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Claire L. Adida

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## Immigrant Exclusion and Insecurity in Africa

*Coethnic Strangers*

This book explores the diverse immigrant experiences in urban West Africa, where some groups integrate seamlessly while others face exclusion and violence. It shows, counterintuitively, that cultural similarities between immigrants and their hosts do not help immigrant integration and may, in fact, disrupt it. This book is one of the first to describe and explain in a systematic way immigrant integration in the developing world, where half of all international migrants go. It relies on intensive fieldwork tracking two immigrant groups in three host cities and draws from in-depth interviews and survey data to paint a picture of the immigrant experience from both immigrant and host perspectives.

Claire L. Adida is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of California, San Diego, where she is also a faculty affiliate with the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies and with the Policy Design and Evaluation Lab. Her work has been published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *Comparative Political Studies*, and *Economics and Politics*. Her research applies experimental, survey, and interview methods to the study of ethnic politics. Adida's fieldwork has taken her to Nigeria, Niger, Benin, Ghana, Uganda, and South Africa.

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# Immigrant Exclusion and Insecurity in Africa

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*University of California, San Diego*



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*For Jen, Gabi, and Mina; in memory of Chief Olujobi.*

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978-1-107-04772-3 - Immigrant Exclusion and Insecurity in Africa: Coethnic Strangers

Claire L. Adida

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	page ix
<i>List of Tables</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
1 Introduction	I
1.1 <i>A Tale of Two Families</i>	I
1.2 <i>Three Assumptions Challenged</i>	3
1.3 <i>Overview of the Theory</i>	14
1.4 <i>Scope</i>	18
1.5 <i>Empirical Strategy</i>	20
1.6 <i>Implications of the Research</i>	33
1.7 <i>Plan of the Book</i>	36
2 Immigrants and Their Leaders	39
2.1 <i>Immigrant Options in Host Societies</i>	41
2.2 <i>Immigrant Leaders and the Threat of Cultural Overlap</i>	42
2.3 <i>Empirical Tests of Cultural Overlap and Immigrant Attachment</i>	48
2.4 <i>Conclusion</i>	67
3 Immigrant Exclusion from Host Societies	69
3.1 <i>Immigrant Exclusion in Urban West Africa</i>	70
3.2 <i>The Face of Exclusion</i>	73
	vii

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04772-3 - Immigrant Exclusion and Insecurity in Africa: Coethnic Strangers

Claire L. Adida

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii	<i>Contents</i>
3.3	<i>Testing the Link between Cultural Overlap and Exclusion</i> 86
3.4	<i>Conclusion</i> 93
4	<i>Alternative Explanations</i> 94
4.1	<i>Robustness Test</i> 95
4.2	<i>Confounding Effects</i> 97
4.3	<i>The Term “Hausa” and Survey Validity</i> 107
4.4	<i>Conclusion</i> 114
5	<i>Mass Immigrant Expulsions in Africa</i> 118
5.1	<i>Correlates of Mass Immigrant Expulsions in Africa</i> 120
5.2	<i>Explaining Mass Immigrant Expulsions in Africa</i> 126
5.3	<i>Testing the Arguments</i> 130
5.4	<i>Robustness Checks</i> 139
5.5	<i>Conclusion</i> 143
6	<i>Conclusion</i> 146
	<i>Appendix A Constructing the Immigrant Attachment Index</i> 151
	<i>Appendix B Constructing the Cultural Overlap Index</i> 153
	<i>Appendix C List of Mass Expulsions and Variable Description</i> 155
	<i>Bibliography</i> 159
	<i>Index</i> 167



Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04772-3 - Immigrant Exclusion and Insecurity in Africa: Coethnic Strangers

Claire L. Adida

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## List of Figures

1.1	Growth in migrant stock in Western Europe and West Africa	<i>page</i> 9
1.2	Summary of the argument	18
1.3	Map of 2007 fieldwork location	22
1.4	Fieldwork map of Accra	28
1.5	Fieldwork map of Niamey	29
2.1	Average immigrant group attachment by ethnicity and host city	55
2.2	Average Yoruba attachment in Accra	62
3.1	Exclusionary attitudes toward Yorubas and Hausas among Ghanaians in Accra	74
3.2	Percentage of Hausa/Yoruba immigrant respondents affected by the 1969 expulsion	82
3.3	Exclusionary attitudes toward Yorubas and Hausas among Nigeriens in Niamey	84
3.4	Immigrant group wealth by ethnicity and host city	89
4.1	Proportion of indigenous respondents who expressed no differences with Yorubas/Hausas	96
4.2	Yoruba occupations in Accra and Niamey	99
4.3	Hausa occupations in Accra and Niamey	100
4.4	Ethnic homelands and nation-states in West Africa	102
4.5	Attachment to immigrant organization, by Hausa hometown	105

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04772-3 - Immigrant Exclusion and Insecurity in Africa: Coethnic Strangers

Claire L. Adida

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x

*List of Figures*

4.6 In-group attachment, excluding geographic variables	106
5.1 Regional variation in mass immigrant expulsions across sub-Saharan Africa, 1956–1999	122
5.2 Number of expulsions in sub-Saharan Africa, by decade	123
5.3 Correlation between a country's ethnolinguistic fractionalization and its propensity to expel	125
5.4 Average growth patterns before and after an expulsion	128

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04772-3 - Immigrant Exclusion and Insecurity in Africa: Coethnic Strangers

Claire L. Adida

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## List of Tables

1.1	Case Selection and Observable Implications	<i>page</i> 21
1.2	Yorubas and Hausas in Accra and Niamey	26
2.1	Informal Indicators of Attachment by Ethnicity and Host City	58
2.2	Formal Indicators of Attachment by Ethnicity and Host City	59
2.3	Disaggregated Indicators of Yoruba Attachment in Accra	63
2.4	Associational Trends of Yorubas and Hausas in Accra in 2007	64
3.1	Summary Statistics for Ghanaian Respondents in Accra	75
3.2	Probability of an Affirmative Answer to: “Do You Think Ghanaians Would Vote for a Yoruba/Hausa?”	77
3.3	Probability of an Affirmative Answer to: “Would You Vote for a Yoruba/Hausa?”	79
3.4	The Targets of the 1969 Alien Compliance Order	83
3.5	Summary Statistics for Nigerien Respondents in Niamey	85
3.6	Probability of an Affirmative Answer to: “Do You Think Nigeriens Would Vote for a Yoruba/Kanawa?”	87

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04772-3 - Immigrant Exclusion and Insecurity in Africa: Coethnic Strangers

Claire L. Adida

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii

*List of Tables*

3.7 Summarizing and Evaluating Alternative Hypotheses	92
4.1 Distance between Christian and Muslim Yoruba Hometowns and Accra	103
4.2 Distance from Niamey and In-Group Attachment	104
4.3 Probability of an Affirmative Answer to: “Do You Think Ghanaians Would Vote for a Yoruba/Hausa?” on Subsample	113
4.4 Probability of an Affirmative Answer to: “Do You Think Ghanaians Would Vote for a Yoruba/Hausa?” with <i>Religious Difference Only</i> Control	115
5.1 Comparing Expelling Countries and Non-Expelling Countries	124
5.2 Probability of Expulsion in Any Given Country-Year	135
5.3 Illustrating the Interaction Effect on the Probability of Expulsion (%)	136
5.4 Probability of Expulsion in any Given Country-Year – Robustness Checks	142
5.5 Summary of Regression Results	144
A.1 Immigrant Attachment Index Construction: Yorubas and Hausas in Accra, Cotonou, and Niamey	151
A.2 Immigrant Attachment Index Construction: Christian and Muslim Yorubas in Accra	152
B.1 Overlap Index Construction	154
C.1 List of Expulsions	155
C.2 Variable List and Description for Difference-of-Means Analysis in Chapter 5	157

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04772-3 - Immigrant Exclusion and Insecurity in Africa: Coethnic Strangers

Claire L. Adida

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Acknowledgments

The idea for this book germinated during a research trip to East Africa in 2005. I was a graduate assistant on a project on coethnicity in Uganda at the time. In the mornings, I enjoyed the luxury of reading the local newspapers while sipping Nescafé in a house overlooking Lake Victoria (subsequent fieldwork would never be as luxurious again); on a regular basis, anti-Asian incidents sprinkled the pages of the *Daily Monitor* and *New Vision*. This piqued my interest, and I began reading about Idi Amin's expulsion of Uganda's more than 50,000 Asians in 1972. Although this event attracted significant media attention, I soon discovered that a myriad other less-publicized expulsion events had occurred throughout sub-Saharan Africa since the 1960s. Clearly, anti-immigrant politics were alive and well in a region typically known for sending migrants elsewhere, not for hosting them.

And yet, systematic research on immigrant exclusion in Africa offered a rather desolate landscape. I saw in that a research opportunity, which – eight years later – has culminated into this book. With it I try to make a dent into our understanding of the immigrant experience in urban Africa. My approach has been to immerse myself into two migrant communities in three West African urban centers and to draw insights from the local dynamics I witnessed and that have been recounted to me in interviews and surveys. As a result, I owe countless individual

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04772-3 - Immigrant Exclusion and Insecurity in Africa: Coethnic Strangers

Claire L. Adida

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04772-3 - Immigrant Exclusion and Insecurity in Africa: Coethnic Strangers

Claire L. Adida

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgments*

xv

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