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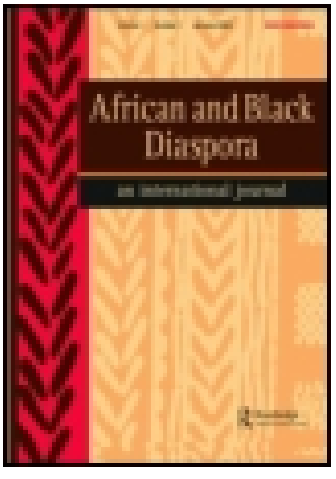

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Seeing/being double: how African immigrants in Canada balance their ethno-racial and national identities

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Seeing/being double: how African immigrants in Canada balance their ethno-racial and national identities

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With increased transnational ties to their homelands, immigrants' ontology now verges on *being double* – and, consequently, on *seeing double* – most of the time. This double consciousness, and the attendant dearth of fixity in identity among immigrants, has led some to wonder where the allegiance of minority immigrants, in particular, lies. Can these immigrants be loyal to both their ethno-racial identity and their host national identity? Is the identification with one's ethno-racial background and national identity a zero-sum game in which one side of the loyalty equation gains only at the expense of the other? This study examines these issues, using African immigrants (specifically, Ghanaians and Somalis) in Canada as a case study. In particular, we use multinomial logistic regression to predict the factors that prompt these immigrants to identify as: 'just Canadians', 'just Ghanaians/Somalis', or as 'Ghanaian-/Somali-Canadians'. The study is significant not only because of the lack of research on African immigrants' identity formation in Canada, but also because immigrants' identity has significant bearing on their settlement and integration in host societies.

Keywords: African immigrants; race and ethnicity; national identity; multinomial logistic model; Canada

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Introduction

As a register of the concerns engendered by increased immigration, issues of race, ethnicity, and identity have become prevalent in the public discourse on citizenship in many immigrant receiving nations. One can hardly pick up a newspaper, or turn on the television, in any major city in the West without encountering talk about how immigrants are undermining the nation state with their identity politics. That some nostalgia persists among many Westerners over a purported loss of moral certainty about what it means to be a true citizen is undeniable. Equally indubitable is the fact that these concerns are intertwined with the 'ontological instabilities, sociocultural disorientations' (Harvey 1990, 301), and the ironic regionalism and ethno-fetishism wrought by contemporary globalization (Mensah 2008, 116).

While Canadian scholars have given considerable attention to the economic dimensions of immigrants' lives in the context of contemporary globalization, by examining themes such as immigrant transnational entrepreneurship and remittances

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This paper is part of a bigger Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada-sponsored Identity Project at York University, which, in addition to the quantitative survey, conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions in both Toronto and Vancouver for the procurement of primary data. This paper relies only on data from the quantitative survey.

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(Preston and Lo 2000; Walton-Roberts 2001; Wong and Ng 2002), it is only recently that they have begun to explore the corresponding cultural aspects and their ramifications (Dlamini and Anucha 2009). To be sure, some of the implications of these global trends for national identity and citizenship are commonly alluded to, but rarely examined systematically with hard empirical evidence. Thus, we know very little about how minority immigrants in Canada, especially those from Africa, balance their ethnicity with their host nation's identity. Yet, because of the palpable fluidity and ambivalence surrounding immigrants' cultural outlooks, it is not uncommon for some observers (e.g., Bibby 1990; Stoffman 2002) to raise questions about the allegiance of immigrants to the Canadian nation state.

As Steven Vertovec reminds us, in the course of making their way in a world, often not of their own making, immigrants operate on the basis of '"diaspora consciousness" marked by dual or multiple identifications' which, in true protean fashion, reflects and reinforces a steadfast 'refusal of fixity' (2009, 5–7). Thus, common categorizations, simple solidarities, and easy expectations are frequently disrupted by the conflicted and contradictory boundary crossings performed by immigrants. This enables immigrants to participate in a wide variety of sociocultural worlds, some of which overlap, while others are markedly distinct, and thus rendering them susceptible to charges of disloyalty not only in their host countries, but also in their homelands. Also, the contemporary international political economy is such that bodies from the global South (especially those from Africa) tend to be racially coded in ways that place firm limits on the degrees of integration within societies of the north. For instance, 'in Canada … there is still a general perception that non-whites are foreigners regardless of how long they or their ancestors have been part of the society' (Wiltshire 1992, 185).

Can immigrants be loyal to both their ethnicity and their new nationality given their diasporic consciousness? And, what influence, if any, does a strong ethnic identification have on one's civic participation? Our goal in this paper is a modest one: to explore how Black African immigrants (specifically Somalis and Ghanaians) balance their ethno-racial identity with their attachment to, and identification with, the Canadian nation state within the context of their diasporic consciousness. More specifically, we examine the factors that prompt these immigrants to identify as 'just Canadian', 'mainly Ghanaian/Somali', or 'Ghanaian-/Somali-Canadian'. While the bulk of the literature on ethnic and national identity formation has been either wholly theoretical or relied mainly on qualitative approaches (e.g. Dlamini and Anucha 2009; Satzewick and Wong 2006; Vertovec 2001), a number of American scholars – notably, Abdelal et al. 2009; Deaux 2008; Portes, Heller, and Guarnizo 2001– have recently called for the incorporation of quantitative techniques in this area of research. It is in response to this call that the present study uses multinomial logistic regression to advance our understanding of how Ghanaian and Somali immigrants in Canada – specifically in the metropolitan areas of Toronto and Vancouver – reconcile their ethno-racial identity with their attachment to the Canadian nation state.

This study is significant not only because of the dearth of quantitative work on how immigrants negotiate their ethnic and national identities in diasporic settings, but also because it deals with Black Africans – a group that has received, arguably, the scantiest research attention in the emergent scholarship on immigrant identity formation in Canada. The study is also important beyond the fact that cultural identification remains a vital part of the lives of immigrants; it also matters because immigrants' identity formation has a bearing on their settlement and integration process. The focus on Ghanaians and Somalis is hardly fortuitous: these two groups are among the largest Black African communities in

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Canada. Also with these two groups, we get to know about how self-identification plays out among a predominantly Muslim, as opposed to Christian, African immigrant group. Moreover, these two groups will help bring out any contrast in identity formation between immigrants from a virtually 'failed' nation state in Somalia and a fledgling democracy in Ghana. And with the focus on the Toronto and Vancouver Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs), we will see the significance of *place* in immigrants' identity formation. While both Vancouver and Toronto are among the top three 'ports of entry' for immigrants in Canada (the third being Montreal), Toronto has far higher Black/African presence, and how this difference affects the identity formation of Somalis and Ghanaians would be worth examining.

Theorizing identity and consciousness among immigrants

On the one hand…

The fear of immigration as a threat to national identity has increased in recent years in most Western nations (Deaux 2008). Nativists in these countries insist on the primacy of identity with the nation state over all other forms of affiliation (Citrin and Sears 2009, 149). In the USA, for instance, the voices of alarm are epitomized by the writings of Huntington (1996, 2004) and Renshon (2005). In *Who are we?* Huntington (2004) writes about how Latino immigration is going to split America into Spanish – and English-speaking Halves – thus, undermining the nation's melting pot outlook. The British politician Norman Tebbits even goes so far as to talk of a 'cricket test' for national identity. In his view, the fact that British citizens of South Asian or West Indian background do not cheer for the English cricket team when it plays against India, Pakistan, or Jamaica amounts to disloyalty (see Citrin and Sears 2009, 149). And, as Nederveen Pieterse (2006) points out, right wing parties in many European countries (e.g., Austria, Belgium, France, the Netherlands) have used anti-immigrant platforms to advance their interests.

In the Canadian context, claims of immigration, hyphenated-citizenship, and multi-culturalism diluting the national identity are commonly espoused by the likes of Bibby (1990), Bissoondath (1994), Collacott (2002), and Stoffman (2002). Bibby (1990, 10) laments that 'since the 1960s, Canada has been encouraging freedom of groups and individuals without simultaneously laying down cultural expectations'. Given the choice, these nativists would like ethnic minorities to dissolve their distinctiveness in pursuit of a uniform amalgam of Canadian national identity. Such nationalistic apprehension is certainly not new. For instance, US President Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924) once noted that ' [a]ny man who carries a hyphen about with him carries a dagger that he is ready to plunge into the vitals of this Republic' (quoted in Sanchez 2005). Perhaps, what is new is the intensity with which such concerns are raised in this era of 'flexible citizenship' (Ong 1999) and post-9/11 Islamaphobia; that such anti-immigrant sentiments increase in times of economic recession is too well known to delay us here. From the standpoint of these nativists, immigrants adhere to their ethnicity only at the expense of their allegiance to the host national identity.

On the other hand…

Even though the evidence is still emerging, there are some indications that immigrants can adhere to their ethno-racial identity and still maintain a strong allegiance to, or

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identification with, their host nation. Thus, the zero-sum account espoused by the nativists does not seem to fit the data. The work of Deaux (2008, 940) in the USA shows that 'acceptance of diversity and respect for the contributions of various cultures can create stronger commitment to the country in which the immigrant resides'. With this in mind, Deaux (2008) notes that social exclusion is more likely to promote the kind of national disunity that Huntington and others are concerned about. Similarly, Simon and Ruhs (2007), in their work in Germany, found that Turkish immigrants who identify both as Turkish and as German are more politically active in Germany, working within the German polity to change policies. Similar findings have been reported by Derks, van Laar, and Ellemers (2007) in the Netherlands. While no such studies are available in Canada, Satzewick and Wong (2006) observed in their book, *Transnational identities and social practices in Canada*, that '[a]lthough it is counter-intuitive to think that multiple citizenship actually enhances integration, recent work in the United States suggests this possibility' (12).

Indeed, as Bauman (2011) has shown, whether or not immigrants succeed in integrating into a host society does not only depend wholly on them, but also on the absorptive inclinations of that society. In his view, immigrants' attachment to their ethno-racial identity is not only 'natural', but also imposed from above – from the host national powers that be, which often deprive immigrants of their right to practice their culture. And there is little doubt that '[t]he decision of dominant parties to contain the dominated within a framework of "ethnic minorities" (or visible minorities – to use a Canadian parlance), relying on their disinclination or inability to break out of it, has all the hallmarks of self-fulfilling prophecy' (Bauman 2011, 77; mine in parenthesis). Surprisingly, anxious nativists tend to overlook the proclivity for 'othering' among members of the dominant group, which often pushes immigrants to engage in ethno-racial particularisms. Ultimately, though, we have to expect some variation in this balancing act, taking into consideration factors such as 'period of immigration' and 'generation/age' of immigrants, in addition to the host society's reception and policies.

Identity and its formation among Africans in a diasporic setting

As Smith (2002, 302) correctly points out, identity is 'among the most normatively significant and behaviorally consequential aspects of politics'; and, one might add, of economics and cultures. However, notwithstanding the attendant flurry of research activities on identity in recent years, the literature has not seen a commensurate increase in definitional consensus on the concept. We thus find Abdelal et al. (2009, 17) noting that '[t]he intense interest in scholarship on identity. … has unfortunately helped undermined the conceptual clarity of identity as a variable'. In fact, the literature is so diffused that some scholars (e.g., Brubaker and Cooper 2000) are even calling for the abandonment of 'identity' altogether.

With insight from the works of Hall (1996a, 1996b), Vertovec (1999, 2001), Abdelal et al. (2009), and Citrin and Sears (2009), 'identity' is used here as a multidimensional, dialectical concept, embodying complex processes within specific social fields. Identity is not only internal, or self-attributed, but also external, or ascribed by others (Vertovec 2001); it is not only individual, but is also collective (Vertovec 2001); it is not only cognitive, but is also affective (Citrin and Sears 2009). Moreover, identity is not only a socially constructed and unstable entity, but also a process – hence Stuart Hall's (1996a, 1996b) notion of identification. For definitional rigour, 'identity' is used in this paper to

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connote a social category that varies along two related axes: *content* and *contestation* (Abdelal et al. 2009). The content points to how a group constitutes and identifies itself: what norms it uses to determine membership and for what purpose it is formed (Abdelal et al. 2009). The contestation axis is about the level of internal and external dis/agreement over the content of the shared identity (Abdelal et al. 2009). By their very nature, both the content and contestation of identity are unstable, internally heterogeneous and contradictory, and imbued with power dynamics.

Notwithstanding its popular conception in cultural terms, identity has significant material aspects as well. In his delineative remarks about the 'analytical triad' of identities/borders/orders, Steven Vertovec explains that 'identities concern matters of membership, belonging, loyalty, and moral and political values; borders involve territoriality, admission, legal status and deportation; orders relate to sovereignty, implications of legal status, civil, social and political rights, obligations, and access to public resources' (2004, 984). At first glance this itemization might seem rather daunting given its density, but for our purposes it is sufficient to note that the triad, considered interactively, can function as a point of departure for a materialist analysis of identity. When the triad of identities, borders, and orders are understood to be reciprocally influential, one can, for example, appreciate how an aspect of identity such as loyalty may be shaped by access to public resources as regulated by protocols regarding legal status. Thus conceived, identity formation does not inexplicably emerge and evolve as some would suggest (e.g., 'these people simply have no sentimental attachment to this land – who knows why?'), but are instead fashioned within the matrices of particular material conditions. Materiality in the form of economic pressures and opportunities is especially germane to any argument stressing the non-arbitrary character of identity/consciousness formation among minority immigrants, in particular. Without subscribing to crudity in the form of economic reductionism, it seems clear that some defining features of immigrants' outlook, thought, and practice are largely propelled by circumstances of an economic sort; this is especially so among immigrants from developing regions such as Africa, where dire economic circumstances have led to pessimistic talk and the proliferation of uncertainties.

All is not bleak, however, because many international migrants have formulated rational reactions to a world of unsteady milieus. To wit:

> In the globalized economy that has developed over the past several decades, there is a sense that no one place is truly secure, although people do have access to many places. One way migrants keep options open is to continuously translate the economic and social position gained in one political setting into political, social and economic capital in another. (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992, 12)

Implicitly, to the extent that identity has this materialistic ramification, forces that undermine the employment chances and the living conditions of immigrants (e.g., racial discrimination in the labour market and social exclusion in housing), would invariably come to play in any thorough analysis of why an immigrant may, for instance, identity as 'just Canadian', or go by a hyphenated identification such as 'Somali-Canadian', or even as 'mainly Somali' while still living in Canada with a Canadian citizenship in hand.

Also, unlike certain European migrants in the first half of the twentieth century, whose stigma avoidance strategies entailed the mere Anglicization of surnames, the embrace of exogamy and, it must be said, the denigration of blackness, African

immigrants in the twenty-first century lack access to equally convenient avenues of escape from marginality. For them the nation of settlement (in this case, Canada) produces a series of unsettling experiences, which, in turn, engender a response that would be considered counter-intuitive from the perspective of early migration studies: the intensification, rather than attenuation, of nationalist connections to their homelands. When the body is in one place and the heart is in another, diasporic consciousness is operative yet very much skewed in the sense that some identifications are granted far more weight than others. Indeed, such patterns of primary identification are to be expected among African immigrants in Canada, many of whom face racism in housing (Teixeira 2006), education (Henry and Tator 2009; Dei 2005), employment (Mensah 2010; Galabuzi 2006), the criminal justice system (Tator and Henry 2006), and other spheres of life. These examples are indicative of the fact that identity formation rarely, if ever, unfolds along the definite tracks of linear neatness and absolute completeness. Matters are messier, less certain, and highly contingent upon dynamic macro-micro interplays between immigrants and the broader sociopolitical and economic settings within which they live.

In addition, despite the constrictive effects of nationalism under contemporary globalization, nations nonetheless tend to facilitate the sustenance of perceptual and experiential duality or plurality among transnational migrants. Through various means, such as their domestic and foreign policies, dominant narratives, symbolic/affective appeals, etc., both sending and receiving nations serve to situate migrants as nodal beings, as flesh and blood points of connection between 'here' and 'there'. No wonder many immigrant groups are still connected to the homeland in terms of holiday observances, language usage, self-categorizations, and homeland political participation, inter alia. Given the constellation of connotations associated with immigrants nowadays – i.e., fluidity, hybridity, transgression, ambivalence, hyphenated-citizenship – it is unsurprising that observers with uni-national frames of mind are found askance at these realities. But what happens when these nativists, or *defenders of oneness,* meet and evaluate the *children of Janus*? Arguably, the resulting atmosphere is likely to be less than comfortable for both.

The study groups: Somalis and Ghanaians in Canada

Until the 1980s, the number of Somali immigrants to Canada was minuscule – less than ten persons per annum for several years (CIC 2005). In 1987, following the intense human rights abuses of the Siad Barré Government, the number of Somali immigrants, for the first time, got into the hundreds, and increased substantially in subsequent years, peaking at 5456 in 1992 (Mensah 2010). By the late 1980s, Somalia had become the leading African source of refugees in Canada (CIC 2005). While the annual flow of Somalis has mostly been in the thousands since 1990, it appears that the immigration restrictions of Bill C-86, which came into effect in 1993, are having constraining effects on the flow of Somalis into Canada. According to the 2006 Census, the overwhelming majority (29,700 or 78.62 per cent) of Somalis live in Ontario; Alberta and British Columbia come in second and third, with a total of 4225 and 1460, respectively. The Toronto CMA hosts the greatest number of Somalis in Canada – i.e., 18,440 (or 48.8 per cent) –and, indeed, has established Somali presence in neighbourhoods such as Rexdale and 'Little Mogadishu' in Etobicoke, where many new Somali immigrants find housing in low-cost public and private rental apartments. Unlike the Toronto CMA, the Somali

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population in the Vancouver CMA is small – totalling some 1320 in 2006 – and lacks a conspicuous street presence in the Greater Toronto Area, even though there seems to be small spatial concentrations of Somalis in parts of Surrey and Richmond. The main settlement problems facing Somalis in Canada relate to inadequate official language proficiency, affordable housing, and employment discrimination (Opoku-Dapaah 1995; Murdie 2002, 2003); these problems seem to have worsened in recent years, given the rise of Islamaphobia in the post-9/11 era.

Like Somalis, it was only after the 1960s that Ghanaians came to Canada in significant numbers (CIC 2005). The Ghanaian immigration to Canada can be divided into two major waves: the first, from the early 1970s to 1986, and the second from about 1990 to the present, with the period from 1987 to 1990 serving as a transition phase (Mensah 2010). Deteriorating economic and political conditions in Ghana and relatively favourable Canadian immigration policies fuelled the earliest wave of immigration, which involved a few hundred immigrants per annum, mostly made up of scholarship students; professionals working in education, health, and social services; and some political dissidents. The majority of these pioneers made their homes in the Toronto CMA, which continues to be the hub of Ghanaian settlement in Canada. It was in the early 1990s, following the end of the Canadian recession of the 1980s, that Ghanaian immigration entered its second wave, with more political dissidents, students, and (un)skilled workers pushing the annual number beyond 1000 (Mensah 2010; CIC 2005). By the mid-1990s, the Ghanaian immigrant population was big enough for the formation of various ethnic and hometown associations and immigrant churches in cities such as Toronto and Montreal to help them deal with their settlement problems, most of which relate to racial discrimination in employment and housing (Owusu 2000; Mensah 2008). According to the 2006 Census, of the 23,230 Ghanaians in Canada, the vast majority of them (63.37 per cent) live in the Toronto CMA, especially in Black enclaves such as the Jane-Finch neighbourhood in North York and in older inner suburbs such as Scarborough and Etobicoke. There is evidence that many African immigrants, including Ghanaians and Somalis, are buying homes in outer suburban neighbourhoods of Brampton and Mississauga (Firang 2011; Walks and Bourne 2006). Like Somalis, the Ghanaian population in Vancouver is quite small, amounting to some 1095 by 2006, with many of them living in Surrey, but with no discernible spatial concentration.

Methodology and analytic approach

This article relies on a quantitative survey data-set procured from Somali and Ghanaian immigrants in the Toronto and Vancouver CMAs. These two metropolitan areas were selected not only because they are homes to sizeable numbers of both immigrant groups, and are the leading 'ports of entry' for immigrants, but also because these are cities in which the authors have the necessary contacts with individuals and community organizations to facilitate the collection of primary data. In the absence of a reliable sample-frame, listing the names of all Ghanaians and Somalis in these cities, we relied on networks of immigrant churches/mosques, ethnic and hometown associations, individuals and groups to compile a list of names and addresses from which we were able to administer questionnaires to a total sample of 656 in the two cities, including 342 Somalis (174 in Toronto; 168 in Vancouver) and 314 Ghanaians (160 in Toronto; 154 in Vancouver). These samples are sizeable enough to permit a multivariate analysis of the

two groups with strong statistical power (Cohen, 1992). We must stress that efforts were made as much as possible to enhance the diversity of respondents in the sample – and, consequently, to reduce biases – by going beyond the established associations and churches/mosques in compiling our list. Still, to the extent that a true randomization was virtually impossible, because of the lack of a complete sample-frame, readers should interpret our findings with some care.

Our questionnaire entailed close-ended questions regarding respondents' socio-economic background (e.g., age, sex, education, marital status); their immigration, settlement, and adaptation processes; their experiences with discrimination and social exclusion; their conceptions of cultural identity, ethnicity, and citizenship; and their attachments to their ethnicity and the Canadian nation state. The survey was conducted face-to-face in a range of locations, including respondents' places of residence and work, cafés, local community centres, churches, and mosques; and were done in English, Arabic, Somali *Af Maay* and *Af Maxad*, Ghanaian *Twi*, and other languages with the help of interpreters. The interviews were conducted from October of 2010 through February of 2011.

In terms of analysis, the study uses multinomial logit (MNL) to examine respondents' propensity to self-identify as: (*a*) just Canadian; (*b*) mainly Ghanaian or mainly Somali; or (*c*) as Ghanaian-Canadian/Somali-Canadian. MNL modelling is able to predict an outcome from a number of independent variables. Like binary logistic regression, MNL deals with situations where the dependent variable is nominal. However, unlike binary logistic regression, MNL is used when the dependent variable has more than two categories, as in the present case where the outcome variable of 'self-identification' is trichotomous. MNL is able to break the outcome variable down into a series of comparison between two categories. For instance, if one has three outcome categories, as in the present case (i.e., *a, b*, and *c* above), then the analysis can compare *a* with the other two categories; in which case *a* becomes the base or comparison group in the analysis, yielding the following two comparisons: *a* vs. *b* and *a* vs. *c*. Similarly, if *c* is chosen as the base category, then the resulting comparison becomes: *a* vs. *c* and *b* vs. *c*.

Fourteen independent variables were used in the MNL to help predict the self-identification of our respondents. With the realization that identity formation has important material base, many of our independent variables reflect not only respondents' socio-demographic background (e.g., age, sex, education, country of birth), but also their economic characteristics as in their employment status, family income, and whether they own or rent their place of residence. Also, with the expectation that how our respondents self-identify would vary on the basis of their experience with racism, we added an independent variable that measures how they rate the level of racism in Canada. Other independent variables deal with respondents' civic involvement (proxied by whether they voted in the last federal elections), their ethnicity, and their city of residence. Table 1 lists all the dependent and independent variables used in the model, together with their respective variable codes and frequency distributions in marginal percentages. It bears noting that with Statistical Package for the Social Science, the independent variables in MNL are grouped into two, depending on their scale of measurement: all categorical independent variables are classified as 'factors', while ordinal and interval level ones are classified as 'covariates' (Table 1).

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Table 1. Variable in the multinomial logistic regression analysis.

Variable labels and descriptions	Variable coding	Marginal percentages[a]
Dependent variable	1. Just Canadian	10.8
SelfID: When it comes to political and social issues in Canada, how do you consider yourself or self-identify?	2. Mainly Ghanaian/ Somali	34.3
	3. Hyphenated ID	54.9
Independent variables (factors)		
Sex: Sex of respondents	0 = Male	53.4
	1 = Female	46.6
Age: Age of respondents	0 = Less than 31 years	43.9
	1 = 31 or more years	56.1
FamilyIncome: Family income of respondents	0 = $30,000 or less	16.0
	1 = More than $30,000	84.0
Education: Highest level of education of respondents	0 = High school or less	30.1
	1 = Above high school	69.9
ImmigPeriod: Period of immigration of respondents	0 = Before 1991	37.3
	1 = 1991 or after	62.7
Employed: Whether the respondent is employed or not	0 = No	23.1
	1 = Yes	76.9
BirthPlace: Place of birth of respondents	0 = Born outside Canada	86.5
	1 = Born inside Canada	13.5
FedVoting: Did respondent vote in the last federal elections	0 = No	39.8
	1 = Yes	60.2
RentOwn: Do you rent your present dwelling	0 = Renting	73.2
	1 = Owing	26.8
GovtAssist: Are your receiving any government social assistance	0 = No	78.2
	1 = Yes	21.8
Ethnicity: Ethnic identity	0 = Ghanaian	54.6
	1 = Somali	45.4
City: City of residence/interview	0 = Vancouver	47.6
	1 = Toronto	52.4
Independent variables (covariates)		
RacismLevel: Would you say the level of racism in Canada is low or high?	Rated 1 = no racism at all; 5 = very high racism	
EthnicityImp: How important is being Ghanaian/Somali to your sense of identity in Canada?	Rated: not important; 5 = extremely important	

[a]Marginal percentage refers to the percentage/proportion of valid observation found in each of the outcome variable's groups.

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Predicting Ghanaian and Somali immigrants' self-identification

Table 2 provides the MNL model fitting information based on the relationship between the dependent variable (*SelfID*) and the 14 independent variables entered into the routine. The row 'Intercept Only' shows how the model works when it does not control for the independent variables and simply fits an intercept to predict our dependent variable, while the 'Final' row describes the model, when it includes the 14 independent variables. As

Table 2. Model fitting information.

	Model fitting criteria			Likelihood ratio tests		
Model	AIC	BIC	−2 log likelihood	Chi-square	*df*	Sig.
Intercept Only	727.566	735.544	723.566			
Final	610.144	729.813	550.144	173.422	28	.000

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can be seen, the size of the unexplained variability in the outcome variable reduced considerably from a variance of 723.566 to 550.144 in the final model. This reduction in unexplained variance was statistically significant by way of a chi-square test that at least one of the independent variables in the model has a regression coefficient which is not equal to zero ($\chi^2 = 173.44$; $df = 28$; $p < 0.001$). The same can be said of the Akaike's information criterion (AIC) and the Bayesian information criterion (BIC), both of which decreased from the 'Intercept only' to 'Final' model, suggesting that our model has worked quite well.

Table 3 reports the main findings – i.e., the parameter estimates – of the MNL model. Again, the outcome variable is 'self-identification' (*SelfID*), denoting how the Ghanaian and Somali immigrants in our sample self-identity per the trichotomous categories of (*a*) just Canadian; (*b*) 'ethnic' or mainly Ghanaian/mainly Somali; and (*c*) hyphenated identity – i.e., Ghanaian-Canadian/Somali-Canadian. The base or reference category in the MNL is *c* (or the hyphenated identity), yielding a comparison of *a* vs. *c* and *b* vs. *c*, as shown by the two halves of Table 3.

The beta (or β) values in Table 3 are the estimated multinomial logistic coefficients for the predictor variables in the model. They represent the change in the logit (or the log-odds ratio) of the outcome variable associated with a one-unit change in a predictor variable. And the exponentiation of beta [exp(β)] refers to the change in odds of the outcome occurring as a result of a unit change in a predictor variable. Given that the odds of an event occurring is defined as the probability of the event occurring, divided by the probability of that same event not occurring, an exp(β) of greater than one indicates that as the predictor increases, the odds of the outcome occurring increases; while an exp(β) value less than one shows and inverse relationship – i.e., as the predictor increases, the odds of the outcome occurring decreases. In what follows we examine the results of the MNL pertaining to the two comparisons: 'just Canadian' vs. 'hyphenated identity' (or *a* vs. *c*) and 'Ethnic' vs. 'Hyphenated Identity' (or *b* vs. c), in turn.

'*Just Canadian*' *vs.* '*hyphenated identity*' *(a vs. c)*

Under 'just Canadian' vs. 'hyphenated identity', our model yielded a β-value of 1.788 for the intercept (see the first half of Table 3). This indicates that the MNL estimate for a respondent identifying as 'just Canadian', relative to a 'hyphenated identity' is 1.788 when all the independent variables are held constant. Also, notice that 3 of the 14 independent variables were statistically significant in predicting whether a respondent self-identifies as 'just Canadian' or as a 'hyphenated identity'. These three variables include the following: how important is being a Ghanaian or Somali to a respondent's sense of identity in Canada (*EthnicImp*); period of immigration (*ImmigPeriod*); and country of birth (*BirthPlace*). *EthnicityImp* yielded a β-value of −0.665; *sig.* of 0.001;

Table 3. Multinomial logistic regression analysis: parameter estimates.

				95% CI for odds ratio		
				Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper
SelfID: How do respondents self-identify	β	(SE)	Sig.		[Exp(β)]	
Just Canadian vs. hyphenated identity						
Intercept	1.798	(1.482)	.225			
RacismLevel	.082	(.209)	.696	.721	1.085	1.633
EthnicityImp	−.665	(.203)*	.001	.345	.514	.766
Sex	.002	(.396)	.996	.461	1.002	2.177
Age	−.088	(.446)	.844	.382	.916	2.197
ImmigPeriod	1.108	(.429)*	.010	1.306	3.029	7.026
Employed	−.359	(.558)	.520	.234	.698	2.084
Education	.594	(.448)	.185	.753	1.812	4.358
BirthPlace	−1.250	(.492)*	.011	.109	.287	.752
FedVoting	−.368	(.468)	.432	.277	.692	1.731
RentOwn	−.637	(.425)	.134	.230	.529	1.217
GovtAssist	−.726	(.501)	.147	.181	.484	1.291
FamilyInc	−.250	(.614)	.684	.234	.779	2.596
Ethnicity	−.187	(.416)	.653	.367	.829	1.874
City	.294	(.434)	.499	.573	1.341	3.140
Ethnic vs. hyphenated identity						
Intercept	−4.453	(.980)	.000			
RacismLevel	.296	(.137)*	.031	1.028	1.345	1.760
EthnicityImp	.060	(.131)	.646	.821	1.062	1.375
Sex	−.073	(.271)	.787	.546	.929	1.581
Age	−.040	(.277)	.886	.558	.961	1.655
ImmigPeriod	−.299	(.306)	.328	.407	.742	1.350
Employed	.574	(.328)	.080	.933	1.775	3.376
Education	−.463	(.323)	.152	.334	.629	1.187
BirthPlace	1.139	(.485)*	.019	1.208	3.125	8.086
FedVoting	1.029	(.284)*	.000	1.604	2.799	4.887
RentOwn	1.116	(.366)*	.002	1.489	3.053	6.258
GovtAssist	−.310	(.323)	.337	.390	.734	1.381
FamilyInc	.380	(.370)	.304	.708	1.463	3.022
Ethnicity	−.212	(.296)	.473	.453	.809	1.444
City	1.667	(.291)*	.000	2.993	5.295	9.367

Note: The reference category is 'hyphenated identity'; R^2 = .35 (Cox & Snell); .41 (Negelkerke); Model χ^2 (28) = 173.42, $p < 001$; *$p < .05$.

and exp(β) of 0.514. Thus, with a one-unit increase in the importance of a respondent's ethnicity to his or her sense of identity in Canada, the multinomial log-odds of identifying as just Canadian, relative to a hyphenated identity, decrease by some .665 units, while holding the rest of the independent variables constant. Put differently, as a respondent's attachment to his or her ethnicity increases by one unit, the odds of selecting just Canadian over a hyphenated identity reduce. The estimated parameters for respondents'

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period of immigration (*ImmigPeriod*) were: $\beta = 1.108$; *sig.* = .010; and exp(β) = 3.029. This indicates that respondents' period of immigration was significant in predicting whether they identify as just Canadian or as a hyphenated Canadian. The odds ratio shows that Somali and Ghanaian immigrants who came to Canada before 1991 have 3.029 times higher odds (than those who came after 1991) to identify as just Canadian, rather than as a hyphenated Canadian. The MNL for those who came before 1991, compared to those who came after 1991, is 1.108 units higher for preferring a 'just Canadian' identification to a 'hyphenated identity'. Also, respondents' country of birth (*BirthPlace*) was a significant predictor of whether they self-identity as just Canadian or a hyphenated identity: $\beta = -1.250$; *sig.* = .011; and exp(β) = .287: More pointedly, Somali and Ghanaian respondents who were born outside Canada were less likely than their Canadian-born counterparts to identity as just Canadian, than as a hyphenated identity.

Even though whether or not respondents were employed (*Employed*) and whether they had higher family incomes or not (*FamilyInc*) were not statistically significant in predicting their self-identification, both variables were inversely associated with respondents' propensity to self-identify as just Canadian. This suggests that those who were not employed and those with lower family incomes (of less than $30,000 per year) were *less likely* to identify as just Canada. If nothing at all, this hints of the import of people's material circumstance to their identity formation, as noted earlier. Notice also that neither respondents' ethnicity (be it Somali or Ghanaian) nor their place of residence (be it Toronto CMA or Vancouver CMA) was a significant predicator of their identification as 'just Canadian', as against a 'hyphenated identity'.

Ethnic vs. hyphenated identity (b vs. c)

The bottom half of Table 3 deals with the comparison of 'ethnic' vs. 'hyphenated identity'. Notice that at the *alpha* level of 0.05, some five variables were significant in predicting whether a respondent self-identifies as ethnic or as a hyphenated Canadian. These variables include the following: a respondent's perception of the level of racism in Canada (*RacismLevel*); whether a respondent was born in or outside Canada (*BirthPlace*); whether or not a respondent voted in the last federal election (*FedVoting*); whether a respondent rents or owns his or her dwelling (*RentOwn*); and whether a respondent lives in Vancouver or Toronto (*City*).

The β-value for *RacismLevel* indicates that if respondents were to increase their perceived level of racism in Canada by one point, the multinomial log-odds for identifying as ethnic, compared to hyphenated identity, would increase by some 0.296 unit, while holding all the other variables in the model constant. Simply put, those who deem the level of racism in Canada to be high are more likely to attach themselves to their ethnicity. The exp(β) value indicates that Ghanaian and Somali respondents who perceive racism to be high in Canada have odds that are 1.345 times higher that they will identify as ethnic (rather than as a hyphenated Canadian), compared to those who see the level of racism to be low. This supports Deaux's (2008) contention that racism and social exclusion are more likely to foster the kind of oppositional identity that the nativists are apprehensive about. Implicitly, those who are concerned about immigrants' purported disloyalty would be better served by promoting initiatives that curtail racism and social exclusion of immigrants. Regarding *BirthPlace,* the results indicate that those who were born outside Canada were more likely to self-identify as ethnic, relative to a hyphenated

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identity. Indeed, a respondent who was born outside Canada has a 3.125 higher odds of identifying as mainly Ghanaian or mainly Somali, relative to identifying as Ghanaian-Canadian or Somali-Canadian. Also, the results show that those who did not vote in the last federal elections (*FedVoting*) are more likely (by odds of 2.79 times) to self-identify as ethnic, relative to a hyphenated identity. Also Ghanaian and Somali immigrants who were renting their dwelling, instead of owning/buying them (*RentOwn*), were more likely to identify as ethnic, as against a hyphenated identity. Thus, one is more likely to identify as mainly Ghanaian or mainly Somali (as against a hyphenated identity) if he or she is renting.

Moreover, whether a respondent lives in Vancouver or Toronto (*City*) was, this time, a significant predictor of his or her identification as 'ethnic' as against a 'hyphenated identity': $\beta = 1.667$; *sig.* = 000; $\exp(\beta) = 5.295$. According to the odds ratio, Ghanaian and Somali immigrants who live in Vancouver, rather than Toronto, are more likely (by a factor of 5.295) to identify as mainly Ghanaians or mainly Somalis, as against Ghanaian-Canadian/Somali-Canadian. This finding is particularly interesting from the standpoint of the geography of identity formation among African immigrants in Canada. It supports the view that ethnic minorities are more likely to be strongly attached to their ethnicity when their numbers are relatively small. By the 2006 Census, there were as many as 14,720 Ghanaians in Toronto, compared to a mere 1095 in Vancouver. Thus, some 0.29 per cent of Toronto's 5,072,070 residents then were Ghanaians, while only 0.05 per cent of Vancouver's 2,097,965 residents were Ghanaians. A similar estimate for Somalis shows that in 2006, only 1320 (or 0.06 per cent) of Vancouver's population were Somalis, the comparable figure for Toronto then was as high as 18,440 (or 0.36 per cent of Toronto's total population). Zygmunt Bauman, in his *Culture in a liquid modern world* (2011), argued that the more immigrants feel threatened or feel uncertain about their culture, the more appealing the cultural options of their home country appear to them, and vice versa. Given that, *ceteris paribus*, immigrant groups with small populations are more likely to feel threatened and uncertain about practicing their culture than those with large populations, the finding that Ghanaians and Somalis in Vancouver tend to identity as 'ethnic' than those in Toronto becomes understandable. In the final analysis, with the pseudo *R*-squares of 0.35 (Cox and Snell) and 0.41 (Negelkerke), one can reasonably posit that our model fits the data quite well.

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Conclusion

Using the quantitative tool of multinomial logistic model, we have explored the factors that are *associated* with the self-identification of Ghanaian and Somali immigrants in Canada. 'Associated' is stressed to serve as a reminder that no claim of causality is invoked between any of the 14 predictor variables, on the one hand, and the outcome variable of self-identification, on the other, as the model deployed is grounded in regression analysis. A number of intriguing findings have surfaced, many of which are quite intuitive, yet reinforced empirically by our MNL model. For instance, we found that those who deemed the level of racism to be high in Canada were less likely to identify as just Canadians, instead of a hyphenated identity, just as those who immigrated to Canada recently, or since 1991, as well as those who were born outside of Canada. Additionally there are indications, albeit with no statistical significance, that people who were unemployed and those who had lower family incomes were less likely to identify as just

Canadians, instead of a hyphenated identity. Conversely, people who find racism to be high in Canada tend to identity as mainly ethnic, relative to a hyphenated identity, just as those who were born outside the country, those who live in Vancouver (compared to Toronto), and those who did not vote in the last federal election. Put together, these findings leave no escape from at least three-related conclusions. First, that self-identification is truly a multifaceted and dialectical process, involving several factors, many of which are mutually reinforcing. Secondly, that those who are concerned about immigrants' disengagement in, or disloyalty to, their host societies would be better served by paying some attention to the ethnic- and race-based discrimination faced by minority immigrants; evidently such forms of intolerance undermine immigrants' allegiance to host societies. Thirdly, identify formation is not only a sociocultural phenomenon, but also an economic or materially grounded one.

In addition to the preceding findings, this study points to several areas where future research would be worthwhile. First, the extent to which immigrants' identity formation transcends generations needs to be examined more closely, because the number of second and third generation of immigrants continues to grow. Secondly, how do differences in immigration histories, policies, and approaches in different countries affect the identity formation of (African) immigrants? It would be worthwhile, for instance, to examine how African immigrants in the USA, with its assimilation-cum-melting pot outlook, would self-identify, compared to their counterparts in Canada, where the official policy is one of multiculturalism. Also, the manner in which this difference shapes nationalistic sentiments regarding immigrants and immigration would be worth examining. Thirdly, in this paper we have used a quantitative methodology to frame a concept as fluid and nebulous as identity to a static category for the purpose of analysis. To get the full picture, then, future researchers are encouraged to use qualitative techniques to tease out the personal narratives, nuances, and tensions implicated in ethno-racial and national identity formation among immigrants. Finally, beyond the trichotomous self-identification category deployed here, immigrants normally adopt different identities in different contexts. Thus, depending on whether they are in their home, among their peers in an ethnic community, or in place of employment, immigrants assume different and multiple identities and it would be useful to understand how these multiplicities play out among different immigrant groups.

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