

Migration and Identity Erosion: An Exploratory Study of First Generation Nigerian-Americans

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Abstract : Nigerians are often celebrated as being the most educated cultural group in America. The cultural values and history that have led to this reality are particular to a generation that came of age post colonialism. Many of these cultural values have been passed down from post-colonial parent to millennial child, but most have not. This study, based on interviews and surveys of Nigerian millennials and their parents in the United States, explores the degree to which identity has been eroded in the millennial generation due to a lack of imparted cultural values and knowledge from the previous generation. Most of the subjects do not speak their native language or identify with their cultural heritage sufficiently to build ties with their native land. Most are experiencing some degree of identity crisis, and therefore limited self-actualization, with little to no support; as there are few successful tools available to this population. If governmental programs to reverse these trends are not implemented within this generation, the implications to the individual, family and home nation (Nigeria), will be felt for generations to come.

Keywords : identity, culture, self-actualization, social identity theory, migration, transnationalism, value systems

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