**African Immigrant Integration and Political Participation in the US**

**Contact Person:** Dr. Amanda Lea Robinson, Political Science, robinson.1012@osu.edu

**Research description:** Integration into American society by non-black immigrants tends to increase with time and result in improved economic outcomes. In contrast, scholars note a form of “black exceptionalism”: black immigrants integrate at the slowest rates among all immigrants and their socioeconomic status and residential integration decline with each generation. This is because the segment of the host population into which they would most likely assimilate – black Americans – is itself a marginalized minority. As a result, previous research finds that, in contrast to other immigrant groups, resistance to assimilation among black immigrants yields better outcomes. Such resistance is a strategic response to racial discrimination in the US, and the risk that such discrimination poses to black immigrants who are perceived to be black American.

Yet black immigrants in the United States are a diverse group, and not all are equally “mistaken” for black Americans. While some black immigrants’ recent foreign heritage is highly visible, other black immigrants’ differences from black Americans are “invisible.” This variation, and its implications for black immigrant integration in the US, has not yet been theoretically developed or empirically tested. The proposed research offers a systematic study of Somali immigrant integration, with a particular focus on racial identity formation and its political implications. The project focuses theoretically on immigrant visibility, and the ways in which host perceptions constrain or incentivize “racial integration” among black immigrants. The proposed theory predicts that immigrant visibility facilitates black identity formation by reducing the disincentives for assimilation that stem from racial commonality with black Americans.

**Student Participation:**

Research assistants will assist with the following aspects of the research project:

1. Coordination of community interviewers, including help with paperwork and respondent compensation.
2. Monitoring of incoming surveys for data quality and interviewer feedback.
3. Community outreach and respondent recruitment.

**Time Commitment:** 5-10 hrs/week. 4 month commitment over the Spring Semester.

**Major Preferences:** Social science, experience with human subject research

**Skill Requirements:** Strong communication skills, excellent organizational skills, evidence of academic excellence, interest in social science research, familiarity with the Columbus Somali community. We strongly encourage students of Somali descent to apply. Successful applicants must be willing to complete the online training in human subjects protection and in-person training on relevant tasks.

**Compensation:** Work-study experience/academic credit

**To apply:** To apply candidates should email Professor Robinson at robinson.1012@osu.edu. Include in your email:

Name
CV/Resume
Year at OSU
Major/Minor
Cumulative GPA
Details of prior research experience, if any
Details of relevant qualifications
Availability (hours per week) during spring semester 2018
Preferred arrangement (course credit, work study)
Faculty or staff reference/recommender contact information (you do not need a recommendation at this time, just a person I can contact if need be)

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis until Jan. 31, 2018 or until the position is filled.