing world, including 10% in sub-Saharan Africa, where the immigrant experience covers a wide range of outcomes.¹ Although a growing body of work informs our understanding

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of the origins and consequences of prejudice against immigrant minorities in industrialized nations (Kitschelt, 1997; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, & Prior, 2004; Sniderman, Peri, de Figueiredo, & Piazza, 2000), we know little about the dynamics that govern relations between immigrant minorities and host populations in developing countries. An overview of expulsion events in sub-Saharan Africa since 1960 indicates that immigrants face insecurity but that exclusionary reactions to immigrants vary by host country and immigrant group.² For example, Nigerian Hausas in Ghana's capital, Accra, have integrated within the society's Muslim minority, to the point that many indigenous Ghanaians consider the Hausa language a native Ghanaian language and Hausas a native Ghanaian people. In contrast, Nigerian Hausas in Niger's capital, Niamey, are excluded by their hosts. Why are Nigerian Hausas integrated into Ghanaian society in Accra but rejected from Nigerian society in Niamey?

This article proposes a simple yet counterintuitive answer to this question. I argue that cultural similarities between immigrant minority and host community can exacerbate immigrant–host relations because of the responses they provoke among immigrant leaders and indigenous members of the host society. Immigrant leaders sharpen cultural boundaries to preserve the distinctive identity of the communities they lead. Furthermore, host society members reject immigrants who can assimilate and enjoy indigenous benefits through the cultural repertoires they share with their hosts. Conversely, if immigrant groups share few or no cultural traits with their host society, their leaders face a lower threat of group identity loss. They lack incentives to highlight boundaries they perceive already naturally exist. In addition, hosts feel less threatened by communities they can easily mark as foreigners and are therefore less likely to reject them.

The idea that cultural proximity may either alleviate or exacerbate immigrant exclusion taps into a larger debate on the determinants of political identity in ethnically diverse societies. A primordialist model would explain exclusion as a direct function of cultural proximity, measured by objective cultural features. Consistent with the primordialist view, Gradstein and Schiff (2006) argue that the social cost of minority integration into a majority depends, among other factors, on the cultural distance between the two groups. Sniderman et al. (2004) claim that the prominence of immigrant group differences, such as skin color, manner of dress, and language, increases the salience of concerns over national identity on the part of the host country. A constructivist alternative would posit that political institutions more powerfully shape the politicization and incorporation of ethnic difference into political identity, thus overwhelming the original cultural factors. Consistent with this constructivist alternative, Laitin (1986) explains that hometown, and not religion, is a politically salient

identity among Nigeria's Yoruba because the British ruled indirectly through ancestral town, rather than religious, leaders in colonial Yorubaland.

The evidence presented in this article indicates that—at least in the context of Yoruba and Hausa migrant exclusion in West Africa—the predictions of a primordialist model do not pan out. Furthermore, this article proposes and tests a mechanism to explain why institutions that limit integration emerge as a strategic response of immigrant leaders and indigenous hosts to the implications of cultural proximity. Cultural affinities may motivate cultural entrepreneurs to highlight differences and reify boundaries. The result is that culturally similar groups may face greater political exclusion than culturally dissimilar ones.

This article tests the observable implications of the argument using data collected during 12 months of fieldwork in Ghana, Benin, Nigeria, and Niger via interviews and surveys of two major immigrant communities, Nigerian Yorubas and Hausas, in three main urban migrant destinations, Accra, Cotonou, and Niamey. Case selection was based on a combination of immigrant communities and host cities that yielded a wide range of variation on the independent variable of interest: the ethnic and religious overlap between immigrant group and host society. Selecting cases on an explanatory variable avoids selection bias and inference problems since there is no restriction on the degree of possible variation in the dependent variable (King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994).

This empirical section draws findings from a comparative analysis of survey responses of immigrant minorities and host populations in each locality as well as from semistructured interviews with immigrant community leaders. The data indicate three important findings. First, a wide range of variation exists in immigrant–host relations across immigrant groups and across host societies. Second, immigrants demonstrate greater attachment to their immigrant community and experience greater exclusion from their host societies when hosts and immigrants share significant cultural traits. Third, immigrant leaders are keenly aware of the opportunities their constituents have to assimilate and strike deals with local police that limit immigrant integration. In sum, this article offers and tests a mechanism by which institutions override raw cultural content in determining immigrant exclusion.

This article proceeds as follows. The first section provides a brief overview of the literatures on migrant communities in the developing world and on the determinants of political identity and elaborates on the definition of the main concepts studied. The second section develops the argument that, in urban West Africa, (a) immigrant group leaders want to preserve the distinct groups they lead and (b) host societies are more threatened by, and more likely to reject, immigrant groups with which they share cultural traits than those more easily marked as foreigners. The third section presents the empirical strategy used to

test the argument and the main results. The fourth section provides evidence for the causal mechanism. The final section concludes with broader implications of these findings for social integration in sub-Saharan Africa.

Immigrants and Identity in Africa

Existing research on immigrant minorities in the developing world does not explore immigrant–host relations: It analyzes primarily the organizational structure and economic impact of migrant communities. This body of work has documented a number of contributions of migrants in developing countries. Hausas were instrumental in the development of the kola nut trade between Ghana and Nigeria (Cohen, 1969). The Lebanese and Fula expanded trade from Freetown to the Protectorate in Sierra Leone (Jalloh, 1999). Yoruba migrants developed commerce and the Esusu institution of rotating credit throughout West Africa (Igué, 2003). Maghrebi traders instituted long-distance trade across North Africa (Greif, 1993). This literature examines the in-group mechanisms by which minorities perform key economic functions but ignores the sociopolitical context that allows them to carry out these functions in the first place. This article offers an analysis of such contextual factors by examining the determinants of immigrant exclusion in African urban settings.

Furthermore, this article employs a systematic study of immigrant exclusion in Africa as a lens through which to examine the determinants of political identity and intergroup relations. It therefore contributes to the broader constructivist literature on the origins of political identity.

In her review on the cumulative findings in the study of ethnic politics, Chandra contrasts the constructivist approach to ethnicity—which views ethnic identity as “fluid and endogenous to a set of social, economic and political processes”—to the primordialist approach, which treats ethnic identity as natural and fixed (Chandra, 2001, p. 7). Constructivism itself comprises a number of perspectives that emphasize different determinants of ethnic identity. Institutionalism, for example, stresses the institutional origins of identity, such as colonial or electoral institutions (Laitin, 1986; Posner, 2005). The political entrepreneurship approach, by contrast, emphasizes the role of political entrepreneurs as agents of identity construction (Barth, 1969; Fearon & Laitin, 1996).

The argument in this article links the personal incentives of cultural entrepreneurs to institutions that affect exclusion outcomes. Using an original empirical strategy, this article shows that institutions may override the effect of raw cultural content on identity and intergroup relations; it further demonstrates that such institutions originate in political entrepreneurs’ incentives to preserve their group’s identity and benefits. The approach in this article, therefore, is

to bridge two strands of constructivist thinking on political identity by linking institutions to the incentives of political entrepreneurs.

In this article, I use the term *immigrant* to mean of nonindigenous ethnic origins. Although immigrant typically denotes a legal status, developing countries lack the state and institutional capacity to formulate a path to citizenship. In a region where border crossings become informal markets and immigrant mass expulsions ignore citizenship status, ethnicity trumps citizenship. Immigrant is an identity rather than a legal status, and the immigrant–indigenous cleavage is an informal rather than a formal legal boundary.

Scholars studying immigrant integration in industrialized countries analyze the effect of divergent immigration policies, from assimilation to multiculturalism, on immigrant integration (Koopmans & Statham, 1999). This approach is inadequate for the study of immigrant–host relations in African countries, where effective immigration policy does not exist. In these contexts, immigrants integrate through the relations they foster and maintain at the local level. This article thus defines immigrant exclusion as an informal process of political nonincorporation, operationalized as (a) immigrant political and institutional attachment to the immigrant community and (b) host attitudes of political exclusion toward the immigrant group.

The Micro Foundations of Immigrant Integration in Urban West Africa

Immigrant Leaders

Immigrant community leaders are well-known members of their community who are either elected or nominated to their leadership position. Leaders accrue financial and social benefits by virtue of their position. Leadership councils collect regular contributions from their members, both in the form of annual dues and in the form of charitable donations at meetings and events, and leaders oversee the disbursement of these funds. They also enjoy social status and recognition, both on the part of their immigrant constituents and on the part of local officials in their host society. They become popular and socially influential members of their community by virtue of the very authority they herald. In return, immigrant leaders offer important club goods to their constituents, such as protection from police harassment, financial support, and access to the immigrant network.

Leaders have a stake in preserving the distinct identity and organization of the groups they lead to preserve the financial and social benefits they enjoy.³ Furthermore, leaders face an altruistic incentive to sharpen ethnic boundaries

to protect their constituents and promote interethnic cooperation (Fearon & Laitin, 1996). This mechanism provides leaders with an incentive to sharpen boundaries to promote cooperation between groups.⁴

The possibility of passing as indigenous constitutes a threat to immigrant leaders trying to preserve the identity of the groups they lead. Immigrants who share ethnic or religious traits with their host societies have an opportunity to assimilate through a shared language, religious identity, religious institution, or ethnic identity. Consequently, leaders of immigrant groups that share cultural overlap with their host society perceive a greater threat of defection on the part of their constituents and impose greater constraints on members' access to the financial and security benefits they provide: High-overlap immigrants are required to display greater commitment to their immigrant community by participating in group activities, attending group meetings, or purchasing membership cards.

Indigenous Hosts

Indigenous hosts compete with immigrant traders in the informal urban economy and react to the threats they perceive from various immigrant groups. The direct implication of cultural similarity between immigrants and hosts—cultural overlap—is threatening to an indigenous host who wants to limit access to indigenous networks and benefits in the competition for scarce resources such as customers or supplies. Indeed, hosts have an advantage over their immigrant counterparts: They are indigenous. Although they may not benefit from the tight immigrant networks that immigrants use to their comparative advantage in the economic realm (Greif, 1993), they need not fear police or social harassment over their “legal” presence and employment in the country. The security that indigenous members of society enjoy is an important *indigenous advantage* in urban African settings, where local police seek to complement their salaries. Indigenous hosts thus face an incentive to monitor their ethnic borders to raise the cost of immigrant assimilation through cultural overlap and to protect their indigenous benefits as they compete economically with immigrant traders. They face an incentive to do so more actively vis-à-vis high-overlap immigrant communities, who face lower costs to passing as indigenous. Consequently, high-overlap immigrants may face greater exclusion than do low-overlap immigrants.

Immigrants

Individual immigrants are caught between the strategies of their leaders and those of their hosts. Immigrants may seek to reach out to their hosts to access

new economic opportunities or to achieve greater safety through social assimilation. This is a risky strategy, however, in light of the hostility they face from their hosts and the protection they acquire only from their leaders.⁵ At the same time, the benefits that immigrant networks bring to the individual migrant are tangible. Not only do they provide a social support system on arrival, they offer a venue of economic opportunity for a migrant in search of work. Individual immigrants thus face an incentive to signal their commitment to their immigrant community to access group benefits and protection.

The theory generates the following observable implications:

Hypothesis 1: Immigrants who share broader cultural repertoires with their host societies maintain stronger links to their immigrant group than those who share narrower cultural repertoires with their host societies because of the institutional mechanism of in-group control that immigrant leaders enforce when facing the threat of assimilation.

Hypothesis 2: Indigenous hosts are more likely to adopt exclusionary attitudes toward immigrants who share wider cultural repertoires with them than those who share narrower cultural repertoires, to prevent immigrant access to indigenous benefits through assimilation.

Hausa and Yoruba Exclusion in Accra, Cotonou, and Niamey

To study immigrant–host relations in the developing world, this article draws on data collected from two immigrant groups—Nigerian Yorubas and Hausas—in three urban migrant destinations in West Africa: Ghana’s capital Accra, Benin’s economic capital Cotonou, and Niger’s capital Niamey. Nigerian Hausas and Yorubas share a country of origin, the British colonial legacy, and a long-standing history of trade migration throughout West Africa. Indeed, both migrated from their homelands and throughout West Africa for over a century (Igué, 2003). Hausas initially specialized in kola nut trade, whereas Yorubas originally sold traditional cloth. Both groups traveled by road to their final destinations with an economic intent to sell their goods abroad. Both settled in their host cities and have been living there for a century. In some localities, like Accra, both groups even fostered key ties with indigenous traditional authorities (Rouch, 1956). By comparing Yoruba and Hausa migrant communities in Accra, Cotonou, and Niamey, this article compares groups that are similar in their timing, goal, and method of migration, but which vary in their cultural overlap with their host societies.

		<u>Immigrant Group</u>	
		Yoruba	Hausa
<u>Host City</u>	Accra	High overlap (religious)	Low overlap (none)
	Cotonou	High overlap (religious, ethnic)	Low overlap (religious)
	Niamey	Low overlap (religious)	High overlap (religious, ethnic)

Figure 1. Case selection

Research Design

In the absence of data on the universe of nonindigenous groups in developing countries, cases were selected on the independent variable of interest, cultural overlap.⁶ The Yoruba are equally split as Muslims and Christians, whereas the Hausa are predominantly Muslim. Furthermore, Accra is a largely Christian city, Cotonou is religiously mixed, and Niamey is predominantly Muslim. Finally, neither Yorubas nor Hausas are indigenous to Accra. Cotonou, on the other hand, houses indigenous Yorubas, and Niamey is home to indigenous Hausas. The case selection, summarized in Figure 1, yields a wide range of variation in cultural overlap.

I administered two types of surveys to collect information on the immigrant population and on its host society during 12 months of field research in West Africa in 2007. First, I collected original survey data on a convenience sample of Yoruba and Hausa migrants in Accra ($n = 192$), Cotonou ($n = 120$), and Niamey ($n = 120$). Respondents in this study were chosen in a nonrandom manner, through snowball sampling and via the enumerator’s own network.⁷

Second, I collected original survey data on a random sample of residents of Accra ($n = 200$) and Niamey ($n = 200$) to measure host acceptance and rejection of Yorubas and Hausas. In each city, I recruited two local enumerators to execute a random-walk sampling methodology and administer a short questionnaire probing sentiments of acceptance and rejection of Yorubas and Hausas among the indigenous population in the streets of Accra and Niamey.⁸

In Ghana, 100 respondents were randomly asked whether they would vote for a Hausa presidential candidate, and the other 100 were randomly asked whether they would vote for a Yoruba presidential candidate (e.g., Posner, 2004). Given that neither Hausas nor Yorubas are indigenous to Ghana, the questions were useful in that both *Hausa* and *Yoruba* are nonindigenous tribes. In other words, respondents were asked to think about whether nonindigenous tribes could become members of their polity and participate in the indigenous political process.⁹

In Niger, 54% of the population is Hausa. This allows for an assessment of hosts' exclusionary attitudes toward immigrants who share with them an ethnic identity. Yet this also creates a problem in the wording of the acceptance and exclusion questions for Hausas. If the term *Hausa* in Niger does not connote *nonindigenous* tribe the way it does in Ghana, a respondent may interpret the question as one that asks about the acceptance and exclusion of indigenous Hausas. In fact, without any indication that the question asks about Nigerian Hausas (a word that would surely bias the respondent's answers unfairly toward exclusion, given that the term *Nigerian* was not used to describe Yorubas), we have no reason to believe that a respondent in Niger would interpret the term *Hausa* as none other than a reference to the indigenous Hausas of Niger.

I resolve this problem by specifying a subgroup of the Hausa ethnic community rather than using the generic and ambiguous term Hausa: Kanawa Hausas refer to the historical Hausa city-state Kano, in northern Nigeria. Kanawas are thus nonindigenous Hausas in Niger.¹⁰ The rest of this article refers to Kanawa Hausas when discussing the acceptance of Hausas in Niger.

Immigrant Community Attachment

In this section, I test the observable implication that immigrants who share broader cultural repertoires with their host societies maintain stronger links to their immigrant group than those who share narrower cultural repertoires with their host societies. Surveys administered in 2007 among 492 members of the Yoruba and Hausa immigrant communities in Accra, Cotonou, and Niamey collected data on the social, religious, and economic characteristics of immigrant lives in their host societies. Figure 2 indicates the average trends in immigrant in-group attachment in each locality. For each host city, immigrant groups are ordered from left to right by increasing level of cultural overlap.¹¹ The bars illustrate the average score on immigrant group attachment for each immigrant group. This index is constructed as an average of nine indicators of attachment to the immigrant community, each expressed as a value between 0 and 1 that increases with immigrant attachment.¹² Hence, higher levels on

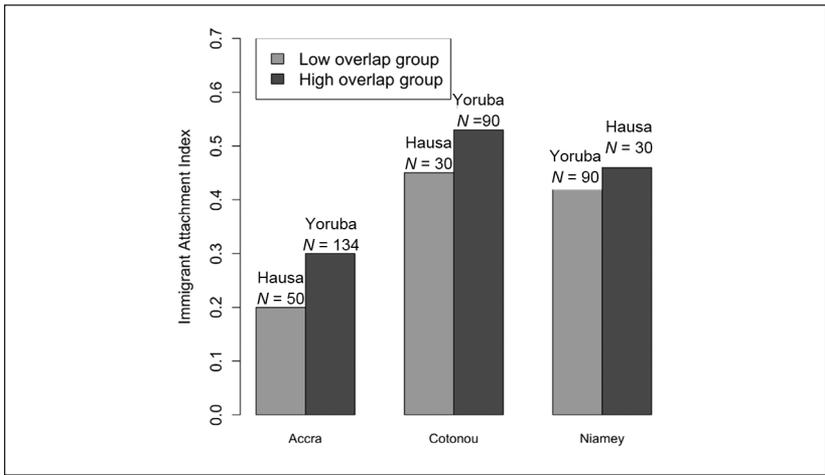


Figure 2. Immigrant group attachment in Accra, Cotonou, and Niamey

the index indicate greater levels of immigrant attachment to the immigrant community.

Figure 2 indicates that groups with higher cultural overlap, on average, score higher on immigrant attachment than groups with lower cultural overlap. In Accra and Cotonou, where Yorubas share greater overlap than Hausas, Yorubas display greater attachment to their community than Hausas. In Niamey, however, where Hausas share greater overlap than Yorubas, Hausas display greater attachment to their community than Yorubas. Furthermore, groups that share both an ethnicity and a religion with their host communities consistently display highest levels of attachment: Immigrants who face the most opportunities to cross the alien–indigenous boundary and tap into indigenous networks demonstrate the strongest attachment to their immigrant group. Conversely, immigrants facing the fewest opportunities to tap into indigenous networks, that is, the Hausas in Accra, demonstrate the weakest attachment to their group.

Table 1 disaggregates the index and summarizes Yoruba and Hausa attachment for a sample of its components. To facilitate interpretation, immigrant groups in each host city are ordered by their degree of cultural overlap, with the low-overlap group in the left-hand column and the high-overlap group in the right-hand column. The figures in bold support the theory.

The Yoruba community in Accra provides a further opportunity to test Hypothesis 1. Approximately 40% of Yorubas in Nigeria are Muslim and 60% are Christian (Laitin, 1986). Furthermore, the immigrant Yoruba community

Table 1. Disaggregated Indicators of Immigrant Attachment

	Accra		Cotonou		Niamey	
	Hausa	Yoruba	Hausa	Yoruba	Yoruba	Hausa
Percentage without an indigenous ethnic group member in their friendship network (five closest friends)	42	50	3	12	27	43
Percentage who sent or send their children to school only in Nigeria	4	10	33	31	20	27
Percentage who identify as Nigerian (over Ghanaian, Beninois or Nigerien, respectively)	6	53	73	96	91	90
Percentage who traveled back to Nigeria in the previous month	4	11	27	32	4	23
Percentage who voted in the last Nigerian presidential elections	6	16	33	57	11	30
Percentage who hold a Nigerian passport	6	37	7	39	39	30

Values in bold support the theory.

in Accra reproduces this cleavage, since both Christian and Muslim Yorubas have settled in Ghana's capital in significant numbers. In fact, of the 134 Yorubas surveyed in Accra, approximately 56% are Christian and 44% are Muslim. If leaders of high-overlap immigrant groups are more likely to highlight group boundaries, we expect to find greater attachment to immigrant communities among the Christian Yorubas than among the Muslim Yorubas in a largely Christian Accra. The data indeed corroborate that high-overlap Christian Yorubas display greater attachment to their immigrant community, by an average of approximately 17 percentage points, than do low-overlap Muslim Yorubas.

Immigrant Exclusion: Accra

Do Ghanaians in Accra exclude Yorubas more than they exclude Hausas? On average, 31.6% of Ghanaians are willing to vote for a Hausa, compared

to only 7.3% who are willing to vote for a Yoruba. Furthermore, although an average 32.6% of Ghanaians believe others would vote for a Hausa, only 9.4% believe others would vote for a Yoruba. These differences of means are significant at the 99.9% confidence level.

In Table 2, Models 1 through 5 estimate the precise effect of receiving the Yoruba versus Hausa questionnaire, controlling for potentially confounding variables. The independent variable of interest is Yoruba, a dummy variable that takes the value of 1 if the respondent received the Yoruba questionnaire and 0 if the respondent received the Hausa questionnaire. The basic model (Model 1) confirms the difference of means results. In Models 2 through 5, a number of key control variables are added.

Model 2 considers the effect of demographic factors, such as a respondent's sex, age, or ethnicity, on the likelihood of excluding a Yoruba or a Hausa. In Model 3, I account for the enumerator bias that stems from the fact that two enumerators executed the survey and may have elicited different responses based on factors that cannot be observed.¹³ Model 4 includes measures of a respondent's "cosmopolitanism," or the respondent's exposure to people of different ethnicities or nationalities. Modernization theory might predict that higher education, for example, decreases exclusionary attitudes. I further control for the number of years a respondent has lived in the capital city. If living in Accra exposes an individual to a greater diversity of people, we might find less exclusionary attitudes in individuals who have been residents of Accra for longer periods of time. Finally, I control for whether or not the respondent was in a "Nigerian area" at the time the survey was administered.¹⁴ Greater exposure to Nigerian immigrants might either fuel or alleviate exclusionary attitudes. In Model 5, I account for a respondent's occupation.

Table 2 indicates that the single most substantive, significant, and robust determinant of exclusionary attitudes on the part of Ghanaian respondents is simply the immigrant group about which they were questioned. The average difference in exclusionary attitudes toward a Yoruba versus a Hausa is significant at the 99.9% confidence level and overwhelms every other factor such as sex, age, ethnicity, education, or occupation.¹⁵

When we reproduce the analysis for the respondent's own probability of voting for a Yoruba or Hausa presidential candidate, the results are confirmed. Ghanaians are significantly less likely to vote for a Yoruba presidential candidate than they are to vote for a Hausa presidential candidate. This result is robust to a number of different specifications.

A further, and cleaner, test of the theory might look at Ghanaians' exclusionary attitudes toward Christian and Muslim Yorubas. To demonstrate that high-overlap Christian Yorubas face more exclusion than low-overlap Muslim

Table 2. Do You Think Ghanaians Would Vote for a Yoruba or Hausa?

	Logit: Probability of an affirmative answer				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Yoruba	-1.544*** (0.414)	-1.552*** (0.413)	-1.591*** (0.440)	-1.549*** (0.453)	-1.582*** (0.468)
Demographics					
Sex		0.179 (0.374)	0.218 (0.373)	0.283 (0.384)	0.437 (0.461)
Age		0.014 (0.015)	0.012 (0.015)	0.010 (0.020)	0.008 (0.020)
Ga		0.194 (0.481)	0.107 (0.473)	0.099 (0.536)	0.097 (0.541)
Ewe ^a		-0.253 (0.494)	-0.170 (0.498)	-0.198 (0.533)	-0.182 (0.527)
Enumerator bias			-0.994* (0.413)	-0.917* (0.448)	-0.895* (0.444)
Cosmopolitanism					
Education				-0.106 (0.147)	-0.070 (0.153)
Years in Accra				0.001 (0.017)	0.002 (0.017)
Nigerian area				-0.124 (0.410)	-0.159 (0.413)
Occupation					
Unemployed					0.377 (0.872)
Trader ^b					0.409 (0.486)
Constant	-0.725*** (0.219)	-1.341* (0.648)	-0.820 (0.679)	-0.480 (0.827)	-0.839 (1.002)
Pseudo R ²	.083	.094	.128	.131	.134
Observations	191	191	191	191	189

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

a. The omitted ethnic category is Akan.

b. Student was dropped because the two student respondents both answered no.

* $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .001$.

Yorubas, I assess the probability that an immigrant was affected by Ghana's 1969 mass immigrant expulsion. This variable comes out of the immigrant community survey—the nonrandom survey—I administered to Hausa and Yoruba

immigrant groups in Accra. It indicates whether or not the immigrant responded yes to the question, “Did you or a family member have to leave Ghana because of the Alien Quit Order of 1969?” Results indicate that the Yorubas sampled in Accra were much more affected than the sampled Hausas. Furthermore, the data show that 55% of Christian Yorubas sampled were affected, compared to 40% of Muslim Yorubas sampled, confirming the positive correlation between cultural overlap and exclusion even after controlling for the ethnicity of the immigrant group.

Immigrant Exclusion: Niamey

Niamey presents almost the opposite setup. Indeed, it is the Hausas—not the Yorubas—who share cultural traits with their host society in Niamey. Not only are they Muslim, they are also Hausas. The Hausa immigrants in Niamey thus share both an ethnic and a religious identity with their hosts.

Nigeriens in Niamey exclude Kanawa Hausas on average more than they exclude Yorubas. Of Nigeriens, 13% would vote for a Yoruba, compared to only 6% for a Kanawa Hausa. This difference is significant at the 95% confidence level. Furthermore, 9% of Nigeriens believe others would vote for a Yoruba, compared to only 5% for a Kanawa Hausa, although this difference is not statistically significant at the conventional levels.

In Table 3, Models 1 through 5 estimate the precise effect of receiving one type of questionnaire over another, controlling for potentially confounding variables. The independent variable of interest is Yoruba, a dummy variable that takes the value of 1 if the respondent received the Yoruba questionnaire and 0 if the respondent received the Kanawa questionnaire. The results in Table 3 indicate that Kanawas evoke greater exclusion than Yorubas, even when we account for a Nigerien respondent’s sex, age, ethnicity, education level, and occupation. This result is robust to the inclusion and exclusion of a variety of controls. In Niamey, where Islam and Hausa are indigenous identities, the host population exhibits a greater propensity to exclude immigrants who are both Muslim and Hausa.

Testing the Mechanism

The analysis so far shows a relationship between cultural overlap and immigrant attachment on one hand and cultural overlap and host exclusion on the other. In this section, I present evidence of the link among cultural similarity, strategic responses on the part of leaders, and institutions that exacerbate exclusion.

Table 3. Do You Think Nigeriens Would Vote for a Yoruba or Kanawa?

	Logit: Probability of an affirmative answer				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Yoruba	0.851 [†] (0.517)	0.918 [†] (0.508)	0.994* (0.504)	1.157* (0.523)	1.205* (0.582)
Demographic					
Sex		0.815 [†] (0.490)	0.757 (0.517)	0.687 (0.563)	0.699 (0.541)
Age		-0.001 (0.016)	0.003 (0.016)	0.015 (0.026)	0.012 (0.026)
Zerma		0.123 (0.479)	0.019 (0.502)	0.264 (0.544)	0.233 (0.565)
Peul ^a		0.010 (1.213)	-0.629 (1.228)	-0.103 (1.194)	-0.163 (1.368)
Enumerator bias			0.634*** (0.219)	0.599* (0.243)	0.587* (0.244)
Cosmopolitanism					
Education				0.259 [†] (0.157)	0.299 [†] (0.170)
Years in Niamey				-0.010 (0.029)	-0.006 (0.027)
Nigerian area				0.181 (0.624)	0.181 (0.638)
Occupation					
Unemployed					1.366 (1.291)
Trader					-0.514 (0.663)
Student					-0.026 (0.905)
Constant	-2.751*** (0.422)	-3.186*** (0.603)	-5.159*** (1.023)	-6.136*** (1.221)	-6.051 (1.426)
Pseudo R ²	.023	.045	.134	.142	.158
Observations	200	196	196	191	190

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

a. The omitted ethnic category is Hausa. A control for the Tuareg ethnic group was also included, but this variable was automatically dropped because all four Tuaregs responded no.

[†] $p \leq .10$. * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

First, I rely on interviews with immigrant community leaders to show that leaders care about, and try to prevent, immigrant defection. Immigrant community leaders know what type of ethnic and religious landscape their constituents encounter in their host societies and are the first to point out how easy it might be for some to simply blend in, or “pass,” as indigenous members of their host society.¹⁶

In Niamey, the secretary general of the Association of Nigerian Citizens in Niger, an Igbo, claims that “sometimes, we cannot differentiate between a Nigerian Hausa and a Niger Hausa.” The public relations officer, himself a Hausa, explains that crossing the border into Niger is easy for Hausas “because of our common nature with the Hausas here in Niger . . . if we don’t speak, if they look at us in the face, they would not differentiate some Hausas from Niger as some Hausas from Nigeria.” When asked whether he speaks any local language in Niger, he affirms, “Yes, Hausa is a local language in Niger.” The Yoruba chief in Niamey concurs with this position: “Nigeriens can’t differentiate between Nigerian and Nigerien Hausas. But it’s not the case for Yorubas.”

In Cotonou, the president of the Ede Youth Society, a Yoruba youth hometown association, asserts that “there is no difference between Anago and Yoruba.”¹⁷ The personal assistant to the president of the Nigerian Community Union (NCU) in Cotonou, an Igbo, explains that “if you are a Nigerian Yoruba, you can mingle with other Yorubas in Benin.” The general secretary of the NCU in Cotonou, a Yoruba, is also aware of the opportunities Nigerian Yorubas have to assimilate as Beninois Yorubas. His perception is that the police “don’t arrest Yorubas as much because there are Yorubas here . . . so they may think it’s a Yoruba from Benin Republic.”

In Accra, where Christian Yorubas share a religion with Christian Accra, opportunities for immigrant defection also exist in the eyes of Yoruba leaders. The pastor of the main Yoruba Baptist Church in downtown Accra is indeed aware that his Baptist Yoruba constituents are able to join indigenous Ghanaian churches: “Most Christian Yorubas in Ghana are Baptist. But they are not all in this church. There are other Yoruba Baptists in indigenous churches: Calvary, Tesano Baptist Churches.”¹⁸

In an effort to counteract these opportunities for assimilation, immigrant community leaders strike deals with local police that empower them as monopoly providers of immigrant security: The police agree to let immigrant leaders protect their loyal constituents from police harassment, and immigrant leaders cooperate with local police by establishing and maintaining order among their constituents. The Nigerian Embassy Identity Card is one institutional mechanism by which this deal is formalized and enforced. Authorities in the host country recognize the card as a valid form of identity. Yet only immigrant

community leaders can procure the card for individual immigrants. The personal assistant to the president of the NCU in Cotonou explains that “if you don’t have the [Embassy] ID card, the police can catch you anytime. . . . Before the card, the police arrested anybody. But now if you are arrested and you show them the card they will leave you.” The president of the Association of Nigerian Citizens in Niamey, a Hausa, explains, “If somebody goes to jail or has a problem with the police, they show their Embassy Card. If it’s not a criminal problem, the Nigerian community will come to his aid if he has the card.” One Yoruba foreign exchange trader born in Benin explains that the “police can stop you if they see you walking around at night—if you can’t produce your card, they can take you to jail or to the border.” The Yoruba chief in Niamey also claims that the first thing authorities ask for is the identity card. He and members of his executive council always carry their Embassy Identity Card with them. An assistant to the pastor at the Yoruba Baptist Church in Accra explains that the church procured the card for all its members in 2002, after a peak in crime rates in Accra triggered mass police crackdowns on aliens.

Individual immigrants who want to stay safe need to not only acquire the card but also foster social capital with their leaders by signaling their commitment to their immigrant community organization beyond formal membership. This is true for two reasons. First, the identity card does not protect immigrants entirely against police harassment; maintaining good relations with the immigrant community leader is an important complement to purchasing the identity card. The personal assistant to the president of the NCU in Cotonou confirms that the “police can still arrest you if you have the card if they want to intimidate you. . . . When an Igbo or a Nigerian is unjustly arrested, NCU leaders go to the police station and the police cooperates.” Second, leaders can impose preconditions for purchasing the identity card. Since individual immigrants apply via their leader, leaders can choose to facilitate the process only for those who have built up their social capital vis-à-vis their leaders. In sum, immigrant community leaders foster key ties with the local police, and the police have the authority to intimidate even card-carrying members of an immigrant group. This induces immigrant commitment to the association.

Members of the local police confirm that they maintain important relations with leaders of immigrant communities, who help them identify “bad apples” if need be. The police enjoy collaborating with these leaders and know to trust them because “their credibility is at stake.”¹⁹ In Cotonou’s 5th Arrondissement, the chief of police cannot recall a single instant when immigrant community leaders refused to cooperate.

Finally, leaders shun immigrants who have no Embassy Identity Card. The secretary general of the NCU in Cotonou explains that “if you are arrested without your ID card, I may not even intervene.” The president of the NCU in Niamey further explicates that “you can’t get anything from the Nigerian Embassy without that card. If you want a business, an account, have children in school, anything that has to do with authority, you have to have the card.”

Interviews with immigrant community leaders thus provide three pieces of evidence that illustrate how leaders foster and maintain immigrant loyalty and attachment. First, leaders are keenly aware of the opportunities high-overlap immigrants have to pass as indigenes. Second, leaders strike deals with local police to create an institutional mechanism—the Embassy Identity Card—that induces immigrant attachment to the community. Finally, leaders punish immigrant defectors.

In an effort to hone in on the mechanism of host exclusion, I survey four alternative explanations for why Ghanaians exclude Yorubas and Nigeriens exclude Hausas. I show that the data do not support these alternative mechanisms.

A prevalent explanation for anti-immigrant sentiment in the developing world is Chua’s (2002) analysis of the backlash economically successful ethnic minorities tend to experience. Are Yorubas more excluded than Hausas in Accra because they are better off? Are Hausas more excluded than Yorubas in Niamey because they are wealthier? The economic success of Yorubas and Hausas in Ghana and Niger, in fact, does not explain the patterns of rejection described in the previous sections. Immigrant survey data on Yorubas and Hausas in Accra and in Niamey indicate that sampled Yorubas are wealthier than sampled Hausas in Accra and Niamey. In Accra, 72.39% of sampled Yorubas live in houses with cement walls, whereas only 50.0% of sampled Hausas live in houses with cement walls; conversely, although only 5.22% of sampled Yorubas live in houses with mud walls, 18.0% of sampled Hausas live in houses with mud walls. In Niamey, 40.0% of sampled Yorubas live in houses with cement walls, whereas 33.33% of sampled Hausas live in houses with cement walls; conversely, 58.89% of sampled Yorubas live in houses with mud walls, whereas as much as 66.67% of sampled Hausas live in houses with mud walls.²⁰ Yorubas are better off than Hausas in both Accra and Niamey. Economic well-being, therefore, cannot account for the differences found across cities.

A second explanation focuses on demographic factors (Quillian, 1995) and migration waves (Olzak, 1989). The demographic explanation would argue that Yorubas are less accepted than Hausas in Accra because they form a bigger demographic entity; similarly, Kanawa Hausas are less accepted than Yorubas in Niamey because they are the larger group. According to this argument, Accra

Yorubas and Kanawa Hausas in Niamey are more threatening because they represent greater competition for scarce resources or because they can be mobilized by political entrepreneurs (Quillian, 1995). Actual demographic data do not exist for immigrant populations by ethnicity in Ghana and in Niger; it is therefore difficult to assess the veracity of these claims. Two pieces of evidence from the field, however, suggest that demographics cannot explain the variation in Yoruba and Hausa acceptance in Accra and in Niamey. First, interviews with Nigerian community leaders in Niamey indicate that Yorubas, not Hausas, are the larger immigrant group in Niamey.²¹ Second, host society respondents rarely mention demographic factors in their open-ended answers. Only 3% of host respondents in Niamey cited population size as a notable characteristic of Yorubas in Niamey; none cited population size as a notable characteristic of Kanawa Hausas in Niamey or Yorubas in Accra.

A related explanation would argue that Yorubas in Accra are more recent migrants than Hausas in Accra and that Kanawa Hausas in Niamey are more recent migrants than Yorubas in Niamey. According to this argument, host societies perceive these groups as more threatening because of their recent influx. Survey data on immigrant populations in Accra and Niamey, however, indicate that Yorubas and Hausas have settled in Accra since the late 19th century; in Niamey, the arrival of Yorubas dates back to the early 20th century, but that of Nigerian Hausas is unknown. It is likely to be at least as old, however, given the geographical proximity of Nigerian Hausas and the fluidity on the northern Nigerian border.

A third explanation would predict that groups with more naturalized citizens are better integrated. My survey data indicate that more Hausas in Accra indeed have Ghanaian passports than do Yorubas in Accra (68% vs. 47%). However, only 10% of Nigerian Yorubas sampled in Niamey—compared to 20% of Nigerian Hausas sampled—have Nigerien passports. Naturalization, therefore, cannot explain why Yorubas are better integrated than Hausas in Niamey. Furthermore, naturalization may be endogenous to immigrants' decisions to signal in-group attachment to their leaders. In this case, naturalization cannot be used as an exogenous factor explaining immigrant integration: Immigrants choose to naturalize, and host societies can choose to make such a process easy or difficult for the applicant.²²

A final explanation for the varying acceptance and rejection of Yorubas and Hausas in Ghana and in Niger goes back to the differentiated roles of indigenous ethnic groups under colonial rule. Colonial powers used some nonindigenous African populations as intermediaries: The historical role these nonindigenous minorities may have played in their respective host countries could contribute to host exclusion today. For example, the Beninois

became easy scapegoats and were expelled throughout West Africa because of the special attention they received from the French. Challenor (1979) explains that the French placed the relatively well-educated Beninois (then Dahomeyans) into colonial bureaucracies throughout West Africa and that, once independent, nations such as Côte d'Ivoire and Niger expelled all their Beninois immigrants in reaction to this imposition (Challenor, 1979). Did the Yoruba play a particularly antagonistic role in the history of Ghana? Similarly, did Nigerian Hausas impose themselves in colonial Niger?

The British indeed used Hausa and Yoruba subjects to help stave off the Ashanti incursions into the land of the Gas in 19th-century Gold Coast (now Ghana).²³ However, the British used both Hausas and Yorubas to fight the Ashanti wars, meaning that any differentiation in Ghanaian attitudes toward Hausas or Yorubas cannot stem from this colonial legacy. Finally, Niger was a French colony and Nigeria a British colony: Yorubas and Hausas never interacted with Nigerien society through the colonial system. There is thus no empirical evidence supporting the claim that relations between Ghanaians and Yorubas on one hand and Nigeriens and Nigerian Hausas on the other are a product of antagonistic relations shaped by colonial powers.

Conclusion

In this article, I have used surveys of Hausa and Yoruba immigrants and surveys of host populations in Accra and Niamey to make two important points about immigrant exclusion in sub-Saharan Africa. The first is that although immigrant communities are insecure in Africa, there is wide variation in immigrant–host relations across groups and localities. The second is that cultural similarities may exacerbate, not ameliorate, immigrant–host relations given the incentives immigrant leaders have to preserve their group identities and the incentives host society players face to reject groups that can most easily blend in.

Furthermore, the arguments advanced in this article highlight the salience of ethnic and religious cleavages and institutions for social integration. Religious affiliations crosscut ethnic categories, and religious institutions could play an important role in building trust and cooperation between members of different ethnic groups. These opportunities are missed, however, when religious leaders use ethnicity as a rallying point for organization and recruitment and effectively “ethnicize” religious institutions. The tension between the opportunities religious institutions create for cooperation and their vulnerability to ethnic mobilization is an important phenomenon in Africa today as world religions such as Christianity and Islam grow.

The findings in this article also bring to light the persistent fragility of national identities relative to ethnic ones in West Africa. Many conversations in Accra and Niamey revealed a tendency for hosts and immigrants alike to equate national identity with ethnic identity. This is salient when the citizenship question becomes a tool to exclude candidates politically (as was attempted in Niger against President Tandja, whose father was Mauritanian) or entire ethnic groups socioeconomically (as it played out for the Burkinabés in Côte d'Ivoire).

Finally, the evidence in this article shows empirically that institutions may overwhelm raw cultural content in determining political identity and group relations. In the context of urban immigrant integration in West Africa, it demonstrates that the predictions of cultural proximity do not pan out. It is thus consistent with the constructivist approach to identity by emphasizing its contextual nature. Furthermore, it proposes a mechanism for why institutional factors limiting integration might overwhelm cultural affinities. It thus contributes to the constructivist debate by offering a link between institutions and political entrepreneurs whereby institutions are a strategic response to the implication of cultural proximity on the part of cultural leaders striving to protect their positions.

Appendix

Table A1. Construction of Immigrant Community Attachment Index

	Accra Yoruba	Accra Hausa	Cotonou Yoruba	Cotonou Hausa	Niamey Yoruba	Niamey Hausa
Went back to Nigeria over the previous month	0.11	0.04	0.32	0.27	0.04	0.23
Voted in the last Nigerian presidential elections	0.16	0.06	0.57	0.33	0.11	0.3
Currently send remittances back to Nigeria	0.53	0.16	0.87	0.73	0.91	0.57
Have tribal marks	0.04	0.24	0.26	0.07	0.4	0.47
Acquired their current job through the help of a coethnic	0.42	0.54	0.52	0.2	0.48	0.33
Children school(ed) only in Nigeria	0.1	0.04	0.31	0.33	0.2	0.27
Hold a Nigerian passport	0.37	0.06	0.31	0.07	0.39	0.3
Follow Nigerian news daily	0.4	0.54	0.67	0.7	0.37	0.8
Identify as Nigerian over host country nationality	0.53	0.06	0.96	0.73	0.91	0.9
Average	0.30	0.19	0.53	0.38	0.42	0.46

Table A2. Construction of Immigrant Community Attachment Index for Christian and Muslim Yorubas

	Accra Christian Yoruba	Accra Muslim Yoruba
Went back to Nigeria over the previous month	0.13	0.08
Voted in the last Nigerian presidential elections	0.24	0.05
Currently send remittances back to Nigeria	0.72	0.29
Have tribal marks	0.01	0.08
Acquired their current job through the help of a coethnic	0.75	0.88
Children school(ed) only in Nigeria	0.13	0.07
Hold a Nigerian passport	0.56	0.14
Follow Nigerian news daily	0.41	0.37
Identify as Nigerian over host country nationality	0.76	0.24
Average	0.41	0.24

Table A3. Construction of a Continuous Indicator for Cultural Overlap

	Accra		Cotonou		Niamey	
	Yoruba	Hausa	Yoruba	Hausa	Yoruba	Hausa
Group % Yoruba	1	0	1	0	1	0
Group % Hausa	0	1	0	1	0	1
Group % Christian	0.56	0	0.27	0	0.12	0
Group % Muslim	0.44	1	0.73	1	0.88	1
Host % Yoruba	0	0	0.11	0.11	0	0
Host % Hausa	0	0	0	0	0.42	0.42
Host % Christian	0.98	0.98	0.74	0.74	0.008	0.008
Host % Muslim	0.01	0.01	0.13	0.13	0.99	0.99
Ethnic overlap	$(1 \times 0) + (0 \times 0) = 0$	$(0 \times 0) + (1 \times 0) = 0$	$(1 \times 0.11) + (0 \times 0) = 0.11$	$(0 \times 0.11) + (1 \times 0) = 0$	$(1 \times 0) + (0 \times 0.42) = 0$	$(0 \times 0) + (1 \times 0.42) = 0.42$

(continued)

Table A3. (continued)

	Accra		Cotonou		Niamey	
	Yoruba	Hausa	Yoruba	Hausa	Yoruba	Hausa
Religious overlap	(0.56 × 0.98) + (0.44 × 0.01) = 0.55	(0 × 0.98) + (1 × 0.01) = 0.01	(0.27 × 0.74) + (0.73 × 0.13) = 0.29	(0 × 0.74) + (1 × 0.13) = 0.13	(0.12 × 0.008) + (0.88 × 0.99) = 0.87	(0 × 0.008) + (1 × 0.99) = 0.99
Cultural overlap (average)	0.275	0.005	0.2	0.065	0.435	0.705

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Notes

1. For data on the distribution of international migrants, see Jason DeParle (2007) and International Organization for Migration (2008).

2. Adepoju (1984), Brennan (1984), Henckaerts (1995), Peil (1971), Sise (1975), and Weiner (1993) discuss the prevalence of mass expulsions in independent African countries.
3. The question arises, why are leaders always interested in reifying boundaries? Do they not gain from pursuing new business opportunities through integration? In West African cities, pursuing the role of immigrant community leader is much more lucrative and safer than pursuing new opportunities through integration. This is because of the fact that West African cities are relatively poor, with few lucrative economic opportunities; furthermore, they are unsafe, offering little to no formal protection of immigrants.
4. Fearon and Laitin (1996) reach the same conclusion by saying that “there is a rationale and interest for leaders of ethnic groups to limit interaction between co-ethnics and other groups, that is, to construct boundaries” (p. 731).
5. This is especially salient in places that lack a formal legal framework that protects individual migrants from social and civil harassment.
6. The Minorities At Risk (MAR) data set has, since 2006, committed to expanding its universe of cases to all communal groups as opposed to only those considered “at risk.” At that point, the MAR data set may become a useful source for a project like this one.
7. Weisberg (2005) defines a convenience sample as one that “studies cases that are readily accessible” (p. 231). This method is necessary if the researcher cannot otherwise identify respondents in a cost-effective way and is common in the study of rare populations. Because it is nonrandom, this sample does not lend itself to tests of statistical significance. Instead, average patterns are compared across samples. To maximize comparability, similar enumerators were recruited in each locality: dynamic young men who are active in their immigrant community.
8. The city was divided into 20 equal, arbitrarily delineated, but geographically contiguous areas. A landmark was arbitrarily chosen as the approximate center of each area. Each landmark was used as a starting point twice, once for every five respondents. The sampling method was designed to ensure that every area in the city had an equal probability of coverage.
9. The survey also asked whether respondents would marry a Yoruba or Hausa. The results show virtually no group differences. On a social level, where lower stakes are involved, group-specific exclusion is not apparent.
10. Kanawa Hausa refers to an ancestral town; it does not denote a respondent’s nationality. Hausa subgroups, such as Katsinawa (from Katsina) or Zinderwa (from Zinder), are more commonly used in Niamey than the generic term Hausa.
11. Cultural overlap is operationalized here as a dichotomous variable (low or high). The results do not change if we use a continuous (and more precise) measure of

- cultural overlap as the product of the share of each population that shares a cultural trait (see Table A3 in the appendix).
12. A complete list of the components of this index is available in the appendix.
 13. Alternatively, enumerators may have elicited different responses based on factors that are observable. Here, female enumerators consistently elicited more exclusionary attitudes.
 14. Areas are coded as Nigerian after consultation with Nigerian research assistants.
 15. A model that includes interaction terms between Yoruba and all control variables from Table 2 is also estimated. No interaction term is significant, so the results are not presented here.
 16. Interviews conducted in 2007 by the author and a local translator.
 17. Anago is a Yoruba subgroup, used here primarily to denote Yorubas in Benin.
 18. It is probable and likely that some high-overlap immigrants are able to pass as indigenous and fully assimilate. The research method employed here effectively misses out on that population of immigrants. This problem is pervasive in any study of immigrant incorporation, which inevitably misses those who successfully assimilate. The fact that successful assimilators exist does not necessarily take away from the analysis here. It does, however, justify the continued and persistent paranoia on the part of immigrant community leaders, who are rational in their fear of immigrant defection.
 19. Interview with police chief, 5th district, Cotonou, August 24, 2007.
 20. Assets, such as the quality of housing, provide a more reliable indicator of long-term economic well-being in the developing world, where incomes tend to be more erratic. Here, cement walls indicate greater wealth than mud walls.
 21. Interview with the secretary general of the Nigerian Community Union in Niamey (a member of the Igbo ethnic group), Niger, February 28, 2007.
 22. The Yoruba chief in Niamey explains, "If you naturalize then it's assumed you don't go back to your country."
 23. The Anglo-Asante wars of the 19th century pitted the Asante Empire in the interior against the British Empire on the coast. Coastal peoples relied on the British Empire, which brought in Hausas and Yorubas from Nigeria, to fight off the Ashanti incursions.

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Bio

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