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Identity, Race, and Immigration: Implications for West African Women

This thesis provides a reflection on different aspects of my identity as a young African woman immigrant in the United States of America. My different identities here and those given to me by family have helped me ponder the following questions: What is identity? How can identity shape our lives? Who is truly prepared to live with multiple identities? My memories of Africa helped me understand how imperative it is to effectively address multiple social identities.

The primary subject matter for this thesis will be drawn from theoretical and empirical analysis of identity related implications for African women whose heart and body crosses the Atlantic Ocean. My goal is to examine my experiences and the experiences of other African women to enable me to better understand the relationship between my childhood and my most recent memories

Chronologically, the paper will proceed with a brief personal history and background. The second part will consist of a theoretical and empirical analysis of identity, race and gender. In the third part, the paper includes an analytical exposition of the experiences of African women, myself included, and how this analysis helps us better understand the other clouded perceptions of identity. It also suggests how to effectively deal with multiple identities. Part four analyzes the relationships between African female immigrants and both African-American and Afro-Caribbean women in the U.S. This part will also attempt to examine similarities and differences among these three groups. In part five, the theoretical and empirical implications of identity, race and gender will be again discussed. In light of the analyzes in the prior chapters.

Some courses that I have taken and others that am currently enrolled in that are relevant to my thesis include: Theories of Self, Sociology of Emotions, Cultural Psychology, Psychology of Race and Ethnicity and Anthropology of Language and Culture. Anne O'Dwyer is both my Thesis advisor and my academic advisor; I would like to have her on the committee because Psychology is highly relevant to my thesis topic. I also took a lot of relevant courses with Nancy Bonvillain and Linda Anderson, whom I have also asked to be on my committee.

Scholars whose work may prove instructive for me in completing my thesis—some of whose works I have already read and others whose work I am planning to read—are listed in the bibliography. For example *My father's House Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* by Kwame Anthony Appiah is relevant to my thesis in that in it Appiah describes how Africa's intellectuals have long been engaged in a conversation among themselves and with Europeans and Americans about what it means to be African. And in this book, Appiah asks how we should think about the cultural situation of these intellectuals, reading their works in the context both of European and American ideas and of Africa's own indigenous traditions. Therefore, the author has a lot to say when it comes to African Identity -- he has knowledge of this experience on three continents.