

# “Togetherness in Difference”: Perceived Personal Discrimination and Acculturation Preferences among Internal Migrants in a Poor Urban Community in Accra

Journal of Asian and African Studies

2018, Vol. 53(2) 297–313

© The Author(s) 2016

Reprints and permissions:

[sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav](http://sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav)

DOI: 10.1177/0021909616679683

[journals.sagepub.com/home/jas](http://journals.sagepub.com/home/jas)**Raymond Asare Tutu**

Delaware State University, USA

**John Boateng**

University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, Ghana

**Edmund Essah Ameyaw**

Howard University, USA

**Janice Desire Busingye**

Kampala International University, Kampala, Uganda

**Abstract**

This paper assesses the relative effects of acculturation preferences (assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization) on migrants' perception of acceptability in James Town, a traditional urban neighborhood in Accra, Ghana. There is a paucity of academic work on the relationship between migrants' acculturation inclinations and their assessment of the hosts' attitude towards them in Ghana. Cognizant of the fluidity of acculturation strategies, the study focuses on individual inclinations towards acculturation. To examine migrants' perception of acceptability by the host, we use perceived personal discrimination. We utilize results from a semi-structured questionnaire administered to 301 migrant individuals from different migrant households in James Town. Our findings suggest that migrants with assimilation preferences are less likely to have a higher rating on the extent to which they are discriminated against by the host population. Such an exploratory study is pertinent to understanding relationships (conflicts or “togetherness in difference”) in poor multi-ethnic settings.

**Keywords**

Acculturation, internal migration, Ghana, assimilation, integration, cultural relations

**Corresponding author:**

Raymond Asare Tutu, Global Societies Program, 1200 North DuPont Highway, Delaware State University, Dover, Delaware 19901, USA.

Email: [rtutu@desu.edu](mailto:rtutu@desu.edu)

## Introduction

### *General context and hypotheses*

Cities have been conceived as cultural mosaic primarily due to ethnic plurality. The “global city” is a multicultural metropolis with individuals of diverse ethnic background with continuous connections around the world (Gow, 2005). Cities live up to this reputation because they exhibit features of ethnic enclaves, which, in some case, are spatially delineated (Dahinden, 2013). The ethnic plurality in cities exemplifies Vertovec’s (2007) “super-diversity” notion—the interaction between elements in the context of a rising number of migrants from manifold places of origin who are demographically and economically distinguished. Apart from cities being known as the main direction of migration stream, as a response to economic growth due to global capital, cities become altered by migrants (Hatziprokopiou and Montagna, 2012; Portes, 2000). The alteration of the cityscape is partly attributed to vibrant ethnic enclaves inhabited by migrants (Rath, 2007), although such communities are sometimes perceived to be settings of discrimination, inadequacies, and conflict (Njoh, 2015; Wacquant, 2008). While some settlements may be predominantly migrants, other spaces are usually more a medley of a variety of migrants and their host; a case of multicultural living. Such living presents real challenges and as Ang (2002: 162) puts it, “the... city is by no means a harmonious cultural paradise.” There are instances of racial and ethnic resentment and antipathy which result in ethnic clashes and violent conflicts.

Perceived discrimination has been identified as precursor to conflicts in cities and out of cities. For example, the contemporary occurrence of riots in global cities such as London and Paris has been attributed to demonstrations arising from perceived discrimination among migrants (Klašnja and Novta, 2014). Perceived discrimination may arise from the process of “othering”—a situation whereby a dominant ethnic community forms undesirable impression of a minority community, which leads to tensions and conflicts (Asal and Rethemeyer, 2008); the feelings of discrimination usually lead to anger and frustration, which subsequently influence acts of violence and conflicts (Victoroff et al., 2012). Irrespective of such conflicts, it has been advocated that the ethnic diversity of the city should be applauded as part of the advanced way of life. Ang (2002: 162) underscores the ethnic significance of the city:

... it is a space where the modern experience of ‘togetherness in difference’ is a central reality, from which we can ... learn. It is a space of possibility where, out of necessity, practical multiculturalism cannot but be tried out, explored, creatively invented in concrete ways...

This, therefore, suggests a reality concerning different forms of interactions and adaptation and begs the question: to what extent do migrants participate at the destination communities? This study, therefore, examines the association between acculturation preferences (assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization) and migrants’ perception of acceptability in a traditional urban neighborhood in Accra.

Internal migration in Ghana has contributed immensely to the cultural mosaic of Ghanaian cities. The major streams of migration in Ghana are rural to urban, rural to rural, urban to rural, and urban to urban. However, the predominant stream is rural to urban, thereby increasing the proportion of people living in urban areas significantly (Awumbila et al., 2016); a phenomenon very familiar throughout Africa (Obeng-Odoom, 2014). Since the 1960s, evidence from all the decennial censuses suggests that regions in the southern half of Ghana are the main destination areas for many internal migrants. The cities of Accra (Greater Accra region), Kumasi (Ashanti region), and Sekondi-Takoradi (Western region) enjoy the largest share of migrants. With Ghana as a multi-ethnic country, migration into Accra, the administrative capital, has made the city very cosmopolitan. Although

Ghana has over 100 linguistic and cultural groups, they have been classified into about nine major ethnic groups (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013) namely Akan, Ga-Adangbe, Ewe, Guan, Gurma, Mole-Dagbani, Grusi, Mande, and Others. Every ethnic group can be found in Accra; a city experiencing annual population growth rate of about 4.4% (Fuseini and Kemp, 2016). In spite of this, not much consideration has been given to acculturation dynamics. Places like Accra are dens of inter-cultural interactions that may produce conflict possibilities (Berry, 2005) due to, among other reasons, a possibility of migrant feeling unwelcome due to perceived/actual discriminatory actions by indigenes, thereby escalating frequency of ethnic resentments, which may lead to violent conflicts (Choi and Piazza, 2014). Consequently, we hypothesize that:

1. assimilation preference is associated with lower perceived personal discrimination among migrants;
2. separation inclination is associated with higher perceived personal discrimination among migrants;
3. migrants with integration preferences are more likely to have a lower rating for perceived personal discrimination;
4. marginalization preference is associated with higher perceived personal discrimination.

This study is important given that parts of Accra are the traditional hometowns of the Ga people, distinct from other predominantly migrant settlements in the city, where substantial numbers of migrants live.

### **Theoretical considerations: Migration, acculturation, social capital, and discrimination**

John Berry's model of acculturation explains the extent to which migrants decide and opt to participate in their destination communities and/or hold on to their distinct cultures, which are characteristic of their cultural identities. The extent to which migrants get involved is typified in four preference classifications, namely assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization (Berry, 1980; Berry et al., 2006). Assimilation is said to have occurred when migrants opt not to maintain and practice customs of their cultural heritage, but adopt the cultural practices and traditions of the host community. Assimilation strategy has been found to be the acculturation approach most preferred by host communities (Horverak et al., 2013; Kosic et al., 2005). On the other hand, when migrants choose to keep values and customs of their cultural heritage and avoid interactions with indigenes of the host community, that is referred to as separation. When migrants keep and practice the customs and values of their cultural identity and observe the customs of the host community while interacting with members of the destination community, that is the epitome of integration; and although studies have shown that migrants prefer integration in the public sphere, a separation strategy is preferred in their private circles (Arends-Tóth and van de Vijver, 2003). Marginalization occurs when there is disinterest in practicing and observing both the customs of cultural heritage and the values and customs of the host community; this acculturation preference has been found to be related to individual traits such as unsociability, anxiety, and closed-mindedness (Horverak et al., 2013).

A wide array of social contextual factors and personal characteristics have been identified as influencing acculturation. International migrants' extent of integration is a function of the reason for migration, socio-economic status, educational background, and proximity to spaces and places for practicing social and cultural norms (e.g. language and marriage ceremonies) of their countries of origin (Mondain and Lardoux, 2013). At the individual scale, personal traits such as age at

migration (Kalmijn and van Tubergen, 2006), educational attainment, duration of stay at the destination, and previous migration experience are important for acculturation (Braun and Glöckner-Rist, 2012). It has been suggested that the passage of time in the host community enhances the acquisition of knowledge of customs and language required for work and, therefore, hastens the assimilation process (Djamba and Kimuna, 2012). The passage of time at the destination also impacts cultural integration. A longer stay at the destination leads to attitudinal changes through the acceptance of the host culture, which, for example, affect desired fertility (Frank and Heuveline, 2005). In addition, using economic performance as a proxy for integration, Chiswick and Miller (2002) found that higher educational attainment, previous work experience, and mastery of the host country language influence better economic performance. At the societal scale, place of settlement is known to influence acculturation in diverse ways. Place of settlement exposes migrants to different job market opportunities and constraints (Djamba and Kimuna, 2012).

Social capital is important for the acculturation process. Social capital is illustrated in different forms and types, for example, bonding, bridging, and linking (Awumbila et al., 2016; Hawkins and Maurer, 2010). Bonding social capital refers to strong horizontal ties between individuals or groups sharing similar socio-demographic features. Such strong ties with family and immediate relations have been found to positively influence integration. Bridging social capital denotes ties outside immediate family, but cuts across different individuals. This form of social capital, usually conceived as weak ties, includes membership in associations and contact with friends. Benefits derived from such relationships are by virtue of rights and privileges associated with being part of a group. These rights, derived through membership, may be likened to Putnam's (1993) idea of moral obligations and norms, which are shared among members of the group. Linking social capital, on the other hand, refers to vertical social ties, signifying different social power relations. This is what Pieterse (2003) calls "friends in high places." Bonding and bridging social capital are brewed in social networks. Social networks manifested in associational membership through clubs, fellowships, and unions are major reservoirs for social capital due to mutually shared goals, interests, and benefits.

More succinct importance of social capital for acculturation preferences is typified in Raza et al.'s (2013) modification of Berry's acculturation model for the purpose of examining earning advantage. First they suggest "individualization," which signifies the experience of weak bonding and weak bridging network ties by migrants; this is a result of experiencing cultural isolation or the denunciation of cultural attributions, encapsulated in the marginalization category of acculturation. Strong bonding and strong bridging social capital are depicted in integration, while separation portrays strong bonding and weak bridging social capital. Assimilation denotes weak bonding and strong bridging; and similarly Portes et al. (2009) suggest that even in the context of closed ethnic communities, social capital facilitates assimilation. Similarly, strong bridging social capital, which has been found to be a function of longer duration of stay at the destination, enhances migrants' social integration (Jun and Ha, 2015). While strong bonding and strong bridging (i.e. integration) may be considered ideal (Kosic et al., 2005), it may carry its own demerits. Although research has shown that when migrants have more social contacts at the destination, they are more likely to integrate (Buijs et al., 2006), it has also been found that they become more susceptible to discrimination; an incongruity referred to as "integration paradox" (van Doorn et al., 2013). In the context of educational attainment, more highly educated immigrants who are more ready to integrate report a low level of acceptance and higher levels of discrimination in the host country (Muller, 2011). This is usually because of greater exposure to indigenes and the greater number of social contacts migrants have; a theory of exposure (van Doorn et al., 2013).

To operationalize social capital for this study, we draw on Tutu's (2013: 715) reconceptualization of social capital; that is, "actual resource flow from social networks with an effect on enabling



**Figure 1.** Map of GaMashie. Adapted from Preliminary Report for Ga Mashie Urban Design Lab. (Mahama et al., 2011, retrieved from <http://mci.ei.columbia.edu/files/2013/03/MCI-Ga-Mashie-report-UDL.pdf>).

the individual to withstand stressors.” Such resources include financial (e.g. money), cultural (the knowledge and practice of the host culture and integration strategies), and physical/material (e.g. clothing). Obviously, the above discussion has shown relationships between acculturation, social capital, and migrants’ perception of acceptability. Our interest in this paper is cultural acculturation; therefore, we do not examine economic assimilation or integration.

## Methods

### *Study area: James Town, Ga Mashie, Accra*

Ga Mashie is a historical settlement on the southwest coast of the city of Accra. Also referred to as “Old Accra,” it is the oldest settlement in Accra and the location where the Gas (Ga people), indigenes of the land, first settled (see Figure 1). James Town has become an affordable place of residence for a lot of poor migrants (Razzu, 2005) chiefly due to its proximity to the Central Business District of Accra and the actual and perceived opportunities the city offers.

James Town is best suited for this study because it is both traditional and semi-cosmopolitan. It is predominantly inhabited by the Gas who practice their cultural values and norms on a regular and daily basis. Ga festivals, funerals, and outdoorings (naming ceremonies) are regular happenings in the community and such functions are graced by the presence and obeisance of the indigenous chiefs, sub-chiefs, and priests; therefore, it has been labeled an indigenous community (Owusu and Afutu-Kotey, 2010). Also, the elements of cultural and social ties are pertinent for work and life. For example, being a coastal indigenous community, the predominant occupation is fishing and fish retailing. To date, in observance of traditional beliefs, fishermen do not go fishing on Tuesdays.

Other celebrations done due to traditional bonds are funerals, baby-naming ceremonies, and festivals (Razzu, 2005). Yet, James Town exhibits features of semi-cosmopolitanism due to the presence and practices of the non-Ga Ghanaian migrants in the community. The demographic composition of the community has noticeably changed due to contemporary, more significantly, rural to urban migration (Codjoe et al., 2014). There have emerged micro-ethnic non-Ga enclaves in James Town. More so, the traditional architecture of James Town, which comprises compound house structural designs, brings migrants and the indigenous inhabitants in close proximity because many unrelated households live within one housing structure; a possible recipe for conflict or “togetherness in difference.”

### *Sample size determination and research instruments*

Communities in Ghana have been divided into smaller units called “Enumeration Areas (EAs)” by the Ghana Statistical Service to enable censuses. James Town has 20 EAs. The population of James Town, according to the 2010 Ghana Census, is 15,508. The population in each EA was cross-tabulated by ethnicity. The following ethnic categories were revealed by the data: Akan, Ga-Adangbe, Ewe, Guan, Gurma, Mole-Dagbani, Grusi, Mande, and Others. The Ga-Adangbe population totaled 8935 and the non-Ga population was 6573. We determined a sample size of 363 given the non-Ga population. Our power calculation indicators, using statistical software Epi info 7, are as follows: limit (5 percent); design effect (1); cluster (1); effect size (50 percent); and confidence level (95 percent). Subsequently, we selected a proportional number of households in conformity with the size of the population in each EA. Overall, 301 migrants participated in our research.

The study semi-structured questionnaire tool was administered by four trained field assistants over a period of 5 weeks. The questionnaire consisted of different sections: (1) structured closed-ended questions for basic demographics such as age, sex, educational attainment, marital status, employment status, ethnicity, and religious affiliation; (2) perceived personal discrimination and migrants’ acculturation preferences and experiences and open-ended questions to obtain more details about their acculturation inclinations; and (3) social capital constructs.

### *Dependent variable*

Regarding the dependent variable (perceived personal discrimination), migrants were asked: “how would you rank or rate the extent to which you feel discriminated against by the Gas?” The closed-ended responses and their codes were never (1), rarely (2), occasionally (3), often (4), very often (5).

### *Proximate independent variables—acculturation preferences and social capital constructs*

Respondents answered yes or no to questions used as proxies for acculturation preferences. Due to the fluidity of acculturation preferences, respondents were not limited in their responses to the various preferences. To measure assimilation preference, participants were asked two questions: (1) “Would you say since you moved to Ga Mashie you have adopted more of the values and/or traditions of the Ga people?” For validation purposes, values were explained as anything regarded as important that pertains to work and life, and traditions were explained as customs and beliefs that have been passed down from one generation to the other; (2) “Would you consider yourself more of Ga now?” Separation was measured using this question: “Would you say you have succeeded in avoiding interaction with the Gas in this community?” The question used to assess integration

preference is: “Do you hold on to your cultural practices and have adopted some cultural practices of the Ga people at the same time?” And to measure marginalization preference, respondents were asked, “Would you say you neither practice your own cultural norms nor that of the Ga people?” Cultural norms were explained as behavior patterns that are characteristic and distinctive of the migrant’s society and that of the Gas.

Social capital information was based on yes/no responses to the following questions: “Do you receive material (money, cloth, food, toiletries and so on) help from the Gas?” “Do you receive material support (money, cloth, toiletries, food and so on) from your ethnic group here (James town)?” “Do you receive information about how to live successfully here from the Gas?” “Do you receive information about how to live successfully here from your ethnic group here?” “Do you receive emotional help from the Gas here (e.g. cheer you up when you are sad, give you confidence in life, spend time with you, and so on)?” “Do you receive emotional help from your ethnic group here (e.g. cheer you up when you are sad, give you confidence in life, spend time with you etc.)?”

### *Analyses of data*

For the quantitative data, we employed a bivariate association model, multicollinearity, and multivariate modeling for analyses. We used a thematic analyses strategy to assess the qualitative data.

*Quantitative analyses.* An ordered logit was used as the analytic model because the dependent variable was measured as an ordinal variable. The model predicts the likelihood of an individual self-reporting perceived frequency of discrimination as being very high (worst perceived personal discrimination) as against any lower-ranked category (least perceived personal discrimination).

To establish the most important independent variables in the study, we used a screening process where only those variables that have a statistically significant association with perceived personal discrimination are included in an Ordinal Logistic Regression model. The chi-square test is used to test for the association between the predictor variables and the response variable. Based on the chi-square results, the variables used in the ordinal regression model after screening are: sex, education level, marital status, employment status, current length of stay at the destination, prior migration experience (lived elsewhere before coming to James Town after migrant left hometown), the proxies for assimilation, separation, integration, marginalization preferences, and social capital constructs (see Table 1).

Subsequently, multicollinearity diagnostics were undertaken. This is important to ensure robust modeling as well as to prevent redundancy in the model. Three indicating constituents of multicollinearity used were the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), Tolerance, and the normal P-P plot of regression standardized residual. The results from the diagnostics were favorable. None of the values for the VIF was greater than 3, and all the values for Tolerance were greater than 0.10; therefore, there is no suggestion of multicollinearity issues (Table 2). We subsequently assessed the possibility of interaction effects using the ordinal logit model. This is important because of the likelihood of two or more independent variables interacting in terms of their effect on perceived personal discrimination. Specifically, we specified an “All 2-way” model build term.

*Qualitative analyses.* Regarding the qualitative data on acculturation preferences collected using the open-ended questions, a thematic analysis was undertaken along the explanations given by respondents for each of their acculturation preference and inclinations. We identify and report the patterns in the data for each of the categories for acculturation inclinations in the discussion section. Essentially we use thematic analyses here as a *contextualist* method, which acknowledge how migrants make meaning of their acculturation experiences and how the broader social context impacts those meanings.

**Table 1.** Description of variables used for analyses.

Variables	Categories	N	Percentage
Rate the extent to which you feel discriminated against	Never	87	28.90%
	Rarely	91	30.20%
	Occasionally	19	6.30%
	Often	54	17.90%
	Very often	50	16.60%
Sex	Female	136	45.20%
	Male	165	54.80%
Education level	No education	66	21.90%
	Primary	55	18.30%
	Junior high/middle	129	42.90%
	Senior high school/vocational	37	12.30%
Marital status	Tertiary	14	4.70%
	Single	85	28.20%
	Consensual union	15	5.00%
	Divorced	21	7.00%
	Separated	21	7.00%
Employment status	Married	159	52.80%
	Unemployed	52	17.30%
Lived elsewhere before	Employed	249	82.70%
	No	162	53.80%
Would you consider yourself more of a Ga now	Yes	139	46.20%
	No	99	32.90%
Have you adopted Ga values	Yes	202	67.10%
	No	132	43.90%
Do you hold on to your cultural practices and have adopted some of the Ga's	Yes	169	56.10%
	No	109	36.20%
Neither practice my own culture and norms nor that of the Gas	Yes	192	63.80%
	No	48	15.90%
Do you receive material help from Gas	Yes	253	84.10%
	No	61	20.30%
Do you receive information about successful living from Gas	Yes	240	79.70%
	No	84	27.90%
Do you receive emotional help from Gas	Yes	217	72.10%
	No	65	21.60%
Total	Yes	236	78.40%
		301	100.00%

## Results

### *Descriptive and bivariate statistics*

Fifty-five (55%) of the study participants were males and 45% were females. While 21% have had no formal education, about 54% have had at least a junior high school education. Regarding marital status, 53% reported they were married, 28% reported they were single, and the

**Table 2.** Multicollinearity diagnostics for perceived personal discrimination.

	Collinearity statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Sex	0.857	1.167
Education level	0.955	1.047
Marital status	0.759	1.318
Employment status	0.914	1.095
Current length of stay	0.671	1.49
Lived elsewhere before	0.826	1.211
Would you consider yourself more of a Ga now	0.672	1.489
Have you adopted Ga values	0.514	1.946
Do you hold on to your cultural practices and have adopted some of the Ga's	0.707	1.414
Neither practice my own culture and norms nor that of the Gas	0.881	1.134
Do you receive material help from Gas	0.485	2.062
Do you receive information about successful living from Gas	0.365	2.739
Do you receive emotional help from Gas	0.378	2.649

remaining were either in a consensual union, divorced or separated. Eighty-three (83%) were active participants in the economy while 54% reported that they had no prior migration experience before coming to James Town. Twenty-nine (29%) of the total respondents indicated that they have never felt discriminated against by the Gas, while 20% and 17% ranked the extent of feeling discriminated against as “often” and “very often”, respectively. Regarding assimilation, 67% reported that they do not consider themselves more of a Ga, while 44% indicated that they have adopted Ga values. Thirty-six (36%) reported that they hold on to their cultural practices and have also adopted some of the practices of the Gas. With social capital, 80% of the respondents indicated that they receive material help from the Gas and 72% receive information about how to live successfully in James Town from the Gas. From the bivariate analyses (Table 2), the percentage of assimilated migrants who received material help, information for successful living, and emotional help ranged from 86–92% compared with less assimilated migrants (60–74%). Respondents who do not receive material help from the Gas are more likely to have higher rating on the ordinal dependent variable compared to their counterparts who receive material help from the Gas. Also, respondents who answered in the affirmative that they receive information about successful living from the Gas have a lower rating on perceived personal discrimination compared with their counterparts who do not receive information. This finding highlights the importance of social capital on perceived acceptance at migrants’ destination.

Initial data diagnostics show that the proportional odds assumption underpinning the ordered logit model has not been violated. Specifically, the test of parallel lines indicated a chi-square value of 50.14 (df=57;  $p=0.728$ ). The ordered logit model (Table 4) shows the following variables as predictors of perceived personal discrimination among the migrants in James Town: education level, separation from spouse, previous migration experience, perceived personal assimilation, perceived personal integration, perceived personal marginalization, social capital (receipt of material help from Gas), and social capital (receipt of information on successful living from the Gas).

**Table 3.** Bivariate relationship between social capital measures and acculturation proxies ( $X^2$  test).

Social capital measures	(Percent) and N – frequency	(Percent) and N – frequency
<b>Would you consider yourself more of a Ga now</b>		
	Yes	No
Received material help from Gas	(91.9) 91	(73.8) 149***
Receive information about successful living from Gas	(88.9) 88	(63.9) 129***
Received emotional help from Gas	(90.9) 90	(72.3) 146***
<b>Have you adopted Ga values</b>		
	Yes	No
Received material help from Gas	(92.4) 122	(69.8) 118***
Received information about successful living from Gas	(86.4) 114	(60.9) 103***
Received emotional help from Gas	(92.4) 122	(67.5) 114***
<b>Do you hold on to your cultural practices and have adopted some of the Ga's</b>		
	Yes	No
Received material help from Gas	(88.1) 96	(75) 144**
Received information about successful living from Gas	(82.6) 90	(66.1) 127**
Received emotional help from Gas	(89) 97	(72.4) 139***
<b>Neither practice my own cultural norms nor that of the Gas</b>		
	Yes	No
Received material help from Gas	(93.8) 45	(77.1) 195**
Received information about successful living from Gas	(91.7) 44	(68.4) 173***
Received emotional help from Gas	(89.6) 43	(76.3) 193*

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; \*\* $p < 0.005$ ;  $p < 0.05$ .

### Demographic predictors

The education level variable has the following categories: No education, Primary, Junior High School/Middle School, Senior High School/Vocational, and Tertiary. All the ordered log-odds regression coefficients of the categories for the variable are negative, meaning a lower score on the dependent variable: no education (-1.702), primary (-1.760), junior high/middle (-1.151), senior high school/vocational (-1.126). However, only respondents with senior high school/vocational educational attainment did not have a significantly lower rating for the response variable compared with their counterparts with tertiary level education.

Marital status revealed an interesting relationship with perceived personal discrimination. Research participants who were either single or in a consensual union had lower scores on the dependent variable, while the divorced and separated had higher score on the response variable. However, only respondents who reported that they were separated (1.335) had significantly higher rating for perceived personal discrimination. Previous migration prior to settling in James Town yielded an ordered log-odds estimates of (0.777), implying a higher rating for the response variable. That is, migrants who moved to James Town directly were more likely to rate the extent of

**Table 4.** Multivariate analyses of perceived personal discrimination among migrants in James Town.

Variable	Categories	Estimates
Current duration of stay		-0.018
Sex	Female	0.06
	Male (Ref)	
Education level	No education	-1.702**
	Primary	-1.76**
	Junior high/middle	-1.151*
	Senior high school/vocational	-1.126
	Tertiary (Ref)	
Marital status	Single	-0.401
	Consensual union	-0.21
	Divorced	0.297
	Separated	1.335*
	Married (Ref)	
Employment status	Unemployed	-0.175
	Employed (Ref)	
Lived elsewhere before	No	0.777**
	Yes (Ref)	
Would you consider yourself more of a Ga now	Yes	-1.188***
	No (Ref)	
Have you adopted Ga values	Yes	-0.951**
	No (Ref)	
Do you hold on to your cultural practices and have adopted some of the Ga's	Yes	0.844**
	No (Ref)	
Neither practice my own culture and norms nor that of the Gas	Yes	-0.937**
	No (Ref)	
Do you receive material help from Gas	No	1.919***
	Yes (Ref)	
Do you receive information about successful living from Gas	No	0.794*
	Yes (Ref)	
Do you receive emotional help from Gas	No	-0.86
	Yes (Ref)	

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; \*\* $p < 0.005$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ .

Nagelkerke  $R^2 = 0.43$ .

feeling discriminated against by Gas higher than migrants who had settled elsewhere before moving to James Town.

### *Acculturation and social capital predictors*

Perceived personal assimilation measured as whether a migrant considers him/herself as more of a Ga is found to have a significant negative association with perceived personal discrimination ( $p < 0.005$ ). The ordered log-odds estimate (-1.188), which is for respondents who answered "yes" or indicated that, they consider themselves more of a Ga, is indicative of lower rating on perceived

personal discrimination. The other proxy variable for assimilation measured as whether or not a migrant has adopted Ga values was negatively related to the response variable ( $p < 0.001$ ). The coefficient ( $-0.951$ ), which is for respondents who reported that they have adopted Ga values, is indicative of lower rating on perceived personal discrimination, thus lending support to our hypothesis that assimilation inclination is associated with lower perceived personal discrimination.

Integration preference was found to be significantly associated with higher perceived personal discrimination. Migrants who reported that they hold on to their customs and have adopted some of the cultural practices of the Gas have higher ratings on perceived personal discrimination compared with their counterparts who are less integrated ( $0.844$ ;  $p < 0.005$ ).

Marginalization preference, measured as whether a migrant neither practices his/her own cultural norms nor that of the Gas, is found to be significantly associated with lower perceived personal discrimination ( $p < 0.005$ ). The coefficient ( $-0.937$ ), which is for respondents who answered “yes” or indicated that they neither practice their own cultural norms nor that of the Gas, is indicative of lower rating on perceived personal discrimination. Therefore, we observe no evidence for either our integration or marginalization hypotheses.

Receiving material help is an important social capital variable for acculturation. Respondents who answered “no” to receipt of material help from the Gas have a positive coefficient ( $1.919$ ). Also, respondents who answered in the affirmative that they receive information about successful living from the Gas have a lower rating on the response variable compared with their counterparts who do not receive information ( $0.794$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ).

## **Discussion**

### *Demographic predictors*

Migrants in James Town who have a tertiary level education are more likely to rate the extent of discrimination against them higher compared with all other migrants with no education, primary, or junior high school education. While it has been found that highly educated migrants know better how to deal with cultural diversity (Braun and Glöckner-Rist, 2012) and are more likely to have better labor market participation (Djamba and Kimuna, 2012), they are more likely to report low acceptance and higher level of discrimination (Muller, 2011). This study found a similar pattern of the “integration paradox” among internal migrants in James Town. Plausibly, the theory of exposure may explain this finding, since highly educated migrants are more likely to be better integrated at the destination; (1) the highly educated migrants, similar to all other migrants, live in close proximity to the indigenes resulting in higher interethnic contacts in public and private spheres; (2) their better integration preference exposes them to interethnic contacts in public spheres, which may further expose them to intended and unintended undesirable reactions from the Gas (van Doorn et al., 2013). On marital status, the significantly higher rating of perceived personal discrimination of participants who were separated compared with their married counterparts may be due to a strong traditional belief on “cohesion of the family, and the conservatism of its adherents” (Takyi and Gyimah, 2007: 698), especially in a traditional setting like James Town.

### *Acculturation and social capital predictors*

Assimilation—withdrawal from one’s cultural identity and adoption of the host culture—is associated with likelihood of lower rating on the extent of feeling discriminated against. The open-ended questions throw more light on the response on the assimilation proxies. The emergent themes for migrants’ explanation on why they consider themselves more of Gas are: (1) the length of time in James Town;

(2) family ties at the destination and social capital; and (3) familiarity with Ga language and way of life. Those who related their level of assimilation in James Town to the duration of stay indicated that their time spent in James Town has made them lose touch with their extended families where they come from, and feel part of the Ga people; this is illustrative of Jun and Ha's (2015) finding that social capital as a function of longer residence facilitates assimilation. The passage of time in the host community hastens the assimilation process through the enhancement of the acquisition of knowledge of customs and language (Djamba and Kimuna, 2012) and leads to attitudinal changes through the acceptance of the host culture (Frank and Heuveline, 2005); that seems to be the case in James Town.

Social capital derived from the Gas in terms of hospitality and generosity with materiality made migrants report they feel at home and, hence, they considered themselves more of Gas. This finding further expounds the relationship between social capital and acculturation. From Table 3, the chi-square test reveals significant relations between the proxies for assimilation and social capital. Assimilated migrants are more likely to receive material support and information on successful living in James Town from Gas at the bivariate level; a corroboration of Raza et al.'s (2013) strong bridging (social capital) hypothesis in their modification of Berry's model of acculturation, albeit not for economic integration but cultural. The same is true for migrants with integration preference. Familiarity with the Ga language was important for participants seeing themselves as more of Gas. This included understanding the Ga language, and high fluency in the language. While Chiswick and Miller (2002) noted the importance of fluency in the language of the host country for economic performance, we find familiarity with the Ga language important for cultural assimilation. This is illustrated in the quote below, from a 50-year-old female:

...because as we speak, I have adopted their name [Ga Name], and moreover I speak and write the language...so I am more of a Ga now. (Anonymous, personal communication, June 2015)

The values and traditions adopted by assimilated migrants were varied. These are festival celebrations, baby-naming ceremonies and practices, observance of traditional work days-off, rites of existence and passage, and Ga courtesies. Such migrants reported that they fully participate in the *homowo*<sup>1</sup> festival, the Ga way of naming a newborn on the seventh day from birth, observance of the tradition of no fishing or fish smoking on Tuesdays, the performance of twin yam festival<sup>2</sup> for their twin children, the circumcision of the male child, and observance of Ga way of greeting.

Migrants who reported that they hold to their customs and have adopted some of the cultural practices of the Gas have higher ratings on perceived personal discrimination compared with their counterparts who are less integrated. This finding was unexpected, but it mirrors findings in the literature that assimilation is the most preferred acculturation strategy by host populations (Horverak et al., 2013). The holding on to and practices of migrants' customs in the indigenous community, although the preferred strategy among migrants (Kosic et al., 2005), may not be appreciated. The emergent themes from the open-ended questions on the explanation of the customs migrants hold on to and practice are (1) marriage rites, (2) child-naming customs, (3) celebration of festivals, (4) funeral rites, and (5) food and delicacies. Such migrants maintain the style and customs of marriage of their ethnicities, name and circumcise their children in accordance with their traditional practices, and travel regularly to celebrate festivals or cook their traditional meal when they are unable to travel. In addition, some of the migrants prepare their traditional meals more often than they do conventional Ga meals. The practice of the customs of the migrants confirms Mondain and Lardoux's (2013) assertion that the extent of integration is dependent on the proximity to spaces for the practice of cultural norms. Clearly, migrants have the liberty and space to observe their customs in James Town.

The marginalization findings, we believe, are explained by the theory of exposure (van Doorn et al., 2013). Withdrawal from the host community's activities will not expose them to hurts through contact. Also, the lack of exhibiting cultural traits peculiar to their own heritage denies the host community the opportunity to frown on their activities. The emergent themes from the explanations regarding marginalization inclinations are (1) religion and religiosity, (2) sojourned royalty, and (3) unsociability. Some of these migrants indicated that their religion and the tenets of their faith prevent them from exhibiting behavior patterns that are peculiar to their ethnic origins or that of the Gas. The themes from the open-ended question mirror Horverak et al.'s (2013) findings that unsociability and anxiety were associated with marginalization preference.

## **Conclusion**

This study has explored the relationship between acculturation preferences and perceived personal discrimination in a traditional, but semi-cosmopolitan, setting of a global city. The migration literature on Ghana has not explored acculturation, although the country is made up of over 100 linguistic groups classified into nine major ethnic groups. James Town, the study site, is principally populated by the Gas, who observe their cultural values and norms on a regular and on daily basis. In spite of this, James Town exhibits features of semi-cosmopolitanism due to the presence and practices of the non-Ga Ghanaian migrants in the community. The traditional architecture of James Town, which comprises compound house structural designs, brings migrants and the indigenous inhabitants in close proximity because many unrelated households live within one housing structure. Such closeness could lead to frequent conflicts or the development of stronger bonds among migrants and indigenes. As an exploratory research project, we used proxies to measure assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization while avoiding clearly limiting research participants into one particular kind of acculturation. In total, 301 respondents completed a semi-structured questionnaire in the community.

We found that the demographic predictors of perceived personal discrimination are educational attainment, marital status, and previous migration experience. While we did not find evidence of a relationship between personal discrimination and the proxy variable for separation preference, the proxies for assimilation, integration, and marginalization preferences were significant predictors of the response variable. Migrants who perceived themselves as more of Gas and have adopted Ga values (proxies for assimilation) were less likely to rate the extent to which they feel discriminated against by Gas higher as compared with less assimilated migrants. This finding conforms to the evidence in the literature that host populations are more inclined to prefer assimilation than other forms of acculturation. In addition, assimilated migrants were more likely to receive material help, information for successful living in James Town, and emotional help from Gas compared with less assimilated migrants; this is quintessential of strong bridging (social capital) as postulated by Raza et al. (2013). Perceived personal assimilation is attributed to how long some migrants have lived in James Town, the family ties made in the neighborhood, fluency in the Ga language, and familiarity with the Ga way of life. Migrants who hold to their customs and have adopted some of the cultural practices of the Gas have higher ratings on perceived personal discrimination compared with their counterparts who are less integrated. While there are examples of migrants with such preference who practice customs that are akin to those of the Gas, they also maintain the style of marriage of their ethnicities, travel regularly to celebrate festivals, or cook their traditional meal when they are unable to travel.

Clearly, this study has shown that the differences that exist between people of diverse backgrounds have a lot to do with perception of acceptance or rejection in the context of interactions. The exposure to difference, active participation in a "foreign" space, and the indifference

to customs and practices conflate to elicit reactions from a host population. Such reactions may be perceived as favorable or otherwise. The next steps in these discussions will need to consider multi-scalar dimensions of acculturation, including the impacts of structural factors. Although this study has discussed the reasons for the acculturation preferences of the migrants, future research should assess temporal dimensions and stages of the development of these preferences.

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This research was partially funded by the Academic Enrichment Fund grant, Delaware State University.

### Notes

1. This is an annual festival celebrated by the Gas to observe the end of famine by mocking hunger that plagued them. The celebration is marked by the sprinkling of traditional food around the house and prayer to their ancestors.
2. The twin yam festival is celebrated to pacify the gods for the removal of any possible misfortune associated with the birth of twins and to honor the twins during the Homowo festival.

### References

- Ang I (2002) After '911': Defending the global city. *Ethnicities* 2(2):160–162.
- Arends-Tóth J and van de Vijver FJ (2003) Multiculturalism and acculturation: Views of Dutch and Turkish–Dutch. *European Journal of Social Psychology* 33(2): 249–266.
- Asal V and Rethemeyer RK (2008) The nature of the beast: Organizational structures and the lethality of terrorist attacks. *The Journal of Politics* 70(02): 437–449.
- Awumbila M, Teye JK and Yaro JA (2016) Social networks, migration trajectories and livelihood strategies of migrant domestic and construction workers in Accra, Ghana. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 52(7): 982–996.
- Berry JW (1980) Acculturation as varieties of adaptation. In: *Acculturation: Theory, Models and Some New Findings*. Boulder, CO: Westview, pp.9–25.
- Berry JW (2005) Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 29(6): 697–712.
- Berry JW, Phinney JS, Sam DL, et al. (2006) Immigrant youth: Acculturation, identity, and adaptation. *Applied psychology* 55(3): 303–332.
- Braun M and Glöckner-Rist A (2012) Patterns of social integration of Western European Migrants. *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 13(4): 403–422.
- Buijs FJ, Demant F and Hamdy A (2006) *Strijders van eigen bodem. Radicale en democratische moslims in Nederland*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Chiswick BR and Miller PW (2002) Immigrant earnings: Language skills, linguistic concentrations and the business cycle. *Journal of Population Economics* 15(1): 31–57.
- Choi SW and Piazza JA (2014) Internally displaced populations and suicide terrorism. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60(6): 1008–1040.
- Codjoe SNA, Owusu G and Burkett V (2014) Perception, experience, and indigenous knowledge of climate change and variability: The case of Accra, a sub-Saharan African city. *Regional Environmental Change* 14(1): 369–383.

- Dahinden J (2013) Cities, migrant incorporation, and ethnicity: A network perspective on boundary work. *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 14(1): 39–60.
- Djamba YK and Kimuna SR (2012) The labor force participation and earnings gap among African immigrant women in the USA. *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 13(4): 481–501.
- Fuseini I and Kemp J (2016) Characterizing urban growth in Tamale, Ghana: An analysis of urban governance response in infrastructure and service provision. *Habitat International* 56: 109–123.
- Frank R and Heuveline P (2005) A crossover in Mexican and Mexican-American fertility rates: Evidence and explanations for an emerging paradox. *Demographic Research* 12(4): 77.
- Ghana Statistical Service (2013) 2010 Population and housing census: National analytical report. Available at: [http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/2010phc/National\\_Analytical\\_Report.pdf](http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/2010phc/National_Analytical_Report.pdf) (accessed 09/06/2015).
- Gow G (2005) Rubbing shoulders in the global city Refugees, citizenship and multicultural alliances in Fairfield, Sydney. *Ethnicities* 5(3): 386–405.
- Hatziprokopiou P and Montagna N (2012) Contested Chinatown: Chinese migrants' incorporation and the urban space in London and Milan. *Ethnicities* 12(6): 706–729.
- Hawkins RL and Maurer K (2010) Bonding, bridging and linking: How social capital operated in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. *British Journal of Social Work* 40(6): 1777–1793.
- Horverak JG, Sandal GM, Pallesen S, et al. (2013) Hiring rankings of immigrant job applicants: Immigrants' acculturation strategies and managers' personality trait perception. *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 14(3): 493–510.
- Kalmijn M and Van Tubergen F (2006) Ethnic intermarriage in the Netherlands: Confirmations and refutations of accepted insights. *European Journal of Population/Revue Européenne de Démographie* 22(4): 371–397.
- Klašnja M and Novta N (2014) Segregation, polarization, and ethnic conflict. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 1–29.
- Kosic A, Mannetti L and Sam DL (2005) The role of majority attitudes towards out-group in the perception of the acculturation strategies of immigrants. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 29(3): 273–288.
- Jun HJ and Ha SK (2015) Social capital and assimilation of migrant workers and foreign wives in South Korea: The case of Wongok community. *Habitat International* 47: 126–135.
- Mahama SA, Acheampong AT, Peprah OB, et al. (2011) *Preliminary report for Ga Mashie urban design lab. Millennium Cities Initiative*. The Earth Institute at Columbia University and The University of Ghana.
- Mondain N and Lardoux S (2013) Transitions to adulthood among first generation sub-Saharan African immigrant adolescents in Canada: Evidence from a qualitative study in Montreal. *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 14(2): 307–326.
- Muller P (2011) Identificatie, acceptatie en discriminatie. In: Dourleijn E en Dagevos J (eds) *Vluchtelingen in Nederland. Over de integratie van Afghaanse, Iraakse, Iraanse en Somalische migranten*. Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, pp.190–206.
- Njoh AJ (2015) “The right-to-the-city question” and indigenous urban populations in capital cities in Cameroon. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 52(2): 188–200.
- Obeng-Odoom F (2014) The state of African cities 2014. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 51(4): 389–397.
- Owusu G and Afutu-Kotey RL (2010) Poor urban communities and municipal interface in Ghana: A case study of Accra and Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis. *African Studies Quarterly* 12(1): 1.
- Pieterse JN (2003) Social capital and migration beyond ethnic economies. *Ethnicities* 3(1): 29–58.
- Portes A (2000) Immigration and the metropolis: reflections on urban history. *Journal of International Migration and Integration/Revue de l'integration et de la migration internationale* 1(2): 153–175.
- Portes A, Fernández-Kelly P and Haller W (2009) The adaptation of the immigrant second generation in America: A theoretical overview and recent evidence. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35(7): 1077–1104.
- Putnam RD (1993) The prosperous community. *The American Prospect* 4(13): 35–42.
- Rath J (2007) *The Transformation of Ethnic Neighborhoods into Places of Leisure and Consumption*. San Diego, CA: Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California, San Diego.

- Raza M, Beaujot R and Woldemicael G (2013) Social capital and economic integration of visible minority immigrants in Canada. *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 14(2): 263–285.
- Razzu G (2005) Urban redevelopment, cultural heritage, poverty and redistribution: The case of Old Accra and Adawso House. *Habitat International* 29(3): 399–419.
- Takyi BK and Gyimah SO (2007) Matrilineal family ties and marital dissolution in Ghana. *Journal of Family Issues* 28(5): 682–705.
- Tutu RA (2013) Self-rated resilience among young migrants in old Fadama, Accra, Ghana. *GeoJournal* 78(4): 709–725.
- van Doorn M, Scheepers P and Dagevos J (2013) Explaining the integration paradox among small immigrant groups in the Netherlands. *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 14(2): 381–400.
- Vertovec S (2007) Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30(6): 1024–1054.
- Victoroff J, Adelman JR and Matthews M (2012) Psychological factors associated with support for suicide bombing in the Muslim diaspora. *Political Psychology* 33(6): 791–809.
- Wacquant L (2008) *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

### Author biographies

**Raymond Asare Tutu** is an Associate Professor in the Global Societies Program, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at Delaware State University. His research interests include: global migration; human–environment geographies including urban environments with emphasis on informality and marginality in the Global South, and health ecology.

**John Boateng** is a Lecturer at the School of Continuing and Distance Education at the University of Ghana. His research encompasses human interactions, technology–pedagogy relations, and agricultural literacy and systems in Africa.

**Edmund Ameyaw** is a PhD candidate and a graduate teaching/research assistant at the Department of Mathematics, Howard University, Washington DC. His current research centers on statistical modeling of clustered bivariate binary outcomes and mathematical demography with emphasis on fertility and migration.

**Janice Desire Busingye** is a Senior Lecturer in the College of Education, Open and Distance Learning and the Deputy Vice Chancellor, at Kampala International University. Her research interests include livelihoods studies, education systems, epistemology and politics of knowledge production.