THE INTEGRATION OF NIGERIAN AND MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS IN DALLAS/FORT WORTH, TEXAS

WORKING PAPER

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is a descriptive analysis and comparison of the segmented integration of Mexican and Nigerian immigrants in Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) Texas, also referred to locally as the "Metroplex."[1] To a lesser degree, it also compares the relations between each community and its "national" coethnic community, Mexican Americans and African Americans, respectively. The comparisons are among groups whose socioeconomic profiles vary: Nigerians (high education and socioeconomic status, or SES), Mexicans (relatively low education and SES), and their national coethnics (low-to-medium education and SES). The essay is based on qualitative and quantitative data collected from a convenience sample of 200 households in the Mexican community and 100 households in the Nigerian community, supplemented by census data and field reports, all collected in the course of a National Science Foundation (USA) study in 2001-2005.[2]

Apart from understanding better the way that recent immigration is transforming DFW, our essay is meant to contribute to the larger discussion of immigrant incorporation in the current great wave of immigration. In an article on segmented assimilation, Portes and Zhou (1993:84) present a typology that underscores three dimensions of incorporation: government policy regarding the immigrant group, their societal reception, and the "strength" of the immigrant coethnic communities that receive them. Drawing from a selection of research on migration as well as from several case studies, the authors suggest, not surprisingly, that the context of incorporation is key to predicting how the children of immigrants will become part of American society. In short, they conclude that children do not become part of American society as a whole, but rather are integrated differentially depending on the community(ies) they ultimately join. While Portes and Zhou explore a variety of possible integration outcomes, they conclude that the children of Mexican immigrants, who technically become Mexican Americans, and the offspring of Caribbean immigrants, who often become part of the African American community, run a high risk of negative incorporation. They may well find themselves excluded from the "American success story," lacking the education and the

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[1] This essay is based largely on data collected as part of a research project entitled "Immigrants, Rights, and Incorporation in a Suburban Metropolis," funded by a grant from the Cultural Anthropology Program of the National Science Foundation (BCS0003938). The principal investigators are Caroline Brettell, Dennis Cordell, Manuel Garcia y Griego, and James Hollifield. Results, opinions, and conclusions presented in this paper are those of its two authors, and do not necessarily reflect the judgments of the National Science Foundation.

[2] The study also included a representative telephone survey of 1,000 immigrants and native-born persons whose results are not yet integrated into this analysis.

means to enjoy a better or even the same standard of living as their parents, and failing to participate in the broader institutions of American society.

In later research stimulated in part by Portes and Zhou, scholars have explored in greater detail how Caribbean immigrants and their children have become integrated into American society (see, for example, Foner 2001, Kasinitz in Foner 2001, Waters 1999, and Vickerman 1999). Other work, such as Gutiérrez's *Walls and Mirrors* (1995), has examined the history of relations between Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans. These studies chart a more complex set of routes to incorporation in American society. In particular, based on research in the Caribbean and Caribbean American communities in New York City, Foner suggests that the relatively rapid growth of the African American middle class offers Caribbean immigrants and their children a broader avenue to inclusion in the middle class as well.

This essay broadens discussion of these issues in two important ways. First, we extend the analysis of immigrants of African heritage to include Nigerian immigrants to DFW. Little of the literature on immigration has yet explored the "new" African immigration to the United States (US), a phenomenon that dates largely from the late 1970s and 1980s. Gordon (1998) offered an overview of the factors that contributed to emigration from Africa in the decades following African independence in the 1960s, coupled with an analysis of African immigration to the United States since that time. Two years later, Arthur (2000) published a book length study of African immigration based on data from the 1990 census and the CIS (ex-INS), along with interviews with immigrants from throughout Africa in four U.S. cities. The result is a valuable foundation study. However, African immigrant communities are so different in size, provenance, and contexts of immigration, that it is imperative now to begin to examine communities of African immigrants from individual countries or regions to understand how they become (or not) part of broader American society. Nigerians are one of the largest African immigrant populations in the United States today.

Second, we compare the incorporation experiences of Nigerian and Mexican immigrants. In his conclusion to Foner's collection *Islands in the City*, Kasinitz writes that West Indian immigrants "are almost always seen relative to other blacks—and only rarely relative to other immigrants" (2001:257). This paper considers relations between Nigerians and the African American community. However, it also reaches beyond black communities to the Mexican immigrant community, by far the largest in DFW. In so doing, it also offers an analysis of Mexican immigration that is broader than usual. The Mexican immigrant community is so large, not only in DFW, but in Texas and the country overall, that many studies focus on Mexicans alone, or, at best, compare them with Mexican Americans or other Hispanic immigrants. As in the case of Nigerians and African Americans, this paper considers the links between Mexican immigrants and the national coethnic Mexican American community. However, it also compares the incorporation of Mexican immigrants with that of their Nigerian counterparts, an exercise that not only enriches our understanding of migration to DFW in general, but leads us to think about each community in somewhat new terms.

Within this broad context, the paper focuses on two topics, central to understanding incorporation: (1) the extent to which race and class affect socioeconomic outcomes; and (2) the interrelation between ethnic background and employment. The essay explores these topics by first considering human capital, or the individual attributes

of Mexican and Nigerian immigrants. It moves on to an analysis of some aspects of social capital—the resources that each community may mobilize thorough family and national coethnics. Next we include an abbreviated analysis of several intervening variables that are indicative of the institutional and societal contexts that each immigrant community faces. We then consider some incorporation outcomes. However, to follow the analysis better, an overview of DFW is in order.

DALLAS-FORT WORTH

The geographical focus of this study, which we refer to as DFW or the Metroplex, is limited to four counties in north Texas at the center of the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area: Collin, Dallas, Denton, and Tarrant. According to the 2000 census, these counties had a population of 4.6 million people, 753,000 of whom were born outside the United States.[3] Beyond this "heartland," the census area called the Dallas-Fort Worth Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area includes eight other surrounding counties whose population numbers about 700,000 people, including 32,000 born abroad. Because this latter population is widely dispersed, we limited our study to the four counties mentioned above. In addition, Collin, Dallas, Denton, and Tarrant counties include the largest cities (Dallas, Fort Worth, Arlington, Plano, Irving, Grand Prairie, Garland, Euless, and Denton), the most important urban infrastructure, and 96 percent of the immigrant population.

In recent decades, the DFW population has experienced substantial shifts in ethnic composition, largely as a result of immigration from Mexico, but from other countries as well. Thirty years ago, for example, the foreign-born population numbered only 100,000 people, or 5 percent of the population of the four counties. Moreover, at that time about 75 percent of the population was "white," and white expectations constituted the dominant model for incorporation. By contrast, in 2000 the white population made up only 56 percent of the population of the four counties, a proportion that has continued to decline. Hispanics, including Mexicans, constituted 23 percent of DFW's inhabitants according to the last census. Although now small at 4 percent, Asians comprise the fastest growing group. The African-origin population, which includes African Americans and a very small black immigrant population, hovers at 23 percent.[4] In the course of this demographic transformation, then, whites passed from an overwhelming majority of the population of the Metroplex to a proportion approaching minority status. Although remaining very influential, the native-born white population no longer sets the "rules" for the incorporation of immigrants.

Mexican immigrants are numerically the dominant Hispanic group in north Texas. The 2000 census placed their numbers as 500,000, a figure which, of course, does not include their minor children born in the United States. In contrast, Nigerians were a minority among the African immigrant population—7,300 Nigerians among the 28,000 people born in Africa. The latter total does not even come to 5 percent of the total black population of DFW, the remainder being Americans descended from slaves of African

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[3] Census of the Population of the United States, 2000 (www.census.gov). The U.S. Census Bureau estimated the population of the four counties to be 5.0 million on 1 July 2004 (http://factfinder.census.gov).

[4] Census of the Population of the United States, 2000 (www.census.gov). The remaining 2% of the population is made up of other ethnic groups including American Indians.

origin who arrived in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[5] Hence, Mexican immigrants outnumber Mexican Americans in the Metroplex, while Nigerians are a very small population when compared with the size of the African American community. As we suggest later, these contrasting numerical relationships between Mexican and Nigerian immigrants and their national coethnics have important consequences for the way each immigrant group relates to its counterpart. Other characteristics are key to understanding how Mexican and Nigerian immigrants have become integrated into the life of Collin, Dallas, Denton, and Tarrant counties in North Texas. We begin by examining several sets of individual attributes that contribute to the overall human capital that Mexicans and Nigerians bring to the challenge of incorporation.

INDIVIDUAL ATTRIBUTES AND HUMAN CAPITAL

Mexicans and Nigerians arrived with very different individual profiles. In terms of education, ability to speak English, and immigration status, Nigerian immigrants enjoyed a much more privileged and secure status than did Mexican migrants at the time of arrival in the United States, and then DFW. With notable exceptions, these attributes laid the foundation for expanding human capital in the years that followed.

To begin with education, Table 1 (p. 5) records the number of years Mexican and Nigerian immigrants went to school before and after arriving in the US. Migrants are grouped according to their year of entry. The table also includes current household income as a rough index of current socioeconomic status. Mexicans in our sample who came to the US before the 1970s and in that decade, came with an average of 5 and 6.2 years of education, more or less the equivalent of primary school. Mexicans who arrived after 1980, however, came with more schooling, having completed between one and three years of secondary education. Nigerians arriving in the 1970s and 1980s had 12-13 years of school, a rough equivalent to a high school education in the United States, and twice the number of years as Mexicans. Moreover, the years of education increased among Nigerians who came after 1990, nearing the equivalent of a four-year university education.

Even more striking are differences in the numbers of years Mexican and Nigerian immigrants have gone to school since arriving in the US. Among Mexicans, those who arrived in the 1970s have gone to school the longest—nearly three years—a number that declined steadily among later groups of arrivals. Those arriving in the 1990s, for example, have had about a year of additional education, while Mexicans immigrants in the US since 2000 have barely attended classes at all. Although not apparent from the table, qualitative information collected in interviews suggests that much of this educational effort has gone into learning English. Nigerians, on the other hand, continued their education for many more years. Arrivals in the 1970s and 1980s, went to school for more than 5 years, and those of the early 1990s added three years of education. Nigerians who have come since 2000 have since spent two years in school. As a result, the educational gap between Mexicans and Nigerians who arrived at the same time has grown since coming to the United States. In interpreting these differences, however it should be underscored that data on both the immigration statuses of both groups at arrival

[5] Census of the Population of the United States, 2000 (www.census.gov). Note that the census enumerated 134,000 Nigerians in the entire country in 2000, a figure probably smaller than the number of undocumented Mexican immigrants who have arrived in DFW since that time!

and qualitative data collected about the Nigerians, makes it clear that many of them came to the US with the purpose of going on to school. Therefore, the fact that the gap in education increased is not surprising.

TABLE 1. MEXICAN AND NIGERIAN IMMIGRANTS. YEARS OF EDUCATION AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY YEARS OF ARRIVAL

Year of arrival	Years of education at arrival	Years of education after arrival	Total years of education	Annual household income
Before 1970				
MEXICANS (N=3)	5	1.33	6.33	20,000
NIGERIANS (N=1)	15	7	22	125,000
1970-1979				
MEXICANS (N=10)	6.2	2.9	9.1	43,500
NIGERIANS (N=10)	12	5.5	17.5	110,000
1980-1989				
MEXICANS (N=12)	9.55	1.9	8.4	40,542
NIGERIANS (N=36)	13.41	5.19	18.61	96,177
1990-1994				
MEXICANS (N=10)	10.5	1.1	11.6	32,000
NIGERIANS (N=11)	15.64	3.18	18.82	49,111
1995-1999				
MEXICANS (N=28)	8.7	0.8	9.5	34,074
NIGERIANS (N=23)	14.91	2	16.91	57,027
2000-2004				
MEXICANS (N=31)	9.9	0.2	10.1	42,345
NIGERIANS (N=18)	14.11	1.83	16	26,071
Don't Know				
NIGERIANS (N=1)	17	2	19	42,500
MEXICANS				
Overall Total	1346	192	1538	2,838,000
Overall Average (N=94)	8.6	1	9.6	32,250 *(N=88)*
NIGERIANS				
Overall Total	1404	365	1769	5,862,500
Overall Average (N=100)	14.04	3.65	17.69	71,494 *(N=82)*

Apart from educational background, the ability to use English is also an important factor determining the way and the extent to which Mexican and Nigerian immigrants have become incorporated into society in north Texas. Being able to speak the language is a crucial component of English usage. Table 2 compiles immigrants' self-evaluation of their speaking skills upon arrival in the US and at the time of the interview, grouped by the period of arrival.

TABLE 2. MEXICANS' AND NIGERIANS' ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH, AT ARRIVAL AND AT INTERVIEW

MEXICANS			***NIGERIANS***		
Interview	**English on arrival -> at interview**		**Interview**	**English on arrival -> at interview**	
Before 1970			***Before 1970***		
(N=3)	P -> EX (1)	NONE -> AV (1)	***(N=1)***	EX -> EX (1)	
	VP -> P (1)				
1970-1979			***1970-1979***		
(N=10)	AV -> VG (1)	NONE -> EX (1)	**(N=10)**	EX -> EX (8)	VG -> EX (1)
	NONE -> AV (6)	NONE -> P (1)		AV -> VG (1)	
	NONE -> NA (1)				
1980-1989			***1980-1989***		
(N=12)	P -> AV (1)	VP -> AV (2)	**(N=36)**	EX -> EX (21)	VG -> EX (8)
	NONE -> EX (1)	NONE -> AV (4)		VG -> VG (5)	AV -> EX (1)
	NONE -> P (1)	NONE -> VP (3)		AV -> VG (1)	
1990-1994			***1990-1994***		
(N=10)	AV -> VG (1)	P -> AV (1)	***(N=11)***	EX -> EX (9)	VG -> VG (1)
	VP -> VG (2)	VP -> VP (1)		AV -> VG (1)	
	NONE -> AV (1)	NONE -> P (3)			
	NONE -> NONE (1)				
1995-1999			***1995-1999***		
(N=28)	P -> EX (1)	P -> AV (2)	**(N=23)**	EX -> EX (15)	VG -> EX (2)
	VP -> P (1)	VP -> AV (2)		VG -> VG (5)	VG -> AV (1)
	NONE -> VG (1)	NONE -> AV (9)			
	NONE -> P (5)	NONE -> VP (5)			
	NONE -> NONE (2)				
2000-2004			***2000-2004***		
(N=31)	P -> P (2)	VP -> AV (1)	***(N=18)***	EX -> EX (11)	VG -> EX (3)
	VP -> P (3)	NONE -> AV (4)		VG -> VG (2)	VG -> AV (1)
	NONE -> VP (5)	NONE -> P (3)		AV -> EX (1)	
	NONE -> NONE (13)				
			Don't know		
			(N=1)	VG -> EX (1)	
(N=94)			***(N=100)***		

NONE= No English VP=Very Poor P=Poor
AV = Average VG = Very Good EX = Excellent

It is immediately apparent from Table 2 that virtually all Nigerians arriving in the DFW, even the most recent cohort in 2000-2004, came with high levels of spoken English. At the bottom end, five of 100 classed themselves as low as "average" upon arrival; only two still rated themselves at that level when they were interviewed. In contrast, 65 Nigerians in the sample described their English as "excellent" upon arrival, and 81 offered this evaluation at the time of their interviews. Among Mexican immigrants, 71 of 94 arrived with no English, 13 described their English skills as "very poor" at that time, and eight classed their English as "poor." Only two of 94 said they spoke "average" English. As a group, however, their English improved substantially between arrival and their interviews. Only sixteen—mainly people who immigrated since 2000—said that they still spoke no English, and only 20 reported that their English was "poor." Mexican immigrants rating themselves as "average" rose to 34, the largest category, and nine described their English as very good or excellent.

Finally, although Table 2 presents evaluations of English skills for both Mexicans and Nigerians by period of immigration, it appears from these two samples, that while their spoken English did improve over time as a whole, that progress is quite varied. Among Mexican immigrants, for example, one person who arrived before 1970 with "very poor" English, still characterized his or her skills as "very poor." On the other hand, four people who arrived from Mexico without any English after 2000, say that they now speak "average" English. Nigerians also made progress, but they did not have as far to go since most thought heir English was very good or excellent when they arrived. The two anomalous cases where Nigerians observe that their "very good" English at arrival deteriorated to "average" stem from the judgment they attach to American English. To their way of thinking, they have suffered the loss of the "Queen's English."

This comment, of course, offers the explanation for the striking difference in the abilities of Nigerian and Mexican immigrants to speak English. Long an outpost for British trade in West Africa, Nigeria became a British colony at the end of the nineteenth century.[6] English became the dominant language of government, although local languages were also used. Over the course of the twentieth century, the British administration implanted a western bureaucracy—tempered with gestures to the local political regimes in place. Churches and mission schools spread through the southern part of the country, to the regions of origin of most of the Nigerian immigrants in DFW. Institutions of higher learning followed, including the University of Ibadan, founded in the 1920s and modeled after Oxford and Cambridge. As the British spread their administration northward, they took with them people like the Igbo and Yoruba from the south, who had benefited from Western education. The southerners ran the lower levels of the bureaucracy—a money-saving strategy on the part of the British. They were also often local agents for British commercial companies, completing with northerners like the Hausa who also had a long history as traders. With independence in 1960, and the explosion of oil wealth in the 1970s, Nigeria expanded its university system dramatically throughout the country, but particularly in the south. English remained the official language. By this time, too, the Yoruba and Igbo had learned that western education was a key to economic success. But, marginalized politically by the central government, which was dominated by northern military leaders, southerners, and the Igbo in

[6] For overviews of Nigerian history, see Osaghae 1998, Falola 1999, and, for purposes of this paper in particular, Maier 2000.

particular, turned to education as an avenue to economic success. Following the rise of corruption in the late 1970s and 1980s, they began seeking their fortunes abroad in larger and larger numbers. Many Nigerians who arrived in DFW, then, have come from the more privileged middle and upper classes whose members speak English well, and who polished their English at secondary schools, technical institutes, or university.

However, two characteristics of the Mexican and Nigerian immigrant communities narrow somewhat the language advantage that Nigerians enjoy in the process of incorporation. First, Mexican immigrants arrive in DFW to become part of a Spanish-speaking Mexican immigrant population of a half million, along with Spanish-speaking immigrants from elsewhere and many Spanish-speaking Mexican Americans. Moreover, Spanish is, without a doubt, the second language of north Texas. Most official documents and the materials of many private entities appear in Spanish as well as English. Hence, it is possible to become incorporated into Spanish-speaking, and yet American, society in north Texas. As for Nigerians, many speak English with a very pronounced Nigerian accent that the native-born find difficult to understand. Indeed many Nigerians in our sample identified their accent as one of the "most serious problems" that they have in the United States.[7] They believe that their accent limits acceptance by both the white and the African American populations. Nigerian immigrants also cite it as a source of discrimination against them (Table 6, p.22; and Garcia y Griego and Cordell 2005).

This said, the educational background of Nigerians upon arrival and their fluency in English do afford them clear advantages over Mexicans in incorporating into north Texas society in ways that enhance the possibilities for broader social inclusion, political participation, and economic success. For virtually all Nigerians, their immigration status at arrival also put them on a more secure footing than was the case for Mexicans. Table 3, listing the immigration status of Mexican and Nigerian immigrants in our study at the time of arrival and at the time of their interviews, allows a more detailed examination of these differences.

The most common of categories of immigration status at arrival were very different for Mexicans and Nigerians in our study—taken either by period of arrival or altogether. For example, 46 of 94 Mexicans were unauthorized immigrants at time of arrival, with statuses of A-1, A-2, or A-3. In contrast, 48 of 100 Nigerians came as students or immediate family members of a student (F-1, F-2). Only one Nigerian had an unauthorized status, while no Mexicans immigrated as students. However, the second most common statuses were the same for both groups; 12 Mexicans and 23 Nigerians entered as tourists or business visitors (B-1, B-2). Three Mexicans (two agricultural workers [H-2B] and the relative of a manager assigned to the US [L-2]), and three Nigerians (one worker in a specialty occupation [H-1B], and two managers assigned to the US [L-1]) arrived with work-related statuses. It is perhaps important to note here, however, that the H1-B visa is authorized for technical and highly skilled workers, while the H2-B is for field workers in agriculture—hardly positions of the same status. H-1B workers often manage eventually to obtain permanent residency; however, H-2B visa

[7] Several of the Nigerians in our sample of 100 have adapted their accents to speak an approximation of American English. Some of these immigrants have been married, or are married, to native-born Americans. Others just seem to have picked up an American accent along the way. None has taken formal classes to alter his or her accent.

holders often morph into undocumented immigrants (as was the case with the two Mexicans in our sample). What is perhaps most surprising in comparing our two samples, however, is that the third most common status for both groups upon entry was legal

TABLE 3. MEXICAN AND NIGERIAN IMMIGRANTS. IMMIGRATION STATUS AT ARRIVAL AND AT TIME OF INTERVIEW

MEXICANS		***NIGERIANS***	
Visa Statuses, Arrival -> Time of interview (N)	**Visa Statuses, Arrival -> Time of interview (N)**	**Visa Statuses, Arrival -> Time of interview (N)**	**Visa Statuses, Arrival -> Time of interview (N)**
Before 1970s (N=3)		**Before 1970s (N=1)**	
LPR -> LPR (1)	Border card -> LPR (1)	F-1 -> NATZ-A (1)	
A1 -> A-1 (1)			
1970-1979 (N=10)		**1970-1979 (N=10)**	
A-1 -> LPR (3)	B-2 -> NATZ-A (1)	F-1 -> NATZ-A (6)	B-2 -> NATZ-A (1)
A-1 -> NATZ-A (1)	LPR -> LPR (2)	F-2 -> LPR (1)	B-2 -> LPR (1)
B-1 -> LPR (1)	LPR -> NATZ-A (2)	B-1 -> LPR (1)	
1980-1989 (N=12)		**1980-1989 (N=36)**	
A-1 -> A-1 (5)	A-3 -> NATZ-A (1)	F-1 -> NATZ-A (24)	B-2 -> NATZ-A (3)
A-1 -> NATZ-A (4)	LPR -> LPR (1)	F-1 -> LPR (3)	B-2 -> DK (1)
A-2 -> A-1 (1)		F-2 -> NATZ-A (2)	K-1 -> NATZ-A (1)
		B-1 -> NATZ-A (1)	A-1 -> NATZ-A (1)
1990-1994 (N=10)		**1990-1994 (N=11)**	
A-1 -> A-1 (3)	B-2 -> Diplomat (1)	F-1 -> NATZ-A (2)	B-1 or B-2 -> LPR (1)
A-1 -> NATZ-A (1)	B-2 -> A-1 (1)	B-1 -> NATZ-A (1)	J-1 -> LPR (1)
A-2 -> NATZ-A (1)	B-2 -> A-2 (1)	B-2 -> NATZ-A (3)	LPR -> NATZ-A (1)*
A-2 -> LPR (1)	Border Card -> A-1 (1)	B-2 -> LPR (1)	Derivative Citizen (1)
1995-1999 (N=28)		**1995-1999 (N=23)**	
A-1 -> A-1 (16)	B-2 -> A-1 (1)	F-1 -> LPR (1)	J-1 -> LPR (1)
A-1 -> A-2 (1)	B-2 -> A-2 (1)	F-1 -> F-1 (1)	L-1 -> L-1 (1)
A-1 -> LPR (4)	B-2 -> LPR (1)	B-2 -> NATZ-A (1)	LPR -> NATZ-A (7)**
A-2 -> A-1 (1)	L-2 -> LPR (1)	B-2 -> LPR (3)	LPR -> LPR (6)***
A-2 -> A-2 (1)	LPR -> LPR (1)	B-2 -> F-1 (1)	DK -> LPR (1)
2000-2004 (N=31)		**2000-2004 (N=18)**	
A-1 -> A-1 (24)	B-2 -> A-2 (3)	F-1 -> F-1 (6)	B-2 -> LPR (1)
A-3 -> A-3 (1)	H2A -> A-2 (1)	F-1 -> LPR (1)	H1B -> H1B (1)
B-2 -> A-1 (1)	H2A - A-1 (1)	B-2 -> B-1 (1)	K-1 -> LPR (1)
		B-2 -> B-2 (1)	L-1 -> L-1 (1)*
		B-2 -> F-1 (1)	LPR-> LPR (4)
Don't Know (N=9)	**(N=0)**	**Don't Know (N=1)**	
		DK -> NATZ-A (1)	
(N=94)		**(N=100)**	

*** Of which, 1 diversity visa ** Of which 4, perhaps 5 diversity visas**
***** Of which 5, perhaps 6 diversity visas**

permanent resident (or LPR). Seven Mexican immigrants and 18 Nigerians entered the US as permanent residents. In the case of the Mexicans, we know little about the circumstances of their entry. Among Nigerians, some permanent residents entered as the spouses of US citizens. Others, perhaps as many as 16 of the 18, arrived with "diversity" visas. Established in 1988, the intent of the diversity visa program is ostensibly to offer visas by lottery to immigrants from countries judged to be under-represented in the roster of nations sending people to the United States. Application is limited to those whose countries have sent less than 50,000 immigrants to the US in the previous five years. Whereas Nigerians in DFW think that the program is an expression of the desire to foster immigrants from countries in the developing world, diversity visas were, in fact, devised by members of Congress to allow the entry of Irish people and Italians whose national coethnic communities have been in the US so long as to preclude immigration based on family reunification. Law suggests that the program was conceived as an effort to correct unintended consequences of the Immigration Act of 1965, which drastically altered US immigration policy and privileged family reunification (see Law 2002). Among Nigerians in the US and in Nigeria the diversity visa program is very well known. In DFW, *The African Herald*, the more important of the two African immigrant newspapers, publishes each year on the front page details concerning applications requirements and deadlines for the program.[8] The paper's editor and publisher is a Nigerian immigrant.

Turning to immigration status at the time of their interviews, contrasts and similarities are also marked. Overall they demonstrate that Nigerians have a more secure status. Among the 100 Nigerians, 56 had become naturalized citizens (NATZ-A), while 28 were legal permanent residents (LPR), and one was a "derivative citizen," a child born in Nigeria of parents of Nigerian and American origin. Another nine were students; two were the US-based agents of foreign businesses, and one worked in a "specialty occupation." Only three Nigerians had what might be termed a very temporary or insecure status: one a business visitor (B-1), one a tourist (B-2), and the last an immigrant who did not wish to reveal his status. Eighty-five, then, were free to stay as long as they wished, and 57 of them were citizens.

In sharp contrast, 65 of the 94 Mexican immigrants remained undocumented at the time they were interviewed (A-1, A-2, A-3). Some probably remained illegal from their initial entry, while others fell into those categories after the expiration of tourist visas, agricultural visas, or border passes. Their precarious situations undoubtedly make it more difficult to become integrated into local society. To be sure, undocumented status precludes participation in the political process, but it also inhibits broader social interaction with the larger society. Although examples abound that demonstrate the possibility of holding a steady job and contributing economically to society in north Texas, illegal status does limit economic potential.

Unlike the status distribution of Nigerians immigrants, where certain classifications such as student (F-1), specialty worker (H-1B), and even US-based employee of a foreign business (L-1) might be termed intermediate statuses between the insecurity of being undocumented and the stability of permanent residence or citizenship,

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[8] See, for example, Boucher, *The African Herald* 12, 8 (August 2001), 1, 27, 29; and Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. State Department, *The African Herald* 13, 9 (September 2002), 1, 27, 29; the latter article even includes the "DV-2004 Visa Entry Form."

the Mexican community is bifurcated. While 65 of 94 are illegally in the United States, the remaining 28 are naturalized citizens or permanent residents. Only one immigrant who is a diplomat occupies an intermediate status. These 28 citizens and permanent residents are, like most of the Nigerians, free to become as integrated into American society as circumstances allow. They face no legal barriers. Assuming our data to be indicative, then, a "great divide" appears to characterize the Mexican community in DFW.

Table 3 also suggests that when viewed over time, both the Mexican and Nigerian immigrants adjusted their immigration statuses to more secure categories. Of the 25 Mexicans who arrived before 1990, for example, all but two were either naturalized citizens or legal permanent residents when interviewed for our study. Only three remained illegal, whereas 12 had been so at arrival. All except one of the 48 Nigerians who came to the US before 1990 had become a citizen or a permanent residents by the time of the interview. It would be easy to conclude from this data that immigrants succeed in adjusting their statuses in a favorable direction over time; and that such adjustments will continue. However, both Mexicans and Nigerians were able to do so as a result of the 1986 amnesty associated with immigration reforms of the 1980s. Mexican immigrants who arrived in the 1990s have not been so fortunate, although Nigerians seem to have fared better.

The attributes examined in this part of our essay, educational background, the ability to speak English, and immigration status at entry position immigrants differently when they arrive in the US. That initial positioning has great bearing on how and in what ways new arrivals will become integrated in to American society. But, of course, other factors are also very important, such as social capital or the social networks upon which immigrants may (or may not) rely. The study of immigrants in DFW also attempted to assess social capital.

SOCIAL CAPITAL OF MEXICAN AND NIGERIAN IMMIGRANTS

In his seminal article of 1988, James Coleman writes that social capital "exists in the relations among persons. Just as physical capital and human capital facilitate productive activity, social capital does as well" (S100-101). Later in the essay, he describes forms of social capital within and outside the family (S109-116). Today, nearly two decades later, social capital has become an important concept in assessing the situations of immigrants and understanding how well or poorly they fare in their quests to find stability and success in their new societies. In an effort to assess social capital, our study probed several aspects of the social relations of Mexican and Nigerian immigrants in DFW. In this essay we examine only one dimension of this complex topic, namely who helped Mexican and Nigerian immigrants when they initially arrived. Many came first to DFW; others first set foot elsewhere in the US.

Table 4 (p. 12) lists the categories of people who assisted Mexican and Nigerian immigrants in our study when they arrived in the US. Among Mexican arrivals, the largest majority by far, 77 of 94 people, recall that family members extended major help when they arrived. The type of help they received was diverse, including housing, general maintenance, transportation, and assistance in looking for a job. All three people who came before the 1970 reported that relatives assisted them. The number of immigrants who arrived in this period (3) is too small to be statistically significant, but the unanimity

of their answers suggests that a large Mexican immigrant community lived in DFW at that time. Indeed, historical sources record that Mexican immigrants began coming to north Texas in the 1860s, a flow that increased in size during the course of the Mexican revolution in the 1910s, and expanded again after the enactment of immigration policies that severely restricted immigration from Europe and the eastern hemisphere in general

TABLE 4. WHO HELPED MEXICAN AND NIGERIAN IMMIGRANTS UPON ARRIVAL

MEXICANS	***NIGERIANS***	
People who helped	**People who helped**	**People who helped**
Before 1970s (N=3)	***Before 1970s (N=1)***	
Family member (3)	American friends known in Africa	
1970-1979 (N=10)	***1970-1979 (N=10)***	
Family member (9)	Family member (5)	White students (1)
NA (1)	Nigerian student (3)	Professor (1)
	Nigerian friends (1)	No one (1)
	Friends (2)	
1980-1989 (N=12)	***1980-1989 (N=36)***	
Family member (9)	Family member (20)	Other student (1)
No one (1)	Friends from Nigeria (3)	University staff (2)
NA (2)	Friends not from Nigeria (6)	Professor (1)
	Nigerian student (5)	No one (3)
1990-1994 (N=10)	***1990-1994 (N=11)***	
Family member (7)	Family member (9)	Non-Nigerian mentor (1)
Friend from Mexico (3)	Friends from Ghana (1)	No one (1)
	Friends (2)	
1995-1999 (N=28)	***1995-1999 (N=23)***	
Family member (25)	Family member (18)	Co-workers (1)
Friend from Mexico (2)	Friend from Nigeria (2)	Pastor (1)
NA (1)	Friend (2)	
2000-2004 (N=31)	***2000-2004 (N=18)***	
Family member (24)	Family member (12)	Co-workers (1)
Friend from Mexico (3)	Friends from Nigeria (1)	No one (2)
Friend not from Mexico (2)	Friends (3)	
No one (1)		
NA (1)		
	Don't Know (N=1)	
	Family member (1)	
(N=94)	***(N=100)***	

during World War I and in the 1920s (KERA 1997; Rice 1995; Williams and Shay 1991, 62-63). Although the numbers are again tiny, it may well be that the support base for Mexican immigrants broadened after 1990 when a small number of Mexicans noted that Mexican and even-non-Mexican "friends" helped them to get their feet on the ground in DFW.

A more varied group of people assisted Nigerians when they came to the US and then DFW. The earliest immigrant in our sample, who came to study in the US in 1963, was helped by American friends that he and his family had known earlier in Africa. Of the others who entered the country before 1980, five indeed reported being helped by family members. But the six others said that they were helped by friends, including other Nigerians, and by students and a professor at the universities where they enrolled. This distribution reflects the history of Nigerian immigration. Before Nigerian independence in 1960, students who went abroad most often went to the United Kingdom (UK), the colonial metropole. Immigration policies in the UK also made it relatively easy for people from the British colonies to enter the country at this time; the doors to immigration only began closing later in the early 1970s. This pattern continued through the 1960s and early 1970s. The Nigerian who came to the US in 1963 was an anomaly.

In the 1970s, the numbers of Nigerian students in the US increased. At the same time, the Nigerian civil war, fought almost exclusively in the southeast part of the country, led many students from this part of the country to find a way to stay in the United States. Many of the immigrants in our sample have very vivid childhood and adolescent memories of the civil war and the havoc it wreaked on family and friends. The southeast region, called Biafra by those seeking secession, lost the war (Uzokwe 2003). The entire episode sowed alienation among the Igbo, which only grew with the discrimination in the distribution of government scholarships and government jobs that followed.[9] By the 1980s, then, a small but growing Nigerian community existed in the US and in DFW. As Nigerians settled they assisted family members who followed them. In part for these reasons, then, more and more immigrants who arrived from Nigeria after 1980 reported receiving substantial assistance from family members in the US—20 of 36 arriving in the 1980s, 29 of 47 in the 1990s, and 12 of 18 who came in 2000 or later. And yet the support pool for Nigerian immigrants still remained more diverse than it is for Mexican arrivals.

In terms of social capital, then, Mexican immigrants have long been dependent on family connections to cushion their arrival in DFW. Nigerians have drawn on family, too, and indeed do so more and more; however, their support system is more diverse. Given the immense difference in the size of the Mexican and Nigerian immigrant populations—a half million Mexicans compared with 7,300 Nigerians according to the last census—it seems reasonable to conclude that Mexican immigrants receive substantial familial support in finding a place for themselves in the larger Mexican immigrant community. In contrast, the small size of the Nigerian community forces immigrants to rely on a broader

[9] Nigerians in our sample, most of whom, like the DFW Nigerian population in general, are from the southern part of the country, report that most students who receive government stipends come from the north. According to interviewees, these scholarship students are usually closely connected with the federal government, which is dominated by northerners. They stay close to Washington, where the embassy is located, and following their studies usually return to Nigeria where government jobs are said to be waiting for them.

network of people. Mexican social capital, then, lends itself to integration into the Mexican immigrant community, but may limit incorporation in the broader non-Mexican or non-Hispanic society of north Texas. Nigerian social capital, at least at the time of arrival, has supported inclusion in the broader society. These distinctions are reinforced by the limited ability of Mexican immigrants to speak English. Nigerians, who are fluent in English, clearly face a communication barrier due to accent. However, it is less limiting, and most Nigerians learn to overcome it with less effort than that required to learn a new language.

Our study also probed other issues related to social capital. For instance, we have more detailed data about who helped immigrants during their first year in the US—as opposed to when they arrived. We also recorded information about the families of immigrants, and, if married, the families of their spouses, including place of birth and residence. Finally, we have information about immigrants' current households and current marital status. However, having just completed fieldwork for this study in May 2005, we have not yet had the opportunity to assemble and analyze all of this data. When we do, we will be able to offer a more detailed appraisal of the sources of social capital and their role in the incorporation of Mexicans and Nigerians in the Metroplex.

As complex as they may be, individual attributes, and the various dimensions of human and social capital are not the only factors that channel avenues of immigrant incorporation. Intervening variables, such as the institutional and local contexts of immigration also condition the integration of Mexicans and Nigerians in DFW.

INSTITUTIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXTS OF INCORPORATION

Institutional contexts

In the years since the earliest Mexican and Nigerian immigrants in our sample arrived in the US, four features of US immigration policy have created an institutional context that has favored entry.[10] First, for Mexicans, until recently it has been relatively easy to enter the US illegally and to work illegally once here. A glance at Table 3 (p. 9) makes it clear that many Mexican immigrants entered illegally. The proximity of Mexico to the US, along with a long and relatively unpoliced land border, has eased entry. If geography has abetted entry, a fundamental contraction in US immigration policy has made it easy to find a job once inside the country. While the public and politicians have engaged in interminable debates about who should be allowed to become part of American society, usually opting for more restrictions rather than fewer, business interests have long favored more open immigration to allow them to recruit labor at the lowest cost. The result has often been the uneven enforcement of immigration regulations and laws which targets illegal immigrants for being in the US without proper documentation, but which does not levy penalties mandated for employers who employ immigrants. The size of the country, the decentralization of a federal system of government with fifty states, and broad-based and long-standing public opposition to tracking mechanisms such as a national identity card have also made it relatively easy to find and hold a job once in the country.

A second feature of immigration policy allowed many Nigerian immigrants to enter the country relatively easily by obtaining student visas. A relatively large

[10] For an overview of US immigration history in the late twentieth century, see Barkan 1996 and Gjerde 1998.

proportion of Nigerian immigrants initially entered as students. Many had on-campus jobs, which was permitted. Others, however, worked off-campus, which was illegal until recently. Some also over-stayed their student visas later and worked illegally in the US. Some of these immigrants continued their studies, eventually finding jobs in economic sectors that enabled them to regularize their immigration status. Others married American citizens which led to legal permanent residence. However, it should be noted that the families of Nigerians who entered as students had to have substantial means. To obtain a student visa, applicants had to produce documentation demonstrating that they had been accepted at a US institution of higher learning, had paid their tuition, and had a bank account with sufficient funds for maintenance. Only those of high socioeconomic status could comply with these requirements. Thus class differences distinguished these Nigerian immigrants from most of their Mexican counterparts.

A third dimension of recent US immigration policy also worked in favor of Mexicans and Nigerians who arrived in the country before the mid-1980s. The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 offered amnesty to all immigrants who could prove that they were in the US illegally in 1982. Beyond simple amnesty, IRCA also created an institutional context that allowed illegal immigrants to become legal permanent residents (Fuchs 1990, 252-255). A large percentage of the Mexican and Nigerian immigrants in our sample who arrived before 1982 took advantage of this opportunity. In some cases, they mapped out complex strategies. A Nigerian who was studying in the US with a student visa in 1982, for example, had his amnesty petition rejected, the judge ruling that he was not an illegal immigrant. To prove that he was indeed illegal, the Nigerian student responded by producing documents that proved that he had an off-campus job, which violated the terms of his visa. The same judge then ruled that he was an illegal immigrant. He re-filed his amnesty petition, and ultimately became a permanent legal resident!

The diversity visas mentioned earlier constituted a fourth institutional arrangement that has favored Nigerian immigration. Between 10 and 12 of the 52 Nigerians who came to DFW after 1990, or between 19 and 23 percent, had won diversity visas, which allowed them to enter the US as legal permanent residents (Table 3, notes). Given that diversity visas are granted to immigrants whose countries had sent less than 50,000 immigrants to the US in the preceding five years, Mexicans do not have access to this means of entry. Moreover, the application process is complex, requires a fee, and applicants must have a secondary school education or equivalent work experience, all conditions which favor immigrants of higher socioeconomic status.

Local contexts

Immediate contexts also affect the incorporation of immigrants. As with social capital, there are multiple indicators of local context. Hypothesizing that local organizations open doors to incorporation, we examined three kinds of community groups based on ethnicity or national origin. First, we asked Mexicans and Nigerians if they belonged to local "national" or "ethnic" organizations to get a sense of how involved they were in their coethnic community, and how organized these communities are in DFW. Table 5 (p. 16) presents their answers. The contrast in responses is truly dramatic. Among Mexicans immigrants, only four of 94 belong to Mexican community organizations! One of these organizations, Casa Guanajuato (or "Guanajuato House"), is a large and active venue

where immigrants from the Mexican state of Guanajuato come together for social events. Casa Guanajuato also offers help to local businesses that are either owned by people from Guanajuato or which market goods from the state. A second, the Club Argentino, seems to be a social club. However, the two others, the United Hispanic Professionals (UHP)

TABLE 5. MEXICAN AND NIGERIAN MEMBERSHIP IN LOCAL/STATE ORGANIZATIONS, UMBRELLA ETHNIC ORGANIZATIONS, NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND US COETHNIC ORGANIZATIONS

MEXICANS	*NIGERIANS*	*NIGERIANS (CONTINUED)*
Local/State Organizations	**Local/State Organizations**	**Local/State Organizations (continued)**
Club Argentino	Ibadan Association	Ondo State Organization
Casa Guanajuato	Edo International	Animoa Union
	Ajalli Progressive Union	Enugukwu Social Club
US National Coethnic Organizations	All Aro USA	Mbaitoli-Ikeduru Progressive Association
League of United Latin American Citizens	Old Orlu Progressive Organization	Enyimba Social club
United Hispanic Professionals	Amiri International	Ngwo Heritage Association
	Obium Association	Mbano Progressive
	Akwaidu Association	Ibadan Progressive Union
	Enugu State International Association	Ijebu Progressive Union
	Akwa Ibom Association	Obosi Progressive Union
	Egba Descendants Association	Idumuje Ugboko Aassociation
	Agura Iwere	Mbaisi Community Association
	Enugu Ukwu	
	Coal City Social Club	**Umbrella Ethnic Organizations**
	Umuahia Association	Yoruba International Union
	People of Awka	Igbo Community Association of Nigeria
	Urualla Progressive Union	Ugbajo-Itsekiri
	Akwa Progressive Association	Federation Club
	Etiti Progressive Association	Yoruba Elite Club
	Ebu Progressive Union	
	Owerri People's Organization	**National Organizations**
	Isukwuato Progressive Union	Organization of Nigerian Nationals
	Ibadan Descendants Union	Union of Nigerian Friends
	Egbeoma Yoruba	Peoples' Club of Nigeria
	Awka Union	African Health, Education and Development
	Ekwenu	Nigerian-US Council
	Ekwenu Umuahia	
	Akwa Ibom Women's Association	**Pan- African Organizations**
	Aguleri Development Union	AfricanChamber of Commerce

and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) are pan-Hispanic groups with immigrant and Hispanic American members. Despite the range of these four organizations, very few of the Mexican immigrants in our sample belong to such groups. For them, such organizations are not avenues for incorporation or group solidarity.

Among Nigerian immigrants the opposite is true. Fifty-seven of one hundred Nigerians said that they belonged to community groups. These include ethnic

organizations open to people from particular towns or cities or states in Nigeria (such as the Mbaitoli-Inkeduru Progressive Association [Igbo], or the Ijebu Indigenous Organization [Yoruba], or the Enugu State International Organization). There are also broader organizations that cater to everyone of the same ethnic origin (examples include the Igbo Community Association of Nigeria [ICAN], Yoruba International, and Ugbajo-Itsekiri). Still other umbrella groups have as their mission to bring all Nigerians together (such as the Organization of Nigerian Nationals [ONN] and the Union of Nigerian Friends). The objectives of these groups are multiple. They provide support for people in the US, perpetuate cultural traditions, promote development projects in Nigeria, and try to influence politics both in the US and at home. These organizations and their counterparts elsewhere in the US are regular stops for Nigerians running for office in Nigeria.[11]

Despite the popularity of such organizations, however, over 40 percent of Nigerians in our sample said that they did not belong to any of them—although all knew about them. Several observations may be made about these "non-joiners." First, more recent arrivals are less likely to be members of such groups. Of 41 Nigerians who came to the US in 1995 or later, 26, or 63 percent, do not belong to Nigerian immigrant organizations (versus only 17 of 59, or 29 percent, of those who arrived earlier). In some ways low membership among new arrivals seems counter-intuitive since we might hypothesize that more recent immigrants are more in need of community support. However, in the case of these Nigerians, many are students who are very involved with their studies and organizations and jobs at school. Many are also the children or other relatives of older Nigerians already established in the US. They often see these organizations as older peoples' social clubs without much appeal. A few younger immigrants reported that on occasion they attended events sponsored these groups, but did so mainly to please their elders. Second, some Nigerians immigrants said that they belonged to local community organizations when they first arrived but do not any longer. Some noted that they no longer "needed" them; others complained that members spent too much time fighting among themselves about leadership positions in the organizations or about politics back in Nigeria. Still others simply noted that they do not have time for social organizations because they work too much. Finally, some immigrants who belong to Pentecostal churches condemned immigrant organizations, charging them with encouraging the drinking of alcohol and with dancing at their events. Some, but not all, of the few Muslim immigrants stayed away for similar reasons.

Secondly, we asked Mexicans and Nigerians if they belonged to "pan-ethnic" organizations of other immigrants with the same ethnic or geographical background. Only a couple of Mexican or Nigerian immigrants belong to groups whose members come from the larger Hispanic world on the one hand, or from elsewhere in Africa on the other. Only one Mexican immigrant reported being a member of UHP, which may include immigrants from countries other than Mexico, but surely also counts Mexican Americans in its ranks. And only one Nigerian belonged to the African Chamber of Commerce, an organization whose founder and president is a Nigerian, but whose membership includes immigrants from other African countries.

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[11] See regular accounts of such visits in *The African Herald* and *The African International*, the two African immigrant newspapers in DFW.

Third, we asked Mexican and Nigerian immigrants about membership in organizations associated with native-born coethnics. The only Mexicans in our sample who belong to such groups are the two who belonged to the UHP and LULAC. More Nigerians, but not many more, connected with African American organizations. Six Nigerians belonged to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (the NAACP) and one to the local African American Leadership Council. However, four others belong to broader organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Southern Poverty Leadership Council, and Move On, groups that have historically supported African American struggles. Although not overwhelming statistically, 10 of 100, or ten percent, of Nigerians, then, might be said to be members of broader groups that include African Americans. As far as ethnic-based and nationality-based community organizations are concerned, then, Nigerian immigrants turn to them much more frequently than those from Mexico. Moreover, Nigerians belong to a much broader range of such organizations—sometimes choosing groups that allow them to interact with African Americans.

These kinds of groups do not exhaust the community-based organizations available to Mexicans and Nigerians. Although we do not focus in this essay on religious organizations in DFW, churches among both Mexicans and Nigerians, and mosques among Nigerians also offer support (for background, see Hirschman 2004). Beyond that, they may encourage incorporation into local society. Both Mexicans and Nigerians are avid churchgoers. Many attend mainstream churches, although a growing number of immigrants in both communities belong to Pentecostal congregations. The few Nigerian Muslims in DFW worship both at mosques frequented mainly by other Nigerians, and at others that attract followers from across the Islamic world. Among Mexicans, given the limitations of language already discussed, church attendance promotes contact with other Spanish-speakers, including Mexican Americans. Nigerians attend a vast array of churches of all denominations, reflecting the great variety of missions that fostered Christianity in Nigeria itself. Some attend services in mainstream Catholic and Protestant churches whose congregations are largely white, or are mixed—white and African American and Hispanic. Others frequent mainstream services populated largely by African Americans and other Africans. Still others attend small, Nigerian-dominated independent churches with Nigerian ministers. Church and mosque attendance exposes Nigerians to virtually all immigrant and native-born communities in north Texas.

However, the local context is not simply a collection of organizations available to immigrants, it also includes the mix of local beliefs and attitudes that greet them when they arrive. The mix includes the character of race relations. In north Texas, these relations have long been characterized by conflict among the three major native-born groups—whites or Anglos, African Americans and Mexican Americans. A word about this history is in order here. Although race relations are perhaps better today than they ever have been, a heritage of white discrimination against both major minority groups as well as tension between African Americans and Mexican Americans also affects the incorporation of Nigerian and Mexican immigrants.

Without a doubt, the daily experiences of people of Mexican and African origin in DFW today are notably different than they were forty years ago, at the time the United States Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. North Texas' heritage of racism is perhaps best illustrated by the history of racial segregation in the region. For much of the

twentieth century, for example, public schools were segregated by race, some schools being reserved for "whites" and others for "persons of color" (African Americans and Mexican Americans). Between 1916 and 1928, the city of Dallas launched a policy of formal residential segregation, approving ordinances that limited black settlement to certain parts of the city. These rules remained in effect well beyond mid-century—until the courts ruled them unconstitutional As late as the 1930s, there was only one black secondary school in the city of Dallas, requiring some students to travel long distances to study. In 1938, this school, supported by its 700 graduates, enrolled 2,100 students. As for politics, in the first half of the twentieth century, the Democratic Party—for all intents and purposes the only party in Texas at the time—prohibited African Americans from voting in its primary elections. Unions were also divided by race. This systematic disenfranchisement and segregation translated into a lack of attention to the desires of residents of African and Mexican origin. The first African American elected to public office, Joseph Lockridge, took his seat in the legislature only in 1966. Mexican American elected officials followed a decade later.

The Civil Rights Act redefined acceptable and unacceptable forms and levels of discrimination (Payne 1994, 175-77, 336; Hill 1996, 59, 168-69n11). The 1970s witnessed a renewed struggle against legal segregation, although *defacto* segregation remained common. The high correlation between ethnic origin and low levels of education and income confirms that despite the legal prohibition of segregation, *de facto* segregation still continues. In their overview of the city's history, Williams and Shay (1991, 169) observe that,

> Poverty in Dallas exists primarily in the racial minority communities [….] Black people make up 57.7 per cent of those in poverty in Dallas, while other racial minorities comprise another 23.3 percent. Only 8.1 percent of the white population is below the poverty level, compared to 24.5 percent of the black population and 30 percent of the Hispanic population.

The disparities reported by Williams and Shay fifteen years ago, have narrowed somewhat, and both the African American and Mexican American communities are characterized by growing middle classes. But poverty remains much more prevalent in minority populations (LaFleur 2005a and 2005b). Government includes more African American and Hispanic officials today. However, a recent newspaper article reports an extraordinary under-representation of minorities on boards in Dallas County (O'Neill 2005). The boards of the other four counties includes in our sample are probably no more representative. The twin scourges of racism and discrimination have not yet been relegated to history. Mexican and Nigerian immigrants step into this history. And part of incorporation into life in DFW requires contending with it.

SOME INCORPORATION OUTCOMES FOR MEXICAN AND NIGERIAN IMMIGRANTS IN DALLAS/FORT WORTH

The data and discussion presented in preceding pages allows discussion of the degree to which, and how, Mexicans and Nigerians in the current wave of immigrants are becoming a part of life in north Texas. These two immigrant communities are quite different. Nigerians arrive in the US and DFW with more than the equivalent of

secondary education (Table 1, p. 5). But for them, education is also an incorporation strategy. Most Nigerians continue to go to school after arrival. Sometimes they pursue advanced degrees in the fields that they studied before coming to the US. In other cases, they retrain, in fields where expertise is in demand or where they perceive that advancement is more likely. A surprising number build on their education to create their own businesses. In contrast, and with notable individual exceptions, Mexican immigrants arrive with much less education. Education after arrival is more often than not devoted to learning English, which, of course, is an appropriate strategy and abets incorporation, but which does not immediately translate into well-paying jobs. The data in Table 1 (p. 5) represent change over time—education before arrival, education since arrival.

The table also includes household income at the time of the interview, which may be interpreted as an incorporation outcome. In part because of differences in educational attainment, Nigerians in our sample occupy a higher socioeconomic status than do Mexicans. That this is so is apparent from average household incomes in both communities. The overall average income of Nigerian immigrant households is over $70,000—more than twice the overall average for Mexican immigrant households. Moreover, the discrepancy increases with the length of time both groups have been in the US. Only in the most recent period, 2000-2004, do Mexican immigrant household incomes surpass those of the Nigerians. This is due to two factors. First, many of the Nigerians who have arrived since 2000—and even since 1995—are students living on a restricted budget. Second, Mexican households are often made up of several individuals who, in fact, do not comprise a true household because residents do not necessarily share a common budget or economic strategy.

But the process of incorporation is more complex than the figure on a paycheck. Integration also includes less tangible dimensions, such as the degree to which immigrants feel welcome, and whether or not they perceive that members of the host society treat them fairly. Indeed, Portes and Zhou's (1993) concept of segmented incorporation, mentioned in the introduction to this essay, speaks to this point. They submit that the unequal treatment accorded minorities in the US—indicated by continued *de facto* residential segregation, and substantive discrepancies in levels of education and income—will also be visited upon immigrant coethnics and their children. The result, they suggest, may well be downward incorporation in the second generation, or integration into marginalized groups within American society that reject the American "success ethic." We assessed Mexican and Nigerian immigrants' perceptions and experiences of discrimination since arriving in the US. We discuss the results here because they fill in our appreciation of what incorporation means to Mexican and Nigerian immigrants in DFW.

In the household survey, Mexican and Nigerian immigrants were asked two questions about discrimination: whether they thought that members of their "nationality group face serious problems of ethnic or racial discrimination," and whether they had "personally encountered prejudice or discrimination in American society from any group." In responding to these questions, about 70 percent of Nigerians and 77 percent of Mexicans said that they had heard about other immigrants who suffered discrimination. However, these figures, high as they are, underestimate the affirmative replies. Fifteen percent of Nigerians and three percent of Mexicans said that they did not think that their compatriots faced serious discrimination, but then elaborated on their answers in ways

that really placed their responses into a "No-but-yes" category. Put together, then, 84 percent of Nigerians and 80 percent of Mexicans reported that members of their community have faced serious problems with discrimination. When asked about personal experiences with prejudice or discrimination, 73 percent of Nigerians either replied in the affirmative or described situations that constituted an affirmative answer. Thus, Nigerians described high levels of discrimination, both in the cases of other Nigerians and themselves.

However, the Mexican responses regarding personal experience were lower. Whereas 80 percent said that they had heard of fellow Mexicans who had experienced discrimination, only 38 percent replied that they themselves had had such experiences. In some ways, this difference is not surprising since the first question asks about a group of people—other immigrants—versus one person's experience. On the other hand, the large gap between the reported personal experience of discrimination by Nigerians (73 percent) and Mexicans (38 percent) raises questions. The difference may be due to the fact that the notion of "discrimination" in its American cultural usage is learned, and Nigerians—because they are black, because they are English-speaking, or because they are less insulated in their ethnic community—have been more often exposed to the lesson. Or it may well be indeed that race is a more problematic issue for Nigerians than for Mexicans. If so, it suggests that discrimination continues to pose problems for Nigerians, despite their higher levels of education and income.

In elaborating on answers to questions about the prevalence and personal experience of discrimination, Mexicans and Nigerians offered opinions about the reasons and contexts for it. Table 6 (p. 22) details and ranks responses in order of frequency. Among both groups, when immigrants offered specific examples, employment-related discrimination was the most often mentioned. Mexicans cited verbal abuse and differential treatment most frequently. Nigerians, on the other hand, described discrimination in hiring most often, followed by hostility and unfair consideration for promotions once on the job. Second most prevalent for Mexicans was discrimination related to English language skills. Some reported negative comments about the quality of their English. Others say that they were simply ignored—sometimes in critical settings such as a hospital emergency room. Among Nigerians the second most common examples were discrimination at school—usually related to their own educational experiences rather than in their children's classrooms—and poor treatment by African Americans.

The third most common problem for Mexicans was generalized hostility; among Nigerians hostility also came third, along with discrimination related to their accents. Nigerians reported that people often tell them to "speak English," when, in fact that was just what they were doing. As noted on Table 6, fourth among Mexican immigrants' examples was incidents related to school, although in their case, these had mainly to do with their children's experiences—such as the teacher hostility or teachers ignoring their children. Nigerians, on the other hand list discriminatory actions or attitudes by the police and untoward social experiences—often at church, for example, where several people said that people changed pews when they sat down, refused to speak to them, or to take their hands when the pastor asked members of the congregation to join hands. Finally, among Mexicans, discriminatory police behavior ranks fifth among their examples. This litany of reasons and contexts of discrimination experienced and reported by Mexicans

and Nigerians suggests that both of groups perceive discrimination as an important problem in American society.

However, before coming to a definitive conclusion about the experience and perception of discrimination among Mexican and Nigerian immigrants, an additional important observation is in order. A significant number of people in both communities tended to minimize or even deny the existence of discrimination. Among Nigerians, these kinds of comments were almost as common as complaints about discrimination related to employment. Among Mexicans, even more people responded in this fashion. Both groups

TABLE 6. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF DISCRIMINATION AMONG MEXICAN AND NIGERIAN IMMIGRANTS

MEXICANS	***NIGERIANS***	
Reasons and Contexts (in order of frequency)	**Reasons and Contexts (in order of frequency)**	
Rank 1	**Rank 1**	
Employment	Employment	
On job	Hiring	
Verbal abuse	Overqualification	
Language	Accent	
Differential treatment	Black	
Hostility/Harrassment	On job	
Physical abuse	Hostility/Harrassment	
Clients refuse service	Promotion	
Hiring	African Americans	
	Firing	
Rank 2	**Rank 2**	
Being Ignored and Language	African Americans	School
Rank 3	**Rank 3**	
Hostility	Accent	Hostility
	Simply being black	
Rank 4	**Rank 4**	
School	Police	Church and Social
Rank 5		
Police		
Denials/Minimization	**Denials/Minimization**	

voiced impatience with Mexican Americans and African Americans who complained about discrimination and racism.

Nigerians explained these responses in several ways. Some said that they "did not believe" in discrimination, and that individual drive determined success. Others suggested that people who complained of discrimination needed to address limitations by

looking within, rather than blaming others. Still others, for the most part "born-again" Christians and fervent members of Pentecostal churches, said that all people are the children of God, and that they "don't see color." In the end, these responses do not mean that Nigerians do not believe that discrimination exists. In one context or another in the course of their interviews, virtually all make reference to these obstacles. In responding to the direct question about discrimination, however, they meant to send two other messages. The first is that they intend to succeed despite the barriers in their path. This message echoes West Indian reactions to racism in New York. As Foner notes, "West Indians tend to subordinate racial considerations to the overriding goal of achieving material success in America, and they believe that individual effort can overcome racial barriers" (Foner 2001, citing Bashi Bobb and Clarke 2001, and Vickerman 2001).

The second intent in denying the existence of discrimination is to set themselves apart from African Americans. Judging from comments made in many interviews, Nigerian immigrants clearly do not understand how forced immigration, the experience of slavery, and subsequent *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination have shaped African American society. The comments of some Nigerians about the alienation of African Americans and their lower educational and economic status in American society are often quite negative. They do not understand "why African Americans do not take advantage of the opportunities this society offers them." Some suggest that African Americans have a "slave mentality." At best, Nigerians who have sympathetic relations with African Americans admit that they simply cannot understand the situation of African Americans "because we weren't here" during the era of slavery, the period of legal discrimination that followed, and the civil rights struggle of the 1950s and 1960s. But all do want to make it clear that they are different. Again these comments are reminiscent of the statements of West Indian immigrants recorded by Waters (2001, 212) in New York City:

> Indeed, one finds cultural distancing from black Americans among the immigrants we interviewed. They argued that West Indians merited inclusion in American society because of their strong work ethnic, the value they placed on education, and their lack of pathological behaviors. […] West Indians make a case for cultural inclusion in American society based on being different from black Americans. […] Cultural distancing may help individual black Americans and West Indians, but it leaves intact and reinforces stereotypes of blacks as inferior, thus harming other group members.

All of this taken together, what might we conclude about the incorporation of Mexican and Nigerian immigrants into society in north Texas? First, Nigerians enjoy a much higher socioeconomic status than Mexicans. Greater education and higher incomes afford them more choices and greater security. Second, both groups are very focused on economic success. For Nigerians such success promises a door to integration into American society. Their wealth allows them to invest in their standards of living here and to send money to extended family members in Nigeria. Mexicans, most of whom make much less money, survive on little money here and send a large percentage of their earnings back home. There is little left to invest in becoming established in the US. But despite minimal wealth, the proximity of Mexico allows them to plan to bring immediate

family members to the US and settle permanently. The possibility that these relatives may work offers the prospect of greater economic security.

Third, Nigerians, because they speak English, and are characterized by higher levels of education and income, connect with a greater diversity of people and groups in DFW. From the time they arrived, they have interacted with a greater variety of people than have Mexican immigrants. This is also due to the fact that Nigerians are a very small community. Their limited numbers compel them to deal with more people outside the Nigerian community. Mexican immigrants, because their English is more limited and because their community is huge, are more likely to integrate into the local immigrant community.

Preliminary analyses of data concerning the people with whom Mexican and Nigerian immigrants work and spend their leisure time also indicates that Mexicans tend to remain involved first with other people from Mexico, then other Hispanics, and then Mexican Americans. Particularly in the workplace, Mexican Americans often serve as the bilingual mediators between Mexican immigrants and English-speaking owners or clients. As for Nigerians, apart from those who own small businesses where they tend to be joined by other family members and other Nigerians, their worksites include all major ethnic groups in the Metroplex. And while they do tend to spend much of their leisure time with other Nigerians, they also interact a lot with whites, African Americans, and other Africans.

There is a final irony in this tale of incorporation. Although both Nigerian and Mexican immigrants express a certain impatience with their native-born coethnics, Mexican Americans and African Americans, they interact with them as much as, if not more, than they do with other native-born groups. Both of these sets of relationships—between Mexicans and Mexican Americans, and between Nigerians and African Americans—are ambivalent. And yet proximity means that for many Mexican and Nigerian immigrants, native-born coethnics are both an avenue and an obstacle to incorporation into broader society in DFW.

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