The African Diaspora Community in the Sacramento Metropolitan Area

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Abstract

This research project looks for spatial patterns in the African immigrant population of the Sacramento Metropolitan Area (El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, and Yolo Counties) and the reasons behind any such pattern. In the study area’s wide spectrum of cultural identities, foreign-born Africans are often misclassified as “African American” which makes it challenging to locate them. Using a Geographic Information System (GIS), maps were generated to display the distribution of the first generation African population in the Sacramento area. African immigrants are more clustered in certain areas than others. These localizations are the result of several types of migration, which can be considered to be of micro and macro migration (new immigrants follow the same behavioral settlement pattern as the previous ones). The generally high national status of African immigrants to Sacramento shows up in their residential patterns. In contrast, the latter do not closely resemble the residential patterns of all those who identify as Black or African American.

The United States, land of freedom and opportunities, has long attracted immigrants from around the world. Latinos and Asians figure prominently in the current debate on immigration policies. However, black immigrants, who represent 8 percent of the U.S. foreign born population, are most often left out (Paris 2012). While some areas in the U.S seem hostile to immigrants, the Sacramento area is known for its multicultural diversity. Even though studies have examined several cultural groups in the area, the local African immigrant population remains understudied despite that they are over 9,000 in number (American Community Survey 2016). With that number, it is surprising that most people cannot confidently point out local geographic concentrations of the African born, even though people commonly say Hispanics are predominant in Winters and Woodland, Chinese in Elk Grove, and Vietnamese around Little Saigon in South Sacramento (Dated and Dingemans 2008). So, the following questions arise: what is the size and spatial distribution of the African-born population in the Sacramento Metropolitan Area? What are the causes of that geographic pattern?

Methods

Data were obtained from the U.S. Census and tabulated and graphed for the total number of African immigrants and their sub-regions and leading source countries. ArcGIS was used to map the data at the census tract level. Maps of educational attainment and Blacks/African Americans in Sacramento were created to support the analysis. People among the African communities were interviewed to find out plausible explanations for the locational pattern of the African-born immigrants. Additional general data from scholarly sources and credible webpages were used to make a comparison with information collected via the interview about major factors that have pushed immigrants out of Africa and led them to the Sacramento area, and reasons for their settlement patterns.

Results

African immigrants are more clustered in certain areas than others. These localizations are the result of several types of migration, which can be considered to be of micro and macro migration (new immigrants follow the same behavioral settlement pattern as the previous ones). The generally high national status of African immigrants to Sacramento shows up in their residential patterns. In contrast, the latter do not closely resemble the residential patterns of all those who identify as Black or African American.

Discussion

Even though they display a broad distribution pattern across the study area, in general the African-born population is more clustered in the urbanized areas, especially urbanized Sacramento County, with a tendency to locate in the vicinity of colleges and universities (Figs. 6 and 7). For instance, the highest concentrations of African-born people are seen in census tracts 30337, 5506, and 5505, which are all very close to California State University Sacramento. Other significant concentrations are seen in Elk Grove, and Davis, close to the campuses of California State College and UC Davis respectively. Rocklin (home of Sierra College) and Auburn seem to be their preferred location in Placer County. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Egypt, and Kenya are the African countries that provide most immigrants into the Sacramento area, and their number of people in the urban core of Sacramento and Rocklin (home of Sierra College) and Auburn seems to be their preferred location in Placer County. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Egypt, and Kenya are the African countries that provide most immigrants into the Sacramento area, and their number of people in the urban core of Sacramento and Rocklin (home of Sierra College) and Auburn seems to be their preferred location in Placer County. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Egypt, and Kenya are the African countries that provide most immigrants into the Sacramento area, and their number of people in the urban core of Sacramento and Rocklin (home of Sierra College) and Auburn seems to be their preferred location in Placer County. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Egypt, and Kenya are the African countries that provide most immigrants into the Sacramento area, and their number of people in the urban core of Sacramento and Rocklin (home of Sierra College) and Auburn seems to be their preferred location in Placer County. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Egypt, and Kenya are the African countries that provide most immigrants into the Sacramento area, and their number of people in the urban core of Sacramento and Rocklin (home of Sierra College) and Auburn seems to be their preferred location in Placer County. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Egypt, and Kenya are the African countries that provide most immigrants into the Sacramento area, and their number of people in the urban core of Sacramento and Rocklin (home of Sierra College) and Auburn seems to be their preferred location in Placer County. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Egypt, and Kenya are the African countries that provide most immigrants into the Sacramento area, and their number of people in the urban core of Sacramento and Rocklin (home of Sierra College) and Auburn seems to be their preferred location in Placer County. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Egypt, and Kenya are the African countries that provide most immigrants into the Sacramento area, and their number of people in the urban core of Sacramento and Rocklin (home of Sierra College) and Auburn seems to be their preferred location in Placer County. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Egypt, and Kenya are the African countries that provide most immigrants into the Sacramento area, and their number of people in the urban core of Sacramento and Rocklin (home of Sierra College) and Auburn seems to be their preferred location in Placer County. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Egypt, and Kenya are the African countries that provide most immigrants into the Sacramento area, and their number of people in the urban core of Sacramento and Rocklin (home of Sierra College) and Auburn seems to be their preferred location in Placer County. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Egypt, and Kenya are the African countries that provide most immigrants into the Sacramento area, and their number of people in the urban core of Sacramento and Rocklin (home of Sierra College) and Auburn seems to be their preferred location in Placer County. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Egypt, and Kenya are the African countries that provide most immigrants into the Sacramento area, and their number of people in the urban core of Sacramento and Rocklin (home of Sierra College) and Auburn seems to be their preferred location in Placer County. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Egypt, and Kenya are the African countries that provide most immigrants into the Sacramento area, and their number of people in the urban core of Sacramento and Rocklin (home of Sierra College) and Auburn seems to be their preferred location in Placer County. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Egypt, and Kenya are the African countries that provide most immigrants into the Sacramento area, and their number of people in the urban core of Sacramento and Rocklin (home of Sierra College) and Aub