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# The Contemporary African Diaspora

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## Introduction

This chapter will focus on the African Diaspora in the US. The chapter examines the migration of populations from other parts of the African Diaspora, as well as the African continent, to the US in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This growing segment of the African Diaspora joins an established African Diaspora that has been in the US since the sixteenth century. The chapter will discuss the numerous social, economic, and legal push and pull factors that have led to increased migration into the US from other African Diasporas and from Africa. The important phases of migration from the Caribbean (1900s to 2010s) and Africa (1960s to 2010s) to the US will be examined by the author. These phases have led to the establishment of Caribbean and African communities and cultures in America, adding to the diversity of the African Diaspora living in the US. Also included in the chapter will be a thorough examination of the presence and representations of Caribbean and African peoples in popular culture and media in the US. Lastly, the chapter will briefly take a comparative look at African Diasporas in various parts of the world.

**Major terms and concepts:** Diaspora, neo-liberalism, refugee, Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, Immigration Act of 1924, Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, Diversity Visa Lottery, Afropolitan, Siddi.

## Overview of Black Migration in the US

The **Diaspora** refers to the scattering or removal of a population from their homeland. It is in the Diaspora where migrants form permanent communities away from their homeland. There are many Diasporas, including the Asian Diaspora, the Jewish Diaspora, and the African Diaspora. African Diasporas can be found all over the world, with the

largest African Diaspora communities established in North and South America, the Caribbean, and Europe. There are also other sizable African Diaspora communities in the Middle East and Asia. In this context, African Diasporas exist wherever there are large communities of people of African descent, and includes Americans, Jamaicans, Afro-Brazilians, Guyanese, Black British, and Siddis, who span the globe.

The relationship between Africa and its Diaspora is a long and complicated one. There has always been an acknowledgement of the large numbers of Africans dispersed (voluntarily or involuntarily) from the continent. There is also a strong history of engagement among the Diasporas, and between the Diasporas and Africa. For example, African Americans objected vocally to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, African Americans supported the struggles of the Kikuyu in the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya in the 1950s, and African Americans mobilized in opposition to apartheid in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. Likewise, African governments spoke out against the killing of four African-American girls in the bombing of a church in Alabama in 1963; several African states welcomed African-American and Caribbean expatriates in their newly independent nations in the 1960s and 1970s; and the African Union recognized the African Diaspora as the sixth region of Africa in 2001. Additionally, Jamaican Rastafarian culture has been heavily influenced by both Ethiopia and the Mau Mau rebellion, in which the rebels locked their hair. In Nigeria and Brazil, practitioners of the Yoruba religion have frequently traveled between the two countries. Musically, in addition, the social and political content in Jamaican roots reggae and American hip hop have influenced the development of roots reggae and hip hop culture in Africa.

The meeting of Africa and the Diasporas in the US has been shaped by a history of engagement, and has involved the voluntary and involuntary migration of African peoples. The African Diaspora in the US was established when large numbers of Africans were enslaved and forcibly taken to America between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. The population of African Americans that grew out of that time period would form a significant African Diaspora community in America. Enslaved Africans also created African Diasporas in Latin America and the Caribbean (sixteenth–nineteenth centuries), Europe (fifteenth–nineteenth centuries), and the Middle East and Asia (seventh–twentieth centuries). This does not include the Africans who have voluntarily migrated in smaller numbers to America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia since the first century. The size and scope of the African Diaspora is so large that prominent Kenyan scholar Dr. Ali Mazrui once said:

Long before slave-days we lived in one huge village called Africa.  
And then strangers came and took some of us away.... Today we  
are scattered so widely that the sun never sets on the descend-

First- and second-generation migrants from the Caribbean and Africa have been involved in shaping what it means to be Black in America and have contributed to Black culture and politics in America in meaningful ways. In many Black communities in major US cities, it is not uncommon to find a soul food, Caribbean, and African restaurant within blocks of each other. African hair braiding salons are frequent in Black communities, where Black barbershops and Caribbean grocery stores can also be found. On college campuses, African and Caribbean students' associations can be found alongside Black student associations, with some students belonging to two or three of them. African-American fraternities and sororities also frequently welcome members who are first- or second-generation Caribbean or African immigrants.

The growth of the Caribbean and African immigrant communities is due to several factors. Economic or educational opportunities often motivate people to migrate from their homes. Migrants also may leave because of a conflict or a natural disaster. Migrants tend to choose countries based a number of reasons, including perceived opportunities available, ease of migration, and cultural connections in the proposed host country. We will next examine some of the push factors that have influenced the decision for Caribbean and African migrants to leave home as well as some of the pull factors that influenced those migrants' decisions to migrate to the US.

## Causes for Migration to the US: Push Factors

The economic crisis that many African and Caribbean nations found themselves in during the 1980s occurred around the same time African and Caribbean migration to the US increased dramatically. International migration patterns can be linked to global economic systems. During the 1980s, many African and Caribbean countries were facing economic difficulties and found that they needed to borrow money from international financial institutions, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As conditions for the loans, governments were required to adopt Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). SAPs were based on neo-liberal economic policies. **Neo-liberalism** is an economic structure that strongly favors the private sector and reduces government involvement in the economy. The recommended economic and social restructuring involves the privatization of the economy, or opening up the economy to private enterprises, and increase in exports. This has also involved opening up economies to foreign corporations, who in competition with local businesses, often weaken local industries. In neo-liberal economies, labor laws are weakened, labor unions are restrained, and there are massive cuts in government spending on public and social services.

ants of Africa. The world is our village; and we plan to make it more human between now and the day after tomorrow.

Once the importation of enslaved Africans ended in the US during the nineteenth century, enslaved individuals were still forcibly brought in to the country from the Caribbean islands. When slavery ended in the US in 1865, voluntary migration from Africa or other parts of the Diaspora was minimal. Voluntary migration from the Caribbean would not increase significantly until the 1900s, while African migration would not begin in earnest until the 1960s, and significantly increase during the 1980s.

**Table I: The Composition of Black America**

	<i>Population in Numbers</i>		<i>Percent of the Black Population in America</i>		Growth Rate
	2000	2010	1990	2000	
African Americans	36,000,000	42,000,000			17
Caribbean Immigrants	2,900,000	3,700,000	8	9	26
African Immigrants	881,000	1,600,000	2	4	81

The African Diaspora in the US has grown and diversified almost beyond recognition since 1985. As a result of successive waves of Black migrants from the Caribbean and Africa, the African Diaspora in the US today speaks Amharic, Yoruba, Swahili, Twi, Wolof, Xhosa, Creole, Patois, Pidgin English, French, Portuguese, Arabic, and almost a thousand other languages, while practicing diverse religions, eating a wide array of foods, and living in every state in America. The growing African Diaspora in America has been impacted by international economic trends, conflict, economic interests, and familial migrations. The Black migrant presence in the US is increasingly reflected in American media, schools, pop culture, and politics.

The number of migrants to the US from Africa and the Caribbean has increased so much since 1985 that foreign-born Black populations in some American cities can sometimes rival that of the American-born Black populations. The rise in the total number of Black immigrants to the US has jumped from 125,000 in 1960 to almost 3 million in 2000. In 2016, several estimates put the number of first- and second-generation Black immigrants in America at well over 5 million. Foreign-born Blacks make up between 10 to 15 percent of the Black population in America. In several major cities, like Miami, Minneapolis, New York, and the Washington, DC, area, the foreign-born Black population has grown to between 15 to 20 percent of the total Black population.

In an effort to examine the role Black migrants play in the changing configuration of Black America, it is helpful to take a look at their growth ([Table I](#)).

Regrettably, the results of the neo-liberal economic reforms that were conditions of the badly needed loans were a decrease in the quality of living due to unemployment, underemployment, and underfunded hospitals and school systems. This also led to increased urbanization, the emergence of more slums and informal dwellings in cities unprepared for the influxes, and declining access to schools and healthcare, particularly for the rural areas. The subsequent failure of SAPs (now called Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers or PRSPs) in many countries was felt by the masses that failed to reap financial benefits from SAPs. The economic conditions in the Caribbean and Africa (and other developing regions) have translated into greater numbers of migrants from the developing world moving to economically developed countries in search of economic and educational opportunities, which have become scarce in their home countries.

Several countries have also had to deal with instability. Conflict and instability have directly affected citizens in countries such as Eritrea, Ethiopia, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Each of these countries has seen increases in immigration to the US as a result of insecurity. The numbers of Rwandan refugees arriving in the US increased in the years after the 1994 genocide, which saw up to 1 million ethnic Tutsi killed in 100 days. Many Rwandans fled to neighboring countries such as Tanzania and Burundi, some fled to Europe, while many of the lucky ones sought and were granted asylum in the US. The number of Rwandans seeking asylum in the US was 31 in 1994, 88 in 1995, and 118 in 1996. This was up from zero in 1990. A similar trend is found among Somalis with refugee arrivals in the US going from 25 in 1990 to 6,436 in 1995, after the collapse of the state in that country, which led to several years of instability and lawlessness. Africans now make up the majority of refugees arriving in the US.

Most asylum seekers coming to the United States from the Caribbean have been from Cuba or Haiti. Cuban refugees generally fall into two categories. First, those that left after Fidel Castro came to power in 1961. These were political refugees who fled the country in the 1960s and 1970s. The second category are economic refugees who fled in the 1980s as US economic sanctions were increasingly impacting Cuba's declining economy. Due to America's strained, and often adversarial, relationship with Cuba, the US government enacted a policy that granted all Cuban migrants legal status if they successfully arrived on US soil. Cubans are the only migrants that this policy has applied to, and it has been responsible for the comparatively large number of Cuban refugees who have settled in the US, especially in southern Florida.

Haitian refugees have fled that country for reasons related to a poor economy, corrupt and unstable government, and natural disasters. Haitians coming to the US increased in the 1980s due to a poor econ-

omy and political uprisings in this small island of the Caribbean. In the aftermath of the toppling of the government in the late 1980s, the numbers of Haitians leaving the country jumped. Many went to other Caribbean countries, including the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas, while several migrated to the US. The flows of Haitian migrants coming to the US crowded on boats in the 1990s became a major media story, as the Haitian population in America more than tripled. With the return to political stability in Haiti, the US had begun deportations of Haitian refugees living in the US. After the 2010 earthquake those deportations stopped, and some Haitians were allowed to enter the US on humanitarian grounds. As Haiti's economy continued to decline, and with the 2016 hurricane coming on the heels of the 2010 earthquake, Haitians continue to make the journey to the US, many now coming by land through South and Central America.

It has thus been a combination of economic and political factors that have pushed migrants out of Africa and the Caribbean. While Europe was once the main region from which refugees in the US came, today the majority of refugee arrivals come from Africa. Economically, the economic shocks in the 1970s and 1980s pushed many migrants out of Africa and the Caribbean, with many lucky ones eventually settling in the US.

**Table II: Number of Refugee Arrivals into the US**

	1990	1995	2000	2004
Africa	3,494	4,779	17,624	29,129
Europe	56,912	45,703	37,664	9,254
Asia	43,360	40,420	13,622	10,896
Caribbean*	4,753	7,618	3,233	2,976
South & Central America	559	N/A	N/A	579

\* Over 90 percent of the refugees from the Caribbean come from Cuba, with the remaining coming from Haiti.

## Pull Factors

The main pull factors that influenced migration to the US have to do with the changes in immigration laws, both in Europe and the US, as well as the spread of globalization and all of the advances that have been made in the availability of information and communication. In the post-colonial era, migrants often traveled to the country of their former colonial master. In most cases this was England, France, or Portugal. Not only did migrants not have significant language barriers to overcome, but Europe had labor shortages, and a comparatively relaxed immigration policy. While immigration was especially encouraged from other European countries, migrants from Africa and the Caribbean were also able to take advantage of Western Europe's need for labor and many immigrated there to study and find employment.

The change in this migration trend and Europe's attitudes towards migrants occurred with the oil price shocks of the early 1970s, which led to an almost immediate curtailment of the previous lenient immigration policies in Europe. During this time period, oil prices more than tripled globally, having a major impact on the global economy. As a result, European countries enacted laws that curbed the number of immigrants who could legally enter their countries. France, for example, began refusing the renewal of residency permits, deporting illegal immigrants, and denying automatic citizenship to the children of immigrants who were born in the country. Many of Europe's immigration laws have yet to undergo the transformation that immigration laws went through in the US. Even these, however, such as the so-called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in the US, need to be resolved through new laws.

Around the same time that immigration laws were being tightened in Europe, they were being loosened in America. The US began to liberalize their immigration policies, beginning with the **Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965**. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 should be seen as part of the sweeping Civil Rights legislation that was passed in the 1960s, legislation that was meant to get rid of racial discrimination. The act included five important provisions: (1) the abolishment of the national-origins quota, which got rid of national origin and race as basis for immigration; (2) the creation of a seven-category preference system, which gave priority to relatives of US citizens and legal permanent residents who were applying for residency; (3) immediate relatives were not subject to numerical restrictions, in terms of how many could gain their residency; (4) immigration from the Western Hemisphere was limited; and (5) refugees were given preference. Of these five provisions, two were critical to immigration from Africa and the Caribbean. First, the act eliminated national origin, race, or ancestry as a basis for immigration to the US. In doing so, the act abolished the national origins quota system that was initiated by the Immigration Act of 1924 and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952. Second, the seven-category preference system for relatives of US citizens and permanent residents allowed for family reunification. The second part of the act has meant that immigrants in America have been able to sponsor the immigration of their relatives.

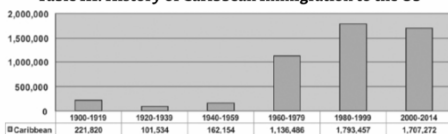
Another pull factor was the rise of the US as a global superpower. During the Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union were the two main superpowers. Both countries fought for power internationally and sought alliances with smaller nations. At the end of the Cold War during the late 1980s, the Soviet Union collapsed, and the US remained as the only superpower. This led to the export and dominance of American economics, American-style education, American culture, and American food. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, people in cities

around the world consumed American culture in all its manifestations. The export of American culture served as an effective public relations tool, and promoted America as a place where success was possible. This consumption of all things American has had a significant impact on the large numbers of Caribbean, and especially African, migrants who decided to migrate to the US.

Many migrants come as legal immigrants. Many also come as students and find permanent employment after graduation. Others have come to the US as refugees, or by other means, and claimed asylum in order to stay in the US. In addition to coming to the US using legal channels, a minority of the migrants arrive undocumented or have statuses that have expired. A good number of migrants come as students but are unable to remain in status, which requires remaining a full-time student. Some are also unable to find a job to sponsor them after graduation, and are forced to work without papers if finding employment at home is not an option. During the 2000s, an increasingly popular method of entering the US from both the Caribbean and Africa was through South and Central America. Many migrants fly into South America and come into America by land, following similar routes as migrants from Central America. Yet, only a small number of migrants from the Caribbean and Africa enter the US this way. However, those that do often face language barriers, criminal gangs, and stricter immigration enforcement.

Changes in immigration laws, namely the passing of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act in America, in conjunction with tighter immigration laws in Europe during the 1970s, can be credited with the shift in focus for migrants from Europe to America. When these factors are combined with the economic crisis that hit Africa and the Caribbean in the 1980s, a vivid picture of the factors influencing Caribbean and African immigration to the US becomes apparent. A look at both Caribbean and African migration shows the distinct migration experiences of the two communities, as well as some of the migrants who had an influential impact in American culture and politics.

**Table III: History of Caribbean Immigration to the US**



## Caribbean Migration

While enslaved Blacks from the Caribbean were brought to the US

naissance. The cultural movement that was the Harlem Renaissance lasted from the early 1920s to the mid-1930s and included important contributions by such Caribbean migrants as Marcus Garvey (Jamaica), founder of the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA); poet and writer Claude McKay (Jamaica); and intellectual and historian Arturo Schomburg (Puerto Rico).

During this time, the composition of the Caribbean community was different from what it is today. The community of the 1930s was highly educated, and these Caribbean migrants made up a significant percentage of New York's Black professional community. Politician Shirley Chisholm (Guyana and Barbados), General Colin Powell (Jamaica), and leader of the Nation of Islam Louis Farrakhan (Saint Kitts and Nevis and Jamaica) were born into this community to parents who were migrants from the Caribbean. This wave of Caribbean migration, however, was slowed by two factors. During the first phase of their immigration, America's economic troubles during the depression of the 1930s slowed their immigration to the country. This was not helped by the Immigration Act of 1924. The **Immigration Act of 1924** established a quota system that limited the number of migrants who could immigrate into the US to 2 percent of the number of people from that country who were already residents of the US in 1890.

## The Second Phase

The second wave of Caribbean migration would occur in the 1940s. It was largely spurred by World War II and the post-war economic boom, which provided many employment opportunities. Several Caribbean immigrants during this period would play roles in the Civil Rights Movement. Some of them include actor and activist Sidney Poitier (Bahamas) and Kwame Ture (a.k.a. Stokely Carmichael, Trinidad and Tobago). Kwame Ture held leadership positions in the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Black Panther Party (BPP), and the All-African People's Revolutionary Party (A-APRP). A product of this second wave of Caribbean immigrants consisted of several US-born Caribbean Americans, including former US Attorney General Eric Holder (Barbados).

This wave of Caribbean immigrants was slowed down by the implementation of stricter immigration laws after the passing of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952. The **Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952** was a product of the Cold War and changed the qualifications for immigration, linking immigration to political orientation. Many Caribbean migrants from the English-speaking Caribbean turned to England and began increasing their migration to that country. These migrants to England would establish large Caribbean communities in neighborhoods such as Brixton in London. Even though Europe was

geographically further away, conditions in America meant that Caribbean immigrants had to turn to their former colonial masters for economic opportunities. By the time Africans began arriving in Europe in large numbers, Caribbean immigrants had already arrived and formed the first post-colonial Black immigrant communities in the region.

### **The Third Phase**

After the Immigration Act of 1965, we see the third wave of Caribbean migration to the US. The passing of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, in conjunction with tighter immigration laws in Europe, is credited with the shift during this third wave. This new wave would bring such migrants as hip hop pioneers DJ Kool Herc (Jamaica) and Grandmaster Flash (Barbados). The post-1965 migrants also included author Edwidge Danticat (Haiti), artist and activist Wycleaf Jean (Haiti), NBA player Patrick Ewing (Jamaica), actress C. C. H. Pounder (Guyana), journalist Kojo Nnamdi (Guyana), and president of Howard University Dr. Wayne A. Frederick (Trinidad and Tobago). The children of these immigrants have had definite impacts in the fields of education, entertainment, sports, and politics. Products of this third migration wave include US-born Caribbean Americans such as actress and activist Rosario Dawson (Cuba/Puerto Rico) and US Representative Misa Love (Haiti).

The relationship between Caribbean immigrants and African-American communities has, obviously, evolved over time. Since the early years of Caribbean immigration to the US, there have been tensions between Caribbean and African-American communities. Those tensions have significantly improved. The few tensions that do exist sometimes result in some Caribbean immigrants separating themselves from African Americans and emphasizing their ethnic heritage when they feel it is to their advantage. First generation Caribbean immigrants who have been in the US for shorter periods are less inclined to recognize solidarity with African Americans, while Caribbean immigrants who have been in this country longer, or were born here, are more likely to identify with African Americans. Less wealthy Caribbean immigrants, however, tend to identify more with African Americans. In contrast, those of privileged backgrounds are more likely to distance themselves from their Diaspora brothers and sisters.

### **Caribbean Communities**

Caribbean migrants settled in the US and created their own communities, or ethnic enclaves. In various New York boroughs, as well as Little Haiti and Little Havana in Miami, for example, there are communities where large numbers of Caribbean migrants settled. The entire eastern seaboard, in fact, is where a significant number of Carib-

bean immigrants have successfully sought asylum. While Florida is an important destination for Cubans and Haitians, many Jamaicans, Trinidadians, Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans have headed to New York.

In these communities, immigrants have often settled into African-American communities, bringing their music and food with them. Thus, many Americans have become familiar with Caribbean music and foods, which are found in many major American cities. Foods like jerk chicken, curry goat, beef patties, and coco bread have become familiar staples in cities along the eastern seaboard. In many large cities, Caribbean immigrants put on large parades, such as the Puerto Rican Day Parade and Dominican Day Parade in New York, or the carnivals held in cities like New York and Washington, DC.

Many communities have also endured discrimination and stereotypes, especially surrounding Jamaican and Haitian migrants. The stereotypes about Haitians seemed to have emerged from the HIV/AIDS outbreak in the Haitian community, the reputation of Haitian laborers in such countries as the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas, the role of some Haitian immigrants in the international drug trade, and Haitian refugees seeking asylum in America. While these stereotypes still abound, many credit the popularity of artists including Wyclef Jean for dispelling some of those that are held among youth about Haitians in America.

## **African Migration**

Very few Africans voluntarily migrated to the US prior to the 1950s, notably Kwame Nkrumah (the first president of Ghana) and Nnamdi Azikiwe (the first president of Nigeria), who studied in this country during the 1930s before returning to West Africa. Africans did not begin any significant voluntary migration to America until during and after independence movements in Africa of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Several students from the colonies or the apartheid regimes, numbering perhaps 300 hundred, where the liberation movements were in action, such as South Africa, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Zimbabwe (former Southern Rhodesia), South-West Africa, now Namibia, received graduate education scholarships to study in the US in the hopes that they would turn out to be friendly to America following independence. Most of them, however, never returned home, which became hostile to those who had spent time abroad, calling them "reactionaries," because they had not joined, instead, the war of independence. Today, African immigrant communities exist in most major US cities. These African migrant populations are especially concentrated in the east and northeastern US, with Washington, DC, and New York being home to the largest communities of African immigrants. The two countries that are heavily represented in the African immigrant popu-

lation are Nigeria and Ethiopia. Other African countries represented in large numbers include Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, and Sierra Leone.

**Table IV: Number of Africans Coming to the US on Immigrant Visas**

<i>Years</i>	<i>Numbers of Immigrants</i>
1941–1970	50,413
1971–1980	80,779
1981–1990	176,893
1991–2000*	305,608
2001–2004*	214,494

\* Includes only sub-Saharan Africa.

While the third wave of Caribbean immigration to the US began in 1965, the start of significantly greater rates of African immigration to America began in 1965, rising dramatically in the 1980s. In fact, more than two-thirds of the African immigrants currently in the US arrived after 1980. The three phases of African immigration to the US include the post-independence arrivals in the 1960s and 1970s, the migrants who came in the wake of the economic crisis that impacted the continent during the 1980s and 1990s, and those that came after 2000 in a post-9/11 immigration environment that was also characterized by revolutionary changes in communication.

[Table IV](#) shows the dramatic increase in the number of Africans who have immigrated to the US since it began tracking immigration by region. These are official numbers, but estimates have put the unofficial numbers, which include undocumented immigrants and out-of-status migrants, at almost double the official counting. The table below shows that, between 1980 and 2000, African immigration to this country roughly doubled each decade.

Several African countries stand out in looking at trends on the continent ([Table V](#)). There are several countries that had significant increases in the numbers of their citizens who immigrated to the US between 1986 and 2004. Somalia's 28 percent increase is likely directly related to the events that led up to the 1992 US military operation in the country and the subsequent collapse of the Somali state. Other countries include Sudan, with a 14-fold increase, Togo with a 93-fold increase, and Cameroon with a 10-fold increase.

**Table V: Immigration Trends in Select African Countries**

	1986	1990	1995	2000	2004
Kenya	719	1,297	1,419	2,210	5,323
Somalia	139	277	3,487	2,465	3,929
Sudan	230	306	1,645	1,538	3,211
Togo	22	30	83	388	2,041
Cameroon	130	380	506	865	1,309

## The First Phase

The African migrants that came to the US in the 1960s and 1970s were largely arriving from newly independent nations and came to acquire skills and education. Many African migrants from this first wave eventually returned to Africa. This includes Barack Obama Sr. (Kenya), historian Ali Mazrui (Kenya), academic and activist Mahmood Mamdani (Uganda), philosopher Wamba dia Wamba (Democratic Republic of the Congo), and filmmaker Haile Gerima (Ethiopia). Many of these early migrants came to America to study and returned to the African continent after finishing their studies. The children of this first phase include actress Danai Gurira (Zimbabwe), hip hop artist Jean Grae (South Africa), sports personality Sal Masekela (South Africa), and President Barack Obama (Kenya).

Many of these early migrants returned home to help fight in anti-colonial struggles and to use their acquired knowledge and expertise to help build their newly independent countries. After Africa's independence, countries were in desperate need of expertise. There were needs for people trained in all fields: government, civil service, education, medicine, engineering, and law. This meant that many Africans who returned home trained in these fields found, except in the former Portuguese colonies of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau, jobs awaiting them. However, some later returned to America as economic or political situations at home forced them to leave. The migrants in the first phase were among the scholars who helped carve out the African perspective in the study of Africa. They were also influential in the Civil Rights and Black Nationalist movements, some choosing to participate by joining and working with such Civil Rights groups as the NAACP and SNCC.

The numbers of Africans migrating to the US was always much smaller than the numbers of Africans migrating to Europe, as most Africans first turned to the countries of their former colonizer. Thus, there was not so much as a slump and resurgence of African migration to the US, but a surge of African migration to America caused by Europe enacting stricter immigration laws, which forced them to look elsewhere. The changes in immigration laws coincided with political conflicts in the countries of Ghana, Nigeria, and Uganda, to name a few, and led to the second phase of African migration to the US.

## The Second Phase

The second phase of African migration to the US began after 1980 and was largely impacted by shifts in Europe's immigration laws, as well as economic and security concerns in Africa. Many African countries were contending with political repressions, conflict, or military coups. This caused many to leave the African continent in search of opportunities abroad. Coming to the US became a realistic alternative for many Africans who were also able to take advantage of the liberalization of the immigration laws with the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. In 1990, African immigration got another boost with the introduction of the Diversity Visa Lottery program, which was attached to the Immigration Act of 1990. The **Diversity Visa Lottery** is run through the US Department of State and was set up to give immigration opportunities to citizens of countries that were underrepresented. The government allots 50,000 visas per year through the Diversity Visa Lottery. In 2015, the Diversity Visa Lottery program received nine million qualified applications during the 30-day application period. Of the 50,000 available slots, almost half went to applicants from Africa.

Africans immigrating during this phase began to settle in many cities along the east coast, such as the Washington, DC, area, New York City, and Boston. Many of them settled and formed communities like Little Senegal in Harlem and Little Ethiopia in Los Angeles. They created Ghanaian communities in the Bronx, NY, and in the Boston, MA, area, and Somali communities in Minneapolis, MN, and Columbus, OH. Unlike the previous generation, these migrants did not return to Africa in large numbers. Instead, many post-1980 migrants established networks between home and host communities in America and created communities with their own community organizations, churches, mosques, grocery stores, and recreational groups. These groups brought their religious and cultural traditions with them and created homes away from home. Among this phase of African migration are writer Ngugi wa'Thiongo (Kenya), poet Abena Busia (Ghana), scientist Bennet Omalu (Nigeria), actor Djimon Hounsou (Benin), US District Judge Abdul Kallon (Sierra Leone), NASA scientist Ave Kludze (Ghana), hip hop artist K'naan (Somalia), and Representative Ilhan Omar, who was the first US lawmaker from Somalia. The children of these migrants would contribute to the worlds of politics, activism, sports, and entertainment, including co-founder of Black Lives Matter Opal Tometi (Nigeria), actress Uzo Aduba (Nigeria), and hip hop artist Wale (Nigeria).

## The Third Phase

The third phase of African immigration to the US began after 2000.

The immigrants of this phase have benefitted from the foundations laid by earlier migrations from Africa, as well as from the Caribbean. They arrived here in an environment where they also benefitted from improvements in technology and communication, allowing them to maintain connections with home. Among this group are some of the most mobile African migrants of any time prior to 2000. Like many who came in the 1980s and 1990s, several of the post-2000 African migrants may not have been born in the country of their parents' birth. Some may have migrated to America from Europe, where their parents migrated to after leaving Africa. Due to improvements in communication and social media, post-2000 African migrants often have maintained connections with classmates and family members that may live in Africa, Europe, or Asia.

Three factors have influenced the mobility and characteristics of the post-2000 migration out of Africa and into America. First, these migrants arrived in a post-9/11 era that saw stronger enforcement of immigration laws. Second, they arrived during a time when improvements in technology, communication, and social media allowed them to maintain a relationship between host and home that differs from previous generations of African migrants. Third, many of these post-2000 migrants are also more transnational than previous migrants. It is not unusual for post-2000 migrants to have lived experiences in two or more countries, experiences that include socialization into multi-national and multi-generational African immigrant communities.

The transnationality of the aforementioned post-2000 migrants has led to the popularity of the term **Afropolitan**. **Afropolitan** is used to describe Africans that are highly transnational and cosmopolitan, with experiences in two or more countries. Afropolitans are seen as Africans who are (1) multicultural in expression; (2) comfortable in a variety of international settings; (3) a product of the migrants that left Africa from the 1960s to the 1980s or middle to upper income Africans at home; and (4) frequently travelers between the West and Africa. The term Afropolitan was coined by cultural scholar Achille Mbembe in 2001, but made popular by author Taiye Selasi in 2005. Since the popularity of the term, Afropolitan has become a label applied to many young Africans in the Diaspora. In addition to *The Afropolitan* magazine out of South Africa, and the Afropolitan Vibes concert series in Nigeria, Afropolitan parties, fashion shows, exhibits, and music performances occur throughout the Diaspora, notably in England, France, Canada, and the US. The Afropolitan label has been criticized for being too consumer driven, and elitist, but it has captured a segment of the African migrant community that is more transnational and mobile than earlier generations of African migrants. Many of these post-2000 migrants include comedian Trevor Noah (South Africa), journalist

during slavery, voluntary Caribbean migration to the US began regularly occurring after emancipation in the early twentieth century. As noted, their migration has been driven by changes in immigration laws, economic and educational opportunities, family reunification, and other factors. Caribbean immigrants make up the largest foreign-born Black population in the US, far outnumbering Africans in almost every city, except the Washington, DC, area. The Caribbean migrants who initially settled in the US mostly settled in Florida. It would not be until the early part of the twentieth century that New York would also become a primary destination for Caribbean migrants. Today, both states are home to the largest populations of Caribbean migrants in America. The majority of these Caribbean migrants come from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Haiti, and Trinidad and Tobago.

America had a long history of Caribbean immigration, and their close geographical proximity to the islands made the US a preferred destination for Caribbean migrants. The trends in Caribbean immigration to the US are reflected in [Table III](#). Caribbean migrants began to increase their numbers in the early twentieth century. Those numbers slowed down during the 1930s, as America entered the Depression, and sharply increased in the 1960s after the passing of the Immigration Act of 1965.

Caribbean scholar Winston James chronicles four phases in Caribbean immigration to this country, beginning with the migration that occurred between the colonial period and 1900. This immigration was primarily involuntary and was a consequence of slavery and the movement of enslaved peoples between the Caribbean and the US. The history of voluntary migration from the Caribbean to the US is divided into three phases: 1900 to 1930, 1940 to 1960, and post-1965. The Caribbean migration has had important impacts in the areas of politics, activism, economics, and culture in America. These migrants have also been involved in major milestones in race relations and civil rights in America.

### **The First Phase**

The first phase occurred between 1900 and 1932, peaking in the 1920s and waning during the Great Depression. During this time, Florida was the primary destination for Caribbean immigrants arriving in the US, until the early twentieth century when New York became the number one US destination for Caribbean immigrants. This era in Caribbean immigration and the shift from Florida to New York intersected with the Great Migration, which saw millions of African Americans migrating out of the South and establishing Black urban metropolitans like Harlem. The convergence of African-American and Caribbean migrants in New York saw the emergence of the Harlem Re-

Femi Oke (Nigeria), journalist Isha Sesay (Sierra Leone), actress Lupita Nyong'o (Kenya), and hip hop artist Blitz the Ambassador (Ghana).

## African Communities

While the percentage of African immigrants is low compared to other immigrant communities, their arrival as immigrants is impacting America's cultural landscape. African migrant communities have established large cultural and economic networks. In most major and several smaller cities, they have established community associations, churches, mosques, restaurants, food stores, hair salons, and community soccer teams. Community associations are often for members from the same country, though larger immigrant groups, like Nigerians, Ethiopians, and Ghanaians, also have associations based on ethnic group memberships. African restaurants and food stores allow migrants to eat familiar foods and provide economic support for their countrymen. An industry that African women have especially found employment is the hair braiding industry. Many hair braiding salons in major cities are owned and operated by African women. Just as the Caribbean communities, African communities in America are beginning to hold festivals in major cities. In the Washington, DC, area, numerous African festivals, such as PanaFest, FestAfrica, and the DC Africa Festival, are held. In Montgomery County, Maryland, just outside of Washington, DC, September has been declared African Heritage Month.

The Washington, DC, metropolitan area, with over 100,000 African-born residents, currently has the highest concentration of African immigrants in America. Washington, DC, is the only US metropolitan area where the number of African immigrants outnumbers that of Caribbean immigrants. While the number of Afro-Caribbean immigrants in Washington, DC, rose from around 32,000 to almost 49,000 between 1990 and 2000, the African population rose from around 32,000 to just over 80,000 in that same period. This brings Africans closer to Washington, DC's shrinking African-American population, which was 400,000 in 1990 and 343,000 in 2000. Due to the large number of African migrants in the region, the Washington, DC, Mayor's Office established the Mayor's Office on African Affairs in 2006. It was the first of its kind, and has played a large role in providing support to African communities in Washington, DC. A survey conducted by the DC Mayor's Office on African Affairs found that Washington, DC's African population is 40 percent Ethiopian, which has resulted in the publishing of multi-language DC government news and decrees in Amharic.

The African immigrant population tends to be highly educated. Almost 35 percent over the age of 25 have at least a bachelor's degree. This compares to other groups, including American-born residents, which range from 10 percent to 30 percent. This has not translated into

higher incomes, however, as many African immigrants in this country are underemployed. There are several reasons for this. Lack of proper immigration status, non-transferability of degrees, lack of employment authorization, and stigma of being foreign all impact their ability to get high-paying jobs, which has resulted in Ethiopian cab drivers with a MAs from Ethiopian universities not being able to find an employer to sponsor their work visa; or Ghanaian security guards with MDs from a Ghanaian medical schools who cannot find a job because their medical degree is not recognized in America.

## **Popular Culture Representations of African and Caribbean People**

Representations of different racial and ethnic groups impact the way the general public sees those groups. The reinforcement of stereotypes of any one group, affects the way others interact with and perceive members of that group. Much of the information we get about others comes from common representations. It has therefore always been important to critically examine representations that appear in popular culture. Additionally, many in the African Diaspora have turned to new and social media, as well as traditional media, to tell their own stories and present their own representations.

In literature, authors such as Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (*Americanah*), Ghanaian author Taiye Selasi (*Ghana Must Go*), Zimbabwean author NoViolet Bulawayo (*We Need New Names*), Jamaican author Marlon James (*A Brief History of Seven Killings*), and Haitian author Edwidge Danticat (*Breath, Eyes, Memory*) tell stories that center on African and Caribbean migrant experiences. Many of these authors are Caribbean and African transplants who moved to the US and wrote about the experiences they witnessed. In television and film, Caribbean and African actors, writers, and directors are using the medium to share their views of African Diaspora experiences in America. Several projects have been launched on YouTube and other online sites to promote the visibility of African immigrant communities in the US. In music, Caribbean and African artists are influencing the sounds and culture being produced in the African Diaspora. Black music has operated as a cycle of influence, with African rhythms impacting salsa, reggae influencing hip hop, and funk influencing Afrobeat. Caribbean and African migrants have added their flavor to Black music scenes in America.

### **Television and Film**

The representation of Caribbean and African people in the media has evolved over the years. Social media spaces, news media, entertain-

ment, and politics have several prominent Caribbean and African immigrant faces. Several representations of Caribbean and African people retain popular stereotypes, but over the years we have seen greater diversity. The presence of Caribbean and African content creators creating programming for platforms like YouTube has helped. For example, Ghanaian producer Nicole Amarteifio created the YouTube series *An African City*. The series centers on the lives of five African women who lived in the US and Europe but decide to return to Africa. The series challenges stereotypes of African women as dependent or docile, and diverges from the familiar tropes of African women as poor and in need of intervention. In the mainstream media, African Americans have long had to struggle with their representations, or erasure, from television programming. Caribbean and African communities have had to grapple with similar issues, as they were often cast as stereotypes. For example, in the 1980s the popular TV series *Miami Vice* often featured the Caribbean gangster, pot-smoking Jamaican Rastafarians, or sensationalized depictions of African religious practices in the Caribbean.

The stereotypes of Caribbean and African immigrants were seen throughout various Hollywood productions. Images of the Jamaican or Haitian drug dealer are found alongside images of the African-American drug dealer. Hollywood films like *The Deep* (1977), *Black Samurai* (1976), *Marked for Death* (1990), *Predator 2* (1990), *New Jack City* (1991), *Belly* (1998), *Shottas* (2002), and *Bad Boys 2* (2003), all featured either Haitian or Jamaican drug dealers and gang members. Africans in Hollywood are often portrayed as the Nigerian drug lord (*Sugar Hill*, 1994), the African rebel fighter (*Black Hawk Down*, 2001, *Tears of the Sun*, 2003, and *Lord of War*, 2005), the witchdoctor or wise sage (*Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, 2001), or the non-English speaking immigrant (*Phone Booth*, 2002, and *Barbershop*, 2002 and 2004).

The 2000s did bring more diverse portrayals of Caribbean and African characters, in large part because Caribbean and African filmmakers were creating much of their own content. While the problematic stereotypes persist, actors get cast in diverse roles, portraying diverse ethnicities. Actors like Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje (Nigeria), Garcelle Beauvais (Haiti), Idris Elba (Ghana/Sierra Leone), Akosua Busia (Ghana), Edi Gathegi (Kenya), Danai Gurira (Zimbabwe), Jimmy Jean-Louis (Haiti), Lupita Nyong'o (Kenya), David Oyelowo (Nigeria), and Lorraine Toussaint (Trinidad) have played characters that were African American, or either African or Caribbean. Ghanaian actress Akosua Busia has primarily played African-American characters, including her roles in *The Color Purple* (1985), *Native Son* (1986), *New Jack City* (1991), and *Rosewood* (1997). Actress Naomie Harris is British and of Jamaican and Trinidadian descent. In addition to portraying British characters, she played Winnie Mandela in *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom* (2013) and a West Indian in *Pirates of the Caribbean* (2006 and 2007). Carmen

Ejogo, who is Nigerian and Scottish, has also played mostly African-American roles, including playing Coretta Scott King in the films *Boycott* (2001) and *Selma* (2014).

Likewise, African Americans have been cast in roles as African characters, including Don Cheadle playing a Rwandan in *Hotel Rwanda*; Omar Epps playing a Ghanaian in *Deadly Voyage*; Forest Whitaker and Keri Washington playing Ugandans in *The Last King of Scotland*, Jill Scott and Anika Noni Rose playing Botswanan in *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*, and Whoopie Goldberg (*Sarafina*), Alfre Woodard (*Bopha!*, *Mandela*), Angela Bassett (*Boesman and Lena*), Denzel Washington (*Cry Freedom*), Danny Glover (*Boesman and Lena*, *Bopha!*, *Mandela*), and Ice Cube (*Dangerous Ground*), all playing Black South Africans in Hollywood films.

The representations of Blacks in TV and film are more diverse, though representations of characters from Africa and the Caribbean are still problematic. While Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje's portrayal of a Nigerian survivor in the TV show *Lost* was multidimensional, and sitcoms like *Where I Live* portrayed the lives of a Caribbean immigrant family in New York, such shows as *Heroes*, *Law & Order SVU*, *Miami Vice*, and *Modern Family* have all pushed the familiar stereotypes of African and Caribbean immigrants. While African and Caribbean actors often portray African-American characters, the increased visibility of Caribbean and African actors provides a space for their voices in African Diaspora stories.

## Music

*We taking it back to the real, '01 till infinity/Original immigrant, never facsimile/From Flatbush to Marcy, Bushwick, Canarsie//My Africans are running things, catch us on/Canal Street, Selling fake Gucci, fake Prada/Fake Louis V, Some of us got bachelor degrees/Between you and me, We still push the dollar cab/Where ever the dollars at, We wire that, Western/Union, Money Gram without a doubt, Speaking with/Our native tongues and I ain't talking Tribe and them,/I'm talking Twi, Swahili, Wolof, you not understanding/Them. Dance Africa, where we parading at BAM/The flyest African women be looking like, Damn/Some are Eritrean, and some are from Sudan, Some/Came here to model, And some came here to dance/Whatever the hustle baby, keep that dream alive/New York city Africans we hustle to survive*

"African in New York," Blitz the Ambassador

There has long been a musical back and forth between Africa and the various Diasporas. In the US, enslaved Africans brought with them the musical influences that went into the blues, jazz, R&B, and hip hop. In Latin America and the Caribbean, those musical influences went into

reggae, salsa, and calypso. The African Diaspora has always contained music that was a fusion of African and local cultures. The African presence in Diaspora music is a fundamental element in most music genres in the African Diaspora. Later, as migrants from both the Caribbean and Africa came to America, they would further add to the sounds of the African Diaspora. Early Caribbean migrants from Jamaica, Cuba, and Puerto Rico were involved in the sounds and culture of the Harlem Renaissance, and so were many Puerto Rican and Cuban musicians in the development of the jazz scene during the Harlem Renaissance. Later, in the 1960s and 1970s, both Caribbean and African migrants would contribute to the flavor of African Diaspora music in the US. African migrants from Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal would participate in the music scene in America, and some, including Fela Kuti, would have a lasting impact on Black music in America. During the 1960s and 1970s, many young African migrants visited America for training, moving into established Black communities and socialized with African Americans and Caribbean migrants. While in the US, some of these migrants became active in the music and political scenes on the local and national level.

When Caribbean migrants come to the US in the 1960s and 1970s, they brought their musical fusions and styles with them. Roots reggae and dancehall reggae became prominent music genres in the US, and Caribbean immigrants would greatly influence hip hop culture. As hip hop emerged in the 1970s, Caribbean migrants were among the architects of the new culture, blending Jamaican sound system culture into the growing hip hop scene. Such Caribbean immigrants as Jamaican-born DJ Kool Herc (Clive Campbell) and Barbadian-born Grandmaster Flash (Joseph Saddler) were among the pioneers who helped develop hip hop culture. The Caribbean influence on hip hop could be clearly heard with the use of two Caribbean music trends: The introduction of dub music, which consisted of remixing and manipulating sound recordings, often removing the vocals to work with the drum beats and the second, was the Jamaican style of toasting, or talking over beats.

First- and second-generation African and Caribbean immigrants Wale (Nigeria), for example, Akon (Senegal), and Rihanna (Barbados) continue to contribute to music in the African Diaspora. While African and Caribbean music and dance have become common parts of the music scene in the African Diaspora in America, reggae music and dance styles have been incorporated into the mainstream by African-American and Caribbean artists. African dance, drumming, and fashion have also become a part of the mainstream through the work of African-American artists, influenced by the growing African presence in the US. African-American music icon Beyoncé performs and includes Caribbean and African styles in her music and videos. Nigerian music icon Fela Kuti is one of the most sampled musicians in American hip

hop. Fela was sampled in the following songs: Mos Def's "Fear Not of Man" (1999), Missy Elliott's "Watcha Gon' Do" (2001), Nas' "Warrior Song" (2002), The Roots' "I Will Not Apologize" (2008), and J. Cole's "Let Nas Down" 2013. In sum, the African Diaspora in America has a vibrant and diverse music scene that has incorporated many styles and experiences. African and Caribbean migrants arriving in the African Diaspora in this country are a part of that music scene; adding to it, influencing it, and borrowing from it.

## Identity

Traditionally, African Americans were seen as a group whose ancestors arrived in the US involuntarily via the transatlantic slave trade and whose history is rooted in the American South and the Civil Rights Movement. Their identity has gone through as many transformations as the terms used to describe them: Negroes, Coloreds, Afro-Americans, and African Americans. Historically, African-American communities have had to adjust to waves of African and Caribbean immigrants. That adjustment has included navigating the complex stereotypes each group has of one another and the distancing from other groups that sometimes happens. For those African Americans who have bought into the image of the uncivilized African savage, it may be difficult to break with it. Likewise, there are African Americans who believe all peoples of African descent should self-identify as being African, or, in the case of African Americans, as Africans born in America.

By the same token, many African and Caribbean immigrants have distanced themselves from an African-American identity, some believing the image of the criminalized African American. Some immigrants claim their national identities, or multiple identities: Nigerian, African, and African American. In other instances, many Caribbean or African immigrants who are US citizens feel they have earned the right to call themselves African Americans or Americans. While they embrace their Caribbean or African culture, they also celebrate their experiences in America and how their host country has shaped who they are. Many second-generation immigrants may hyphenate their identity, for example, as "Nigerian-American" or "Jamaican-American," or may identify as African American. Many scholars argue that, in the second generation, migrants become American. If, therefore, second-generation Caribbean and African immigrants claim Caribbean or African identities, alongside African-American identities, will room be made on soul food menus for curry goat or fufu? What about Caribbean Patois or West African Pidgin English as part of the African-American vernacular?

There is pressure from first-generation immigrants for the second generation to retain their African or Caribbean identities. With the

numbers of African and Caribbean immigrants now in the US, it is possible for a second-generation Ethiopian, for example, to find an entire social network of Ethiopians in their own city. One of the fears for immigrant parents is that their children will become Americanized to the detriment of their traditional culture. On one hand, there is much pressure exerted in these immigrant communities for one to retain one's immigrant identity. On the other hand, second-generation African and Caribbean immigrants feel social pressure to become "African Americanized." In some of these cases, second-generation Caribbean or African immigrants who lack a Caribbean or African accent and have adopted African-American culture, often assimilate into the African-American community.

A critical piece of the identity debate is the importance of one's accent. An accent signals one's origin. With Caribbean and African immigrants in the US, this has played a significant role in how they identified themselves and how other people identify them. Any Black person in America who has shed their foreign accent and acquired an American accent has, in the process, simultaneously acquired multiple identities. Regardless of how that person self-identifies, he or she will have several imposed identities. For example, a Nigerian who has lost his/her Nigerian accent and acquired an American accent may still be seen as a Nigerian. However, the communities around that person will listen to their accent and assign them an identity, probably an African-American identity.

Most African immigrants self-identify first as being African, most Caribbean immigrants self-identify as being either Caribbean or West Indian, and most African Americans self-identify as being African American. In a survey of the three groups, however, some African Americans and Caribbean immigrants also adopted African identities. These African identities are based less on citizenship, and more on racial identity. The importance of race, racial identity, and racial politics is important in America, more so than almost anywhere else. Even when one examines the different ideas of race found in such countries as South Africa or Brazil, the strict definitions which surround the two major races in America are unique to this country. Indeed, the binary system of race relations has made the American example unique.

## Other Diasporas

The US Diaspora is not the only Diaspora with a significant population of descendants from Africa. The country with the second largest Black population in the world is Brazil, with over 75 million people of African descent. This compares to the US, where the Black population is almost 40 million. The country with the largest Black population in the world is Nigeria, with more than 170 million people. It is important to

briefly examine three other regions which have large African Diaspora communities. Most of these communities were established because of the involuntary migration of enslaved Africans.

While Africans were traveling to the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia prior to the institutionalization of slavery, the size and scope of those Diaspora communities is directly tied to slavery, in the case of the Americas, the Middle East, and Asia. In Europe, large African Diaspora communities can be directly related to the colonial endeavors of imperialist Europe. In the last sections, we will briefly look at the origins of African Diaspora populations in the Americas, the Middle East and Asia, and in Europe. We will also see how Africans established or recreated home in their new environments, consciously and subconsciously retaining African cultural and traditional customs.

## The Americas

Brazil and other countries in South America and the Caribbean were recipients of populations of enslaved Africans. Like the US enslaved Africans, they were taken throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and subjected to forced labor. Of the 10 to 15 million enslaved Africans who survived to arrive in the Americas, Brazil received the largest number. About 30 percent (3 to 5 million) of the enslaved Africans brought to the Americas went to Brazil. Most of the others went to the various islands of the Caribbean, with 600,000 to 900,000 going to the US. In Latin America and the Caribbean, unlike in the US, enslaved Africans were able to retain aspects of their culture, namely religion, by keeping them hidden from Europeans. The Yoruba religion, for example, is still practiced widely in countries like Brazil (where it is called *Candomblé*) and Cuba (where it is called *Santería*). West African religious traditions can also be found in Haiti (*Voodoo*), Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago (*Obeah*), and Venezuela (*Palo*). While African religious traditions have survived in African-American communities (Voodoo and Hoodoo), they are not as widespread and mainstream in their practice as they are in the Caribbean and Latin America.

The African Diaspora in the Americas incorporated other aspects of African culture. The cuisines, music, and language structures of Blacks in the Americas have borrowed heavily from Africa. Merengue, salsa, reggae, calypso, R&B, and hip hop are all examples of music styles that have roots in West African rhythms and dance styles. Additionally, Caribbean Creole, West Indian Patois, and African American Vernacular English (AAVE), all have structures similar to languages found in West Africa. The African Diaspora in the Americas is diverse and changing, as people migrate within the region, as well as to and from Africa. In addition to the US and the Caribbean, large populations of African-descended people live in Brazil, Belize, Guyana, Suriname, Panama, Costa

Rica, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Columbia. Other but smaller African-descended populations can be found in Mexico, Argentina, and Bolivia.

## The Middle East and Asia

There has always been travel between Africa and the Middle East. Much of that travel was voluntary. During the East African slave trade, enslaved Africans were also taken to the Middle East and Asia. These enslaved Africans were taken from East Africa all the way to the Far East, to such places as China. While the enslaved Africans destined to the Americas were taken between the 1500s and 1800s, those destined to the East were taken between 700 and the 1900s. The majority of the enslaved Africans from East Africa went to the Middle East. Thus, Basra, Iraq, was the site of one of the largest slave rebellions in the Middle East in the 800s. While enslaved Africans were brought to the Americas to work on farms, those who went east were mostly women and often were seen as a status symbol. In the Middle East, enslaved Africans eventually blended into local populations, though communities of African descendants can be found in Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Yemen. With a long history of contact between East Africa and the Middle East, communities that are both Middle Eastern and African have emerged in both regions. The Swahili language, spoken in East Africa, is indeed a blend of African Bantu languages and Arabic.

However, fewer enslaved Africans were taken to Far East Asia (China, Japan), while many Africans went (voluntarily and involuntarily) to India and Pakistan. There is a community of African decedents in those countries called the **Siddi**. While their numbers are small, presumably no more than 60,000, their presence as a distinct group is significant. There are also communities of Siddis living in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. The Siddi culture is a hybrid of Asian and East African culture. In fact, Siddi communities have dance and music styles that are similar to those found in East Africa. Many of their cultural and traditional celebrations commemorate their identities as Siddis. As a small community, their presence has only recently become widely known outside of Asia and East Africa. They have since established a presence online, as part of the larger African Diaspora.

## Europe

Africans have also had a long history of travel to Europe. As early as the first century AD, Africans, mostly North Africans, migrated into Europe. Many North Africans were living in southern Europe and were a part of European societies at that time. Between the 1500s and 1800s, enslaved Africans were brought into Europe in small numbers, and it was not until the 1900s that Africans began migrating to Europe in large numbers. During colonialism and immediately thereafter,

many Africans went to that continent in search of an education and economic opportunities. After World War II, there was a demand for labor in Europe, and many African and Caribbean migrants moved to their former colonial empires in search of work. During the mid-1900s, neighborhoods like Brixton in London, Goutte D'Or in Paris, and Celas and Cova da Mourain in Lisbon became populated by Caribbean and African migrants moving into these cities. These neighborhoods are today still dominated by poor and working-class migrants from the Caribbean and Africa, and have created community centers, grocery and retail stores, and restaurants that cater to these immigrant populations. Much like the Black immigrant groups in the US, in Europe, the Black immigrants have established large Diaspora communities within which they find support and a sense of community.

Once Europe tightened its immigration laws in the 1970s, migrants from Africa (along with migrants from the Middle East and Asia) began to look for alternative ways of getting there. Once economic and political conditions in some African countries deteriorated during the 1990s, Europe saw an increase in Africans migrating north, either across the Sahara or by boat through the Mediterranean route, an extremely dangerous journey. As a result, between 1997 and 2001, an estimated 3,285 dead bodies were found in the waters between North Africa and southern Europe. In 2015, that number increased to over 2,000 in a single year. With a trip from Senegal to Spain costing an estimated \$500–\$1,000, many migrants risk their lives when taking the journey. Those choosing to cross the Sahara Desert also find the route rife with dangers, compelling observers and experts to refer to it as “the most dangerous migration route in the world.” Like migrants coming into the US from Central America, many migrants crossing the Sahara Desert have died trying to cross it due to inadequate supplies or as the victims of crime from thieves.

Today, most European countries have African Diaspora communities made up of Caribbean and/or African immigrant populations. This includes countries such as Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland, that had no colonies abroad. The flow of migration into Europe continues, especially from North Africa, which is geographically closest to Europe. The tensions between these migrant communities have led to backlash from host populations and politicians. One of the more serious rebellions against the treatment of migrants occurred in France in 2005. In that year, two African youth were electrocuted and killed while running from the police. Uprisings broke out in the ghettos or *banlieues* outside Paris over the treatment of African and Arab immigrants. In 2011, news channel Al Jazeera produced the program “Surprising Europe,” which highlighted the lives of African immigrant communities throughout Europe. It underscored some of the challenges those immigrants face, as well as the cultural and political impact their presence is

- b. Why do you think so many African (and Caribbean) migrants have adopted Afropolitan identities?
6. If you had to leave the country in which you currently live: a. what factors would influence your choice of host country? b. what sort of community associations would you seek out to both help you adjust, and maintain links to home?

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having in Europe. Across Europe, African and Caribbean migrants have won political seats and gained political appointments. England, France, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and The Netherlands have all elected or appointed Black immigrants from Africa or the Caribbean to political office.

## Summary

The African Diaspora is large and spans the whole world. The scattering of enslaved Africans created African Diasporas in the Americas, the Caribbean, Asia, and the Middle East. Colonialism created African Diasporas across Europe. The voluntary migration of Black people globally is tied to numerous factors that have influenced the push from home and the pull into various host countries around the globe. Those push and pull factors center on economic and safety considerations, immigration laws, family reunification, and access to education resources. Additionally, US immigration laws have greatly impacted the numbers of migrants coming to this country from the Caribbean and Africa. In the US, large-scale immigration from the Caribbean and Africa came in different phases, each influenced by changes in the US economy and immigration laws in both the US and Europe.

Migrants from both the Caribbean and Africa have come over in different immigration waves, often influenced by both US immigration policy and events at home. Each migration wave has been shaped by domestic and international events, and each has impacted the US in different ways. The presence of African Diasporas impacts and influences host cultures, politics, and economies. African Diasporas around the world have established community businesses and economic and education associations. Many Black immigrant communities abroad also perform a vital role back home through remittances that boost local economies.

Likewise, members of the African Diaspora around the world have entered into politics. The US has several years of African-American elected officials in its history, dating back to the late 1800s. When the US elected its first Black president in 2008, it was a Black president who was also a second-generation African immigrant. Other Black immigrants have held various federal, state, and municipal government positions in America. Across Latin America, Black lawmakers and politicians have held various positions. These lawmakers and politicians in turn have influenced laws on discrimination, as well as affirmative action policies. In Europe, there have also been several first- and second-generation African and Caribbean immigrants who have earned political posts. Members of African Diaspora communities are increasingly visible in the media and in popular culture as well. They head projects, work as journalists (professionally and independently), and