
Various theories have been advanced to account for immigrants to the United States. Most of these immigrants have faced the same types of challenges and obstacles in their acculturation, but the majority of immigrants have historically succeeded in assimilating and the U.S. has emerged as a truly multicultural nation as a result. While the problems facing immigrants have been well documented, studies have shown that immigrants from African nations face additional problems as well.

This study is a qualitative inquiry into the perceived experiences of African immigrant professors on the faculties of two public owned HBCUs. The influx of Sub-Saharan African immigrants taking faculty positions at HBCUs necessitates a qualitative study of their experiences on these campuses. It explores these immigrants’ motives to emigrate to America, their choice of academic careers and institutions, the influence of their ethnic and linguistic differences on their experiences and how they cope.

This study illuminates what is currently a lacuna in our understanding of a group of African immigrants who have achieved high levels of educational attainment. Also, it delves into a topical domain that has thus far been neglected.

This study reveals that the participants’ primary motive for immigration was the attraction to the more open opportunities of advanced scholarship in America. Other
motives include quests for political and economic stability. It describes academic career experiences of African immigrant professors that were continually responding to institutional pressures to prove themselves. Despite their shared racial characteristics with African Americans, African immigrant professors have not assimilated or melted into the cultural pot of HBCU campuses. This study also suggests that African immigrant academia are doubly disadvantaged. They have experienced discriminatory treatment, accent barrier, mistrust, alienation, career glass ceiling, exclusion, stress, and negative estimation of competence on these campuses. Overall, the participants have successes despite the difficult circumstances. The participants demonstrate a positive dual frame of reference (Ogbu, 1991) and are pleased to emigrate to America.
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF AFRICAN IMMIGRANT
PROFESSORS IN TWO HISTORICALLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS IN A
SOUTHEASTERN STATE

by

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Albert Ochukpue and late Mrs. Angela Patricia Ekenma Ochukpue who instilled in all their children the love for learning, the value of perseverance, reverence to God and service to humanity. Mama, you had longed to see the completion of this dissertation effort. It has taken me longer than I thought, but I know you have been with me all the way. You have been my inspiration. Nne anyi Ochiorah, may your gentle soul rest in perfect peace.
BIOGRAPHY

Winnie Edith Ngozi Ochukpue is the daughter of Mr. Albert Ochukpue and late Mrs. Angela Ochukpue. Winnie is an African immigrant. After her high school education, she attended the College of Education, Abraka and the University of Benin in Nigeria, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English and Music.

She began her education career as an English Instructor at a Federal College of Education, where she was given the responsibility of establishing and heading the English department of a new junior college. She planned and developed the English curriculum, organized the entire department, recruited teachers and saw the department to its accreditation.

She immigrated to the United States in 1988 to pursue a law degree but rekindled interest in the area of education. She attended North Carolina Central University where she graduated with two Master’s degrees in Special Education and Educational Administration and Supervision. While in graduate school, she served in Durham Public Schools in different capacities as special education teacher, Special Education chairperson, and liaison between the local industries and Durham Public Schools. In 1997 she became an Assistant Principal at Walter William High School in Burlington School System.

The failing health and the demands of taking care of her mother brought Winnie to Northern Virginia where she took a position as a specialist in English Speakers for Other Languages (ESOL) with Fairfax County Public Schools. When her mother’s
situation became critical, Winnie put her research writing and administrative career on hold to devote more time to care for her mother until she passed on.

She is currently enrolled in doctoral program at North Carolina State University where she is completing a Ph.D. in Educational Research, and Policy Analysis.

She resides in Alexandria Virginia and has four adopted wonderful children.
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Children and loved ones must also endure lapses of sanity that take place in authors with whom they live during the final stages of such a project as this. A full measure of my gratitude goes to my parents, Mr. Albert Ochukpue and late Mrs. Angela Ochukpue for inculcating in us (their children) the passion for education. I am particularly grateful to God for having you as my parents. Thank you both immensely for your sacrifices and the gift of and exposure to knowledge. I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to every member of my family for their patience and support. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my sister Frances whose selfless support made it possible for me to complete and defend my dissertation at a very critical time. To my brother Ike, I’m most appreciative of his belief in me, his intellectual contributions, and unwavering support.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Facilitated through a succession of major policy reforms that have been enacted by Congress from the mid-1960s onward, the United States has enjoyed a significant and steadily growing influx of immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa during the past quarter century. As Niessa (1997) remarked, the wave of African nationals coming to America in the final decades of the twentieth century was virtually unprecedented in its magnitude, greatly surpassing all comparable historical periods since the eradication of the slave trade (p.179). Recently published statistical data disclose that this ongoing influx has since proceeded apace and, in fact, gathered momentum of late. According to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, in the year 2002 alone, more than 60,000 African citizens entered the United States for the purpose of establishing permanent or semi-permanent residence within its borders (www.ins.gov). While estimates of the total number of Africans currently living in America vary somewhat, Arthur (2000) has recently reckoned that more than 500,000 African-born individuals had been granted legal resident status in the United States by the turn of the twenty-first century (p.33).

Although a substantial proportion of these immigrants will eventually return to their homelands, there is little doubt that new arrivals from Africa will out-number these repatriates in the foreseeable future, Although the mass media and, indeed, the general public of the United States seem unaware of this phenomenon, the U. S. has become the preferred destination for Africans seeking greater political freedom and/or economic opportunities than
are available to them in their countries of origin. In spite of the decrease, African immigration is still high when compared to earlier eras.

The limited number of empirical studies that have investigated the demographic characteristics of sub-Saharan immigrants in the United States indicates that America has received a disproportionately large share of Africa's best and brightest people. These studies uniformly report that educational attainment among African-born residents of the United States is remarkably high, considerably greater than that of native-born Americans and of most, if not all, other immigrant groups (Africa Profiles International, 1996; Amissah 1994; Apraku 1991, 1996; Arthur 2000; Attah-Poku 1996; Balch Institute 2001; Butcher 1994; Djamba, 1999; DoDoo 1997; Katende 1994; Lews 1996; Ogbu & Gibson 1991; Okoli, 1994; 1995; Takougang 1995; Zeleza 2003)). At the time of their entrance into the United States, the majority of male African immigrants interviewed in Arthur’s 2000 study had completed their college education and, in fact, within this sample, the proximate motive for coming to America was to extend their formal schooling at the post-graduate level. The impressive academic credentials and aspirations of African immigrants in the United States are at least partially reflected in their collective vocational profiles. According to Yang (2000), African immigrants account for approximately nine percent of all foreign-born, highly trained "professional, technical, and skilled workers" (PTS) in America today (p.643).

The large proportion of highly educated individuals among African immigrants is plainly an artifact of educational and professional opportunity differentials between the United States and African nations and closely related to this, an outcome of US immigration policies that have deliberately favored persons who possess valuable human
capital assets. On one hand, the underdeveloped economies of most sub-Saharan African states are unable to absorb the full volume of young Africans graduating from their universities, colleges, and technical training institutes; while on the other hand, many segments within the far more advanced labor market of the United States face a perennial shortage of highly skilled workers. Indeed, a central motive behind the liberalization of American immigration laws was the desire to attract well-educated individuals from around the world, especially from non-traditional sources in the so-called Third World societies of Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

Many Africans who have responded to the call of employment opportunities in the United States have gravitated toward careers in academia (Manrique & Manrique, 1994). An inordinately high percentage of African immigrants in the United States have joined other foreign-born educators and researchers on the faculties of American universities and colleges (Heller 1987; Bourvier & Sincox 1995; Davis 1997). In his comparatively small-scale study of African immigrants in the United States, Aparaku (1991) found that forty-three percent of his subjects were employed as professors at colleges and universities. In his large-scale study (N = 650) of African immigrants, Arthur reported that among those holding doctoral degrees, "a principal source of employment is in institutions of higher learning, especially historically black colleges and universities" (2000, p. 47).

Figure 1 represents the rate of migration of Africans to the United States from 1821 to 2000. U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Service records shows no migration from Africa between 1821 and 1890, and between 1891 and 1940, less than two thousand Africa can immigrants arrived in the United States. Between 1971 and 1990 over one hundred
thousand immigrated to the United States. The graph shows a slight decrease by 1991. This figure accounts for only documented African immigration.

**Graph 1. African Immigration Line Graph 1821-2000**

![Graph 1](image)

Figure 1. Historic African Immigration to the United States [Source: American Immigration: 2002]
While the assimilation and acculturation of immigrants into any host society are extraordinarily complex processes, in the context of America's historical experience, the customary explanatory construct has pivoted upon the metaphor of the "melting pot." Grounded in observations based upon successive waves of immigrants from Europe to the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the central plank of the melting pot thesis is (or was) that as each immigrant group (for example, the Germans, Irish, and Italians) achieved middle-class status through formal education and vocational effort, their ethnic backgrounds became progressively less important as a determinant of both their public and their private identities (Anderson 2000, p. 263). Concurrently, as each group of immigrants blended (or melted) into the host nation's society, American culture as a whole was gradually altered. Eventually, or so it was thought, foreign-born individuals would assume an American identity even as American society itself was enriched through the addition of new "ingredients."

Since the 1960s, the contemporaneous explanatory power of the melting pot metaphor has been subjected to withering challenge (Glazer & Moynihan 1963; Glazer 1993; 1997; Foner 2000; Anderson 2000). More particularly, scholars have noted that the assimilation of immigrant groups into American society has always been variable, and that the principal factor differentiating the respective experiences of different ethnic groups in the United States has been race. The prime example of an ethnic group that has not achieved full assimilation into America's melting pot is African Americans, the vast majority of whom are the descendants of individuals brought to the United States as human chattel in chains. Throughout history (including the period after the American Civil War), race has served as a
powerful discriminator of individual social status and, hence, of individual experience, in the United States (Wellman 1977; Manning 1997). Closely correlated with economic class, race has functioned as a marker of an individual's value and place in a predominantly Caucasian society, with non-whites (especially blacks) being consigned to the lower rungs of the social hierarchy by virtue of their skin color. As Fair (1999) has recently observed, despite the strides that African Americans have made since the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, even today “to be colored in this country is to be an outsider” (p. 3).

Given this sordid legacy of racial discrimination against African Americans and other non-white native-born sons and daughters, it is not surprising that race has been operative in American immigration policy. Arguably, until 1965, U.S. immigration laws actively discriminated against non-whites, with the most draconian barriers being erected against Asians (as in the Chinese Exclusionary Act) and Hispanics. Beyond official policies, while immigrants of all races have confronted prejudicial, xenophobic attitudes, non-white newcomers to the United States have been subjected to especially harsh treatment (Barkan, Gjerde, & Lee 1999; Fair, 1999; Jaret 1999; Legge 1997; Portes & Rumbaut, 1990; Schaefer, 1990). It is by no means a coincidence that as the complexion of immigrant inflows to the United States has taken on an increasingly non-white caste by dint of policy reforms, there has been a recrudescence of anti-immigrant sentiment among Americans. This "backlash" has been accompanied by periodic calls to establish barriers against all immigrants or (worse) to resume strict (or blanket) prohibitions against non-white foreign nationals (Williamson, 1998, pp. 3-5).

It is within this hybrid framework of racial discrimination and xenophobia that critical
parameters of the African immigrant experience in the United States have emerged. African immigrants have not melted into the cultural pot in the United States for two generic and interrelated reasons. First, their home culture is far different from that of the United States than is the case for other immigrant groups, for example, newcomers from Eastern Europe. Second, they face special problems stemming from their non-white racial status that function as barriers to full-fledged assimilation. Indeed, African immigrants are doubly disadvantaged, for as Arthur has pointed out, "they are foreign and black, with distinctive accents and different cultures from that of the dominant (white) group. These cultural differences about which the dominant culture in America knows very little, have produced mistrust, alienation, and exclusion from dominant spheres of social interaction" (Arthur 2000, p. 85). Indeed, even within what are presumably enlightened institutional settings such as the campuses of American universities and colleges, studies have shown that African-born individuals are subjected to more frequent and more severe discrimination than other immigrants, white and non-white alike (Manrique & Manrique 1993; Antwi & Ziyati 1996).

One particularly pernicious, if somewhat unexpected, aspect of the racial or immigrant status of Africans in the United States is the potential for conflict with African Americans. The latter frequently display hostility toward the former as the superior academic credentials of African immigrants enable them to obtain higher-status jobs, and, in fact, there is evidence that at least some white employers prefer African immigrants to native-born blacks. On this count, Kamya (1997) has commented, "the tensions generated by the masked preferential treatment given to Africans over African Americans often contributes…mutual suspicion among members of both groups" (p. 161). In like manner, the stories of Arthur's
study informants suggested that, "the cultural barriers and the social and economic
differences separating the Africans and the African-Americans is sometimes the cause of a
simmering hostility and misunderstanding between them" (2000, p. 77). The prospective
relevance of this topic and its importance for the study at hand comes into sharper focus as
we consider a second parameter of my interest and the setting for my field study, historically
black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

The American Professoriate

Especially when compared to the halcyon days of American academia in the two
decades after World War II, the 1970s and 1980s witnessed a period of turmoil, angst, and
decline within much of the nation's professoriate. As the co-author of a highly influential
study of American faculty members (Bowen & Schuster 1986), Jack Schuster noted in 1989,
working conditions of faculty in the United States suffered a dramatic deterioration in the
1970s and early 1980s. During this period, professors in the United States experienced a
sharp drop in both absolute and relative wages along with much higher levels of job
insecurity, resulting in widespread demoralization (p. 94). As the "baby boom generation"
graduated from institutions of higher learning, the economy entered into a prolonged period
of stagnation. Both state and federal funding declined, and American universities and
colleges adopted stringent cost-cutting measures. They turned increasingly to the use of non-
tenured and part-time faculty. As entire programs were unceremoniously jettisoned, even
tenured professors became increasingly apprehensive about their job status (Metzger 1987, p.
174).

It was, however, upon the shoulders of new entrants into the professoriate that this
massive retrenchment in American academia fell most heavily. As Bowen and Schuster (1986) observed, even exceptionally talented young scholars faced formidable obstacles in their struggle to gain tenure—if, indeed, they were able to get a full-time appointment at all (p. 201). Summarizing a central finding of his 1986 investigation with Bowen, Schuster (1989) commented, "all in all, faculty members tended to be dispirited" (Schuster 1989, p. 95). Even worse, resentments compounded the depressed outlook of the American professoriate at the end of the 1980s. As recapitulated by Schuster (1989), the 1986 survey found "that many faculty members were disgruntled over campus differential pay policies…at numerous campuses faculty members reported strong resentment over inequitable treatment" (p. 95).

While Bowen and Schuster's general findings were disconcerting, Schuster (1989) later recalled, "One particularly disturbing finding involves the recruitment of minority talent into the professoriate. No aspect of our study has been more discouraging than our findings about the prospects of attracting highly able minorities to academic careers" (pp. 96-97). This projection did, in fact, materialize. Although there was some growth in the proportion of university and college faculty positions held by non-whites, the available evidence reveals that by the early 1990s, African Americans were still grossly under-represented within the ranks of academia. In fall semester of 1992, African Americans composed 12.5 percent of the US populace and 9.6 percent of all students enrolled in higher education but only 4.9 percent of all teaching faculty at American universities and colleges (Nettles & Perna 1997, p. 427). Moreover, when compared to their white counterparts at that time, African American university and college faculty "tended to hold lower ranks and untenured positions and to
receive lower salaries" (Nettles & Perna 1997, p. 427). These differences, it must be noted, were partially an artifact of the reported facts that African American professors had fewer years of experience and lower levels of educational attainment than white professors did.

In predicting that American universities and colleges would experience severe difficulties in trying to attract qualified African American professors, Schuster cited two variables, "the first [centering] [upon] discrimination or the perception of discrimination; the second on academe's declining competitiveness with other careers" (Schuster 1989, p. 97). Of these two factors, it was the second factor, the eroding competitiveness of academia relative to other careers that exerted the most powerful influence. Somewhat ironically, as a consequence of affirmative action programs in corporate America, many talented African Americans were diverted from academic careers and into much more highly paid jobs in the private sector. Schuster (1989) cited a comment by a professor of economics at Morehouse College (an HBCU): "It's a shock these days to find a good student who wants to go on to a teaching career" (in Schuster 1989, p. 99). The same informant noted that many of his best students had spent summer internships working for major insurance companies and Wall Street brokerage houses, returning to their campuses with the intention of pursuing highly paid positions unavailable to them in academic careers.

In terms of its geographic disbursement across the United States, the African-American professoriate is heavily concentrated in the southeastern region of the country. In 1996, 48.1 percent of all black professors (as opposed to 23.7 percent of their white counterparts) worked in colleges and universities located in the Southeast (Nettles & Perna 1997, p. 428). The explanation for this lopsided distribution is that three-quarters of
historically black colleges and universities were established between 1865 and 1899 during the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction eras, and of those, more than 90 percent are in the Southeastern region (Jackson 2001, p. 108). Indeed, according to Slaughter (1989), the majority of all African American professors are employed by HBCUs (p. 89).

The basic definition of an HBCU is a "post-secondary institution specifically established to educate African Americans" (Jackson 2001, p. 109). Including both public and private institutions, at the end of the twentieth century there were 109 HBCUs meeting the definitional criteria of the Department of Education, of which twenty offered two-year associates degrees while the remaining 89 offered four-year bachelor's degrees or higher (Jackson 2001, p. 109). With a few exceptions (Howard University, Southern University, and a handful of others), most of these schools are comparatively small, with an average enrollment of approximately 1,600 students (Whiting 1991, p. 21).

Originally construed as liberal arts colleges, many HBCUs became industrial training schools under the model of "Negro education" espoused by Booker T. Washington. In the post-World War II era, however, HBCUs returned to their original mission of providing African Americans with a tertiary education similar to that provided at predominantly white institutions (PWIs), including liberal arts, physical sciences, and professional (legal, medical) degree programs. Concurrently, more and more HBCUs began to offer masters and doctoral degrees. Over the years, many of the most distinguished African-American leaders have graduated from HBCUs, including Dr. Martin Luther King, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall (Whiting 1991, p. 37). Indeed, according to Jackson (2001), by 1991 70 percent of all African-Americans holding baccalaureate degrees
had graduated from HBCUs, and by 1996, 60 percent of all African-Americans holding doctoral degrees had received their bachelors degree from HBCUs (p.107). As opportunities for African-Americans at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) arose in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement and affirmative action programs, the proportion of all African-American college students attending HBCUs necessarily declined. Nonetheless, in 1996 these institutions matriculated 26 percent of all African-Americans enrolled in four-year colleges in the United States (Jackson 2001, p. 128). During the final decades of the twentieth century, HBCUs experienced modest but significant growth in their aggregate student bodies; between 1976 and 1994, student enrollment at HBCUs rose by 26 percent, with most of this increase coming after 1986 (Jackson 2001, p.109).

HBCUs pride themselves on being student focused. Educators at these predominantly black colleges and universities concentrate upon the development of undergraduate students with the intention of empowering them to pursue high-status, influential careers once they have earned their degrees. By several critical yardsticks, they have accomplished this goal. A statistical exercise conducted by Constantine in 1994 revealed that HBCUs have a substantially higher retention rate of African American college students than do historically white colleges (Constantine 1994). A follow-up study of how their graduates fared reported, "students who attended HBCUs in the 1970s apparently enjoyed substantially higher value added to wages than black students who attended historically white or racially mixed four year institutions" (p.541). These outcome findings strongly suggest that, in the main, HBCUs have been effective in accomplishing their collective mission.

As noted in passing above, HBCUs are primarily teaching institutions geared to the
needs of undergraduate students. As Whiting observed in the early 1990s, "although the faculties of these schools were, for long years, generally without advanced research training and/or doctorates, they entered the task of teaching with strong commitment and unbounded enthusiasm" (Whiting 1991, p.30). Today, a significant percentage of all HBCUs provide post-graduate degrees and their faculties boast of a substantially greater proportion of Ph.D.s. As Finnegan (1993) observed, between 1960 and 1980, the proportion of HBCUs offering Masters’ degrees grew at a substantially faster pace than the percentage of PWIs that inaugurated post-graduate programs. Nevertheless, most HBCUs still offer a bachelor’s diploma as their terminal degree; in comparison to PWIs, they tend to concentrate upon teaching undergraduates with considerably less emphasis upon graduate programs and advanced research work (Jackson 2001, p. 149).

The vast majority of HBCUs were ushered into existence in response to the relative exclusion of African Americans from PWIs. To the present, HBCUs present themselves as bastions of equal opportunity and diversity. On this count, Jackson (2001) has recently proclaimed:

HBCUs are the Garden of Eden of equal opportunity. The possibility of a more just society grows from the education model provided by HBCUs. Unlike historically white institutions, HBCUs have always been institutions of inclusion, not exclusion. HBCUs have never by law or tradition excluded individuals because of race, color, creed, or national origin (Jackson, 2001, p. 107).
Indeed, the student bodies of many HBCUs include whites and non-whites who are not African Americans. In addition to African Americans, their faculties encompass Asian, Hispanic, white and foreign-born black professors. Although we have no firm statistics, the available evidence suggests that the majority of African-born professors in the United States are employed at HBCUs (Zeleza, 2003).

Consistent with both their historical mission and their precept of inclusion, HBCUs accept a significant number of African American students who would not otherwise qualify for college or university admission. According to Linette Fox, a tenured professor of business administration at Johnson C. Smith University (a private HBCU), at her school, "we have students who come from various levels of achievement, from the very high achievers to the minimal achievers. One of our roles is to be there for students who would not have the opportunity to get their college degrees if it were not for HBCUs" (Fox, 1989, cited in Jackson, 2001, p. 152).

The comparatively low admission standards of HBCUs have led some of their critics to charge that except for a handful of such institutions (again, Howard, Southern, and Morehouse), HBCUs are "at best junior colleges and should be designated as such" (Jackson 2001, p. 128). Understandably, the administrators of HBCUs take umbrage at such disparaging appraisals. Arthur Thomas, the president emeritus of Central State University (an HBCU), has ascribed negative judgments of the quality of HBCUs to residual racism. In an interview with Jackson, Thomas complained, "We still have the stereotypical attitude that if it is a black school, it is inferior, and there is something wrong with it," (Thomas cited in Jackson, 2001, p. 140).
By at least one central criterion, that of financial resources, HBCUs do, in fact, suffer by comparison with their predominantly white counterparts. When set alongside PWIs, HBCUs receive a disproportionately small amount of federal grant funding. President Emeritus Thomas attributes this anomaly to racial discrimination; moreover, it is his contention that "whites deliberately, premeditatedly, and maliciously planned the stunting of the growth of Central State" (Thomas cited in Jackson 2001, p. 139). Although there is no way of assessing the validity of Thomas's second charge, aside (nor, for that matter, the first), it must be noted that one obvious reason that PWIs receive a higher percentage of federal funding than HBCUs is that they tend to have a much greater presence in research projects that are of interest to Congress.

A particularly pertinent aspect of the financial resource shortage that most HBCUs endure revolves around endowments and alumni contributions at large. As Whiting (1991) observed a decade ago, "almost without exception, the HBCUs, both private and public, have depended for the larger part of their annual operating budgets on student tuition and fees. No such institution, even to this day has a significant endowment" (Whiting, 1991, p.23). Whiting then added that "the lack of black giving to black higher education has been an acute group failing and a source of embarrassment through the years" (p. 23). During the past decade, there have been a few well-publicized instances of alumni largesse; comedian Bill Cosby donated an eye-popping $53 million to his alma mater, an HBCU. On the whole, however, HBCUs have not enjoyed significant financial support from African Americans.

Paradoxically, those HBCU alumni who do actively support their former schools typically want a significant say in policy-making. In Whiting's (1991) estimation, “many
alumni of black colleges seem to feel that their advisory and support roles should involve consultation on daily operations. Their lack of power in other settings has historically left churches, schools and lodges as their major political arenas" (1991, p. 25). The net result of this meddling in institutional affairs is that decision-making at HBCUs tends to be highly politicized and this, in turn, has frequently generated conflict at the top.

Along with a dearth of capital, Jackson cites presidential turnover rates at HBCUs as one of the greatest challenges that these institutions face today. "HBCUs, especially public HBCUs," she recently wrote, "are experiencing a rapid exodus of presidents. In the public institutions, the turnover is attributed primarily to a hostile political environment. Some have suggested that overall, the turnover rate is due to the incompatibility of expectations between the presidents and the boards of trustees" (Jackson, 2001, p. 130). At the same time, HBCUs tend to be isolated from the larger communities in which they are located (Whiting, 1991, p. 33). On the whole, they lack a town-and-gown tradition and their anonymity can be traced back to segregation.

Taking all this into account, Albert Whiting (1991), a former president of an HBCU, presented a less than flattering thumbnail sketch of historically black institutions of higher learning at the start of the 1990s:

In sum, these schools are for the most part small, financially marginal, relatively unknown, poorly equipped and housed, with poorly prepared students, and staffed by faculties with a minimum of advanced degrees. On the other hand, they also have an unusually strong commitment to teaching undergirded by a nurturant atmosphere and a special affinity and expertise in
awakening untutored minds and molding unprepared students into functioning professionals and contributing citizens (Whiting, 1991, p.,35).

At the risk of over-simplifying the equation, relative to larger, better-endowed PWIs, HBCUs are compelled by their mission to do more for their comparatively under-prepared students with less in the way of financial and physical resources.

As might be anticipated, the relative poverty of HBCUs is a factor in their efforts to recruit and retain qualified faculty members. As a professor at a prominent HBCU told Schuster in 1989, the key to attracting more African Americans into careers in tertiary-level education is, in a single word, "money" (p. 100). Owing to their financial circumstances, HBCUs pay their professors substantially less than the national average. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (1996), during the 1993-1994 school year, the faculty of HBCUs received wages that were approximately seventy-nine percent of those earned by all faculty members in the United States (p. vii). Incidentally, it may be noted that HBCU faculty salaries display above-norm gender equality. In 1993-1994, male faculty members at HBCUs earned twelve percent more than their female colleagues while male faculty at all American institutions of higher learning earned twenty-four percent more than their female counterparts (National Center for Educational Statistics 1996, p. vii). This greater gender equality aside, the faculty of HBCUs tends to be underpaid when compared to professors working on PWI campuses.

Along with below-mean personnel budgets, HBCUs suffer from deficits in their capital budgets. As Whiting has noted, “nearly all physical plants at HBCUs are inadequate and deferred maintenance is a major problem. This tends to depress the learning environment
unless great emphasis is placed on lifting the learning and teaching process to a level where buildings, modernization, and out-of-date equipment are secondary” (Whiting, 1991, p. 34). Physical working conditions at HBCUs are highly unfavorable relative to those of PWIs: they tend, for example, to have far less digital technology and far fewer computer terminals per student than non-HBCU schools.

Many qualified professionals are deterred from applying for faculty positions at HBCUs due to a dearth of research opportunities, on the one hand, and inordinately heavy teaching loads, on the other. As Whiting (1991) explained, "because of limited resources and facilities, HBCUs rarely qualify for major research and/or government grants…. Therefore, these schools have understandably been constricted in growth, vision, and talent and therefore limited in outreach and educational influence" (p. 24). As part and parcel with this, Professor Linette Fox noted that the heavy teaching demands placed upon HBCU faculty members leave little time for conducting and publishing research (cited in Jackson, 2001, p. 151). Speaking of her own experience, Professor Fox told Jackson (2001), "I would like to do more research and publishing. However, it requires a different kind of time, time that is taken from teaching, coaching, mentoring, motivating and encouraging students" (cited in Jackson, 2001, p. 151). One consequence of this quandary is that the severe constraints on their capacity to conduct and publish studies deprives HBCU faculty members of critical credentials on their curriculum vitae, thereby restricting members’ inter-institutional job mobility.

We have ample cause to suspect that jobs at HBCUs are not attractive relative to positions elsewhere in American academia. At a time when a significant number of
prospective African American educators have been drawn to career opportunities outside of academia, we would expect that HBCUs currently confront problems in attempting to recruit faculty members from their traditional pool of talent, native-born blacks. What we do know is that HBCUs rely heavily upon foreign-born professors, including scholars from sub-Saharan (i.e., black) Africa to fill faculty positions (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1994).

Given their ideological legacy of diversity and inclusion, we might presume that HBCUs would welcome qualified African educators onto their teaching staffs. Indeed, in light of their shared racial characteristics and common ties to the motherland (Africa), we might anticipate that African-born faculty members would be highly prized additions to the HBCU professoriate. Nevertheless, as previously stated, relations between African immigrants in the United States and African Americans have often been marred by mutual distrust and conflict. On this front, Arthur Thomas observed that while he was proud of his school's work with African immigrant students and staff members, he was also "disappointed that many blacks have the same attitudes as many whites toward Africa. Some of them say they want nothing to do with Africa" (Thomas cited in Jackson, 2001, p. 143).

Although they are engaged in a common and eminently worthy endeavor, relations between African immigrant HBCU faculty members and the African American faculty, administrators, and students of HBCUs are nevertheless problematic. They are clearly influenced by an institutional mission that highlights diversity and equality but that is also marked by resource shortages and, of late, internal political conflicts. It is against this
background, and in this research setting that the original fieldwork of the study at hand has been conducted.

**Study Purpose**

This study is a qualitative inquiry into the experiences of African immigrant professors on the faculties of two public HBCUs. It is a heuristic exploration designed to illuminate the reported, subjective experience of its participants. As such, it does not have a research problem in the positivist sense of a specific, pre-determined hypothesis (or set of hypotheses) for testing. Its proximate purpose is to advance my understanding of the experiences and status and experiences of African immigrant faculty members in American institutions. Its ultimate purpose is to convey at least a portion of that understanding to the reader.

**Research Questions**

The focus and scope of this inquiry is organized around a set of research questions that were derived from my review of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature, from my own experience as an academic in America, from my observations as an African immigrant graduate school student, and from anecdotal accounts conveyed to me by other sub-Saharan African immigrants prior to the initiation of field work. This study's questions can be stated as:

1. What are the motives of African immigrant faculty for coming to the United States and pursuing careers in higher education?
2. How do African immigrant HBCU faculty members understand their professional and personal experiences on the campuses of these schools?
3. To what extent have racial, ethnic, and linguistic differences influenced these experiences?

4. What are the participants' perceptions of the performance of HBCUs in providing a supportive professional environment and how do these immigrants cope on their campuses?

**Research Orientation**

The study is a qualitative inquiry, and, as such, a manifestation of what Thomas Schwandt (2000) has characterized as the “qualitative inquiry movement.” According to Schwandt, this movement emerged in the 1970s and presently encompasses "multiple epistemological, methodological, political, and ethical criticisms of social scientific research in fields and disciplines that favored experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, and survey research strategies" (p. 189). Schwandt has distinguished among three stances within the qualitative inquiry movement: interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social constructionism, and he allows that there are other distinctive schools or branches within that movement. Nevertheless, all variants of qualitative inquiry “share a general rejection of the blend of scientism, foundationalist epistemology, instrumental reasoning, and the philosophical anthropology of disengagement that has marked mainstream social science" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 190). Moreover, the qualitative inquiry movement as a whole embraces "a profound concern with understanding what other human beings are doing or saying" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 200). This concern is grounded in the belief that human behavior is fundamentally different from the non-human phenomena of the natural sciences. People are guided by the
meanings that they construct as they attempt to make sense of their experience and respond to the world around them, a world that includes other meaning-making individuals.

Although there are myriad ramifications within the qualitative inquiry movement as a whole, an especially crucial difference arises from contrasting responses to the common acknowledgement that the study of human phenomena cannot be entirely objective. As Valerie Janesick observed, "qualitative researchers accept the fact that research is ideologically driven. There is no value-free research design. Early on, the qualitative researcher identifies his or her own biases and articulates the ideology or conceptual frame of the study" (2000 p. 385). Phenomenological researchers take stock of their own biases and then attempt to limit their impact upon study findings by dropping all preconceptions and allowing their participants to speak in their own terms. By contrast, while scholars who adopt a heuristic stance also engage in deep reflection upon the pre-existing biases that they bring with them to study design and the interpretation of data, they do not attempt to jettison their "prejudices." They harness their personal biases into identification with their study participants (Janesick 2000, p. 394).

In this study, I have implemented a heuristic approach based chiefly upon a model delineated by Moustakis (1990; Douglas and Moustakis, 1985). As outlined by Moustakis, heuristic research unfolds in five broad stages. Researchers first immerse themselves in the world of their study participants. Grounded in this experience, the researchers then allow certain ideas to emerge during an incubation phase as they come to a preliminary understanding of the phenomenon in question. It is only after these processes have been initiated that the researchers are able to illuminate the phenomenon by formulating broad, but
specific points of inquiry and posing them to the study participants (or otherwise observing
their behavior). After gathering such data, the researchers employ inductive methods to
construct mid-level generalizations about the subjective experience of the study's
participants, exercising care in retaining nuances that reflect differences among individual
participants. This, in turn, creates an understanding that enables them to explicate the
participants' experiences and to convey at least part of them to a third party, the reader of the
study. In the fifth and final phase of the heuristic inquiry process as presented by Moustakis,
they undertake a creative synthesis, integrating their own experience with that of their study
participants or co-researchers.

**Significance of the Study**

There are reasons to believe that this study will yield significant findings. First, the
phenomenon under scrutiny, i.e., the experience of African immigrant professors at HBCUs
in the United States, should be of substantive importance. Given the increasing inflow of
Sub-Saharan African immigrants taking faculty positions at HBCUs, qualitative study of
their professional experiences is needed to further our understanding of how they fare on
these campuses. Second and closely related to this, the study may well help to pinpoint
sources of participant dissatisfaction that can be addressed by HBCU administrators.

At the same time, this study delves into a topical domain that has thus far been
neglected. A comprehensive review of the literature by the researcher has disclosed that there
is a paucity of studies concerning the experience of African immigrants in the United States.
Indeed, until the publication of Arthur's (2000) *Invisible Sojourners*, there were no full-
length empirical investigations of the African immigrant experience in America. To the best
of my knowledge, no qualitative examinations of African immigrant faculty members have been published to date, despite their rapidly increasing presence on American campuses. It goes without saying that aside from a handful of anecdotal remarks, the literature is currently devoid of studies dedicated to African immigrant professors working at HBCUs. Hence, this study should illuminate what is currently a lacuna in our understanding of a group of African immigrants who have achieved very high levels of educational attainment, with participant eligibility criteria functioning to isolate a key characteristic of African immigrants as a whole.

Consistent with the premises of grounded theory (Glaser, 1978), it is also possible that the findings of this study will contribute to the testing and reformulation of certain key theoretical constructs, including, but not limited to the melting pot thesis. In particular, the study results may shed light upon the interplay between race and ethnicity.

Lastly, I am an African immigrant academic, and, as such, I have a self-evident stake in understanding the experience of African-born faculty members. Indeed, it is my contention that my shared background with my study participants is a key asset in gaining access to and in interpreting information from other African-born scholars living in the United States.

Assumptions and Limitations

I approached this study with the assumption that I hold certain preconceived ideas, attitudes, and biases that can be identified through self-reflection and the maintenance of a research journal, but that cannot be entirely discarded. I further assumed that by following a heuristic research model, I can come to an understanding of the phenomenon to which this research inquiry is directed, and that this understanding can be articulated to an external user,
the reader. I further assume that the information conveyed to me by study participants is valid.

Consistent with this exploration's qualitative orientation, it is my assertion that, for the purposes of this study, validity equates with credibility. This study relies exclusively upon qualitative data-gathering techniques, the primary research instrument being an author-constructed, semi-structured interview schedule. Although the interview protocol was pilot tested, I make no claim as to the validity of responses to it.

The study utilizes a very small participant sample in which eight individual participants were recruited through purposive, non-probabilistic means. That being so, the reliability and generalizability of study findings is inherently limited. Moreover, during the process of enlisting participants, I encountered some significant setbacks: most of the prospective participants whom I contacted declined to be interviewed. Because only a fraction of the individuals contacted agreed to participate in this study, it is highly likely that a subject self-selection phenomenon has influenced study results and thereby constrained their reliability and external validity.

**Sequence of Presentation**

Following this introductory chapter, a survey of relevant theoretical and empirical studies is presented in Chapter 2's review of the literature. A full exposition of the study's methodology appears in Chapter 3. Organized into broad themes, study results and findings, including extensive citations from interview transcripts, are reported in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 provides a brief summary of, and draws conclusions from, the inquiry's principal findings.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Until the early 1990s, virtually all published studies of foreign-born blacks in the United States were dedicated exclusively or primarily to immigrants from the Caribbean region (Dodoo, 1997, pp.,527-528). Prior to that juncture, although the number of African immigrants residing in America had increased at a phenomenal pace (rising more than tenfold between 1960 and 1990), scholarly interest in this distinctive population was negligible. As the title of John Arthur's book *Invisible Sojourners* (2000) suggests, from the respective standpoints of both the research community and the American public at large, African immigration to the United States was dismissed as an insignificant anomaly. Overshadowed by the far larger inflows of newcomers from Latin America and Asia, apart from sporadic inclusion in demographic analyses prepared by official agencies, Transatlantic black immigration did not command the attention of social scientists. As a consequence of this long-standing neglect, the current body of research delving into the relocation motives, the controlling aspirations, and the qualitative experiences of African immigrants in America is of recent vintage and, as yet, woefully inadequate.

Nevertheless, aside from rapid expansion in their ranks, recently conducted studies have firmly established some facts about African-born individuals and households living in the United States that highlight their salient attributes and thereby furnish a basis for the selection and delimitation of prospective research topics. As every scholar who has approached the subject has reported, educational attainment among African-born residents of
the United States is extraordinarily high, considerably above that of native-born Americans and of most, if not all, other immigrant groups (Africa Profiles International, 1996; Amissah 1994; Apraku 1991, 1996; Arthur 2000; Attah-Poku 1996; Balch Institute 2001; Djamba, 1999; Ogbru & Gibson 1991; Okoli, 1994; Speer 1994, 1995; Takougang 1995). A majority of male African immigrants in the United States have completed a college education; indeed, their proximate motive for coming to America is often to extend their formal schooling at the post-graduate level (Arthur, 2000, p. 5). Many African immigrants arrive in the United States after receiving a post-secondary degree (or its technical equivalent) in Africa or elsewhere abroad. As Yang (2000) has observed, African immigrants now account for approximately nine percent of all foreign-born, highly trained "professional, technical, and skilled workers" (PTS) (p. 643). The inordinately large proportion of highly educated individuals among African immigrants in America is an artifact of educational/professional opportunity differentials between the United States and African nations and, closely related to this, an outcome of US immigration policies that have deliberately favored individuals who possess valuable human capital assets.

Seen in this context, the ongoing inflow of educated Africans to the United States is part of that substantially broader pattern of human capital cross-border transfers colloquially referred to as the global "brain drain." As world systems theorists have argued, the flow of talented individuals from less developed (LD) economies (such as those of Africa) into more developed (MD) economies (like that of the United States) can be construed as an inevitable outcome of growing socioeconomic inequality within a globalizing capitalist system. While the degree of determinacy and its linkages to micro-level (individual) and meso-level
(household/network) international relocation decisions is a matter of debate, researchers acknowledge that the current post-modern stage of the African Diaspora centers around a brain drain pattern (Mohan & Zack-Williams, 2002, pp. 211ff.). Although other advanced capitalist societies, notably those of Western Europe, are net recipients (and to that extent, beneficiaries) of the worldwide brain drain, the United States is the single largest destination for the movement of PTS individuals from Latin America, Asia, and Africa (Cheng & Yang, 1998, p. 627). Plainly, the brain drain phenomenon is a controversial public policy issue, particularly within sending nations, and is, in fact, viewed by its critics as a seemingly benign but ultimately destructive exploitation of non-white labor.

While the brain drain that encompasses many African immigrants to the United States has been the subject of substantial theory, research, and commentary, as indicated above, the actual experience of the "invisible sojourners" themselves in their host societies, notably the United States, has been largely overlooked (Dodoo, 1997, p. 530). Fortunately, a handful of researchers have begun to probe beneath macro-level trends. Among them, the aforementioned book by Arthur (2000) encompasses findings from a three-year long ethnographic field study of 650 Africans living in four American cities—Charlotte (North Carolina) Washington, DC, Atlanta, and Minneapolis-St. Paul. It is the single largest examination to date of African immigrants in the United States to present qualitative information about the experience of this transplanted population from the perspective of its actual participants.

The over-arching theme of Arthur's text resonates with observations made by other
scholars (Aparaku, 1991, 1996: Ogbu, 1991) about the dual character of the African immigrant's identity and runs directly contrary to the so-called melting pot metaphor concerning immigrant acculturation leading to cultural assimilation in the United States. As Arthur realized from his field research, most African immigrants in America selectively participate in the host society, but have no intention of assimilating into it.

The African immigrant is a sojourner and stranger in America and often does not aspire to naturalize or assimilate. Becoming culturally and economically integrated is not a major goal. Most African immigrants have one goal in mind, and this they pursue with relentless vigor—the goal of achieving economic independence and self-sufficiency and funneling their assets to Africa to start a business or retire (Arthur 2000, p.128).

This pattern stands in sharp contrast to that of other new immigrant groups in the United States, Koreans, for example. It displays what Linda Basch and her colleagues (Basch, Glick-Shiller & Blanc-Szanton, 1994) have characterized as the defining features of emergent transnational communities.

Whether they intend to return to their homelands or to remain in the United States, the available research shows that African immigrants in America confront an exceedingly difficult and complicated balancing act. It entails the concurrent management and negotiation of racial identities and the (re-) formulation of ethnic identities. While all immigrants are vulnerable to acculturative stress, non-whites coming from societies in which non-whites are predominant to the United States are acutely prone to suffer the combined effects of xenophobic and racist abuses (Gjerde & Lee, 1999). Given the particularly antagonistic
history and the current state of race relations in America, this is clearly the case for people with black complexions. In a public context, their superficial resemblance to African Americans marks them as targets for discriminatory racial treatment by whites; yet beneath the surface, they remain culturally/ethnically distinct from African Americans (Legge, 1997). Both intentional and inadvertent expressions of cultural differences (including responses to white racism) may well precipitate conflict with members of the traditional black population in the United States. If we are to fully appreciate the qualitative facets of African immigrant experience in the United States, the issue of race is unavoidable. At the same time, given the attributes of this study's focus and its respondent sample, African immigrant faculty members at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), the research of African/African-American relations must necessarily be examined in detail.

**Theoretical Review**

Immigration is an extraordinarily complex phenomenon. Its causes and consequences have been approached from a wide variety of disciplinary perspectives, including demography, macroeconomics, microeconomics, sociology and social psychology. As this truncated roster connotes, immigration involves micro or individual level factors (variables influencing individual decision-making, for example), macro or structural/systemic level variables (disparities in national development, changes in immigration laws), and meso or social factors (the existence and strength of immigration networks). Taking all this into account, Alejandro Portes (1997) has recently asserted that any attempt to construct a grand theory of immigration would be inherently futile (p. 810).
Acknowledging this, we note from the outset that traditional (and over-simplified) models of immigration focus upon individual decision-making construed as a rational assessment process. From this standpoint, the prospective immigrant essentially weighs the perceived benefits and drawbacks of remaining in his or her home society against the anticipated gains/losses of relocating to a given host society. At its core, conventional immigration theory explains the causes of cross-border population movements according to a utility maximization function. In this context, brain drain immigration from less developed to more developed countries is conceptualized as a form of human capital investment. People living in Third World nations initially assess international market demand differentials for both their current and prospective vocational skills to determine where they are likely to receive the greatest reward for their talents.

Placed in this analytical framework, the epicenter of the brain drain phenomenon can be approached in terms of push and pull factors, with variable educational and career opportunities accorded the greatest weight on both sides of the ledger (Lee, 1966). As Chen and Yang (1998) have explained, "favorable conditions in the receiving country, such as high salaries, high living standards, good research conditions, and career opportunities, pull professional migrants to the recipient country while unfavorable conditions in the sending country push the highly trained to leave" (Cheng & Yang 1998, p. 628). In terms of micro-level immigration decisions, the key component of brain drain push/pull calculations is the difference between skilled labor absorption capacities of the immigrant's home nation and those of prospective host countries. Within many LD countries, including those of Africa, the capacity to produce highly trained people is substantially greater than the ability of their
economies to provide them with employment opportunities commensurate with their skills. Consequently, highly educated individuals leave their homelands and come to the United States (and other advanced labor markets) in search of economic opportunities that can be augmented by additional education and training within the host society. At the same time, it must be recognized that political variables are operative on both sides of the push/pull balance sheet. Individuals living in unstable polities where war and civil unrest are frequent, under authoritarian regimes in which individual liberties are repressed, and/or in societies where considerations other than merit are important determinants of socioeconomic advancement are essentially pushed abroad. By the same token, they are pulled toward host societies that are perceived as stable, free, and reasonably egalitarian environments.

Since the 1970s, the classical model of immigration as an aggregation of individual decision-making outcomes has come under assault from proponents of macro-structural or systemic theories. As Zolberg (1989) has noted, although there is substantial variation among them, these approaches tend to be historical, structural, global and critical (pp. 403). Among the salient alternatives to the classical model in currency, dependency theorists have attempted to incorporate the push and pull mechanism into a broader analytical framework that encompasses international imbalances dividing developed and lesser developed nations (see, for example, Ong, Cheng & Evans, 1992). Despite Portes's admonition, world system theorists have "attempted to link highly trained migration to broader global processes such as global articulation of higher education and unequal development on a global scale" (Cheng & Yang 1998, p. 628). The core assumption shared by these critical world system theorists is that as the capitalist globalization process accelerates, inter-dependencies between nations,
notably LD and MD societies, are strengthened. Concurrently, however, the globalization process sustains and in fact increases disparities in national development (Cheng & Yang 1998, p. 629).

A prime example of efforts to combine micro-level and world systems globalization variables into a unified model capable of explaining and, in fact, predicting the movement of PTS workers from LD to MD societies was recently undertaken by Cheng and Yang (1998). At the risk of oversimplifying the reasoning behind their model, Cheng and Yang (1998) maintained that the brain drain is driven by two over-arching global trends. The first of these is the growing disparity in the economic development of LD and MD nation-states as reflected in mean per capita income levels. Between 1940 and 1990, they note, the difference in mean per capita incomes between advanced industrialized nations and less developed countries widened substantially (Cheng & Yang, 1998, p. 634). At the start of that period, mean per capita income in MD societies was twenty-three times greater than that of LD nations, but by 1990, this gap had widened to a ratio of sixty to one. Of crucial importance, with the acceleration of technological advances causing a shift from manufacturing-based to information-based economic activity, the ability of MD nations to meet skilled labor force requirements from indigenous sources eroded, creating a need to import human capital from abroad. As this occurred, skill profile deficits in their economies prompted MD policy-makers to liberalize immigration policies, at least insofar as "PTS" workers (and their families) were concerned.
Concurrently, Cheng and Yang argued, capitalist globalization processes led to what they termed "global educational articulation." Spearheaded by multinational corporate (MNC) penetration of and expansion within LD nations, as globalization has proceeded the curricula used in LD schools has come to replicate curricula used in MD educational institutions. It is not unusual, for example, to find institutions of higher learning in Latin America, Asia, and Africa relying upon textbooks that are essentially translations of those used in the colleges, universities, and technical schools of North America and Western Europe. This global educational articulation process generates an expanding pool of students in poor LD nations with vocational skills that can be readily transferred to the job markets of wealthy MD nations.

At the same time, exposure to foreign curricula weakens the cultural ties and loyalties of students in their own societies, thereby lowering the social/psychological costs of moving abroad. In sum, Cheng and Yang (1998) asserted, "the articulation of higher education across countries provides similar training of skills, shapes common universal values, facilitates transnational ties, and therefore produces a large pool of internationally employable professionals" (p. 634). The supply side of the current worldwide brain drain pattern is located within these enlarged pools of PTS workers, who are motivated to move to MD societies by growing disparities between their poor nations and the world's labor importing rich countries, a consequence of uneven development in a capitalist-dominated world.

Applying this framework to highly skilled individuals in LD countries, Cheng and Yang reasoned that five factors induce PTS workers to migrate to MD nations. These five variables are differences between LD and MD nations in terms of living conditions, work and
research conditions, children's educational opportunities, political conditions, and professional employment opportunities (pp. 635-636). Testing their model against 1988 data, Cheng and Yang found only partial empirical support for it. On the one hand, differences in living conditions and professional employment opportunities exhibited strong, direct correlations with migration flows from Asia, Latin America, and Africa to the United States. On the other hand, as these researchers readily allowed, "cross national data do not attest our arguments that disparities in research conditions, in children's educational opportunities, and in political conditions increase the level of professional migration" (p. 649). As will be discussed in greater detail below, surveys of African immigrants themselves underscore the centrality of professional economic opportunities based on current or prospective vocational skills (the latter grounded in educational opportunities) for their immigration decisions.

Given the severity of political problems in many African nations, and despite Cheng and Yang's failure to discern a significant association for this variable, there is little doubt that political "push" factors have played a significant part in the immigration decisions of African citizens.

Even as "world systems/globalization" critics have tried to forge an enlarged template for the analysis of the brain drain, other theorists/researchers have examined the influence of "meso-level" social factors upon the cross-border relocation decisions. These include "network analysis" studies that focus on the impact of ties between immigrants who are already living in a given host nation and prospective immigrants from their homeland (Portes 1997, pp. 801ff). Such networks furnish the latter with crucial immigration-related information, with the prospect of economic, social, and psychological support following
relocation, and with instrumental assistance that facilitates movement into and subsequent adjustment to a foreign society (Massey & Garcia, 1987). Both the uncertainty and the substantive costs associated with immigration to North America for a skilled worker in Ghana, for example, would be reduced through his or her ongoing contact with members of a Ghanaian network that has already been established in North America.

Community normative expectations in both the home and host societies also influence immigrant behavior. Thus, for example, the expectation that a highly educated individual should move abroad to an economy in which material resources that are not available in the LD can be acquired and remitted back to the home nation provides a powerful impetus for immigration. Several studies have shown that, contrary to the purely individual decision-making model, "the decision to migrate is located at the household level whereby family members see migration as a form of portfolio diversification, which spreads the risks between various income-generating activities" (Mohan & Zack-Williams 2002, p. 225). From the standpoint of this study's interest, a potential African immigrant is often selected or sponsored for advanced education within the home country by members of his or her extended family on the presumption that he or she will move to a foreign land where the economic rewards of that education can be fully realized and shared with the sponsoring family.

Part and parcel with this social dimension, is increasingly acknowledged that immigration decisions, including those of skilled workers in LD societies, are conditioned by cultural and hence, subjective, considerations. As Arthur (2000) has put it, "the expected gains to be derived from the place of destination are culturally perceived and defined within
the constraints of such factors as social, cultural, and psychological costs of migration, level of existing information about the intended place of residence, access to labor markets, and presence of kin group members who have successfully undertaken the journey" (p. 22). In particular, immigrants to the United States take into account the likelihood that they will suffer subjective costs by virtue of their relocation, including a loss of contact with valued aspects of their home society, exposure to a materialist ethos, and, in the case of African immigrants in particular, discrimination on the basis of race.

Largely in response to these subjective consideration, as Alba and Nee (1997) have noted, many new wave immigrants to the United States (and other MD states) exhibit attributes, such as holding a high-paying job, that seem to be indicative of assimilation into the host society. Nevertheless, they continue to view themselves as permanent outsiders and have no desire to become culturally integrated into the host society (Albert & Nee, 1997, pp. 826ff).

Here we encounter a divergence between the acculturation of new wave skilled immigrants and their assimilation into the host society that is acutely apparent for many African-born residents of the United States. On one hand, the latter tend to undergo successful acculturation in the sense that they learn American values and expected behavioral norms. They are, as a consequence, able to function effectively in the host society. On the other hand, if we define assimilation with Arthur (2000) as "the process whereby groups that are culturally distinct and separate come to create and share a common culture" (p. 69), a much different picture emerges. As will be brought forth in the literature review at hand,
African immigrants have not melted into the cultural pot of the United States for two generic and inter-related reasons. First, their home culture is far more different from that of the United States than is the case for other immigrant groups, such as newcomers from Eastern Europe. Additionally, they face special problems stemming from their non-white racial status that function as barriers to full-fledged assimilation.

The melting pot metaphor is, of course, an integral part of the American mythos. It signifies a pattern that was repeated among successive waves of immigrants from Europe to the United States in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Coming to the United States, each of these immigrant groups attained substantial upward socio-economic mobility across generations and then blended into a composite culture. The core proposition of the melting pot construct is that as each immigrant group achieved middle-class status (through formal education and vocational effort) their ethnic backgrounds became less and less important as a determinant of both their public and their private identities (Anderson 2000, p. 263).

In 1963, Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan published a critique of this assimilationist model in their now famous text, Beyond the Melting Pot. As Portes (2000) observed, even at that time, Glazer and Moynihan recognized that for certain ethnic groups the "melting pot" analogy was not valid (Portes 2000, p. 243). Of these groups, the largest was the progeny of involuntary immigrants from Africa, that is, African Americans, while other non-white groups, notably Hispanics, had not followed the traditional path of upward socio-economic mobility leading to full-fledged assimilation into a hybrid national ethnic identity. According to Nancy Foner (2000), even in light of their reservations about African
Americans, Glazer and Moynihan grossly underestimated the influence of racial antagonism in the United States (p. 257). In 1993, Glazer himself stated that the idea of immigrant assimilation in the United States is dead, and, more recently, he asserted that as a consequence of trends unfolding since the early 1960s, *We Are All Multiculturalists, Now* (1997).

With the advent of new wave immigration from LD societies to America, what Elijah Anderson (2000) and others see today in the United States is "more of a salad bowl than a melting pot. Rather than giving it up, racial and ethnic groups appear to embrace their particularism" (p. 262). Anderson elaborates on this topic by writing of “the growing trend toward ethnicity and particularism among groups throughout the wider society (and the world), including the newer waves of immigrants. Many are educated and already middle class and thus under less pressure than previous than previous immigrants to divest themselves of their ethnic identities in exchange for upward mobility" (p. 267). For African-born immigrants to America, particularly professional, technical, and skilled workers whose educational credentials provide immediate access to relatively high-paying jobs, the costs of assimilation are viewed as excessive in relation to their perceived benefits.

With the extraordinary progress that has occurred in global communications and transportation infrastructures over the past decades, skilled workers from LD nations have the opportunity to maintain much more frequent and intensive contact with their home societies than was the case for earlier immigrant groups in the United States. As an extension of the network concept, Linda Basch and her colleagues (Basch, Glick-Shiller & Blanc-Szanton, 1994) have argued that immigration often assumes the form of transnationalism. By
“transnationalism,” Basch et.al. (1993) mean "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (p. 6). The transnationalist process is conducted chiefly through the development of what Portes (1997) has called "transnational communities," that is, "dense networks across political borders created by immigrants in their quest for economic advancement and social recognition" (p. 812). By utilizing these networks, Portes observes, "an increasing number of people are able to lead dual lives" (1997, p. 812). As will become apparent in a subsequent discussion of African immigrant ethnic associations, among African-born residents of the United States, transnationalism is heavily reinforced by individual desires for eventual repatriation to the motherland and is, in fact, the norm. It furnishes a viable and attractive alternative to ethnic assimilation with a host society in which innate African immigrant attributes, notably non-white skin color, continue to function as a barrier to integration and as a ceiling for their upward mobility within the United States.

No single theoretical model can capture all of the variables that motivate highly educated Africans to immigrate to the United States. As we examine the quantitative and the qualitative research on African-born individuals living in America, the explanatory value of the micro- (push-pull), macro- (systemic/policy) and meso-level (network/extended family/cultural) factors will become more evident as will the relevance of the transnational community alternative to ethnic assimilation.

**Historical Review**

In his succinct historical analysis of African immigration to the United States, Joseph Takougang (1995) divided the movement of African-born individuals to America into three
broad stages. Between the early 17th century and the end of the Civil War, Takougang (1995) reminds us, some 10 million to 20 million Africans were forcibly relocated to the United States (many coming through plantations in the West Indies) by the pernicious mechanism of the slave trade. Today, the vast majority of all black people living in the United States (approximately 34 million or 13 percent of the U.S. populace as a whole) are descendants of these slaves. As we might anticipate, voluntary African migration to the United States during this stage was exceedingly limited (Halter 1980).

Over the course of the next century, some Africans did come to America, the bulk of this movement occurred in the final decades of this second stage as the de-colonization of Africa by European powers transpired and independent African nations gained growing importance in the context of the Cold War. Under these conditions, the majority of all Africans entering the United States were foreign exchange students and members of national elites (Takougang, 1995, p. 51). It was presumed by U.S. policy-makers that they would absorb the skills and the norms associated with the West, return home after completing post-secondary/graduate education programs, and then apply their learning and democratic values to the task of propagating pro-Western societies in their home countries.

It was in 1965, Takougang (1995) noted, that African immigration to the United States entered its third, and current, phase. This shift was propelled by the passage of the first in a series of U.S. immigration reforms that increased African representation in America. A brief examination of these reforms demonstrates that one of their principal objectives was (and remains) the recruitment of skilled individuals into the American labor force.
Prior to the mid-1960s, the miniscule extent of African-born immigration to the United States was an artifact of the latter's restrictive immigration policies reinforced by constraints imposed upon the outward movement of Africans by European colonial regimes (Zeleza, 2003). After African nations achieved independence, the U.S. Congress passed the Hart-Cellar Immigration Act of 1965, which phased out a long-standing national origin quota system that was inherently biased against immigration from the developing world outside of the Western Hemisphere. Instead of a detailed system of national quotas, the Hart-Cellar Act established an overall annual limit accompanied by a system of preferences for individuals with vocational skills in high demand by American employers. Hart-Cellar also included a family reunification provision whereby immigrants enjoying permanent non-alien status could bring their immediate family members to the United States.

African immigration to America received a modest boost in the early 1980s with the passage of federal legislation that extended a safe haven to political refugees. But the implementation of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) provided even greater impetus to the movement of Africans into the United States (Takougang 1995). Aimed primarily at restricting illegal immigration from Latin America, the IRCA instituted an amnesty program for illegal aliens, a liberalized family reunification program, and a further revision of the preference system toward individuals with skills requiring advanced levels of formal education.

It was, however, the 1990 Immigration Act that caused the upsurge of African-born individuals who have come to the United States through the brain drain stream. In response to a mounting shortfall of highly skilled workers, particularly in computer sciences, the 1990
Immigration Act greatly increased the total number of immigrants who could be admitted to the United States on the basis of their employment skills. At the same time, in an effort to promote greater ethnic/racial diversity in the United States, the 1990 Act increased admission of immigrants from countries and regions of the world that were under-represented in America, including Africa. According to Gordon (1998), in 1995, some 37 percent of immigration "slots" under the diversity program initiative were allotted to Africa.

The impact of these relatively recent changes in American immigration laws upon the number of African-born individuals living in the United States is unmistakable. In 1960, the U.S. Census Bureau counted just 35,355 African immigrants; by 1990, their number had increased more than tenfold to 363,819. Three years later, according to Wynn (1995), the relevant figure had risen to 418,425. Although year 2000 immigration census data are not yet available in readily accessible form, Arthur (2000) estimated that by the turn of the century, at least 500,000 African-born individuals enjoyed legal resident status in the United States (p. 33). Annual data from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) counting new (but not net) inflows argue a steadily rising trend. In the year 2001 alone, 53,948 African nationals entered the United States; in 2002, that figure had risen to 60,269 (www.ins.gov).

There are two major provisos that should be taken into account when considering U.S. Census data about African immigration. First, the statistics cited above are not broken down on the basis of race: they include Negroes, Caucasians, and Orientals from Africa. There is good cause to suspect that Speer's (1994) assertion that only half of the 15,000 African immigrants entering the United States in 1993 were racially black (40 percent being white and 10 percent Asian, according to Speer) is wildly erroneous. His total figures for
African immigration in 1993 are, in fact, less than half those appearing in INS data for that year. Still, at least some African immigrants counted in US Census data are not black.

Second, the Census data for Africa includes immigrants from both North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, prior to 1971, Egypt and Morocco (ethnically Arab) were the two largest sources of African immigration to the United States. According to Gordon (1998), since the early 1970s, immigration to the United States from Northern Africa has declined while immigration from sub-Saharan Africa has increased sharply. In terms of individual countries of origin, Nigeria is the homeland of the most African immigrants in the United States today (17 percent of the total), followed by Ethiopia (13 percent), with substantial numbers originating in South Africa, Liberia, the Cape Verde Islands, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, and Senegal.

The prominence of Ethiopians in the current nationality mix of African immigrants in the United States reflects the impact of political refugee/asylum legislation initiated in the 1980s outside of immigration ceilings. Among Africans, Ethiopians and other politically persecuted nationals from the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Sudan, and Eritrea) received the lion's share of refugee/asylum status admissions into the United States. Nevertheless, as Arthur (2000) wrote, between 1980 and 1998, "the number of Africans who were granted political asylum or given refugee status (was) miniscule" (p. 25). In 1996, for example, of some 128,565 persons granted refugee or asylees status by the United States, only 5,464 (4 percent) were Africans, an inordinately low proportion given the prevalence of political repression within many African states (Arthur 2000, p. 8).
In concert with improvements in worldwide transportation/communication infrastructures, the proximate demand-side cause for the recent African immigration surge to the United States has been the liberalization of US immigration laws since 1965. Along with provisions that favor admission from under-represented regions/countries, these laws have progressively favored immigrants who meet skill criteria that are defined chiefly through measures of formal education. Although the current immigration preference system is complicated, it clearly attests to the operation of structural and systemic globalization forces, America imported human capital from Africa (and other LD societies) to accommodate its growing needs for highly educated workers. Indeed, as we now turn to various demographic profiles of recent African immigrants to the United States, educational attainment, particularly training in professions that are in very high demand within America's information-age economy, comes to the fore.

**Socio-Demographic Profiles of African Immigrants**

In a study of Igbo (Nigerian) immigrants living in the Chicago, Illinois area, Reynolds remarked that the lifestyle that her subjects experienced was quite similar to that of educated, upper-middle class whites. In comparison with other "new immigrant" groups, African immigrants to the United States are highly educated, culturally sophisticated, and decidedly urban in orientation. As Speer (1994) has observed, "while Central-American and Asian immigrants to the U.S. include many peasant farmers fleeing from violence, African immigrants are more likely to be well-schooled urbanites" (Speer, 1994, p. 10). Many scholars have noted that in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom alike, recently arrived Africans are among the most highly educated of all immigrant groups.
(Butcher 1994; Katende 1994, Lews, 1996). Thus, for example, based upon the results of a survey conducted in the year 2000, researchers from the Balch Institute (2001) reported that, within the Philadelphia SMSA, a greater proportion of African immigrants held a bachelor's degree or higher than any other immigrant group sampled.

Owing to their use of non-probabilistic sampling techniques, some scholars have exaggerated the extent of African immigrant educational attainment levels. This is plainly the case among the 250 Nigerian and Ghanaian immigrants surveyed by Aparaku (1991). Recruiting his respondents from professional directories and an expanding nucleus technique with epicenters located among university professors, Aparaku (1991) reported that a full 58 percent of his subjects held Ph.D. or M.D. degrees while another 19 percent held master's degrees. Aparaku also found that, prior to their entrance into the United States, 20 percent of his highly educated sample had been employed as university professors. Indeed, a full 43 percent were currently members of university or college faculties, while an additional 23 percent worked with international development agencies (World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and United Nations). Although Aparaku's figures have been cited throughout the literature, the sample size may seem non-representative as a later study.

Utilizing randomized sampling techniques that greatly reduced bias toward over-reporting educational credentials, Dodoo (1997) analyzed background data for 1,973 African immigrants along with 7,346 black Caribbeans and 14,347 African Americans. He reported that the African immigrants had significantly higher profiles of completed formal education than either the black Caribbean or African American groups. Indeed, 58 percent of the African immigrants in the study had completed college as compared with 13.1 percent of the
black Caribbeans and 14.6 percent of the African Americans (1997, p. 533). To date, Dodoo's research represents the largest demographic survey of African immigrants. Its results clearly support the assertion that they are highly educated in both absolute and comparative terms.

According to Arthur (2000), "education is the cultural capital that most African immigrants bring with them to the United States" (p. 20). Most (but not all) of the 650 African immigrant subjects in his study were, in fact, "young, well-educated, skilled professionals…” (Arthur, 2000, p. 5). Arthur divided his study sample into three distinct groups on the basis of educational attainment before entrance into the United States and subsequent educational pursuit in the United States. The first (and largest) of these three "streams" (as Arthur referred to them) was comprised of individuals who came to the United States after completing a tertiary education program (university, advanced technical, teacher certification), and this study group was strongly oriented toward pursuing post-graduate programs. A second stream consisted of individuals who had completed an advanced secondary school education (General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level) in Africa. They tended to pursue professional and non-professional studies leading to an associate's degree. Among the 650 individuals that Arthur studied, 86 percent finished high school before arriving in America, and of those, sixty percent had completed university or post-secondary educational programs, many of these coming to the United States to attend or to teach at institutions of higher learning (p. 21). There was, however, a third stream (fourteen percent of the sample) comprised of Africans who entered the United States without a high school diploma. Most of those in this stream had attempted to complete secondary school in the United States, had failed in this endeavor due chiefly to the concurrent need for full-time
employment, had lost their visa status and had taken menial jobs as day-laborers in the "underground economy" (p. 21).

Using INS data for the years 1980 through 1993, Arthur (2000) educed from occupational listings that upon entrance into the United States, the most common occupational category given by African immigrants (twelve percent) was “student,” followed by “housewife” (eleven percent), and “service occupations” (ten percent). Oddly, only four percent of African immigrants between 1980 and 1993 stated their occupations on INS documents as executives, administrators, and managers, and only one percent indicated that they were post-secondary teachers, physicians, nurses, technologists, and technicians (Arthur 2000, p. 40).

At first glance, the educational attainment and immigration occupational category listings seem grossly incongruent. The main explanation is that many highly educated or highly qualified individuals had relatively low occupational category status upon entrance to the United States due to the paucity of higher strata jobs within their home countries. In Arthur's own survey of 650 African immigrants who had been in the United States for at least seven years, 15 percent were members of what he characterized as a professional class, that is, holding positions that required some graduate school. Arthur proceeded to note that "the professional class includes mainly teachers, college professors, chemists, social workers, and engineers…For immigrants with doctoral degrees, a principal source of employment is in institutions of higher learning, especially historically black colleges and universities" (Arthur 2000, p. 47). What we gain then from Arthur's educational attainment and occupational profiles of African immigrants in the United States is two-fold: first, many were grossly
over-qualified for the positions that they held in Africa; secondly, many attained additional educational qualifications while in the United States, having initially entered as students.

The pursuit of education in the United States is a salient characteristic of African immigrants. In Aparaku's sample, sixty percent reported that they had undertaken formal education (typically a doctoral degree) after coming to America (1991, p. 4). Almost eighty percent of the subjects in Arthur's study who arrived in the United States with a baccalaureate degree said that they had earned a master's or a doctoral degree since immigrating to America. A very high percentage of African immigrants in his study's two main streams indicated that they had utilized employer tuition reimbursement programs and/or engaged in "voluntary" (unpaid) on-the-job training (p. 103). In contrast to Aparaku's sample, the subjects with whom Arthur spoke were oriented toward labor market demand in their choices of collegiate and post-graduate subject disciplines. Arthur reported that among them, "there is little emphasis on the arts and humanities. Business administration and the sciences, especially computer science, engineering, and medicine, are preferred choices of study" (2000, p. 25).

Studies of immigrants coming to the United States (and to other MD societies) have frequently noted that they display greater upward socioeconomic mobility than the native-born members of respective host societies do. In America, successive immigrant waves have tended to enter the United States with low educational credentials and then worked their way up the occupational/earnings ladder, eventually achieving parity with the indigenous population, albeit through an extended process that often reached fruition among the second generation of immigrant sons and daughters. The conventional explanation for immigrant
upward mobility success is the presumed existence of a self-selection phenomenon (Dodoo 1997, p. 528). In America's past, individuals who emigrated from a given home country to the United States appeared to have been more highly motivated and entrepreneurial in spirit than their counterparts who remained at home. Several researchers have noted that this self-selection mechanism is also operative among African immigrants to the United States (Dodoo, 1997, Manrique & Manrique, 1993, 1994). Indeed, in the case of African immigrants, not only is an individual self-selection mechanism at work, but there also is a very lengthy screening process through which individuals are chosen by their families to attend school in Africa and then sponsored to travel to the United States. The net result is that those who reach American shores tend to be success-oriented by dint of their own willingness to undertake the arduous trek to the United States and the willingness of sponsoring families to invest scant resources to support their education/relocation (Arthur 2000, p. 43).

In the research literature concerning black immigrants from the Caribbean to the United States and other English-speaking nations, some scholars (Foner, 1985; Kalmijn, 1996; Model, 1991) have reported that white employers perceive these black immigrants more favorably than they do African Americans. Studies by Butcher (1994), Chiswick (1979), and Model (1991) have found that in terms of occupational status and/or earnings, even after controlling for educational attainment and vocational experience, Caribbean black immigrants to the United States surpass their African American counterparts within ten years of their arrival. Consistent with the studies cited immediately above, the explanation for the
black Caribbean "success story" is that "they have a greater motivation for achievement and a stronger work ethic than native-born blacks" (Kalmijn 1996, p. 913).

Nevertheless, Kalmijn's (1996) research highlighted a crucial qualification concerning the upward mobility of black Caribbeans relative to African Americans. He found that in terms of earnings, recent black arrivals from the English-speaking Caribbean surpassed their African American counterparts, while French-speaking and Spanish-speaking black Caribbean immigrants earned less than African Americans. Of the greatest importance, however, Kalmijn found that although black, English-speaking Caribbean immigrants achieved higher levels of occupational status than African Americans, the earnings differential between the two groups did not fully reflect the higher level of vocational achievement by the immigrants. On this count, Kalmijn (1996) wrote:

That British Carribbeans have a net occupational advantage over African Americans without a corresponding earnings advantage suggests that they have difficulty in translating their occupational advantage into an earnings advantage. Perhaps this is due to a greater emphasis on—relatively poor paying—high cultural segments of the labor market, such as teaching (p. 922).

A similar result, encompassing both black Caribbean and African immigrants relative to African Americans was reported by Daneshvary and Schwer (1994). They found that, after controlling for education and occupation, African Americans enjoyed an eight percent earnings premium over black immigrants to the United States. As Model (1991) had remarked, employers may prefer black immigrants to African Americans (or to some other
immigrant/native ethnic group), but this does not necessarily mean that they will pay more (or even an adjusted equivalent) in wages to the former.

Some studies, e.g., Butcher (1994) have found that returns from education for black immigrants are, in fact, poor in comparison to returns for African Americans. Based upon surveys conducted in London and New York, Model and Lapido (1996) reported that when educational attainment is taken into account, African immigrants had lower levels of occupational attainment than either African Americans or African Caribbeans, with the latter enjoying the highest returns to education in their study. This suggests that relative to their job qualifications, African immigrants experience discriminatory earnings treatment. Within Aparaku's (1991) sample, despite holding high level positions, many African immigrants nevertheless believed that they were being held back in their careers in the United States by racism. Elaborating on this point, Aparaku wrote, "while African emigrants are generally satisfied with their jobs, many do not believe that they have good prospects for advancement in their professions and careers, and this they attribute to racism and discrimination" (Aparaku 1991, p. 24). Similarly, Arthur's (2000) conversations with African immigrants over a three-year period led him to report that:

Education has allowed those immigrants with post-graduate credentials to obtain high-paying professional jobs and provided some immigrants with social mobility. But generally, one finds that among Africans immigrants the possession of advanced degrees, professional employment, and proficiency in English have not translated into high status and social acceptance in mainstream society (p. 86).
High levels of educational attainment accompanied by employer perceptions of a strong work ethic may enable African immigrants to get good jobs; however, these positions are often not commensurate with their educational credentials, may not provide an equitable level of remuneration, and do not guarantee a correspondingly high level of social status.

In an aforementioned investigation by Dodoo (1997), 1,973 male African immigrants did, in fact, earn more on average than both the male black Caribbean immigrants (N =7,346) and the male African Americans (N =14,347) included in the analysis. However, of the three groups, relative to their level of achieved education, the African immigrants actually earned the lowest amount. Commenting upon this anomaly, Dodoo (1997) stated that:

African immigrants, despite their high levels of schooling, are rewarded least for their college education. This is not simply a result of a smaller proportion of Africans' degrees being foreign or non-American. Africans with American degrees also encounter a penalty; however, the disadvantage is even harsher for those with terminal degrees earned outside the United States (Dodoo, 1997, p. 541).

Although African Americans enjoyed higher returns to education than black Caribbean immigrants, this gap was comparatively small relative to that separating African immigrants from both of the other study groups in Dodoo's investigation.

Why aren't African immigrants paid as much as African Americans or other black immigrants for similar educational credentials? Since his study did not take into account occupational categories, Dodoo first speculated that African immigrants might experience greater occupational mismatch than the other groups (1997, p. 542). In other words, they may
accept jobs for which they are substantially over-qualified, as least insofar as educational attainment is concerned. Alternatively, African immigrants may experience lower levels of earnings within the same occupational category simply because they are newcomers and, therefore, have lower levels of job experience or, at least, job experience in the United States. As Yang (2000) observed: "very often, immigrant professionals suffer downward occupational mobility, especially in the first few years of their arrival, which helps fill the less desirable positions in their professions that have been vacated by native workers" (p. 646). Yang (2000) also noted that immigrant professionals frequently encounter a variation on the glass ceiling effect; as "outsiders" they are permitted by top decision-makers to rise only so far after which they are prevented from reaching the highest rungs of organizational power and prestige (Yang 2000, p. 647). Another factor that may be at work centers upon Renteria's (2000) observation that employers are sometimes deterred from providing immigrants with job-specific training on the premise that these employees are inherently disposed toward leaving their positions in search of better opportunities (p. 601).

In Dodoo's (1997) analysis, one of the main reason that African immigrants suffer low returns to education hinges upon employer perceptions of the transferability of skills developed in African institutions of higher learning and the relative quality of education received in African colleges and universities. On the first count, Dodoo (1997) remarked: "one explanation for the lower return to education is that a larger proportion of Africans (than Caribbean immigrants) received degrees outside of the United States, where the degree of skill transferability may be lower" (Dodoo, 1997, p. 538). On the second count, he speculated: "apparently, foreign qualifications of Africans, presumably gained in their home
countries, are not valued as highly as American, or for that matter, Caribbean degrees" (Dodoo, 1997, p. 541).

The available evidence, however, suggests that because of the very limited number of available slots at African institutions of higher learning, the quality of the students who attend universities and colleges in Africa may actually be higher than that of their American counterparts (Domatob 1996). According to Arthur, "limited space in African institutions of higher learning makes the system of education highly selective and fiercely competitive. The number of universities is rising but so is the demand for higher education. University entrance exams at both the ordinary and the advanced levels are very competitive" (2000, p. 102). Adeyemi (2001) has argued that the qualifications required for entrance into Nigerian universities are substantially higher than those of their American counterparts. In line with this assertion, several of Reynolds's (2002) Nigerian informants told her that they were compelled to immigrate to the United States because their admission test scores were too low to qualify for admission to a Nigerian university.

The quality of African universities and colleges relative to American institutions aside, as both Aparaku's survey and Arthur's study suggest, a substantial percentage of all African immigrants who hold advanced academic degrees work at institutions of higher learning as faculty members or research fellows (see also Manrique & Manrique, 1994). From her conversations with Igbo immigrants who had worked as educators in Nigeria before coming to the United States, Reynolds (2002) learned that in Nigeria, "teachers and university professors are very underpaid---or not paid for months on end---and they struggle with loss of salary and loss of prestige" (p. 278). It may be that, upon coming to the United
States, highly qualified African immigrant professors are willing to accept lower-rung positions in academia. It may also be that they are consigned to lower-rung positions by institutional decision-makers who realize that these foreign-born faculty members are willing to work as hard (or harder) than native-born professors for substantially lower rewards (Krup & Krup, 2000, p. 704). Zeleza (2003) has recently observed that African immigrant intellectuals in the United States frequently end up joining the long lines of the lumpen professoriate, a floating faculty excluded from the gilded privileges of tenure or trapped, in the case of the United States, in third-rate colleges or under funded Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

What emerges from the studies reviewed in this section is that, as a group, African immigrants in the United States are indeed very highly educated, yet they do not appear to enjoy occupational status or economic benefits that are consistent with their levels of educational attainment. These disparities are not fully by either immigrant status or racial identity alone, since they are significantly larger than those found among black Caribbean immigrants. This suggests that discriminatory variables that are specific to immigrants from Africa are operative in their career experience, including employer perception that African educational institutions are inferior to their counterparts elsewhere, despite indirect evidence to the contrary.

**Individual Motives for African Immigration to the United States**

Within his sample, Arthur (2000) identified four generic motives for immigration to the United States: one, pursuit of post-secondary education at American schools; two,
reunion with family members living in the United States; three, desire to take advantage of occupational opportunities; and finally, desire to escape from political terror and instability.

Among others, Manrique and Manrique (1993, 1994) have observed that the desire to extend their formal education at the college and graduate school levels figures prominently in the decisions of Africans who immigrate to the United States. This motive is equally strong among African immigrants who intend to relocate permanently to America and those who intend to return to their countries of origin. For both of these groups, high educational attainment is viewed as an indispensable instrumentality of upward socio-economic mobility. According to Arthur, the majority of male African immigrants in the United States today originally entered with student visas, completed their education, and then over-stayed their visas, legalizing their status in the host society by obtaining sponsorship from an employer (2000, p. 21).

The family reunion provisions embodied in post-1965 US immigration laws have facilitated increases in the number of African-born persons living in America, and a significant percentage of the subjects in Arthur's study indicated that the desire to reunite with family members was an important factor in their immigration decision. Indeed, forty percent of Arthur's sample cited family reunion as a major immigration motive (2000, p. 21). Arthur found that many of his study informants were sponsored by their extended families to attend institutions of higher learning in the United States with the understanding that they would, in turn, bring additional family members to America once they had achieved permanent resident status (2000, p. 22).
Although economic conditions have improved in some African nations of late, since the "lost decade" of the 1980s, unemployment and under-employment have prevailed throughout the continent (Takougang, 1995). Not only are attractive career opportunities carce in Africa, employment decisions in both the public and private sectors are frequently based upon kinship/ethnic ties, rather than objectively measured merit. By contrast, until quite recently, the labor market in the United States, particularly in sectors requiring advanced skills, has been robust. Educated Africans are able to earn salaries in America that are much higher than those available in their home countries, and they are paid in the relatively strong currency of the U.S. dollar. Plainly, the desire to take advantage of economic opportunities in the United States is a primary motivational factor for African immigrants (Arthur 2000, p. 32).

During the past two decades, African nations have experienced a very high degree of political instability, with civil wars, ethnic conflicts, and coups erupting on a regular basis (Chabal & Daloz, 1999). Many African states are currently governed by authoritarian regimes that do not recognize even the most basic of individual liberties. As Arthur has commented, at the turn of the twenty-first century, "African countries are mired in political degeneration as democratic institutions are replaced by despotic, tyrannical, and kleptomaniac regimes that have no respect for the human rights or the political and economic well being of their citizens" (Arthur 2000, p. 26). Corruption is rampant in all save a few African nations; indeed, many of Arthur's subjects reported paying bribes to obtain the requisite documentation to leave their homelands. From this, it is clear that adverse political
conditions comprise a major push factor in the immigration calculations of many African immigrants.

In addition to these individual motives, broader objectives and circumstances play a prominent part in the decisions of Africans to sojourn to the United States. The vast majority of African-born residents of the United States maintain their ties to their respective "motherlands" (Arthur 2000, p. 139). Many of them return to their countries of origin on a regular basis, and most maintain regular contact with family members and friends in Africa (Owusu, 2000, p. 1174). Having enjoyed immigration sponsorship from their families, African immigrants in the United States frequently display a "do or die" mentality; they are determined to succeed in the host country to meet the expectations of their sponsors: "premature" repatriation is viewed as shameful (Arthur 2000, p. 31).

The expectations placed on African immigrants by their families and friends are manifold and intense. Once they have obtained full-time employment, they are expected to remit a substantial portion of their earnings to those who remain behind. In 1990, the highly educated subjects in Aparaku's (1991) study sent back an average of $3,500 a year to their families in Africa (p. 5). Indeed, ostracism awaits those African immigrants who fail to fulfill the remittance expectations of their sponsoring kin (Arthur, 2000, p. 134). Beyond this, many African immigrants report a social duty to assist in the economic development of their homelands. Sixty percent of the subjects in Arthur's study stated that they had either established or were in the process of establishing business enterprises in their countries of origin (2000, p. 129). Many married male African immigrants arrive in the United States with the expectation that they will eventually bring their wives to America under family
reunion provisions. Particularly among highly educated African immigrants, there is a strong
tendency to leave young children in Africa to be reared and educated by their extended
families until they have completed high school and then bring them to the United States to

The Social Networks of African Immigrants

Once in the United States, African immigrants exhibit a very low degree of residential
mobility: within Arthur's (2000) sample, only seven percent reported changing their place of
residence during the previous five years (p. 45). The majority of African immigrants cluster
in distinct enclaves comprised primarily of individuals and households from their home
nations. Owusu (2000), for example, noted that nearly two-thirds of all Ghanaians living in
Canada reside in Toronto (p. 1161).

In terms of their social networks, African immigrants display a very strong preference
for friendships with individuals from their homelands, supplemented by immigrants from
other African nations, and, from there, by associations with other black immigrants. In a
subsequent section of this review, it will be explained that African immigrant friendships
with African Americans are relatively uncommon.

In both their decisions to immigrate to the United States and their choice of a
residence within the host society, African-born individuals are clearly drawn to those locales
in which African immigrant associations are well established. Since the early 1970s,
numerous African immigrant associations based upon common ethnicity, clan membership,
municipality of origin, alumni ties, and/or nationality have emerged in North America
(Owusu, 2000, p. 1155). As Arthur stated, "the African immigrant associations are the
building blocks for the creation of African cultural communities in the United States" (2000, p. 71). Membership in these associations furnishes newcomers with economic, psychological, cultural and political support. Although they provide crucial information to newly arrived countrymen about the host society and, hence, a degree of socialization into American culture, "the ethnic associations that they form are not set up to enable the immigrants to put down roots in America. They are designed for the preservation of ethnic enclaves" (Arthur, 2000, p. 93).

Because they offer entrée and access to substantial numbers of African immigrants, ethnic associations have been the subjects of considerable research by American and Canadian scholars. Attah-Poku (1996), for example, investigated Ghanaian immigrant associations operating in multiple locations in the United States. Consistent with Arthur's observations, Attah-Poku reported that their principal objective is to provide means through which their members can maintain their cultural heritage in an alien society (p. 63). Although they offered instrumental assistance to members, the associations investigated by Attah-Poku (1996) emphasized unity with and ongoing connections to Africa. Many of them sponsored investment clubs, permitting members to pool their resources to finance commercial ventures in Ghana. Cultural preservation, rather than assimilation into the host society, was the primary mission of the forty Nigerian immigrant associations in the Chicago SMSA studied by Reynolds (2002). She reported that among newcomers, the decision to come to the United States and to establish residence in the Chicago area was heavily influenced by the existence of Igbo ethnic associations there (p. 282).
Owusu (2000) found that nearly 60 percent of all Ghanaians living in Toronto belonged to one or more immigrant associations (p. 1160). Most of these associations were organized along township lines to facilitate bi-directional flows of communication and travel as well as foreign exchange remittances to finance investment projects (p. 1167). Although new arrivals in Toronto were far more likely to belong to immigrant associations than were Ghanaians who had been in Canada for an extensive period of time (p. 1168), the leadership of these organizations was comprised of elders who had left Africa more than a decade before Owusu initiated his research. Their highest priority was the preservation of a collective Ghanaian cultural identity; indeed, many of these associations were actively engaged in lobbying their home government to permit dual Canadian/Ghanaian citizenship.

In sharp contrast to other immigrant groups in the United States, the vast majority of African-born individuals in America plan to return to their homes on a permanent basis. Within Aparaku's sample of 250 high status African immigrants, eighty-nine percent indicated that they planned to repatriate within the next ten years (1991, pp.22, 25). Among Aparaku's informants, the timing of intended return to Africa was a function of improvements in conditions within their nations of origin (Nigeria and Ghana), particularly the restoration of political stability and progress toward participatory forms of government.

In like manner, Arthur reported: "most African immigrants expect to return to Africa and to live there permanently" (2000, p. 127). The common pattern among Arthur's subjects was a desire to accumulate wealth abroad and return to Africa to engage in commercial ventures or to retire. Consequently, there was a strong, positive association between the personal assets of African immigrants and repatriation intentions (Arthur, 2000, p. 136).
More than eighty percent of Ghanaians living in Toronto with whom Owusu (2000) spoke said that they intended to relocate to their homeland at some point in the future (p. 1174). As Waldrof (1995) has noted, the expressed repatriation intentions of immigrants are not a reliable predictor of actual behavior (p. 125). Nevertheless, Pires, Kassimir, and Brhane (1999) found that among Africans who earned a Ph.D. degree in the United States between 1986 and 1996, fifty-seven percent did, in fact, return to their country of origin, thirty-two percent stayed in the United States, and the remainder relocated to a third country.

Statistical data reveal that most African immigrants in the United States do not seek to become naturalized US citizens (Arthur 2000, p. 127). In his conversations with African immigrants living in four American cities, Arthur found that the most common reason for their failure to pursue citizenship was the sense that they would nevertheless remain “outsiders” in American society owing to racial discrimination. As one of his informants stated to Arthur, “why should I give up my national origin to become a peripheral and marginalized outsider in the United States?” (cited in Arthur, 2000, p. 127). As an alternative, long-term residents simply renew their alien registration certificates every ten years to retain their legal right to remain in the United States. Arthur did report that applications for citizenship and completed naturalizations were highest among those subjects who had attained a master's or doctoral degree in the United States (p.101). However, several of them indicated that they planned to use their US citizenship as a "shield" to pursue political reform in their home countries (p. 132).

As Owolabi (1996) has noted, African immigrants in the United States comprise a "silent minority" (p. 7). Apart from campaigning for political reform in their homelands,
African immigrants tend to avoid involvement in social or political causes. Thus, Arthur found that even among the naturalized African immigrants in his study, voting registration rates as well as rates of membership in partisan political organizations were inordinately low. Examining these findings, Arthur speculated: "political incorporation in America will remain elusive for African immigrants as long as they hold on to their sojourner status" (p.91). But given the depth of their African ethnic identities and their physical presence in an alien society, it is highly unlikely that African immigrants will relinquish their anomalous status as sojourners.

What we find, then, is that African immigrants in the United States follow social patterns that move powerfully against assimilation into the host society. They tend to reside in immigrant enclaves and to restrict their social networks to other black immigrants. A very high percentage of African immigrants belong to organized immigrant associations, and these bodies are clearly oriented toward the preservation of African culture and African identity in the midst of an alien host society. Of greatest importance, several researchers have reported that the majority of African immigrants in the United States today intend to return to their homelands on a permanent basis. In the next section of this survey, the social and psychological aspects of this sojourner or dual status will be examined.

**Psychological and Social Aspects of the African Immigrant Experience**

Generally, African immigrants living in the United States appear to be comparatively happy with their relocation decisions, although not necessarily with their present life experience. The majority of subjects in Arthur's study indicated that they were satisfied with their lives, and that they considered themselves fortunate to be living in America. They were,
moreover, "unanimous in their belief that migration to the United States had a positive impact upon their lives" (Arthur 2000, p.73). Nevertheless, many of Arthur's subjects confided to him that they were deeply troubled by racial polarization in American society (p.73). Many of them disclosed a sense of "powerlessness, marginalization, and alienation from mainstream (white) society" (p.85). On the whole, however, Arthur's subjects were committed to participation in the educational and economic opportunity structures presented to them by the host society.

Among the 250 high-status African immigrants in Aparaku's (1991) study, a substantially higher percentage indicated that they were discontented with their sojourner status. Some eighty-nine percent of this sample said that they felt resentment because of the racism and anti-immigrant discrimination that they had personally experienced, eighty-five percent reported a sense of "isolation" from their countries, families, and friends, while sixty percent said they missed family and friends (Aparaku 1991, p. 19). Interestingly, although nearly all of Aparaku's subjects said that they resented the racist and xenophobic treatment accorded to them personally, only forty percent indicated resentment at the manner in which white Americans treated African Americans (p. 19). This, in itself, is indicative of an African immigrant identity that stands apart from both mainstream (white) society and from the black racial identity of African Americans.

Virtually every study that has examined the qualitative facets of African immigrant experience in the United States has commented upon what Ogbu and Gibson (1991) identified as a "dual frame of reference" (p.7). This duality has a lateral dimension. African immigrants compare the status that they have achieved in the United States with that of their
peers in Africa (Ogbu & Gibson, 1991, p. 11). It also has a longitudinal dimension. African immigrants compare their current life circumstances to those that they experienced in Africa prior to immigration (Arthur, 2000, p. 88). Finally, there is a projective dimension, whereby African immigrants compare their current status to what they hope to attain in the United States and/or upon repatriation to their homeland at some future point in time (Ogbu & Gibson, 1991, p.,11). Since most African immigrants are optimistic about the future, these projective exercises enable them to mitigate disaffection by treating it as transient.

Although the maintenance of duality enables the African immigrant to straddle two worlds, psychological conflicts are manifested as a consequence of maintaining an inherently ambivalent identity. As Aparaku (1991) noted in the preface to *African Émigrès in the United States*:

The African emigrant in America, like a child of two worlds, is torn between America and Africa. On the one hand, he loves the political freedoms, the civil liberties, and the economic prosperity he enjoys in the United States, although he does feel a sense of alienation and discrimination. He also feels ignored, underutilized, unrecognized, and unfulfilled. On the other hand, he loves his country, his family, his friends, and the culture that he left behind him. However, he resents political dictatorship and abuse, corruption, economic mismanagement, tribalism, and civil wars that are pervasive in Africa today (p.xvi).

Feelings of powerlessness, low self-esteem, and alienation from their surroundings are prominent strands in the fabric of the African immigrant's psychological experience.
It is well known that cross-border immigration is an inherently stressful undertaking and that immigrants are prone to elevated levels of physiological and psychological stress (Dyal & Dyal, 1981). In a study of Chinese immigrants to the United States, Kuo (1976) posited that they suffer heightened stress and depression as a consequence of four forces: feelings of isolation in the host society; cultural shock; goal-striving stress; and cultural change itself. Most studies of stress among immigrants to the United States have concentrated upon this fourth type of stress, designating it “acculturative stress,” which, according to Nwadiora and McAdoo (1996), can be defined as "psycho-cultural stress due to cultural differences found between a host culture and an incoming culture marked by reduction in the physical and mental health status of individuals or groups undergoing acculturation" (p. 476). The strength and character of experienced acculturative stress is determined by both individual factors (age, gender, level of education, etc.) and by cultural variables, notably the extent of similarity and dissimilarity between the immigrant's home society and the host society (Berry, 1987). Although negative mood and affect invariably accompany it, acculturative stress need not be a dysfunctional phenomenon; it can, in fact, have positive consequences for motivation and psycho-social adjustment. As Nwadiora and McAdoo (1996) have pointed out, "although acculturation may sometimes enhance opportunities and mental health, it often can virtually destroy a person's sense of identity, integrity, and ability to cope" (p. 482).

In a sample of black immigrants to the United States that included Africans and black Caribbeans, Nwadiora (1995) found that the former were more vulnerable to alienation and the negative effects of stress than the latter. African immigrants in this study reported intense
feelings of isolation, distress, loneliness, and frustration, and these negative emotional experiences were especially pronounced among the women in Nwadiora's sample. Nwadiora (1995) found a high incidence of alienation and self-estrangement among African immigrants that directly correlated to the subject’s reported level of adjustment to the host society's culture.

Kamya (1997) investigated psychological stress in a sample of 52 African immigrants, many of whom had fled political repression in Uganda. Contrary to Nwadiora's results, Kamya reported that in terms of experienced stress, "this African immigrant population falls within the normal range when compared with other populations" (1997, p. 160). The level of psychological stress in Kamya's subjects was directly associated with the degree to which they perceived their relocation to the United States as “voluntary”. Those subjects who reported that they had a say in the immigration decision reported higher levels of self-esteem and higher ability to cope with stress than those who indicated that they had no choice but to flee their homeland (p. 158). The most important resource for coping with stress among Kamya's subjects was participation in organized religious activities, with both the spirituality and social support dimensions of attending religious services having a positive influence upon stress-coping ability.

The psychological adjustment of immigrants to host societies is an ongoing process that exhibits a fairly predictable pattern. Thus, according to Carnes (2000), "it is not uncommon for immigrants to experience a crisis period following the first six months after immigration, a period that can last from six months to six years" (p.721). In Carnes's (2000) view, newly arrived immigrants to the United States typically enjoy a honeymoon phase in
which they are happy to have surmounted the legal and financial obstacles of relocation and
to be in a free and open America. This euphoria, however, is typically short-lived and segues
into the “crisis” phase mentioned above, as immigrants experience disheartening problems
such as unemployment, racial discrimination, or financial constraints. A degree of
improvement emerges in a third stage in Carnes's schema, as immigrants acquire the
knowledge and resources necessary to survive in an alien society. In a fourth and final stage,
Carnes asserted, immigrants to the United States undergo assimilation, shedding their self-
perceived identity as "outsiders" and bonding with the host society's major institutions (2000,
p. 720). Before they achieve normal psycho-social functioning, then, immigrants pass
through a succession of stages in which they must exert physical and psychic energy to
accomplish distinct tasks.

Taking a psycho-dynamic approach to immigration, Elovitz (1996) has asserted that it
involves a process of identity formation that is analogous to the construction of self-concept
during adolescence. As with the latter, the immigrant's adjustment to a host society entails “a
reshuffling of the self, its change and its rebuilding” (p. 25). Unlike the adolescent transition
from childhood to an adult identity, however, immigrants do not have the leisure of an
extensive period of time to perform the psychological work of experimentation in the new
surroundings. The demands of their environment require that immigrants function as full-
fledged adults in a much shorter span of time than adolescents.

For most immigrants from Africa, however, movement through this social
adjustment/identity formation sequence is bound to fall short of completion. The majority of
African immigrants in the United States maintain the objective of returning to their home
nations. Their social networks are comprised of similarly minded newcomers who overtly value the retention of an African cultural identity. Comments supplied by Arthur's informants clearly reveal that African immigrants are deterred from attempting to integrate themselves into a society in which their non-white racial identity relegates them to a subordinate social status. It is to the issue of race and, with it, of relations with African Americans that this review now turns.

**Racism/Ethnicism, Relations with African Americans, and Anti-Immigrant Attitudes**

As Fair (1999) has recently observed, despite the strides that African Americans have made since the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, more than three decades later, “to be colored in this country is to be an outsider” (p. 3). The United States remains a society in which racial animosity and stereotypes are prevalent even among those whites who do not consider themselves to be racially biased. "American society attributes greater meaning and significance to skin color than the objective realities could possibly justify,” Healy (1997, p. 24) has lamented, with skin color serving as a shorthand marker of subordinate social identity.

Incidents of racial discrimination and violence inflicted upon African immigrants have been amply documented, and surveys of African-born individuals in the United States plainly reveal their resentment towards and anxiety about victimization at the hands of whites (see, for example, Africa Profiles International 1996, p. 13). In contrast to African Americans who learn from an early age that many of their white compatriots hold them in low regard, most African immigrants have been reared in environments in which ethnicity, rather than race, is the principal criteria of social stratification and the main cause of inter-group conflict.
They come from societies in which privileged black elites, frequently limited to members of a particular tribal or kinship group, exert determinative power over social, cultural, economic, and political affairs. Hence, Africans arrive in the United States with only a superficial understanding of the dynamics of the bias against blacks that they are bound to encounter.

Most of the subjects in Arthur's (2000) study acknowledged that their foreign backgrounds made it difficult, if not impossible, to grasp the meaning of black-white polarization in American society (pp. 73-74). In comparison with African Americans, African immigrants in the United States are not as sensitive toward or as pre-occupied with the subtler manifestations of racism (Arthur 2000, p. 74). On the whole, they persist in the belief that innate talent, hard work, and, above all, educational accomplishments will enable them to achieve their personal objectives for immigrating to America (Ogbu & Gibson, 1991). As Arthur has put it, "the expected economic returns and benefits to be gained in America overshadow African immigrants' objective perceptions of the insidiousness of racism" (Arthur, 2000, p. 75).

Part and parcel with this, African immigrants in the United States are plainly reluctant to take a firm stand on issues that are of paramount importance to African Americans. For them, political and economic repression in their homelands represent a far more compelling problem than does their experience of racial discrimination within a society in which they are, after all, merely temporary guests. Their attitude on this subject was captured by one of Arthur's study informants when he asserted that: "The black-white racial divide is not our fight, neither is it our struggle. We Africans are here temporarily. One day, we will engage in
our own struggle to free ourselves from poverty and economic miseries. Our struggle is to find ways to confront our leaders back home who have brought miseries and woes to so many of our people" (cited in Arthur, 2000, p. 75). In their experience, it is not American whites that are the collective adversary, but the corrupt ruling classes who dominate the affairs of their home nations.

Traditional African norms regarding the respective behaviors of hosts and guests reinforce the predisposition of African immigrants to remain silent in the face of the racism that they perceive and experience in the United States. In Africa, outsiders or guests are expected to adopt a deferential stance toward their hosts, and, above all, they are expected to refrain from meddling in the internal affairs of the latter (Shack, 1978). The sojourner identity of African immigrants (and the solace that they will eventually return to their countries of origin) is equated with a guest role and, hence, with the precept that they should not intervene in issues that divide members of the host society.

The comparative passivity of African immigrants toward racial issues function as a cause of tension between them and African Americans and this, in turn, is reinforced by antagonism directed toward them by America's native-born blacks. Local reports from communities in which African immigrants and African Americans live in close proximity (Asika, 1997, for example), frequently acknowledge inter-group tensions. "The cultural barriers and the social and economic differences separating the Africans and the African-Americans is sometimes the cause of a simmering hostility and misunderstanding between them" (Arthur 2000, p. 77). Indeed, on all too many occasions, this simmering hostility reaches a boiling point of outright abuse and violence.
Much of the research on inter-group relations between African Americans and black immigrants has focused upon blacks who have come to the United States from the Caribbean (see, for example, Lowenthal, 1972). As "new wave" immigrants, the generally superior educational credentials and substantially greater ambitions of the latter mark them as potential competitors of African Americans for status, jobs, educational opportunities, and other critical resources (Anderson, 2000, p. 264). Although they rarely compete in the same segments of the job market, African Americans tend to view black Caribbeans as a threat to the limited occupational gains that they have achieved, as rivals who are not burdened by the psychological handicaps imposed by growing up in a racist system (Bach, 1993).

As early as the 1970s both Bryce-Laporte (1973) and Lowenthal (1972) found that black immigrants to the United States perceive achieved status in American society as a function of ability, discipline, and, above all, effort. Among the black Caribbean immigrants studied by Waters and Kasinitz (1992), the prevailing explanation for African American under-achievement was that it resulted from a failure to exert effort, from personal disorganization, and from sub-cultural norms that promote a cavalier attitude on the part of African American males towards family life and child-rearing. Waters (1994) subsequently affirmed that black Caribbeans and African Americans hold opposing attitudes toward family life, education, and commitment to work. Similarly, Zephir (1996) in her study of relations between African Americans and Haitian-born blacks living in the United States found evidence of sharp value differences generating inter-group hostility.

As noted in passing above, African immigrants to the United States characteristically confine their social contacts to other black immigrants. As a rule, "native-born blacks do not

In terms of cultural norms, African immigrants embrace a strong, extended family model and have profound difficulty in attempting to fathom the prevalence of single-parent households among native-born blacks. The African immigrants in Arthur's sample held stereotypical views of African Americans that were virtually indistinguishable from those of white Americans, seeing them as lazy malcontents suffering from pathological predispositions toward casual sex, extramarital affairs, alcohol and drug abuse, and the avoidance of responsibility for their problems (2000, p. 81). On the other hand, from the standpoint of African immigrants, African Americans maintain cultural images of Africa and Africans that are "usually no different from the stereotypical and prejudicial views held by white Americans" (Arthur, 2000, p. 81). In the perceptions of African immigrants, African Americans equate Africa with economic backwardness, degradation, and primitive savagery (Arthur, 2000, p. 81). According to one of Arthur's interviewees, despite the rise of multiculturalism and the "back to Africa" movement, "African-Americans have become ashamed of their African heritage; this shamefulness is accompanied by a sense of cultural inferiority, and thus, the need to limit or sever their African cultural ties" (cited in Arthur, 2000, p. 81).

Both groups tend to ascribe negative stereotypes to ignorance born of indifference. African immigrants contend that native-born blacks are ignorant of the history and current culture of Africa, while African Americans charge that the newcomers are ignorant of their tortured past and of how it manifests itself in the form of racial oppression. In studies of black-white attitudes towards racism, researchers (McDaniel 1995; Bashi & McDaniel, 1997)
have reported that African Americans deeply resent the failure of white people to recognize that racial stratification is entrenched within American society. African Americans today see the denial of racist oppression in the United States as effectively abetting their continued victimization.

As in the conflicts that have emerged between African Americans and black Caribbean immigrants, the efforts of African immigrants to get ahead in American society are often interpreted by the former as threats to their own life prospects (Arthur, 2000, p. 83). In his study of stress among African immigrants, Kamya (1997) noted that "the tensions generated by the preferential treatment given to Africans over African Americans often contributes . . . [to] mutual suspicion among members of both groups" (p. 161). African Americans are assiduously aware that white employers prefer to hire black immigrants, and they are understandably disturbed by the success of African immigrants in the US labor market.

Studies of black immigrants in the United States and Great Britain have shown that they do, in fact, recognize the negative influence that a native black identity exerts upon socio-economic mobility. In her study of Jamaicans in New York City and London, Foner (1985) found that her subjects deliberately stressed their differences from native blacks. In Foner's investigation, black West Indians viewed themselves as "more ambitious, harder workers, less likely to be found on welfare, less hostile to whites, and (they) feel more dignified and self-assured in their dealings with the white majority" than indigenous blacks (p. 717). Waters (1994) reported that the black immigrants whom she studied consciously
attempted to distinguish themselves as foreign-born, a status that they considered to be substantially higher than that of African American. In like manner, the African immigrants in Arthur's study expressed anxiety about being lumped together with violence-prone, criminal African American youths. To prevent this, "African immigrants prefer[red] to identify as African blacks,' sometimes accentuating those cultural traits (for example accent and dress patterns) that are uniquely African" (Arthur, 2000, p. 77). Keenly sensitive to this preference, African Americans may tend to interpret the expression of African culture/identity by an African immigrant as an indirect, but nevertheless palpable, form of disparagement, a left-handed insult intended to emphasize the superiority of foreign blacks over themselves.

Deliberately or inadvertently qualifying their non-white racial status by expressions of their foreign or African cultural background, African immigrants amplify the likelihood that they will encounter anti-immigrant bias from African Americans and whites alike. As new wave immigrants have entered the United States in increasingly large numbers, native xenophobia has risen substantially. Indeed, Jaret (1999) has recently noted that anti-immigrant sentiment is rampant in the United States, while Cox (1985) has argued that non-European newcomers to America are especially vulnerable to biased attitudes and discriminatory treatment. African immigrants are "doubly disadvantaged," for as Arthur has pointed out, "they are foreign and black, with distinctive accents and different cultures from that of the dominant (white) group. These cultural differences about which the dominant culture in America knows very little, have produced mistrust, alienation, and exclusion from dominant spheres of social interaction" (Arthur 2000, p. 85). Rather than enhancing their status by manifesting displays of their African origin, African immigrants may face a second
set of barriers to their upward mobility if they elect to openly display their cultural credentials.

In their study of African-born graduate students attending American colleges and universities, Antwi and Ziyati (1996) found that their white peers perceived them to be either inferior by dint of their African cultural background and prior education in Africa, or to be exceptional by virtue of their having overcome the disadvantages of being raised and schooled in a primitive society. As Antwi and Ziyati (1996) concluded, both of these assessments yielded the same result: African graduate students are seen as outsiders and systematically excluded from social activities (p. 12). Manrique and Manrique (1993) investigated the experience of non-European immigrant faculty members working in the political science departments of American colleges and universities. Their African subjects reported suffering more frequent and severe discriminatory treatment than non-European immigrant professors from other regions of the world.

Aside from superficial coverage in celebrations of multi-cultural diversity, American public school curricula typically confine lessons about Africa to the history of the slave trade and the European colonization period. In both of these contexts, Africa is depicted as a domain of black servitude to white masters (Ohaegbulam, 1990). The impression that public school students receive is that Africans are a subordinate race, readily conquered and exploited by culturally superior whites. The scanty references to Africa that appear in history textbooks used in American schools are, in Ohaegbulam's (1990) estimation, “perfunctory, derogatory, and culture bound” (1990, p. 2). From early childhood onward, both white and black Americans are taught to look down on Africa as a "dark continent" that is essentially
devoid of history, and upon Africans as savages fitted for little save the most menial forms of labor.

The American media presents a similarly lopsided and distorted view of contemporary Africa. Mass media rarely mention current political, economic, social, or cultural events and trends taking place in Africa. As Arthur (2000) has commented, "when Africa's existence is acknowledged, its importance and impact on the world scene are usually overlooked. The people of the region gain visibility among Americans only when there is a crisis, like the Rwandan and Zairean crisis of the early 1990s…." (p. 74). The African immigrants that Arthur spoke with were uniformly disturbed by the stereotypical manner in which their homelands are depicted by the American media (p. 85). Such coverage portrays Africa as being either an exotic clime that exists primarily for the benefit of Western tourists on safari, or as a region in chaos, where political upheaval, epidemic diseases, and starvation are endemic. Several scholars (Hawk, 1992; Zaffiro, 1992; Mpanya, 1995) have analyzed the way in which modern Africa is presented to Americans through the mass media; all have concluded that extremely negative stereotypes are commonplace and these distortions are, in Zaffiro's appraisal, only a "short step from racism" (Zaffiro, 1992, p. 81). Mpanya (1995) has argued that the media actively contributes to the negative attitudes that Americans hold toward Africa and its peoples. Indeed, Dodoo (1997) noted in his analysis of wage discrimination against African immigrants in the United States, "it is clear that the media transmits devaluing messages, signaling the remote geographic and cultural chasm between African and American society, to prospective employers of Africans" (p. 530). Seen in this
context, the efforts of African immigrants to preserve their cultural identities carry a demonstrably high cost.

Even when they do not intentionally emphasize their African ethnicity, African immigrants carry distinctively foreign attributes with them to the United States that cannot be easily discarded. As Urciuoli (1996) found in her study of Spanish-speaking Puerto Ricans working in the United States, accents mark English-speaking immigrants as foreigners, and, hence, as targets for xenophobic discrimination. To avoid these repercussions, Urciuoli found, the Puerto Ricans in her study consciously altered their manner of speaking to replicate colloquial English, but the net result was that they sounded highly artificial and, indeed, affected.

African immigrants from nations that were once part of the British colonial empire are accustomed to speaking English with a British accent that nonetheless carries the residuum of their native (African) tongues. According to Antwi and Ziyati (1993) African immigrants attending graduate schools in the United States and/or serving on their faculties were highly self-conscious about their accents. Indeed, they felt vulnerable to ridicule on this basis, and, when peers and colleagues mentioned their accents, they experienced a sense of social isolation and unease. Similarly, the immigrant faculty members studied by Manrique and Manrique (1994) asserted that they were at elevated risk for discriminatory treatment because of their accents and, in fact, simply as a consequence of their having foreign-sounding names.
Summary

Despite the paucity of research on the experience of African immigrants in the United States, the available findings indicate that, as a group, they seemingly have resisted assimilation into the host society, confining their participation to educational and occupational realms. Boasting very high levels of educational attainment, African immigrants have achieved a considerable measure of success in both of these realms.

Ironically, relative to their educational accomplishments, African-born individuals residing in America have not fared well as suggested by the findings of Dodoo's research. African immigrants maintain a sojourner status in the United States, assessing their lives through an ambivalent dual frame of reference. Moreover, African immigrants encounter bias by virtue of both their racial and their ethnic identities, and the complexity of these conflicts is acutely evident in their relations with African Americans. Taking all of this into account, I have concluded that a qualitative study of African immigrant faculty members working at Historically Black Colleges and Universities is warranted and that it should yield significant insights on a topic that has not yet been examined.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Study Purpose

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the self-reported experience of African immigrant professors currently employed as full-time faculty at two historically black institutions of higher learning. In essence, the study has tandem objectives: Its proximate purpose is to advance my understanding of key facets of the African immigrant HBCU professor experience; its ultimate purpose is to convey the researcher's understanding of the study participants' experiences to the reader.

Research Questions

As delineated in Chapter 1, the questions that have guided inquiry in this study are:

1. What are the motives of African immigrant faculty for coming to the United States and pursuing careers in higher education?

2. How do African immigrant faculty members at HBCU understand their professional and personal experiences on the campuses of these schools?

3. To what extent have racial, ethnic, and linguistic differences influenced these experiences?

4. How do the participants perceive the efforts of HBCUs administrators in providing supportive, conducive and professional environment for immigrants? How do these immigrants cope on these campuses?
Research Design

This study is a qualitative study governed by the model of heuristic research design and methods presented by Moustakis (1990). Participant interviews were the primary source of data collection. In addition, curricula vitae, publications, and other documents relevant to each participant’s campus professional life were collected.

Rationale for the Selection of the Research Design

The use of a qualitative research approach was mandated by the nature of the study's inquiry. The study's purpose was to advance understanding of complicated and subjective phenomena, rather than to measure strictly defined (quantifiable) variables. The choice of a heuristic orientation was based upon the exploratory nature of an inquiry that was not directed by any extant theoretical model; it was, in fact, addressed to a topic that had not been the subject of prior empirical studies. That being so, I recognized the necessity for the generation of rich, meaningful information based on participant perceptions, conveyed to the reader in the participant's own words. An open-ended, semi-structured interview protocol administered on a face-to-face basis within the topically relevant field setting (on the campuses of HBCUs) permitted me to discern nuances in both the verbal and non-verbal responses of study participants.

Selection of the Study Setting

This study was carried out at two historically black institutions located within a southeastern state. The selection of these two venues was essentially dictated by the sample
construction and recruitment procedures followed. The study settings were determined by the availability of willing prospective participants who met its multiple eligibility criteria (see immediately below).

Subject Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility of individuals to serve as participants in this study was defined by three criteria. First, while all of the participants had resided in the United States for a considerable period of time (and some had become naturalized citizens), to be considered for inclusion in the study sample individuals had to have been born in a sub-Saharan African country as citizens of those states. Although one participant came to the United States with her parents at the age of thirteen, she met the definitional criteria of being a first-generation immigrant. Although I identified several North African immigrant faculty members working at geographically accessible HBCUs, they were not included, in the first case, by virtue of differences in cultural background. The second participant eligibility yardstick employed in this study was black (or Negro) race. Since the determination of race is not as straightforward as it may seem, subject self-report of being black was deemed sufficient to satisfy this criteria. Third, all participants were full-time faculty members with teaching responsibilities.

Construction of the Sampling Universe

The study employed purposive means for constructing its sampling universe in which I combined a nomination procedure with a search of faculty directories. I first contacted an African immigrant HBCU faculty member whom I knew as a co-parishioner at my church
and asked him to recommend colleagues at his school and at other HBCUs within the state whom he believed would agree to take part in the study. He identified four potential study participants, two of whom nominated colleagues at their respective schools. Through this snowballing procedure a list of 14 candidates was eventually developed. Recognizing the likelihood that at least some of these individuals might not be receptive to my request for an in-depth (and time-consuming) interview delving into sensitive, inter-personal aspects of their current jobs, I sought to augment this roster. I scoured the faculty directories of four HBCUs located within a one hundred mile radius of my home (including two schools at which nominated candidates worked) seeking to identify African immigrants by their surnames. Twelve additional prospects were added to the initial sampling universe through this search procedure.

**Participant Recruitment**

I sent mailed requests for interviews to a total of twenty-six individuals, of whom nineteen worked at two of the four HBCUs. An introductory letter identifying myself and my academic affiliation, briefly describing the study’s nature and purpose, and asking for their participation in an interview at a time and place to be determined later; was sent to the campus offices of the prospective informants. The letters also indicated that I would be attempting to contact them in the near future. Two of these letters were returned as undeliverable (the individuals had left their positions). Follow-up phone calls were made to twenty-four remaining candidates. Of these, eleven individuals (seven males and four females) declined to participate in the study, including all four of the candidates at one of the
HBCUs, and the majority five of those at a second HBCU who had been identified through faculty directory searches. Three of the remaining candidates (all from the second HBCU) identified through a directory search, initially agreed to be interviewed but withdrew from the study before the interviews.

**Final Study Sample**

The final study sample was comprised of eight individuals (seven males and one female) working at two historically black universities, each of which offers post-graduate (masters and doctoral) degrees (see Chapter 4 for classification of respondents by academic rank, number of years in the profession, and publication records). All eight participants held doctoral degrees and all were full-time faculty members with teaching responsibilities. At the time of the interview, three of the participants had achieved tenure. The interviewees worked in diverse academic disciplines, including the humanities, social sciences, applied sciences, and engineering. On the whole, the participants had resided in the United States for a lengthy period of time, with a mean length of residence of nearly nineteen years. The number of years served as full-time faculty members by study participants ranged from four to twenty years. Seven of the participants (including the lone female in the final sample) were married and living with their spouses; all seven had children. One subject was single.

**Researcher's Role**

As Merriam (1998) has recently observed, although qualitative studies utilize a broad range of information gathering techniques, at bottom, the researcher is the “primary instrument of data collection and analysis” (p.17). In conducting the study's interviews,
gathering impressions from the research setting and analyzing archival materials, I have endeavored to see the experience of the participants from their point of view, rather than superimpose my own experience and/or my academic/research opinions upon them. Nevertheless, proponents of the qualitative research movement duly acknowledge that the researcher’s own life history and complex composite of values, attitudes, beliefs, interests, and needs may affect a study (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). As Bogdan and Biklen (1992) have stated, in heuristic studies such as the one at hand, limiting observer biases, not eliminating them is the appropriate and desired standard. In this instance, although I had no personal relationship with any of the study informants, I shared their racial/ethnic background, their immigrant status in American society, and their commitment to scholarship and academic pursuits. In the course of the interviews themselves, it became apparent that I also shared certain value orientations (commitment to equal treatment for persons of all races/ethnic backgrounds, high valuations of education, family, and spirituality, and the like). Recognizing the prospective limitations upon the study finding validity that overidentification with my participants might create, I nonetheless construe my role as a co-participant in the production of this exploratory study.

Profiles of the Study Participants

This section provides thumbnail profiles of the eight study participants: All of the participants were assigned fictitious names by the researcher to protect their anonymity (see "Informed Consent and Other Ethical Considerations" below), and these pseudonyms will be used consistently in this and all following chapters.
Table 3.1

*Profile of Participants, Number of Years in U.S., and Degree Awarding Country*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Number of Years</th>
<th>Undergraduate School</th>
<th>Graduate School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armah</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimba</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kure</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nzogwu</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okwuta</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>Overseas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onyema</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uloko</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wazie</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participant #1 Dr. "Chike Wazie"**

Dr. Chike Wazie immigrated to the United States from a West African country twenty years ago and is a naturalized US citizen. He completed his college education in America and earned a doctoral degree in the physical sciences in the early 1990s. Dr. Wazie comes from a large, comparatively affluent family. Both of his parents have completed college and they have traveled extensively abroad. Two of his brothers currently live in the United States; they also hold advanced academic degrees. At the time of interview, Dr. Wazie had been employed as a non-tenured, associate professor at an HBCU for approximately seven years. I was struck by his cordial, soft-spoken demeanor.
Participant #2: Dr. "Helen Onyema"

Dr. Helen Onyema came to the United States with her parents at the age of thirteen, completing her secondary education in America and earning her bachelor's degree and her master's degree at an American university. She then returned to her home country, where she taught at a junior college for a few years. Upon her return to the United States she earned a doctoral degree in a physical science and then accepted a research position at a biotech company. She left firm after the birth of her fourth child six years prior to this interview and joined the faculty of the HBCU where she is presently employed. The researcher's initial impression of Dr. Onyema was that of a low-keyed, fair-minded, and unassuming scholar.

Table 3.2

Distribution of Participants by Major Fields

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engineering</th>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Law</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant #3: Dr. "Idion Uloko"

Dr. Idion Uloko was born into a large, relatively impoverished family (neither of his parents have any formal education), and immigrated to the United States twenty-five years prior to this study's field research. He completed both his undergraduate and graduate-school
work in the United States and holds a doctoral degree in the applied sciences. He taught at a primarily white university for four years before taking his current post as a full professor at an HBCU. Dr. Uloko had been working at this school for sixteen years at the time of interview, having earned tenure more than a decade before. Dr. Uloko apparently serves as a role model for other African immigrant faculty members at his school, a role he appears to appreciate. During the course of the interview, several African immigrant graduate students and junior faculty members consulted with him on various issues. He acted as an informal mentor figure for them.

**Participant #4: Dr. "John Kure"**

Dr. John Kure immigrated to the United States from his West African homeland eighteen years before the interview by the researcher. After earning his bachelor's and master's degrees in public administration/political science at an Ivy League college, Dr. Kure returned to his home country where he expected to head a governmental agency. But due to political turmoil, Dr. Kure fled his native land and returned to the United States where he earned two doctoral degrees in social sciences. He had been an associate professor at a PWI prior to joining the faculty of his present school for three years. He is also an associate professor.

**Participant #5: Dr. "Eddie Nzogwu"**

Dr. Nzogwu came to the United States from West Africa sixteen years ago after his high school education in his home country. He is one of the privileged few whose parents guided and steered into getting American education. Dr. Nzogwu completed his college education and earned both masters and Ph.D. degrees in the U.S. He comes from a middle-
class background. The father was a principal and the mother a schoolteacher. He has been in his present institution for six years as a non-tenured associate professor in the department of engineering. He appears to exude an aristocratic air and to have lost touch with his African heritage. He was very formal but welcoming.

**Participant #6: Dr. "Charles Kimba"**

Immigrating from an East African nation to the United States twenty years prior to the interview, Dr. Charles Kimba comes from comparatively humble family origins. He came to America specifically to get an undergraduate degree and return to his job in his country. He received two B.A. degrees and his graduate studies in the U.S. After receiving his doctoral degree, Dr. Kimba joined the faculty of his current school, where he serves as a full professor in the faculty of social sciences. Dr. Kimba was among the most forthright of the interviewees in this study and spoke about both his personal and his professional life with candor.

**Participant #7: Dr. "Kunte Armah"**

After completing his undergraduate education in a West African nation, Dr. Armah came to the United States to undertake graduate work through the sponsorship of his government twenty years prior to the interview. He distinguished himself in graduate school, earning a Master’s degree and a Ph.D. in finance in less than five years. Owing to unsettled circumstances in his home country, Dr. Armah remained in the United States, taking a position at a PWI. He transferred to his current school nine years later, and was a full tenured professor at the time of this study. Dr. Armah was eager to share his experiences and his
educational philosophy with the researcher; he takes pride in his intellectual accomplishments and defined his role in opposition to the status quo at his school.

**Participant #8: Dr. "Obed Okwuta"**

Dr. Okwuta was the only study participant to have completed his graduate study in Africa, and he served as an associate professor at a university in his West African homeland before immigrating to the United States six years prior to interview. Although his parents have no formal education, his teachers (Catholic nuns) recognized his intellectual ability while he was in primary school. The nuns actively encouraged him to pursue a career in education. His intellectual earned him several scholarships through the university. Dr. Okwuta spent his first two years in America as a research fellow at a PWI northeastern university. He then joined the faculty of his present school as a professor of the humanities.

Eight of these individuals were interviewed in the process of this research. Each of these individuals was identified as faculty in one of the two HBCUs. Seven of those interviewed were males representing ninety percent of the total. The lone female represents ten percent of those interviewed. Five of the interviewees were in their forties, two in their fifties and one in his late thirties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>30’s</th>
<th>40’s</th>
<th>50’s</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Informed Consent and Other Ethical Considerations

My appreciation of the ethical requirements for qualitative interviewing led me to believe that informed consent forms would be required (Fontana & Frey 2000, p. 662). Toward that end, I carefully and truthfully explained the exact nature of the inquiry upon initial contact and, again, immediately prior to each interview setting. I also acknowledged the need for confidentiality. I assigned the study's participants fictitious names and elected to refrain from directly identifying the two HBCUs where they worked. All information gathered through original fieldwork was maintained in a safe, locked box. This material includes a master list matching participant designations to their actual first names and last initials. This list was kept in hard copy form only. No digital record that could be used to identify the participants was employed. Upon initial contact and before starting interview sessions, all participants were told that they would be presented with questions concerning personal and sensitive subjects that they might find distressful. All interview participants were informed that response was not needed to any question that they did not wish to answer.

Despite these safeguards, I detected some hesitancy on the part of some of the study's participants. Consistent with my abiding concern for the welfare of my participants, I assiduously avoided pressing them to provide answers to questions with which they seemed uncomfortable. To the best of my understanding, adequate safeguards to protect the privacy, anonymity, and well being of participants have been employed throughout the research process.
Methods and Procedures of Data Collection

The principal data-gathering instrument for this study was an author-constructed, semi-structured interview schedule attached to the dissertation as Appendix A. As Kathy Charmaz has observed, "every qualitative researcher should [avoid] forcing data into preconceived categories through the imposition of artificial questions" (2000, p. 514). Consequently, the interview schedule was designed to furnish participants with a high degree of latitude in their responses and a high degree of elasticity in my management of the interview process.

I sought to create the equivalent of a focused conversation with my participants (Warren, 2002, p. 83). Concurrently, I maintained a journal of my experience within and response to the gathering of study information through original fieldwork. Following Janesick's date recommendations, I documented my ongoing experience for a period of thirty days, between March and May, 2000, making daily entries, and being especially sensitive to the receipt of information that departed from my baseline ideas, opinions, and beliefs.

Interview Procedures

I personally conducted all of the study's interviews on a one-on-one, face-to-face basis. The determination of the interview setting and the time of the interview was left solely to the participant at his or her convenience. All of the interviews took place in the respective on-campus offices of the participants between March and May, 2000. Although there were
some brief interruptions, in no case was a third party present during the interview itself. Each session required between ninety minutes and two hours to complete.

With each participant’s knowledge and expressed consent, all interviews were recorded on audiotape; the researcher did not engage in physical note taking during the interview sessions. On two occasions, study participants requested that the recording machine be (temporarily) shut down as he or she conveyed particularly sensitive information. In these instances, I merely took mental note of what the participant had to say: these remarks were not reproduced in Chapter 4's discussion of study results. Each tape was transcribed onto my personal computer within forty-eight hours. The files were printed out and then permanently deleted from the computer's hard drive, a copy being recorded on a floppy diskette maintained with all other field study materials.

**Data Management**

The data collection and analysis format used in this study is represented in Table 3.4. All interviews were conducted in the participants’ office and were audiotaped with the exception of one scripted at the participant’s request. Because I utilized semi-structured interview questions, inquiry domains were determined in advance of data analysis. Nevertheless, I employed inductive methods of content analysis allowing thematic responses to emerge from the data itself. For each topical domain, I used selective two or three word codes, facilitating response integration into themes. Periodically, I composed memoranda about the emergence of themes.
Table 3.4

**Data Collection and Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview 8 participants</td>
<td>Take field notes. Expand data (constant comparison)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Semi-Structured Interview Guide.</td>
<td>Read, reread, reflect, read, and reflect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probe when needed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcribe data</td>
<td>Read/re-read, transcriptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect/make meaning of the stories.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denote themes/interpret/retell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select stories to present as data.</td>
<td>Reflect/retell/reflect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpret/analyze/reflect to determine the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>essence of the stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Craft a text of the whole.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Adapted from Kelchtermann, 1993.

Studies have described narratives or stories as one way of making sense of lived experiences (Bruner, 1986; 1994; hooks, 1992; Polkinghome, 1995). Stories allow the storyteller an opportunity to reflect on specific moments in time. Grumet (1988) suggested, after reading Joan Didion’s essay “Keeping a Notebook” that the narratives fill the space between “what happens” and “what it means” (as cited in Kramp, 1995, p. 8). As in any social events, there must be an interested listener and an interested storyteller. Bruner (1988)
concluded: “live narratives obviously reflect the prevailing theories about possible lives that are a part of one’s culture” (p. 7).

**Validity, Reliability, and Generalizability**

As Janesick has argued, in qualitative inquiries the validity of study findings pivots upon their credibility and plausibility, notably on whether the findings fit the reported experiences (Janesick, 2000, p. 393). I employed two procedures to enhance the validity of the study's findings. First, I used a practice interview with a fellow African immigrant graduate student at her school. This enabled me to refine the wording of questions to reduce possible sources of ambiguity. Second, I implemented member checks, seeking feedback on data analysis from two study participants. All study participants were provided with an opportunity to review the wording and interpretation of passages drawn from transcripts of the interviews in which they took part. I also elected to reproduce extended passages from the transcripts in the study at hand, permitting the participants to speak to the reader in their own words.

The study findings are neither reliable nor generalizable in the conventional sense of those terms. The findings were drawn from a very limited number of participants who were identified and selected through non-probabilistic methods. Moreover, many of the prospective interviewees identified declined to take part in this study, creating the likelihood that study findings were influenced, to some extent, by a subject self-selection phenomenon. As a result, the findings from this study may not be generalized to other African immigrant
faculty members in other HBCUs. However, it does not diminish the relevance of the findings for two reasons. First, these findings are important for generating hypotheses that could be further tested with a more representative and, perhaps, a larger sample. Secondly, the findings are relevant for theory building.

I further acknowledge that, as an African immigrant with academic career aspirations, my own subjective biases may have influenced the construction of the study's interview protocol as well as my interpretation of results generated through its administration. In response to these issues, I engaged in periods of self-reflection to identify potential sources of bias before and after the interview portion of my fieldwork was completed.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents and discusses the perceptions of academic career experiences of eight African immigrant professors on two HBCU campuses. The stories they share communicate to the reader the multiple realities constructed by the participants. Direct quotations reveal to the reader “the depth of emotion, the ways they [the participants] have organized their world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions” (Patton, 1990, p. 24). According to hooks (1989), “speaking becomes both a way to engage in active self-transformation and a rite of passage where no one moves from being object to subject . . . Only as subjects can we speak. As objects we remain voiceless --- our being defined and interpreted by others” (p. 12).

The results are presented in themes that emerged from the data analysis: motives to immigrate, choice of academic career, professional and personal experiences, impact of racial, ethnic, and linguistic differences on their experiences, and finally participants’ perceptions of their institutions’ support. The findings are presented using the participants’ words and descriptions. Each presentation begins with a theme grounded in the data and interwoven with discussions. These themes reflect what was important to each participant in terms of his/her decisions for immigration, careers in higher education; choice of HBCUs, their perceptions of diversity and racial/ethnic relations on campus, career advancement, collegial relations, participants’ response to stress, working conditions, social network, hiring channels and mentoring; accent as a marker of outsider status, and finally their coping resources. Policy implications will be discussed in Chapter 5.
Motives for Coming to America

Although the composition of immigration to the United States has undergone significant changes since the mid-1960s and, at the same time, increasingly reflects a global brain drain from developing nations to OECD economies, the push/pull mechanism retains a high degree of explanatory power (Kunz 1973). In the context of late twentieth century cross-border movements, Cheng and Yang (1998) succinctly captured the core of the pull/push construct, stating, "favorable conditions in the receiving country, such as high salaries, high living standards, good research conditions, and career opportunities, pull professional migrants to the recipient country while unfavorable conditions in the sending country push the highly trained to leave" (p. 628).

Benefits of American Education

Both pull and push factors were salient in the decisions of study participants to leave their home nations and relocate to the United States. As we would anticipate within a set of individuals who have a very high level of educational attainment, the opportunity for advanced study in America was the key motivational variable for immigration. With two exceptions, i.e., the study's sole female participant, Dr. Onyema and Dr. Okwuta, all of the interviewees emphasized the centrality of an American education in their respective decisions to immigrate. Thus, for example, although Dr. Wazie had an offer of admission to a university in his native land, he chose to come to America for his under-graduate and graduate level education. Dr. Armah obtained his bachelor's degree in his home country, but decided to extend his education in the United States for the purpose of conducting
"sophisticated research." On this count, Armah, one of the most distinguished scholars, stated that:

I was lucky to obtain a scholarship for my master’s and terminal degree. After my first degree from [my home country] I had a strong desire to come to the States to get my terminal degree because of the relative flexibility in U.S. educational system . . . I’m better off teaching in the United States than in [his home country] because of access to research, resources, and wealth and other [benefits].

Whether they completed their undergraduate education in Africa before traveling to the host society or received a bachelor's degree at an American institution of higher learning, virtually all of the participants were attracted to the far broader and more open opportunities of advanced scholarship available in the United States.

Nevertheless, push factors had a complementary role in the immigration decisions of several study participants. These included a dearth of educational slots in their home countries, but both political instability and closed opportunity structures, marked by nepotism and cronyism, in Africa served as powerful push variables. This was most patently evident in the case of Dr. Kure, who had intended to permanently repatriate to his home nation after earning his master's degree in America, but who nevertheless fled that nation's political unrest.

**Adverse Political Situation**

While Dr. Kure witnessed the deterioration in his country's political circumstances first-hand, others watched from abroad as their home nations fell into increasing disorder and
opted to remain in the United States in reaction to these adverse developments. Dr. Kimba, who had anticipated returning to his homeland and taking a high civil service position, told the researcher:

My intention was to get a master’s degree and then go back to head the government agency that I had worked for. The political situation at home was not encouraging because nepotism and political favoritism gradually embedded in my country.

Closely monitoring events in their respective nations of origin, some of the interviewees made a second immigration decision after spending time in America, electing to remain in the host society after realizing the political hardships that they would face upon repatriation.

**Economic Motives**

The significance of economic motives, particularly the need to assist impoverished family members living in Africa, was a central theme in the responses of study participants to the question of why they came and why they remained in America. To varying degrees, all of the interviewees reported sending a portion of their salaries to their families in Africa; in some cases, participants earmarked as much as forty percent of their wages for remittance. Dr. Idion Uloko revealed that his family in Africa is virtually dependent upon the funds that he furnishes to them from his salary as an HBCU professor.

I’m the sole provider for everybody at home, even for my cousins. I’m responsible for every their every need. I have many of them in the university. The most disturbing thing is that my uncle continues to have children and I hate to see them suffer when I can make a little sacrifice.
Dr. Okwuta also represents those that immigrated for economic reasons. Similarly, Dr. Okwuta who had all his education and was an Assistant Professor in his home country before immigrating to America opted to stay in America after his two-year sabbatical for purely economic reasons. According to him, he would encourage others to come to America for the benefit of economic rewards unlike his country where professors and workers may not be paid for months.

Given the wage differentials separating the United States from labor markets in Africa, what appears to be a modest stream of funds to Africa from a single individual can have a crucial effect on the well-being of family members, making it difficult to forgo (or even to practically limit) voluntary transfers back home. Although they generally welcome the opportunity to help their family members in Africa, participants implied that they now had no choice but to remain in the United States given the extended families’ reliance upon their financial support. Several study participants intimated that they were inhibited from behaving in ways that might jeopardize their ongoing incomes, e.g., quitting their jobs or complaining too vociferously about working conditions and perceived inequities, since this would put their dependent family members at risk.

**Academic Career Choice**

In the United States, talented young people are generally given substantial latitude in their career choices. Within sub-Saharan Africa, the collective forces of expectation from the village or extended family play a more prominent role in the vocational paths of promising youngsters (Rica, 1989; Mohan & Zack-Williams, 2002, p. 225). Dr. Wazie, for example, comes from a large family headed by educated, worldly parents who expected their son to
join two of his brothers in pursuing an academic career in America. For himself and his nine siblings, Dr. Wazie confided, “getting a doctoral degree was imperative. Everyone strives for it. My parents believe that university education is the only way out.” Yet even for those study participants whose parents had little or no formal education, such as Drs. Kimba, Uloko, and Okwuta, family expectations had a strong, if not determinative, role in the establishment of a career in higher education as a personal objective.

Most of the study subjects were drawn to teaching long before they came to the United States. Thus, Dr. Wazie stated that his decision to become a university educator was "not really a decision at all" because he was "always sure" that he would be a college professor. Dr. Armah characterized his career choice in quasi-evangelical terms, saying that: “Teaching, like preaching, is a call and as far back as age six, I was helping my classmates to read. I have always wanted to give something back to society.” For Dr. Kimba, a love of teaching combined with a desire to have the requisite time to pursue scholarly interests:

I would categorize my choice for my present career to be love of teaching.

The working conditions for a college professor were an excellent motivation for me, especially the three months in the summer that allow me to travel and do my research. That was the motivation . . . and getting a doctorate means teaching.

Not all of the participants were disposed toward a pedagogical vocation during their youth. Although his father is a high school principal in his home nation and insisted that he apply for a scholarship at an American university, Dr. Nzogwu recounted:
Although my father was in education, I do not think he was an influence in my career decision. I did not set out to be a professor. But, I had always asked my father about the right thing to do. So, after my masters degree I thought the next thing to do was to get a Ph.D. And during my doctoral studies, I fell in love with teaching. And that was how my career in the professoriate began.

For these participants, a childhood or an acquired desire to teach and to empower young people combined with the prestige and the perks of American academia steered their career paths.

In contrast, Dr. Helen Onyema, who came to the United States with her parents at the age of 13 was not initially drawn to the university professoriate, but, instead, switched career paths in early adulthood. Although she spent a fairly brief period teaching at a junior college in her homeland, after obtaining her doctoral degree in the United States, Dr. Onyema took a high-paying position at a pharmaceutical corporation. Following the birth of her fourth child, Dr. Onyema returned to academia as a means for achieving a viable balance between her professional pursuits and her mounting family obligations.

. . . after my Ph.D., I started working for a [biotech] company. The demands of four children and working for a [private] company were overwhelming. I have taught before in [my country] and I have always longed for the flexibility that teaching provides. [When] an opening [became] available in [this institution], I applied and they gave me the job.
Dr. Onyema does not regret her decision to leave the corporate world or see it as having delayed her career advancement. Instead, she speaks in positive terms about “incorporating her prior experience of the corporate world into the classroom setting.”

**Decision to Teach at HBCUs**

We recall that in Arthur's (2000) study of 650 African immigrants living in the United States, the participants were virtually, "unanimous in their belief that migration to the United States had a positive impact upon their lives" (p. 73). This was the case for the eight African immigrant scholars with whom I spoke. Overall, these participants seem satisfied with the choice they had made to come to America and to teach within American academia.

Regarding the decision to join the faculty of a small, poorly endowed HBCU, however, many participants were not uniformly satisfied with some of its consequences.

As will be seen, in their choice of a historically black institution, the responses of the study participants plainly reflect an awareness of the white/black racial divide in the United States. Indeed, with the exception of Dr. Onyema, most of the interviewees expressed their initial belief that by working at an HBCU, they would easily “blend in with African-American colleagues." At least three of the study participants - Drs. Uloko, Kure, and Armah began their faculty careers at PWIs, but transferred to an HBCU with the expectation that they would be more comfortable in a setting in which blacks were predominant in administration, among the faculty, and within the student body. In Dr. Armah's case, the attraction of working at an HBCU was amplified by the promise that he would chair a new department in African studies (a incentive that did not, in fact, materialize). Dr. Nzogwu was drawn to an HBCU and also believed that working at a comparatively small university would
furnish him with the opportunity to influence program development. While he received several employment offers from other schools, Dr. Nzogwu chose his present institution because:

   It was a small institution and a new department in its infancy . . . I believed it had room for my philosophy. My ideas can be included in the development of the department. And I have opportunities for growth here [the science department].

Albeit to a somewhat lesser extent for Dr. Armah, Dr. Nzogwu has not achieved the influence that he anticipated, for, as an outsider (a foreigner), he does not command the political pull of his native-born (largely African American) colleagues.

   Dr. Uloko, who moved from a PWI before coming to a HBCU, also has similar ideas regarding teaching in his present institution as he responded that “it is a small university and the need for me here is greater . . . I could make greater contribution here [present institution] than in the previous institution.” For Dr. Wazie, his choice of teaching venue was influenced by a prior association with his present school: he was an alumnus at his current HBCU, and returned to it following the completion of his doctoral degree at a PWI because “I wanted to give back to the institution what I received.”

   On the whole, a career in higher education was established for the participants before they came to the United States, family influences were prominent in their decisions, and the choice of an HBCU was determined by a desire to blend in with non-whites and to exert influence upon program development at a relatively small institution. As demonstrated below, most of the participants are, in fact, disappointed with the outcome of their desire to
assimilate into the African American niche of higher education and by their lack of decision-making power.

**Perceived Professional and Personal Experiences**

The conditions of American academe can be discernable only in part from the measurable, tangible aspects of campus life (Bowen & Schuster, 1986). Faculty members’ experience cannot be understood apart from their own perceptions of campus life. African immigrant faculty members’ experiences of their circumstances are derived from their perceptions of their campus environments. In this study, participants spoke of the benefits and challenges they experienced as limited career opportunities, earning tenure, isolation, and negative estimation of their competence. Whereas in their decisions to immigrate to America, they may have envisaged great expectations of the melting pot and equality, on entering their academic careers, they believed that their awareness of a social and historical struggle emerged.

**Securing Tenured Positions**

Capital resource shortage has led to many institutions’, including HBCUs, efforts at limiting tenured positions as a means of cost cutting. The available empirical literature indicates that tenured positions are becoming scarcer over time. In this study, the participants believe that in their institutions, tenure-track positions and promotions are treated as entitlements that belong to American-born faculty from which immigrant professors are excluded.

Among the African immigrant professors interviewed for this study, Dr. Wazie's qualified his experience in gaining tenure as a nightmare. At the time of the interview, Dr.
Wazie had been working on a series of annual contracts in a non-tenured position for seven years. In essence, Dr. Wazie serves his school "at the dean's pleasure," and, in his words, this frustrating situation “leaves me uncertain even sometimes a day before the next semester begins to know if I have a job or not.” With an open display of emotion, Dr. Wazie spoke about the “excruciating” uncertainty he feels while waiting to hear from the dean at the end of each academic year. He makes no bones about his view that African faculty members at his school are relegated to "non-tenure tracks" positions by dint of their national background:

[It] looks like tenure positions are secured for US born faculty [members]. In other words, most American-born faculty get the tenure and non-American-born faculty rarely get tenure even in tenure-track positions in my department. . . . The very few tenure positions are given to American-born faculty members . . . Frequently the foreign-born faculty is offered the non-tenure-track positions. I have been here for seven years.

When Dr. Wazie lodged an informal grievance with the dean at his HBCU, the latter took his grievance under advisement, delaying any resolution of the matter. But far worse, while he received this protest, after ostensibly considering Dr. Wazie's complaint, the dean in question responded to it with a condescending "take it or leave it" pronouncement. As this study informant recalls his organizational superior's response:

The dean reminded me that I was making more money than I would have earned in my [home country] and that I should be appreciative of teaching in America. He also remarked that if I was not satisfied I should either accept the
position or resign because in my Africa I would not have fared better than my present situation.

Plainly, while giving the appearance of an open mind, Dr. Wazie believes, the dean had decided the issue on the basis of financial expediency. Some time after the completion of the interview with Dr. Wazie, a follow up conversation with him revealed that the position was eliminated for lack of funding, when in fact, he later discovered that the same position was not only upgraded to a tenure-track position but was given to an African American faculty member. The participant shared a letter to that effect with me.

**Attaining Tenure**

In response to what difference the participant sees in tenure awards between African immigrants and American-born colleagues, Dr. Wazie appears to be somewhat uncertain about his department’s established standard in awarding tenure because it is difficult to tell what yardsticks are being used to grant tenure. Speaking for himself and other African immigrant educators at his HBCU, Dr. Wazie commented:

Some of us think this institution uses different standards and it is not fair. We [African immigrants] do not understand the system even though there is a written procedure, a process for this thing [tenure]. There seems to be less promotion for foreign faculty, especially Africans, even though they do most of the work . . . They [the institution] stretch that standard to do what they want. You know, they bend the law to do what they want.

Dr. Wazie spoke for the majority of study informants when he complained about the lack of clarity in the application of standards for granting tenure. The denial of tenure to an African
immigrant faculty member (or any foreign-born professor) can be viewed, in these circumstances, as a manifestation of discriminatory or double standards operative in the tenure process.

The deleterious consequences for African immigrant faculty members that stem from absence of the consistent application of clear-cut yardsticks for granting tenure is compounded by the department’s unclear criteria for tenure decisions. When asked to describe the tenure process, Dr. Onyema also spoke of lack of clarity in the tenure standards in her department:

I don’t think I understand it completely. But I think it is a rigorous process for tenure and promotion. . . . The reason I think is rigorous is that the emphasis is teaching, but then for tenure and promotion, you must have publications. You cannot be promoted by teaching alone. You must have publication, your teaching, and also your services to the university and the community. All three components count. I think it is rigorous.

Of the five lacking tenure, only one occupies a non-tenure track position. The other four immigrant faculty members feel that they have been unfairly denied tenure while some of their less qualified US born colleagues have been granted tenure. The overarching impression gained from conversations with study participants on the subject of tenure is that they are befuddled by the absence of clear-cut standards, seeing the process as Kure says, “rigorous, slippery, and subjective.” Given the ambiguities that envelop tenure, several participants (including tenured professors) expressed the notion that a "double-standard" is operative to which African immigrants must demonstrate much higher levels of performance
(especially in terms of scholarly publications) than their African American counterparts to gain the coveted status of tenured faculty. Table 4.1 shows participants who are tenured, not tenured, and those that are not on tenure track. Of the eight participants in the study, three are tenured professors while five are not yet tenured.

Table 4.1

Participants’ Tenure Status

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<th>Tenured</th>
<th>Not Tenured</th>
<th>Non Tenure Track</th>
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<td>Participants</td>
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It might be expected that those informants who had successfully negotiated the rocky shoals of the tenure stream would bring a different perspective to the process. Nevertheless, the tenured Dr. Kimba's criticisms of the tenure procedure at his HBCU closely mirrored the charges leveled by Dr. Wazie. In Dr. Kimba's estimation, the tenure process is inconsistent and unfair, with tenure granted to African Americans who have personal connections to decision-makers. Dr. Kimba shared his thoughts on this issue:

The differences in awarding tenure are there. These are again subtle. For the African immigrant to be tenured, his records must be complete and his publications have to really stand out. They [the department] must make sure you have more than your colleagues. With African-Americans, sometimes they could get away with publications. The publication could be in what we call buddy, buddy kind of journal—journals that you know friends and they can put in something in there for you, sometimes, even in quality journals that
you can’t get things in. So they know how to play the game than the African immigrants. For the Africans, the criteria are more stringent. Actually, they end up working harder to get tenure. For an African, they [administrators] look at his record more critically.

In support of these allegations, Dr. Kimba noted that five African immigrant faculty members summarily resigned from their positions within his department after failing to attain tenured. He then recounted a frustrating period in which the already higher publication standard imposed on African immigrant professors was successively raised:

I’m the first African that has ever applied for tenure in this department and gotten it. But it was a battle. I felt like they raised the bar. The last person that got tenure was an African-American. But he never had a single publication. He was tenured based on having written only a few grants [proposals]. And when I applied for tenure they raised the bar. They scrutinized and followed the books to make sure I had the required number of publications. “You need six,” they said, but [when] they found that I met all the criteria . . . they went on to add other things that are not applicable to anyone else on campus. When my application got up to the dean . . . she declined it and did not clear it . . . She said, “I think you should do more. You need to add two or more publications.” I did not understand why I had to do 10 publications when I had almost 8. I know many people who had not done a single publication before tenure . . . It’s purely trying to discriminate against me. I feel the criteria I had to meet were much, much higher than the rest of my colleagues. You can’t
help but wonder why you have to be treated differently . . . You’ll find out
that most African immigrants do five times better than the African-American
faculty.

Some of the study participants did not experience inordinate difficulty to attaining
tenure. Dr. Idion Uloko became a tenured professor within five years of joining the
academia, teaching at a HBCU for much of that period. Dr. Armah reportedly "sailed
through" the tenure process because he knew the obstacles that he would face and deferred
his application for a tenure until he had amassed overwhelmingly superior credentials. Along
with Dr. Okwuta, Dr. Armah's remarks indicate that he perceived that he would be facing a
battle in trying to gain tenure, strategically planned his ascent, and defined his role as that of
an antagonist confronting a hostile enemy in the person of his HBCU's administrators. Dr.
Armah believed that his independence has not been well received by his African American
colleagues, who tend to see him as a maverick and have made no effort to bring him into the
fold.

For all of the tenured participants with the possible exception of Dr. Uloko, the
process of attaining tenure reinforced the sense that they were outsiders within an institution
that is nominally dedicated to diversity, inclusiveness, and equality of treatment. “I was very
naive," one study informant recounted, "I thought that all you do is do your work, publish,
and move on.” Most of this study's informants spoke of the naiveté of the career plans that
they had envisioned upon joining their current school's faculty. They believed to have
suffered a certain dissonance between what they believe should be the case at their schools
(equality of treatment) and what they believed they have experienced first hand. In this
context, an item appearing in the September 6, 2000 issues of *The Washington Post* reported that several highly qualified African immigrant professors had been denied tenure at Virginia State University, prompting one of them to file a job discrimination lawsuit against the school.

**Career Advancement**

Not only are scholarly publications a key determinant of tenure and promotion decisions in academia, for the participants in this study they believed to have furnished tangible evidence of their qualifications for permanent faculty positions and career advancement. Although some of the participants are tenured, all of the participants reported that further advancement, i.e., to a department chairmanship, a dean's position, or a vice presidency, was highly unlikely for themselves and for all other African immigrants at their schools.

While Dr. Uloko succeeded in the tenure process without any obstacles more than a decade and a half ago, he has never received serious consideration for a departmental chairmanship. As this informant noted, "I have been here for almost twenty years, I mean longer than even the dean. Yet, I have never been asked to chair the department, or recommended for a higher position.” This is despite the fact that Dr. Uloko had extended his record of scholarly publications during the interim between his reception of tenure and the time of interview. Also, Dr. Armah has witnessed other African-born professors struggle with their lack of advancement and left the school in an embittered and frustrated state of mind. Speaking of a friend's experience with an application for tenure, Dr. Armah recalled:
This office was first given to a guy from [Africa] a friend of mine who is now in [another state]. Dr. [Kwash] . . . the reason he left, he told me, was that he was not being paid as much as some of his junior colleagues who were American-born. He was also very highly published. In fact, since I came here, we [African immigrant faculty members] have been leading or most published in the institution.

All of the participants in this study acknowledged that African immigrants were heavily represented on the faculties of their respective schools, but they also observed that few of them had risen to positions of formal authority such as department chairmanships. They speak of barriers between themselves and administrative positions. Particularly with regard to the tenure hurdle but extending beyond that, the study informants are eminently aware of what Bowen and Schuster (1986) called the “up or out” rule. In academia at large, those faculty members who do not move "upward" are bound to be pushed "outward," dismissed from their non-tenured contract positions.

Because the study participants believe that career rewards and promotions are distributed through an "old boys network" among African American academics, they are convinced that they are denied these benefits by virtue of their lack of personal connections with experienced individuals on their respective campuses. As for those American-born professors who have been promoted at his school, Dr. Armah makes no effort to conceal or temper his contempt. He details his perception of the pattern of reward in his institution.

People are rewarded for doing nothing and people who work hard are rewarded with nothing. And this is very demoralizing and very discouraging.
In other words, the environment [does not] attract talents because they challenge the lazy people, put them to work so much and they would scare you. So, they pay you the same way like somebody who is doing nothing . . . I have made that very issue known to the Chancellor . . . that quality is broken down when talents are rewarded the same because we all know that we have different talents and high talent must be rewarded highly. It just does not happen here.

With the introduction of affirmative action in employment, members of various minority groups have found opportunities to enter fields of endeavor from which they had been previously barred. Despite the benefits of affirmative action, many minority groups are unable to break through the proverbial glass ceiling: promotion decisions generally become more and more subjective in nature, based upon such multivalent attributes as the possession of leadership quality and vision. As this occurs, the process of selecting individuals for positions of authority tends to become increasingly politicized. From my interviews with study informants, I learned that no African immigrant faculty members had ever held any type of administrative position or had been involved in policy/decision-making at either of these two HBCUs. As Dr. Uloko observed “we had one African who made it to the deanship but was quickly removed. And since then no other African has been given that position.”

Dr. Uloko no longer harbors any hope that he or any African-born colleague will reach administrative ranks. In his experience-tempered opinion, at his present school, Dr. Uloko stated, “African immigrant faculty members might as well wait for this opportunity forever. Just forget it.” He adds,
I’ll like to see more diversity in administration. There’s no immigrant administrator representing the minority or immigrant faculty. Perhaps, because they feel we have not been here long enough to understand the system. Positions of deans and department chairs are not given to African immigrants let alone that of vice presidency. The feel we do not understand the dynamics of the people. I think it is needless seeking any of those positions because you will never get it as an African immigrant. The problem in [my country] has reduced us to nothing. We just have to live with the situation.

Even when they have been appointed to positions of authority, as for example, the chairmanship of a departmental committee, African immigrant scholars at these two schools have found that their formal titles were not accompanied by autonomous decision-making power. Dr. Wazie, for example, was named as the chairman of a department-wide curriculum committee, but he soon found that all of its decisions were contingent upon the departmental chair's approval.

I was the chairman of the curriculum but the head of the department will come and chair the meeting, while I do all the work. I wonder why he puts me there in the first place. Of course, there are still few Africans that have proven themselves. In other words, they fought their way through. But rarely you find Africans who are heads. On our campus here [an HBCU institution], there is no African who is the head but they are many of them who are senior faculty officers. They are just back of the line.
In his interpretation of this experience, while Dr. Wazie's expertise in curriculum development within his discipline was necessary to its mission, the head of his department simply did not trust him to act on the basis of his superior acumen. The net result for Dr. Wazie is a sense of powerlessness, a theme that ran throughout the responses of study participants concerning their experience in attempting to influence departmental or institutional policies. Dr. Onyema contrasted the influence that professors can exert in the universities of her home country with the lack of influence that African immigrant faculty members have in the United States, ascribing the difference to bonds of interpersonal trust.

I don’t know if it is the pressure as a foreigner, but I think it is particularly true of being a foreigner because we do not have godfathers [having connections in high places]. In [my country’s] university, at least you can always rely on the fact that you have influence, that you can influence the committee; you can influence the chancellor on decisions that are unfavorable to you. You can go to the chancellor. You have so many people who can go to the chancellor and ask, why did this happen? But you can’t do that because you simply don’t have that network here [in the U.S.], we are the outsiders.

We shall return to the subject of "godfathers" shortly. One might ask why these immigrants claim to leave their countries because of cronyism and favoritism if they could influence decisions. There are several reasons that motivate people to leave their countries. As one participant observed during the interview, “it is a matter of expectation.” Cronyism and favoritism may not be considered an acute reason why some of them migrated; but when they came to the U.S., the culture was different: they had higher expectations regarding
behaviors in an advanced democracy. They do not expect to experience cronyism and favoritism on the scale of their home countries, which explains their disappointment.

**Pressure/Stress/Isolation**

The attainment of tenure is one of the most crucial milestones in a college professor's career and, by all accounts, the struggle to attain tenure is a highly stressful, even excruciating process (Phillip, 1993; Ramey, 1995). Studies have demonstrated that recent immigrants from developing nations experience high levels of acculturation stress as they attempt to adapt to the ways of the host nation society (Dyal & Dyal 1981; Kuo 1976) and several researchers have found some evidence of heightened stress levels among African immigrants to the United States and the United Kingdom (Kamya 1997; Nwadiora, 1995; Nwadiora & McAdoo 1996, Okoli, 1994).

For study participants, stress originating in isolation is a two-way street. First, several study informants believed that they were permanently excluded from social interaction, unable to discard the label of being an outsider in tight-knit HBCU communities. As Dr. Armah asserted, he continues to experience isolation and exclusion despite status as a naturalized U.S. citizen who had been working at the same institution for nearly a decade at the time of interview.

There’s a case I’m going to make. Sometimes, it is even shown by the staff and secretaries. And what I have found is that they are in league, whereby you get a problem with the boss all of them work together. So what I discovered here is that this is a small town league . . . once you talk to one person, everybody hears about it. It is a bias system. So when you touch one, you
touch the whole town. That’s bad. When you incur the displeasure of one, you have offended the rest of them, it is seen as a family feud. You are not one of them; you don’t belong even though you are a naturalized citizen.

In another instance, Dr. Wazie believed that even though African immigrants make up the bulk of the faculty in his institution, they are excluded from the decision-making positions. He states:

This institution relies on the abilities of expatriates, especially that of African immigrant faculty to operate. But when it comes to leadership positions, they’ll rather hire their own people. They are leery about foreigners, especially Africans taking over positions that they feel is supposed to be theirs. So, in this institution, foreigners are usually given temporary appointments or non-tenure appointments pending when American-born black is hired. So the Americans have much more rights than expatriates. Again, because of the perceptions they have about Africans and the notable political and economic instability in African countries, they feel we are satisfied with the anything we are given. Sometimes they think you have no alternative. For leadership positions, they still do not believe in our ability to run things.

The other aspect of isolation is self-imposed. Some of the participants have adopted a reclusive lifestyle that virtually precludes the development of interpersonal ties on campus. This was clearly so in the case of Dr. Okwuta. By his own report, Dr. Okwuta is so withdrawn and so detached from both the department and the university activities that an award for his scholarship was presented to him in absentia. As he related to the interviewer,
“I teach three classes and work two days a week. I’m only at my office for those two days from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm. I work mostly at home because I have a computer at home to work with.”

A principal source of stress among participants in this study stemmed from feelings of isolation, of being "other" than those around them. Although American academia at large is replete with accounts of faculty member isolation, these African immigrant professors believed that they experience isolation to an abnormally large extent because of their marginal status in being foreign and unconnected by a web of personal associations. African immigrants are doubly disadvantaged because of their distinctive accent (Nwadiorah, 1995; Arthur, 2000; and Kamya, 1997) and the stereotypes associated with it. In HBCUs, the easiest way to identify African immigrants is through their accent. Their accent is not very easily overcome by American accent and therefore not readily understandable by the natives. That makes it difficult to form friendships and associations with the American born natives. This may contribute to their high level of stress and feelings of isolation. Such stress can well undermine the capacity of African immigrant professors to achieve high levels of performance. According to Dr. Kimba,

All these subtle and sometimes overt discriminations and prejudices . . . in addition to the demands from home, the stress adds up and we [African immigrants] find it even harder to concentrate and publish as much as we would like to.

Tenure tension is not culture specific and as one of the respondents stated “it cuts across the board.” The stress involved in getting tenure is commonly perceived among
untenured faculty and even among some who are tenured. However, the immigrants in this study perceive their quest for tenure in the two HBCUs as causing them compounded stress. Rowe (1993, p. 9) found that in performance evaluation process that “difficulty, tension producing, . . . apprehension and nervousness as typical reactions” from non-tenured faculty members. She also indicated that faculty members who are not part of the dominant culture of the institution might have even more apprehension about the process.

Returning again to Arthur's study, one of the central findings of *Invisible Sojourners* (2000) was that "native-born blacks do not feature prominently in the African immigrants' web(s) of associations" (p. 80). Whether or not they discern ethnic discrimination at their schools, none of the participants report close ties with the non-African professors on their campuses. This is most obviously true of Dr. Okwuta, who remains isolated from virtually all his fellow faculty members, and who readily allows that even after four years at his HBCU, "I barely know anybody here.” The majority of the participants reported experiencing distrust upon coming to their respective schools. Most said that when they joined the faculty, their colleagues often treated them as though they had come to be enriched, not to enrich the institution.

**Negative Estimation of Competence**

In Dodoo's (1997) investigation of the negative differentials in experience by skilled African immigrants, one explanation he found was that employers did not ascribe the same value to an African education as they did to schooling in the United States. Several of the participants in the study at hand perceived a similar phenomenon: their colleagues, and students, seemed to believe that they were not as competent as American-educated
professors, even though most of the study informants earned one or more advanced degrees in the United States.

The participants reacted to this perceived label of incompetence through overcompensation: working harder than the non-foreign faculty members of their schools, they believe, in order to prove themselves. This study has no way of verifying these participants’ claims of working harder than their native born colleagues except through letters from former students, awards, curriculum vitae, and their research and publications as shown on Table 4.2. colleagues. Indeed, all of the study participants spoke about the psychological pressure to work harder than the American-born faculty at their schools. In general, Dr. Nzogwu observed, that “in general, foreign faculty members [at his school] have to work more than the American-born faculty, and in particular, black immigrants have to work even more.” Due to lack of funds, this study had no other way of substantiating the claims through interviews with the participants. Even the optimistic Dr. Onyema, who had been employed at an HBCU for five years, added that she is “still in constant fear of failure and the need to work harder to can make a good impression.” She elaborated on this felt need to act as a "representative" of African immigrant scholars as a whole in stating:

As an immigrant, I think we work harder in order to maintain the positions that we have. In a way, I feel we have to do more than the best we can because we don’t want to be [seen as incompetent]. You look at yourself as being in a position where you can influence the way that people that will come after you are perceived. And look at it this way. If I don’t do a good job here, maybe when I leave and a position comes up and another African comes for an
interview based on my experiences with them, they will definitely say that we
don’t want an African any more. In that way, you feel as an immigrant, you
need to work harder to maintain your professional integrity. You feel that you
must work harder to justify your being there because you don’t want to
disappoint people that come after you.

In the view of several interviewees, there is a certain irony: while African Americans in PWI
claim that they must work harder to prove themselves in the eyes of a predominantly white
American society, these African immigrants maintain that they must work much harder to
prove themselves to African Americans at HBCUs. Dr. Kimba articulated this observation
and went so far as to claim that the need to overcome an incompetence label was more
intensive at HBCUs than at PWIs.

African Americans often say that if they have to succeed they have to kick a
little higher. As an African immigrant, you have to kick much higher. They
will scrutinize your credentials. As an African, the expectation is much higher
than the African Americans. The quality of your work must surpass that of the
African American. You have to outshine them. Even if you are applying for
the same position, you must show that you are more qualified. Maybe in white
institutions you may be at par, or may have an edge, but here in the black
institution you have to be really good, even though your credential speak to
your qualifications, it’s you versus them. So, for us, it’s not an easy road. You
have to be better and market yourself a little bit better. They want to see that
you are involved in research, that you have published and that you are a serious scholar.

On the whole, the study participants believed that they shoulder the burden of the negative estimation of Africans by African Americans, that they are seen as inferiors and lacking in intelligence irrespective of their achievements and therefore feel the pressure to work harder to gain recognition, acceptance, and respect.

Nevertheless, relentlessly deepening their dilemma, the participants also felt that some of their native-born colleagues did not want them to work hard since this would reflect badly upon those who were not under the same pressure to prove themselves. As Dr. Wazie wryly commented: “My colleagues think I’m hardworking. They have said that but their actions sometimes say otherwise. They’d rather you’re not working so hard.” Again, Dr. Armah felt that his colleagues expect him to do more but become resentful about his achievements when “I outdo them.” He elaborates:

They expect you to do more than their own people or do more than the original. And they expect you to live the same lifestyle. I choose not to . . . When you can’t get somebody who works as hard as you, you are under-utilizing your services because they want you to behave just like them. Some people cannot behave that way, and I’m somebody that nobody can pull behind. I always want to aim high. I always want to fly high, high. Somebody who is flying and somebody who is sitting . . . It is a problem.
Above all, in the view of most participants, their African American colleagues frequently see them as a "threat" to their own job security and advancement. Dr. Kimba was quite frank in highlighting this theme:

They [African-Americans] see us Africans as threats . . . that have come to compete with the few positions left for them. They know we out-do them with our performance. They believe we are only taking and not giving to the society. Although they see your performance and all that, for as long as you are an African, you have no chance. Because of that there’s this feeling of threat. I mean, African-Americans, somewhat, are threatened by African immigrants, probably more so than they are of Oriental faculty and other immigrant faculty members.

Although these particular African American faculty members at these particular HBCUs may think that their African immigrant fellows are willing to work harder than native-born black professors for substantially lower rewards, it may not be the perception of other African American professors in other HBCUs.

Those participants who referred to the threat phenomenon did not so much blame their colleagues as they did administrative officials at their schools. There was a decided element of resentment in their views on this subject. Several believed that their superiors had exploited them. Indeed, one study informant recounted being told that if he was dissatisfied with the material rewards (pay, tenure, promotion, etc.) that he received, he should go back to his home country.
As will be documented below, most of this study's sample has distinguished itself through publications ranging from textbooks to cutting edge research studies appearing in first-class scholarly journals. Indeed, they feel that they must outdo their native-born colleagues in this area. Nevertheless, they believe that they have not received commensurate compensation and recognition. Dr. Uloko complained about the unfairness in the lack of advancement by the African immigrant faculty at his school: "Maybe they see us as ignorant Africans. But they trust our publications that bring prestige to the institution."

The perception that African professors must be inferior to American-born faculty members extends to the student body of HBCUs (Krup and Krup, 2000) and is manifested in what informants interpret as a lack of respect. In Dr. Onyema's experience, “the students just challenge you in a very disrespectful manner because you are different.” However, the students at these HBCUs appear to gain an appreciation of the talents that their African-born professors have in fairly short order. As one informant observed, the initial disparagement that he and other African professors felt from their students evaporated once they had “experienced [their] teaching and [seen] our publications.”

In contrast to these negative views of African American students, Dr. Okwuta reported that he did experience disrespect from students at the PWI where he previously worked, but has not suffered a like phenomena since transferring to an HBCU. He recalled:

When I was in a predominantly white school in a small town, they were disrespectful to me and some would come to my office and tell me that they never had a black professor. And they start to challenge me because they
doubted my ability and capability. I do not experience it here in black institution.

Quite obviously, there is some variation in the participants' experience of negative racial/ethnic stereotypes. Mostly, however, the study informants felt that they were caught on the horns of a dilemma. They felt that they needed to work harder and thereby overcome perceptions that they were incompetent, but by virtue of working harder, they risked magnifying the competitive threat that they posed to their native-born colleagues.

**Influence of Racial/Ethnic and Linguistic Differences**

Even when they do not intentionally emphasize their ethnicity, Africans carry distinctive “foreign attributes with them to the United States that cannot easily be discarded. The cultural barriers and the social and economic differences separating Africans and African Americans is sometimes the cause of a simmering hostility and misunderstanding between them” (Arthur 2000).

Participants’ rank, year in current position and publications are represented in Table 4.2 (below). The ranks of these participants range from assistant professors to full professors. The table indicates the most number of years in a position as 15 years and the least as two years. The participants seem to have the highest number of their publications in articles and chapters.

**Ethnic Tension**

The tenor of participant responses to questions about racial/ethnic relations on campus was one of frustration and, in fact, perplexity. Dr. Armah spoke of being excluded
Table 4.2

Participants Rank, Year in Current Position, and Publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Years in Current Position</th>
<th>Books</th>
<th>Articles/Chapters</th>
<th>Reviews</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Armah</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kure</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wazie</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

from university life at his HBCU by dint of his African immigrant status and compares the situation at his school unfavorably to his experience at PWIs.

I have had more discrimination and dissatisfaction here than in an all-white institution where I taught before I came here. We were about three, [blacks]. One of the guys was from Trinidad, the other was a black American woman and myself . . . and no problem. Nobody bothered me. [The] secretaries typed my work. The dean was my friend. In fact, he has been my reference. I don’t
have that type of relationships here . . . not even one, in a typical black institution.

Dr. Kure, another participant who worked at a PWI before joining his present school, a relatively short time before taking part in this study, replicated Dr. Armah's point by disclosing:

While American whites embrace and welcome foreign whites like they are the same, blacks resent blacks, especially those from Africa. I don’t understand it. These African Americans complain about being discriminated against by whites, but they in turn discriminate against others.

Particularly vexing to Dr. Nzogwu was the experience of being told by one of his African American colleagues that he is (somehow) "not black." Of such incidents, Dr. Nzogwu stated:

One thing that bothers me sometimes, is the way African Americans pursue Africans. It’s really difficult to express. It is not what you would expect. They’ll be the first to say, he is not black. By that they mean, you’re not an African-American, you are not one of them. Yet they accuse us [African immigrants] of preferring the whites over them.

Since all save one of the participants came to their present positions with the expectation that they would be treated as equals based on a shared African heritage, the interviewees were generally confused by the treatment that they received as outsiders. In the words of one study informant, “I’m just baffled with the way we [African immigrants] are treated. I have not been able to put a finger on what we did to them [African Americans].”
The nature of the tension between the participants and their African American colleagues was termed “subtle.” Rather than blatant acts of black-on-black xenophobia, the interviewees spoke of discrimination lurking beneath the surface of seeming harmony. As Dr. Kimba explained:

Although there has been no incidents in which one has been attacked because he is African immigrant, relations between African-Americans and African immigrants seem healthy, but there is often tension beneath the surface. There’s the feeling of threat. African-Americans somewhat are threatened by African immigrants, probably, and more so than they do of Oriental faculty and students. The discrimination is not that overt, it’s subtle. You realize it when it comes to the issue of promotion—when the chairmanship or dean positions are open or any administrative position is open and you apply with some of your African-American colleagues. You’ll see that they are not very anxious for you getting the position. It’s very subtle. They will never tell you they don't want you, but you will see they are more supportive of their own candidate. Its subtle and never that direct.

Dr. Wazie expressed an opinion on this topic that was entirely congruent with Dr. Kimba's assessment. He spoke about ostensible diversity on his campus masking the deeper reality that African immigrants are unaccepted and excluded from important positions:

It [ethnic relations] is not excellent. With some people, it’s okay; with others it’s cruel. There’s no direct confrontation but you can understand [and] feel the differences in culture. And some of the American faculty members are not
relaxed when they are with foreign members of the faculty, especially African immigrant faculty. They accept other immigrants with white skin color more than us [African immigrants]. Also for the department chair to tell me to go back to Africa if I did not like the non-tenure position tells me the extent of his disgust for Africans.

We shall return to subtle forms of discrimination against African immigrant scholars under the rubric of unequal career treatment. Dr. Nzogwi sums up what he believed as the racial/ethnic divide prevalent in his analysis of appointments that are devoid of merits:

> What I see as a weakness in this university is that all things are based on race and ethnicity. I think it should be acknowledged. When they are doing appointments they should be careful and not look only at people’s origin but qualifications and achievements. By that I mean, the best-qualified and the most capable person. And because these things are not considered, the system is not run on a merit basis. It is based on who you are. Any reasonable person does not appreciate a system that operates like that. Part of the reason some of us are still here is because of the situation in our country.

For the majority, then, ethnic differences divide them from their African American colleagues and leave them in a position of inferiority.

Not all of the study participants hold this view. Dr. Onyema sees the baffling interplay of race and ethnicity in her school as a matter of cultural differences and, above all, of mutual miscommunication. On this subject, Dr. Onyema elaborated:
I think, because again, this is a predominantly black college, I don’t see any overt signs of discrimination . . . I do see signs of miscommunication, misunderstanding, especially between black foreigners and black Americans. It is always miscommunication. I won’t say it is discrimination. I will say it is miscommunication or cultural misunderstanding, cultural differences. They [African Americans] have a way of looking at things that we don’t see the way they see and vice versa. I don’t think there’s overt discrimination. Misunderstanding could be between student and student, or student and faculty.

This particular informant is quick to qualify her perception of non-discrimination by stating that she is the kind of (upbeat) individual who does not attract negativity from others. If Dr. Onyema is correct in her main assertion, perceived discrimination among other participants may dissipate (at least insofar as intra-faculty relations are concerned) as African American and other native born professors learn more about the culture and the communication style of their African immigrant colleagues and vice-versa. Lastly, Dr. Okwuta (who reportedly spends only two days a week on campus and has little interaction with colleagues) did not report discrimination against African immigrant scholars at his school, declaring that he sees “no evidence of discrimination. I haven’t experienced anything since I have been here on this campus.

**Accent Barriers**

It is widely recognized that most African immigrants speak with a British-flavored accent; indeed, it is through hearing them speak that African immigrants are often identified
as being other than native African Americans. In combination with African-sounding names, the characteristic pronunciations and inflections of English-speaking African professors have been shown to evoke or reinforce discriminatory treatment of these foreign academics (Antwi & Ziyati 1996; Manrique and Manrique 1994). Since their profession demands verbal exchanges, most notably in classroom settings, African immigrant scholars are vulnerable to derision and derogation on the part of American natives, even when (or, rather, especially when) their spoken discourse is formally correct.

As I confirmed upon speaking with prospective study participants on the telephone, despite their extensive stays in the United States, all of them have an African accent to some extent. They tend to be highly sensitive on this front. Indeed, when they first speak with native-born Americans and are asked by them, “Where are you from?” or, “What did you say?” these scholars experience the tandem frustration of being marked as an outsider and being misunderstood despite their best efforts.

What was acutely vexing to the study participants are instances in which African American students and faculty members become preoccupied with idiosyncrasies of diction and then neglect the content of the lesson or message being conveyed to them. While Dr. Onyema had been in the United States since the age of thirteen, she still encountered a negative reaction to her accent usually with her first semester freshman class. She explains,

My first semesters are not very pleasant. When you go into a class of freshmen who are just coming from high school, and you speak . . . oh my gosh! They pretend they don’t understand. They will say, “What is she saying? What did she say? I didn’t hear that.” But when they pick up the cues
that you really mean business, they tend to relax and let go and then they
begin to understand your accent . . . I get less and less of it.

The operative word in this statement is “pretend,” for students can easily place the blame for their failure to grasp lessons taught to them by African immigrant faculty on being unable to understand their instructor.

Although Dr. Kimba noted that some of his students “get a kick out of my accent,” he also reported that his African American students are more perturbed by this reminder of their teacher's African background than are other students in his class, including the limited number of white undergraduates:

More of the African Americans are peeved with my accent than the whites . . .
I don’t have problem with white students. They are more open. I mean there’s never been a big problem. I think the whites pay more attention than the African-Americans. African-Americans usually ask, “Say what?” you know. I run into this often even though I have lived here [America] for almost 20 years. For white students, it occurs once a while. It happened yesterday. This time, they didn’t know the meaning of a word and one of the white students asked, “What did you say?” They sure get a kick out of my accent. It used to bother me but now, I even take part in making a joke of me.

What disturbs Dr. Kimba in the response of his African American students to his accent is that they are not genuinely interested in Africa or even in clarifying what he has said to them: instead, they seem to be intent upon establishing his otherness as an individual who is somehow "less black" than they are.
Dr. Wazie added an unexpected wrinkle to the African accent issue, the assertion by some of his students that he does not, in fact, "speak English."

I have had people telling me that I did not speak English. They will ask me to speak the English language, even though you are speaking better grammar. Again, for most of the students, they don’t have problems with me. Accent!

Now at the beginning of each semester, you’ll have a few people ask questions because they easily did not get the differences because of the difference in intonation, or as they call it, accent. When you speak, they comment on accent. But as time goes on they have no problem. However, I believe that my accent does not impede my communication with anyone, unless the person chooses not to understand me.

This informant’s notion that at least some people choose not to understand him resonates with the perceptions of deliberate misunderstanding by students voiced by Dr. Onyema and others.

In partial contrast to this perception, Dr. Kure accepts that he has an accent that makes it difficult for some of his students, including African Americans, to fully understand what he is saying to them. Dr. Kure has addressed this problem by altering his speech patterns, most notably by modulating the rate of his speech:

I’m from Africa and so have an accent. Once in a while, a student would ask that I repeat a sentence for clarity. These are some of the things we have to remind ourselves. It depends on the individual. You have to slow down when communicating or answering their questions. But among my colleagues, it’s
not a problem. It’s never been a big problem. My evaluation has never reflected that.

Taking a constructive approach, Dr. Kure went so far as to characterize his accent as an asset because it compels his students and his colleagues to pay close attention to his verbal communications:

Sometimes I get more attention because they listen more closely. Every once in a while you’ll meet those with closed minds that have trained their ears not to understand others. Some of them have never been exposed to anybody who speaks differently from them. It is purely lack of exposure . . . It is frustrating because they come to class with the mind not to understand you and find excuses for not doing well in tests. The accent is still there and will continue to be there. It’s really not what I want to lose.

In like manner, while Dr. Armah acknowledges that some of the miscommunication with students caused by his accent is merely a marker to identify him as an outsider, he has been able to overcome legitimate misunderstandings by furnishing them with written lecture notes:

[My] foreign accent is not a handicap because I take my time to speak and I provide them with lecture notes, sometimes typed in various forms. And they always give excellent remarks for the lecture notes, that they were very helpful. I often joke with them by saying, if they can’t hear me, they can at least see the work. They understand you when they need something from you. It is a way of reminding us that we are different, you don’t belong here, therefore, inferior.
In Dr. Armah's case, his African accent has presented him with an opportunity to demonstrate his written language proficiency to his students.

For his part, Dr. Kimba did not report any major problems with his faculty colleagues owing to his accent. Answering a question posed to him on this topic, Dr. Uloko shrugged and said, "they may have problems but none has told me. I believe they are just being professional, you know. But you can see it on their faces when they become abrupt in their conversation, especially if the person is unfamiliar." Other study informants noted that their native-born colleagues might initially respond to their accents with bewilderment, but that they are generally able to adjust quite rapidly to their speech patterns.

One highly practical concern voiced by several informants is that faculty performance evaluation criteria at both schools encompass an “ability to communicate” standard into their personnel assessment schedules. At least some of the study participants report that they have received low marks on this dimension of their evaluations. This was most apparent in the case of Dr. Okwuta, who has a very thick accent and who expressed chagrin at the "poor" grades that his classroom students have given him as inputs to his performance evaluations. On this subject, Dr. Okwuta was adamant in his assertion:

They [students] have problem understanding my accent. That is the major contribution to the problem. Students have scholarly problems and they are not motivated and they tend to attribute it to accent. This is not true. They are not well prepared for college.
Dr. Okwuta was not the only informant to have received low marks from his students on an ability to communicate assessment item. Another study participant (with a far less noticeable accent) stated:

In my evaluations, I get poor grades in the question, “the professor explains things, or speaks clearly.” I have very poor grade in that area even though I speak better than some of the American professors just because I don’t have the same intonation as they do, just because I’m a foreigner.

Both of these individuals trace the negative influence of student assessment of their communications skills as an artifact of student academic deficiencies. At the very least, African immigrant faculty at the two HBCUs in which this study was conducted are further handicapped in their upward career mobility by the inability or unwillingness of students to accommodate a voice that is different from American English.

**Professional Environment and Institutional Support**

I assume that participants are interested in working in schools that will make use of their potential. Given that assumption, this section discusses the extent to which support is provided for African immigrants on these HBCU campuses. Participants were asked about their experiences when they first arrived at their respective campuses, if they were given some sort of orientation and how they perceive their institutions’ support as a minority group. Oftentimes they were people who were first-generation college graduates, as well as first-generation faculty, therefore, were unaware of the expectations of faculty or even of office procedures.
Several of the interviewees complained that the university had not provided them with orientation or socialization into the American academic culture. They believe that if their institutions had been proactive in providing the immigrant faculty with orientation, mentoring, and guidance, the stress they reportedly experienced would have been significantly reduced. Dr. Okwuta’s comment about his expectation of the institution as being a “place that will provide scholarly and conducive atmosphere for communication as well as students’ scholarly inquiry and exchange of ideas,” introduces the next section. The issues of support and mentoring will be discussed in the section entitled, “Perceived Institutional Support.”

The Diversity Myth

Consistent with their historical commitment to equality and inclusiveness, both HBCUs in which this study's fieldwork was conducted (and virtually all educational institutions) have explicitly embraced diversity in their updated mission statements. Six of the eight interviewees took issue with the depth of their schools' commitment to genuine diversity, several using the word "façade" in this topical context. This was plainly the case for Dr. Armah, who observed that diversity at his HBCU is "a joke" and a mere expression of "political rhetoric." Although he did allow that the student body at his school was diverse and that its faculty included professors from varied backgrounds, including not only African immigrants in particular but also immigrants as a whole, Dr. Armah stated:
They [university administration] just use it [diversity] as; I’ll call it a wrong nametag. They like the concept but they don’t copy the concept. It is a joke all over the institutions in the country. They talk about it, and they don’t do something practical about it. Apparently, that is what the Chancellor has been saying. But it’s yet to be seen. I mean, there are some areas in academia that [prejudice against African immigrants] are so obvious, even some staff will not respect you and sometimes students will make some [derogatory] remarks all because you are from Africa. Last year, for example, I was elected a parliamentarian, and I talked about this issue of diversity. In every meeting, they hear me and I talked. I made several attempts but there is no difference. They only talk and nothing is happening. They ask me for suggestions every year and every day regarding diversity but nothing changed.

A closely related theme that emerged in responses to the researcher's inquiries about diversity underscored a significant difference in how that term is defined within the host society.

Emblematic of this discordance, Dr. Nzogwu said:

The term diversity to me means people of different colors, different backgrounds. But in the US, it means different race. I don’t think they go out to encourage diversity in this university. I don’t think there’s a program geared toward diversity. Bigger institutions may have a program for diversity but not in this institution. The fact is, as far as I know, if you apply for a position in this institution, and there’s an African-American person whose qualifications are about the same, they will hire the African-American person.
That is the practice. And so, I do not think they go out of their way to hire African immigrants. No program is categorized as diversity. No practice here. There’s none.

As would become evident in the responses of the participants to other questions posed to them by the researcher, several of these African immigrant faculty members believed that at HBCUs, diversity was equated with the predominance of African Americans in an institution lodged within a national academia dominated by whites.

Among those who expressed their discontent with diversity at their schools, most avoided charges that administrators actively discriminated against African immigrants. Instead, they typically noted that the university was not proactive in recruiting foreign faculty members who share its predominant racial characteristics. In Dr. Armah's view, for example:

The institution prides itself on being diverse. They encourage diversity through hiring people from different ethnic backgrounds, race, men, and women. They just hire them but don’t do much for them, not much. They see the group as being diverse. They don’t have a high technical program that goes next step further. Those most disadvantaged are African immigrants who are the least respected.

Both Dr. Okwuta and Dr. Wazie concur that their campuses have a substantial number of African immigrants and other foreign faculty members, but they add that their institutions do not provide special support to remedy the unhealthy relationships between African immigrants and African American groups. Finally, Dr. Uloko allowed that his school did
make efforts to add immigrants to their faculties, but that its administration did not offer "any incentives to lure African minorities."

Three participants expressed a dissenting opinion. According to Dr. Okwuta, diversity is alive and working on his school's campus and, in his estimation, “the institution does a great job in bringing foreigners to teach . . .” In like manner, Dr. Onyema speaks in glowing terms about the commitment of her school's chief administrator to fostering genuine diversity. She talked about how diversity operates in her institution.

The chancellor . . . wants to diversify the student population and faculty. He says it all the time that he wants to diversify. He doesn’t want it to be looked at just as a black institution. He wants the diversification of student body and faculty . . . He seems to support that. I think here, the department is very well integrated. There are whites, there are blacks, and there are Indians in terms of faculty.

Dr. Kure who worked at the same school as Dr. Onyema, registered a similar opinion, in somewhat less ebullient terms:

I have seen some diversity here. The department is highly mixed with whites, blacks, and Africans. The law school is almost 50-50. The department here is also mixed, two African immigrants, two females, and one white. For a small department, I will say it is very diverse in terms of people from different cultures.

Both camps of the diversity issue believe that HBCUs have been compelled to turn to foreign professors chiefly because of the lack of African American Ph.D.s who are willing to
work at these institutions. Offsetting the minority opinion that their university is committed to diversity, even those who acknowledge diversification efforts attribute a portion of the underlying motive to practical exigencies, i.e., the scant pool of qualified African American professors. As Dr. Kimba puts it, "I don’t think we [African immigrants] would be here if they have enough pool of African American doctorates to take the positions." Seen in this light, the participants feel that their HBCUs have diversified into hiring African (and other) immigrant faculty members by default and the current arrangement is, in the words of one study informant, largely "a marriage of convenience."

**Social Network within Institutions**

The importance of social networks comprised of countrymen already living in a host society for newly arrived immigrants has been heavily underscored in the pertinent research literature (see, for example, Portes 1997, pp.801ff). Such networks furnish the latter with crucial immigration-related information, with the prospect of economic, social, and psychological support following relocation, and with instrumental assistance that facilitates movement into and subsequent adjustment to a foreign society (Massey & Garcia 1987). In many instances, immigrants to the United States have settled into distinguishable enclaves wherein compatriots provide assistance in locating housing and employment.

Institutions of higher learning typically advertise open faculty positions in the "want ads" of publications oriented toward an academic readership, but a word-of-mouth process fills most positions (Moses 1995). None of the participants in this study enjoyed such advantages. All of them learned about the existence of a faculty opening through professional journals as opposed to the informal information-transmission channels. Most arrived on their
present campuses in relatively remote locales without the benefit of a personal connection. Perhaps most critically, none of them had the benefit of a mentor at their schools to guide them through the difficult process of adjusting to local institutional customs.

**Mentoring**

Mentoring is needed in all professions, but having a mentor to point out the right direction and provide advice is invaluable in higher education. Although many of the participants clearly appreciate the value of having a mentor or sponsor to show them the ropes and to present the case for their being granted tenure or a promotion, none of the study informants was able to secure a mentor during the initial years at their current schools. When the question about having the benefit of a mentor was asked, Dr. Onyema was quick to comment that that insofar as African immigrant professors are concerned,

> There is no such thing as mentoring. Another failing that this university has . . .

> I think it would have helped a lot if I came in here and there was . . . someone, a mentor . . . You know, in academics, when you finish you are on your own . . . It would have been nice if you have somebody you can always go to and say, this is what I’m doing. Please can you give me your opinion on this thing that I’m doing. It’s always nice to have that person. But we don’t have that here.

Absent a mentor from the same national or other background, all of the interviewees agreed that they were deprived of an indispensable resource for integration into their campus culture. As Dr. Nzogwu remarked, even among African immigrants who are graduates of his school, provisions for acculturation are inadequate:
Although most immigrant new hires, from my experience, have attended schools here in the U.S., they still need mentors and cultural orientation. So there are very few people they have hired who have not been in the US culture, in this culture, at least for some period of time. Therefore, even though I feel there should be a program, that program should be a cultural one. It should have a cultural component to it. And also what I call, a technical component. A culture component should entail some efforts to link somebody new with faculty that has the same experience like them. That will make them feel more comfortable. But as far as I know, that is not happening. The technical component, I think, has nothing to do with whether you are immigrant or not.

For all of the study informants, the unavailability of other African immigrant faculty members to serve as mentors made it far more difficult to grasp the cultural and normative dimensions of their positions.

Dr. Onyema demonstrated her insight into this handicap when she observed that at her school, “we have no critical mass because we are not sons of the soil.” She proceeded to explain:

The thing about immigrants, if you look at it this way, we don’t have godfathers. That’s another way you can look at it. We are not sons of the soil. We don’t belong to the inner circle, we don’t belong to the old boys’ club, and we don’t have godfathers. Simply, for that, we have to work much harder.
You can’t make enemies. You can’t make enemies simply because you don’t have godfathers. If you have godfathers, then you can make any enemies you want.

Dr. Nzogwu believed that the top officials at his school have not acted upon his proposals. Under these circumstances, the African-born scholars have adopted alternative strategies to compensate for the absence of "godfathers" and orientation programs at their schools. First and foremost, many have turned to African immigrant professors working at other schools for guidance and support. Dr. Armah apprised the researcher that he had developed interpersonal ties with African academics working on the faculties of other universities in the United States and other economically developed nations:

But I do collaborative work with professors elsewhere than maybe over here. Sometimes people will understand you better in other institutions. There was a paper I published with one professor from [another African country] who . . . teaches in Canada . . . In academic relationship, you know, I cannot find the right peer to do collaboration work, so I seek help somewhere. Sometimes, I attend seminars at [other] universities and other institutions.

The responsibility for what is perceived by the study informants as inadequate organizational orientation or socialization programs is laid squarely at the doorstep of university administrators. Dr. Wazie pinpointed this problem and suggested a remedy for it:
My expectations were that the university will be supportive of scholarship to make resources available to facilitate research, presentation of papers, and things that will help my publications. They fell short of my expectations because the support has not been there. The resources and the encouragement have not been there. I tried to mention it at the meetings and hoped every faculty member will join me in talking about it. But they kept emphasizing that it is a teaching university.

All the participants perceived their institution as lacking in providing the necessary support in all areas. Dr. Nzogwu pinpoints the exact areas for institutional support among the group:

As far as I know, there’s no direct support. No technical training, no cultural awareness training. Just get into the program and start adjusting to the system . . . First of all, there should be an orientation that will educate them on the culture of this society. And also that will let them show their own culture and see how they can reconcile these two cultures. That will help them to adapt more easily in this environment. And also creating awareness of the differences in culture among the students that such faculty will be teaching.

Dr. Nzeogwu’s suggestions seem quite impressive in the effort to reach African immigrant faculty members at these HBCUs. It can be argued that other minority groups may find them outlandish and time consuming, hence may be perceived as preferential treatment of this group of immigrants. Dr. Okwuta added in his expected support for especially new hires as
“fewer classes, availability of computer, and conducive office space” and the translation of verbal commitment to scholarship into material use. All the participants noted a lack of support or collaboration from their African American colleagues. As a result, many sought collaboration outside their institutions.

The second strategy that study participants have adopted in response to the absence of opportunities for socialization into their schools' organizational cultures is to consciously reject what they perceive as the established customs and mores of their school in favor of higher standards. Again, Dr. Armah served as a profound informant on this topic, declaring that he deliberately utilized a non-conformist pedagogical style. By doing so, Dr. Armah acknowledges, he has risked the disapproval of his superiors in his department and the university at large. Dr. Armah has become an outspoken critic of what he believed was unequal treatment of African immigrant professors from Africa. Believing that their institutions have failed to provide much needed support, these participants have found ways to negotiate the bumpy terrains of the academe.

**Working Conditions**

It became more apparent as interviews proceeded that most of those citing poor physical conditions, lack of technology and the like as a source of job dissatisfaction at their HBCUs suggested that there was some linkage between the hardships that they labored under and their immigrant status.

All of the study informants expressed a desire to engage in research and writing activities. It is by no means surprising to find that several of the interviewees expressed
dissatisfaction with what they regard as heavy teaching loads that reduce their opportunities to engage in scholarship. On this subject, Dr. Okwuta reports,

I have not been utilized the way I’d like to. Teaching four classes is too much. I am overworked and classes take me away from research, consulting, workshop, grant writing . . . I have the talent and resources but I’m just swamped with classes and can’t finish many things that I started. I have never been included in any campus activity that needs my expertise. I’m under utilized.

Dr. Onyema expressed a similar opinion, underscoring the connection between reduced time for research, publication, and grant writing and the inability of immigrant professors to advance their careers. "Although this institution’s mission emphasizes teaching," Dr. Onyema observed, "the ultimate determinant of one’s promotions and tenure is publication. I’m inundated with too much teaching load and meetings, upon meetings with various committees and no time to publish."

Alongside their dissatisfaction with inordinately heavy teaching duties, the informants in this study recounted seemingly minor forms of unequal treatment, seeing them as symbolically important expressions of their subordinate status. Dr. Wazie, for instance, recalled an incident in which he was compelled to move from his campus office to make room for a newly hired African American colleague.

We constantly experience humiliation by the way we are treated. We are told in every way that we are not needed here. Let me share another horrible experience. I was asked to leave an office that I have used for
two years to a smaller office space because of a new faculty member . . .

Of course he is an American. I felt like nothing. The racism is . . . well
not racism because we are all black. I mean the ethnic difference. It is
hard to give a name when you are dealing with a fellow black.

A similar humiliation was inflicted upon Dr. Okwuta, who discovered that a rug was
removed from his office without notice and was installed in the campus quarters of an
African American faculty member. “Perhaps they think Africans don’t need a rug,” Dr.
Okwuta observed in a decidedly cynical tone of voice.

One of participants’ focal complaints centered upon the "below-mean" quality of
physical infrastructure, teaching technology, and support services. The relatively upbeat Dr.
Onyema took time out from the interview to show the researcher the teaching lab in which
she is expected to instruct students attending her biology courses. The lab in question was a
small, almost closet-sized room, and she commented with uncharacteristic sarcasm, “that is
the university lab where I’m expected to carry out experiments with over 30 students at a
time. One can only get things if you bring money to the university, otherwise you make do
with the crumbs [left over].” Partially because of the sub-par research facilities and research
reputation of her school, neither Dr. Onyema nor any of her colleagues enjoy major external
grant funding. Working at the same HBCU as Dr. Onyema, Dr. Kure, who attended an Ivy
League institution and was a member of a PWI faculty prior to his present position was
taken aback by the lack of technical support services at his school. During the interview, Dr.
Kure pointed to an unpacked computer box and said,
I have been here for a year, and a computer has just been delivered to me last week. On top of that there is no technician to hook it up. So, it is as good as not having one. It is extremely impossible to work without the necessary technology. I teach graduate courses and cannot communicate with my students unless from my home.

The capital shortages common to HBCUs at large have clearly generated focused discontent on the part of these African immigrant faculty members. He did admit that the poor that lack of technology on his campus affected every faculty member regardless of race or ethnicity.

Participants were divided, however, as to whether the poor physical working conditions that they reported were primarily a consequence of their school's dearth of funds or deprivations specific to their immigrant status. Among the former, Dr. Onyema, who has worked in private industry, saw her teaching laboratory quandary as an institution-wide phenomenon; indeed, she stated that her poor working conditions reflected her own lack of published research studies and, hence, inability to attract outside grant funding.

**Emergent Themes**

This section presents additional themes that emerged from the interviews. Literature review reveals that immigrants develop sources of support to balance their experiences in the host country. Such means of support include coping mechanisms, personal traits, religion, and networking among their kind. The review also suggested that immigrants from third world countries tend to engage in dual frames of reference as they compare their situation in the host country with that of their peers in their home countries.
Coping Resources

In his study of acculturative stress among African immigrants, Kamya (1997) noted that his subjects were able to cope with stress through a variety of resources. Despite the roadblocks and the disappointments that they believe to have encountered in their academic careers in the United States, all of the participants in this study cited one or more compensatory factors that enabled them to maintain high levels of perceived self-efficacy and spiritual well being. These coping resources can be construed as mediating variables that, in many instances, have enabled the interviewees to survive (and grow) under trying circumstances.

Making a Difference

Despite the demoralizing influences that have affected the morale of the American professoriate at large, as Clark (1987) has commented, the low material or extrinsic rewards (relative to educational attainment) of careers in higher education are partially counterbalanced by the intrinsic rewards. Among the participants in this study, the academic profession was viewed as a means for making a difference in the society as a whole, empowering students with knowledge and inspiring them with models of professional success.

The participants are keenly aware that many of the students enrolled at HBCUs are not academically oriented, that they are, in fact, "low achievers." Dr. Okwuta, for instance, characterized his students as "lax," "unmotivated," and "poorly prepared" for college-level work. Still, all of the study informants derive satisfaction from their interactions with students. Most said that that their relationship with students sustains them in the HBCU
professoriate, reinforcing their sense of self worth, personal fulfillment, and the achievement of meaningful work.

Several of the African immigrant professors spoke of their career choice as a "calling," placing their decision to become teachers in a spiritual context. Dr. Armah is openly passionate about the impact that he has had on young people, and he proudly shared letters of appreciation from former students with me. While I scanned these testimonials, Dr. Armah declared:

[M]y students are my best customers. They love me and I love them. But it is with what I call hardiness and love. I teach very hard and I test very hard. Sometimes they complain but at the end they confess with their own mouth all the things they have gained because I always say that there are two types of teachers, one that teaches knowledge from the head and one that teaches knowledge and wisdom from the heart. And I combine two of them. They perceive me as one very caring and very compassionate. Most of them maintain contact with me after they graduate. They write me letters to thank me for the rigorous preparation I give them.

Apart from the performance evaluations that he has received, and far more important from his standpoint, the success of his erstwhile students is Dr. Armah's primary source of feedback. He was openly elated by the fact that “some of my students have become very rich and they still maintain contact with me. This gives me a great joy and helps me cope in the midst of all the petty politics, discrimination, and disrespect that I experience.” He attributes
the praise that he has received from his students to his unconventional, informal and highly animated teaching style, and contrasts his approach to the dry formality that pervades student-faculty relations at his school. It is apparent that Dr. Armah places far greater importance on the adulation that he has received from his students than he does to the criticisms that he has encountered as a campus advocate from some of his fellow faculty members.

Recommended for awards by his students, Dr. Nzogwu is yet another African immigrant faculty member who has derived satisfaction from the bonds that he has developed with his students. He told the researcher:

The students respect me, they like me. I enjoy working with them and we do a lot together. We have written papers together. But I like to keep it professional. They even recommended me for an award. I find solace working with students because they make you feel you are making a difference. That is a good feeling and you want to continue in spite of the negativity directed toward us Africans.

Similarly, Dr. Nzogwu indicated that the "good feeling" he has experienced from the positive feedback of his students counteracts the "negativity" and the hostility that he believe he has received as a consequence of being an African immigrant. Dr. Nzogwu speaks of the two awards he recently received:

This past year I worked with three students on the Engineering Conference Paper and at the end I was given an award by my department with the
recommendations of the student body. This past Spring I won another award as an outstanding faculty member.

Clearly, all of the study participants place a high value on education for its own sake and are deeply committed to the tandem aims of enlightening and empowering their students. In this domain of their career experience, professional interest and personal satisfaction are seamlessly combined.

**Sense of Accomplishment**

Despite perceived temporal constraints upon their research work that heavy teaching loads impose on these immigrants, most of the interviewees have an extensive and impressive list of scholarly publications in their curricula vitae. Several have published multiple full-length works, including textbooks, and their authorship of these works furnishes them with tangible evidence and the belief that they are competent in their respective fields. Dr. Uloko identified “being a scholar and having authored book chapters that are used in American universities” as a source of the satisfaction that he has derived from his academic career. Dr. Kure with his modest demeanor casually noted: “one must publish to be in this business, especially African immigrants.” His vita indicates several authorships (see Table 4.2).

Dr. Armah, who publishes four to five scholarly works each year, noted that the editors of the journals to which he has submitted his manuscripts have been pleased at the quality of work coming from an African immigrant professor at a relatively obscure HBCU. He commented:
Sometimes, they [the review board] look at the names and sometimes they look at the institution. But when the ideas are very strong, they seem to question, “How come?” because they didn’t expect such quality work to come from this environment. . . . I think I need a personal secretary. I’m somebody that likes to publish four to five papers a year.

Somewhat ironically, Dr. Armah indicated that his contributions to his field are better known and more highly appreciated abroad, particularly in Europe, than they are on his own campus. Through his publications he contributes to the university’s reputation, yet Dr. Armah feels exploited because in his view, he does not receive remuneration commensurate to his contribution. A perception of exploitation was apparent in his comment,

They [university] like to keep my publications. They know it. . . . I hear people, even in other colleges and other departments talk about my strong performance here. They know it, but they seem to use them for themselves but not to recognize my efforts. They capitalize on it, it is good, but they don’t like to recognize me.

Dr. Armah has interpreted his vocal criticism of university policies that affect immigrant professors, as well as his unorthodox pedagogy, as likely factors in the reluctance of his school's administrative officials to provide him with the recognition that his scholarly record warrants.

On the other end of the spectrum, Dr. Okwuta, a self-described "low-key" professor of the humanities and literary critic who has steered clear of campus politics, sees his scholarly publications and review work as an alternative to a militant stance on immigrant
faculty issues. During the interview held at his office, Dr. Okwuta directed the researcher's attention to a pile of manuscripts on his desk and explained: "these stacks are publications to be reviewed." Not only does Dr. Okwuta publish regularly in his own right, he performs peer review functions for several scholarly journals in his field.

I publish regularly. Since I have been here, I’ve published one book, two others are in press, and I’m working on the fourth. I regularly review articles and journals. I have great scholarship; way beyond anyone in the department.

. . . I’m busy. I was given an award in absentia for my recent publication. I enjoy what I’m doing because I barely have time for politics. I understand my status in American society as a whole and I try to live with it.

Dr. Okwuta repeatedly expressed his delight in the renown that he has garnered outside of his campus, and allowed that he has deliberately immersed himself in writing, reviewing, and publishing scholarly works as a means for surviving the challenges and perceived barriers faced by black (and other) immigrants in their academic careers.

Positive Dual Frame of Reference

The construct of a dual frame of reference surfaced during inquiries into the main sources of study participant career satisfaction. In their home nations, opportunities for conducting quality research are heavily constrained and, in some cases, government censorship inhibits freedom of expression. Comparing his experiences in the United States to that of peers in his home country, Dr. Armah insisted that his decision to immigrate had been worthwhile. He cited the “flexibility" of the American educational system, and stated: "I am
better off teaching in the United States than [in my country] because of access to research resources, economic, and other benefits.”

While all of the study participants shared Dr. Armah's conclusion that they are "better off" pursuing an academic career in the United States than they would have been had they remained in their own countries, they have not turned their back on family members and friends who still live in Africa. Whenever the researcher raised the subject of conditions in their homelands, a certain wistful nostalgia was evident in the verbal and nonverbal responses of the interviewees. All of the study participants maintain contact with family members, friends, and fellow academics in Africa, and all of them accord high value to the opportunity to assist their relatives, villages, and compatriots. Regular communication with family members has served as a coping resource for these professors; most visit their homelands on a frequent basis, about once every two years on average. There they witness the material benefits that the repatriation of funds garnered from their salaries have brought to their families and their communities in Africa, and, as importantly, appreciate the pride that their fellow Africans have felt in seeing a hometown student succeed in American academia.

**Interinstitutional Networking**

Most of the participants developed friendships with African immigrant faculty members at other North American colleges and universities. Indeed, some have found the equivalent of mentors through inter-institutional contacts. By circumstance and by choice, the highly independent Dr. Armah has not established close collegial ties to faculty members within his school, but has instead nurtured collaborative relations with several African
immigrant faculty members working elsewhere. He apprised me of his recent work being “done with a guy from [my home nation] who teaches in Canada.” In contrast to the immigrants who came to the United States prior to 1965, modern telecommunications technology, including the Internet, and comparatively inexpensive air travel have enabled these immigrant professors to participate in scholarly communities that extend across vast distances.

**Spiritual Orientation**

Lastly, as has been the case for successive waves of white and non-white immigrants who have traveled to the United States, religious beliefs or, more precisely, spiritual values, have served as a critical pillar of psychological support and normative commitment for study participants. The majority of the interviewees reported attending worship services and participating in congregational activities at churches and mosques in which other African immigrants are present. According to Dr. Kure, he and his family spend the bulk of their leisure time at a local church, "that has something going on all the time. We are very involved in the activities. I believe that has kept me going.” Similarly, Dr. Wazie is an active member of the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fellowship. It is their personal relationship with God/Allah to which they have turned in times of experienced stress. As Dr. Armah stated, his principal means for coping with his "terrible experience" as an outsider on an HBCU campus "is my strong faith in God. I can’t do without Him. I pray all the time, even for my enemies. God is all that we have here.” Dr. Armah's statement that "God is all we have here" may be viewed as a dramatic flourish (at earlier points in the interview, Dr. Armah cited other coping resources). Dr. Okwuta also told of a very strong participation at
his church. In his words, “Everything stops on Sundays because my family and I are actively involved in the services.”

Nevertheless, spiritual beliefs, values, and practices are clearly a pillar upon which he and other study informants have found the strength to withstand the ambiguities, uncertainties, humiliation, stress, and discriminatory treatment that they perceived in their careers as African immigrants working on the faculties of HBCUs.

These findings are the results of the interviews conducted for this research effort and provide interesting perspectives on the personal and professional experiences of African immigrants as higher education faculty. While the results do not represent a statistically significant portion of African immigrant faculty members in all HBCU institutions, the themes that emerged are consistent in some areas with research conducted on other groups of minority faculty (see Chapter Five for further details).
CHAPTER V

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceived academic career experiences of African immigrant faculty in two historically black institutions. Using naturalistic/heuristic inquiry, a methodology rooted in ethnography and phenomenology, enabled me to navigate the relative realities of these immigrants’ motives in immigrating to America, academic career choice, and social as well as academic career experiences in two HBCUs. While no phenomenon can be understood out of the time and context in which it developed, the burden of applying the findings of this study to another context lies with the transferor.

Qualitative data was collected to elicit thick descriptions of these immigrants’ perceptions of their academic career experiences in these two colleges. The interview produced a large volume of information about their academic careers.

In this chapter, I have organized the information as follows: summary of findings, conclusions, policy implications, and recommendations for future research. I will also discuss briefly the issue of self-selection as it relates to the study’s findings.

Summary of the Findings:

This study involved interviews with eight faculty members in two historically black institutions who identified themselves as African immigrants. The findings are the results of interviews conducted for this research effort and provide interesting perspectives on the experiences of African immigrants as higher education faculty. While the results do not represent the experiences of all African immigrant faculty members in historically black departments.
colleges and universities, the conclusions drawn from the themes that emerged from the interviews are consistent in some areas with research conducted on other groups of African immigrants, minority faculty and especially, African immigrant faculty. As a reminder, there were variations in the participants’ responses in the interview process. The findings in this research effort reflect only the more salient themes emerging from the data.

In this section, I will summarize the major themes that emerged from the interviews with the African immigrant scholars. During the interviews, these faculty members shared information about their: (a) decisions to come to America, become academics, and teach in historically black institutions; (b) academic career experiences; (c) racial/ethnic and linguistic (accent) influences on their experiences, and (d) perceptions of their institutions’ support. Other themes that were gleaned from the interviews were their views about diversity and how it functions in their institutions. The interviews also revealed these immigrants’ dual frame of reference and sources of support in their academic career in HBCUs.

Although these immigrants came to America with various academic credentials and at various ages, this study found that all but one indicated that their primary motive for immigrating to America was to get the benefits of American education. This result is consistent with Arthur’s (2000) findings that African immigrants come to America for four generic reasons: pursuit of post-secondary education; reunion with family members living in the United States; desire to take advantage of occupational opportunities (economic); and desire to escape from political instability. This study also found other motives for these participants’ migrating to or remaining in America after their studies as that of economic and
job opportunities. These findings are consistent with other studies that found political instability as the cause for African immigration to the United States (Chabal and Daloz, 1999). For example, while Dr. Okwute was already a professor in his home country, he indicated that he remained in America after his fellowship program because of the economic advantage he found in America. The study shows that majority of the participants who came to America with either a high school education or a baccalaureate degree were attracted to the opportunities of American higher education and later remained for economic reasons. While a few participants came with the desire to reunite with family members, others remained in America due to political unrest in their home countries.

This study also found that participants’ academic careers were greatly influenced by their individual families and their communities. Dr. Onyema, who came from the corporate world, joined the professoriate due to her growing family demands. Dr. Wazie revealed that his decision to become an academic was not really a decision because he was always propelled to university teaching. This finding is in concert with other researchers. Rica (1989) and Mohan and Zack-Williams (2002) observed that within sub-Saharan Africa, collective (i.e., village or extended family) forces play a more prominent role in the vocational paths of promising youngsters. Aparaku (1996) found that 43% of African immigrants to the United States are employed in colleges and universities. The findings show that the participants in this study chose their present institutions (HBCUs) with the hopes to blend with African American and the organization structure. Apparently, this did not happen as they realized that although they share similar racial attributes with African American colleagues, they are culturally and linguistically different. According to the literature, in spite
of the superficial resemblance of Africans and African Americans, they remain culturally and ethnically distinct and these differences sometimes cause misunderstanding, distrust, and tension between the two groups (Asika, 1997; Arthur, 2000).

In the context of their immigration decision, the study found that all the participants were overall satisfied with their migration to America. As in Arthur's (2000) sample, all of this study's participants were generally satisfied with their decision to immigrate to the United States. As Dr. Kimba put it toward the conclusion of his interview,

If I had to do it all over again, I would still come to the US and do it all over again despite the hardships that I had to go through. I am not sure that I would have the energy to go into a doctoral program and go into teaching but I would still try because I am having such a good time.

Maybe I would take to another field.

When compared with the limited career opportunities available in their home nations, the overall openness of American academia pleased the interviewees. According to Aparaku (1991), African immigrants have a positive dual frame of reference that entails comparing their present situation with their own former situation or with that of their peers back home. They remain convinced that through baseline talent and unwavering effort, individuals from Africa can get ahead in the United States. Speaking to this subject, Dr. Okwuta stated that: “I will encourage others to come to America to enjoy the benefits of hard work. There are a lot of opportunities. The good thing in America, unlike my country, is that people get rewarded
when they work hard.” In contrast to Arthur's subjects (as well as the African immigrants studied by Aparaku 1991, Owusu 2000, and Pires, Kissimir & Brhane 1999), all of the participants in this study indicated that they plan to remain in the United States. And, in contrast to most African immigrants in America, most of the participants in this study have either obtained or applied for US citizenship. Perhaps the difference can be attributed to deteriorating political and economic conditions in their countries of origin. As Uloko summarized it during the interview,

But for the deplorable situation in [my country], I would have gone back home. They know our country is bad and that we really have no choice but to accept whatever they [HBCUs] give to us. Whatever they do to us, we are better off here [American] than in our country.

Virtually all of the African immigrant faculty members expressed some degree of disillusionment with their experience at their current schools. With the sole exception of Dr. Onyema, all of these scholars cited their original belief that teaching at a historically black institution would furnish them with greater opportunities to "blend" into the organizational culture. These beliefs have been dispelled. On the whole, the ethnic divide separating them from African Americans has proven intractable. None of the participants anticipated that they would experience discrimination at the hands of African Americans; all reported to have suffered from the biased attitudes and behaviors of the latter. Indeed, in terms of race relations, those participants who had studied at and/or served on the faculties of PWIs indicated that they had experienced greater discrimination at HBCUs than in PWI. In these small, poorly endowed schools, they have encountered a "good old boy" network that they
believe is bent upon excluding foreign-born faculty from positions of authority. As a consequence, they believe to have faced obstacles in their efforts to achieve tenure and to move up departmental ranks that their African American colleagues do not confront. Moreover, they believe that a portion of the shabby treatment that they have received stems from the perception of African Americans that these outsiders are a competitive threat.

Moreover, as was apparent in their response to questions about the tenure granting process, the study participants are uncertain about how much of the hardships they have experienced is normal for professors working at small, comparatively poor HBCUs and how much should be attributed to their status as immigrants. These immigrants reported discriminatory treatment from their institutions. Although one participant differs from this conclusion, the majority reported having experienced one form of discriminatory treatment or another. Other challenges included double standards, isolation, obstacles to getting tenure, a glass ceiling barring career advancement, and negative estimation of their competence.

In addition to the relative discriminatory treatment, the participants spoke of other challenges that they faced. Isolation and stress resulting from working harder to prove themselves, attributed to their racial/ethnic, and linguistic differences, were most often mentioned challenges in their academic careers. Many, for example, reported being ridiculed because of their African accent.

Lack of institutional support appears as one of the major concerns of the participants. They noted little in the way of training and preparation for the faculty role. The teaching role was new to some of the participants. Most stated that they have no formal orientation to the faculty position, especially as they were first generation college graduates and first
generation faculty. Although educated in American universities, many mentioned additional difficulties resulting from the lack of cultural and social orientation, particularly as they are immigrants. All, except one, reported the need for mentors. They indicated that the lack of mentoring alienates them from the institutional culture and networking, and further complicates their situation. The study found that the lack of clarity in the tenure process compounded their stress as they tried to balance the demands of faculty responsibilities, publishing, adjusting to the alien U.S academic culture and meeting expectations upon them as immigrant faculty members.

Many expressed deep disappointment at the failure of their schools to promote genuine diversity (especially within the higher echelons of the professoriate). Thus this finding negates and challenges HBCUs’ ideological legacy that is based upon diversity and inclusion. Such contradictions can be perceived from the absence of programs to facilitate the socialization of immigrant faculty into institutional cultures, recruitment policies and mentorship arrangements. When asked about their expectations prior to teaching at their institutions, the participants were dismayed as to how the HBCUs could rely heavily on foreign-born professors, especially scholars from Africa, to fill faculty positions (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1994) and fail to recognize the importance of the African immigrant presence on these campuses.

The predominant response of the study participants to their adverse circumstances was simply to work hard. The African immigrant faculty members were intent upon demonstrating their competence by "kicking higher" than their native-born peers. They consider themselves to be dedicated classroom teachers, but it is to their scholarly
publications that these informants turn for objective proof that they are, in fact, highly qualified scholars. Those who have not received recognition for their accomplishments believe that their institutions have, in essence, benefited from their achievements, yet still continued to deny them compensation commensurate with their value. As Dr. Armah said, “for my students, I teach hard and I teach well. My work is talked about, even in other universities, but the university takes the glory.” A strain of resentment arose when these faculty members discussed the disparity between what they have given to their schools and what they have received in return.

Although the participants were faced with many challenges, they also identified several coping resources or sources of support. Primarily, the participants mentioned that making a difference among their students is a source of satisfaction for them. Many spoke of the positive feedback they receive from their previous and present students as a source of sustenance. The tenured few also mentioned that their own publications, awards, and recognition by their institutions confirm their competence. Many spoke about drawing strength from their spiritual/religious orientation. All demonstrated their source of support in what Aparaku (1996) referred to as dual frame of reference. That means when they compare their situation in America with that of their peers in their home countries and feel they are better off being here. That was a source of comfort for the participants. From their responses, family, networking and collaboration with African immigrants in other institutions, all of the study participants have found sources of support and comfort around them.

As Glazer, (1997); Foner, (2000); and Anderson, (2000) noted, the assimilation of immigrant groups into American society has always been variable, and the principal factor
differentiating the respective experiences of different ethnic groups in the United States has been race. Ironically, one particularly pernicious, if somewhat unexpected aspect of the racial/ethnic immigrant status of African immigrant professors at the two HBCUs are the findings of tensions and discrimination as revealed in this study. They have experienced discrimination, career glass ceiling, isolation, stress, tenure tension, lack of career advancement, and negative estimation of competence. Despite their shared racial characteristics and common African heritage with African Americans, this study shows that African immigrant professors have not melted into the cultural pot of the two Historically Black Universities. Consistent with Arthur’s (2001) findings, African immigrants are doubly disadvantaged. They are foreign, black and with distinct accent.

Looking ahead, some of the participants, Dr. Onyema, for example, are optimistic about their own careers and future prospects for learned African immigrants in American academia. Others, however, like Dr. Kure seem resigned to their status as "outsiders" even within institutional settings in which persons of African descent predominate. All told, coming to America has been a bittersweet experience for the participants. By their own estimations, they have fared far better abroad than they would have had they remained in their home societies, but they have not fared as well as they had once hoped.

**Participants’ Self Selection Discourse**

The findings of this study are not meant to apply to all African immigrant faculty. This study involved interviews with eight African immigrant faculty members in two historically black universities.
Although this study used purposive sampling, it is limited because of the small number of interviews and the sample selection process. There are obvious difficulties in trying to identify all African immigrant scholars in the state where the research was conducted. First, there is no statewide registry for these immigrants. Second, I lacked funds to conduct an exhaustive search for these immigrants. To overcome these difficulties, I followed a two-step selection process for the sample selection as described in Chapter 3 under participant recruitment. Of the twenty-six participants identified, ten of those who responded to the letter declined to be interviewed. In addition, all of the data were collected from the eight participants and none from their colleagues or administrators. Therefore, the absence of data from other sources makes for difficulties in understanding the perception of respondents by colleagues within their departments, colleges and universities.

In light of the preponderance of negative findings of this study, one might argue that the refusal of many prospective participants may have led to self-selection by individuals with grievances, complaints, and criticisms. In this context, this study is limited. On the other hand, there are several reasons that self-selection may not have been an overriding influence on the study’s results. First, discussions with those who declined to be interviewed portrayed pictures of their experiences similar to that presented in this study. Second, many do not believe that a mere dissertation can make any difference in African immigrant experiences in American academy. Some, in fact, felt this study was a futile effort and discouraged me from pursuing this research effort. Third, all participants, including the tenured, were concerned about potential consequences of participating in a study such as this, in spite of the
confidentiality agreement; despite the expectation that their tenured positions in these institutions would provide a safeguard to their academic careers.

Another perspective nurtures the idea that the refusal of these many prospective participants from across the ranks may be a pointer to further investigation about the status of African immigrant faculty members and troubling for American institutions of higher education. Their refusal further heightened my motivation and determination to explore the status of this group of immigrants.

**Policy Implications**

This study adds to literature regarding immigrant faculty in American academia. The implications for policy are broad. If higher education institutions are to more effectively meet the needs of African immigrant faculty members, changes are needed. There are several reforms suggested by the findings of this study.

Institutions should recognize that there are differences among and within racial and ethnic groups, especially between African immigrants and African Americans. The challenge to institutions is to design creative recruitment strategies and to initiate programming that responds to the uniqueness of this particular group. African immigrants should not be grouped with other ethnic groups when addressing the needs of minority faculty members. This nested minority is often lumped together with other blacks due to the superficial resemblance of the groups. African immigrants are culturally, ethnically, and linguistically distinct from other black immigrants. Recognition of diverse values, beliefs, and world-view must be incorporated into the institutional structure and mission. In this vein, programs to
support and encourage these immigrant faculty members’ integration into the campus life would be useful.

As some African immigrant faculty members may be first generation college graduates, as well as first-generation faculty members, institutions should consider directing orientation programs to all aspects of the faculty experience. Faculty in general and perhaps African immigrant faculty in particular, may find teaching workshops, research and publication support, and guidance in balancing their role as faculty members overwhelming.

Realizing that attaining tenure is the most crucial milestone in the life of a professor and bumpy for even the American-born faculty, institutions should encourage departments to establish clear guidelines on promotion and tenure. Faculty members should be clear regarding departmental regulations, including publication requirements, teaching expectations, and service. In addition to reduced teaching load in the first semester, funds should be provided to encourage and give the new hire time to research and publish toward tenure.

All the participants in this study clearly acknowledge the need for mentors. Mentoring plays an important role in professional and personal development which suggests that institutions should develop and continually evaluate mentoring programs for African immigrant faculty members. It should not be a random pairing of faculty members but as Dr. Nzogwu puts it, “the mentor should have the same background with the mentee.” Whether offering structured programs in which mentors seek out protégés, or making mentors available for immigrant faculty interested in connecting to someone as a career guide, African immigrant faculty members need good mentoring. Evaluation of the mentoring
program is equally an important component because, other studies have reported that while few of the minority faculty members interviewed mentioned their participation in formal mentoring programs, they reported that their contact with their mentors was sporadic. If HBCUs are committed to diversity and inclusion as their mission statements indicate, they must include mentoring programs in their staff development. Administrators need to recognize that nurturing people with diverse backgrounds and experience strengthens the institution just as it provides needed socialization and career advancement for the individual.

Historically, tension marks the relations between African Americans and African immigrants because both groups hold negative stereotypical views about the other. Recognizing that for some African American faculty members, teaching at HBCUs may likely be their very first close contact with African immigrants, institutions must encourage and implement effective multicultural programs with various components. HBCUs may begin by including or increasing African studies as core courses in their college curriculum and an African Cultural Awareness Day can be organized to provide accurate information about Africa to African Americans. Most importantly, establishment of inter-university exchange programs among students and faculty in the US and African countries can provide experiences that could foster better ethnic and cultural understanding.

Though faculty diversity at historically black institutions is increasing at a rapid pace, the HBCUs in this study do not seem to be achieving similar levels of diversity among their administrators. Some experts believe that institutions will not reach their full potential as a catalyst for educational and social progress without increasing their commitment to multicultural leadership (Bowen and Muller, 1996). HBCUs must endeavor to diversify all
spheres of the institutions to include African immigrant faculty members in the decision-making process.

It is beneficial for historically black colleges to adopt programming activities that encourage faculty, administrators, and students to enhance their growth and development through interaction with people from a variety of cultures. Moreno (2000) stresses that for the benefit of educational proficiency and productivity, multicultural groups accomplish tasks that could not be done by individuals; they bring multiple skills and talents to bear on highly complex tasks.

The majority of participants reported non-inclusion and inequities in their institutions, especially at the decision making level. This can have dual consequences. In the end, it is not merely the African immigrant professors who suffer from such inequities, but students and, in the end, the school itself, are saddled with a mediocre faculty bent upon getting as much as possible from their positions while doing as little as possible.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

This study represents a foray into the previously undocumented subject of the career aspirations and experiences of African immigrant faculty members at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Regarding the effort as it applies to the field, it points a way toward a series of related issues for future investigations. More efforts should be directed to this end.

1. This study interviewed eight African immigrants. Using a naturalistic paradigm, further research on African immigrant faculty using a larger sample from across the United
States may provide more generalized conclusions about African immigrants teaching in America.

2. The research efforts should address common issues and those specific to ethnic groups as these groups can have differing needs and issues. Particularly, the issue of misunderstood culture and values must be explored when involved in research with African immigrant population.

3. Because I share similar background and perhaps similar experience with the participants in this study, future study by a neutral researcher may be necessary to reduce chances of bias through over identification, hence give more credence and a better understanding of the status of African immigrant faculty in black institutions. I admit that my close identification with the narratives of these participants made my analytical role difficult.

4. Future researchers may explore the status of African immigrant faculty in both Predominantly White Institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities to enable a comparison of the impact of institutional history and demography.

5. A comparative study should also be conducted on African immigrant faculty and other immigrant faculty members. The study might help to determine the extent to which African immigrants’ experiences are unique to those of their background or are part of a more general pattern among all immigrant faculty.

6. The benefits of cultivating mentoring relationships for African immigrant faculty may be explored by future researchers to determine what impact such mentoring may have on adjustments to American institutions of higher education.
7. Using the naturalistic paradigm, researchers might study other immigrant faculty to determine similarities or differences in their perceptions of factors influencing their status in American higher institutions.
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Appendices
APPENDIX A

LETTER AND CONSENT FORM

Letter of invitation to participate in the study

Date

African immigrant faculty member
Historically Black Institution (address)
Southeast USA

Dear _________________

Almost fifty percent of African immigrants work as faculty and staff members in American universities and colleges. Although with no firm statistics, the available evidence suggests that the majority of this African-born professors in the United States are employed at the HBCUs (Zeleza 2003). This group of immigrant is one of the most significant groups in providing educational services in higher education.

I invite you, as an African immigrant faculty or administrator, to assist me in understanding how African immigrant faculty members perceive their status and the extent of their assimilation into the cultures of two historically black universities.

I am a graduate student at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina, working with Dr. Robert Serow and Dr. Peter Hessling. The subject of this doctoral research is *A Qualitative Study of African Immigrant Professors in Two Historically Black Institutions*.

Studies about immigrant and minority faculty members have focused on African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and others. While few studies have noted the high credentials and documented the notable presence of African immigrant academia in American higher education, a couple more studies have lumped this group of immigrant with the minority faculty studies. Neither qualitative nor quantitative research has attempted to examine the perceived experiences, status, assimilation and academic careers of African immigrant faculty members in American higher education. This study will bridge the gap.

Your time commitment will be small. I will hold two interviews, lasting approximately 60-90 minutes each. If you have questions or concerns, you may contact me at (919) 544-4869. If you wish to participate, please read and sign the enclosed informed consent form, I will contact you to arrange a time to meet. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Winnie E. Ochukpue
North Carolina State University  
Informed Consent Form

A Qualitative Study of African Immigrant Professors in Two Historically Black Institutions

Principal Investigator Faculty Sponsors: Dr. Robert Serow, Dr. P. Hessling

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of Sub-Sahara African immigrant faculty and to understand how they interpret and respond to these experiences on two selected American campuses.

INFORMATION

Procedures that will be employed in the study include:
1. Participant will designate a convenient place, usually the faculty office, for the interview.
2. Participant and interviewer [I] will sit around a table on which a tape recorder.
3. I will restate the purpose of the meeting, his/her options and that the interview will be audio taped.
4. I will ask questions about their professional, academic, and sometimes personal life.
5. The interview will be guided with open-ended questions. However, the list will not be followed strictly.
6. I will make notes during the interviews.
7. I will ask participants to provide copies of their CV's or their publications.
8. I will ask participants' permission to call them after the initial interview for clarification, if need be.
9. Each interview session will take 60 to 90 minutes. The total duration of the study will be three weeks.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks in this study. A discomfort can occur as interviews might encroach on their schedule.

BENEFITS

1. It can inform us as to the status of Sub-Sahara African immigrant faculty members in two historically black universities.
2. Issues relating to ethnicity, diversity, cultural and linguistic differences between African immigrants and African Americans can be better understood.
3. It can alleviate the process of transition for the immigrants and better interactions for both American-born faculty and African immigrants.
4. It can impact the decision of potential African immigrant scholars seeking faculty positions in American universities.
5. The findings can lead to a qualitative study grounded in data, contribute to immigrant literature and sensitize further studies on African immigrant professionals in the U.S.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information in the student's records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study. Unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.
COMPENSATION
There will be no direct compensation to participants in this study.

CONTACT
If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, WINNIE E. N. OCHUKPU at 1017 WEDGEWOOD LANE DURHAM, NC 27713, or Phone (919) 544-4869. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Gary A. Mirka, Chair of the NCSU IRB for the use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, Box 7906, NCSU Campus.

PARTICIPATION
Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT
I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Subject's signature ………………………………….. Date ______________________

Researcher’s signature …………………………….. Date _____________________
APPENDIX B

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Background Questions:

1. What is your nationality?
2. Tell me about your family. (What were the occupation and education of your parents? Do you have siblings? What level of education and occupation have your siblings?)
3. Tell me about your education. (What level of education did you have before emigrating to the U.S.?)
4. Did you have any work experience in your country? Were there any differences for professional minorities?)
5. What were your impressions about the U.S. prior to your relocation?
6. What is your age range 30’s, 40’s, 50’s, 60’s

Motive for immigrating to America:

7. Why did you come to the U.S.? (Why did you choose U.S. instead of other countries?) Did anybody else from your family immigrate to the U.S?
8. How long have you lived in the U.S.?
9. What were your impressions of America, the people and the culture on arrival?
10. What were the main problems that you faced when you came to the U.S.? (What were your aspirations? And how have you meet those aspirations?)
10. How often do you visit your native country? Do you hope to return back in the near future, or at retirement, or do you see yourself as here permanently?
**Academic Career Choice:**

11. From where did you get your degrees? (What is your academic field? What is your highest earned degree? What is your rank?).

12. Why did you choose an academic career? (Who/what influenced your career decisions?)

13. Did you work outside the academia? (How many years have you worked in higher education?),

14. Why did you choose this institution?

**Professional Experience:**

15. What was your experience in finding a job in the academy? (How did you get your first appointment? How would you describe the interview process?)

16. Concerning teaching, how do you relate to your students? (Did/do you have any problems with American-born students? Do you feel that these problems, if any, are related to your ethnicity, race, language, or your status as immigrant?)

17. What are your experiences in getting grants and publishing?

18. What are your relationships with your colleagues?

19. How would you describe the promotion and tenure process in your department? What kinds of problems did you have or expect to have? What is the “price” of promotion/tenure your institution?
20. What do you perceive as the norms or the rules of “academic game”? Are the U.S. norms different from those of your homeland or other countries? (Do you think that these norms are different for academics of different ethnic/racial/language groups?)

21. Do you think your talents are adequately utilized? Why or why not?

22. Tell me about challenges you face(d) in your career as a faculty member.

23. How would you compare your professional and social status in the U.S. to that which you had or could have had in your country?

24. Do you plan to stay in academia? Why or why not?

25. What do you think about diversity in your department/institution?

26. Can you confidently say that African immigrant faculty members on your campus are fully assimilated into the American culture? Why?

**Influence of Racial/Ethnic, and Language Differences on African Immigrants’ Experiences:**

27. Did you feel disadvantaged based on your nationality, race, language, or other factors in finding a faculty job? How?)

28. What do you think is the current hierarchy of ethnicities and races at your institution?)

29. Do you feel part of your department/institution or that you belong here? (Have you ever been made to feel uncomfortable as an African immigrant? How?)

30. Are there aspects of your culture that have (because of conflicts with mainstream values) created barriers to your progress as a faculty member?
31. How do your language, ethnicity, race, immigrant status, and culture impact your relationships with colleagues and students?

32. How does your accent interfere with your communication with colleagues, students, and job performance?

33. How do your colleagues perceive you? (How do students perceive you?)

**Perceived Institutional Support:**

34. How does the institution provide support for new hires in general and for immigrants in particular?

35. How does the climate in your institution encourage or discourage diversity, discrimination, or prejudice, collegiality?

36. How would you compare the status of other immigrants in your institution with the status of African immigrants? (Do you think you receive equal treatment, perceived the same or differently?)

37. What were your expectations prior to joining the academy? How have your experiences differ from those expectations?

38. Tell me about your first year/experience in the academy as a faculty member.

39. What kind of academic activities do you perform; teaching, research, administration, service? (In which one do you feel most successful and why?) Which one do you consider as your failure and why? Which one (or ones) do you enjoy most?

40. How published are you? (Please name the type of publications i.e. articles, books, etc.)
**Looking Ahead**

41. How did or do you overcome challenges? What keeps you here?

42. What do you consider your greatest successes? What is the best thing that has happened to you at this university?

43. Are there aspects (values, beliefs and customs) of your culture that have guided you or been a source of strength to you in your academic career?

44. What do you think about the current status of African immigrants academics in the U.S. compared to that in your country?

45. What do you wish you knew before coming to America and to this institution? (Do you have any regrets coming to American and/working in this institution?

46. If you have to do it all over again, would you make the decision to come to the U.S and become an academic? Why or why not?

47. What advice would you give to an African immigrant aspiring to become an academic in American higher education?

48. What other experiences, suggestions, and input would you like to share that might help this research effort.