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We Don't Only Live Here, But We Also Live There": Exploring Transnational Ties Among Ghanaian Immigrants in Toronto

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Abstract

Many studies of immigrant settlement and integration continue to do so within the borders of a nation state without reference to transnationalism. This case study of Ghanaian immigrants' transnationalism in Toronto aims to increase our understanding of one racialized immigrant group's settlement and integration process that transcends Canada's borders. Utilizing a mixed method approach, this study builds on previous studies on Ghanaian transnationality by exploring a range of transnational activities between Ghana and Canada. Conceptually, the study contributes to an understanding of how the "here" and "there" constitutes a transnational social field for Ghanaians in Toronto. Empirically, the study adds to our knowledge of how racialized immigrants, like Ghanaians, with a wealth of socio-demographic assets, struggle to integrate into a larger Canadian society. The empirical analysis reveals that Ghanaians' over-representation in low occupational jobs diminishes their social status in Toronto. Unlike previous studies on Ghanaian transnationality, this paper argues that structural elements of oppression and privilege embedded within the Canadian society are the underlying cause of Ghanaian immigrants' social status reduction. Transnationalism provides a social field to lift Ghanaian immigrants' self-esteem and social status. Thus, the expression we do not only live here, but we also live there will continue to manifest the Ghanaian settlement and integration process in Canada.

Keywords Transnationalism · Immigrant integration · Ghanaians · Toronto · Canada

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Introduction

Immigrants[1] integration process interconnects not only with their socio-economic characteristics, but also with their transnational ties transcending national borders. Although earlier immigrants to Canada have successfully integrated into the Canadian society after a reasonable period (e.g., Anisef & Lanphier, 2003; Breton, 2005; Darden, 2015; Hiebert, 2006; Li, 2003; Murdie, 2002, 2003; Murdie & Teixeira, 2003; Reitz, 2001), recent racialized immigrants are more likely to experience integration problems due to systemic barriers in the destination countries (Darden, 2015; Mensah, 2010). In studying the immigrant integration process some scholars, blinded by "methodological nationalism" (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2003), assume that immigrants, especially those from the developing world, make a one-way permanent move to settle in developed countries, such as Canada, and then sever their ties with their homelands. Now, transnational scholars reject the assumption that immigrants integrate completely within the host society and consequently cut off their ties with their homelands (e.g., Faist, 2000; Glick-Schiller et al., 1992; Kivisto, 2001; Portes et.al, 1999). This realization has resulted in a proliferation of research on transnationalism. In Canada, transnational scholars focus mainly on earlier immigrant groups from Italy (e.g., Tomchuck, 2015), Hong Kong (e.g., Preston et al., 2006), and China (e.g., Hiebert & Ley, 2003, 2006). Recently, Canadian studies on transnational activities among African immigrants in Canada are also emerging (e.g., Manuh, 2003; Mensah, 2008, 2014; Tettey & Puplampu, 2005; Owusu, 2003 and Wong, 2000). Also, European scholars have extensively studied Ghanaian transnationalism (e.g., Krause, 2015; Nieswand, 2011; Tonah, 2007; Van Dijk, 2014).

The present study addresses two gaps in the literature on Ghanaian transnationalism. First, Canadian studies on Ghanaian transnationalism are solely based either on qualitative or quantitative methods. The relative limitations of either an exclusively quantitative or a solely qualitative approach seem to make it less prudent to understand the nature of transnational ties among Ghanaians in Toronto. The present study fills this gap by adopting a mixed method approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, to analyze a range of transnational activities to understand Ghanaian immigrants' integration process in Canada. This approach allows the data to offset the relative weaknesses of one data set to strengthen the reliability and validity of the results to provide a comprehensive understanding of the nature transnational ties among Ghanaians in Toronto. Secondly, this study departs from the previous studies on Ghanaian transnationalism as it captures in a striking way the range of transnational activities Ghanaians in Toronto engage between Canada and Ghana. These transnational activities are not only exceptional among Ghanaians in Toronto, as other immigrants group do the same. However,

[1] For the purpose of this paper, I define the term "immigrants" as those who were born outside Canada and those who have been in Canada for at least 3 years. It is an all-inclusive term, encompassing: (1) those without legal status; (2) those who have arrived as visitors and students; (3) those claiming refugee status whose claim has not yet been heard; (4) those who have come as convention refugees; and (5) permanent residents and Canadian citizens who arrived in the independent class, family class, and business class.

what makes this study exceptional from previous studies is how Ghanaians in Toronto perceive transnational ties as lifting their social status in the homeland and how much they rely on the homeland social status for their self-esteem in Canada. Thus, the study does not only aid our understanding of the various social, cultural, political, and economic relationships Ghanaians in Toronto sustain between the "**here**" and "**there**," but also they enhance our understanding of how transnational ties lift Ghanaians' social status to help them to cope with the integration process in Canada.

Studying Ghanaians in Toronto is important. Ghanaians are a part of the larger Black Canadian group, but researchers usually lump them together with other Black Canadians as a homogeneous group (Mensah, 2010). Such broad homogenization masks the reality of vast differences among Black Canadians. The diversity in the demographic profiles, cultural norms, and social practices among Black Canadians requires that we study each Black group differently (Firang, 2019; Mensah, 2010). Also, although Ghanaians, constitute a small proportion of the foreign-born population in Canada, the number of Ghanaians in Canada generally, and in Toronto particularly, has been increasing dramatically over the last two decades (Firang, 2019; Statistics Canada, 2016). For instance, in 2001, about 20,000 Ghanaians were living in Canada (Firang, 2011; Statistics Canada, 2006). In 2016, the Ghanaian population almost doubled to about 39,000, with about 60% of Ghanaians in Canada residing in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) (Firang, 2019; Statistics Canada, 2016). Another notable characteristic of the Ghanaian population is that Ghanaians are the 5th ethnic groups most spatially concentrated in Toronto.[2] The surging Ghanaian population in Canada, and their high spatial concentration in Toronto, provides the rationale for a study of Ghanaian immigrants to understand why this racialized group in Canada maintains transnational ties with their homeland. Toronto's multicultural landscape and irresistible attraction of immigrants provides an excellent geographic laboratory for a wide range of immigrant-related research, especially the present study that explores the dynamic linkages between a racialized immigrant transnationalism and their integration process.

Following this introduction, the rest of the paper begins with a critical review of the existing literature on the theoretical perspectives that form the core of this paper—*immigrant integration and transnationalism*. This is followed by an overview of the research design used for the study. Next, using empirical evidence drawn from the questionnaire survey and focus group interviews, the following questions are explored:

- What are the socio-demographic characteristics of Ghanaians in Toronto?
- What are the nature and extent of transnational ties between Ghana and Canada?
- Is Ghanaian transnationalism a strategy for integration into Canadian society?

[2] A simple index of concentration for the 60 top ethnic groups in Toronto shows that Ghanaians rank among the top 10 most spatially concentrated ethnic group in Toronto (Murdie, 2010).

The paper, subsequently, concludes by reviewing the findings and discussing their implications for social policy.

Literature Review: Theoretical Perspectives on Integration and Transnationalism

In an attempt to synthesize the various interpretations of integration some scholars have identified two extremes on a continuum that explains the immigrant settlement process in the host country. One extreme encourages assimilation, the traditional American style of immigrant incorporation, which implies that immigrants are to adapt to the host society, if necessary, by abandoning their cultural identities, in order to fit into their new societies. The other, segregation, means immigrants are separated from the larger society and denied equal access to its institutions and entitlements (Abu-Laban, 1998; Li, 2003). In between the continuum of assimilation and segregation is the notion of *multiculturalism* or *integration* (e.g., Abu-Laban, 1998; Li, 2003; Millar, 2013), also the Canadian approach of immigrants' incorporation (Abu-Laban, 1998). This model promotes immigrants' social inclusion in the public domain of the host country, while supporting diverse ethnic cultural identities (Bertossi, 2011; Li, 2004). In Canada, this notion of integration is viewed as the final stage of the immigrant settlement process, wherein immigrants actively participate in the institutional fabric of the larger society without necessarily losing their cultural distinctiveness (Anisef & Lanphier, 2003; Breton, 2005; Li, 2003; Winnemore & Biles, 2006). In the academic literature, the terms *acculturation*, *incorporation*, and *integration* are sometimes used interchangeably (e.g., Abu-Laban, 1998; Breton, 2005; George, 2006; Li, 2003), although there are subtle differences among these terms. The fluid nature of the notion of immigrant integration makes it difficult to measure the dimensions of Canada's notion of integration. Ray (2003) summarizes 3 key dimensions of the Canadian immigrant integration as follows:

The socio-economic dimensions assess a range of immigrants' social and economic outcomes, including social networks, sense of belonging, participation in the labor market, income measures, linguistic ability (speaking English and French), educational attainment, and homeownership rates.

The political dimensions examine immigrants' civic and political participation in political parties, unions, neighborhood associations, religious institutions, and/or community groups.

The health dimensions gauges immigrants' health outcomes as indicated by access to quality healthcare and quality of life (Ray, 2003).

This article adopts the socio-economic dimensions of immigrant integration to assess the gap between immigrants, like Ghanaians in Toronto, and Canadian born citizens, although the other dimensions are also considered crucial. In Canada, integration is conceptualized as a two-way process between the immigrants (with their characteristics) and the receiving society (with its institutions and their interactions with immigrants) (Abu-Laban, 1998; Li, 2003). The way Canadian institutions react to immigrants determine the outcome of the integration process (Li,

2003). In reality, the Canadian public institutions react negatively against racialized immigrants, whose racial identities predispose them to a greater degree of social exclusion.

The notion of integration assumes that the immigrant settlement process culminates in a complete break with the homeland. Such explanatory frameworks are a product of what Wimmer and Glick-Schiller (2003) describe as the *methodological nationalism*, without a thought about transnationalism and its impact on the integration process. Fortunately, since the 1990s, transnational scholars have intellectually liberated the scholarly understanding of the integration process from the captivity of methodological nationalism by highlighting the role transnationalism (e.g., Robinson, 2005; Wimmer & Glick- Schiller, 2003).

Although the earliest articulation of the notion "immigrant transnationalism" was by cultural anthropologists, Glick Schiller et al. (1992), Basch et. al., (1994)'s definition of immigrant transnationalism—"the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Basch et al., 1994, 27) is widely accepted among transnational scholars, and is therefore adopted for this paper. Later, Portes and his colleagues expanded the definition of transnationalism by employing to analyze new and second-generation immigrant communities in the USA (Portes, et al., 1999). They identified a broad range of contemporary transnational activities, including economic, political, and socio-cultural transnationalism. Economic transnationalism involves remittances, entrepreneurial businesses, and other commercial activities immigrants engage across national borders. Political transnationalism includes political activities of homeland party functionaries (Portes et al. 1999, p. 221). The socio-cultural transnational practices are manifested in the increased number of visits that immigrants make to the homeland, remittances, correspondence, such as emails, online chats, phone calls, and traditional letters. By engaging in such intensive transnational activities, Portes et al., (1999) posit that immigrants build social fields that link their country of origin with the destination.

After Portes and his colleagues, several scholars, mostly from the social sciences, (e.g., Castles, 2002; Faist, 2000; Kelly, 2001; Kivisto, 2001; Levitt, 2004; Preston et al., 2006; Robinson, 2005) have popularized transnationalism across various academic disciplines. The burgeoning transnational literature speaks to the fact that contemporary immigrant transnationalism has become frequent and intense as a response to 3 key processes: (1) contemporary globalization, (2) advances in communication and transportation technologies, and (3) worldwide ascendancy of market economies. The advent of modern transportation and telecommunication technologies has promoted what Portes (2003) describes as transnationalism "from below" (the process of empowerment of ordinary and poor people to participate in cross border activities). This is in contrast to transnationalism "from above"—a form of transnationalism that leads to the empowerment of the rich through global financial integration and the spread of capitalism (Portes, 2001, 2003). Transnationalism from below implies that it is not only immigrants with economic resources and human capital (the educated and professionals) who have greater access to space–time-compressing technologies, but ordinary immigrants can engage in

transnational activities because they now have access to cheaper means of transportation and telecommunication (Levitt, 2011; Portes, 2003).

Currently, the transnational literature is now more concerned with the idea of hybridity and liminality, with transnational identities being re-imagined in a way that is prompting scholars to rethink about immigrants' homeland and host society identities. In reality, the notion of liminality suggests immigrants do not belong to a fixed geographic space, but they are always in transient "betwixt and between" (Bhabha, 1994: 37) the homeland and host society. The liminal spaces which immigrants occupy, ranging from national borders to frontiers, are considered as spaces migrants pass through but do not live in. The notion of liminality raises the idea of hybridity. In his classic study of cultural hybridity, Bhabha (1994: 37) explains that hybridity is the "in-between" space that carries the burden and meaning of culture; this makes the notion of hybridity so important in the transnationalism-integration discourse due to the cross-cultural "exchange" it offers. Transmigrants occupy contested sites that exist "betwixt and between" the laminal spaces (Bhabha, 1994; 37), to allow them to negotiate cultural identities. For immigrants, the notions of liminality and hybridity create what Bhabha (1994) refers to as a "Third Space." Even though immigrants exist within Third Space, they not necessarily belong to either the *Here* or *There*. They can only negotiate for cultural identity and social status.

Transnational scholars continue to debate on transnationalism-integration nexus. While some studies conceptualize transnationalism as hindering immigrants' integration (e.g., Preston et al., 2006; Wong & Szetawick, 2006), other studies theorize transnationalism as a mode of immigrant adaptation in the host country (e.g., Nieswand, 2011; Portes, 2001; Walters, 2003). Studies on Ghanaian transnationality (e.g., Krause, 2015; Nieswand, 2011; Smith & Mazzucato, 2009; Tonah, 2007; Van Dijk, 2010, 2014) offer a valuable analytical perspective on how transnationalism allows immigrants to adapt within their destinations. In particular, Nieswand's (2011) theorization of *the status paradox of migration* explains how transnationalism allows immigrants from the Global South (e.g., Ghanaian immigrants) who migrate to the Global North (e.g., Germany) to adapt to their hostile society. According to this theorization (status paradox of migration), highly qualified and skilled migrants from the Global South, who used to occupy higher social class in the country of origin, tend to lose their social status in the destinations of the Global North. The loss of social status is due to the fact these highly qualified immigrants from the Global South are considered unskilled according to the educational and occupational standards in the Global North. Since their skills and qualifications are devalued, these highly skilled immigrants from the Global South are forced to engage in menial, precarious and low-paying jobs, which do not merit their qualifications. Consequently, the migration experience of these Global South migrants is often characterized by loss of social status in the destination country. However, when these migrants engage in transnational ties, they attain social prestige in the country of origin as they tend to gain a privileged socio-economic status compared to those they left behind. For these transmigrants, the privileged socio-economic status they gain through transnational engagements provides them with heightened sense of purpose and improved self-esteem (Nieswand, 2011). Nieswand's *status paradox of migration* constructs the notion of transnationalism as more tangible entity rather than being viewed as

what Ghassan Hage has called a non-contiguous site (Hage, 2005). Although, not exactly conceptualizing the *status paradox of migration* notion, few studies on Ghanaian transnationality (e.g., Krause, 2015; Mensah, 2014; Tettey & Puplampu, 2005; Tonah, 2007; Van Dijk, 2014) also shed light on transnationalism-integration nexus.

Bonding social capital, intra-group network among immigrants, could serve as a driver for positive transnationalism-integration outcomes in the host society. Findings from studies in Canada and Europe have confirmed the positive aspects of bonding social capital of transnational social networks in aiding immigrant integration. For example, Murdie and Teixeira (2003) and Teixeira (2006) have noted that intra-group transnational networks allow new immigrants to escape an unfamiliar environment in the host country. Similarly, Larsen (2011) highlights how immigrants' transnational network of intra-group relations in Denmark serve as a driver for integration into their local community. Thus, by relying on transnational social networks immigrants, like Ghanaians in Canada, can aid in the shifts of low social status to high social identity in the host country.

Even though the existing literature on transnationality examines issues of social identity reduction as inhibiting successful integration for immigrants in the destination country, they barely address structural elements of oppression, power, and privilege embedded within Western capitalist societies as the underlying cause of immigrants' social identity reduction. Oppression against a racialized subordinate group like Ghanaians by the privileged dominant group contributes to the process of status reduction and poor integration outcomes. Primary structures of oppression, such as racism, sexism, and classism, create intersectionality of oppression (Mullaly, 2010) to produce marginalization and status reduction for racialized immigrants' groups. Unless we address issues of oppression and privilege, established through public institutions and policies, such as the labor markets and educational systems, we will fail to understand the root cause of immigrants' status reduction. Thus, in the following empirical analysis, the notion of oppression is captured as explanatory framework to understand the nature of status reduction and the difficult integration process racialized immigrants, like Ghanaians, experience in the destination country.

Design and Methods

The research questions of this study were explored using the sequential mixed method. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) refer to this approach as quantitative priority mixed method design, with greater emphasis on the quantitative methods, while the qualitative method is used a secondary role to elicit more information on some specific quantitative data. The utility of this sequential mixed method design has been discussed extensively in the literature (e.g., Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The effectiveness of this design rests on the premise that blending quantitative and qualitative research techniques in a single method offsets the relative strengths and weaknesses of each research technique. The data collection and analysis proceeded in three phases: (1) pre-testing the questionnaire, (2) questionnaire survey, and (3) qualitative focus group interviews.

In the first place, the questionnaire survey was pretested on five respondents who conduct frequent transnational activities between Ghana and Canada to uncover any ambiguities with the wording of the questions. Next, I collected and analyzed questionnaire data to address most of the research questions. Constructing an appropriate sampling frame of Ghanaians in Toronto for the questionnaire survey was a significant methodological challenge for the study. Previous studies had utilized a Bell Canada's telephone directory as a sampling frame to identify unique Ghanaian surnames (e.g., Opoku, Owusu, Mensah, Obeng) (Owusu, 1998). A sampling frame from these previous studies has some shortcomings as Ghanaians who are married to spouses of non-Ghanaian ethnic backgrounds and have adopted partners' cognomens might be overlooked in the sample selection. Also, Canadian telephone service providers, such as *Bell Canada* and *Rogers*, no longer maintain a list of subscribers due to the increased use of social media sites, prepaid phone cards, and cell phones. Thus, I purposely administered the questionnaire to a sample of 200 Ghanaians in Toronto attending church services and hometown association meetings.[3] This procedure of recruiting potential respondents was appropriate for the study, because almost all Ghanaians in Toronto belong to various Ghanaian ethnic hometown associations and churches. The inclusive criteria for selecting the respondents for the study were: persons of Ghanaian ethnic origin, who were born and raised in Ghana, who immigrated to Toronto as adults either directly from Ghana or another country, and who have been resident in Toronto at least for 5 years to have adequate transnational ties with Ghana. These inclusive criteria are necessary because a study of transnational ties requires an adequate timeframe to capture first-generation Ghanaian immigrants, who have lived in Toronto long enough to have adequate transnational experience. In administering the questionnaire, I first contacted a representative from each of the ethnic associations and churches to obtain their consents to distribute the questionnaire to a sample of persons attending meetings or church services (i.e., willing respondents). The willing respondents completed the questionnaire conveniently at their homes. A list of the willing respondents (including their phone numbers) was compiled to help track the questionnaire. Even though, the questionnaire was administered to 200 respondents, 150 of them completed the questionnaire, producing a response rate of 75% for the survey.

A *G*power* statistical software was used to determine that the sample size of 150 was considered reasonably powerful for statistical analysis. Since the survey requires a power of 0.85 to detect a minimum effect size (of 0.3, at 0.05 level of significance), it turns out that a minimum sample size of 137 was sufficient for the study. The author admits the respondents were not selected through strict randomization. The questionnaire covered a variety of topics encompassing immigration history, socio-demographic characteristics, and a range of transnational activities. The socio-demographic components include age, sex, ethnicity, place of birth, occupation, income, and immigration history. The variables for transnational activities, include

[3] It was estimated that there are about 30 Ghanaian churches and 25 Ghanaian hometown associations in Toronto. The churches have an average of 500 members, while the hometown associations have an average of 100 members each (Firang, 2011).

remittances, contacts with friends and relatives in Ghana, frequency of travel to and from Ghana, attending funerals and investments in Ghana. The questionnaire survey data were analyzed using quantitative data analysis techniques (SPSS).

Finally, I conducted qualitative interviews (focus group discussions) with 20 Ghanaians who conduct various transnational activities between Ghana and Canada. The focus group was necessary since the quantitative analyses only allow for statistical description, and do not elicit in-depth information about the transnational behaviors of Ghanaians, especially their motives, perceptions, and attitudes about their homeland. A snowball sampling method was used to identify and recruit the 20 participants who conduct frequent transnational activities between Ghana and Toronto and have lived in Toronto long enough (at least 10 years) to have a reasonably long migration experience, have attained at least 35 years of age, and should have visited Ghana, at least, three times since migrating from Ghana to Toronto. For the snowball sampling procedure, I contacted a few (5) key informants who were community leaders holding leadership positions in religious organizations and hometown associations, who engage in frequent transnational activities between Ghana and Canada to nominate, through their social networks, other participants who meet the study criteria and could potentially contribute to meaningful discussions on Ghanaian transnationality and its effect on the settlement and integration process in Canada.

The 20 focus group participants were recruited from Ghanaians of varied socio-demographic backgrounds (i.e., gender, education, income, occupation). The socio-demographic characteristics of the group participants were as follows: 40% female and 60% male; 75% married; 80% have completed post-secondary education. Seventy percent were engaged in the processing and manufacturing occupations, while only 15% were involved in professional, governmental, managerial, and business administrative occupations. About 65% were low middle-income earners who make between $31,000 and $60,000. The focus group participants were divided into two groups of 10 participants and held two separate discussion sessions, with each session lasting 2 h. The discussions were based on unstructured interviews, with open-ended questions, with the intent to obtain a more detailed information about the participants' views and perceptions of their immigration experience, transnational behaviors, perceptions of the Canadian institutions (e.g., educational system, labor and housing markets). The participants also engaged in open discussions on the following themes: the nature and extent of transnational activities between Ghana and Canada; the motives behind their transnational behavior, the effect of transnationalism on settlement process, and their perceptions towards economic opportunities in Canada. To explore how transnational ties influence the integration process of Ghanaians in Toronto, the participants were asked how they experience social status in Ghana and in Toronto. With the permission of the participants, the focus group discussions were tape-recorded, while detailed records of my objective observation and informants' opinions and feelings were also recorded.

In analyzing the discussions from the focus group interviews, participants' stories were transcribed to identify the important themes surfacing from the stories to capture the life histories of Ghanaians' migratory process, homeland ties, their perceptions of transnational ties between Ghana and Canada. A simple search on keywords was used to classify themes and events that emerged from the focus group

discussions in order to understand the experiences of respondents' transnational behaviors and how these affect their settlement and integration process in Canada.

The author admits that the sample for the focus group seems small and reporting data from such a small, non-representative sample risk over-generalizing the experiences of Ghanaian immigrants' transnational behavior. Ultimately, the focus group was not a quantitative data collection procedure; hence, the sampling was not meant to be representative. Also, there were significant differences in regard to the questions asked between the focus group and survey participants. The differences are due the fact that, as noted previously, the mixed method design employs the quantitative priority, with greater emphasis placed on the quantitative methods while using the qualitative focus group interviews as a secondary role to elicit more information on some specific quantitative data.

Findings and Discussions

The Socio-demographic Characteristics of Ghanaians in Toronto

Immigrants' socio-demographic characteristics have implications for immigrant transnationalism and the integration process. The findings on the socio-demographic characteristics emerged from the survey data. Table 1 summarizes the diverse socio-demographic characteristics among the sample along the following categories: gender, age, period of immigration, level of education, occupation, and income. The sample has a slightly higher male to female ratio of 13:12 (52 to 48%). A majority of the respondents were within the middle adulthood of 41–60 years, with the smallest percentage under 20 years and over 81 years (Firang, 2019). In terms of the period of immigration, a majority of the sample (almost 60%) recently came to Canada after 1991, while an estimated 40% came to Canada before 1991. Curiously, the massive migration flows from Ghana to Toronto after the 1990s seems to have caused a demographic transformation in the Ghanaian community in Toronto, setting a stage for transnationalism among Ghanaians in Canada.

Educational achievement, occupational status, and income levels are significant variables that influence immigrant transnationalism and integration in the destination country. The analysis of the level of education, occupational status, and income levels reveals a curious story about Ghanaians in Toronto. As Table 1 indicates, the majority of the sample in this study have attained a high level of education: more than 40% have some or completed post-secondary education, more than 34% have completed university degrees, postgraduate or professional degrees, mainly from Ghana. The analysis of educational attainment is consistent with Statistics Canada's census data, which indicates that more Ghanaians have attained a combined high school and post-secondary education than the general Toronto CMA population (Statistics Canada, 2016). All things being equal, people with a higher level of educational qualifications are more likely to secure better jobs, earn more income, and hence more likely to achieve high social mobility. Unfortunately, for Ghanaians in Toronto, the opposite situation seems to be the case (Firang, 2019). Table 1 demonstrates that the sample in this

Table 1 Socio-demographic characteristics of Ghanaians in Toronto

	Characteristics	(***n*** = 150)	(%)
Gender	Male	78	52
	Female	72	48
Age	Less than 20 years	2	1.3
	21–40	44	29.4
	41–60	93	62.0
	61–80	10	6.7
	81 years and over	1	0.7
Period of immigration	Before 1960s	5	3.3
	1971–1980	11	7.3
	1981–1990	49	32.7
	1991–2000	56	37.3
	After 2000	29	19.3
Level education	Some high school/completed high school	28	18.7
	Some trade sch/college or completed trade/college	71	47.3
	Some university/completed university	39	26
	Professional/masters/docs	12	8.7
Occupation in Canada	Clerical/sales/services	34	4.0
	Managerial/administration	7	4.7
	Public/civil service	24	16
	Processing, machining/manufacturing/construction	50	33.3
	Transport, including cab	21	14.0
	Others, including students	14	9.3
Income (personal)	Under $31,000	32	20
	$31,000–$60,000	78	52
	$61,000-–$90,000	20	13.3
	$90,000 +	1	0.7
	Refused/Don't	22	14.7

study is over-represented in the processing and manufacturing occupations and disproportionately underrepresented in professional, governmental, managerial, and business administrative occupations compared to the general population in the Toronto CMA (Firang, 2019; Statistics Canada, 2016). The occupational profile of Ghanaians may reflect structural inequalities (e.g., discrimination and racism) in the labor market and not necessarily their education levels (Firang, 2019). Holding other factors constant, occupational status correlates with income levels. Undoubtedly, the low occupation status of Ghanaians implies low-income levels. As shown in Table 1, although income levels differ markedly among the sample, about half of them earned between $31,000 and $60,000 (with a calculated median income of $45,000). The average income among the respondents is far lower compared to the general population of Toronto CMA (Firang, 2020), which had an average income between $45,000 and $70,000 (with a calculated

median income of $62,500) in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2016). The present study can argue that the low-income levels among Ghanaians are likely due to their over-representations in low-status jobs, a situation likely to generate poor integration outcomes. The low-income levels recorded for the sample is symptomatic of the high levels of poverty and deprivation among Ghanaians in Toronto (Danso, 2002). The findings are consistent with Michael Ornstein's (2000) recent analysis of income earnings among ethno-cultural groups in Toronto, which found that together with Ethiopians and Somalis, Ghanaians are among the ethno-racial groups facing alarmingly high levels of poverty and deprivations in Toronto.

The focus group interviews shed more light of the quantitative analysis of education, occupational status and incomes among Ghanaians in Toronto. The characteristics of the focus group participants, as indicated earlier, is much similar to the survey participants. Forty percent were female, while 65% were male. Seventy-five percent of them were married and 80% have completed post-secondary education. Seventy percent were engaged in the processing and manufacturing occupations, while only 15% were involved in professional, governmental, managerial, and business administrative occupations. About 65% earned between $31,000 and $60,000 and were considered as low-middle-income earners. Thus, one key informant who participated in the focus group discussions shared his frustration in the Canadian housing market, where he has been working in manufacturing jobs, which earned him low income, this way:

Brother***, we don't belong here***. I graduated with honours in Business Administration ***there*** (Ghana) in 1990. I came ***here*** (Canada) to pursue an MBA. After more than 15 years of graduating from the MBA program, I have not been able to secure a job in my field. I only work at a factory …. a job which is way below my educational qualifications. This job pays me peanut. I am always *broke* as I have little income form my job. I struggle to pay rent and to feed my family.

Another focus group participant shed light on the quantitative data on education, occupational status and incomes among Ghanaians in Toronto, by reflecting on his experience in the Canadian labor market in this way:

I have a law degree from university of Ghana. Unfortunately, when I came to Canada, I tried to practice family law. But was told that my qualifications are not recognized in Canada. I, therefore, have to find job in the factory to take care of my family. This factory job pays me nothing compared to what I used to earn back home in Ghana.

Another participant expressed the issue of getting his educational qualifications and credentials recognized by Canadian employers in this way:

I completed my LLB and practiced in Ghana before migrating to Canada. Unfortunately, for more than 5 years I have not been able to obtain job in the Canadian law firms. Anywhere I go, I am told that the Ghanaian law qualification is not equivalent to the Canadian. I am not alone, my other friends with higher educational qualifications get turn down on job application for the same reasons of lack of recognition of their educational qualifications and professional credentials from Ghana. This kind of situation definitely makes you feel that you are nobody and you do not belong here in Canada.

Overall, both the quantitative and qualitative findings on educational level, occupational status, and personal income of Ghanaian immigrants in Toronto validate Nieswand's (2011) notion of *status paradox*. Highly skilled Ghanaian migrants who used to occupy higher social class in the country of origin before migration to Canada seem to have lost their social status as their skills and qualifications seem to have been devalued in the Canada labor market. It is important to note that, the focus group discussions make clear that getting foreign education approved in Canada is a real issue for immigrants from the Global South. As such, immigrants like Ghanaians in Toronto are compelled to engage in menial employments, which do not merit their qualifications.

Structural Oppression: Underlies Ghanaians' Status Reduction in Toronto

Arguably, the social status reduction experienced by Ghanaian immigrants in Toronto is a manifestation of oppression in Canadian society. The basis of this oppression is "differences," created by social constructions of human groups along various social dimensions of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, ability, class, ethnicity culture, and so forth (Mullaly, 2010). Our human "differences" are not necessarily a social problem. Human differences can be perceived as a social problem or a social blessing depending upon the meaning society attributes to "differences." When a society tolerates human differences to promote diversity, differences can be a social blessing. On the other hand, "differences" can be problematic when society categorizes people as significantly different from one another in a way that socially constructs people into the "Norm" and "Other" (Mullaly, 2010). In the western industrialized countries, the "Norm" is considered a standard of rightness, wherein all "Others" are judged with it (Mullaly, 2010). The "Norm," according to Mullaly, consists of the dominant or privileged group (e.g., the rich, white, Christian, heterosexual, Caucasian, able-bodied, men) who use their privileged social locations to maintain and control power in society. The "Other" are those who fall outside the "Norm," and are often seen as "inferior," or "subordinate" group (e.g., the poor, ethnic minority immigrants, non-Christians, homosexuals, disabled, women) (Mullaly, 2010). Thus, the social construction of such *differences* becomes problematic as it leads to oppression by a dominant group against subordinate group members.

In our Western democratic societies, social and political institutions established by the dominant groups perpetuate oppression. For instance, the Canadian social and economic institutions, such as educational institutions and labor markets, reflect the views, values, beliefs, and social positions of the dominant group members. Consequently, the dominant group members enjoy privileges at the expense of "other" groups of racialized immigrants, the working class, non-Christians, homosexuals, and women. The social construction of the dominant and subordinate groupings reinforces the intersectionality of oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, classism) (Mullaly, 2010). For Ghanaians in Toronto, being black (race), combined with their African identity (ethnicity), interacts with their low occupational/income status (class) to place them at the margins of Canadian society. Oppression benefits the

dominant group as it provides the oppressors preferential treatments and access to a wide range of resources to maintain their superior social status (Mullaly, 2010). The oppressed groups, such as the Ghanaian immigrants in Toronto, serves as labor supply to carry out menial jobs in the Canadian society. Consequently, their social status is reduced to "inferior" human beings. Therefore, the systemic oppression, endorsed by dominant groups of Caucasians, upper/middle class, White, able-bodied groups, reinforces social status reduction on racialized immigrant groups like Ghanaians in Toronto. The status reduction of Ghana immigrants in Toronto negates Canadian literature, especially Abu-Laban, (1998)'s and Li (2003)'s conceptualization of immigrant integration process as a two-way process. It seems that the Canadian social and economic institutions (e.g., education system and labor market) are not hospitable to Ghanaians who have migrated to Canada, although they possess a wealth of socio-demographic characteristics. The question is, how do Ghanaians cope with their social status reduction syndrome in Canada? As Nieswand, 2011) reveals, when immigrants, like Ghanaians in Toronto, maintain transnational ties with their homeland, by engaging in cross-border activities, such as visiting the country of origin and connecting with families and relatives, they are more likely to attain social prestige. Next, the study examines the range of transnational activities among Ghanaians in Toronto to set the context for understanding the nature of transnationalism-integration nexus.

What is the Nature and Extent of Transnational Ties between Ghana and Canada?

The analysis of the nature and extent of transnational ties between Ghana and Canada is evaluated from the survey questionnaire. It begins with a brief listing of transnational activities among Ghanaians in Toronto. Table 2 lists these transnational activities, including remittances to Ghana, contacts with family and friends, attending funeral and religious rituals, following politics, and visiting Ghana.

Remittances to Ghana

Remittances represent one of the major avenues by which Ghanaian immigrants in Toronto maintain transnational ties with the homeland. Table 2 shows that remittances to the homeland include money, ideas, and goods (mostly non-perishable items). An overwhelming majority of Ghanaians in Toronto (95%) remit various items to the country of origin. Remittances are made to Ghana on a regular basis by about 63% of the respondents, while slightly more than one-third indicated that they occasionally remit to the homeland. Money is the most important item remitted to Ghana regularly. About 85% of the respondents indicated that remitting money to Ghana is very important, while a little more than 70% reported that sending food (37%) and clothing items (36%) to Ghana is important. To understand the motives behind their remittances, respondents were asked to indicate the reasons for remitting to Ghana. Majority of the sample indicated that they have a very important sense of obligation to send remittances to their families and friends in Ghana. For

Table 2 Type and nature of transnational activities among Ghanaians in Toronto

Transnational activities	**Response**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	
Remittances (***n*** = 150)	Yes	142	94.7	
	No	8	5.3	
Frequency of remittances	Regularly	94	62.60	
	Once a while/occasionally	53	35.30	
	Never	3	0.02	
Items remitted	**Very important**	**Important**	**Somewhat important**	
Money	84.7	2.0	5.3	
Food	6.7	37.3	22.0	
Clothing/shoes	3.3	36.0	30.0	
Other	1.3	6.0	4.0	
Refused to answer	4.0	18.7	38.3	
Reason for remittances (***n*** = 150)	**Very important** (%)	**Important** (%)	**Somewhat important** (%)	
Sense of charity to homeland	37.3	1.3	16.7	
Sense of obligation to family/ friend	55.3	49.3	2.0	
Adding to personal wealth	4.7	32.7	15.3	
For social prestige	1.4	8.0	17.3	
Sense of obligation to homeland	1.4	7.3	50.0	
Contact/ties with family/friends	Yes	144	96	
	No	6	4.0	
Freq. of contacts/ties with family and friends	Never	6	4.0	
	Rarely	5	3.3	
	Regularly	131	81.7	
	Refused to answer	6	4.0	
Method of contacts		***1st method***	***2nd method***	***3rd method***
	Social media -facebook	30 (20%)	26 (17.3%)	30 (20.0%)
	Email	11 (7.3%)	18 (12%)	16 (10.7%)

Table 2 (continued)

	Fax	2 (1.3%)	1 (0.7%)	2 (1.3%)
	Telephone *(both prepaid cards and home/landline)*	100 (66.7%)	47 (31.3)	20 (13.3%)
	Visits	3 (2.0%)	40 (26.7%)	36 (24.0%)
	Other	0 (0%)	1 (0.7)	46 (30.7%)
Attending funerals	Yes	97	65	
	No/No response	53	35	
Following politics in Ghana	Yes	96	64	
	No	54	36	
Owning investment in Ghana	Yes	92	62.4	
	No	58	38.6	
Visiting Ghana		**Frequency**	**Percentage**	
	Yes	124	82.7	
	No	26	17.3	
If yes, how often?	Less than once a year	10	6.7	
	Once every 2 years	41	27.4	
	Once every 3–4 years	42	28.0	
	Once > 4 years	23	15.3	
	Never	26	17.3	
	Refused	8	5.3	
If yes, length of stay ($n=116$)	Less than one month	23	19.8	
	1- 2 months	57	49.1	
	3- 4 months	20	17.2	
	5- 6 months	9	7.7	
	More than 6 months	7	6.0	

more than a third of the respondents, sending remittances to Ghana is an important sense of charity to the homeland.

How are these remittances used to contribute to life back home? And what meaning they confer on Ghanaians who remit home regularly? Almost all the focus group participants suggested that remittances to Ghana are important family obligations, which allow Ghanaians in Toronto to invest in education for the migrants' extended family members. Others also mentioned that remittances are used to support extended family members for general subsistence, while others noted that remittances helped ensure a livelihood for members of migrants' transnational networks based in Ghana. There was a consensus among the focus group participants that remittances to fulfill family obligations confer upon Ghanaians in Toronto a social prestige in the country of origin. Thus, for Ghanaians in Toronto, the ability to remit home regularly confers status recognition. One focus group participant expressed social status recognition brought by regular remittances in this way:

> If I can remit money, mobile phones to my family and friends, they recognize me as a savior. They do not only call to offer special gratitude but also, they hold me in high esteem *(K.D.)*

Another participant also remarked on the status paradox idea this way:

I send money to Ghana through Western union monthly for my family back home in Ghana. And because of the regular remittances they have conferred upon me a sub-chief in my village in the Ashanti region of Ghana. As sub-chief I am highly honored in Ghana.

The data analysis on remittance shed light on the status paradox idea. Ghanaians in Toronto, despite their low-income status are able to increase their social status in their country of origin through remittances. Whereas other some studies (e.g., Larsen, 2011) show that remittances may influence the immigrants' economic viability in the destination country, for Ghanaians in Toronto, remittances, as a continuous decision-making process, allow them to balance their efforts between the *here* and *there*. The importance of remittances from Ghanaians in the diaspora has been emphasized by the Governor of Bank of Ghana, who estimated that in 2015 that remittances from Ghanaians living abroad were the second most important source of foreign exchange (Ghana Statistical Services, 2016). The remittances from Ghanaians in Toronto, meant for sustaining the lives of people in the homeland, are also emphasized by Itzigsohn et al. (1999) in their study of transnational activities among Dominicans in the USA.

Contacts with families and friends in Ghana—An overwhelming proportion of respondents (96%) maintain contacts with family, friends, and relatives who remain in Ghana. Contact, in most cases, takes place regularly. At the time of the survey, a vast majority of respondents used a telephone (both prepaid cards and a home landline) to contact families and friends in Ghana. A relatively small proportion of respondents also used social media and email. For Ghanaians in Toronto, it appears that the postal system and facsimile have receded in significance, as only a small proportion of the respondents indicated these forms of communication as a method of contact with family and friends in Ghana. The low level of social media (i.e., Facebook) and email usage among the respondents is

not surprising, given the poor access to internet connectivity in Ghana at the time of the survey. As identified in the literature, due to the advances in telecommunication system globally (Faist, 2000; Portes, 2003), mobile phones have become easily available and affordable for many Ghanaians with the result that Ghanaians in the Diaspora, including those in Toronto, can establish easy contacts with their families and friends in the country of origin (Mensah, 2008).

Attending Funerals and Religious Rituals—Attending funerals and religious rituals in the country of origin is another critical transnational practice among Ghanaians in Toronto. About two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they often travel to Ghana to attend funerals of their relatives in Ghana (Table 2). Funeral celebrations are important transnational cultural events that can only be understood within the context of the homeland cosmology. In Ghana, funerals are important for both the entire extended family (*abusua*) and the community. Funeral celebrations in your religious settings can bestow prestige or shame on the family of the deceased person (Smith & Mazzucato, 2009). It is thus of great importance to both Ghanaian migrants and their extended family to have a grand funeral in religious settings (in churches) (Mensah, 2008) for a family member of the *abusua*. In most cases, after attending the funeral in religious sanctuaries of a family member in the country of origin, Ghanaian immigrants in Toronto also celebrate the life of the deceased in religious settings here in Toronto.

From the focus group discussion, it was learned that funeral celebrations in Ghana and Toronto are not only a way to prove the deceased's success in life, but also to establish the bereaved migrants' prestige in the Ghanaian community in the diaspora. Indeed, two focus group participants attested to the importance of grand funerals among Ghanaian immigrants in this way:

> When my father died five years ago, my hometown community was looking forward to our family for a big funeral, knowing that my father has four children living abroad. I have no choice but to organize a big funeral for my father. To do that, we kept the body in the mortuary for almost a year to give me and my brothers who reside in Europe ample time for the funeral…. The funeral was so big that people in our village held us in high esteem (J.Y.).

The importance of funeral celebrations among Ghanaians in the diaspora is also well documented in the literature (e.g., Smith & Mazzucato, 2009).

Following Politics (Political Ties)—Political transnationalism is also another means by which Ghanaians in Toronto maintain ties with the homeland. To explore the strength of political ties among Ghanaians in Toronto, respondents were asked whether they follow politics in Ghana. A majority of the respondents (62%) reported that they follow politics, while about 36% indicated that they do not. One of the most common expressions of deep political ties among Ghanaians in Toronto is their interest in electoral politics in Ghana. During elections, Ghanaians who may otherwise not be very involved in the Ghanaian political scene become passionate supporters or opponents of the two dominant political parties in Ghana: National Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC).

Investments in Ghana

Investments in the country of origin represent yet another kind of transnational tie among Ghanaians in Toronto. Table 2 shows that more than 60% of the respondents indicated that they have investments in Ghana. The key informants in the focus group discussion specified that they own investments in Ghana, including housing, small-scale businesses, restaurants or bars, banking, telecommunications, education, and transportation. For Ghanaians in Toronto, investments in Ghana are partly driven by two motives: (1) the desire to return permanently to Ghana after retirement and (2) the opportunity to provide sustenance for the family in the homeland (Owusu, 2003). This motive to invest in the homeland is not unique among Ghanaians in Toronto; Itzigsohn (1999) identifies similar motives among the Dominican migrants in the USA. For Ghanaians in Toronto, investments in houses is a form of building assets towards their eventual retirement in the country of origin (Firang, forthcoming, Owusu, 1998). Consider the case of R.R., who has lived for 15 years in Toronto. R.R. had some university training when he migrated to Toronto in 1989, but in all his years in Toronto, he has been a factory worker. Nevertheless, he indicated during the focus group discussion that he had saved enough money to buy land near his hometown in the Upper East Region of Ghana. R.R. has also purchased some cows, currently kept by his father. R.R.'s investment goal, as he hinted during the focus group meeting, is not to make a living out of his investment, but to have some assets for his eventual retirement. Whether R.R. will retire in Ghana is an open question. The fact is that the desire to return to the homeland to retire drives many Ghanaians, such as R.R., in the diaspora to invest in businesses and housing in Ghana.

Visiting Ghana—Visiting Ghana was found to be a common transnational practice among Ghanaians in Toronto. Approximately 82% of the respondents have visited Ghana at least once. Of those who have visited Ghana, only about 7% do so once a year; however, more than one-quarter (27%) do so once every 2 years, and a further 28% do so once every 3 to 4 years. The less frequent visits to Ghana are not surprising, given the financial burden of traveling from Toronto to Ghana, as it cost more than $1500 CDN to travel to Ghana. This point is consistent with other studies (Mensah, 2008; Manuh, 2001), which attributed expensive airfare as limiting the frequency of Ghanaians traveling to the homeland. The frequency of visiting home among the respondents is remarkably different from what was reported in the literature among Latin American and Caribbean immigrants in the USA, most of whom travel to their homelands more frequently (Portes et al., 2002).

The focus group discussion helps to capture further the essence of visiting or traveling to Ghana. From the focus group discussion, it became clear that every time Ghanaians return to Ghana, they attained higher social status and felt very respected. One focus group participant remarked attaining a high social status each time he visits or travel home to Ghana in this way:

> Whenever I travel home to my village in Ghana, I am respected as a real human being. My self-esteem is always high when people come to my house

> to praise me for able to make it to Canada. Even those older people in my village, including the tribal chiefs, would come to my house to salute me (Y.A).

Another participant also expressed his status paradox whenever he travels and visits Ghana in this way:

> I will love to travel to Ghana for my annual vacation. I love being Ghana because I feel so good about myself any time I visit Ghana. But in Canada you are nobody. Despite my MBA degree in Canada, I work as a janitor in a mall. Anytime I come home from work, I feel sad and curse myself for coming to Canada (J.D).

The above two focus group comments highlight the reality of Niewsand's notion of status paradox. This paradox status occurs when migrants like Y. A and J.D are simultaneously members of two classes—usually a lower class in the receiving country and a higher class in the sending country (Nieswand, 2011). This idea of a status reduction in the destination country and status recognition in the country of origin seems to challenge the Canadian literature which conceptualizes immigrant integration process as bi-directional—a two-way dynamic process of equal interaction between immigrants (with their characteristics) and receiving society (with its institutions) (Abu-Laban, 1998; Li, 2003). This study demonstrates that the interaction between Ghanaians immigrants and the Canadian institutional structures are unequal. The institutional arrangements in Canadian society seem to react negatively to Ghanaians in Toronto in a way that does not seem to open doors for Ghanaian immigrants to experience a sense of belonging in Canada.

Ghanaian Transnationalism: a Strategy for Coping with Difficult Integration Process?

The focus group discussions shed insights into the significance of transnational ties among Ghanaians to understand how they can cope with their status reduction paradox in Toronto. Making sense of Ghanaians' deep involvement in transnational ties with the homeland, it emerged from the focus group discussion that, since their social status do not count in a society where intersectionality of oppression (race, class, and gender) ostracizes racialized immigrant groups, many Ghanaians in Toronto have adopted transnationalism as a strategy to minimize the psychological impacts of status reduction. They do this by maintaining deep transnational ties with the country of origin through frequent remittances, numerous phone contacts, attending the funeral and religious rituals, engaging in investments, and visiting Ghana to gain status recognition. The expression ***"we don't only live here, but also live there***," literally explained as 'we live here, but our lives are there," is a strategy deployed to promote their self-worth by maintaining strong ties with their communities of origin. One participant explained the importance of the transnational relations for coping with the daily hustles in Toronto in this way:

> Hey, I tell you what? ***We don't only live here, but we also live there"***. I graduated with honours in Civil Engineering ***there*** (Ghana) in 1992. I came ***here*** (Canada) to pursue a career in my field. I have not been able to secure a job in my field. I only work at a factory .. I don't belong ***here.*** …. The only thing that keeps me going is I always maintain contacts with friends and families over ***there*** (Ghana). Any time I call home, I regain my self-esteem as my family holds me in high respect (KB.).

The above comments also demonstrate that Ghanaians seem to have lost their sense of belonging to Canadian society. Another focus group participant expressed a sense of non-belonging and his reasons for continuous ties with Ghana in this way:

> We live both ***here*** and ***there*** because of the situation we find ourselves ***here*** in Canada. We love to live ***here*** alone so that we can put down roots for our children, but we also need to live ***there***. Living ***here*** alone, you don't have a chance to succeed in life because of your black skin color. Being black, we face a lot of discrimination, and we cannot get the good jobs we deserve (K.K.)

An older key informant who has been in Canada for more than 30 years supported the idea of ***we not only live here, but we also live*** **there** by expressing his frustration of immigrating to Canada as this:

> I have a professional degree in Chartered Accounting… but I have no regular job in Canada. I travel home quite often, as I have established an accounting firm with my friends over ***there*** in Ghana. I am planning to go back eventually. However, for the sake of my children I may not be able to go … But my continuous contacts with families and friends over ***there*** provides me with the strength to live ***here*** (Toronto). I am also able to access financial support from my business ***there*** to support my family ***here***. So, we need to live not only ***here*** alone, but also to live ***there***" (M.K.).

The comments shared by these focus group participants demonstrate that Ghanaians in Toronto seem to have lost their sense of belonging to the Canadian society. Therefore, they are more likely to continue to **live here (Canada), but will also continue to live there (Ghana)** to cope with the harsh socio-economic environment they find themselves in Toronto. Their daily lives in Canada will continue to be punctuated by frequent transnational practices: sending remittances, visiting Ghana, following Ghanaian politics, attending funerals and religious rituals, and investing in Ghana. The author contends that, these transnational activities—remittances, gifts, frequent travels to Ghana—do not necessarily indicate an exceptional transnational behavior among Ghanaians in Toronto. These activities are habitual practices among other immigrants elsewhere in the world regardless of their nationality and social status in the diaspora. These days, most immigrants elsewhere remit money, gifts and iPhone to the country of origin, and there is nothing special about the Ghanaian case. However, what makes the Ghanaian transnational activities unique is the contrast Ghanaians in Toronto perceive in their status at ***there*** (Ghana) and ***here*** (Canada) and how much they rely on the homeland status for their self-esteem and social status recognition in Canada. Although their daily experiences in Canada

will continue to reflect economic uncertainty, racial discrimination, and frustrations (Wong, 2000), they are likely to maintain a sense of self-worth through transnational ties with Ghana. Therefore, for Ghanaians in Toronto, transnational ties between Ghana and Canada is reminiscent of a racialized immigrant group's resistance to, and liberation from, subordination and inequalities in the dominant society (Wong & Szetawick, 2006). As learned from the literature review, for Ghanaians in Toronto, occupying contested sites that exist "betwixt and between" the laminal spaces (Bhabha, 1994; 37) of ***here*** and ***there***, allows them to negotiate cultural identities and social status.

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to explore transnationalism among Ghanaian immigrants in Toronto as a way to understand their integration process. Utilizing mixed methods to build on previous studies on Ghanaian transnationalism (e.g., Mensah, 2008, Mensah, 2014; Nieswand, 2011; Owusu, 2003; Manuh, 2003 Wong, 2000), the present study has explored a range of transnational activities to understand the social, cultural, political, and economic ties Ghanaians in Toronto builds between Ghana and Canada. Conceptually, the study contributes to our understanding of how the "**here"** and "**there"** constitute a transnational social field for Ghanaians in Toronto. Empirically, the statistical data enhance our understanding of how a racialized immigrant group like Ghanaians with a wealth of socio-demographic assets (e.g., higher education) struggle to integrate into a larger Canadian society. The empirical analysis reveals that as a racialized immigrant group in Toronto, Ghanaians occupy lower occupational strata, and have lower incomes and higher unemployment rates compared to the average for the general Toronto population. Consequently, a situation like this reduces the social status of Ghanaians; hence, poor integration outcomes in Toronto. The transnational activities of remittances, gifts, frequent travels to Ghana lift Ghanaians self-esteem and social status. These transnational activities are not exceptional behavior among Ghanaians in Toronto. They are habitual practices among other immigrants elsewhere in the world regardless of their nationality and social status in the diaspora. However, what makes the Ghanaian transnational activities unique is the contrast Ghanaians in Toronto perceive in their status at ***there*** (Ghana) and ***here*** (Canada) and how much they rely on the homeland status for their self-esteem and social status recognition in Canada.

The study also extends the discussion on the loss of social status among Ghanaians to capture those structural elements of oppression, power, and privilege, manifested through Canadian labor market policies and educational institutions, as the underlying cause of immigrants' social identity reduction. Oppression against racialized immigrants like Ghanaians by the privileged dominant group contributes to the status reduction, creating poor integration outcomes for this racialized immigrant group in Canada. The present study then alerts that unless policymakers address issues of oppression and privilege, we will fail to understand the root cause of poor integration outcomes for racialized immigrants in Canada. It seems that the Canadian social and political institutions are not

hospitable to racialized minority immigrant groups. Theoretically, the findings suggest that transnationalism does not only provide an alternative to the low-wage menial labor that Ghanaians experience in Canada, but also offers a social field for Ghanaians in Toronto to minimize their social status reduction (in the destination country) to promote their status recognition (in the country of origin). Therefore, the expression—**we don't only live here, but we also live there**—the findings of the present study raise some implications for social policy in a welfare state like Canada, where public policy measures are construed as conscious efforts by governments to promote the well-being of all Canadians. In this transnational era, the emergence of a migrant population, such as the Ghanaian immigrants in Toronto, who live their lives across borders, offers numerous challenges and opportunities to social policymakers. However, it appears Canadian policymakers are yet to develop a focused understanding of the needs and issues that confront transnational migrant populations whose lives have found expression in the notion that **we don't only live here, but we also live there**.

Developing a policy to include transnational population requires two sets of knowledge. First, social policy analysts need to understand those societal institutions that create social inequalities between "Norm" (dominant groups) and "Other" (subordinate racialized immigrants' groups) to develop social inclusion policy for all Canadians. Secondly, effective social policy development concerning transnational populations such as Ghanaians in Toronto requires a better understanding of the social and political structures that create status reduction for some racialized immigrants due to unequal treatments. Such knowledge can help policymakers develop an inclusive policy framework to address the needs of many of these transnational population groups in Canada, who **live here and there**.

Caution must be exercised in using the present data for definitive assertions about Ghanaian immigrant transnationalism. The respondents in this study were not selected through strict randomization. The sample for the focus group is small and reporting data from such a small, non-representative sample risks over-generalizing the experiences of Ghanaian immigrants transnational behavior. Furthermore, there are meaningful differences between the focus group participants and the survey participants in regard to the questions or data. The differences are due the fact that the focus group was intended to elicit more information on some specific quantitative data. Also, the data used in this study, is almost 10 years old, even though is still relevant today as there have been no study on Ghanaian transnationality in Toronto since 2011. Nonetheless, the study offers an opportunity for future research. While the sample in this study includes people, who have immigrated from Ghana to Toronto over a wide range of time, the study does not have comprehensive data to analyze differences in transnational experiences of older and new immigrant groups. Accordingly, a review of immigrant transnationalism, using longitudinal surveys to capture immigrants' transnational ties through time, would be worthwhile. It will also be necessary for a future study to examine any differences in the transnational experiences among intergenerational roots. Also, for future research, exploring how current social policies impede the immigrant settlement process is a tangible way to understand how structural oppression serve to hinder immigrant integration in Canada. Furthermore, little is known about the gender differences of Ghanaian

transnationalism in Toronto; indeed, the voices of immigrant women concerning their transnational experiences between Ghana and Canada require further research.

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