

## Introduction and History

Various scholars specializing in black and African studies have conducted extensive research shedding light on the history, shared identities, struggles, and differences of Native Africans and Africans in the diaspora. During the late 1960s, Kwame Touré (formerly known as Stokely Carmichael) proposed the notion of a unified entity among individuals of African origin residing outside of Africa, commonly referred to as diaspora Africans. This concept of being "one people" aimed to emphasize their interconnectedness (Carmichael, 1969).

The concept of Africans in the diaspora holds a rich historical background dating back to the early 1800s. David Walker's influential appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World, published in 1829, serves as an exemplary illustration. Within this influential text, Walker advocated for the formation of a black nation and highlighted the global interconnectedness among individuals of African heritage (Palmer, 2000). He urged people of African descent to unite and work towards their emancipation, stating that their complete glory and happiness depended on the liberation of their enslaved brethren worldwide (Palmer, 2000).

Scholars have attributed the modern African diaspora to various significant movements, with the Atlantic slave trade being the most extensively discussed in literature. This trade, which began in the mid-fifteenth century, is considered a pivotal factor (Jackson et al., 2003). L. Bennett argued in 1988 that the infiltration of Europeans and the slave trade had detrimental effects on several essential aspects of African culture. Konadu-Agyemang et al. (2006) further emphasized that slavery, the slave trade, imperialism, and colonialism were instrumental in shaping the diaspora.

Within the African diaspora, a group known as West Indians exists, although this term is widely recognized as inaccurate. It originated from Christopher Columbus's mistaken belief that

he had reached India, as the indigenous people he encountered in the so-called New World resembled Indians. However, West Indians primarily refer to individuals from the Caribbean region, including Jamaica, Trinidad, and Guyana, who share a common history of British colonization and English language usage (Darboe, 2006). Research indicates a noticeable increase in the population of Africans residing outside of Africa, particularly in the United States (Darboe, 2006; Lenoir et al., 2007). It is estimated that approximately 1.8 million individuals in the United States identify Africa as their birthplace, with nearly 60 percent of this population having migrated between 1990 and 2000 (Lenoir et al., 2007).

The impact of these migrations and the displacement of African peoples from their ancestral past and cultural roots have been documented (Waters, 1993). Despite a shared lineage, Africans, and individuals of African descent in the diaspora, including African Americans and Caribbeans, continue to face divisions perpetuated by myths, misconceptions, and negative stereotypes (Traore, 2003). However, they also share a genetic connection and an inherent historical and psychological bond with Africa. Moreover, their collective history encompasses resistance against European slavery and colonialism (Mwakikagile, 2007; Shaw-Taylor, 2007). These stereotypes and misconceptions have been shown to affect the relationships between Africans, African Americans, and Caribbeans, highlighting the need to identify and address them through dialogues with native Africans, African Americans, and Caribbeans in this study.

## **Literature Review**

This section will address existing literature on the areas of concern for this topic.

### **Stereotypes and Existing Stereotypes amongst Africans**

The term "stereotypes" pertains to a collection of characteristics that are employed to elucidate and anticipate the actions of individuals belonging to a socially defined group (Dixon et

al., 2004). According to Hilton et al., (1996) Stereotypes encompass beliefs regarding the traits, attributes, and actions associated with individuals belonging to specific groups. Beyond merely representing beliefs about these groups, stereotypes also function as theories that explain the associations and correlations between various attributes. Stereotypes are not necessarily derived from individuals' firsthand experiences with members of stereotyped groups. They can be acquired through learning from others, society, or exposure to mass media. The lack of recognition for individual differences within a stereotyped group causes stereotypes to become over-generalizations leading to distortion (Seiter, 1986). Negative and positive stereotypes are acquired from the social environments we encounter on a daily basis, starting from childhood, often without conscious awareness. Negative stereotypes can begin as early as six years old, becoming internalized during childhood and persisting into adulthood and old age (Levy, 1996).

Stereotypes hold a significant influence over Native Africans, African Americans, and Caribbeans. Unfortunately, most of the prevailing stereotypes between these groups are predominantly negative, greatly impacting their overall relationship (Darboe, 2006). In a study investigating how Yoruba Nigerians perceive African Americans in the United States, Adeyemo (2018) discovered that Yoruba Nigerian perceptions of African Americans predominantly revolve around stereotypes. These stereotypes include notions of being disrespectful, criminal, uneducated, lacking individual autonomy, and exhibiting irrational behavior.

This phenomenon extends beyond social contexts and permeates other spheres as well. During the NPR program Tell Me More (2013), Michel Martin, an African American host, expressed that many African Americans perceive a sense of condescension from first-generation Africans. In response, Tope Folarin, an African short story writer who was a guest on the show, countered by stating that Africans believe African Americans perceive Africa as being

"backward." (Nsangou, 2018). Traore (2003) provided detailed explanations of the stereotypes that exist between these groups. She pointed out that African American students often associate their African heritage with images of Tarzan, wild animals, and the concept of the "Dark Continent." These associations have led to a tendency to avoid or despise their African roots. On the other hand, African students have been exposed to perplexing images of African Americans relying on welfare, engaging in violence towards others, and displaying uncommon rudeness towards their own people. These images have also contributed to negative reactions when they are identified as "African American." Interestingly, the African students often questioned why their African American counterparts treated them as second-class citizens, while the African Americans wondered why the African students appeared to feel or act superior. When considering the situation from another perspective, neither group could justify their unfounded beliefs about the other.

In a similar vein, Logan (1958), conducted a study involving forty African American students from Howard University to uncover their overall perceptions of Africa. The study revealed various stereotypes held by the students regarding Africa and Africans. These included notions such as Africa being a mysterious continent, characterized by intense heat, lacking its own civilization, and inhabited by cannibals, heathens, and fierce animals residing in impenetrable jungles. Additionally, the students expressed a sense of superiority over Africans. While numerous studies have explored the stereotypes held by Africans and African Americans regarding West Indians, some scholars argue that these perceptions are generally less negative compared to the stereotypes associated with African Americans and Africans (Jackson, 2005). Jackson's study in 2003, for instance, revealed that African Americans tend to perceive West Indians as less arrogant when compared to Africans. They view West Indians as more open to sharing their culture, possessing a positive self-image, displaying greater empathy towards the challenges faced by

African Americans, and maintaining a stronger connection to their African heritage. On the other hand, Africans expressed the belief that West Indians tend to exhibit a friendlier demeanor towards others in comparison to African Americans. However, West Indians themselves hold mixed views about Africans. Some perceive them as untrustworthy, prone to internal conflicts, lacking unity, and failing to support other African countries (Jackson, 2005). In contrast to the positive stereotypes associated with West Indians, a study by Costes in 2005 among African American and West Indian college students in New York revealed that African Americans perceive West Indians as arrogant and as individuals who come to the United States to take their jobs. Additionally, Costes found that West Indians perceive African Americans as lazy individuals who are unwilling to seize and make the most of the opportunities available in America.

Evidently, there are prevalent stereotypes within the black community, encompassing individuals with shared African ancestry, including native Africans, African Americans, and West Indians. Previous studies have primarily examined these stereotypes among college students in the United States, predominantly focusing on only Africans and African Americans. As a result, the objective of this study is to explore the perceptions of college professors, tutors, and professionals from these groups towards one another—specifically, native Africans, African Americans, and West Indians. Additionally, this research extends beyond individuals residing in the United States to include native Africans living in Africa. By engaging in dialogue with college professors and professionals from these groups, the study aims to investigate the perceptions held by Africans and Africans in the diaspora towards each other. Consequently, the first research question is formulated as follows:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of Africans and Africans in the diaspora about each other?

## Root Causes and Underlying Factors of Stereotypes

The existence of stereotypes cannot be attributed to a single source; rather, they emerge from a complex interplay of various factors and causes, shaping their development and perpetuation. These stereotypes do not arise in isolation, but rather find influence in different environments and institutions. Within college and university settings, where interactions take place, stereotypical beliefs often manifest and gain prominence (Coates, 2004). Coates' study specifically reveals the significant role played by the college environment in amplifying existing stereotypes between African Americans and West Indians.

Additionally, the mass media serves as a powerful force in the creation and perpetuation of stereotypes, as it permeates different aspects of society, shaping trends, labels, and everyday debates (Roskos-Ewoldsen et al., 2002). Numerous studies have highlighted the media's inclination to portray minorities, particularly Black individuals, in a negative light. Interestingly, Black individuals exhibit a heightened level of criticism towards news coverage of their own racial group, surpassing the levels expressed by other minority groups such as Hispanics and Asian Americans (McAneny, 1994; Fujioka, 2005). This tendency is further accentuated by the media's portrayal of Blacks in two distinct and polarized manners: as rare tokens representing positive aspects or more commonly depicted in a negative light, reflecting the historical dichotomy of the house Negro or the field Negro during the era of slavery (Wood, 2003; Fujioka, 2005).

Similarly, Africa has often been depicted negatively in Western media outlets, predominantly due to the imagery employed by foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) during fundraising campaigns (Poncian, 2015). To elicit compassion and generate support for their administrative and humanitarian activities, these NGOs often rely on portraying distressing images of child soldiers, malnourished children, slums, and unsanitary conditions. Unfortunately, while

effective in fundraising efforts, these portrayals perpetuate a negative image of Africa, portraying both the continent and its inhabitants as impoverished.

Moreover, personal experiences play a significant role in the formation and reinforcement of stereotypes. Adeyemo (2018) highlights how native African participants in her study shared negative experiences they encountered while residing in African American communities, including incidents of lynching and crime. One participant vividly recalls their personal encounter, stating, "In the neighborhood where we lived, which was predominantly African American, our house was burglarized three times by our African American neighbors. Furthermore, my nephew was attacked on his way home from school, experiencing a lynching incident where his money and cell phone were taken from him." Furthermore, stereotypes can also arise from hearsay, as individuals without direct experience with different groups may form stereotypes based on information received from friends or family members who have had encounters with those groups (Wesler et al., 2006).

While various studies have shed light on the root causes of stereotypes, most of these studies are older and only a limited number have focused specifically on the root causes of stereotypes existing among native Africans, African Americans, and West Indians. Thus, this study aims to identify the root causes of existing stereotypes among these groups and determine the dominant underlying factor. This will be achieved through the following research question:

RQ 2: What are the root causes of existing stereotypes between Africans, African Americans, and West Indians?

### **Social Identity Threat**

Negative stereotypes, despite their lack of correspondence with reality, have far-reaching consequences and effects on individuals and social dynamics. According to social identity theory

(SIT), group memberships play a central role in shaping one's identity (Tajfel et al., 1986). Belonging to a highly esteemed group can yield psychological rewards, boosting self-concept, self-esteem, and attitudes toward one's group. Conversely, association with a devalued group can have detrimental psychological outcomes, including diminished self-worth and group esteem (Tukachinsky et al., 2017). In social contexts where negative stereotypes prevail, individuals are constantly reminded of the cultural devaluation of their social identity, which triggers social identity threat (Steele et al., 2002). Social identity threats can manifest through physiological responses, cognitive disruptions, and shifts in preferences, ironically reinforcing group differences in behavior and performance (Schmader et al., 2008; Tukachinsky et al., 2017).

Media environments serve as crucial domains for the negotiation of identity needs (Mastro, 2009). Exposure to media can pose a social identity threat by presenting negative and unfavorable messages about one's group, leading to lowered personal and group esteem (Mastro, 2009). Moreover, the perpetuation of negative stereotypes and hearsay about minorities further exacerbates identity threats. Simply being aware of the cultural stereotypes held against one's in-group can threaten social identity (Steele, 1997).

The experience of social identity threat can elicit various individual and group-based reactions among stigmatized individuals. In the case of Native Africans and Africans in the diaspora, the shared history and roots of these groups are overshadowed by stigmatization and negative stereotypes, leading to disassociation and devaluation of their respective cultures. The resistance to embracing an African identity traces back to the era of slavery, during which Africans were stripped of their ancestral heritage and forced to assimilate to the dominant white culture (Iheduru, 2012). The systematic degradation of African pride was vital in maintaining the institution of slavery, achieved through humiliating and dehumanizing acts coupled with the



eradication of cultural traditions, rituals, family life, and religion, ultimately eroding self-respect (Akbar, 1984).

In contemporary society, the reverence for the dominant white culture, perpetuated through media and other domains, further perpetuates negative perceptions of Africa, African Americans, and West Indians, making acceptance of African culture challenging (Asante, 2005; Iheduru, 2021). The distorted portrayal of Africa in white media perpetuates negative stereotypes that inhibit the African American community from embracing African culture and value systems (Iheduru, 2012). Clearly, negative stereotypes have far-reaching consequences, leading individuals to reject shared systems and beliefs and perpetuating a cycle of looking down upon each other's groups and cultures due to identity threats.

To comprehend the existing effects of negative stereotypes among Africans and Africans in the diaspora, this research aims to investigate the question:

**RQ 3:** What are the effects of negative stereotypes between Africans and Africans in the diaspora? By addressing this question, we can shed light on the impact of these stereotypes and gain insights for fostering understanding and reconciliation among these groups.

Based on the existing literature, it is evident that negative stereotypes persist between Africans and Africans in the diaspora. However, limited attention has been given to exploring potential solutions for addressing these negative stereotypes and understanding their effects on intergroup relationships. Hence, this study aims to fill this research gap by not only identifying the solutions to the existing negative stereotypes among these groups but also placing a significant emphasis on obtaining insights directly from the participants through meaningful dialogues. Consequently, the fourth research question guiding this study is as follows:

**RQ 4:** What are the solutions to stereotypes and the effects of stereotypes among Africans and Africans in the diaspora? By addressing this research question, we seek to uncover effective strategies for combating stereotypes and promoting positive intergroup dynamics in this context.

## **Methodology**

In order to address the problem under study and seek effective solutions, the research employed the communicative methodology approach (CM) (Gómez et al., 2019). This approach has been widely utilized in various research projects that emphasize the significant social impact achieved through its implementation. Consequently, it has become a requirement for all research projects to engage in co-creation of knowledge with research participants (European Commission, 2018).

The CM, driven by its aim to achieve social impact, establishes an egalitarian dialogue with research participants. This dialogue goes beyond the mere description of the problems experienced by individuals and their communities. Its purpose is to identify key elements that can contribute to solving those problems (Gómez et al., 2019; Valls et al., 2020). Egalitarian dialogue entails a process where diverse forms of knowledge, including system and lifeworld knowledge, are brought together. The objective of this dialogue is to transform reality by bridging the gap between academic knowledge and the lived experiences, opinions, and reflections of the participants. In our particular case, it involved fostering dialogues among Africans and Africans in the diaspora to enable the sharing of their experiences, opinions, reflections, and the offering of potential solutions.

The concept of social impact can be understood as the improvement of society and its citizens, with a focus on their own goals. For instance, exploring how Africans and Africans in the

diaspora perceive and propose solutions to the issues of stereotypes and their consequences (Van den Besselaar et al., 2018, p. 43). Thus, the social impact of research lies in the benefits that participants receive, rather than simply the dissemination of research results. It is important to note that the dissemination of research results alone does not constitute social impact.

Egalitarian dialogue ensures the usefulness and objectivity of research through the direct participation of the people involved. By incorporating their perspectives and insights, the research outcomes remain grounded in their reality. The utilization of egalitarian dialogue, as proposed by Flecha (2000), represents one of the potential options among various methodological perspectives. This approach enables the generation of results that are oriented towards transformative change and the overcoming of inequalities, which are closely linked to attaining social impact.

Additionally, dialogue that encompasses and transcends differences, particularly intergroup dialogue (IGD), is widely recognized as an effective educational approach to promote learning about social conflict and facilitate social change (Nagda,). The utilization of the dialogue approach also served as a healing space and circle for the individuals involved. This was achieved through Zoom sessions facilitated by a trained moderator. The research consisted of five different sessions, each focusing on specific research questions and themes, conducted on separate days. By adopting the communicative methodology approach and facilitating dialogue among diverse participants, the research aimed to not only gather valuable insights and perspectives but also foster a sense of healing and mutual understanding.

## **Analysis**

The analysis phase involved the transcription of the audio recordings from the Zoom sessions. These transcripts were then subjected to coding using a qualitative software analysis tool

called Dedoose. To conduct the analysis, a thematic analysis process was employed, allowing for the identification of recurring themes within the data. For the coding process, a descriptive coding strategy was utilized, which aims to let the data speak for itself. This approach involves using the words and phrases employed by the participants themselves to create codes (Adu, 2019). By employing descriptive coding, a close connection between the codes and the empirical indicators is established.

Furthermore, this approach helps to reduce the influence of the researcher's biases, as preconceived codes are avoided (Adu, 2019). As Gibbs (2021) highlights, researchers are both observers of the social world and integral parts of that same world. While it is natural to have expectations and theoretical ideas based on previous knowledge, it is crucial to approach the analysis phase with minimal preconceptions in order to minimize bias. Hence, a descriptive coding method was employed, following the line-by-line approach suggested by Adu (2019).

This involved reading each transcript line by line to identify relevant codes. Each code was then assigned a name based on the words or phrases within the respective sentence, and the corresponding sentences and themes were grouped under the relevant codes. Line-by-line coding offers the advantage of requiring close attention to the participants' actual words and helps construct codes that truly reflect their experiences of the world, rather than the researcher's own or any theoretical presuppositions (Gibbs, 2021). Once the descriptive coding was completed, the generated codes were further organized into broader categories. This transition from descriptive coding, which relies on the respondents' terms, to categorical coding assists in reflecting overarching themes and moving beyond mere descriptions in the analysis process.

## Results and Discussion

Following my analysis and coding of the data, this chapter highlights the results by categorizing them into themes and subthemes based on the research questions. Subsequently, this section discusses these themes and subthemes in a bid to answer the research questions.

Considering RQ 1, there have been existing literature on stereotypes between African Americans and Africans based on cultural, historical and socio-political perspectives (Hall, 1990). For instance, African Americans have been regarded as aliens of the African heritage and culture which has caused them to lose their identity. This has been as a result of the slave trade which forced them out of Africa. Africans on the other hand have been considered as being uncivilized and impoverished individuals (Mbaku, 2005).

The first research question, RQ1, focused on participants' perceptions of each other. We grouped these perceptions into categories: perceptions about African Americans, Africans, and West Indians. Regarding perceptions about African Americans, two main themes emerged from this research question, each with its own subtheme. These two main themes were Negative Stereotypes and Positive Stereotypes. The table outlines the themes along with their corresponding excerpts.

Theme	Code	Excerpt
Negative Stereotypes	Lazy	"I have heard that African Americans are too lazy to take care of their children"
	Criminals	"Things like most of these African Americans don't keep jobs, they are criminals."

		<p>“There are American violence and things, and you think, and I remember my first trip to the U.S. Don't judge me I'm 50. No, I was about 20 then and I visited a friend who was studying in Saint Louis, and we went to this shopping mall there were a lot of African and I felt really unsafe for some reason in people with my own color just because of that”</p>
	Poverty	<p>“We've heard about some of these things, such as African Americans being people who live in poverty”</p> <p>“If I'm looking for a school for my child, I sometimes feel more comfortable if there are more white people in the school than black American people because of the history that black schools where poorly resourced, had bad teachers”.</p>

	Relationship Difficulties	<p>“So, I was dating an African American woman and my African friends were like, are you crazy? They control you know; they like to control you. You know, then you'll be the sugar, you know, the stereotype. You'll be wearing the dress and she'll be wearing the trousers in that relationship”</p>
Positive Stereotypes	Contributions	<p>“Just to add to knowledge as well, is when I learned about all the interventions in this country that make life quite comfortable, that meant, you know, from everything from the gas masks to the traffic light and many more that they came from African Americans”</p>
	Role Models	<p>“Yeah, just that growing up in Zimbabwe, you know, my perception of African Americans, because it was African American popular culture that we consume. Our, our perception was very positive because we valorize these</p>

		<p>artists. We valorize the artist. So African Americans where people to look up to my encounter with stereotypes that have to do with African Americans happened when I got here in the United States”.</p>

**Regarding existing Stereotypes and perceptions about Africans, these were the emerging themes and codes.**

Theme	Code	Excerpt
Negative Stereotypes	Scam and Deception	<p>“One of the stereotypes that I've heard about blacks from other parts of the world is that two things. One, that they're shady and that means that they're trying to scam you or trick you into something. Even now I get emails from a Nigerian prince that that needs to transfer \$56 million or something”.</p>



	Unpleasant Odor	<p>“They smell funny. These are things I have heard and experienced in my life”</p>
	Superiority Feeling	<p>“When I was in college and I went to a small liberal arts school that only had 1200 students and there were 12 black students, including eight from Africa. And for some us, you know what? I have always been proud of my African heritage, but I got the impression that the African students that they were better than the African Americans and did one associate”.</p> <p>“The is sort of superiority from those on the continent that their ancestors weren’t enslaved. And then so even interacting with Nigerians</p>

		<p>during my graduate school time, the is sort of this disdain for when African Americans adopt how should I say, Africa, Afrocentric names, or dress in particular Afrocentric ways”.</p> <p>“Your ancestors not being enslaved is not any great privilege on your part. A lot of that, of course, there were intentional tribes that did this. But that can also just be happenstance or pure luck that your ancestors did not end up in any parts of the Americas or the Caribbean. So that’s sort of a one stereotype sort of ingrained superiority because they’re basically remain on the continent”.</p>
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		<p>“When they come to America, they prefer to deal with the Europeans, rather than interact with native blacks”</p>
	Poverty and Punctuality	<p>“There tends to be this narrative around Africans being poor and not being on time”.</p> <p>“And then the other the other one is, you know, this is among African Americans in America. Who, because of what they see on television, some of their organizations trying to raise money and they show, quote, extreme poverty.</p>

		Everything is, quote, poor or backward”.
	Spirituality	<p>“We also hear about this spiritual”.</p> <p>“You know, we think things and we've heard things, for example, we've heard that, oh, Africans drink blood”</p>
	Relationship Difficulties	<p>“And then her friends is like, are you crazy? You know, dating an African, you know, he probably has five wives.</p> <p>Why would you do that? Of course, both of us, you know, ignored all those. We've been married for decades now”</p>
Positive Stereotypes	Hospitable	<p>“So, I've been to different countries in Africa, and I've had to deal with many people, you know, people in Senegal, people in Botswana, people in</p>

		<p>Kenya, and what I found out is I and maybe it's because I'm already black, but I found out that they were very friendly with me”.</p> <p>“Africans...very friendly with me...very helpful to me...work together very well”.</p>

**Regarding existing Stereotypes and perceptions about Caribbeans/West Indians, these were the emerging themes and codes.**

Negative Stereotypes	Religious Stereotypes	<p>“I've heard that Haitians are demonic worshipers through voodoo or voodoo”</p> <p>“The Haitians are demonic worshipers”.</p>
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	Colorism and skin color stereotypes	<p>“Yeah, and in on the issue of skin color and it being viewed certainly in Jamaica as a as a as a benefit. You know, it goes to the extent that popular artists who shall remain nameless, I’m sure many knows who I’m speaking about. But a popular artist made a song about how he likes Browning. Browning being the short for legs for a colored girl”.</p>

### 1. Perceptions about African Americans

This analysis focuses on the several stereotypes that exist between African Americans, West Indians, and Africans. Negative stereotypes such as “lazy”, “criminals”, being in “poverty” particularly stand out. These stereotypes have been greatly exaggerated on the media and through popular culture (Hall, 1990). For instance, the stereotype of being lazy has been used to discredit African Americans as being unreliable and unwilling to take on family responsibilities. Similarly, the stereotyping of African Americans as being criminal introduces the perceptions of violence

and danger which according to existing literature have been perpetuated by the media. (Dixon & Linz, 2000).

The positive stereotypes on the other hand highlight the significant contribution of African Americans especially in the field of innovation and culture. Some research about African Americans mentions their remarkable achievements in various fields despite systemic challenges (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003)

## 2. Perceptions about Africans

Notable negative stereotypes for Africans comprise of themes of “deception”, and “unpleasant odor”. This is mainly due to the existing online scams that have been echoed globally such as the globally infamous “Nigerian prince” scams. Such stereotypes can be devastating to the identity of African individuals by degrading them to mere caricatures (Adichie, 2009). The stereotype of having bad odor additionally dehumanizes Africans and is reminiscent of colonial narratives that portray African people in a bad light (Fanon, 1967).

These results also suggest that some Africans feel superior to African Americans in terms of perception and self-worth because African Americans were once sold as slaves. On the other hand, the results of this analysis also suggest that Africans are hospitable and that they can bring out positive experiences to people they associate with. This can be crucial in breaking barriers and enabling better relationships.

## 3. Perception of Caribbeans/West Indians.

According to these results the stereotypes surrounding the Caribbeans/West Indians and Haitians include practices such as “voodoo”. Even though “voodoo” is a legitimate religious practice by the Haitians, many people hold misconceptions about it (Métraux, 1959). To further

discuss the stereotypes, we need to consider the Jamaican example which is about the perceptions that result from skin color.

**The second question RQ 2 sought to identify** the root causes of existing stereotypes between native Africans and Africans in the diaspora and these were the emerging themes.

Theme	Excerpt
Media Influence	<p>“We've heard about some of these things, such as being lazy criminals, being in poverty. They think they're better than us. These are some of the terms that I've heard well I've seen on TV; I think is the media is the most important role that had to play with some of these stereotypes”</p> <p>“And the stereotypes, of course, are mediated through popular culture. So of course, the media and so on. And that inform how you initially perceive each other”.</p>



	<p>“These stereotypes are rooted in this suspension of media representations of different diaspora groups as well as selective experiences with each other, both in the United States and Africa”.</p> <p>“What I knew about Africa was really from the media and in my textbooks”.</p> <p>“So that separation, we all we talked about it quite a few examples of people who had moved offshore from one country, moved to another country, and grew up and found there were stereotypes about them from that place that they landed, they lived.”</p>
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	<p>“That's when I begin to learn about all the negative things. And most of it came from the media”.</p> <p>“We get our stereotypes from, you know, from stories, from the stories we hear, from the media culture, TV”</p>
Institutional Indoctrination and Cultural Influence	<p>“I believe we bring a lot of baggage to trans diasporic encounters, and the baggage is made up of centuries long indoctrination of our home countries and communities, attitudes and beliefs about the diasporic other ideas that emanate from colonial and anti-black hegemonic institutions that we all have come through”.</p>

	<p>“When I was at the University, one of the things which I immediately noticed was that when African students came to the continent, they you know, from the continent, they had, of course, been fed a lot of stereotypes about African Americans”.</p>
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These findings sought to understand the root causes of stereotypes that exist between native Africans and Africans in the diaspora. The two major themes in this analysis were Media Influence and Institutional Indoctrination & Cultural Influence.

#### 1. Media Influence

The media has played a big role in promoting certain narratives about the native Africans and the African Americans while reinforcing the already existing stereotypes. Participants from this study on RQ2 admitted that their stereotypical understanding was influenced by the media culture through images and narratives portrayed in the movies, television, and other media platforms. These results are in line with the existing research on the media’s influence by creating division

among people through racial lines (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). These portrayals by the media are less likely to be neutral and are sometimes part of a larger socio-political agenda that instills negative historical narratives and prejudices. As mentioned by one of the participants, the stereotypes they harbored were “mediated through popular culture”. These stereotypes when communicated repetitively become reaffirmed thus creating a long-lasting impression and perception.

## 2. Institutional Indoctrination & Cultural Influence

Another interesting theme that arises is the influence of institutional indoctrination and cultural narratives. Participants in this study also admitted that their upbringing, education, and cultural contexts contributed to the understanding of diasporic groups and African Americans. In one instance, a participant mentions the concept of “baggage” which refers to negative stereotypes that African people carry due to the historical impact of slave trade, colonialism, and anti-black supremacy. This theme complements the research by Said (1978), who sought to understand how institutional and cultural stereotypes can influence how people view other cultures.

To identify the effects of these stereotypes, RQ3 sought to answer that through the research question RQ 3: What are the effects of negative stereotypes between Africans and Africans in the diaspora? By addressing this question, we can shed light on the impact of these stereotypes and gain insights for fostering understanding and reconciliation among these groups. These are the themes that emerged for **RQ3**

Themes	Excerpts
Lack of Engagement with Each Other	"And the African students admitted that they were not

	<p>engaging African Americans in a way that would enable them to read this space in which they were located."</p> <p>"I've also seen that students come and try to move away from being seen as just as a black person with, you know, they want to assimilate. And in that they don't want to fit in with the other black students. They don't want to be seen with the other black students. They prefer to not associate".</p> <p>"Some of them told me at that time they had been warned by their families and that when they came to the U.S., the black folks, to stay away from the black folks"</p>
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	<p>“And I remember my sophomore year going up to one of the young ladies, and we and it turned out she thought the same thing, that we thought we were better.”</p> <p>“They were stereotypes that were really designed to keep us apart, to separate us.”</p>
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A notable observation from these results is the apparent lack of engagement and interaction between the native Africans and those in the diaspora. This lack of discord between the two groups is dangerous because it promotes the stereotypes mentioned while preventing the possibility of interaction and engagement that would otherwise solve the existing discord among the two groups. According to Tatum (1997), a segregation between two groups, even though unintentional, can result in the reinforcement of pre-existing beliefs and biases about them. For instance, the fact that African students were not “engaging African Americans in a way that would enable them to read this space” highlights a divide between the two groups which squashes any chance for cross-cultural understanding.

According to the results, some students were warned by their families “to stay away from the black folks”. This assertion provides a vivid picture of just how the misconception about African Americans is deeply engrained. It is important to note that perceptions are not shaped by

personal experiences but by the generational beliefs and prejudices that have been perpetuated over a long period of time. This theory resonates with Feagin's (2000) study on systemic racism in which the existing beliefs shape the perceptions of other cultures thus reinforcing racial stereotypes.

**RQ4 Focused on identifying solutions to stereotypes and the effects of stereotypes through the research question,** what are the solutions to stereotypes and the effects of stereotypes among Africans and Africans in the diaspora? These were the overarching and emerging themes from this question.

Major Theme	Codes	Excerpt
Education and Awareness	Challenging Stereotypes	"A part of my career is really dedicated to dismantle telling stereotypical perspectives...we can contradict with the scholars of the fifties and sixties."
	Learning and Growing	"She's learning, but she's learning in a professional sense...Every day you're learning...if you're not learning from it, then you will not grow as an individual."
	Promoting Cultural	"But beyond the academic, personal relationships,

	Exchange	visiting people, going to churches, barbecuing and doing it openly."
	Critical Thinking	"The oft carried out extensive studies on African American and Caribbean literature, theater history, culture, and religion...strengthen social interaction has been fundamental in the understanding and friendships that are built."
	Educating About Context	"But I do enjoy collaborating with other people...co-create...co-creation is so important and the synergy that is built, I find it very, very fulfilling."
	Reducing Ignorance	"But I think I've enjoyed the atmosphere. even though there has been man instances when I've been in a class and



		<p>been the only black person...because they were ignorant and not ignorant in the negative way."</p>
	<p>Encouraging Dialogue</p>	<p>"If if there's no difference, is there then to a great degree, there's no growth.. what you say. but it's the way in which you say it...with some degree of concern, with some degree of love and respect."</p>
<p>Cultural Understanding</p>	<p>Building Intercultural Bridges</p>	<p>"The oft carried out extensive studies on African American and Caribbean literature, theater history, culture, and religion interacting free spirited me with Caribbean and African Americans in their homes, at barbecues, in their churches and other such spaces that strengthen social interaction has been fundamental in the</p>

		understanding and friendships that are built with people from these societies."
	Openness to Different Cultures	"So locally and I think that's quite an international and for me, those interpersonal relationships, you know, especially when they're casual and many times that there's a lot of strength behind them and they can lead to much greater things."
Racial Healing and Unity	Creating Safe Spaces	"The components of a racial healing circle are simple. Yet when combined form a container, a space where folks feel comfortable sharing stories with total strangers."
	Shared Humanity	"They can create a space for cross-cultural truth telling where individuals still connect it, respected and able to tell the story without

		tiptoeing around their raw experiences."
	Breaking Down Barriers	"So, I look forward to learning... and it shall be well. So, I'm excited and happy for this opportunity."
	Empathy and Understanding	"In the racial healing circles, you bring together people to share their stories, to share their joy and their pain."
	Dialogue and Connection	"Racial healing circles can lift up history, personal experiences, and knowledge of people whose stories are often untold...encourage participants to begin taking actions in their communities to bring about positive change."
	Listening and Mutual Respect	"When you listen to reply, you are only thinking of yourself.....turning to wonder. Turning to wonder

		what messages they were this person were receiving as a child that led them to think or feel this way."
	Healing from Trauma	"Healing from anything is the process of healing from the personal and generational trauma of racism is difficult yet so very, very necessary."

RQ4 sought to understand the effects of stereotypes among Africans and Africans in the diaspora with the aim of identifying solutions. Three overarching themes became apparent: Education and Awareness, Cultural Understanding, and Racial Healing and Unity.

#### 1. Education and Awareness

The importance of education and awareness could not be overstated in these results. By challenging the preexisting beliefs and notions about the Africans, and Africans in the diaspora we can address the stereotypes and contradict previous perceptions and foster unity, love, and mutual respect. The emphasis on continual learning, and gradual change of mindsets is not only a professional endeavor but a personal quest to reduce ignorance and foster mutual respect. It is worth noting that dialogue is important in challenging stereotypes and can be particularly effective when done with "love and mutual respect". It can foster a deeper and mutual understanding of the complexities of identity that exist in the fabric of our society.

## 2. Cultural Understanding

An initiative to build bridges between different cultures can be instrumental in fostering openness and dispel any preexisting beliefs and notions. Increased interaction and engagement in shared spaces such as churches, schools, and barbecues can help create strong bonds. According to Hall (1990), understanding and valuing diverse cultures can help create richer interpersonal relationships which can then challenge the existing stereotypes.

## 3. Racial Healing and Unity

Being the most outstanding theme in the scope of this research question and the results of the analysis, racial healing can help individuals confront and navigate personal and generational racial traumas. The emphasis on listening, mutual respect and empathy is important in breaking intergenerational barriers such as racial profiling, lack of interaction, and the differences that exist among Africans and Africans in the diaspora. This could subsequently result in unity and genuine reconciliation. As hooks (1994) states, true understanding comes from sharing challenges and historical backgrounds which in turn fosters genuine connections jumpstarting the healing process.

## **Theoretical Implications**

The results of this study add to the existing research on the stereotypical implications of positive and negative feedback with regards to the Africans, African Americans, and West Indians. Being able to participate in this discourse helps us define the rhetoric that can shape societal perceptions and biases (Burke, 1969). By understanding how the different stereotypes are formed and the underlying causes of such stereotypes we can be able to add to the theoretical paradigms and change the rhetorical discourse. Additionally, the focus on media influence and institutional indoctrination highlights the power that the media can have in influencing beliefs

and perspectives. This calls for a investigation of how such narratives are developed and propagated by the media and educational institutions.

There are several ways in which this can be addressed through multi-prolonged approach such as media sensitization, education sector reforms, cultural exchange programs, and truth and reconciliation efforts. There is need for a media sensitization campaign to ensure that media outlets are aware of the detrimental effects of propagating rhetorical narratives that perpetuate harmful stereotypes. By implementing cultural initiatives that promote intercultural activities we promote interaction and engagements in educational institutions. To dispel myths and promote mutual understanding among individuals of African descent, we need to promote cultural exchange programs in the society.

### **Limitations of this study**

The samples obtained for this study might be lacking in diversity since there exists differences between people of African descent in the form of socio-economic status, level of education, origin etc. therefore creating issues of bias. Secondly, the information used to create different themes and codes to define the different stereotypes is based on personal responses and experiences which may be devoid of social desirability bias. This study asserts that harmful rhetoric is primarily propagated by the media. However, it fails to mention the actual media sources that contribute to the harmful rhetoric and the level of portrayal and bias exhibited by such sources. Cultural beliefs also tend to change overtime. Therefore, the results of this study could be time limited since the socio-political context tends to change.

### **Conclusion**

This research embarked on quest to understand the various stereotypes that create discord between Africans, African Americans, and West Indians. It also sought to understand the root

causes of these stereotypes and provide recommendations. Even though the media still stands out as a major influence in the promotion of harmful narratives and beliefs, personal experiences also played a key role in shaping attitudes and perceptions about racial narratives. This study highlights the importance of education, cultural understanding, and racial healing in challenging and reshaping these narratives. Despite the various limitations of this study, the research objectives of this study contribute to the rhetorical discourse subsequently shaping interventions, policy changes, and further academic research. It emphasizes the importance of narrative change in challenging existing beliefs for a more inclusive and understanding future.

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