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AGENCY AND TRANSNATIONALISM: SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AMONG AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE ATLANTA METROPOLITAN AREA

by

FELICIA CHIGOZIE ANONYUO

Under the direction of Kathryn A Kozaitis, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Immigrants live transnational lives when they maintain transborder social ties, participate simultaneously in multi-local social relations, and engage in self-transforming identity negotiations that also impact their host societies and their communities of origin. Their social organizations manifest identity construction as agency, with their objectives reflecting particular culture production activities. This native ethnography of Atlanta's sub-Saharan African immigrants combines 115 surveys of the general population, and 13 in-depth interviews of their organization leaders and members, to examine the potential problem solving instrumentality of social organizations. Study results show that organizational objectives do not reflect top community problems, but prioritize projects that confirm immigrant transnational lives. The organizations' early potential for engineering non-tribal nationalism within the specific countries and the continent is a surprising finding. African philosophy is evoked to illuminate the relevance of pre-migratory identities and socialization as a possible homogenizer, but also a source of friction for immigrant integration.

INDEX WORDS: Agency, Transnationalism, Immigrant social organizations, African immigrants, New immigration, Postcolonialism

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FELICIA CHIGOZIE ANONYUO

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2006

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Felicia Chigozie Anonyuo
2006

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by

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August 2006

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my son, Augustine Chidubem Nwaenyi, Jr. More than a second generation African immigrant for whom important prospects and challenges lie ahead, he was my challenge, not only to go on, but to do so successfully, after his father, Augustine Obimma Nwaenyi, my husband of 54 weeks, died from injuries he sustained in an automobile accident in Nigeria. On the day his father was buried, he was barely one month old. When I held my orphaned son in my arms to nurse him, he symbolically smiled up to me, my tears falling on his face, as I wondered where our lives were headed. Today he is my 28 year-old rock. He is a quiet peaceful river; my wise old man who speaks strategic and uplifting words that seem whispered to him to convey to me. My son assumed the role of parent, providing moral and financial support when I decided to return to academia after a long hiatus. Nna, how can I ever adequately express my gratitude to you? You are a son, exponentially.

I also dedicate this thesis to my Heavenly Father, His Son, Jesus Christ, and His Holy Spirit. Your love for me baffles me. Set me apart, just for you.

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To my family: my brothers, Ernest Jideofor (Onye j'ebi!), Charles Ndilue, Daniel Obioha, Alban Menkiti, Noel Izuchukwu and Anthony Azuka (both deceased), and my sisters, Esther Uzoamaka, Gilda Obianuju, and Celestina Ifeyinwa (deceased), my brother-in-law Ogbuefi Promise Oduah, my sisters-in-law, Nnediugwu, Tamunomienye, Ukamaka, Benedicta, Ngozichukwudumebi, Nnenne, and my twenty-nine nieces and nephews, you have all loved me and lifted me up to a place from where the world is increasingly coming into focus. I do everything for you.

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To Mother Africa and her children: Let it storm. Your sun is rising!

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1. INTRODUCTION

The website of "Democracy Now' has likened the nationwide marches for immigrant rights to the civil rights movement. The number of marchers were estimated at one and a half million on May Day, 2006, a day that has gone down in history as 'the largest day of protest in U.S history'. Businesses across the country closed, losing millions of dollars altogether. Schools closed, and everyone who lived in an American major city knew that something was going on, and chances are that they knew it was about the fate of immigrants in the U. S. No doubt, immigration and immigrants have America's attention.

Nancy Foner (2003) describes immigration as "one of the most pressing contemporary social issues in the United States… [causing] … dramatic transformations in American society, changing the nation's cities and a host of social institutions and, of course, altering the lives of the immigrants themselves." Immigrants impact their host society as they themselves are influenced by it. The reach and ramifications of these "dramatic transformations" should differ for each immigrant group and would depend, to some extent, on the intensity and thrust of their collective agency in response to structural realities and constraints, and the interplay of these factors with culturally motivated purposes and instrumentalities.

Anthropologists have been involved in the human dimensions of immigration discourse, to the extent that the demographics and trends have long paled in importance, in comparison to the intricacies and complexities engendered by global flows of capital and people. The shift from the predomination of rural to urban migration among mainly communities in the developing world has also had to make way to people moving across

national borders, sometimes constantly looking back, and sometimes never looking back. In so doing, these tides of human motion, both in its exit and in its entry, come in direct confrontation with nation states their prevailing social ideologies, and impact on their political agendas and schedules, while eliciting responses from the nation states as well.

The impact made on political and economic agendas of states has been tilted more heavily in the direction of sending states from the developing world. There has been enormous focus on the economic and developmental implications of choices made by émigrés and how these choices have created crucial and noteworthy transformations in the native communities left behind. The concept of transnational social fields is a reminder of the multiplicity of process and realities that define migrant lives. Immigrants are no longer "neither here nor there" but are now seen as "here and there", living in multiple worlds, and torn between multiple worlds. While recognizing that the multiplicity of sources of socio-economic forces does not apply homogeneously to all migrants, the challenge for anthropologists has been and still is to identify and analyze these processes and the nature of the social realities in their entirety. So far, studies of economic impetuses and impact of migration have received more attention than social aspects that may illuminate migrant integration or adaptation dynamics. Considering the enormous diversity of origins of recent immigrants to the United States, processes of adaptation to the host society is bound to present significant levels of difference in the nature of constraints and challenges faced by the migrant groups. Foner (2005) was right in cautioning anthropologists to refrain from the attractive simplicity of applying very broad strokes of the brush in painting pictures of the widely heterogeneous immigrant groups. The push factors for migrating do indeed differ for different groups, and for

different cohorts for that matter, and the perceived opportunities offered by the receiving country also differ for the different migrant groups. Other academic disciplines have studied the dynamics of migration and its attendant processes, but anthropologists have developed their own unique humanistic approach through the conceptual foundation of transnationalism. This is the degree to which migrants participate in the life of their nation of origin, the multiple nature of the fields of social, political, and economic activity, and their multiple subjectivities.

Migrant communities in anthropological research have not been given equal attention. With the shift from rural far away communities to the hub of global flows in the more developed receiving nations, and yet another shift away from the U.S. master narrative of one-way migration to freedom and opportunity, some groups of immigrants still fall through the interstitial spaces created by the misfit between theoretical orientations and the level of differentiation in extant realities of migrant groups. African migrants seem to be disappearing in the academic mistake of a phenotypical 'Bermuda Triangle'. It seems that their 'blackness' in American terms dumped them in the OMB Directive 15 of 1977 category of 'Black' from where they would make short lived appearances, pick up a few acknowledgements from the academic community and then disappear quickly, again. There are smatterings of research data on African immigrants, all duplicating themselves. The adaptation and incorporation processes are given too glib a commentary, when the need for more focused studies is obvious, at least, because a plethora of studies are being done about Hispanic, and Asian immigrant communities.

In their acclaimed book, *Transnationalism from Below*, Smith and Guarnizo (1998) provided very important analyses of themes and concepts elucidating the

understanding of transnationalism. They pointed out, among various issues, basic questions and key processes that need to be investigated among immigrant populations. Among them are social movements. (p. 83). This immigrant phenomenon has revelatory potential for the analyses of the process of adaptation, and the challenges they bring up for the specific immigrant group. It can also shed some light on the directions of agency as construed by the specific immigrant group. Mention is made in a handful of social science research of social organizations among migrant Africans but these have been mostly static and mainly descriptive. Attempts have not been made, at least not sufficiently, to identify how they may or may not be mobilizing structures for the achievement of a variety of migrant objectives. The immigrant organizations have not been placed in the broader context of the cultural milieu of the immigrants to see the reflections and refractions they produce of what is important to these migrants.

Possibly because it has been nicknamed the Black Mecca, Atlanta has been named one of the biggest receiving metropolitan areas for African immigrants. My study seeks to identify any overlaps there might be between Atlanta African immigrant social organization objectives, and the structural constraints or problems named by the migrants themselves. In other words, do the associations exist as instrumental mechanisms or are they just a hobby? Diouf (2001) observed that the number of African organizations and associations throughout the country is astonishing. “Every nationality has national, regional, professional, gender-based, political, and sometimes ethnic organizations.” She also stated that people often belonged to several organizations, indicating “the many layers of identity that Africans bring with them and are eager to maintain.’ (p. 16) The associations have the added benefit of gathering people, who, because of differences in

class or educational background, would not have met at home. Immigration creates links that transcend some of the social boundaries prevalent in the country of origin. These attributes should make the migrant organizations fertile ground for the manifestation of the aspirations of these groups, and for the unique realities which identify them as a separate group, and draw the line where 'blackness ends,' and 'African' begins.

There are over one million African migrants in the United States. It has been noted that no other immigrant group is more educated. Knowing as much as there is to know about this group prepares society for various future transactions with them, at both individual and group levels. This study will contribute to knowledge about African immigrants as people whose social and cultural identity (or identities) are reflected in the considerations, purposes, and directions of their social organizing as strategic in their adaptation and integration into American society. In addition to reflecting the social organizations back to the immigrant themselves, who invest their resources in the social organizations, and hold on to their perceived instrumental value, this study hopes to link origins with the present. By exploring African philosophy as a source of explanation for certain collective tendencies and behaviors among African migrants, there will be sufficient justification for some degree of homogeneity in social values and contingent behavioral tendencies among African migrants especially as they may affect their efforts to organize. This hopefully, should stimulate interest in what worldviews migrants held before they came to the United States, and how those worldviews mediate their adaptation processes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Migration has been and remains an important aspect of human social history and behavior. People move individually or in groups away from conditions that are adverse to their survival and happiness and toward places that offer better economic and living conditions. These movements are sometimes forced and precipitous, and sometimes voluntary and deliberate. With current global socio-political and economic transformations, human motion has intensified, especially those across national borders. At the turn of the millennium, an estimated 175 transnational immigrants and refugees are living beyond their homelands. (Foner, 2005: 53) For anthropologists, the conceptualization of this human phenomenon revolves around questions of why people move, who moves, and what happens after they move.

The concept of "new immigration" subsumes pre-existing kinds of immigration, those that predate the Post World War II migrations from rural agrarian communities to major urban industrial hubs of developing and developed countries. Early migrants were mainly rural villagers who were finding employment as unskilled or semiskilled workers and were living in neighborhoods with people of their own ethnic group or home community. (Brettell, 2003). The anthropology of migration addresses both push and pull factors and their relevant mediating and defining human phenomena. Because of the increasingly complex globalizing tendencies and dimensions of the economic and political factors that determine migration decisions, new immigration demands that anthropologists take a closer look at the question of if and how migrants remain connected to their places of origin. These questions, in addition to those of what prompts

individuals to leave their communities and how they fare after the move, form the nexus of anthropology's analysis of "new immigration."

The new immigration is an offshoot of current global trends that reflect the progression of what Kottak and Kozaitis (2003: 34) describe as the replacement of the ideological, political, and military basis of international alliance by a focus on trade and economic issues. Most of the impetuses of new immigration can be subsumed under what Orozco calls a search to realize "structures of desire and consumption fantasies that local economies cannot fulfill." (Foner, 2003: 46) These desires and fantasies of the new migrants are responses to globalization. Orozco identifies an "emerging regime" of globalization constituted by mobile capital, mobile production and distribution, mobile populations, and mobile cultures, the progenitors of deep paradoxes. (Foner 2003: 46).

Globalization and the New Immigration

In an insightful analysis of the factors that influence contemporary human movement across national borders, Orozco (Foner, 2005) describes globalization as the general backdrop for any understanding of the anthropology of immigration and discusses several ways by which globalization has increased immigration. This influence includes the tendency for immigration flows to follow capital flows, the stimulation for migration provided by the new information, communication, and media technologies that are at the heart of globalization, encouraging new cultural expectations, tastes, consumption practices, and lifestyle choices. Other ways, in Orozco's analysis, by which globalization has increased migration are: deeply globalized economies that are increasingly being structured around a voracious appetite for foreign workers, the

affordability of mass transportation that has put the migration option within the reach of millions who couldn't afford it not too long ago, and the asymmetry of the outcomes of globalization.

Human social phenomena known to anthropologists as diffusion, acculturation, colonialism, imperialism, and commercialization, are interrelated on varied levels and degrees. They have ideational commonalities, and are components of universal processes that are conceptually analogous to what we now call globalization. Before globalization was named as it is now known in the second half of the twentieth century, human society was already global and interdependent and has been that way since the sixteenth century.

Eric Wolf's *Europe and the People without History* sought to alert academia on an often overlooked fact: that the world of humankind constitutes a manifold, a totality of interconnected processes. (Wolf, 1982: 3) He critiques scholars for compartmentalizing cultures and fields of study, discusses attempts to transcend the boundaries of the microcosm, and calls for an understanding of the microcosm in a larger context. In doing so, Wolf offers a metaphorical glimpse of what would follow: an explosion of theorizing on globalization with various perspectives on its human, financial, technological, cultural, and media dimensions. Though he pointedly names anthropology along with other academic disciplines as culprits in this intellectual shortfall, his theories are inspired by Immanuel Wallerstein's work in the late 70s, a few years before *Europe and the People without History*. Wallerstein is a proponent of world systems analysis, a focus on the matrix formed by many institutions – states and the interstate system, productive firms, households, classes, identity groups of all sorts – foundational not only to the functioning of the state but to the conflicts and contradictions that permeate the system. (Wallerstein,

2005: x) Though a sociologist, it is Wallerstein's influence on other scholars, among them anthropologist Eric Wolf, and his long academic career as historian and theorist of the global capitalist economy on a macroscopic level, that make his work germinal to the conceptualization of globalization and its pivotal place in the understanding of old and new immigration. While Wallerstein's focus is on systems, Wolf brought in the people.

The theme of interconnectedness explored by both Wolf and Wallerstein resonates in Inda and Rosaldo's definition of globalization. (2002 : 5). To them, globalization is first "the intensification of global interconnectedness." Later, they expatiate on the term as an "intensification of circuits of economic, political, cultural, and ecological interdependence." Ultimately, they define globalization as "…those spatial-temporal processes, operating on a global scale, that rapidly cut across national boundaries, drawing more and more of the world into webs of interconnection, integrating and stretching cultures and communities across space and time, and compressing our spatial and temporal horizons." (p. 9) They further suggest that globalization points to a world in motion and they link this concept to contemporary anthropological perspectives on culture as deterritorialized and mobile, and a rejection of earlier concepts of culture as tied to a fixed territory. But globalization is not an abstract concept. It is embodied. Humans are porters of globalization, for it is their thoughts, experiences, values, beliefs, decisions, and agency that produce globalization.

New immigration illustrates the pivotal place of human mobility in the story of globalization. It is a vehicle for the deterritorialization and the reterritorialization of culture and an antithesis for the function and dominance of nation-states as homogenizing apparatuses. According to Inda and Rosaldo, nation-states of the West "have developed

into sites of extraordinary cultural heterogeneity [where]…the isomorphism of territory, ethnos, and legitimate sovereignty has to some extent been undone…[and the nation-state becomes] a place of the ethni" rather than a place of the 'ethnos'. (p.21) Thus, new immigration synthesizes the foundational concepts of motion and interconnectedness that characterize globalization, and signifies the "mobile subjects" who, as presented by Inda and Rosaldo, "do not necessarily leave their homelands behind, but instead often try to forge cultural, political, and economic relations that link together their home and host societies." (p. 155).

In a conceptual reprise of the theme of world systems and global interconnectedness for which Immanuel Wallerstein and Eric Wolf are noted, Arjun Appadurai contributes to the understanding of globalization the idea of a large-scale interactive system of '-scapes'. In his view, there is a global cultural economy which can be best understood in terms of the interconnectedness and interaction of five dimensions of global cultural flows. *Ethnoscapes,* or the moving landscapes of people, situates the new immigration in globalization discourse. It interacts with *mediascapes,* or the distribution of the electronic capabilities to disseminate information, *technoscapes,* or the global configuration of technology, *financescapes,* or the disposition of global capital, and *ideoscapes,* a chain of ideas composed of the Enlightenment worldview. (Appadurai 1996: 33) Appadurai explains the suffix –scape as an indication of the fluid, amorphous, and expansive nature of the global processes that have been unleashed and propelled by the dynamics of transformations and disjunctures materializing under the rubric of globalization. It also indicates the subjective possibilities or inflections that may result from the multiplicity of actors and agents that are involved in the interpretation and

constitution of these constructs. These actors or agents include nation-states, multinationals, diasporic communities, subnational groupings and movements, villages, neighborhoods, families, and individuals. Appadurai explains the neologism, ethnoscapes, as an indication of changing social, territorial, and cultural reproduction of group identity. (p. 48) These changes, he clarifies, happen as groups migrate, regroup in new locations, reconstruct their histories, and reconfigure their ethnic projects. As these groups are no longer "tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogeneous," there is a "woof of human motion", that includes those people that "deal with the realities of having to move or the fantasies of wanting to move." (p. 34). This expanded view of motion as enacted or imagined by humans illuminates not only the compression of space as a facilitator of the fantasies, and the creation of communities with "no sense of place" (Appadurai, 1996), but also the centrality of push and pull factors in the anthropological study of the new immigration. It is not only the thought processes of those who move but also the thought processes of those who surmise a move but have not yet moved or do not move, that provide crucial insights into the undercurrents of human motion as part of globalization. Appadurai's concept of "-scapes" provides a conceptual scaffolding for the thought processes that create or inhibit migration. The ideas and images that mass media produce are conflated with money and commodities to explicate the goods and experiences that deterritorialized populations transfer to one another. New immigration encapsulates these dynamics as it provides perspective on how sending and receiving societies impact upon one another through the agency, the integration efforts, and identity construction processes of globalization's mobile subjects.

Ulf Hannerz (1989) highlights the dimensions and directions of center-periphery relationships which illustrate the morphogenesis of power relations between the West and the rest of the global community. At issue are the constraints, or lack of these, exercised by the wealthier and more powerful nations that constitute the core or center of global economic and political transformations, and the response or lack of it offered by the less powerful and poorer nations which constitute the periphery. The asymmetries that typify globalization in its cultural, political, and economic manifestations factor into the flow and direction of the new immigration. Hannerz analyzes two possible views on the production of culture in the center-periphery relationship. There is the similitude of a monologue ensuing from the center, the wealthier and more powerful nations of the West, to which the periphery listens without talking back. The other view more closely reflects the theme of interconnectedness and systemic co-production of culture where the center speaks, the periphery listens, and then talks back. Then, of course, the center responds to the response of the periphery and the seemingly unending communication between this imprecisely dichotomized global community spins the complex web that defines the dynamics of globalization.

Appadurai's –scapes are the containers and conveyors of what the West, or most of it, contributes to fuel the engines of contemporary global transformations, and what the rest of the world gives back in response to the West. The new immigration is a significant part of the response of the periphery to what the West as center has conveyed to the global community. In specific terms, the economic and military power of the West in conjunction with an intense neo-liberalist trade and business environment, and their sustaining policies and alliances, translate into conditions in the periphery that elicit

certain responses, significant among which is the new immigration. While Hannerz submits that the center-periphery relationships of culture are somewhat unwieldy and difficult to capture or analyze, he is successful in pointing out the lopsidedness or asymmetry in the impact of the global relationships and cultural flows he describes, on less developed parts of the world. His analysis of the center-periphery relationships is useful in understanding which groups of persons are most likely to move, the most likely reasons for the move, in what directions they are more likely to move, and how their efforts at integration and construction of identity at their new destinations impact global production of culture.

James Ferguson (1999) expands Hannerz's concept of asymmetry in global transformations. By presenting the array of possibilities that confront periphery nations as they deal with the impact of globalization, he brings to closer scrutiny the inequalities that pervade the dynamics of globalization. He does so by placing the experiences of Zambians at the crossroads of the failures of the modernist project, and new questions arising from the emergence of complex webs of global interconnection. This approach shines an uncommon spotlight on globalization as an expression of postmodernism. Zambia glimpses civilization through its connection with the copper industry while being locally unprepared at the level of the population's everyday living for the trappings that come with 'modernization.' The disconnect of the local from the global that Zambia exemplifies in this incomplete submergence in a global economic network portrays what Ferguson calls the 'differentiation' that poses a paradox to the interconnectedness we all expect from globalization.

Ferguson highlights the inequalities and moral questions of globalization perhaps more than any other theorist of this ubiquitous phenomenon. In so doing, he contributes to the understanding of the position of Africa and Africans as they emerge from the cultural schizophrenia and devastation of colonialism only to be confronted with a mutated and more intense variety of Western domination. The new immigration finds expression in Ferguson's questioning of the dynamics of globalization which selectively connects, impoverishes, and even ignores some parts of the globe, such as Africa. As he repudiates linear modernist teleology, he succinctly poses the challenge thus: "How can we acknowledge historical and ethical obligations of connectedness, responsibility, and, indeed, guilt that link western wealth and security with African poverty and insecurity in an era when the modernist grid of universal copper connectivity has begun to disintegrate?" (Ferguson, 1999) This aspect of Ferguson's analysis begs a few questions: Is the West as dominant in the colonial transformation of Africa indebted to the continent for the disorientation that currently manifests itself in the economic failures that beleaguer the continent and undermines its inclusion in the global community? How does this question and its possible answers impact the settling and integration of the African populations migrating in large numbers to western countries?

Ferguson's call for the reappraisal of the place of Zambia's *lambwazza,* the unemployed, stigmatized "hangers-on" who epitomize "incomplete or stunted modernity and a failure to attain full proletarianization" provides a metaphor for a fairly widespread African phenomenon. The Copperbelt Zambia story was the African Industrial Revolution that slipped off-track, marking a reversal of the myth of modernization. The dramatic intrusion of modernity was at first rendered innocuous by its hopes and

aspirations for material and social betterment. All turned out to be a hoax, as Zambians who had moved from the rural to the urban industrialized world saw their living standards plummet as did this prospect of Africa entering the mainstream of history.

Like Zambia, many African countries and other communities of the developing nations have experienced the humiliating expulsion from "the circle of full humanity" that Ferguson dubs 'abjection' – the process of being thrown aside, expelled, or discarded. (Inda and Rosaldo, 2002: 140) The Zambian experience illustrates the transitory nature of modernist projects and the residue that is often left behind when the deterministic potential of cultural flows are underestimated in the evaluation of their impact on local communities. It also provides a contrast for the contemporary responsive periphery, for while the majority of the marooned Zambians did not make a beeline for the developed world but relied on their own creative strategies for survival locally, today's populations of the developing world seldom look for locally based solutions.

By exhibiting remarkable resourcefulness in negotiating survival strategies, the *lambwazzas* of Zambia typify a globalized population that did not have to cross national borders to experience this transition from the primitive to the western, but did experience, as people do in the context of the new immigration, the cultural tensions that often result when the west and the non-west intersect. Are African populations in the new immigration, clones of the *lambwazzas* of Zambia? With the lure of perceived promises of the West providing some of the pull factors for the new immigration, and the migrant populations of the less-developed nations having to navigate the cultural challenges that accompany relocation to a new cultural context, Ferguson's analysis of Zambia's

transformations underscore that meeting of the technoscapes, financescapes and ethnoscapes of Appadurai's analysis of globalization.

Diaspora and the New Immigration

Vertovec and Cohen (1999) present a view of diaspora as any population which is considered "deterritorialized" or "transnational" which has originated in a land other than which it currently resides, and whose social, economic and political networks cross the borders of nation-states, or indeed span the globe. (p. xvi) They conceptualize diaspora as a social form, a type of consciousness, or a mode of cultural production. The social form concept is often associated with the experiences of the Jews: forced displacement, victimization, alienation, and loss, and a dream of return. As a type of consciousness, a more recent approach, diaspora emphasizes a variety of experience, a state of mind, and a sense of identity; a particular kind of awareness said to be generated among contemporary transnational communities. Diaspora as a mode of production is more closely associated with conceptualizations of globalization as world-wide flow of cultural subjects, images, symbols, and meanings, and their roles in the production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomena.

The new immigration is dusted to varying degrees of intensity, depending on the ethnicity or history of the population, by each of these 'strains' of diasporic attributes. African immigrants are engaged in an identity construction in a diasporic context that is not drastically severed from the influences of their origins. The dream of return does not impose a strain on their options because they do return, quite frequently, both physically and psychologically, but that choice is circumscribed by socio-economic factors in the

host society. Their diaspora is more of a type of consciousness that is intricately woven into their modes of cultural production.

Okpewho, Davies, and Mazrui (2001) presents an extensive discussion of the concept of diaspora and its dimensions as manifested in the lives of Africans in the New World. They also summarized the different perspectives on the African diaspora, and have taken issue with the emergence of "essentialism" in recent diaspora discourse as an ugly label for any tendency to see the imprint of an African homeland or ancestral culture in any lifestyle or outlook of African-descended peoples in the western Atlantic world. They specifically point out that "[w]e can hardly deny that Africa has had much to do with the ways that New World Blacks have chosen to address the realities before them from the moment they emerged from the ship." (xv) The memory of Africa served the 'exiles' well, they argue, especially when conditions became intolerable. According to their perspective, "Black people have been led to summon certain African instincts, buried in the collective psyche, against systems of oppression in which they are forced to live in the World…" (xvii) As far as identity is concerned, there are questions of derivation from Africa, the ability to negotiate the social, cultural, and political spaces they encounter, and the coexistence of their "ancestral peculiarities" with those of other peoples they have been compelled to live with because of history. Okpewho et al vigorously repudiate what they identify as "resistance to African origins" and specifically discredit Gilroy's (1993) "obsessive phobia against all form of essentialism (as in attribution of a 'Black' quality in anything) or particularism (as in the invocation of African origins). (xxii) Africa, therefore is a resilient consciousness that persists among her dispersed peoples, despite potent threats of obliteration.

The two perspectives that have emerged from the study of the nature and character of New World black culture, according to Okpewho et al include the "Afrocentrist" and the "Atlanticist". The Afrocentrist sees Africa as the homeland of all black peoples across the world, whose experiences and outlooks may best be seen in the light of traditions and lifestyles that have defined African peoples over time, and migrated with them to various parts of the world. The Atlanticist argues that too much has happened to the African essence in the several centuries that black peoples have been living in Western societies for it to have remained pure. They think that in their coexistence with races from all parts of the world, black people have been able to fashion for themselves a culture that owes far less to Africa than to the hybrid climate that has inevitably become their home. In the diaspora discourse and its linkages with transnationalism, the term 'African American' rarely specifies differences between the voluntary and involuntary 'migrants'. In either case, Africa consciousness is a matter of intensity, but hardly of admission or denial. As Michael Echeruo remarked (in Echeruo et al, 2001) "In simple terms, even were we not to claim any particular identity, we would be assigned one by the simple logic of either appearances or essences." (10) The temporal separation of the two strains of "African American" has not yet been sufficiently expressed, much less achieved, in academia, especially in identity discourses. The need to do so, however, is accentuated by the increased prominence of transnationalism in anthropological research, which cannot in the African sense be confounded with the realities and social dynamics that describe experiences of the descendants of slaves. In diaspora research and theories, the separation of these two groups might provide much needed insights because of the differences in their experiences.

Globalization in the twentieth century unleashed an unprecedented flow of capital, persons, ideas, and information. As this flow becomes less unidirectional, and the "narrative" of globalization changes from monologue to dialogue with a periphery that is progressively responsive, the millions of people in motion who leave their places of origin to sojourn or find mooring in another, create diasporas. For anthropology, the unit of analysis expands from the local community to the diaspora, described as the offspring of a geographic space who have spread to many lands (Kottak and Kozaitis, 2002: 41) The process by which diasporas are created is expressed as follows by Inda and Rosaldo (2002: 155): "…as the boundaries of community have become less confined to the limits of a singular territorial national space, the nation-state has come to operate less as a self-contained unit and more as a way-station through which an increasing number of people shuttle."

To the image of the remodeling of the nation-state, Rouse (1991: 8) adds an expanded view that sheds light on the nature of transformations that culminate in the creation of diasporas. These transformations are reflected in the obsolescence of "the comforting imagery of …national languages, of coherent communities and consistent subjectivities, of dominant centers and distant margins…" Rouse argues that since World War II, the image of the territorially bounded community "has become increasingly unable to contain the postmodern complexities that it confronts." This is how he articulates his observations from a study of Mexicans from the town of Aguililla who migrated to the North American community of Redwood City. The socio-spatial organization of this immigrant population illustrates the simultaneous placement of

individuals or groups in different locations, and provide a good example of the contiguous nature of the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism.

While diaspora expresses location and its contingent consciousness, transnationalism expresses the activities that fill and connect the locations and consciousnesses. A very good illustration of the two concepts is Rouse's observation that the Mexican immigrants had not severed their ties to their place of origin (diaspora) but had created lifestyles and practices (transnational) that seemed to compress the spatial distance between their place of origin and their new place of settlement. The two locations could no longer be conceived as separate communities. In human terms, it is the bringing together of cultural and financial transmissions in a production process engineered by globalization. While diaspora implies some degree of separation from the place of origin and experiences of displacement, this relocation is not always voluntary as in the case of some Jewish peoples and some people of African ancestry. The diasporas or dimensions of diasporas that are created by new immigration, involve mobile subjects that are responding to factors of a global nature they hope to control by deciding to relocate to another social space.

James Clifford (1994: 302) identifies aspects of diaspora that are pivotal to contemporary considerations of the socio-spatial dimensions of global human motion. He leads anthropological theorizing on diasporas in the direction of experiences of constructing homes away from home and other experiences that may be interrelated or vie for centrality. An example of these competing or interrelated experiences would be the technology explosion that primarily determines globalization. Diasporas and the transnational circuits they spawn are sustained and nurtured, for example, by telephones

and the internet which function to buttress and buoy translocality. But there are definite attributes of diaspora that are considered by Clifford.

Some of these attributes seem to expand Vertovec and Cohen's conceptualizations, though they were taken from Safran's (Clifford, 1994: 305) characterizations of diaspora. Clifford crystallizes the following attributes: a history of dispersal, myths/memories of the homeland, alienation in the host country, desire for eventual return, ongoing support of the homeland, and a collective identity importantly defined by this relationship. He suggests that all of these attributes are not essential to the social phenomenon and discourse of diaspora, and therefore should not be strictly enforced. He envisions an expanded definition with the possibility of elements added or subtracted from Safran's list. For example, the transnational connections linking diasporas need not be articulated primarily through a real or symbolic homeland. Instead, there should be a place for decentered, lateral connections that may be as important as those formed around a teleology of origin or return. (p. 306) This open-endedness espoused by Clifford would then allow for modifications and varied translations, since societies may qualify or fail to qualify on different counts throughout their history.

Clifford includes in his analysis other attributes and dimensions of diaspora, among which are how it is differentiated from the nation-state, and how diasporic populations may differ from immigrants. He points out that whether the national narrative is one of common origins or of gathered populations, it cannot assimilate groups that maintain important allegiances and practical connections to a homeland or a dispersed community located elsewhere. This view seems to fall within the purview of conceptual clarion calls for the abandonment of the assimilationist paradigm in favor of

acculturation in the analysis of immigrant integration into the host society. It also facilitates the understanding of generational differentials or incremental success in integration efforts of immigrant populations. For it is conceivable that immigrant 'tenure' in the host society should be negatively related to emotional ties, allegiances, or practical connections with a real or symbolic homeland.

Clifford's suggestions about effectiveness or applicability differential of nation-state narratives to immigrants and people in the diaspora also point to the plausibility of a social integration schema for those who leave their place of origin for a host society. This would indicate an 'immigrant identity' at the lower end of a continuum where we would find those of shorter tenure in the host community, which would progress to a diasporic identity at the higher end of the continuum, where we would find those with higher tenure in the host society. The implications of these concepts for new immigration would be most useful in understanding temporality as it applies to social integration of contemporary immigrants in host societies.

Jacqueline Nassy Brown (2005) contributes richly to the anthropology of diaspora with her ethnography of Liverpool Blacks in the United Kingdom in which she finds that this postcolonial formation of diaspora includes both internal antagonisms and power asymmetries and the challenges of overcoming these asymmetries. Her work conflates race and place or cosmopolitanism as important aspects of cultural agency and identity formation within the context of diaspora. The identity tensions are widespread but predominate among the Liverpool-born blacks (LLBs) as they find contradictions in their racial or phenotypical 'cousins' from Africa and the Caribbean. West Africans and the Afro-Caribbeans who have the historical commonality of colonialism, sport not only

generally higher education credentials but also “stable racial identities.” (p.127) Blackness acquires varied definitions, and claims to blackness go beyond phenotypical commonalities to include place of birth. Brown concludes her analysis of the chapter she named “diaspora and its discontents” as follows: “Diaspora must never be made synonymous with the project of unity – nor with origins, authenticity, difference, roots, routes, or hybridity. These terms just give voice to the discrepant desires and discontents of counter/parts.”

To understand what factors drive the socio-spatial transformations that define new immigration, the concept of diaspora must be approached cautiously because as Brown observes in Liverpool Blacks, it cannot be a homogenizing factor for people of other places of origin even when they share historical and phenotypical commonalities. In addition to race and place in the Liverpool study, other factors may compound analyses of new immigrant agency toward integration in the ‘host’ society. Just like Brown asked her students in a class at City University of New York, we must also ask and seek to answer the following questions: What is "diaspora"? Is it a population that lives outside of its original homeland? An ethnic community spread across nation-states? Or is diaspora a state of mind? Does the term mean the same thing to various diasporic peoples around the world? The new immigration subsumes all of these questions.

Paul Gilroy occupies a place in anthropological studies of diaspora that is similar to Wallerstein’s place in the study of globalization. Neither Gilroy nor Wallerstein are anthropologists but their works demonstrate the growing interdisciplinary thrust in the study and analysis of human factors called up by contemporary global transformations. Gilroy’s *Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) illuminates, though

contentiously, the conceptualization of diasporas. Moorings and anchors remain formidable undercurrents in the diaspora discourse. Both Brown (2005), and Saffran (1991), accentuate those themes. Moorings and anchors are also Gilroy's preoccupations as he finds a place for diaspora discourse in postmodernity. Gilroy sees ethnicity as "an infinite process of identity construction" (p. 224) thus placing it snugly within the theme of fluidity and motion that flourish in the analyses of globalization and postmodernism.

For Gilroy, the Black or African diaspora presents a situation where place of origin and its manifestations in art, music, culture, or language, are inextricable from a mix of contextual realities. Place of origin cannot be retrieved from the mixture it has formed with its context that include power structures that define social phenomena. Consequently, essentialism, primordialism, cultural insiderism, and similar concepts are problematic for Gilroy because they tend to undermine the realities of cultural mutation that have whittled away at any absolute notions of identity or ethnicity. He advocates the entertainment of syncretic and hybrid emanations of the interaction of origins with the external world. Gilroy moves blackness and its cultural traditions to "historically decentered, or multiply centered, Atlantic space." (Clifford, 1994: 316) In diasporic cultures, the tension between the utopic and the dystopic is inevitable. First, there are the strains of being removed from the familiarity of one's origins. While this is undeniably germane to immigrant resettlement and integration efforts, it combines with maintenance of community, selective recovery and preservation of traditions and their situational application, to provide perspective on the new immigration and its implications for immigrant responses to the exigencies and challenges of integration and identity construction.

Transnationalism and the New Immigration

Globalization is replete with paradoxical images and imageries of, on the one hand, a bigger global stage for human action created by a conceptual collapsing or vanishing of borders, and on the other hand, increasingly compressed space and time, created by advances in modern technologies. In the context of the new immigration, Inda and Rosaldo (2002) provide a crisp summary of the situation as follows: "Contemporary migrants (or at least many of them) thus represent different ways of being someone in a shrinking world. They are mobile subjects who draw on diverse assemblages of meanings and locate themselves in different geographies simultaneously." (p. 19) The lives of many immigrants become multilocal because of the ease of movement and contact brought about by modern technology. These global phenomena form the fabric of transnationalism.

But transnationalism is more complex than the actions of translocal subjects, and conceptually, it is multidirectional. There are now important distinctions between transnationalism from above, and transnationalism from below. (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998). Just as there is a new immigration with distinct characteristics and dynamics that set it apart from the old immigration, there is old transnationalism, and new transnationalism, each with its distinguishing characteristics and dynamics. (Foner, 2005: 62) Like globalization, transnationalism was alive and well a hundred years ago. What has changed is technology and its facilitation of communication and transportation that make it possible for immigrants to continue relationships by maintaining frequent, immediate, and closer contact with their home societies. (Foner, 2005: 69) The view that globalization is a flow from the West to the rest of the world was first replaced with the

picture of a periphery that talks back, actively bringing about reverse traffic in culture. But as global transformations have accelerated, the core-periphery binary has become increasingly blurred, as “the periphery has set itself up within the very heart of the West”, and continues to bring about what is seen by some as the peripheralization of the core. (Inda and Rosaldo, 2003: 18)

Transnationalism from above is characterized by Smith and Guarnizo (p. 3) as the culmination of the suppressive power crafted by a mix of transnational capital, global media, and emergent supranational political institutions. The nation-states are most affected by this suppressive power of global financial transformations. Nonetheless, they retain some of their traditional coercive powers. This unsettling of the nation-states of the West has a lot to do with contemporary population movements. (Inda and Rosaldo, 2003: 18.) From below, transnationalism is defined by the decentering local resistances of the informal economy, ethnic nationalism, and grassroots activism. Despite the asymmetries in the global flows of meaning, goods, and capital, sending states, usually in the less-developed world, have not withered away under the onslaught of transnationalism. Instead, they have moved from their peripheral position to the center as they promote the reproduction of transnational subjects, and in the process reinvent their own role in the new world order. (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998: 8) As they are reconfigured into trans-territorial nation-states, they incorporate their nationals residing abroad, in a process called “deterritorialized” nation-state formation. (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc, 1994). These factors find varying levels of intensity and expression in the new immigration, with the added dimension of individually calculated instrumentalities that reflect “structures of desire” and “consumption fantasies.” (Foner, 2003: 46)

Social Integration of Contemporary Immigrants to Host Societies

Trouillot (2003) gives a poignant critique of globalization and its illusions, and draws attention to what he calls a "fragmented globality." His views about this fragmentation have significant implications for the new immigration. He provides the example of the Senegalese living in France or Italy, whose presence there may be perceived as an invasion, a perception enhanced by the visibility of the few Senegalese peddling cheap wares on the street. (p. 61) Trouillot suggests that though acceptance by the natives is not guaranteed, the immigrants' increasing refusal to blend and disappear culturally into France or Italy, and their material capacity to sustain that refusal is noteworthy and significant. According to this argument, it was a "vision of good life in France and Italy that attracted them there in the first place, but their material capacity to both accept and reject parts of France and Italy is reinforced by a number of global processes…" Trouillot goes on to caution that not all human beings everywhere have had and will have goals that are market-oriented. For the analysis of the new immigration, therefore, his views suggest that we cannot assume that the impetus for immigrant integration into host societies is always economic. The moral values, and cultural codes that drive and sustain their efforts, in combination with the influence they are able to wield at the home front by their presence abroad, determine how the new immigrants view integration into the host society and if and how they expend their resources to accomplish that. Trouillot's thoughts echo the awareness of multi-locality suggested by Vertovec and Cohen (1999) as the operation of diasporic consciousness that stimulates the need to conceptually connect oneself with others, 'both here and there', who share the same 'routes' or 'roots'. A conceivably large number, but definitely not all new immigrants are transnationals who

have a foot in each of the two worlds that chart their lives in a foreign land while they are immersed in activities of inadvertent or purposeful cultural production, 'here' and 'there'.

Transnationalism is viewed by Brettell (2003: x) as a concept that has transformed how we understand the process of immigrant incorporation by offering an alternative model to the older assimilation model. One of the alternative models is acculturation, a mechanism for cultural change that is more amenable to the conditions of the new immigration, especially if their host society is pluralist. Kottak and Kozaitis (2003) describe acculturation as "the exchange of cultural features that results when groups come into continuous first-hand contact…Parts of the cultures change, but each group remains distinct." (p. 27) The concept of transnationalism enhances the understanding of how new immigrants are more likely to be acculturated rather than assimilated into the host society. This view is reflected in the definition of transnationalism by Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (1992:1) as the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. Based on this definition, these authors prefer the term transmigrants to immigrants because 'immigrants' conjures up images of stagnancy or permanence while the 'transmigrants' is indicative of the contemporary reality that "immigrants develop networks, activities, patterns of living, and ideologies that span their home and the host society." (Basch et al. 1994: 3-4) Transnationalism, therefore involves multilocal transmigrant, or immigrant agency.

The understanding of immigrant incorporation is helped when the role of nation-states as reflected in their laws, philosophies, and structural characteristics, is combined with the role of immigrants themselves as reflected in their collective agency and

interests. This combination is expressed in the vulnerability to migration of established spatial images. In discussing Mexican migration and the social space of postmodernism, Rouse (1991) acknowledges the role of migration in highlighting the social nature of space as something created and reproduced through collective human agency. This is demonstrative of the susceptibility of spatial arrangements to change, within the limits imposed by power. (p. 3). Brettel argues that cities as contexts for the reception and incorporation of immigrants differ, in their history of immigration, their spatial dimensions and housing stocks, their political economies, their immigrant populations and their dominant culture or ethos. (Foner, 2005: 190) The limits imposed by power refers to state policies that differentially affect the cities. A combination of all these, in turn, affect the experiences of immigrant populations in the process of incorporation into the cities.

The integration of immigrants into host societies creates other susceptibilities driven by such factors as the development and maintenance by individuals of social networks that cross borders, constituting what Alan Smart and Josephine Smart refer to as "moral economies" or "social economies." (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998: 104) These integration processes are subject to the practices of the receiving states, such as ethnic pluralism in the United States, and full assimilation in France. Transmigrants, therefore, may be subjected to host climates that are conducive to the double-consciousness that inevitably accompanies multilocal existence, or they are confronted with xenophobic hysteria that is often accompanied by assimilationist tendencies. In the latter situations, a complete and thorough stripping of primordial markers, and imputing of radical psychological and even physical makeovers are perceived to enhance the immigrants'

chances of successful integration. Social integration of migrants, however, involves both individual and collective agency that are facilitated or impeded by contextual or structural factors.

Judith Goode prefers to teach students that boundaries between groups are not natural but are formed and dissolved through historical contingencies which alter identities and relationships. (Susser and Patterson, 2001: 436) She tracks the cultural metamorphosis of the American society from the pre-war model of Anglo-conformity which required the relinquishing of all specific elements of foreign cultural practice in favor of the assimilationist "melting pot" social philosophy, to the nation as a mosaic of different cultures where the parts retain their integrity as they contribute to a better whole. (p. 438) Efforts by the United States to mask racial inequalities led to judicial decisions and official group categories and classification that facilitated incentives for the expression of difference – a dimension of multiculturalism. In the same vein, the American Anthropological Association suggested in 1997 that ethnic origin be substituted for official race and ethnic categories to capture the fact that all members of U.S. the nation-state, with the exception of indigenous peoples, are immigrants, came from somewhere else. (p. 437) This is a very good example of how immigration flows alter the climate of social relations that may or may not eradicate racial tensions but definitely speak to new immigrant populations about what integration options and tools are available to them.

The state's efforts in a civil rights conscious atmosphere, toward the allocation of resources or the enforcement of political representation through the reification of ethnic categories encouraged a new consciousness of collective boundaries. Panethnic

consciousness and the resulting cultural identity movements were catalyzed by state's actions on the one hand, and the need for the immigrant populations to construct power structures that would enhance their chances for successful integration, on the other. Espiritu (1992) defined panethnicity as "shifts in levels of group consciousness from smaller to larger units, which are not as closely related in culture or descent." (p.3) Espiritu's important study of Asian American panethnicity illustrates an immigrant social integration project operating within the limits of state power.

Accepting and using the state categories to achieve their goals would result from the value each immigrant group collectively attaches to the category in which they are placed in terms of what they may gain by accepting it. The differences in values that may be attached to the state categories of panethnic identities are explained by two theoretical perspectives on ethnicity: primordialism and instrumentalism. (Espiritu 1992: 3)

Primordialists are characterized by a focus on communities of culture, while instrumentalists espouse communities of interest. Primordial ties of ethnicity are created by a common bond stemming from beliefs, values, geography, culture and tradition, but may not always lead to panethnic coalitions. In fact, primordial sentiments would tend to pose the biggest challenge to the mutability of identity that facilitates panethnic organizing. On the other hand, instrumentalist ethnic orientation is based on the value placed on one's ethnic group as a means to an end, a strategic tool or resource. For a group to lean toward panethnic collaboration, they would typically weigh or calculate the returns that would accrue to them if they remained with their original (primordial) group versus if they identified with the panethnic label. When perceptions of greater instrumentality or usefulness favor the larger (panethnic) group, then the new label is

readily accepted and expended to achieve desired and attainable goals. Whatever its impetus, panethnicity represents collective agency, and without question its goal is successful integration into a host society that imputes identities on its immigrants.

Social integration of contemporary immigrants to host societies and the strategies espoused by different groups would depend, however, on the unique circumstances of each group and how distinguishable these circumstances are from those of the other groups with whom they are lumped together. In the United States, newly forged panethnic groups include the Native American, the Latino American, and the Asian American. Despite the heterogeneity within each group including divisions along class, linguistic, generational lines, distinctive histories and separate identities, these ethnic groups have united to protect and promote their collective interests. (Espiritu 1992: 2-3)

In his ethnography of Puerto Rican residents of East Harlem also known as El Barrio, Bourgois (1996, 2003) presents a community of people who found themselves at the periphery of society but fought as they knew how to be part of that society. They alternated between trying to learn mainstream social norms and expected roles but found better solace in an oppositional culture. Oppositional culture is often an outcome of a group's judgmental interpretation of their adverse social situation or status such as marginalization, oppression, and perceived permanence of these adverse conditions. It can be seen as a product of the dynamics of human agency's confrontation with overpowering social structural constraints. In El Barrio, oppositionally defined cultural identities and practices manifest the internal logic of an alternative system that would replace the mainstream status quo but still is juxtaposed to it and must coexist with it. Bourgois summarizes it thus: "Through cultural practices of opposition, individuals shape

the oppression that larger forces impose on them." (p. 17) Thus produced, the oppositional culture is legitimized and internalized as the frame of reference for what is acceptable or not, what works and what doesn't, what is right and what is wrong. Oppositional culture represents the compass for everyday living.

Cyclical reproduction of oppositional culture creates generations of people whose realities are continuously shaped by various forms of rejection and resistance of mainstream society. One of the subjects, Primo, pilfered from his employer and was very proud that he was successful in this retaliation for being called illiterate. In fact he perfected his ability to realize his version of even handed justice by concocting scams that manipulated double invoicing and interchanging receipts. (p. 156) Legal employment was shunned by some crack dealers in El Barrio because of the wardrobe and dress codes it imposed, viewed in street oppositional culture as demeaning and inappropriate.

In his book, *Learning to Labor*, (1977), Paul Willis explains the informal as oppositional culture: "The informal guides and validates real behavior but it is held ultimately in the larger frame of the formal. Even where the formal is explicitly rejected in concrete situations, its power to classify lingers on." (p. 67) Everyday life and relationships in El Barrio are guided by the unwritten values and norms of oppositional culture, but embedded in this culture is the reality of the law enforced by the police, the documentation required by the state to start a business, the state penitentiaries that attempt to enforce the norms of society, the need to scramble when police or other state officials are in view, and to camouflage the drug economy, keeping it "off the books" to avoid the censure of the formal larger society which always dominates. Bourgois' Puerto

Ricans in El Barrio tell a story of the persistence of modernity's project of abjection. The Puerto Ricans in El Barrio represent a matured or sophisticated extrapolation of Ferguson's Zambian *lambwazzas*.

Social organizing is increasingly attracting the attention of academic analysis in the study of contemporary immigrant integration efforts and identity construction, but anthropological perspectives in this area are still scarce. Schrover (2005) points out that immigrant organizations are not only important for the immigrants themselves, but also for the study of their participation and integration into the host society. She argues that immigrant organizations can be defensive as a response to exclusion, or offensive stemming from a choice of immigrants to set themselves apart from others. Among factors that dictate immigrants' organizational activity, according to Schrover, are the characteristics of the immigrant community and the political opportunity structure. Characteristics of the immigrant population include residential propinquity, regional background, age, sex, ratio, religion, occupational structure, education and political orientation, also, the turnover rate within the immigrant community. Opportunity structure includes the possibility that governments of the host society may use immigrant organizations to mould immigrants into a coherent community such that the immigrant community is more accessible and within the view of government, and so that the community can be held responsible for its members. The opportunity model predicts that the level of immigrant organization will depend on the structure of political institutions and the configuration of political power in a given society.

While government's attitudes influences immigrant opportunities for setting up organizations, these attitudes may include forbidding, condoning, or stimulating

immigrant organizations or part of their activities. Schrover concludes that immigrant organizations are an indication of how immigrants see differences between themselves and the rest of society, or how these differences are perceived by others; a translation of which is found in government policy and may dictate the success or failure of their integration into the host society.

Push and pull factors of recent African immigration

Aihwa Ong (1999) discusses the enabling nature of flexible citizenship, arguing that in an era of globalization, individuals, as well as governments develop a flexible notion of citizenship and sovereignty as strategies to accumulate capital and power. If economic motivation is strongest among the factors that determine migration, then Ong's concept is overarching in the consideration of the "push" and "pull" factors of immigration. She defines "flexible citizenship" as the cultural logics of capital accumulation, travel, and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing economic and political conditions. She further explained that in the quest to accumulate capital and social prestige in the global arena, the decisions made by people are dictated or driven by, practices favoring flexibility, mobility, and repositioning in relation to markets, governments, and cultural regimes. (p.6)

Gordon (1998) addresses the recent shift in African migration patterns from Western Europe to the U.S. fed by new stringent immigration practices in England and other former European colonial metropolises, changing regional, political, and economic situations in Africa, and broader processes of globalization within the world economy. The new diaspora that Gordon identifies is an exodus greatly constituted by growing

numbers of Africans who are entering the stream of international migration away from the continent, not just from the country, of their birth. She identifies five major factors that account for the patterns in African migration: globalization and integration of the world economy, economic and political development failures in Africa, immigration and refugee policies in Europe and the United States, anglophone background, and historic ties of sending countries to the United States.

As a result of skewed economic activity that characterizes contemporary global transformations, most jobs, trade, and production are located in rich countries. Unfortunately, most job seekers are in the world's poor countries and the chances of most of these people finding meaningful employment in their own countries are dismal. The disparity in opportunity and living standards between the have and have not countries is widely known to the world's struggling masses. One response is international migration. The decision to migrate to another country often reflects the failure of development at home.

Political turmoil which is closely linked to the failure of economic development translates into pressures of poverty, rapid population growth, disease and illiteracy, and environmental degradation. The interaction of these factors produce what Gordon calls a "volatile cocktail of insecurity" which often result in war, civil strife, state-sponsored terrorism, riots, and other forms of political violence, and can lead to the displacement of large numbers of people as migrants, refugees, or asylees. These trends, Gordon suggests, are precipitating unprecedented high levels of international migration. Economic and political factors associated with international migration manifest themselves mainly in the lack of economic development and political stability in many Third World countries.

Gordon proposes these as the major push factors in migration; that is, the pressures that compel people to leave their own countries. The pull factors are those pressures that draw people to particular destinations. They are mainly immigration policies in post-World War II industrial economies of Western Europe and North America, especially the United States, designed to meet a burgeoning demand for cheap labor, largely precipitated by globalization.

According to Massey et al. (in Gordon, 1998) modern industrial societies have a built-in demand for workers at the bottom of the labor hierarchy which encourages migration from less developed to more developed economies. As proposed by the world systems theory and dual labor market theory, once migrant paths are established, the movement of other migrants becomes easier because there are networks of kin and friends in the host country. In Gordon's analysis, structural adjustment programs or SAPs designed to combat Africa's economic problems create, at least in the short run, conditions that actually increase the pressures on the educated and skilled to emigrate. These programs forced governments to lay off public sector workers, open their economies to foreign competition, and lower wages, and have, consequently, compounded the plight of Africa's middle classes who experienced steep decline in their living standards. This probably explains why African immigrants are described as highly credentialled, hardly typifying the "huddled masses" that scramble to America's shores in droves.

Takougang (2005) observes that unlike their counterparts in the 1960s and 70s whose aspirations was to return to their respective countries with an American education and the skills necessary for the task of nation-building, many of the immigrants in the last

two decades are more interested in settling in United States and building a comfortable life for themselves and their families. His study examines why an increasing number of African immigrants decide to become permanent residents or citizens of the United States instead of returning to their home countries. Both push and pull factors of African immigration are examined in order to answer this question.

Takougang found the same explanations as Gordon (1998), but couches his discussion in the context of a postcolonial Africa, thereby offering an extensive analysis of how African political systems constitute a push factor for immigration. He observes that more than four decades after independence, the economy of most African states is characterized by grinding poverty, endemic corruption and high rates of unemployment. Part of the reason for this, he suggests, is the authoritarian structure of the postcolonial state that continues to hinder the kind of open discussion and constructive criticism that might have fostered healthy and sustained economic development.

There is also the endemic corruption by political leaders, nepotism, and the establishment of highly repressive and dictatorial regimes that suffocated free speech and had little regard for the human rights of their citizens across the continent. Wanton pillaging of the national treasury resulting from the excesses of authority figures, along with uninhibited corruption and capital flight has the net effect that resources that could be invested in the various African countries to generate economic growth and create employment opportunities are lost to the western industrialized nations that do not need African capital. Such economic paralysis and political suffocation has caused many Africans, particularly highly skilled professionals, to seek their economic fortunes elsewhere, including the United States.

A 1991 report estimated that one out of every four Africans in the United States was believed to be a Nigerian. (Butty, 1991) And according to the United Nation's Human Development Report, in 1993, at a time when Nigeria's healthcare system was severely deficient, there were more than 21,000 practicing Nigerian physicians in the United States. (in Soumana Sako, 2002) Highly skilled and trained professionals who had been educated in the United States and Europe and had returned home in the 1970s and early 80s are now forced to return to the West in search of better opportunities. (Takougang, 1995)

Apraku (1991) remarks that theoretical frameworks using the push-pull model "have relied too much on the inequalities in the state of economic development, employment opportunities, and especially income and living conditions between developed and developing countries." (p. 9) This, he adds, amounts to oversimplification of the migration process. Portes (1976: 489) argues that mere poverty or underdevelopment do not fully explain migration as much as the asymmetry between the capacity of a nation to produce numbers of highly trained personnel and its capacity to absorb them. He attributes this asymmetry to a lack of adequate manpower planning – producing high-level professionals without supporting them materially, nor rewarding them adequately. An extension of this argument is Apraku's critique of incongruent university curricula that mirror western circumstances and needs, not local conditions. The international labor market, he writes, offers more opportunities to these professionals where the local labor market offers none. This glut of professionals who are misfits in the local labor markets translates into the new immigration.

Okome (2002) situates African migration to the United States within the context of globalization and echoes most of Gordon's (1998) observations. However, she adds a rarely discussed aspect on the new immigration phenomenon, the push factor contributed by the propaganda of the West, especially, the United States. She states that the U.S. lures black immigrants by telling them they'll be welcomed, that they are different from African Americans, who refuse to 'pull themselves up by their bootstraps.' But no one immigrates to the U.S. expecting to become part of a racially oppressed group, so it takes long personal experience with racism for even black immigrants to see that they are viewed as 'niggers'

Arthur (2000) reports survey data from a study of African immigrants from which he summarized the reasons for African emigration, especially to the United States. They were the desire to pursue post secondary education, to reunite with family members, to take advantage of economic opportunities, and to escape from political terror and instability. While these factors mirror much of what other analyses of African emigration have already pointed out, Arthur adds a new reason for emigration. He calls it an adolescent culture of "going abroad to the United States." (p. 24) This culture created and nurtured by stories told by African returnees from the United States who paint fantastic pictures of the United States, replete with unflattering comparisons of the home society and the society of their host country. Immigration laws in the receiving countries which are ever-changing and which may facilitate or impede the crossing of borders from Africa to the West are also seen by Arthur as playing a major role in the new immigration.

Settlement patterns and socioeconomic integration of African immigrants in the United States

The years 1984 to 1992 saw an upsurge in immigration from African countries. (Diouf, 2001) Similar to the African American community, and unlike the Caribbean immigrants, Africans are dispersed throughout the country, including Hawaii and Puerto Rico, and there is no state that has fewer than 150 of them. (p. 4) Takougang (2005) identified patterns of African immigrant settlement preferences and possible explanations of the preferences. In addition to small numbers found in many small towns and cities throughout the United States, major cities like New York, Chicago, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, Boston, and the Washington D.C. area continue to attract the largest number of immigrants. It was estimated that in 2000, 1 percent or 92,435 of the population of New York City were African-born immigrants, while Montgomery experienced a 15 percent increase to 25,776 in the number of African immigrants in the 1990s. (Snyder, 2002) There were about 200,000 African immigrants in Atlanta in 2003.(Bodie, 2003) , though Atlanta ranks 70th among the 100 largest cities in the US. (Census 2000)

Africans are highly urban, with 95 percent in metropolitan areas, and they tend to select certain states for residence, according to the region in Africa they come from. New York has the highest percentage of West Africans at 17 percent, with Maryland following at 11percent, while East Africans reside mostly in California where there are 15 percent of them, followed by Minnesota, at 10 percent. Sixteen percent of Central Africans live in Maryland and 9.5percent in California. Southern Africans are most numerous in California at 22 percent, followed by Florida at 9.4 percent. (Diouf, 2001)

These trends seem to support the observation (Takougang, 2005) that the presence of friends and relatives who are able to provide temporary residence for the new immigrants until they are able to situate themselves, is a lure for these immigrants' choice of residence. The temporary hosts also provide the new immigrants with important advice on surviving in the United States. Throughout the nation, the longer Africans have been in the country, the more spread out they are, such that their gravitation toward metropolitan centers are only temporary. Like many other immigrant groups, once they have "learned the ropes" and been informed of opportunities in other places by their network of African friends and relatives, they tend to migrate one more time. (Diouf 2001: 5)

Other trends observed by Takougang reflect the desire of some African immigrants to have a more tranquil life and raise their children in safer environments than can be provided in some of the larger cities like New York, Chicago, Houston or Los Angeles. These immigrants seek the smaller or medium-sized cities. He also argues that sometimes, it takes much more than social connections and networks to attract African immigrants to certain locations. He suggests that perhaps the most important factor that influences the decision to migrate to any particular city or area is the prevailing racial climate, political tolerance toward immigrants, and employment opportunities. That may explain why Atlanta, where Blacks occupy important economic and political positions in the city administration has become a Mecca for African immigrants. (Florida Times, 2000)

The socioeconomic integration of African immigrants depends to a great extent on the relationships they establish with members of the host society. But these relations

are determined by prevailing social conditions and structural realities. Arthur (2000) offers the perspective that throughout the making of American society, racial status and identity have been the most socially visible elements. When African immigrants arrive in America, they are very likely to confront what Arthur calls ideological racism and its enduring legacy in American race relations. This racism is the normative cultural system which claims that particular racial groups are inferior, and structures the system of stratification, while also influencing access to wealth, power, and economic opportunities. (p. 73) Because African immigrants have not been homogeneously exposed to racial experiences, they come to the United States with little or no understanding of the dynamics of discrimination against black Americans and other non-whites. Uwah (2002) for instance, questions why successful African immigrants like himself, who have all the right American values of hard work, and education, and have embraced assimilation into the mainstream culture are still not accepted like other immigrants from Europe, Cuba or Asia who also possess those same values or are even less enterprising. This kind of concern invites consideration of the interference of phenotype.

Based on the study of African immigrants he conducted, Arthur found that the immigrants acknowledge that though their lives and the lives of their immediate relatives in Africa have been positively affected by their move to the United States, their prospects for social integration did not look as good. They understand that they and peoples of black African ancestry often become targets of discriminatory practices designed to exclude them. They do not understand why issues concerning peoples of African ancestry are generally considered peripheral and unimportant by members of the

dominant culture, when almost 13 percent of the total population is of African origin. In their interactions with Americans, the immigrants paint a picture of an American society that holds little or no respect for non-whites, especially blacks. They believe that the cultural images that Americans have associated with Africa and blacks, is usually dominated with negative stereotypes in areas of crime, violence, drugs, laziness, welfare, and the formation of subcultures. They are often regarded as primitive, uncivilized, or backwards. The perception of mainstream society by Africans is that it holds them in low esteem by them, that even if they achieved the highest social mobility in the United States, they would continue to experience problems with integration simply because of their skin color. These immigrants also acknowledge experiences with discrimination, prejudice, and racism, hate crimes, because of their race, accent or national origin. But generally, Arthur observes, the immigrants tend not to allow racial conflicts to dominate their social consciousness.

A sizeable number of media ventures reflect efforts by African immigrants, especially the sub-Saharans to stay connected and to process their experiences and realities in their host societies. Diouf (2001) identifies several newspapers, magazines, and radio and television programs owned, operated, or produced by Africans. There is an African Independent Television, a Nigerian channel that is available on cable. The *African Times, African Abroad, The African, The African Observer, Afro-Heritage,* and *The African Sun Times* are some of the better known print media that cater to Africans irrespective of nationality. The *Gaffat*, which is based in Maryland, is written in Amharic and is read mainly by the Ethiopian community, *Class*, a social-event and style magazine covers the Nigerian community in Texas. Some pan-African magazines include the

African Spectrum which covers Chicago, and *USAfricaOnline* which has a nationwide coverage and readership. These media forms fill the gap created by mainstream American media that rarely cover news or issues of interest to the African community.

Takougang (2005) observes that although there were about 100,000 highly educated African professionals throughout the United States in 1999, many more are also involved in jobs where less education and often less skill may be required. They work as cab drivers, parking lot attendants, airport workers or waiters, waitresses, and cooks in restaurants. Still others have become entrepreneurs. In Washington D.C., New York, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Houston and Miami, for example, African immigrants own restaurants, healthcare agencies and specialty stores that cater to the needs of the large African and other immigrant population in these cities. In his study of Washington DC's new African immigrants, Selassie (1996) noted that Washington's African communities also face problems of limited access to good jobs, a shortage of affordable housing in safe neighborhoods, and inadequate health services and child care programs. A very common career setback suffered by African immigrants is that despite their high academic credentials and skills and years of experience in their area of specialization, they are often regarded as inexperienced by employers in the host countries when they arrive. This excuse is readily used as a pretext to hire these immigrants for jobs that are at a lower level than they would otherwise qualify for. (Diouf, 2001)

With a median income of over $40,000 in 2003, (Rodriguez 2003) many African immigrants support their families in the United States, and are expected to support other relatives back in Africa. Apraku (1991) reported that 37 percent of respondents to his

study remitted between $1,500 and $3,000, while 20 percent sent between $3,000 to more than $10,000 annually to support friends and relatives back in their home countries. (p. 6)

The socioeconomic integration of African immigrants is vigorously expressed in the social networks they construct and maintain. The new African immigrants are no longer just interested in financial progress; they are also interested in building stronger communities and organizing themselves in order to become a more powerful political and economic force in their respective communities. Groups such as the All African Peoples Organization in Omaha, Nebraska, the Nigerian-American Chamber of Commerce in Miami, the Tristate (Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky) Cameroon Family, the Nigerian Women Eagles Club in Cincinnati, Ohio, and the African Heritage Inc. in Wisconsin all aim to help their members become active in their communities and create a better understanding between Africans and Americans. Takougang (2005)

Arthur (2002) questions the effectiveness of these social organizations in facilitating integration of African immigrants who tend to insulate their social networks from access by ‘strangers’. He observes that African immigrants value a strong reliance on associations formed with other Africans and other immigrants of the black diaspora as vital to their economic and psychological security. Other social enclaves African immigrants sometimes create outside of their communities tend to serve mainly economic purposes and are never as close-knit as those that are formed along ethnic lines. (p. 88)

Some African immigrant groups such as the Senegalese have established a tradition of entrepreneurial engagement they have maintained in large metropolitan areas such as New York. Diouf (2001) observed that the African presence has become very visible on the streets of several U.S. cities. Little Africa in Harlem is known for a

predominance of francophone African entrepreneurs who own several restaurants, a tax and computer center, grocery stores, a butcher shop, photocopy shops, a hardware store, tailor shops, wholesale stores, braiding salons, and telecommunication centers. Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and other big cities in the U.S. feature bourgeoning African entrepreneurial pockets that include men and women.

Other socioeconomic activities of African immigrants designed to facilitate their integration into their host society include efforts to make capital available for small-scale ventures. These are rotating savings funds used throughout Africa, and which enable the immigrants to obtain financial support outside of the bank system. These systems known as *isusu*, *tontine*, or *ekoub* by different immigrant groups were brought by slaves and were based on trust, mutual aid, and reciprocity. Just as they helped many Africans buy their freedom generations ago, they have proved to be highly effective in helping contemporary African entrepreneurs in the United States. (Diouf, 2001)

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Culture and agency in the construction of social identity and status among African immigrants

Arthur (2000) observes that for African immigrants in the United States, the establishment of cultural communities begins with the formation of intra-immigrant relationships. (p. 71) But before that, immigrants who want to be integrated into the affairs of the host society must learn the behavioral norms and expected roles. For the success of this learning process, Arthur emphasizes the importance of socialization, and the need for the immigrants to commit to the incorporation of essentials of the host culture into their normative systems. (p. 69) The concept of socialization invites an

understanding of culture as produced by people, and Arthur's views on the importance of commitment on the part of the immigrants to adjustment to the host culture's normative systems beckons at agency. The active role of individuals in making and remaking culture is called agency (Kottak and Kozaitis, 2003:42). It is agency that permits persons or groups to aim for autonomy while rejecting cultural and structural determinism as they become actors in the dynamics and creation of both emerging culture and social structure. Whether actively or passively expressed, agency in a social context seeks to occupy a position on society's distribution of scarce resources and must contend with the structural impositions presented in the form of differentiated levels of access, networks of power, and other day-to-day manifestations of objective and externally determined life-chances

According to Durkheim (1966), "It is society which, fashioning us in its image, fills us with religious, political, and moral beliefs that control our actions." As a prelude to David Rubinstein's (2001) discussion of a synthesis model of agency, Durkheim aptly brings to our attention the interconnectedness of society as structure, our values and worldview (or culture) as upshots of society, and our actions as both creators and products of these relationships. Rubinstein seeks to ground agency in the interplay of culture and structure, thereby attempting to reconcile two positions in explaining behavior: that behavior is mainly controlled by cultural training, and that behavior is controlled by social structure. He defines agency as the degree to which persons are authors of their own conduct or are controlled by "external" social forces: cultural training and/or the (social) structure of costs and benefits. This model has analytical potential for comprehending the "desires" and choice of actions or agency preferred by individuals and the collectivities represented by social organizations among African

immigrants in the United States. Cultural training, however, is not always uniform among all members of a roup.

Underlying this process is the central role of culture not as a static inherited system of symbols, values, and beliefs, but as a dynamic which can be created and re-created to unite group members. Culture, in this context, is "a much 'messier' process than unmediated vertical transmission from one generation to another, including practices that are partly inherited, partly modified, as well as partly invented." (Lisa Lowe, 1991)

In the case of immigrants, efforts exerted toward incorporation into host societies and at identity construction as part of this process, are often sanitized to reflect a unidirectional desire, that of "becoming" part of a new normative system. Bourgois' demonstration of oppositional culture as moral compass for the Puerto Ricans he studied, and the very idea of double consciousness as part of the reality of transnationalism easily demand that analyses of immigrant efforts at identity construction be given more depth and scholarly attention. Straddling two worlds, which is what transnational immigrants do, suggests tensions between past and present cultural exigencies. For these reasons, and for the immigrant, externally imputed identities and their potential for accomplishing desired ends as in the case of Espiritu's analysis of Asian American panethnicity would need to be complemented with expressions of identity that come from what Archer (2003) refers to as "internal conversation". Archer suggests that internal conversation can achieve mediation through the interplay of the objective and involuntary social placement of agents in different situations in relation to the distribution of society's scarce resources, and the generative powers of constraint and enablement possessed by the structural and cultural factors which shape the situations that agents confront. She

states that "[u]ltimately, what courses of action are adopted and which social practices become established derives from the reflexive deliberation of agents, who subjectively determine their practical projects in relation to their objective circumstances." (p. 183) Internal conversation as a potential mediator in social conditioning per Archer's reasoning, validates the need to consider an agent's assessment of structures that limit their actions and the (cultural) orientations that dictate their responses to those contextual structures.

In the case of African immigrants, their efforts at constructing social networks and generally exclusivist organizations, (Arthur 200) and their reluctance or failure at developing panethnic consciousness with their diaspora cousins presage identity construction projects undertaken by them beyond the racialized and externally imputed identity. The relationships between African immigrants and African Americans provide more perspective. There is, as Diouf pointed out, the often-heard accusation of "you sold us", which refers to the transatlantic slave trade, and there are also other tensions that emanate from cultural differences. (p. 20) Prominent among these differences is African immigrants' rejection of the 'black' label which baffles African Americans. They see this as a serious demarcation between the worldview of African immigrants and themselves, and as a subterfuge that other blacks use to avoid being associated with the African-American community and the stereotypes attached to it. Dennis Archer, a former mayor of Detroit is cited as having stated it thus: "In some instances, some who come from the Motherland may have an aristocratic air that turns off a black who wants to have a better relationship and bond."(Goffe, 2001) This accusation that African immigrants see themselves as better, if not superior to their African American counterparts is not

accepted by some African scholars. Takougang (2005) dismisses it and states that his personal observation is that it is not a matter of African immigrants seeing themselves as superior to their African American counterparts or vice versa. Rather, like with other immigrant groups- Irish versus Italians, English versus Irish etc.- it is an issue of deep-seated cultural differences with neither side expressing a willingness to acknowledge those differences and work through them. Despite its highly probable inaccuracy, this perception has led to scant or tenuous relationships between some African immigrants and African Americans, and continues to undermine the potential for Blacks in America becoming effective political and economic forces in national politics.

To further separate themselves from African Americans, African immigrants repudiate the stereotypical and pessimistic images which the American media offer to the American people, while acknowledging the political, economic and social problems that mark their homeland, Africa. But there are sporadic invitations by the structural realities of the American society to reflect on the realities of race in America. The February 1999 killing by New York police officers of Amadou Diallo, an African immigrant from Guinea near his home in the Bronx has become a metaphor for the way African immigrants are perceived and treated by some law enforcement authorities. This conveys to Africans in the U.S. that the same stereotypes that are conveyed to African Americans are also applied to them, confirming their earlier perceptions observed in Arthur (2000) that the color of their skin is more deterministic of their destiny than their own agency.

The fluidity of culture and the recognition in anthropological circles of its amenability to deterritorialization enhances its malleability as a tool for panethnic negotiations, as new forms of culture replace or modify old forms, and as culture is used

to define a collective ethnic boundary. But the very soul of panethnic consciousness is challenged by the deep divisions that separate people of the African diaspora, putting prospects for a panethnic identity at peril, and its possible instrumentalities far out of reach. The dynamics called for in the consideration of panethnicity as an identity option is further explained by Archer's analysis of the dimensions of agency.

Archer (2000) presents agency as a process of pre-grouping and re-grouping, from the involuntary placement of persons in society by force of their humanity as what she refers to as Primary Agents, to the more evolved, collectively expressed stage of what she refers to as Corporate Agents. It is at this stage of Corporate Agents that interest groups, social movements, and defensive associations are created and expressed in concerted action. Panethnic groups cooperate at the level of Corporate Agents as they pursue their collective goals. Each component group can be seen initially as a Primary Agent relative to the ultimate collective creation of the panethnic group. The component group becomes an integral part of the Corporate Agent, the panethnic group, by becoming aware of what they want and articulating it to themselves and to others. Their individual boundaries dissolve as they collaborate with other groups to obtain what they want, engaging in concerted action to reshape or retain the structural and/or cultural features they contend with. Corporate Agents are therefore collectivities of Primary Agents, as panethnic groups are collectivities of ethnic groups that allow their cultural boundaries to dissolve as they re-create themselves and their identities. Archer's analysis extends the options for identity construction for immigrant populations, and for African immigrants, it creates a need for them to include in their 'internal conversation' modifications of their often claimed sojourner identity, that is the temporariness of their stay in America, and the

ineluctable externally imputed identities that packages them socially with other blacks in America.

Espiritu's analysis of panethnic identities projects it as being about culture construction, a fundamental ingredient for consolidating ethnic boundaries, by functioning as a constant reminder for the group members, of the overarching importance of what they share as opposed to their differences or those things they do not share. The culture at play in panethnicity prospects for identity construction is not of a primordial nature that may bear resemblance to the practices or beliefs of any of the subgroups. Panethnic groups, for any meaningful purpose, cannot bond around a primordial culture. That would be counterproductive, if not impossible. Instead, as Espiritu suggests, the group is united by a symbolic reinterpretation of their common history, particularly when this history involves racial subjugation. African immigrants do know about racial subjugation. When this is successfully done, group differences pale and give way to feelings of cohesiveness which lay a strong foundation for collective action and which in turn can pressure political institutions to advance the material interests of the group. The enhancement of status would be a reasonable expectation that can accrue from the achievement of this strong foundation for collective action. In pursuit of their goals, panethnic groups expend resources and effort for the ultimate purpose of becoming co-authors of their own conduct rather than allow external social forces to hold a deterministic sway over the direction of their lives. This means that they exercise agency.

Social organizing among African immigrants is an expression of collective agency toward the preservation of native culture. Arthur (2000) observes that some African immigrants in his study view their social organizations as expressions of their

panethnic consciousness and identity. According to a Nigerian in Atlanta, Georgia, "The immigrant associations are formed to remind us of our culture. The enclaves and pan-ethnic ties we form culturally sustain us in America. [The ties emanating from the immigrant associations anchor] us to our roots in Africa while we are here, ever reminding us of possibilities, opportunities, and the dreams of what the future holds." (Arthur, 2000: 73) Another immigrant from Sierra Leone in the same study agrees with the instrumental value of his association with other African immigrants. He states that "[T]he interactions with immigrants from my home town and country [have] been pivotal for my success in America."

In his study of community-based organizations and migration in New York City, Cordero-Guzman (2005) proposes several factors that are related to the formation of immigrant organizations. His operationalization of 'immigrant organization' refers more to those seeking social services that typically include cultural considerations in service delivery, but his discussion of the nature of these organizations can shed light on the understanding of African immigrant associations. The factors he suggests that impact the formation of immigrant organizations indicate an immigrant-tenure related progression toward the ability to identify their needs. Cordero-Guzman's first factor, that organizations are usually formed in immigrant groups that are relatively large and growing, quickly point to the first-generation status of a majority of African immigrants. African immigrant groups can be said to be at the early stages of formation in light of the growth factor in Cordero-Guzman's model. This model suggests hope (if the rate of African migration to the United States persists in its upward trend) for a progression of African immigrant organizations away from their criticized identities of parochialness

and territorial tendencies to more openness toward other people of the African diaspora. Gilroy's (1993) concept of 'unfinished identities' resonates with the idea of identity that evolves temporally, and helps to understand the identity implications of African immigrant social prganizations.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Transnational anthropology and global 'ethnoscapes'

Appadurai (1996) calls on anthropology to respond to the changing social, territorial, and cultural reproduction of group identity, as groups migrate, regroup in new locations, reconstruct their histories, and reconfigure their ethnic projects. (48) As global interconnection picks up speed, people around the world, the ethnoscapes, become more connected, such that the construction of culture and identity are more complex. Appadurai defines ethnoscapes as "the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest-workers, and other moving groups and individuals." (33) As a result of the enormity and far-reaching consequences of this human motion, the rural-urban migration focus in anthropology, inevitably, has had to give way to a more systematic attention to migration as a topic for research. (Brettell, 2003: ix) With migration in a central role, anthropology has found that transnationalism offers better insights than the assimilation model which was fast becoming inadequate, for understanding the intricacies involved in migrant lives.

Anthropology has also been compelled to find its object not in cultures outside the United States but also within the United States, so centrally placed as the destination of choice for more than 50 million people from all over the world. Anthropology's traditional constituency, people from non-industrial societies, has been subjected to multiple changes in a reconfigured and increasingly dynamic society. It is no longer possible to maintain that well-known gaze that characterized the anthropologist's quest for an understanding of the complexities of humanity, since the picture is ever-changing and increasingly confounding. The phenomena that produce these complexities include

the deterritorialization of the culture production process, as people relocate from the developing world to the more industrialized world where they seek to achieve their ‘structures of desire’, and ‘consumption fantasies’. (Suarez-Orozco, 2003) The landscape of people interacts with other aspects of the new global cultural economy to produce what Appadurai characterizes as “a complex overlapping disjunctive order that can no longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models.”(32)

To capture this interaction and its outcomes for analytical purposes, anthropologists have articulated various terms, including ‘transnational social fields’ (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc, 1994), a sociocentric concept which seeks to direct focus on the alterations in social actions, ideas, and values, as people are linked together by means of multiple interlocking networks. (Foner 2003:107) The life of the inhabitants of social fields is impinged upon by sets of social expectations, cultural values, and a multiplicity of outcomes from the interaction of political, economic and social systems. Other terms used to conceptualize the dense web of human social relationships created by cross-border connections are ‘transnational community’, ‘social networks’, ‘circuit’, ‘transnational space’, and ‘transnational village’. (Foner 2003: 107 - 108). All of these terms have directed anthropological inquiry in various directions, and at varying extents, toward the unraveling of the dynamics of transnational migration.

Kearney (1995) sees globalization as a source of certain displacements in the production of anthropological knowledge, moving it away from its historic national institutional and cultural contexts to other sites. (548) Global space, thus favored by this decentering, obscures the understanding of micro issues at the local level which include identities and the politics they generate. In contextualizing transnationalism within

globalization, Kearney sees an overlap between the two, a connection of the global and the local, which completes the span of human activities as part of cultural flows in which they are embedded. The actions of immigrants constitute further consolidation of this reconciliation of the global and the local, as they respond to the pull of deterritorialized production and capital, and create transnational spaces where new negotiations shape new culture production processes.

Foner (2003) emphasizes the need to identify accurately the scope of the transnational. She cautions that not all persons who leave their native communities for another locale are embedded in more than one locale. Some émigrés cut their ties to the community of origin and never think of returning. The sojourners are those that do not put down roots, but sniff out opportunities for fulfilling economic goals, and move as those opportunities move. They may have transnational connections, but they are never squarely placed in more than one nation, at the same time. (106). The different levels of embeddedness are not fixed for most migrants. Sojourners may indeed become immigrants, and immigrants may cast occasional glances at the distant homeland, claiming it as needed in their identity negotiations.

This need for exactitude in mapping their terrain in the study of the human factors of global processes also evoked for anthropologists, further refinement of the term transnationalism, and the separation of transmigrants from migrants. Appadurai's concept of various dimensions of global flows suggests that transnationalism does not refer to human movement alone. The financial, technological, information and ideas aspects of the global flows provide an understanding of the milieu of human choices and actions. They move just as humans move. He states, for example, that

"deterritorialization may be applied to money and finance, as money managers seek the best markets for their investments independent of national boundaries." (49) Migrants participate in different transnational processes at different degrees of intensity. Transmigrants, therefore, have been described by Foner, as "those persons who, having migrated from one nation-state to another, live their lives across borders, participating simultaneously in social relations that embed them in more than one nation-state." (105) This distinction is viewed as a vital one by some anthropologists who see a certain measure of unidimensionality and permanence in the term 'immigrant'. In consideration of the multi-locality entailed in new migration processes especially those originating from communities in the developing world, it is noteworthy that historical changes have conferred changing meanings to anthropological terminology. These nuances carry the intangible but crucial value of illuminating not only the minutiae that define transnational anthropology, but also the nebulous nature of the processes it entails.

Transnationalism from below

Vertovec and Cohen (1999) view transnationalism as a central concept in understanding how global identities are constructed 'from below' and 'on the move'. When Appadurai (1996) differentiated the components of the global cultural flows, he identified financescapes and ideoscapes as related to ideologies of the state, financial institutions, global media, and other supranational entities. But he also juxtaposes them with counterideologies exemplified by other movements that compromise state power. Appadurai's ethnoscapes are part of those counterideologies. Ethnoscapes encompass transnational migration and the engendering of new liberatory practices and spaces,

informal economy, ethnic nationalism and multi-positional identities, cultural hybridity, border-crossing by marginalized others, and grassroots activism. Transnationalism from below is an attempt to articulate these processes which depict conscious and successful efforts by ordinary people to escape control and domination "from above" by capital and the state. (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998:5) It subsumes an expansion of the local-global binary and an extension of the thematic complexities that inform the analyses of transnational practices and processes

Transmigrants have been described above as people who have migrated from one nation-state to another, and live their lives across borders, participating simultaneously in social relations that embed them in more than one nation-state. From the analytical position of transnationalism from below, the forces from above that impel the trans-border responses persist as crucial components of anthropology's focus on transnational migration. Part of this expanded view of transnationalism from below is the role of states that have experienced out-migration, and their adjusted positions in response to the transnational outcomes of the choices made by their émigrés. Under the pressures of international economic conditions and processes, and the failure of the states in sending countries to contain these pressures, foreign investment has come to play a pivotal role in the development of these countries.

Remittances by transmigrants are well documented as generally exceeding the foreign aid received by nation states in developing countries to alleviate their economic hardships. These transmigrant remittances have become an essential and sizeable part of the foreign investments enjoyed by developing nations. Therefore, far from withering away in the epoch of transnationalism, sending states that were once dubbed "peripheral"

are promoting the reproduction of transnational subjects, and in tandem, reinventing their own role in the "new world order". (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998:8) Transnationalism processes and practices render the sending states trans-territorial, and by negotiating dual citizenship statuses for their émigrés, these countries retain and consolidate a place in their own plans for their citizens who have left and are living in other countries. Transnationalism is thereby bolstered by the actions of nation states in developing countries from which transmigrants originate. The implication of this trans-territorialization of the sending countries for transmigrants is that they become more solidly grounded in their multilocal lives, and are thereby exposed to multiplying possibilities for agency as they encounter more closely the structural realities that impinge on their lives.

"Neither here nor there" was for long a cliché in the academic circles for the multi-local nature of transnational migrant lives. These migrants have been seen as people who are not grounded anywhere as they find themselves in a position of having to respond to allegiances, desires, and agencies that span multiple worlds. This view promotes the misconstruction of the intensity of the allegiances faced by migrants, and the pressures caused by the choices they must make, often in constrained contexts. The socio-political environments within which migrants live and engage in the production of their locales are containers of system outcomes that elicit repertoires of resources from the migrants themselves. These resources are critical and required for the effective containment of the transnational forces that impact the lives of the migrants who really are "here and there" rather than "neither here nor there." In their new locales, they reproduce their communities, and in their communities of origin, they provided not only

much needed monetary investments and support whose implications range from personal to national maintenance and development, but they also export the cultures of their current communities. Foner (2003) critiques the common view of transnationalism from below as a signal of transmigrant practices that constitute a transgressive or grassroots type of transnational connection. She views migrants as representing "a wide range of classes and political and economic interests." Migrants activities are not always subversive and at loggerheads with existing systems of power. On the contrary, Foner notes, many transmigrants work to maintain existing systems of power. They may oppose oppressive regimes at one locale and still commit their resources to exploitative hierarchical systems of power at another locale. (106) Thus, validating the bifocal nature of their views of the worlds they inhabit, the migrants, in Foner's opinion, acknowledge more than one locale as part of their lives, but their actions are never mass produced, they are customized to the unique set of circumstances that produce the challenges they have to confront at any specific time.

There is also a question in anthropology as to whether transnationalism dies with the first generation of migrants, or diminishes in force or relevance to migrant life as a focal migrant population ages. It is conceptually appealing that the ties to primordial communities experienced by migrants are intensely experienced by those migrant groups or cohorts who have first hand experience of those ties. The question of continuity of transmigrant connections revolves around whether or not the offsprings of migrants will continue to feel the same primordial connections as their forebears. In other words, will diaspora persist after the first generation of migrants? Smith and Guarnizo (1998) suggest that transnational orientations will not die with the first generation. (16 – 17) That

depends, they argue, on the differences in receiving states' practices. In state environments and societies where assimilationist tendencies prevail and drive the culture, it appears more likely that migrants in those states will witness a weakening and possible dissolution of primordial ties and loyalties. In cases like that, the continuity of transnationalism is in jeopardy. But in cases where the receiving state is more pluralistic, and a multicultural mosaic predominates as the driving force in social relations, then conditions are conducive for the perpetuation of primordial ties, and by extension, transnational living..

Identity politics is an important part of the dynamic of transnationalism from below. Since transnationalism acknowledges the immersion of migrants in various social spaces or social fields, the question of identity raises a complex of discursive factors, loyalties and oppositions, and social structures that compose identity. Smith and Guarnizo (1998) sum up the intricacies of identity construction as a process that constitutes opportunities as well as constraints. They explain these intricacies as follows:

> "…personal identity formation in transnational social spaces can best be understood as a dialectic of embedding and disembedding which over time, involves an unavoidable encumbering, disencumbering, and re-encumbering of situated selves…. People seek to be situated, to have a stable mooring, anchor amidst the tempest." (21)

This dynamic of searching for mooring or stasis in the context of transnationalism explains the mutability of the culture production process. It also explains how nation states are impacted by the outcomes of identity negotiations by a smaller group immersed in a dominant culture. By obfuscating lines of demarcation between primordial ties and allegiances, and the host culture, it implies the deterritorialization of culture that threatens the clarity of the core-periphery binary. Because of the constant motion of processes that

define transnationalism from below, many more complex questions are bound to surface in the future that will demand new approaches to the study of migrants, especially as state immigration policies determine the mix of the migrant population, and dictate the nature of the political responses that will be elicited.

Transnational Agency and Immigrant Social Organizations

A logical deduction from the literature is that international migration as the human dimension of globalization is working at the grassroots level to reduce poverty. The transnational immigrant communities are composed of astounding numbers of people from the developing world, mainly, who have stayed tied to their homeland even after leaving it physically. The preponderance of academic interest in the growth of the multi-billion dollar market remittance market has created the impression that transnational agency is synonymous with the transfer of monetary currency from the rich countries to the poorer ones. Other manifestations of agency among migrants have been sidelined or have gone unnoticed. The agency of migrants transcends economic transactions, and includes social transactions whose ramifications are broad-based. They also exercise agency in their host societies through various activities such as participating in social organizations.

Kottak and Kozaitis(2003) define agency as “the active role of individuals in making and remaking culture.” (42) They note that the initiative to create or resist culture depends on knowing that all humans possess the capacity for agency, that is, the capacity to make and remake culture. (291) The concept of agency gained attention in the 1970s as a reaction against the failure of structuralism to take individual actions into account.

(Ahearn, 2000:12) Its development was catalyzed by a social climate defined by challenges to existing power structures for the purpose of racial and gender equalities as some academics tried to develop new theories that would effectively explore the potential effects of human action. Ahearn discusses several perspectives on agency, such as synonymous with free will, emergent in sociocultural and linguistic practices, synonymous with resistance, or involving complicity with, accommodation to, or reinforcement of the status quo.(13) Her analysis also suggests that some approaches to agency deny agency to individuals while attributing it instead to discourses or social forces. The juxtaposition of these two perspectives suggests that agency is heightened when circumstances are right for culture change. The years of civil rights consciousness, according to Ahearn, drew scholarly attention to the concept of agency. Transnationalism, as a product of globalization, is replete with nuances of cultural dynamics and change, and is seen by some as culture production. It is also fertile ground for transformations that can be achieved through the actions of those who engage in agentic action. The main actors, the various and different groups of migrants, will exercise agency based on their experiential histories, socializations, and unique collective desires.

In his recent study of community-based organizations and migration in New York City, Coordero-Guzman (2005) notes the emphasis of some researchers on the importance of immigrant networks to the adaptation and incorporation of immigrants and to the development and maintenance of immigrant communities. The mechanisms that facilitate the formation and maintenance of social ties, he suggests, lend a helping hand in the promotion of regular interpersonal contact, and assist with adaptation and mutual

assistance among migrants. Portes et al (2005) in their study of immigrant transnational organization and development acknowledge that beyond remittances to native communities, not much is known about the wide variety of collective organizations among immigrants that may be engaged in diverse projects in their respective countries or communities of origin. Their study of three Spanish speaking communities of immigrants concludes that universal, transnational civic, philanthropic, cultural, and political activities are not common among immigrants in the United States, but are important enough for the development of the sending nations whose attention they attract and engage. Their study supports prior findings that home loyalties and nostalgia endure and have the potential to fuel future developmental agency among immigrant organizations as the communities mature. Social organizations are the sites of collective expressions of belonging for immigrants, and therefore, will influence these expressions through their agendas, foci, and internal dynamics.

In Ivan Karp's (1986) review of Giddens's notions of agency, he analyzes the concept of power as presented in '*Central Problems'* by Giddens. According to this analysis, power is situated in "transformative capacity" and manifests itself through social relations. Together, power and social relations are directly related to the agent's capacity to produce form through work upon the world. Power, according to him, is therefore a necessary implication of the logical connection between human action and transformative capacity. Following this reasoning, agency becomes power when it is capable of producing transformations. Placed within the context of transnationalism, agency from the three perspectives above (Kottak and Kozaitis, 2003, Ahearn, 2000, and Karp, 1986) can be seen to hold great instrumental potentials in environments of cultural

change, when agency can produce meaningful transformations. Social organizations as expressions of human action or agency can be manifestations or power if they are able to produce transformations. By extension, the more crucial the transformations achieved by the social organizations, the more power that social organization can claim. When immigrants or transmigrants are the main actors within social organizations, the transformative power amassed through agency impact both the sending and receiving nations.

In a talk he gave on 'The Psychology of Human Agency', American Psychological Society fellow and charter member, Albert Bandura argued that humans "act on the environment; they create, uphold, transform, and even destroy their environment" in a "socially embedded interplay between personal agency, and environmental influences." This statement does not provide the dynamics through which personal agency becomes collective agency. In the context of group dynamics, as in the case of social organizations, personal agency would have to convert into collective agency through a complex dynamic. Archer (2000) provides this connection when she differentiates between Primary Agents and Corporate agents. She argues that everyone is necessarily an Agent, since being an Agent is simply to occupy a position on society's distribution of scarce resources. (261) She further explains that society impinges on the human self to develop Primary Agents, and Primary Agents collectively transform themselves in seeking to transform society, and thereby, develop Corporate Agents. (260) Corporate Agents, she states, are social subjects with reasons for attempting to bring about certain outcomes, rather than objects to whom things happen.

Participants in immigrant social organizations are Corporate Agents per Archer's reasoning, and they act to bring about outcomes that should reflect collective desires of the group. When those outcomes are beneficial to the organization's membership, then opportunities for more Corporate Agents (members who move from passivity to active participation), would be created. Based on a series of in-depth interviews, Archer(2003) argues that "internal conversations govern agent's responses to social conditioning, their individual patterns of social mobility, and whether or not they contribute to social stability or change. Internal conversation is seen as the missing link between society and individual, structure and agency."

Diasporic identity construction

In diaspora, people imagine themselves as a nation outside of a homeland. (Kearney, 1995:553) Generally, the term 'diaspora' is used to describe any population which is considered deterritorialized or transnational., or a group of people whose origins are elsewhere, and not in a land where they currently reside. Vertovec and Cohen (1999) distill three main uses or meanings of the term diaspora. They are 'diaspora' as social form, as type of consciousness, and as mode of cultural production. Of the three meanings, two reflect transnational processes more closely: diaspora as a type of consciousness, and diaspora as a mode of cultural production. While diaspora as cultural production is described as involving the production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomena, diaspora as consciousness is more related to issues of identity. It emphasizes a variety of experience, a state of mind, a sense of identity, and is

considered a form of resistance through engagement with, and consequent visibility in public space. (xix)

Because diaspora is often linked to the Jewish experiences of oppression, forced exile, and no hope for return, it assumes characteristics in transnational discourse that call for careful consideration. In the case of the African diaspora, for example, African Americans are discussed side-by-side with Jews, the analogies of forced exile, oppression, remorse, anger and bitterness may apply, but placing these experiences in the context of trananstionalism can create confusion, since voluntary motion or displacement are not as fatalistic as the emotions attributed to Jews or African Americans . In the editorial comments on "Moving Targets" (Vertovec and Cohen, 1999:484) several forms of diaspora are identified: diasporas by design, and diasporas by accident, diasporas of loyalty, and diasporas of exit. These perspectives on diaspora provide an opportunity to separate African Americans, descendants of slaves or involuntary migrants, and Africans who are voluntary migrants, and who would assume other traits of diaspora, since their separation from the homeland was an expression of individual agency. Identity as a notion which rests on the concept of diaspora is given a stronger base when diaspora is defined as connected to a trail of collective memory about another place and time, creating new maps of desire and attachment. This definition separates the different component groups of a diaspora who might share that trail of collective memory about a certain place, but who now have different degrees of attachment to that certain place.

Alpers (2001) presents issues related to the definition of the African diaspora. In fact it continues to be contended whether or not African migrants should be seen as belonging to the African diaspora. Some attributes of diaspora that came out of the

discourse are useful in determining what may or may not be regarded as diaspora in the case of Africans. Palmer (1998: 25) identifies what he calls "the modern African Diaspora." He argues that regardless of their location, members of a diaspora share an emotional attachment to their ancestral land, are cognizant of their dispersal, and, if conditions warrant, of their oppression and their alienation in the countries in which they reside. He also suggests that members of a diaspora tend to possess a sense of "racial," ethnic, or religious identity that transcends geographic boundaries, to share broad cultural similarities, and sometimes share a desire to return to their homeland. This appealing definition correctly adds the footnote that no diasporic community manifests all of these characteristics. In his conclusion, Alpers proposes that when we speak of an African diaspora, we speak of multiple frequently overlapping diasporas, we also allow for comparisons, and we locate it within a number of global processes of change from ancient to modern to contemporary times

In the most recent dialogic analyses of the African diaspora, Harrison (2006) contextualizes its attributes within the extension of "ruptures and realignments" of global processes that now constitute globalization. In bringing to focus the less studied "dispersions occurring in the age of contemporary globalization…" she observes a departure from the classical model of diaspora studies which emphasizes trauma, exile, alienation, oppression, and even racialization. (384) To capture the diverse diasporic situations across space and time, Harrison suggests a dual function for African diaspora: an analytical tool, and a complex dynamic of sociohistorical phenomena. But for a more robust understanding of the phenomena subsumed under African diaspora, it has a new face that presents multiple layers of distance from the homogenizing tendencies of a

common homeland. Ethnic identities have persisted as part of the transnationalism discourse, and with increased emigration of non-Westerners to the West, self-knowledge, more than ever, has multiplied its deterministic power in the construction of identity. A sense of shared ancestry is part of that self-knowledge, and its clarity is empowering for the purpose of self determination.

Kozaitis (1997) discusses how the Roma of Athens, Greece, descendants of a diaspora culture "invest in the present and in the future by responding selectively to the physical, economic, and political conditions of host societies." The negotiation for place and identity by the Roma enabled their adjustment to political and economic marginality while supporting organizational solidarity. In their case, the Roma were able to overcome "the barriers of descent' because of circumstances that wove together their history and cultural heritage, and their beliefs in constructing ethnic identity and social organizations. This ethnic identity, however, did not entertain desires of return to their homeland, thereby liberating them from primordial constraints, and expanding their horizon in their construction of a new homeland, and identity. The case of the Roma suggests that the unique histories and experiences of migrant groups determine their identity construction aspirations, and the resources available to attain those aspirations.

Reflexivity and Native Anthropology

Anthropologists and their work are generally seen as having provided justification for colonialism and oppression. The alleged complicity of anthropologists in colonial imperialist domination, and criticisms of their excessive focus and negative portrayals of communities of Third World natives in their search of what it means to be human,

compelled them to turn the searchlight on themselves. They began to question the centrality of their positions in the ethnographies they conducted and the authority they arrogated to themselves as representatives of other people's cultures. As part of this self-examination process, or reflexivity, the anthropologist as a contextualized person whose positionality injects feelings, assumptions, personality, and actions into the data gathering process has been a source of argument and contentions.

Reflexivity is the awareness, on the part of the anthropologist, of how self and process of research affect knowledge collection. Its impact on anthropological research hinges on the acknowledgment that the researcher and the researched contribute to the data by drawing on their specific contexts, thus raising questions about any claims to objective reality. This keen awareness of the effect that anthropologists themselves have on their research in its entirety has grown from the analyses and critiques of the ethical, epistemological, and ethnographic practices of early anthropologists, including Tylor, Boas, Malinowski, Mead, Evans-Pritchard, and Geertz. Anthropological interests in self-reflexivity may have intensified in relatively recent times, but it has been an undercurrent from the beginnings of this field of inquiry.

Salzman (2002) suggests that reflexivity is not sufficient to give us sound knowledge but can provide insights and ideas that, if followed up properly might yield valuable knowledge. It is not yet clear how anthropologists might follow up these reflexively generated insights and ideas "properly", but Garriott (2006) commenting on "Reflexive Anthropology Today", points at Michael M.J. Fischer's *Emergent Forms of Life and the Anthropological Voice* as a roadmap to the contemporary and the place anthropology might occupy within it. He summarizes the author's views as a call for "a

reflexive anthropology that does more than simply direct attention back towards the conditions of its own knowledge making." The negotiation of cultural difference, he suggests, is a "potent site" for such reflexivity. Such negotiations are the fabric of the lives of immigrants in a context such as the United States, where diverse cultures and populations, navigate powerful currents of power, identity, and material desires.

It was postmodernism that buoyed the concept of reflexivity as an integral part of what anthropologist had traditionally seen as 'immersion into otherness'. In that same spirit, postmodernism has sought the demise of representation, and has, in tandem, sought to cultivate a place for the voice of the Other. As part of the chorus of postmodernism, Fabian (1983) indicts the foundations of ethnography that tended to sustain anthropology's role as "provider of cultural difference as distance." (p. 146). He proscribes the denial of coevalness of the Other, the researched, and argues for the acknowledgment of the political nature of the relationships between anthropology and its object. To alleviate the nefarious shortcomings of the allochronic conception of anthropology's object, Fabian prefers a polemic "total" response that expresses intent on the part of the writer to address opponents or opposing views in an antagonistic fashion. (p.152). Because of the ongoing dialogue on race and the color biases that pervade the American society, some aspects of this study of African immigrants by an African immigrant have the potential of being seen as polemic, to follow Fabian's reasoning, but if it expresses, or is guided to any extent by the coevalness of the historic Other, then the knowledge it produces should be less suspect.

In the context of globalization, the Other, mostly from the periphery, talks back, and has been doing so increasingly as borderless citizenship and its attendant contacts,

coalitions, and interactions find expression in the discourse on transnationalism. This state of affairs demand that the raucous contentions about reflexivity among anthropologists must now mellow and revisit the spirit of its discourse since the "native" can now tell her own story, and no longer has to leave it to another, a stranger, a third party, who faces a more bitter battle with value neutrality. The entrance of the "native" into the fray of the anthropological discourse on reflexivity offers avenues for an easier resolution of concerns about coevalness. When the native anthropologist as the historical "Other" assumes a prime position of equality in the process of knowledge production, she whittles away at the concept of anthropology's role as provider of cultural difference as distance. She opens to scrutiny the dynamics of geopolitics and its accomplice, chronopolitics. She also questions Rosaldo's (2000:533) assertion that a researcher's "position", both structural and experiential, shapes perception and cognition, thus limiting what the researcher can learn. They key word, here, is 'limiting'. The native, in studying phenomena of which she has experientially partaken, is not beholden to any political exigencies of the research process. She is liberated from any previously conceptualized allegiances to subversive influences on the search for truths of humanity. She is positioned to be more of a source of data, a facilitator of data flow, than a learner, and must be given a crucial place of importance in the knowledge making process. When this is done, knowledge production through the research study in question is not limited, but facilitated.

In *Reflexive Ethnography: a Guide to Researching Selves as Others*, reviewed by Davies (2001), the affirmation of multivocality and the door it opens for the native anthropologist, and the acknowledgement of the political nature of anthropological

research, are undermined by the equal position assigned to both native and non-native anthropologist. The potential advantages or disadvantages of this equality can be more adequately determined by the nature of the research question(s), but the author indiscriminately warns that both the native and non-native anthropologists should "examine carefully their relationships with their own societies and refrain from assuming that belonging is either uncontested or unproblematic." (p. 35) The caveat is valid but glibly distributed. In this consideration of reflexivity, the separation of the native and the non-native anthropologist is necessary, because the native anthropologist in pursuit of answers to research questions such as those posed in this study, is more likely to aspire to incontestability for the truth she seeks about her hitherto traditionally subaltern and oppressed population, the historic Other.

4. THE HISTORY OF AFRICAN MIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

A group of Africans known as Cape Verdeans are reported to have landed on the shores of America to work as craftsmen and other occupations, but the history of African immigration to the United States is generally believed to have started with the trans-Atlantic slave trade. It was in the 17th century when the trade had been going on for more than two centuries at various locations in the world that the British started transporting Africans to North America. The initial sources of slaves have been reported to be the Bight of Benin, Senegal and Gambia areas, and the Gold Coast, all in West Africa. The slaves were deposited mainly to the coasts of Georgia, South Carolina, Maryland, and Virginia. For over a century, the slaves, whose exact numbers remain a source of debate and controversy, made significant impact on the sociocultural and economic landscapes of the United States. The agency of their descendants through such historic efforts as the Civil Rights movement and ideology, paved the way for modern African immigration.

At the end of the slave trade, African immigration to the United States saw a steep decline. In collaboration with pan-African leaders from the continent and the diaspora, the Civil Rights movement gained prominence in the United States, and inspired reformers to confront the then discriminatory and heavily Eurocentric immigration policy. The McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 eliminated all racially specific language from the Immigration and Nationality act (INA) but did nothing to change the national quotas, which set migration from the African continent at the lowest quota of 1,400 annually. In 1965, the Hart-Cellar Immigration Act, widely believed to be spawned by the Civil Rights Movement, revolutionized the criteria for immigration to the United States. The criteria became skills, profession, or relationship to families in the United States. It was

this Act that heralded a period of rapid increase in the rate of voluntary migration. From 1970, the increase was three times more than the preceding decade, and by 1995, The United States admitted more than 40,000 Africans annually. The numbers of Africans moving to the United States was given a boost by the widespread economic downturn in Europe, which caused many nations to stem the human tide of immigration. This measure resulted in a change of destination for those Africans who favored European countries, but who now headed for the United States.

After two decades experimenting with sovereignty and vestiges of colonial rule, the economy of many African countries were skidding out of control. The 'structural adjustment programs' prescribed by the International Monetary Fund did not deliver any remedies for Africa's economic problems. Instead, unemployment ravaged families and desperation hung over the daily lives of people. Severe currency devaluations were also part of the ripples of the failed structural adjustment programs. This seemingly irreversible trend forced those who could pay their way out of their countries to do so at a rate that saw the hemorrhage of some of Africa's best hope for future development.

More changes in the 1980s in U.S. policy toward refugees qualified a number of African national populations as refugees. The Refugee Act of 1980 amended the definition of a refugee, raised regional refugee ceilings, and offered new arrivals permanent residence after one year. Soon after this, Africans in the United States who had been living there since 1982 were allowed to legalize their statuses by the provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act. About 31,000 Africans benefited from this Act and were able to make the United States their home permanently. The Immigration Act of 1990 introduced the Diversity Visa Lottery which sought to identify national

populations that were underrepresented in the United States, and to offer immigration opportunities for individuals with at least a high school level education. Currently, the immigration lottery program is the primary method of immigration for Africans to the United States. The number of African immigrants to the United States, today, is estimated at over one million.

Currently, the Migration Information Source, an online newsletter that provides analysis of migration trends in the United States estimates the African born population, as of 2002, at over 1 million and 3 percent of the total foreign born population in the United States. The largest group of African foreign born in the United States, by region of Africa, is of people from Western Africa who constitute35.2% of all African foreign born, or 357,360 immigrants. Over half of all African immigrants are recent arrivals, according to US census 2000, with 56% of all African born arriving in the US between 1990 and 2000, while 26% entered between 1980 and 1989, and 18% before 1980. Nigerians outnumber all other national groups from West Africa at 139,493 immigrants or 13.8% of all African born immigrants. There were 65,600 Ghanaians.

Atlanta African immigrants

The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy provided a profile of Atlanta from Census 2000, in which immigration was viewed as central to understanding the social, economic, and political dynamics of cities. In that report, Atlanta was identified as one of the “emerging gateway’ metropolitan areas in the South, that is, one of the metropolitan cities through which recent immigrants pass as they head for the suburbs where they settle in increasing numbers. According to this report, 10% of

Atlanta's foreign born population are Africans. They are one percentage point more than Caribbeans, six percentage points more than South Americans, and four percentage points less than Europeans.

An analysis of "Black Diversity in Metropolitan America" provided by John R Logan and Glenn Deane at Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research University at Albany, estimated that in 1990, there were almost 9,000 African born in Atlanta. In 2000, this number had increased to 34,302 immigrants, a 284.6 percent increase. Between 1990 and 2000, Atlanta held steady at the third metropolitan area in the Us with the largest African born population. The median household income of the year 1990 Atlanta homeowners was $43,049, and for 2000 college educated, $48,614.

5. EPISTEMOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS AND METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES OF DIASPORIC POPULATIONS

The ethnographic study of migration, complex societies, and transborder processes is not new to anthropology. (Foner 2003, p.10) Beginning with focus on countryside to urban movements, anthropologists featured mainly ties to home communities while also addressing the question of whether urban migrants were sojourners or settlers. Anthropologists documented cyclical and seasonal patterns of movement between home communities and urban areas in their efforts to sort out the underlying factors that cause people to migrate or return at various stages in their lives. An illustration of this focus in anthropological inquiry is in William Shack's comments, in the *Urban Anthropology* collection, on Africans in town retaining their tribal identity and membership in the rural society. (Shack 1973:. 251) Most early ethnographies of migration were characterized by the predominance of urban factors as the guiding epistemological framework in the analysis of human movement. The study of ethnic diasporas was the beginning of a combination of urban and rural factors. According to Foner, this was also the beginning of the study of how cultural and social patterns from the home country or region were transformed as migrants settled in vastly different places around the globe. (2003: 13)

Brettell (2003) calls attention to the stories of individuals and couples in the spirit of what Lila Abu-Lughod described as particulars of individual life as manifestations of the effects of extralocal and long-term processes. In her study of Portuguese migrants, Brettell acknowledges that the particulars of their lives permitted her to emphasize several aspects of the migration experience that are not always featured in the social science literature. She also suggests that a handful of personal narratives can teach us a

good deal about pattern, structure, culture, and the role of the individual in the migration process, by revealing what may have been distinctive about a specific immigrant population movement, and experiences that may be comparable with other immigrants in other places and other times. This, she claims, would enhance generalizability. (pp. 23-24)

Narratives and life histories in ethnographic research are also acknowledged by Sarah Lamb (2001) as one of the practices by which people reflect, exercise agency, contest interpretations of things, make meanings, feel sorrow and hope, and live their lives. (p. 28) Earlier, Fielding (1992) observes that "the feelings associated with migration are usually complicated, the decision to migrate is typically difficult to make, and the outcome involves mixed emotions." (p. 201) Fielding laments that when anthropologists study migration scientifically, the fact that it is a statement of an individual's worldview, and, therefore, an extremely cultural event, seems to be forgotten. He does not agree with the implied suggestion of the pure rationality of the decision of a migrant to choose individual advancement only as a response to the economic signals of the job and housing markets. This choice, in his view, could not come about because of a migrant's rational choice to reject "feeling like a virtual prisoner of his or her class position", that subjects him or her to "powerful structural economic forces set in motion by the logic of capital accumulation." Fielding's views fit with Foner's observation of the welcome paradigm shift in the study of ethnic diasporas that emerged as anthropology's focus moved from the urban only, to a combination of urban and rural factors. This combination foregrounded cultural and social patterns, and their transformations, as migrants settled, and should intensify the need for the study of the

migration process as they apply to the individual particulars. The particular, as Brettell (2003), and Lamb (2001) suggest, are enlightening, and can be richly mined using the methodology of narratives and life histories in ethnographic research.

Beyond the shift from an urban focus to a combination of the urban and the rural, the paradigmatic changes away from assumptions that persons could belong to only a single country, and that [US] migrants had to choose between their home country and the new land, moved the spotlight to transnationalism and transborder living, with multiculturalism, not assimilation, as the mode of integration. This is also a move from the static to the fluid, and to the importance of immigrant social integration processes. As in most traditions of anthropological inquiry, how culture is conceptualized drives most approaches to ethnographic studies. Nina Glick Schiller (in Foner, 2003) states that past ethnographies of migration have followed anthropologists' definitions and understandings of culture and that the study of transnational migration has encompassed social relations, social structure, and transgenerationally transmitted patterns of action, belief, and language. (p.101) Transnational studies focus on the embeddedness of people in two or more societies as determined by the nature and impact of social, economic, religious and political relationships. This suggests diasporic consciousness among other implications of the relationships.

After a remarkable period of distraction, the intensity of the academic gaze on globalization gave way to a clearer view and significance of the epistemological frameworks offered by transnationalism for the study of migration. Broad based interdisciplinary interest created the study of transnational processes of which transnational migration studies is only a part. With the clearing of the epistemological

confusion and concerns, diaspora studies started with narratives of identity that were based on myths of common origin and global dispersal. (Clifford, 1994)

The development of the term, transnational social fields, is of paramount importance for the study of the multilocal or transborder lives of migrants. This concept was developed by Glick Schiller and her colleagues to separate and contrast it with the concept of network analysis which they viewed as egocentric. (Foner, 2003: 107) Social field was preferred over network analysis because it was sociocentric as opposed to directing attention to the density and types of relationships of a specific individual. Social field focuses on alterations in social actions, ideas, and values as people are linked together by means of multiple interlocking networks. They are, therefore, Schiller explained, "not metaphoric references to altered experiences of space; they comprise observable social relationships and transactions."

Among methodological concerns about transnationalism research addressed by anthropologists is the question of generalizability, excessive reliance on case studies, and sampling that enables only a univariate design. In her discussion of the 'centrality of ethnography' in transnational studies, Glick Schiller (Foner, 2003) notes that the concept of hypothesis testing in ethnographic studies differs from its application to other social studies that involve scientifically generated samples. In ethnographies, anthropologists generate hypotheses which they subject to rigorous probing, explorations and revisions that allow them to readjust their focus as needed, and as unexpected phenomena and facts arise from the research process. Despite the possible utilities of the ethnographic approach in the study of human phenomena, including one as interconnected as transnational populations, the concern that the data generated from this approach falls

short of developing and substantiating theory, seems to persist, at least among scholars from other social sciences.

In the area of immigrant incorporation, anthropologists, (Wimmer and Glick 2001: 301) have challenged theories of modernization and assimilation, and have brought into closer connection the already connected global changes in the world economy and changes in the patterns of migrant incorporation. They also repudiate the notion of the nation-state as the unit of analysis that is common in some social sciences and humanities, a notion they have called in their analysis, *methodological nationalism*, defined as "the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world." This view has a conceptual commonality with an analysis of the nation-state presented by Inda and Rosaldo, (2002). They commented on the inability of western nation-states to fully produce proper national subjects that are defined by residence in a common territory, a shared cultural heritage, and an undivided loyalty to a common government… the inability to construct a monolithic national community… the incapacity to turn immigrants into proper national objects. (pp.20 - 21) This also represents the general neoliberal view that market forces have minimized the power of the nation-state.

Foner (2003) in her editorial commentary extolled the benefits of ethnographies of intergroup dynamics and their usefulness in revealing not only sites of contention and consensus but also processes of identity construction and incorporation. (p. 30) As evidenced in Foner's analysis, the value of this stronghold of anthropological inquiry remains high as is the acclaim it has received for its accomplishment and potentials in immigration studies. Foner sees the value of ethnographic studies of immigration in

showing the shifting and situational nature of the racial and ethnic identities, the meanings people attach to them, and how these identities evolve in the context of changing social, economic and political conditions. She illustrates the advantage of ethnographic studies over surveys with their role in panethnic studies where ethnographic studies are needed to show how and why panethnic identities become salient in particular contexts, how they can be invoked or put aside in different moments for different purposes and take on different meanings, depending on the circumstances or sites of interaction. (p. 29)

Foner also reaffirms anthropology's loyalty to fieldwork and attributes to it a serendipity and flexibility that can have theoretical benefits. Faith in fieldwork methodology is often defended by the idea of finding things you never knew existed and were not expected within the limits of the initial study design. Clifford (1997) further explores the idea of 'field' in fieldwork, usually conceptualized as earthbound, "a cleared place of work" that the anthropologist professional can go out into, a spatial distinction between a home base and an exterior place of discovery where one can keep out "distracting influences". (p. 53)

Within the context of travel or spatial practices, Clifford, invokes anthropology's charge of the production of deep cultural knowledge, and affirms the need to reconceptualize 'field' in fieldwork as having unstable borders that are constantly renegotiated. He invites anthropologists to rethink their view of 'field' as "a distinct place with an inside and outside, reached by practices of physical movement." (p. 54) He rejects the positivist underpinnings of fieldwork with its attendant colonial historical associations. The field, to Clifford, is everywhere and anywhere relational practices take

place along with the shifting identities of the people and issues the anthropologists seeks to represent. For these reasons, a reworking of the concept of ‘field’ in anthropological research and how it is negotiated will be of special benefit to “indigenous”, “postcolonial”, “diasporic”, or “minority” attachments. Travel, Clifford explains, denotes practices of leaving familiar ground in search of difference. He therefore locates fieldwork in a long “increasingly contested tradition of Western travel practices”, and suggests that other travel traditions and diasporic routes can help renovate methodologies of displacement, leading to metamorphoses of the field. (p. 90)

6. EXAMPLES OF ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDIES THAT EXAMINE IMMIGRATION, SETTLEMENT, IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION, AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION

In Search of Respect, Phillipe Bourgois, 1996 and 2003

Phillipe Bourgois rented a tenement apartment in East Harlem, New York, also known as El Barrio, from which he studied for three and half years, Puerto Rican immigrants living out an "oppositional mentality" *in search of respect* and identity - forged in the face of long-term colonial domination. He set out to document how "the richest industrialized nation in the world" imposes racial segregation and economic marginalization on so many of its Latinos and African-American citizens but ended up studying the underground economy of a crack/drug-world that consumed the entire neighborhood.

The population of El Barrio relevant to this ethnography is 110,599 people – 51 percent Latino/Puerto Rican, 39 percent African-American, and 10 percent "other". (p.33). The problems the people face are deeply rooted in the political economic and cultural context of the United States of America in general, the structuring of New York City's economy, specifically, and the history and dynamics of Puerto Rican immigration. Racial and class boundaries and ethnic-based apartheids stringently enforced by institutional racial prejudice confine the people of El Barrio to vicious cycles of poverty and imprisonment, structural marginalization, illiteracy, crime, feelings of social ostracism and ineptitude which predisposes them to anti-social lifestyles that border on self-destructiveness manifested in drug addiction and violence, chronic or internalized unemployment, sexual wantonness, a worldview of powerlessness vis-à-vis dominant social structures such as envisioned impenetrable labor markets, and a bleak outlook on the future.

As with many immigrant populations, the Puerto Ricans of El Barrio who were the protagonists of this ethnography found themselves in a crossfire between their own culturally constructed values and norms based on their native socialization as Puerto Ricans, and the social norms and values maintained by mainstream American society. This was acutely illustrated in the impediment to legal and steady employment posed by the premium placed on the machismo of street culture and its perceived vulnerability in the corporate culture of service sector jobs rife with female supervisors and rules that seemed humiliating and nonsensical.

Bourgois owns up to his violation of the canons of positivist research with the ethnographic tradition of living with the community under study, so as to collect "accurate data". He uses participant observation, and reaffirms the tradition of establishing long-term, organic relationships with the people under study. He embraces the postmodernist ethnographic approach of self-conscious reflexivity as an outsider, from the larger society's dominant class, ethnicity, and gender categories who was attempting to study the experience of inner-city poverty among Puerto Ricans. He used the analytical frameworks of cultural production theory and feminism as a backdrop for the analysis of his tape-recorded conversations or interviews and life histories of the crack dealers and addicts, their families, spouses, lovers, siblings, grandparents, etc., and also local politicians. As the residents of El Barrio did not have any reliable institutional records from which a sample could be taken, the sample for this study was snowballed. He observed crackhouses and the streets, and attended institutional meetings. As he edited "thousands of pages of transcriptions" he was reminded of the deconstructionist concept of "culture as text" and pondered the fact that he had the exclusive control over

what gets to be revealed to the world in the final product, “although the literary quality and emotional force of this book depends entirely on the articulate words of the main characters”.

Little Brazil: An Ethnography Of Brazilian Immigrants in New York City – Maxine Margolis, 1994

Margolis spent three years studying the Brazilian community in New York. The growing presence of Brazilians in New York first became apparent to her around the mid 80s during periodic visits when she found that more and more people were speaking Portuguese. Little Brazil is the name of a street also called Brazil Street located in the heart of midtown Manhattan. A chance conversation inspired her to research New York Brazilians and ultimately to write the book *Little Brazil* which documents her ethnography. Her cousin who had visited New York when she was there had mentioned how pleased she was with her Brazilian housekeeper, and intimated that many of her friends had Brazilian maids and nannies. Margolis subsequently discovered the paucity of research on Brazilians in the United States and decided to fill the void. The book metamorphosed from what she thought was going to be a “need to know” book, one that would recount the experiences of an ethnic group that had not been previously studied to an ethnographic account of Brazilian immigrants, specifically an undocumented immigrant stream. The Brazilians of Margolis’ study, in her evaluation, serve as vivid illustrations of undocumented immigrants, and as surrogates for many other immigrant groups who were living in this country because of their strong economic motivation, despite their problematic immigration status.

Early in her research, Margolis found that Brazilian immigrants were not the typical illegal aliens who were uneducated and poor. They were middle and lower-middle class, and many were college educated. They were not escaping poverty neither were they escaping political repression. They were typified by Margolis as economic refugees fleeing from a chaotic economy back home. The Brazilians, themselves, Margolis observed, were reluctant to identify themselves as immigrants, and felt more comfortable with being regarded as sojourners, temporary visitors, who were in the United States for a short while, as a measure to fix their economic problems back home.

The study was done in two phases. The first phase was interspersed between the summers of 1988 and 1989 and the second lasted from January 1990 to January 1991. The first phase consisted of 'informal' surveys and open-ended interviews with 53 Brazilians, including both recent immigrants and long-term residents of New York City. The study subjects included Brazilian consular officers, the editor of the local Brazilian paper, and owners of stores, restaurants, travel and remittance agencies, and other businesses frequented by Brazilians. The second phase consisted of one hundred questionnaires which Margolis herself filled out on a sample of Brazilian informants. The questionnaires covered most aspects of Brazilian immigrant life, including the decision to come to New York, entry, settlement, and subsequent experiences while working and living in the city. Other questions covered demographics, including educational backgrounds and prior work histories.

Sampling of informants was difficult because of the undocumented status of part of the population, and the difficulty in estimating them. Obtaining any official or institutionally documented statistics was impossible, therefore, there were no sampling

frames, and a random sample was impossible. Snowball sampling which the author acknowledged as effective in obtaining samples of "hidden" populations, though it was nonrandom, was her best option. Problems of generalizability of the data or information from this study were acknowledged by the author, because of the nonrandom sample. The snowballing process was as follows: the author first made initial contacts with a few informants through the monthly Brazilian newspaper published in New York City, and then asked each informer for names of one or two other people who might agree to be interviewed. These people named others and the process produced a network of informants. In addition to the subjects of the questionnaires, the author talked informally to many other Brazilians. They totaled 250 in all.

Participant observation was reflective of the author's efforts to immerse herself in the lives of Brazilians in New York. There were visits to people's homes, musical and sporting events, church services, street fairs, stores, restaurants, and to nightclubs frequented by Brazilians. She subsequently went to Rio de Janeiro to interview US consulate officials, and a handful of returned migrants. She also visited a city that was known for exporting most of the *brazucas* – a term for Brazilians living in the US – and visited family members, local officials and travel agents, to collect information on the history and impact of the emigrant flow.

Hegemony and Transnational Practices of Nigerian-Yorubas in Toronto. Charles Adeyanju – 2004

This study was designed to address the process in which transnational practices continue to sustain the existing unequal social relations at global and local levels. It is a case study

of Nigerian-Yoruba transnationals and their portrayal of how the struggles of immigrants inadvertently accentuate inequalities based on class, race, and gender. The author uses Gramsci's notion of hegemony as his epistemological base to sustain his observations. He argues that Nigerian-Yoruba transmigrants are conscious agents whose responses are in connection with how they understand their social positions in relation to their external material reality. He states that the transnational practices of the Nigerian-Yorubas legitimize the hegemonic construction of Canada as a 'white country' and that transnationally-induced hegemony holds firm when immigrants valorize their social standings within the Yoruba community and in the local Toronto area and Yorubaland, Nigeria.

The study is based on data gathered from an 8-month ethnographic fieldwork project conducted from May, 1999 to December 1999 among the Yoruba in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Qualitative research methods including participant observation and unstructured and semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data. Fifty subjects between the ages of 18 and 60, and one 78-year old man, a number made up of 33 adult males and seventeen adult females were interviewed. Seven subjects, five men and two women were selected for in-depth unstructured interviews that lasted from one to three and a half hours. Six community association leaders took part in semi-structured interviews that lasted one and a half to two hours each. A snowballing sampling method was used, with initial contacts made through a friend or a leader in the community. Participant observation by the author helped the snowballing of the sample as more people became interested in becoming study subjects. The participant observation events included summer picnics, *ere ibile* or traditional dances, Yoruba *aladuras* or indigenized

Christian church Sunday services, Yoruba Muslim Sunday *asalat*/prayer meetings, and *iwuye* or chieftaincy ceremony, and association meetings. A special consideration regarding the sample was its representativeness, as much as possible, of the diverse social strata in the community. There were small business owners, working class/blue collar persons, doctor, management consultant, musician, insurance broker, lawyer, and other white collar professional persons. There were also students, priests, refugees and refugee claimants, permanent residents, Canadian citizens, traders, unemployed persons, and the so-called *omo olodu*/fraudsters. The author acknowledged the limitations of his non-random sample regarding generalizability and defends qualitative methodologies as more interactive and data-rich.

Immigrant Youth Project – Stepick and Stepick, (in Foner 2003)

This project began in 1989 as research among Haitian high school students, but later expanded to include the other immigrant and native minority youth groups in Miami, Florida. It grew out of twenty years of fieldwork in Miami among various immigrant and non-immigrant communities. A longitudinal qualitative project with the title "The Academic Orientation of Immigrant and Native Minorities", was started in 1995, in four high schools of the Miami Dade public high school system.

The research study started with a sample of 300 students who were newly entering high school. They consisted of Haitians, English-speaking West Indians, Nicaraguans, Cubans, Mexicans, and African Americans, some of whom were documented, and others, undocumented. Participant observation was done, with the authors sitting in classrooms or just "hanging out" with the students between classes and

after school. Students were interviewed and so were teachers, counselors, administrators and parents. The quantitative method of survey research and the qualitative method of participant observation were combined because the authors believed in their complementarity.

7. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND APPROACH OF THIS STUDY

Cross-border processes and relationships, and the flows of people, ideas, artifacts, and capital across the territorial borders of states have led anthropologists in the direction of transnationalism as an approach to the study of migration. (Schiller, in Foner, 2003: 100) Migrant interconnections across state borders have intensified as global interconnections have picked up speed and have become more complex. Anthropology has responded to these global trends with the separation of transnational migration from other forms of transnational connections. Appadurai (1996) conceptualized this separation more succinctly in his proposal of an elementary framework for exploring such disjunctures as can be illustrated by the relationships among five dimensions of global cultural flows: ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes.

Schiller and her colleagues (1994, 1992) suggested the term 'social field' to facilitate the conceptualization and analysis of the multiple transborder relationships within which 'transmigrants' live their daily lives. Vertovec, (2001) locates this concept retrospectively in a rarely cited theoretical pedigree of the Manchester School of Anthropology, and brings back Mitchell's (1966) suggestion that a social field may be thought of as a series of inter-connecting relationships all of which in some way influence the other. In Mitchell's thinking, each field is a segment of the social system which may be isolated in terms of the interdependency of the relationships and the activities of the people involved in it. Schiller explains (Foner, 2003) that this approach enables them to investigate the ways in which transmigrants become part of the fabric of daily life in more than one state, simultaneously participating in the social, cultural, economic,

religious, or political activities in more than one locality. (p. 107) The concept of social fields describes observable social relationships and transactions, and the intricacies of power interplays, social expectations, cultural values, and human interaction shaped by more than one social economic, and political system. Therefore, for any aspect of immigrant life under close scrutiny, there are interconnections that must be examined so that the study can paint a more complete picture, while laying solid foundations for future inquiry.

Anthropologists defend their traditional research approach of ethnographies as powerful enough to rein in the multiple extensions of transnational immigrant living. (Bourgois, 2003, Brown, 2005, Margolis, 1994, Schiller, in Foner, ed. 2003). Among the criticism of this approach to the study of transmigrants is the claim by Guarnitzo, Portes, and Haller (2002:2) that the empirical base of ethnographic studies relies on case studies, which according to them sample only on the dependent variables and exclude those who do not take part in the activities under study. While this criticism is vigorously disputed by Schiller (Foner, 2003: 109), additionally, its broad strokes cannot sufficiently include the dynamics of transnational migration. In the present study of social organizations as expressions of agency among sub-Saharan African immigrants in Atlanta, the parameters of the study cannot provide for a boost to the validity of the data, or their generalizability, by systematically including those immigrants who do not participate in social organizations, or social organizations that are formed by non-immigrants. The research question of this study does not address why some immigrants do not participate in social organizations nor does it seek to explain any consequences of their non-participation in social organizations. The thrust of the study is the search of an overlap between structural

and experiential problems confronted by the immigrant study population, and the purposes, plans, and activities contained in the social organizations they court or join. Not all aspects of transnational living can be beneficially subjected to such modernist empirical rigors of probability sampling and a sanitized delimitation of dependent and independent variables. The complexities of transnational living portray an ever-changing world that cannot be confined or contained in empirical prisons or conceptual shoeboxes.

The design of this research study took into consideration the reductionist criticisms of ethnographies as anecdotal. (Kivisto 2001, Portes, Guarnizo, and Landholt (1999:218-219). Schiller, (Foner, 2003) responded to these criticisms by highlighting the contingencies presented by the phenomenon of transnationalism, and the peculiarities of theory-building it demands. The methodological focus, she suggests, should be guided by the type of questions that would maximize the generation of the needed data, Therefore, a survey approach to the study of transnational migration, for example, should not be viewed as the same as a survey approach to the study of domestic violence. That they are both surveys does not homogenize such methodological details as the identification and place of the dependent variable in the study. The paucity and fogginess of the knowledge in anthropology of African immigrants and the agencies they may choose to exercise within certain contexts dictates that the main goal of the study be the robustness of the data collected, and their enhanced heuristic value. The methodological triangulation described above responds to that exigency.

The call for a conceptual cross-fertilization in the study of transnational migration (Vertovec, 2001) is the culmination of the argument that there are many kinds of transnational activity today, and many rich areas of social scientific inquiry surrounding

them. Vertovec explicates his call for a truce on methodological protectionism by further suggesting that each transnational field of study, whatever its focus, shares a kind of common goal, which is to look empirically at, and to analyze, transnational activities and social forms along with the political and economic factors that condition their creation and reproduction. The concept of transnational social fields lends support to the existence of possible benefits from conceptual cross-fertilization, in the efforts of the intellectual community to contain the unwieldy manifestation of accelerating global flows. Such an approach has the potential to liberate the process of inquiry by unshackling it from theoretical and methodological parochialisms. In this study, some concepts, such as agency find more vigorous expression in sociology, and others, such as identity, benefit from insights from psychology. It would be erroneous to assume that any one field possesses all the conceptual foundations necessary for unraveling the intricacies of human phenomena. Transnational migration is uniquely very broad in the concepts it subsumes. The transnational social fields approach, with social relations as its bastion, manifests the breadth of this subject, and suggests how it must be studied.

In response to critics of anthropology's methodological preferences in the study of transnational migration, Schiller (Foner, 2003:116) juxtaposes ethnography and social survey so as to elucidate how ethnography does what a survey cannot do. At the center of her comparisons are the differences between observed behavior and verbal reports, how predefined choices (in surveys) shape and distort one's responses, and may fail to capture behaviors recalled after the survey. She ultimately reconciles the two approaches by expressing their complementariness. Having secured the defense of anthropology's methodological stronghold, participant observation, she goes on to conclude that

ethnography cannot rely only on participant observation, but must include ethnographic interviews and surveys.

This study includes interviews and surveys but does not incorporate the extended time periods of classic ethnographies. The data collection period was seven weeks. This relatively short period, in light of ethnographies that are typically conducted over extended periods of time, can be justified by considerations of the nature of the transnational phenomena under study: social organizations, their objectives and agendas, and how these may overlap with the most important problems experienced by Atlanta African immigrants. The study's interest, therefore, is a snapshot not a process. As such, it helps to establish foundational knowledge that may inform other inquiries of transnational social organizations or other transnational phenomena that may choose to focus on phenomena that are processes.

8. THE STUDY, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AND DESIGN

This is an exploratory study of the agency potentials and implications of social organizations formed, supported, or desired by sub-Saharan African immigrants in the Atlanta metropolitan area. The primary goal of the study is to find out to what extent social organizations represent opportunity structures, mobilizing structures, or an enhancement of opportunities for pooling resources toward the creation of instrumental transnational repertoires. The focus is on what the social organizations formed by this immigrant group reveal about the dynamics of their integration into a new society, and how the group responds to the challenges they confront in the United States. The following three primary questions are addressed by the study: (1) What structural or experiential constraints do African immigrants in the Atlanta metropolitan area identify the most as pertinent to the fulfillment of their goals and expectations, or influential to the outcomes of their struggles? (2) In what types of social organizations do they invest their resources, or would they like to invest their resources? (3) To what extent do the social organizations that interest them move them toward their goals, and how do these organizations address or alleviate the constraints or problems they experience the most?

The research design is a combination of paper questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews. The survey questionnaires were completed by the respondents and returned on the spot, or they received them in the mail and mailed them back in stamped addressed envelopes. My own self-reflexivity as a native anthropologist conducting the research makes my lived experience a source of data in the study. This multi-pronged approach to the generation of data is what Denzin (1978) called methodological triangulation. As a heuristic tool in this exploratory study, methodological triangulation

has the great potential for bringing to light many unexplored and unknown directions and impetuses for agency among the population of sub-Saharan African immigrants anywhere, and in the Atlanta area. It also optimizes the capacity of this knowledge production exercise to capture the complexities of transnational living and the multiple relationships that determine its scope and ramifications.

The survey

The surveys were conducted between April 6, 2006, and May 30, 2006. The sample was not generated from a systematic sampling frame because none was known to exist at the time of the survey for African immigrants in the Atlanta metropolitan area. To curtail the probability of skewedness in the reponses, about 80% of the survey questionnaires were distributed to clients at African grocery stores, a church, and a restaurant. All these locations were equally accessible to everyone, and African immigrants of all social statuses and nationalities frequented these locations. A few other questionnaires were distributed to volunteers at a social organization meeting of Ghanaians to increase the pool of respondents from that national group. Efforts were made to identify gathering locations for Africans of specific nationalities, in addition to places in the community that attracted African immigrants of different nationalities. For example, Kenyans frequented a Kenyan-owned butcher and grocery store in Marietta, especially on Saturdays. I was informed that that was a day when it was most likely that a good mix of people were not at work, and would come out to buy food. This tip was given by the owner of the business.

H. Russell Bernard (2000) suggests that nonrandom samples of respondents yield richer data if the purpose of the research is to know about the lived experience of individuals. (p.192) This, he argues, is because choosing study subjects this way best assures obtaining specific information about their lives, something they are better equipped to offer than anyone else. Randomness, in this case would presume that any African immigrant picked would have the same social reality as the next one around the corner. Migration experiences are not entirely homogeneous for African immigrants, and there are regional specificities and differences. Migrants from the northern or northeastern part of Africa, such as Ethiopia, Erithrea, Sudan, and Somalia are more likely to be refugees because of years of political strife in their region, and the involvement of the United States in alleviating the resultant human fiasco. Their immigration experiences and the dynamics of their adjustment efforts are bound to be defined by the involvement of the state, which, to a great extent is a mediator with significant impact on the experiential outcomes of their stay in the United States. Foner (2003) acknowledges the distinction often implied in general parlance between an immigrant, that is someone who is legally admitted to the United States with an immigrant visa for permanent resident status, as opposed to refugees, for example, who enter under different provisions. (p. 16) Though she chooses to ignore this difference in her discussions of transnational migration, its importance is recognized by the research questions of this study. The inclusion of refugees in this study, because of their special status with the state would not mirror the circumstances of voluntary immigrants and would confound the data.

Each respondent was given the questionnaire after he or she confirmed that they were an African immigrant living in the Atlanta area. Their specific country of origin was also confirmed verbally, to ensure that they were of sub-Saharan origin. Not all African immigrants agreed to do the survey. Those who accepted a questionnaire completed it on the spot. The completion time ranged from 10 to 15 minutes. Ten questionnaires were mailed to respondents with a stamped and addressed return envelope. Nine out of the ten mailed survey questionnaires were returned. An approximate count of questionnaire respondents was kept and monitored so as to maintain a close reflection of Census 2000 estimates of African immigrants in Atlanta.

The survey questions (see Appendix)

This study seeks to find any overlap between the structural realities sub-Saharan Africans contend with in the United States, and the agency that is represented by their social organizing, for addressing or containing those realities. Voluntary social organizations are the main focus of the study, and the impetuses of their formation are presumed to exemplify the observation of Alexis de Tocqueville in 1831 that 'in no country in the world has the principle of association been more successfully used…than in America (1954: 1, 198). This suggests, then, that associations are typically successfully *used* in America by those who form them or participate in them, to accomplish something of value. Alexis de Tocqueville's statement was evoked as the centerpiece in Moya's (2005) analysis of the impetus and origins of associations among immigrants. Noting that the similarity between the associational practices of immigrants in the same country is indeed striking, Moya suggests from the evidence he examined

that “the host environment acted as a homogenizing steamroller.” In the case of this study, American society, therefore, represents a repertoire of enabling or constraining factors that impact the lives of immigrants, defining and prescribing their agentic activities. The design of this study of African immigrants, therefore, views as paramount, the role that immigrants’ perceptions and assessment of their social context must play in determining any instrumentalities their social organizations might hold for them.

After the questions aimed at obtaining demographic profiles of the respondents, the first survey question (#7) is comprised of ten items that attempt to capture those elements in the immigrant social environment that are identified by them as problems or impediments to their adaptation efforts. These elements are roughly categorized as structural or experiential by nature and are conceptualized as differentially imposed by state institutions and their policies, host society attitudes toward immigrants, market and economic factors, cultural and identity issues, and transnational connectivities. The last of this set of questions explicitly taps the respondents’ assessment of their own capability for agency.

In the next question (#8), the respondent is asked to review and refine his or her three choices from the preceding question and select a single problem out of these three that is most important to them. This study expects that this singular item would have significant representation in the objectives of the social organizations. Following this one-item response, the next question (#9) has a set of seven items representing possible organizations that may exist in the social spaces of the immigrants, and that the immigrants may be aware of. The set of items in this question portray social organizations that relate to or express structural realities, spiritual interests, cultural and

identity proclivities, and economic interests. They also reflect, at least partially, the underlying logic of Moya's typology of immigrant organization categories: secret societies, rotating credit associations, mutual aid societies, religious associations, hometown associations, and political groups. The same seven types of organizations are presented in the set of items in the next two (#10 and #11) questions which seek to identify the type of organizations that attract the interest, support, or participation of this group of African immigrants. The study expects that responses to the questions described thus far should begin to paint a theoretical picture of the factors that determine African immigrants' formal sociability, and indirectly reveal their agentic proclivities.

The last two questions of the survey (#12 and #13) are intended to explore perceptions of imposed identity, and the potential for panethnic collaboration. As in the case of Asian Americans (Espiritu, 1992), panethnic agency was stimulated and propelled into a now historic reality by externally imposed identity, when the group 'Asian" was created by the United States OMB Directive 15 in 1977. (Susser and Patterson, 2001). . The question about the chances for panethnic collaboration among people of the African diaspora has been raised. Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Blanc (1994) suggested that Caribbean peoples and Africans try to avoid U.S. practices of racialization by using strong national origin identities. In so doing, these groups also avoid panethnicity in their efforts to avoid being racialized as American blacks. This state of identity contentions among people of the African diaspora indicate that transnational ties pose significant challenges for panethnic collective consciousness. One item that was reiterated on each of the immediate three preceding questions (9, 10, and 11) query these immigrants' attitudes toward organizations that "connect Africans with other blacks," and set the stage

for the two final questions testing collective identity perceptions and panethnicity potentials.

9. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE SURVEY DATA

The survey questionnaires were assigned a number as they were completed and returned. The responses were tallied for each of the items that were components of the questions by a simple frequency count and rearranged in a descending order, from the items that were selected the most to those that were the least selected. The following data are the result of the frequency tallies of the demographics of the sample and the tallies for their responses to the survey questionnaire items.

Demographic profile of the survey sample

Gender

Male	66
Female	47
Missing value	3

Age

18 to 25	10
26 to 35	34
36 to 45	39
46 to 55	26
56 to 65	4
Missing value	3

Countries of origin (+/- 3)

Nigeria	37
Ghana	30
Cameroon	20
Kenya	16
Liberia	7
Burkina Faso	3
Cote D'Ivoire	1
Congo	1
Uganda	1

Highest Education Level Achieved

Bachelor's Degree/Four-Year College	58
Master's Degree	25
Associate Degree/Two-Year College	15
Professional Degree (e.g. Pharm D, M.D.)	7
High School or Equivalent	5
Ph.D.	4
Missing value	2

Type of Employment

Self Employed	26
Medical/Health	23
Technical	21
Clerical	17
Retail/Sales	11
Service	11
Academic	5
Domestic	1
Missing value	6

Analysis of respondent demographics

The conceivable significance of the 'bulge' in the age profile of the respondents (between 26 and 55, with the largest number of the respondents belonging to the 36 – 45 age category) brings attention to the generational issues in the study of transnational migration. Smith and Guarnizo (1998) offer questions that need to be addressed and answered on the subject of transnationalism, through a closer examination and analysis of the age profiles of immigrants. Among these are the fundamental contentions about the newness of transnationalism, and questions about whether or not migrants' children will

pursue transnational lives. (p.84) These authors acknowledge the difficulty and cost in attempting to answer these questions which may demand longitudinal studies.

The age of the sample in this study invites an analytical consideration of differences in social organization dynamics that may be explained by the social context of each generation and contingent agency differences and impetuses. Possible reasons for the future importance of such research are suggested by psychological analyses of the unfolding identity of African immigrants. In a study of thirteen first and second generation African immigrants from Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Uganda, during the years 1977 to 1992, Mary Ann Watson suggests that ethnic identity is modified by life events, both positive and negative. She views this process as partially chronological and notes its similarity to acculturation, the manner in which ethnic identity changes with contact with another group or groups. She also suggests that the importance of an individual's identity and self esteem, and a group's collective identity and self-esteem has a major impact on the broader political nature of a group. Watson further argues that the development of ethnic identity is an age-related progression in the ability to perceive, process, and integrate or interpret racial or ethnic stimuli that lead to the establishment of ethnic identity. Concerns about raising their children in the African culture rank very high among the most important problems as perceived by the African immigrants in the present study. It will be very informative for transnationalism theory to observe generational changes among this population several years into the future.

Educational attainment

The education level of this sample reflects the documented general characteristics of African immigrants in the United States. United States Census 2000 analyses show African immigrants to have the highest educational levels among all immigrants to the United States. A study of African immigrants in Philadelphia, *Extended Lives*, by Leigh Swigart also reiterates this characteristic. The study adds that the African immigrants have an average over 3 years of education and over half are college educated. Based on another survey data, Arthur (2000) describes education levels among African immigrants as a product of the emphasis that African culture attaches to education in addition to other factors. (p. 104) Selassie (1998) also observes that "[m]ost African immigrants in Washington are not "the huddled masses" and "wretched refuse" of Emma Lazarus's poem inscribed on the Statue of Liberty. They are primarily young and comparatively well-educated men and women, many of whom have come to the United States with professional skills and entrepreneurial drive." The educational levels of the survey sample in this study closely reflect these facts.

Of the 115 respondents in the survey, 59 or 51% have a Bachelor's degree, 25 or 22% have a Master's degree, 15 or 13% have an Associate degree or its equivalent, 7 or 6% have a professional degree such as M.D., Pharm, D, or J.D, there were four Ph.D.s and only 5 respondents had a high school level education. The Migration Information Source, January 2006, reports that nearly 9 in every 10 African born had a high school or higher degree, and more than 2 in every 5 of the African born had a college education. These statistics should further separate African immigrants from the common perception by the American public, of immigrants as intellectually inferior and unskilled.

The top 3 problems

Immigration separates my family	46
Insufficient income to meet needs	43
Hard to raise children in African culture	42
Life is torn between origin and U.S.	40
U.S. government not care about Africans	30
No time to socialize within my culture	30
Being black is a big problem	28
Difficult to hold on to/express my culture	26
Obstacles prevent improving life	25
Powerless to make life better	14
Missing value	2

Of 10 possible problems generated from the literature on social and structural challenges faced by African immigrants (Arthur, 2000, Selassie, 1998, Takougang 1995 and 2005, Diouf, 2003), separation of family by immigration laws was the most selected problem (46 respondents) in this study. This was closely followed by insufficient income (44 respondents), and difficulties with raising children in the African culture (43 respondents). Life torn between native country and the United States (40 respondents) is a close fourth and is included in this analysis because it is operationalized to be an index of transnational living.

Constraints posed by immigration laws indirectly contribute to the aforementioned difficulties (Selassie, 1998) with correct reporting of African immigrant demographics. Overstaying visas by the African immigrants in Selassie's study also sheds light on the state as a suprastructure with overarching deterministic impact on the lives of immigrants. It is the laws enacted by the state that determine who is allowed to enter, who stays, and what opportunities are within reach for those who stay. Those

immigrants who overstay their visas are forced into an illegal status which makes it more difficult if not impossible to secure meaningful employment. It also makes it more difficult or impossible for them to apply for and secure visas for family members they are likely to have left behind in Africa. Since this study does not differentiate among the immigration statutes, and has not collected data on the immigration statuses of respondents, it is impossible to tell which immigrants are most affected by which immigration statutes, and which are most likely to suffer the family separations caused by immigration laws. It is also probable that immigrants with legal statuses are affected by immigration laws, and have also suffered family separations. No statistics are available on visa denials and reasons for denial at U.S consulates in Africa nations at the time of this study. However, there are ubiquitous woeful tales of publicly exhibited emotional pain by people seeking to join their families but were denied visas at U.S consulates in Africa. I, too, and many people that I know have been affected by instances of unexplained visa denials to family members at the United States consulates in Africa.

The impact of immigration laws, in addition to keeping families apart, has had significant effect on the ability of some immigrants to secure employment at, or close to, their education credential levels. Though no such studies have been conducted for Atlanta African immigrants, other studies portray African immigrants as generally underemployed. Selassie (1996) in explaining the implications of widespread underemployment among recent African immigrants in the Washington D.C. area, pointed out that having job security and a regular paycheck may not be enough if their professional aspirations cannot be realized. Observations from other sources cited by Selassie include those made by a Nigerian filmmaker who came to D.C. in the 1980s, and

policy analysts studying the results of the 1990 U.S. census. The Nigerian filmmaker stated that the majority of Nigerian cab drivers have M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. The policy analysts provide even more details on this situation, and report that new immigrants work predominantly in low-wage service jobs, regardless of their educational backgrounds. These same reports showed that although immigrants composed 6 percent of the area's lawyers and 11 percent of its managers and professionals overall, the overwhelming majority of the region's household workers were immigrants and 50 percent of the area's parking-lot attendants, taxicab drivers, and busboys were foreign-born. (Spayd, 1993) These two sources put together sufficiently corroborate the results of the survey in this study which name 'insufficient income' second of the top three problems experienced by Atlanta African immigrants. The Migration Information Source, January 2006, reports that 20% of African immigrants live in poverty. It is possible that this number is boosted by the number of less educated and less skilled refugees from Somalia and Sudan, for example, but juxtaposing the generally high credentials and skill levels of African immigrants and the high poverty rate of the same population portrays a noteworthy paradox in the dynamics of transnational migration.

'Hard to raise my children in the African culture' (at 43 respondents) was the third of the top three problems identified by the Atlanta African immigrants, only one point behind insufficient income concerns. This expressed concern among Atlanta African immigrants is strongly reflective of the paramount importance African immigrants in general place on maintaining ethnic identities. (Selassie, 1996) In the United States, both parents and their youngsters experience unfamiliar constraints on their lifestyles and expressions of their cultural norms and values. Diouf (2001) provides

a detailed analysis of these constraints. She states that children of African immigrants are restricted by their parents who feel that "the world outside their door is dangerous and violent, with risky temptations." Diouf observed in her study that the absence of the extended family, which in Africa is commonly an intermediary and a referee in case of conflict, has led the expatriates to increasingly turn to religious and community associations to act as advisors, and to send their children back home when all else fails. In addition to the push toward African cultural values exerted by their parents, children of African immigrants are exposed to potent external pressure, a pull away from African cultural values and attendant mannerisms and behavior. The external pressure is exerted mainly by their peers who often ridicule them for their foreign manners, their politeness toward teachers and elders, their accent, and sometimes the darkness of their skin. According to Diouf, the African youngsters respond by hiding their African ways to avoid being singled out, and to adopt the ways of their American peers.(p. 13) An African from Charlotte, North Carolina, in Diouf's study expressed her concerns that "the values we brought from Africa are our anchor of survivability in America. Our kinds who are copying the fads of the urban culture, especially their choice of music and clothes, are going to estrange themselves from us, their family, as well as the rest of America." (p.13)

Arthur (2000) observes from his survey of African immigrants, that African parents stress to their children the importance of education, social responsibility, respect for authority, hard work, and service. In their efforts to instill these traditional values in their youngsters, "African immigrant parents recognize potential problems in replicating African-based expectations in the United States. They can no longer rely on a collective system of socialization and social control." (p. 113) The explanation for the protective

efforts of African immigrant parents to preserve their cultural identities and values, and steer the second generation in that direction, according to Arthur, is that the parents believe that in an increasingly diverse society like America, the adoption of an African ethnic role is vital for the cultural survival of their children. These parents have the primary goal of preserving African institutions of kinship and ethnic bonds among future generations while at the same time reinforcing the culture upon which these institutions and bonds rest. (pp. 113 – 114) The generational dynamics are underscored by Portes and Rumbaut (1990: 183), who support the assimilationist suggestion that the dual frame of reference of the first generation died with it, and that the withering away of transnational ties, language, and most cultural practices and values brought by immigrants from the old country was almost completed by the third generation. Approximately 90% of the survey respondents in this study are predominantly first generation African immigrants. If the generation dynamics as observed in anthropological theory is borne out, then the concerns expressed by the survey respondents in the present study are validated.

Concerns about raising children in the African culture seem to pervade the African immigrant population. The studies examining this tendency have not specified the national origins of the African immigrants they studied. The Atlanta African immigrants have significantly expressed similar concerns. Based on the apparent commonality of these concerns among African immigrants, a picture of homogeneity of values begins to emerge. This raises questions about the importance of potential contributions of nascent theories of African philosophy to the understanding of transnationalism as it applies to African immigrants. The suggestions of homogeneity of

values among members of specific immigrant populations, as shown in this study and others mentioned above, should lend support to the relevance of a generally overlooked role of primordial cultures and identities in the adjustment or adaptation challenges faced by specific immigrant populations.

A life 'torn between the native country and the United States' was a close fourth to concerns about raising children in the African culture. With only a difference of three respondents (40, or 35% or the survey respondents), it deserves special attention in this study because this item was intended to indicate the presence of challenges imposed by transnational living on the Atlanta African immigrants. Anthropological theory has pointed out that not all immigrants are transnationals, or are subjected to the ethos of transnational living. In Foner (2003), Glick-Schiller identified two waves of recent scholarship on transnational migration. The first wave of research aimed at identifying and separating specific migrant experience that could be called "transnational migration" and has social relations for its foundation. This separation, she suggested, made visible the multiple, cross-border relationships of many migrants (p. 100), and therefore made the term "transmigrants" more preferable so as to emphasize the "across borders" aspect of the immigrants' lives. Mahler discusses approaches to defining the field of transnational studies to make it more manageable in size and focus. She suggests a demarcation that isolates it as the study of migrants who retain ties to their homeland. (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998: 73) The need for this demarcation implies that there are migrants who do not retain ties to their homeland, and that transnational studies do not focus on those migrants.

Atlanta African immigrants in this study significantly (at 35%) perceive their lives as being torn between their native country and the United States. Diouf (2001) provides the details of such ties, and puts the total amount sent home in 1999, by Nigerians from all over the world, at $1.3 billion, and the amount from all African émigré s from all over the world at $3 billion annually through official channels, and another $3 billion through informal channels. (p. 14) A Ghanaian nurse in Diouf's study expressed her personal connections and obligations to extended family across borders, thus: "The main reason I came here was to support my family. I send $250 every month, which is more than I used to make. I am nothing without my family and I would never think of not providing for them, even when it gets difficult here."

Other transnational connections discussed in Diouf's study include businesses established by the African émigrés in their hometown, and run by relatives. Many pay tuition for siblings and extended family members, and their costs for maintaining communication with family members run into millions of dollars. The study also observed that in Senegal, more than 10,000 public telephone centers, privately owned, sometimes by expatriates or their families employ more than 15,000 people. Apraku (1991) corroborates these connections to the native society. In his study, only 10 percent of the African immigrants had never been back to visit their home countries since their emigration. For 55 percent of the respondents, a trip home once or more every one to three years was the norm, while 19 percent visit home once or more per year. Only 12 percent of the respondents do not make any remittances to their immediate families, other relatives, or friends. (pp. 4 – 5) This study also found that for 37 percent of respondents, annual remittances range between $1,500 and $3,000 for the support of family and

friends, and another 20 percent remit from $3,500 to over $10,000 also for the support of their families and friends. In addition to remittances, there were also business investments among the respondents.

Current practices by groups and associations in the sending countries tend to bolster transnational living and connectivities. Diouf observed that in many countries, neighborhood or town associations state their development needs and call on associations of emigrant sons and daughters to contribute specific amounts to that project. The émigrés also were observed to be strongly involved in social and political developments. Nigerians based in the United States were said to have participated in party primaries in Nigeria, as candidates or financial supporters. Senegalese citizens in Los Angeles and New York vote in presidential elections at home.

Reasons for feeling "torn" between their native societies and the United States abound in studies of African immigrants. The present study, therefore, confirms a widespread phenomenon while also placing it in the context of other issues and concerns expressed by these immigrants. But while it seems to have considerable impact on the "two worlds" of African immigrants, transnational connections ranked a much lower sixth place when the respondents were asked to single out a problem that was most important to them. Immigration problems, income concerns, and instilling African cultural values in their children held steady at their previous first, second, and third, places, while transnational living dropped much lower. While there were no other surprises in the responses to this item, several explanations could be ventured for the drop of transnational living or challenges from fourth to sixth place. One of the reasons, again, may be found in emerging theories in African philosophy. The central concept of

communitarianism or connectedness of people to one another characterizes philosophical theorizing on African social and interpersonal relations. It is highly probable that African immigrants may acknowledge the strains imposed by living in “two worlds” but deemphasize it as a problem. Resources expended for the benefit of family, friends and community, may indeed be seen as resources expended on the self, for one’s own benefit. This is tempting as another index of homogeneity for the African immigrants. However, it would be necessary to find out why the nine respondents saw it as their top problem, and to find out what aspects of their “torn life” were most responsible for making it problematic.

Another explanation for the low placing of transnational challenges may be found in an item included in that same set of possible problems, intended to capture any feelings of powerlessness, or impossibilities of agency. That item was the only one with zero response. The immigrants feel they can handle the transnational challenges. The Ghanaian nurse mentioned earlier in Diouf’s study captures that in her claim that she could not bear the idea of not supporting her family back home even when times were tough in the United States. Her sentiments about her transnational obligations also illustrate the philosophy of connectedness, called “ubuntu” in Zulu, and variously expressed by African philosophers who will be discussed in greater detail below.

The most important problem

Immigration laws separate family	24
Hard to raise children in African culture	22
Insufficient income to meet needs	14
No time to socialize within culture	10
Life is torn between origin and U.S.	9
Being black is a big problem	6

Obstacles prevent improving life	6
U.S. government not care about Africans	6
Difficult to hold on/express my culture	3
Powerless to make life better	0
Missing value	15

When asked to select the one problem that was most important to them, the Atlanta African immigrants maintained the same choices as when asked to select the top three problems. The top three problems: immigration laws, problems with raising children in the African culture, and insufficient income, were again the most selected when it came to the one most important problem. Immigration laws and concerns with raising children in the African culture were a virtual tie, bumping income concerns to a distant third place. The possibility of building networks that extend beyond their communities will be determined to a great extent on political instrumentalities attached by the African immigrants to such networks. Conceivably, it is political networking that can bring the African immigrants and their social organizations closer to knowledge about state policies in matters that concern them and their families. This is perhaps where they need African Americans.

While African immigrants are yet to integrate sufficiently in American society to build the networks and connections that are instrumental to goal achievement, they also must contend with primordial loyalties which they express through their children to a great extent. Lack of political savvy or clout that would bring these immigrants and their organizations closer to the political machines that hold determinist sway over their family connections

The social organizations they know about

People from own town, tribe, country	62
Religious/spiritual	49
Promoting/observing African culture	45
Business/professional networking	42
Addressing immigration problems	27
Connecting Africans with other blacks	19
Promoting awareness of rights	14
OTHER (unspecified)	6
None	4
Missing value	2

Atlanta African immigrants in this study know more of what Moya (2005) called hometown associations (55%) than any other. This was followed by religious or spiritual organizations (at 43%), and organizations promoting or observing African culture (at 40%). Knowledge about social organizations that exist within the social spaces of the immigrants can indicate either the visibility or prominence of that organization, or the extent to which they are sensitized to social organization, or to formal sociability, as Moya (2005) characterized it, or both.

Among the types of organizations in this survey, the hometown organization has a sizeable lead in prominence over the other types of organizations. Based on scholarly literature, this should not be surprising. Foner (2003) states that ties to home communities were a prominent feature of the early, first-wave urban anthropology literature. (p. 10). Portes et al (2005) remark on the already established but also increasingly vital connections between people left behind at the homeland by immigrants, and the immigrants themselves at their new locales. In recalling this well-known fact, they state that “[a]ll over the hemisphere, countries and local communities that are sources of migrants to the developed world have come to rely on the solidarity of these persons and

on their sense of obligation with those left behind, not only for the survival of families but also for the implementation of a whole array of philanthropic and civic projects." They also reiterate the economic and developmental benefits of this connection, to the hometown, estimating its raw value as easily surpassing the foreign aid that these nations receive, and matching their hard currency earnings from exports.(p.4) Moya (2005) observes the omnipresence of hometown or locality-based associations that makes it seem as if they "embody a universal law and a primordial attachment to birthplace rather than, as the mantra goes, historically embedded social constructions." (p. 9) According to him, their "functional similarity reinforces the appearance of a universal quasi-natural(ised) process" as they predictably aim to preserve and promote connections with the area of origin, supporting all sorts of civic projects back home, especially the support of schools. Additionally, he noted that they were more likely to appear in large immigrant communities where arrivals from a variety of localities were numerous enough to make this type of organization viable. Diouf (2001) pointed out that these hometown organizations sometimes serve as surrogate families, as in situations where parents are overwhelmed with the challenges of steering their children in the direction of African values and norms. These observations facilitate the understanding of why Atlanta African immigrants overwhelmingly know more about organizations based on town, tribe, or country. At least, they indicated problems with raising their children in the African culture as one of their top three problems as they adjust to their new society. They know that the hometown organizations are among their best places to find that cultural compass.

Many urban areas in the United States, Atlanta most definitely included, are experiencing an explosion in the number of African religious institutions characterized by services conducted in an African language, the ubiquity of African traditional clothes (which people do not feel as free to wear to other social spaces), the use of African music, songs, and dance. Diouf (2001) attributes this phenomenon to the tendency for growing communities of African immigrants to seek a collective place of worship to serve their needs. She also acknowledges the role of religion as an essential part of most Africans' lives, a situation accentuated by migration, and which tends to touch upon aspects of social, familial, and cultural life. In New York City alone, she states, there were at least 110 such churches at the time of her study. (p. 15) According to Diouf, also, the churches formed by African immigrants, regardless of their denominations have begun to take on new roles in the U.S. to respond to the needs of African immigrants. Serving as orientation focal points for recent immigrants, conference halls, community and counseling centers, religious schools, temporary shelters, and social aid societies, and job referral centers, these churches also provide opportunities to socialize and discuss social and political developments at home. (Diouf 2001: 15) As instruments of cultural continuity, Diouf remarks that parents' concerns about inculcating traditional values to their children are to a great extent facilitated by the cultural environment created by the churches.

So important has religion become among African immigrants in the United States, that Jacob Olupona, a Yoruba Nigerian, and African religion scholar at University of California, Davis, has been given more than $500,000 by the Ford Foundation, to study, mainly, African immigrant religious communities in order to develop ethnographic and

historical pictures of their lives. His scholarly lens of religion will observe how immigrant identities and communities are shaped in a context of North American religious landscapes. Among the urban communities he is studying are Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. Olupona, himself, points out that Africans participate in a variety of religions, including Islam, evangelical Christianity and indigenous African religions. (Rockwell, 2003)

Machacek (2003) examines the degree to which new African immigrant communities identify with African Americans and African American culture, and the degree to which African immigrant religions are adopting the civic profile of African American churches. Among his conclusions from this study is the potential for forming of a pan-African identity within religious contexts. This observation includes the potential for collaboration between Africans and African Americans for the purose of mobilizing the collective resources of the fledgling pan-African churches.

Atlanta African immigrants, in this study, mirror a nationwide phenomenon that illuminates the religious and spiritual peculiarities of this population, and the place of religion in the study of transnational migration in anthropology generally, as well as among immigrants marked by historical postcolonial tensions. Considering the well-known place of religion and spirituality in the history of African-Americans in the United States, especially in the Civil Rights movement, religious and spiritual concerns among African immigrants have the potential of unraveling the complex social aspects of postcolonialism as it impacts identity construction.

‘Organizations promoting or observing African culture’, as an item in the survey, closely follows organizations that address religious or spiritual needs (at 46 or 40% of the

respondents). It is becoming evident from the literature that the promotion and observation of African culture are intricately bound with the hometown organizations and the religious and spiritual organizations. These organizations are venues for cultural expression, and for the expressions of shared identity. Another view of these connections are expressed by Moya (2005) who concludes from his review of scholarly literature, that the connection of religion to ethno-national identity represented the most important impetus for religious organization among immigrants. This view may not hold as strongly for African immigrants as it did for the European immigrant communities or nationalities he reviewed. For Africans, there are few and tenuous relationships between religion and ethno-national identity. Religion is not typically predictable for the African national groups. With the exception of the wide influence of Islam among mainly the northern African nations, there are no clear patterns of connections between religion and ethno-national identities among sub-Saharan African immigrants. Religions may impact cultural practices, but they do so broadly and across national lines.

Because of vestiges of colonialism, and the obliteration it effected on sub-Saharan African societies, sprinklings of Protestantism and Catholicism, as well as Islam, are found in pockets of populations scattered among sub-Saharan nations. Any statements about transnational implications of religious and spiritual organizations must therefore be made cautiously, especially when national identities are at issue. It is for this reason that Foner (2005) sounded a note of caution about broad generalizations from one immigrant group to another. She espouses a comparative approach to the study of transnational processes among immigrant groups because the experiences of each group may be more fully understood in the light of the experiences of others, in different locations or

different eras. (p. 3). This view helps to separate the African immigrants as products of their own history, from observations about other national groups.

The closeness of the total responses on 'organizations promoting business/professional networking' to the top three organizations in this survey question, (43 or 37% of the respondents), is noteworthy. The immigrants in this study have indicated income concerns as one of their top 3 problems. It is logical to conclude that the respondents feel that organizations promoting business/professional networking may help alleviate their income problems or concerns, possibly by making them more savvy about the business or professional culture of the United States. They are therefore very likely to be sensitive to the existence of such organizations. Arthur (2000) suggested that the strong intra-ethnic networks forged by the immigrants among themselves serve to impede social integration, leading to further isolation and disengagement from wider social discourse. (p. 87). Social networks that facilitate employment opportunities and self-development may therefore be obscured by the tendency for these African immigrants to maintain insular ethnic social networks.

Membership in organizations

Same tribe, town, country	44
Religious/spiritual	26
Promoting/observing African culture	22
Business/professional	20
Connecting Africans with other blacks	12
Promoting awareness of rights	6
Addressing immigration problems	3
OTHER (unspecified)	5
None	13
Missing value	11

The responses to the items listed under the question of which types of organizations the immigrants are members of, follow the same pattern as their responses to the questions assessing their sensitivity to the types of social organizations in their social spaces. Membership in organizations is highest for ‘organizations of people from (your) town, tribe, country’ (at 39% of respondents). It is followed very remotely by ‘organizations that address religious or spiritual issues’ (at 23% or respondents), and lastly, by ‘organizations promoting or observing African culture (at 20% of respondents). ‘Organizations promoting business/professional networking’ were also a very close fourth position (at 17%)

These results boost the validity of the explanations and trends that apply to responses to the survey questions preceding the organization membership question. The Atlanta African immigrants place the highest premium on hometown organizations because of their perceived obligation to their native communities, and because of the external pressures from the native communities on the expatriates for assistance with development projects. This high rate of membership in hometown organizations by African immigrants also reflects what Mayo observed as seemingly “an embodiment of a universal and primordial phenomenon.” (p. 10). Immigrants of other nationalities also showed the same attachments to communities of origin, but the African immigrants manifest a mix of factors worthy of further study because of the implications of their primordial connections for the development of the continent.

Organizations they would like to join or support

Business/professional networking	52
Connecting Africans with other blacks	41
Promoting/observing African culture	37
Promoting awareness of rights	26
Religious/spiritual	26
Addressing immigration problems	24
People from same town, tribe, country	19
OTHER (unspecified)	5
None	3
Missing value	5

The responses to this question reveal an entirely different trend from that shown by responses to membership in organizations and sensitivity to the existence of certain types of organizations. This question was designed to capture the interest of the immigrants in certain kinds of organizations, whether they know about one or not. Precisely, they were asked the question, "Which organization would you like to join/support if they existed?" The responses to this question show very high preference for organizations promoting business/professional networking (at 52 respondents or 45%). The next type of organization preferred are 'organizations connecting Africans with other blacks.' (at 41 respondents or 36%), and the third were 'organizations promoting or observing African culture'. These three types of organizations of highest preference were clearly distinguished from the other choices in this question. There was no close fourth organization in this category of responses.

The high preference for organizations promoting business/professional networking has two possible explanations. One is that the existing organizations do not provide satisfactory levels of this type of networking. The plausibility of this explanation is supported by the heavy emphasis placed on assistance to primordial communities,

possibly to the detriment of other social exigencies stemming the host country. It is possible, therefore, that personal development within the context of the host country, and the facilitation of integration into the host society, is being undermined by transnational ties. The other possible explanation for the high preference for organizations promoting business/professional networking is that African immigrants in this study perceive the potential instrumentality of these kinds of organizations, for their career and financial betterment in their new society. Their problems with underemployment and the concomitant income concerns may be perceived by the respondents as being caused by lack of socialization in the career and professional mores of the United States.

Expressed interest in ‘organizations connecting Africans with other blacks’, is emerging at the top 3 response preferences for the first time in the results of the survey. Similar to organizations promoting business/professional networking, this can be seen as indicative of an unmet need. The organizations they know about and desire to participate in are not presenting enough opportunities for collaboration with other blacks. It can also be interpreted as an indication of interest in exploring panethnic collaboration as a potential solution to their problems. The tensions in relationships between African immigrants and African Americans are well known and have been discussed above. It has also been suggested that the tendency to insulate themselves from non-Africans poses major integration obstacles and diminishes the chances for African immigrants to muster significant political clout.

In addition to self-imposed boundaries to social spaces, Arthur (2000) mentions the role of the perceptions immigrants may have about the United States. He suggests that the negotiation of a desired status depends on whether or not the immigrants view the

American society as a ‘closed’ or ‘open’ one. This perception would be based on the recognition that the immigrant status implies a limit to social, cultural, and economic participation, and on the recognition that people seek certain degrees of material comfort and economic prosperity for their advancement, empowerment, and general well-being. (p. 88) This negotiation of status, for the African immigrant, is occurring in a milieu where social values are different from what they were used to in Africa. Arthur argues that African immigrants seek a sense of status that is informed by the need to improve the lot of their family members at home. Therefore “[s]tatus fulfillment and role recognition are derived from the financial remittances that are sent home to family members.” (p. 88) Arthur concludes this argument by suggesting that when African immigrants are denied status in the affairs of the American society, they are compensated by the status that is derived from meeting culturally defined expectations.

If Arthur is right, then the desire expressed by the survey respondents to participate in or support organizations that connect African immigrants with other blacks suggests that the meeting of culturally defined expectations represents only partial fulfillment of the statuses they seek. It also suggests the possibility that African immigrants are starting to view themselves, no longer as sojourners, but as Americans emerging from the interplay of complex desires, expectations, and agencies. Their indication of their interest still in organizations promoting or observing African culture, illustrates the persistence of their primordial loyalties. This illustrates the transnational tensions that characterize the lives of African immigrants, in Atlanta, and possibly anywhere. It remains only to be seen what impact generational differences may have on these tensions, and which factor will prevail: the exigencies of the host society for status

acquisition, or the pull of the primordial community for an alternative source of status fulfillment.

'Black' or African? - Implications for Panethnicity

feelings about being regarded as a 'black'

Does not matter	74
Appropriate	24
Not appropriate	15
Missing value	2

potential benefits for panethnic collaboration

Yes	104
No	9
Missing value	2

The responses to the last two questions of the survey (#12, and #13) suggest that African immigrants do not attach much importance to whether or not they are called 'blacks'. Diouf (2001) suggests that they view the 'black' identity as reductionist. In this study, 74 respondents, or 64% feel that being called 'black' does not matter to them, a distant second place 24 respondents, or 21% feel that it is appropriate, while 16 respondents or 14% feel that it is not appropriate. Since the survey did not include more questions for an in-depth investigation of this sentiment and the perspectives surrounding it, any deductions made from the snapshot responses to the question of being called black can only be conjectural, and probably superficial. The responses seem to suggest, however, a downward trend of the need for African immigrants to dissociate themselves

from African Americans. It would be enlightening and interesting to explore further, the reasons for these changing dynamics.

The last question which hopes to capture inclinations toward panethnic collaboration among the respondents does not stop at the exploration of future agency potentials but seeks to lay foundations for the understanding of a possible morphogenesis of agency in transnational social fields. An astounding 105 respondents or 91% feel that they or their community can benefit in some way by collaborating with other people or communities known as ‘blacks’ in the U.S. Only 9 respondents or 8% do not see any instrumentality in such collaboration. These responses do not corroborate the suggestion by Basch et al (1994) that avoiding U.S. practices of racialization plays a role on the use of strong national origin identities by Caribbean peoples and Africans who avoid panethnicity in their desires to avoid racialization as American blacks. Instead, the results of this survey suggest that Atlanta African immigrants may not be inclined to avoid panethnicity. These findings point to a different future direction for Atlanta African immigrants’ social organizations that might entail breaking out of their old mold of insular relationships and reaching out to other American ‘blacks’. Panethnic collaboration, no doubt, is heavily favored, at least conceptually.

10. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE INTERVIEW DATA

This study includes a total of thirteen interviews, seven in-person, and six, by telephone. Some of the interviews were done at the home of the informant, and others at their workplace, or in transit. They were semi-structured interviews designed to gain in-depth information on the social organizations of different nationalities of African immigrants. They were also designed to provide more content to the survey responses to the questions on social organizations known to the immigrants, those of which the immigrants were members, and those they would support or join. The guiding interview questions (see Appendix***) sought to paint a picture of the current mission, accomplishments, future goals and plans, and the intra-organizational challenges or difficulties for African immigrant organizations in the Atlanta area. Members of the organizations who did not hold any positions were interviewed to complement the views of the organization's officers who were expected to provide more details about the mission of the organization and the challenges they experienced in running the organizations.

The aim of this study is to find out how much of the problems identified by the immigrants through their responses to the survey questions, are reflected in the mission, plans, and challenges of the organizations. The survey was planned to elicit answers that could provide knowledge about immigrant problems and concerns while the interviews were expected to provide knowledge about what the organizations are doing. Different questions were asked of the organization leaders and the members and to avoid a 'groupthink' dynamic and capture diversified perspectives, efforts were made to not interview the members recommended by the leaders. The interviews were done between April 17, 2006, and June 5, 2006.

The interview sample

I selected the nationalities to be interviewed based on their numerical superiority or prominence as I have observed it in the Atlanta area. This is a significant outcome of my self-reflexivity, and an advantage of a native anthropologist over a non-native anthropologist. Based on my prior socializing experiences and with basic knowledge of which nationalities were most visible and active, it was relatively easier to gauge the strength of their formal sociability. This informal knowledge was also aided by available census data on the nationalities that make up the Atlanta metropolitan area. Once social organizations within those nationalities were selected, a snowballing effect generated a pool of organizations to choose from, as well as members and officials of those organizations that would make good informants. The original leads also provided information on community events which I attended mainly for the purpose of locating and acquainting myself with the informants of the study.

Ultimately, the interview sample consisted of people who were interested in participating in the research and could make time for the interviews, not exactly the original profile sought. For example, I was planning to cover two Ghanaian community organizations, and two members from each organization. Because of the difficulties with finding informants who were willing to be interviewed and could make the time, only one Ghanaian organization was available, and the four members which was the quota I assigned to Ghana, originally, had to be selected from one organization. Table 1 is a summary of the type of social organizations in this study, their national origins, and the number of members interviewed in each organizations.

Table 1. Profile of the social organizations covered in the interviews

Cameroon:	1 local tribal – level organization (one member interviewed)
	1 national – level organization (one member interviewed)
Ghana:	1 national/multinational-level organization based in
	(4 members interviewed)
Kenya:	1 national-level sports organization (1 member interviewed)
	1 national-level organization (1 member interviewed)
Nigeria:	1 national-level organization (1 member interviewed)
	1 national-level women's organization (2 members interviewed)
	1 tribal-level organization (2 members interviewed)
Total number of organizations included in the interviews = 8	

Profile of interview subjects

Cameroonian male, 33 years-old, president of a tribal Cameroonian organization of about 10 members locally and 50 members nationally

Cameroonian female, 27 years old, president of local branch of a Cameroonian national-level organization

Ghanaian male, 47 years-old, president of a Ghanaian national/multinational-level organization based in the state of Georgia

Ghanaian female, 48 years old, treasurer of the same Ghanaian organization

Ghanaian male, 49 years-old, regular member of the same Ghanaian organization

Ghanaian male, 47 years-old, secretary of the same Ghanaian organization

Kenyan female, "pushing fifty"-years old, board member of a Kenyan national sports organization

Kenyan female, 34 years-old, president of national-level organization for all Kenyans

Nigerian male, 51 years-old, vice-president of a local branch of a nationwide tribal Nigerian organization

Nigerian female, 50 years-old, founder and current president of a local Nigerian women's organization

Nigerian female, Ph.D. 58 years-old, former president of the same local Nigerian women's organization

Nigerian male, Ph.D., 55 years-old, regular member of a local branch of national-level tribal organization

Nigerian male, Ph.D. 51 years-old, president of a "pan-tribal" alliance of Nigerian organizations and the managing director a local Nigerian investment group

Total interview subjects = 12

The interview data

The seven in-person interviews were electronically recorded and transcribed, and the telephone interviews were recorded manually. The text analysis method of grounded theory was used to identify categories and concepts that emerged from the text. The text of the interview transcript was analyzed and separated thematically with differentiated formatting. For example, transnational agency concepts were identified across the text for each of the organizations and then formatted with bold 16 point, and primordial loyalty themes were identified and formatted with 14 point bold and italicized. The concepts identified and differentially formatted were grouped and labeled according to their fit with predominant themes in transnational immigration theories and research. The loose text that did not fit the identified categories, were analyzed separately so as to identify any themes that were unique to any of the organizations in the sample. Table*** shows the social organizations whose members were interviewed, and the categories and themes that emerged from the interviews. The categories were: transnational agency, primordial loyalty, integration dynamics, generational issues, personal benefit, social

change. Table 2 is a summary of the response categories identified in the interview data from the different organizations.

Table 2. Organizations interviewed and response categories

Name of Organization	**Response Categories**						
	Transnational Agency	Primordial Loyalty	Integration Dynamics	Generational Issues	Personal Benefit	Organizing Problems	Social Change
Munyang Cameroon	YES		YES		YES	YES	
CAMSA Cameroon	YES	YES				YES	
Ghana Association	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Uhuru Golf Kenya	YES	YES				YES	
Kenya Professionals	YES	YES	YES			YES	
Nigerian Women	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Anambra Nigeria	YES	YES		YES	YES	YES	YES
Nigerian Alliance	YES	YES			YES	YES	YES

Definitions of interview response categories

Transnational living and agency: this term is intended to capture the bifocal, multifaceted, and multi-local nature of the lives of migrants whose everyday living, choices, expenditure of resources, and identities, are impacted upon by the multiple realities of more than one location which always includes their states of origin.

*Primordial loyalty***:** I define this term as the continued attachment of subjects who have moved away from their places or origin, to the values, culture, and social realities of that place of origin, and their continued commitment to its interests and challenges.

Integration dynamics: This term describes frictions, problems, or challenges that the immigrants in this study may face in the context of the American society, as they try to adapt to its newness, pressures, and demands.

Generational issues: These are concerns, aspirations, and perceived challenges that the immigrant organizations acknowledge, regarding the continuity of their cultural values, identity, and kinship ties, as these affect their own offsprings and the future generation in general.

Personal benefit: These are the perceived benefits or instrumentalities of belonging to an organization that the members identify as personally gratifying. These benefits come to the members directly or indirectly, and include material or intangible outcomes.

Organizing problems: This term denotes the intra-organizational problems and challenges experienced by the immigrants that may or may not result from the interactions of the primordial cultural values with the social and cultural context of their new locale.

Social change: This term represents the social impact of the immigrants, the missions, goals, visions, and thrust of their organizations and agencies, and the potential of this impact as a source of change in the native communities.

Transnational living and agency

The interviews projected a picture of organizations whose raison d'être was to help people at home or to cast the home country favorably to the American society. The manifestations of this transnational existence was also reflected in the informants' descriptions of how their learned behaviors at home posed constraints Other objectives

were not as passionately expressed or emphasized, and were remotely secondary to this very strong sense of duty to the place of origin. For the tribal Cameroonian organization, helping people at home was their rallying motivation. Projects in this area, such as building a community hall, paying teachers' salaries, collaborating with local nuns for the "Green Project" (teaching and helping local women with growing vegetables and selling them for cash), and sending textbooks from the United States, were described as their greatest accomplishment. This organization plans to build community halls in "one village after another."

The Ghanaian organization focuses on health and education projects in Ghana. It has organized shipments of textbooks to some high schools, and has undertaken health related projects including providing local hospitals with equipments and medication. When asked about the achievements of the organization, the president responded emphatically, "Service to Ghana is the big thing." A Ghanaian male member of this same organization lamented the poor conditions at Ghana hospitals. He commented on the personal benefit he gets from the hope that their ideas will become reality. He gave an example,

> "like hospitals in Ghana are at a very poor stage. I know people who died and shouldn't have. The care they have is such that if it were somewhere else those people would not have died."

The president of a Nigerian women's organization articulates their transnational mission in philosophical terms, and as an expression of their commitment to Nigeria's future.

> "The flagship program is the scholarship program… currently 111 scholarships in 25 Nigerian states. We give only to Nigerian females because we believe that if you educate girls, they will educate others… We found that out of desperation, many of them did unbecoming kinds of things to be able to pay their school fees. We also

> adopted different orphanages all over the country, and we provide them with nutritious meals."

But transnationalism is not expressed only through multi-local commitments and obligations or interest in and assistance with projects at the native country. It is also manifested in the concerns of the immigrants in this study about a usefulness or appropriateness of a 'balance' between behaviors that grew out of the primordial culture, and those observed in the host society. The way the president of the Nigerian women's organization stated it as she shared her vision for the organization:

> "We are training members to make organization's operations, behaviors, and so on, to resemble what happens in American society. We live a dual life. You are a Nigerian at home, and at work, you try to be American. We have to let standards in American society be our filter."

She went on to comment on how parents have let go of traditional parenting roles as are expected in the Nigerian social context, and how they watch complacently even in public spaces, and in the company of other Nigerians, as their children behave disrespectfully and seem to be out of control. When asked why she thought parents were letting go, she felt that the parents did not try hard enough "to balance the dual cultures… they probably think they are now American children." In this informant's views, this attitude among Nigerians has far-reaching implications. She states that

> "the core conflict within the Nigerian community is that we feel that this thing about a strange culture and the way we raise our children will go away, fix itself…the parents are not handling it well and the children are not handling it well either. This is because the parents deny their heritage and claim to be something else other than what they are."

The transnational social fields of Atlanta African immigrants in this study include obligations toward the improvement of political institutions and processes in the native country. This was noticeably heavily expressed mainly by the Nigerian organizations,

excluding the women's organization. Three out of the four Nigerian organizations covered in the interviews have had political dealings with the native country in terms of expressed interests and aspirations, financial or logistical support, or other forms of encouragement. The vice-president of a Nigerian state level organization in Atlanta, with branches in several American cities, discussed how their organization was actually established in the Georgia by the visiting state governor. The mission and objectives of the organization included using

> "resources to bring about positive change in [their home state], to promote the cultural, political, and general development of [their home state], to serve as a communication link between the people and the government of [their home state], the federal government, and other state governments and the people of Nigeria and [their home state] in metro Atlanta… and to provide members with accurate and comprehensive information for business opportunities with interested parties in [their home state] and the United States"

Asked what special information he wanted share about the organization and how he would summarize the organization's activities so far, he added:

> "We have made an impact on a political crisis at home. Members of the organization wrote individually to senators advising them to be watchful, suggesting subversive intentions by the Nigerian head of state. These open statements from people in the United States who were seen to be out of reach of any retaliatory responses helped defuse the crises and the sense of threat felt by the home-based politicians."

Another male member of the same organization emphasized his wish for this organization to become more involved in what was "going on at home, especially in politics." This is how he sees it:

> We have come here. We are in a better position to touch the situation at home…. We may take something good here, and add it there. So, down the road, I hope that this organization will be able to influence the organization at home and actually run for offices if our constitution allows

> us…so that we don't just sit down here and just criticize whatever is going on there..."

This member of the organization also added his wish that the organization would organize volunteering professionals in areas of need in the home country such as engineers, teachers, and doctors so they can help with problems within their professions.

The president of a unique 'pan-Nigerian' alliance discussed extensively the prime place of Nigerian politics in the formation and subsequent agenda of the organization. Through their agenda and projects, this group is also surreptitiously, maybe inadvertently, laying foundations for social change in Nigeria that confronts tribal divisions, Nigeria's Achilles Heel. The foundation for this organization was put in place by representatives from the three major tribal or linguistic groups in Nigeria, that is, Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo who met in response to a political situation in Nigeria. They were moved to action by the quest for a third term by the president of Nigeria, something they saw as unconstitutional. With this as their rallying point, they sought for ways to address other social problems in Nigeria, including public security, corruption, and the perceived unsatisfactory performance of the current administration. They balked at what they saw as Nigeria's president's efforts to manipulate the constitution to suit him and not the country's future. The representatives of this group that would become a Nigerian 'alliance' traveled to Nigeria where they met with the top political figures in the effort to stop the president. The visiting representatives from the United States gave press conferences and on their return sent a communiqué back to the Nigerian senate. The third-term bid was eventually defeated.

The organization that grew out of this pan-Nigerian effort maintained a transnational agenda, including symposia to screen and evaluate aspirants to political positions in Nigeria, with the intention of deciding who they would like to support, and what kind of support to lend. The president of the alliance expressed confidence in the potential of these 'transnational' candidates to build a better Nigeria. "I believe that with their own exposure outside Nigeria, if they're serious in what they are saying, they will change things at home", he said, emphatically. Underscoring his awareness of the dual consciousness of the Nigerian immigrants he expatiated on his earlier views on what Nigerians can offer the native country, because of their exposure to the United States.

> "Although we are Americans, we are Nigerian, too. Those of us who are still interested in running for positions in Nigeria…and we believe, truly believe that those of us that are here, not everyone…not all of us who want to run for positions will do a good job, but most of us will do a better job. We have both sides of the world. We know the wrong things that America is doing, and the good things…we know the good things that Nigeria does and the bad things. So, if you go there, you can always sieve out the good things."

But this organization has more political ambitions. They are going after the rights of "Nigerians in the diaspora, as he put it, to vote in Nigerian elections.

> "We are focused on our rights as Nigerians here in the diaspora. Right now, we cannot vote. Constitutionally, it is still very vague. We have no right to vote, and most civilized countries do that, even Iraq, of recent. They were able to vote, to go to Tennessee and vote, but Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa, with most blacks, we don't have the right to vote. So we discussed the issue, and there was a write up and we sent that to the Senate."

A thirty-four year-old female is the president of a Kenyan organization, whose mission is to get Kenyans involved in developing projects for the country, Kenya, and in developing themselves, and to become "a link, the go to organization for people

interested in Kenya." She includes practical details in her summary of the transnational situation:

> "It is difficult to live in two places, because of proximity issues. It is thousands of miles between Kenya and here, and maintaining a living in these two places is going to be difficult, unless you are extremely wealthy… The family unit would be disrupted if you lived in two places. As far as your career being an obstacle, if you work in America, you get 10 days vacation per year, therefore how do you do that? Everyone knows that's not enough time to have any meaningful visit to home and be back."

Primordial loyalty

All but only one of the organizations covered by the interviews raised issues connected with primordial loyalty that form part of their vision, challenges, or their agency. A Kenyan female "pushing fifty" years-old, and a board member of a sports organization explained that she felt strongly to participate in the organization because it was "essential" for her to be affiliated with an African organization and that she was missing that "connectedness with the community." She sheds more light on this connectedness that she said was her most fulfilling benefit from participating in the activities of the organization.

> "Being able to connect is closest to being home. After being in this country for so long, there's a sense of emptiness, almost as if your culture is gone. You kind of forget where you are from, so when you come across an organization that brings in cultural things, an opportunity to speak my language, eat the Kenyan food, educate my child about the culture, to prepare her when the family visits…"

For a fifty-five year-old Nigerian man, a member of a home state-level organization, it was also the idea of "belonging to your own group" that prompted him to become a member of the organization. When asked what he meant by "your own group",

he responded with a smirk that I read to mean 'I can't believe you are asking me that' (I am from the same tribal group as this informant) and stated, "it is natural to belong to an organization that is catering to all Ibos living in Atlanta…it is natural." Further into the interview, he brought back up the benefits of a "sense of belonging" and how it entails mutual support and counsel. "We are continuing just the way we are. We are continuing that life here, the way we were brought up", he said. When probed on why he thought it best to continue the way he was brought up, to hold on to his culture and wish for the children to do the same despite the impact and pressures of the American culture, he responded, again, with that confident smile that makes the question sound ridiculous, as his response soon confirmed:

> "No, it is not possible to forget your culture. Everybody is born into a certain culture and that culture means you have to live that way, at least as long as it's good. If it's not good, you don't need to…Good, meaning, good for me. So far, I think our culture is good. I mean not everything in our culture is good…but the good ones we want to maintain. So that's why we continue to maintain it and live that way, and try to bring our children also to emulate us and live that way…Everybody must love certain parts of their culture…"

The president of the Nigerian women's association believes in the beauty of the Nigerian culture and wants to share it with others. Her organization does school outreach visits where they talk about Nigeria, specifically, and Africa, in general. She is mostly gratified that during some of their outreach visits, they meet Nigerian children who "get a sense of pride that they are part of a beautiful culture that they didn't know." Some other Nigerians are loyal to the image of Nigeria in America and feel obliged to protect it. They give recognition awards to people in their community who hold positions of social or public responsibility in the Atlanta area. They hope that these awards would contribute

to a positive image for Nigeria. As the male president of a Nigerian organization put it "you hear a lot of negative things about Nigerians, just negative things. Some of those are about drugs, and other things… and that is not what Nigerians are about." He mentioned the names of prominent Nigerians in the area, such as the resigned former CEO of Grady Hospital, a professor at Georgia Tech, a neurosurgeon at Emory, physicists at NASA. Because of these gifts Nigeria has given America, and in addition to recognizing these people, the Nigerian organization wants to do more. According to him,

> "…we want to tell the world, we will publicize it more now and put it in the news…Nigerians are doing a lot… there's a reason for this organization, to continue to tell the world, especially the United States, that Nigerians are doing good things… we want to continue to improve the Nigerian image in the community… we are partially ambassadors"

The female president of a Kenyan organization counts among their major accomplishments, efforts made "to introduce Kenya, its culture, and its peoples." This is the outcome they hope for when they plan their annual galas, to which they ascribe various themes, such as, "to celebrate Kenya", "the legacy of Kenyan powerhouses." With such attention and focus on the image and prestige of the home country, it becomes almost personified.

Integration dynamics

Half of the organizations in this study expressed their concerns about, or interest in addressing the frictions, problems, or challenges faced by their members in the context of American society, as they try to adapt to its newness, pressures, and demands. The president of the Cameroonian organization shared a very common problem with immigrants in the United States: the devaluation of their academic credentials. In the

absence of any room for negotiation, they go back to school and start over, "because the degrees they have from home are not usable here.' After naming 'integration' as the biggest problem facing African immigrants, he commented on the constraints posed by entering the United States illegally: "You go through the process of regularizing your situation. Many people do odd jobs. They go through that for so many years…all of that makes us economically strained. We help each other learn how to go through the immigration process."

A Kenyan female was concerned about how the mission of the immigrant organizations excludes them from mainstream America. She explained that the reason for this is the impetus for organizing, "to connect", and that this makes the immigrants forget the relevance of American society to their stay. She wished for a merger of ideals emanating from American society, and those coming from African immigrants' felt need to organize. The female president of another Kenyan organization described in further details, how integration problems affected their organization. She observed that it was difficult for an African organization to find a place in the American business community. When probed for clarification, she gave the interesting explanation that "Africa has too many problems, and we are always soliciting for financial help, but we have nothing to bring to the table." She feels that this situation is compounded by the extra hardship put on the few willing participants in the organizations activities. She also names immigration problems as the nexus of all integration problems. But for those Kenyans who are settled in society, she observed that they are "starting to assimilate." She added that they are now planning to settle in the United States, and that their children are "picking up American ways" and becoming "new Americans" She sees this dynamic as

"natural" but in a twist that smacks of primordial loyalty, she ends that thought with "but that is not to say they are leaving the Kenyan culture behind."

To conclude her comment of integration challenges for African immigrants, she expressed her "wish that Africans would learn to give of themselves." "We come from a culture of receiving," she said, and I would change the way we see ourselves, because we have inferiority complex, and unfortunately, more power than we think we have."

Generational issues

Three of all the organizations discussed issues related to the concerns, aspirations, and challenges they see regarding the continuity of their cultural values, identity, and kinship ties, as they relate to their own children directly, and the future generation in general. The vice president of a Nigerian organization saw generational issues as pivotal in their future plans. "How do we reclaim our children?" he asked. He commented on how the attention and resources of the organization has been inordinately directed at issues in Nigeria, at the expense of what was happening to the future generation, here in America. This is so important, he stressed, that this summer, they are planning to secure the services of a child care facility run by a woman who was one of their own, to begin cultural education classes for their children. In addition to the summer program which starts this year, the organization is planning to take children to Nigeria, "to help them know where they come from, and to learn their language by interaction." He explains this new direction and growing interest as an outcome of members of the organization "crying out that we are losing our culture." He speaks in greater detail on the organization's concerns in this area:

> "We are trying to turn focus, at least for a while, from Nigeria to issues in America. Everybody believes we are fighting the system when it comes to our children. When they go to school, they will mix up with other children both from here and other places. These cultural differences we have with other people create problems. For example, a child should greet an elder in the morning. We try to get our children to do that and it is a problem. It is the influence of children from other cultures. I have to remind my nine year-old that is what she is supposed to do."

A forty-seven tear-old Ghanaian male, a computer industry professional and secretary for the organization looks further down the road and into the future, at what they might lose if the didn't bring their children along to participate in the activities of the organization. He sees this as an unmet need that should be addressed by the organization and acknowledges the difficulty of such a task:

> "If we had a way to attract the younger ones, the students…but this is hard because the young ones look at things differently. It is hard to find out what exactly they want. If you have them, they are the future, and one can guarantee that the organization continues in the future. Most of the current members are aging. We need the younger people to take over or the organization would die. If we had the resources, we would like to provide those who were born here with the opportunity to learn the native language…"

When probed as to why he felt it was important for the children to learn the language, he stressed that "it was part of them" and that it would pose problems if the children ever went to Ghana and could not communicate with the people. His reasoning included the global economy and the new realities it is creating. Citing the examples of Mexican and Chinese youth, who, according to him, could speak their language even though they were not born in their native country. Because of this, it is easier for them to interact here in their community, and to do business with people in their native country. He regretted that Ghanaian children might lose out on such opportunities in the future that might open up for them because of their ancestral origin and ties. Being able to speak the language, he

said has great potential to be of great benefit, not only to the youth, but to the African continent, as well.

A fifty year-old Nigerian female, president of the women's organization also organizes a separate youth program. She observed how parents were the stumbling blocks in her efforts to build strong cultural identity for Nigerian youth. "The youth reflect the conflict of their parents. It is the parents who can expose their children to whatever they choose, but there are parents who don't want anything to do with the black people around them." These parents, she lamented have carried over to America the divisive tribal sentiments that is so common in the Nigerian society. There were parents who wanted to keep their children away from other children from certain tribes, and would rather their children socialized with, and even married an American.. Surprisingly, for her, there are children who are speaking up about these tribal issues, and she believes that if such children are allowed to be among other children who share the same culture, they would be proud to claim their cultural identity.

A fifty-five year-old Nigerian male sees potential benefits for his children socializing with other children whose parents are members of the community and of the organization. He believes also that the opportunity for the youth to intermarry when the time is right was an ideal that many parents sought after, the chances of which would be enhanced by such programs as the summer project the organization was planning. Concerns about the future generation have also inspired some investment ventures.

Personal benefits

Five out of the eight organizations in the interview include or plan to formally include benefits for members of the organization. These range from hardship financial support, providing information about how to use or manage personal credit, to promoting the entrepreneurial spirit, retirement plans, how to buy a house, getting scholarships and grants for education. But there were also intangible benefits, those that were out of control of the organization,Almost all of the organizations provide support reflective of surrogate family roles. A female member of the Ghanaian association extolled the merits of her organization as her surrogate family. “They were there for me when my husband died. They became the family that I do not have here in America,” she said. Life insurance concerns were common. Death and a good burial are important to Africans, and the major concern was what would happen if a person passed away.

A major personal instrumentality focus was exemplified by the aspirations and projects of a Nigerian investment association. A group of people from different tribal groups in Nigeria wanted to deviate from the norm of the community organizations which they said were mostly socially inspired. They decided to start an investment company. The early “shares” sold enabled them to buy real estate from which they now collect dividends. Their success, so far, has encouraged them to expand their investments. Their managing director, who is also the president of another community association, said that the members of the investment group are encouraged mainly by the thought of establishing a financial legacy for the future generation.

The president of one of the Kenyan organizations discussed the emphasis they placed on helping members and their children with scholarships. To this end, they have

secured the collaboration of an American organization that specializes in finding educational funding for minority students. Some of their fundraising activities are also geared toward getting funds for educational purposes. These efforts are purported to fulfill part of their main mission, which is encouraging Kenyans to develop themselves.

Organizing problems

Intra-organizational problems and ways to contain them were discussed by all of the informants. They include excessive non-constructive criticism of the leadership by members, low participation levels, financial hardship, selfish agenda, power mongering, and various types of sometimes sectarian conflicts. The president of the Ghana association talked about the unique circumstances of immigrants that he sees as mainly responsible for some of the conflicts.

> "When we come to places like the United States, we are forced into a social circle that if we were back home, it would rarely be the case. You have to mix with the city boys, you have the village boys, folks who just are not polished, and you have to interact with those folks. I mean those are not your level but when you go to these meetings, go to these functions, there are those folks. I am not saying do away with them, but they are not your level. You are seen as though you intimidate them… and the lack of understanding…"

A Kenyan female felt that the original motivation level for coming together and organizing around issues of common interest is undermined by conflicts that surface "when the details come up." This a widespread concern which has caused some of the organizations to concentrate of working with members who are committed to organizational goals despite the conflicts. A male member of the Ghana association, and an architect by profession, would like to have "high quality participation and screen out

those who are not serious." To accomplish this, the association is considering increasing the membership dues. This class-oriented understanding of the organizational dynamics was not widespread among the organizations but it was plausible. Africans are class-conscious people and the U.S. immigrants have to contend with how this fact affects their efforts to organize effectively.

The Nigerian women's association set up conflict resolution structures to process disagreements within the organization. This association also espouses a preventive approach such as retreats, and values the opportunities that conflicts present as useful for improving the organization. But the self critique is ever present. The president of the women's organization remarks that "Nigerians are very passionate people, sometimes we talk a lot and we don't listen that much to other people." The president of the Cameroonian tribal-level organization regrets that "we Africans like to wait and see how something is going before joining."

Sometimes, the difficulties experienced in minimizing conflict provide further evidence of the transnational nature of the factors that determine the different levels of success in these organizations. The president of the Cameroonian organization feels that being in a new and different culture also has something to do with some of the frictions his organization has to deal with. His analysis of these frictions illustrates this clash of cultures: "Back home, we are used to autocracy. Some people keep that mentality from home. The older you are, the more authority you have. Here, everybody is allowed to offer their ideas."

There is also the widely acknowledged strains of 'trying to make ends meet' which puts the organizations on a direct collision course with tight work schedules

caused by the financial strains many immigrant families suffer. The other side of this situation is the spiritual and religious interests confirmed by this study as a high priority for the African immigrants. The president of the Ghana association offers this analysis:

> "Most of the people have work schedules that make it difficult to be involved. Work takes precedence. The emergence of local churches is a challenge. They are all over the place. A lot of these folks are killing several birds with one stone. What has happened is that on Sunday when they're off, they get a chance to socialize at church. We can't compete with God. That has been a major problem."

The problems experienced by the organizations seemed to be a source of great concern, but the members and officers of the organizations interviewed saw them as containable. They feel that long term, these intra-organizational obstacles will not be detrimental to the overall objectives of the organization. The president of a Nigerian organization was optimistic. In his view, these problems are natural and not limited to Nigerians: "Just start something, and if you know it is something that is good, eventually, you will get everybody to come in, so I don't think it is a problem... it's everywhere, I don't want to blame it on Nigerians or Africans." He further attributes the problems to the differences among people in inclination to exercise agency for communal benefits: "You are starting an organization, and there are a lot of people who ask, 'what is my benefit?' There are some people who just exist to help others…"

Whether it is class-based, personal, cultural, or structural, the problems experienced by the organizations are a major index of the strains of transnational exigencies and challenges. While no comparisons are available for the dynamics of the organizations at their home societies, it is obvious that the ability to accomplish their objectives, and even the future goals these organizations set, are going to be significantly

determined by how able they are to defuse both internal and external pressures. Since the organizations are aware of them, it is probable that solutions are not out of reach, and as one of the informants put it, it is hard at first but it gets easier with time. Perhaps future studies that focus on the age of the organizations will be able to reveal changes in the nature of conflicts and what, if any impact they have on the accomplishment of organizational goals.

Social change

Half of the organizations in this study raised various issues that are pertinent to what they are trying to accomplish, but known or unknown to them, these issues also hold implications for the societies of their home countries. Moya (2005) referred to host societies as 'homogenizing steamrollers' because of their role as stimulants for the formation of organizations among newcomers. The outcomes of this coming together can be extended beyond the immediate locale or spaces of the immigrants. The coming together of otherwise disparate groups or communities has the potential to set in motion relationships and activities that may begin to resolve ruptures in social and inter-group relations at the home front.

Africa's tribal tensions and the dire outcomes of these tensions are popular media features. Some informants in this study discussed missions and visions of the organization that suggest ways by which they are trying to minimize damage by pre-existing situations in their native communities. The need for unity and efforts to accomplish it was expressed by the Ghana association members, the Nigerian women's association, a state-level Nigerian organization, and most all the Nigerian alliance. Two

Ghanaian informants repeatedly spoke nostalgically about the almost total absence of tribal consciousness at the time the Ghanaian community formed their first organization. They concede that sectarian interests as a major force undermined that first organization's goal of bringing all Ghanaians together. The president of the Ghana association expressed his wish to see "Ghanaians form one organization" while maintaining the ethnic groups, so that they can have "a common front to portray the image of Ghana." This sentiment was echoed by two other members of the same organization. One of them, a Ghanaian male went further, and wished to see "more mixing among Africans back home", something he hopes would generate continent-wide benefits. Another Ghanaian male longed for the early days when "there were no tribal organizations and attendance was better…meetings used to have full rooms…" This Ghanaian still supports his tribal organization but feels "we are better off with the national one." A Ghanaian female states her main reason for joining and staying with the Ghanaian association was that "they are more multicultural, no matter what your background is, as long as you have interest in Ghana." The president of the Nigerian women's association confirmed that "tribal issues are present as undercurrent but organizational structure alleviates that."

The alliance of Nigerian organizations came together in response to that "homogenizing steamroller" that motivated them to identify issues of common concern to Nigerians in the Atlanta area. This organization, like the Ghanaians, also wishes for their component ethnic groups to maintain their identities while "making time to be Nigerians." The president of the alliance rejoices at their ability to celebrate the Nigerian independence as a united group, not as separate groups as has been the case in the past.

The alliance now incorporates 15 registered organizations of the almost 50 Nigerian organizations they know about in the Atlanta area, and their aim is the eventually incorporate all Nigerian organizations in Atlanta. The only stipulation is that the organizations register first with the secretary of state. When asked why this unification was important to his organization, he explained that

> "…if you look at our country, Nigeria, even though we might fight each other, we are not going anywhere, we are not going to separate. We need to find a way of working together…if we can voluntarily come together and form something very cohesive, very strong, then, when we are there in Nigeria, and we are in power, I will not always think about because I am from the North. I will think about the Igbo, and I will think about the Yoruba. By bringing ourselves together, we get to know each other very well."

The pervasiveness of this nostalgia for "a more united front" at the national and continental levels reveal a possible paling of divisive tribal divisions and parochial worldviews, at least among the émigrés. There are also the observed opportunities to intermarry among the tribal groups that are beginning to show among the Atlanta African immigrants. If these trends and sentiments hold strong, then it might become necessary to track the direction of these ripples of unity as they might begin to head for the coast of Africa. Just as the transnational immigrants impact their local communities and native countries with their financial remittances, they might be unleashing a unifying trend that would hold far-reaching positive outcomes for a continent torn by sectarian interests and divisive power mongering.

11. DISCUSSION OF STUDY RESULTS

This is an exploratory study of the agency potentials and implications of social organizations formed, supported, or desired by sub-Saharan African immigrants in the Atlanta metropolitan area. The focus is on what the social organizations formed by this immigrant group reveal about the dynamics of their integration into a new society, and how the group responds to the challenges they confront in the United States. The following three primary questions are addressed by the study: (1) What structural or experiential constraints do African immigrants in the Atlanta metropolitan area identify the most as pertinent to the fulfillment of their goals and expectations, or influential to the outcomes of their struggles? (2) In what types of social organizations do they invest their resources, or would they like to invest their resources? (3) To what extent do the social organizations that interest them move them toward their goals, and how do these organizations address or alleviate the constraints or problems they experience the most?

The three top problems identified by the Atlanta African immigrants are, ‘immigration laws separate me from my family’, ‘I do not make enough money to meet my needs’, and ‘it is hard to raise my children in the African culture’. The top three areas of focus in the African immigrant social organizations are, ‘transnational living and agency’, ‘primordial loyalty’, and ‘organizing problems’. For the purposes of this discussion, I will put organizing problems aside, because it constitutes self-critique and intra-organizational challenge, not because it is not vital to this discussion. This would then bring up ‘personal benefit’ as the third issue of focus in the immigrant organizations.

The source of my conceptual framework for this study is self-reflexivity that acknowledges my experiences as an African immigrant who has been involved in social

organizations. Though this study was exploratory, my preconceived notion was that African immigrants did not address their most important problems through their social organizations. I was also keenly aware of the mediating role that structural realities in American society might play in this disconnect. The findings of this study can be summarized as follows: the problems that Atlanta African immigrants identify as most important to them are not directly reflected to a significant extent in the missions, agendas, or agency of the social organizations. In an ideal situation, social organizations should expend their resources toward alleviating the constraints on the lives of the immigrants by immigration laws. They should be developing networks that would link them to locations of power from where they would be able to influence legislation that affects their lives and those of their families. They should also be addressing the problem of raising their children in the African culture, and facilitating networking opportunities for their member's career and professional development. These three problematic issues have not featured prominently in the agency of the immigrants represented by their social organizations. Instead, the social organizations have been inordinately preoccupied with the support and development of their countries of origin, their immediate communities, and their families, and with the intra-organizational constraints that compromise their ability to achieve their mission. There are many possible ways of explaining these findings.

Immigrants or Transmigrants?

The above results suggest a close causal relationship between transnational living and agency, and primordial loyalty. Considering the preponderance of objectives of the

organizations aimed at alleviating the problems in the native community in Africa, it can be hypothesized that primordial loyalty causes transnational agency. It is the immigrants' attachment to the primordial community that raises the successful development of that community to a place of priority far above all other possible objectives. This possible causal relationship may also explain why the most prevalent structural constraint, the restrictions on their lives imposed by immigration laws, is somewhat occluded in the objectives of the organizations. In addition to this, the interview data confirms that the African organizations in the study exhibit the attributes of transnational migrants, or better still transmigrants, as opposed to immigrants.

Foner (2003) emphasizes the point that not all persons who migrate become embedded in more than one location. Those that are incorporated into the old land and the new may publicly identify with only one of these locations. She also expresses anthropology's preference for calling persons who live their lives across borders transmigrants, to highlight the ongoing connections with the home society. The African immigrants have acknowledged the constraints imposed on them as well as other experiential constraints that arise out of their social relations in American society. They are embedded in their new land and have simultaneously developed and maintained familial, economic, social organizational, religious, and political relations that span nation-state borders. (Foner 2003: 17) Their relationships with their African communities are ongoing, and they express this in the close fourth top problem in the survey: "My life is torn between my native country and the United States." American society, therefore, provides them with the instrumental possibilities they need to enact and sustain their primordial identities. But anthropological theory does not provide an

exhaustive explanation for these primordial ties. This is mainly because transnational processes have been studied mainly by Western anthropologists. In the case of groups such as the African immigrants in this study, it becomes necessary to look beyond the obvious for other conceptual windows that may provide further insights into the adaptation and incorporation of this group into their new social contexts. A place to look in this case would be African philosophy which though sidelined in mainstream academic discourses, holds great potential to illuminate the gray areas created by the paling of structural exigencies vis-à-vis primordial ties.

Illuminations from African philosophy

Africa's diversity in language, religion, colonial influences, and cultural origins, has made it impossible to overlook the geographic imposition of homogeneity on the continent in matters of academic analyses or inquiry. This diversity has also constrained efforts by African scholars to identify and articulate socio-cultural experiential manifestations of varying degrees of commonality as an African philosophy. Africanists have sought to subjectively ascribe a posteriori an identity to distilled lived experiences which they have called "African philosophy", but their efforts have been dogged by assertions of the heterogeneity of the continent's population by the academic community. This tension can be attributed to the late emergence of written expressions of localized African thought and worldview which have been mainly communicated over generations in an oral tradition. This tension is also sustained by continued minimizing of Africa's internal diasporas created by geographical proximity, pre-colonial internal migrations of the agricultural era, intermarriage, and outcomes of tribal wars which have created some

degree of mixing among African peoples, and consequently, mixing and exportation of values and beliefs among neighboring societies and communities.

Beyond phenotype, Africans, at least those from south of the Sahara, are often attributed certain commonality of values, beliefs, and behavioral tendencies. These markers are acknowledged a priori by Africans themselves, especially immigrants in a homogenizing host society, a perfect place for undistracted introspection. In this context, migrants from (sub-Saharan) Africa are positioned such that they are sensitized to the commonalities among them and the differences between them as a group, and people from other cultural or geographical origins. Though they sometimes have to peel their "philosophical" markers from colonial compounders, the shared feelings of commonality of origin may be the new "glue" that has many of the immigrants in this study expressing pan-Africanist nostalgia. The conceptual proffers that identify an African philosophy deserve much more than academic arguments and quick dismissals spiked with constructivist choruses. To feel the existence of an "African philosophy" is to have lived it, and to be living it in tandem with other philosophies and social ideologies. To question a monolith Africa is to question a monolith America, for instance. There are commonalities submerged in the diversity. These commonalities surface irrepressibly and may be elicited or evoked by certain circumstances, as in a quest for an understanding of transnational agencies.

One of the basic attributes of culture is that it is dynamic. Postmodernist discourse expresses this lack of fixity in the concept of deterritorialization of culture. As globalization breaks down and reconfigures previously well known boundaries of economies and geopolitical conceptions, culture becomes portable so that identity

negotiation is enabled. This portability of culture, the fact that it can be deterritorialized implies that people move around with bits and pieces of their culture, not in their suitcases and purses but in their minds, in their subconscious. The mutability of each person's cultural package is determined by contextual severities and pressures and resistances to which the person is subjected. To participate in an ongoing discourse that is culture, a person has a starting point, a springboard, the culture to which they have been exposed for a distinguishable period of time. Their cultural package is their toolkit where they find the ways and means to address situations they face in society, and negotiate a place, a direction, and an identity for themselves.

To correctly respond to postmodernism's invitation, Africa's story must include her transformations by the incursions of the West into her physical and psychological realms and its mélange with the pre- and post-Western colonization realities and worldviews. In so doing, we will better understand the African that lives, works, and cohabitates the world with other human beings. We will understand what commonalities of inclinations, desires, preferences and understandings exist among her peoples. The once prevailing view, typically modernist, that Africa and her peoples were ahistorical has now been permanently dumped in academic dustbins as scholars have vigorously argued the existence of documented and deductible African history, civilization and thought. There is therefore, an African philosophy which articulates Africa's localized facts and narratives.

Moya (2005) has explained the reason for gaps in the study of immigrants as a result of what he calls assumptions of North American 'exceptionalism', of the new country's superiority and assimilating power of its environment. This, he argues, has led

to lack of scholarly interest in pre-arrival experiences of immigrants, as most scholars begin their studies after the immigrants have reached their destinations. Moya sees this as a major shortcoming because the pre-migratory background, the timing and rhythm of the flows, and the mechanisms of migration strongly affect the arrivals' adaptation to their new environment. When scholars focus only on the experiences of immigrants in the new land they miss half the story. Immigrants are treated as tabula rasa and in so doing, over-environmentalist conclusions that miss possible continuities and adaptations predominate to the detriment of other explanatory windows. (3)

. Some of the shared realities that have crystallized from the animated discourses on African philosophy are peace and harmony, communitarianism (or relationism) versus individualism, the concept of time, communication and the individual's responsiveness to her social world as the basis of her constitutive growth, the role of the community on the shaping of the person. Applied to the situation of African immigrants, for example, the central question for the concept of communitarianism would be who or what do African immigrants define as community? Once identified, it would be this community that would then guide their conduct and sense of moral propriety, as well agency. The preponderance of transnational agency over other objectives as expressed by immigrants in this study suggests that the community of these African immigrants span the connecting points from the United States, across the Atlantic, to the shores of Africa. To them, the two locations are inseparable, and one supports the other.

Kwasi Wiredu conceives of a person to be intricately connected with others and to depend on them for what accounts as her basic and specific distinction from other species. (Masolo, op.cit.) This sociality nourishes personhood. The same concept

resonates in the principle of the ethics of *ubuntu*, the central notion of one form of the anti-Cartesian notion which means 'I am because you are.' *Ubuntu* is a Zulu word, a unifying worldview enshrined in the Zulu maxim, *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, that is, *"a person is a person through other persons."* (Schutte, 1993) A common rebuttal to this claim is that it is not exclusive to Africa or Africans. It boils down to primacy and intensity of relationism or communitarianism in a given social context. It also leans on relativity which is now more inevitable than ever in this global cohabitation of diverse cultures at various parts of the world. Taking an American and a sub-Saharan African, for example, who is more likely to espouse an individualistic approach to social relations? Who is more likely to express communal connectedness? These questions are meant to be rhetorical.

It can be argued that African immigrants in the United States thrive on a symbiotic relationship with their primordial communities: they remit funds for its development and sustenance, and the primordial community provides the émigrés with the mooring they need for the construction of their identities. These concepts help to understand the concerns African immigrants have about raising their children in the African culture. They fear what may be called the de-Africanization of their children who can only acquire primordial ties through their parents, but whom are also pulled fiercely in the direction of American society and culture. The primordial attachment is also expressed in their overwhelming preference for membership in 'organizations of people from your town, tribe, country.' It would appear that hybridity is still a feeble manifestation for this group, for the moorings to origin still wax strong.

To capture more complete cultural identity snapshots of the African immigrant, therefore, whom he was in Africa as edified by Africa's localized narratives and as transported with him in his own deterritorialization by migrating, need to be clearly understood and acknowledged as inseparable from any meaningful analysis of his choices, tendencies, preferences, relationships and decisions. The African that arrives at the shores of the West immediately assumes an identity as a signified other, one that might cause misjudgments, misunderstandings and incorrectly determined outcomes, to follow Said's reasoning. The immigrant does not disrobe of his original self in the proverbial cloakroom at his or her point of entry into the West so as to don a completely new self spontaneously.

Immigrant agency and the future of sectarian politics in the homeland

An interesting finding in this study is a significant emphasis on 'coming together' expressed as an underlying or explicit goal for the organizations. Since perspectives in African philosophy suggest that the immigrants belong to a continuous community that spans the Atlantic and beyond, their agency has the potential to impact both ends of their 'community' in the United States, and in Africa. Africa has suffered from decades of tribal divisions and strife emanating from those divisions. The social engineering efforts of many of the African immigrant associations have seemed to emphasize inclusiveness, not an obliteration of the particularities, but a forging and accommodation of common identity. While this resonates with Moya's concept of host societies acting as homogenizing steamrollers that promote the gelling of hitherto separated groups, it is also a phenomenon that is worth watching, especially in the case of African communities

where the severity of sectarian interests has had far-reaching debilitating dysfunctional consequences. It is also worth watching because anthropological research, thus far, has examined preponderantly immigrant cultural production in the host society, and not that much in the community of origin.

Also, as Foner (2003) argues, extrapolations of observations should not be made easily to different groups of immigrants. The concept of the host community acting as a homogenizing agent for immigrants needs to be applied discriminately in consideration of the home social conditions and realities for each group. The homogenizing steamroller may be operative for many immigrant groups in their new land, but the implications of the homogenizing effect may vary in gravity and in its potential to effect much needed social transformations. For African immigrants, a homogenization of identity in the United States may carry substantial social dividends for the African continent. In this sense, Giddens' suggestion of the location of power in transformative capacity raises interesting questions about the possible outcomes and reach of the cultural production in which these African immigrants are engaged.

The social organizations formed by the immigrants have the potential to transform their distant homelands not only economically but culturally, and with far-reaching political impact. This does not have to do with Michael Jordan, Madonna, and the CNN being fictive neighborhood icons; it has to do with the production of a completely new culture that is totally African, not a hybrid, because it will not contain any foreign markers, but will showcase a cultural product of a recycling of some of Africa's social realities. In this case, that product would be diminishing sectarian sentiments and politics that would eventually lead to the demise of tribalism. If, as Arthur (2000) argues, the

immigrants acquire higher statuses in their home countries because of their monetary remittances and other financial investments, that power can translate into strategic positioning for effecting changes in the social structures of their home countries. They would be officially established in the homeland as 'elites' who, traditionally are the most likely to exercise agency or lead the expression of agency.

The immigrants seek inclusiveness in their social organizations in the United States because they have acquired more visibility as one group, and have learned or developed a tendency to identify themselves as members of that one group. They are Nigerians or Ghanaians or even Africans, and are more widely known as such, not Igbo, Yoruba, or Akan or Ashanti. Their presence in American society, and the connections that amplify this presence, therefore, enable and facilitate possible future remittances of a 'recycled culture' to their homelands. This 'recycled culture' is one which the African immigrants are producing here in the United States: one that proscribes sectarian identity and sentiment. The Ghanaians in the study repeatedly expressed a longing to "bring all Ghanaians together", and "to reach out to other Ghanaians". The Nigerian alliance is built on a philosophy of unification (of all tribes). They are touting the fruits of their achievements in the direction of unification, so far, for example, the celebration of Nigerian independence 'together' rather than as separate groups as has been the case in the past. This process of transnational identity diffusion has the potential to accomplish high levels of intra-national decentering than the international decentering achieved by globalization, and the potential to collapse walls that demarcate identity structures within nations, to the possible significant benefits of the developing nations. The nationalism

that could emanate from a ‘culture recycling’ agency from émigrés, may plug a yawning chasm that has depleted Africa’s human economic resources.

Postcolonialism and African Immigrants

Beginning with the argument that the world was marked by the “high-handed executive attitude on nineteenth century and twentieth century European colonialism,” Said (1979) discusses the West/East (West/Orient) dichotomy which progressively developed into a metaphor for European versus non-European power relationships, domination, and varying degrees of a complex hegemony. (p.6) This dichotomy and the relationships it spawned were created by an unchallenged production of the non-West by the West, of the non-European by the European. In this groundbreaking work, *Orientalism*, Said presents not just simply an imperialistic view of the world, or the study of imperialism and culture, but raises questions that seek to unravel the processes underlying that “distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts…” (p.12)

The various kinds of power identified by Said as integral to the concept of *Orientalism*, and involved in this uneven exchange are: power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what “we” do and what “they” cannot do or understand as “we” do). (p. 12) These various kinds of power explain the production of an African consciousness by the colonial domination of Europe, with varying degrees of cultural obliterations and implantations.

For decades, Africa has been tangled up with the legacy of colonialism which meant “destroying peoples’ languages, history, dances, education, religions, naming systems, and other social institutions that were the basis of their self-conception as a people.” Ngugi (1993: 42) Colonialism was the economic and political conquest of Africa accompanied by mental, spiritual, and cultural subjugation and the imposition of an imperialist cultural tradition. The departure of colonial structures and the subsequent independence of many African nations was never an automatic extrication of Africa from the claws of colonialism. When physical colonial rule disengaged, the psychological rule of colonialism engaged Africa, and has to a great extent defined its successes and failures, charting Africa’s destiny.

Mbembe (2001) views Africa as first and foremost a geographical accident which has since taken on characterizations imputed on it by various perspectives and interpretations. Africa is therefore a formation of desires, passions, and undifferentiated fantasies, so strongly entrenched and provocative that it has forced Western discourses on the self and the other, on difference and alterity, or on particularity and universalism. This was Mbembe’s explanation of the role that postcolonialism has sought to play in its intellectual onslaught for the achievement of an African renewal. According to his analysis, Africa is evolving in multiple and overlapping directions simultaneously and its present is formed by an assemblage of signs and symbols and artifacts that mean different things in various languages and contexts.

In an interview with Christian Hoeller of Springerin Magazine, based in Vienna, Austria, Mbembe suggests ways through which Africa can make a positive transition from its present consternation. They include a serious shift in the terms of cultural

rendition of contemporary African experiences that would foster the replacement of the current syndrome of victimization with the virtue of intellectual curiosity. He acknowledges the impossibility of a complete restitution of the past, rejects the transformation of the past into a subjective present so that Africa's identities are not rooted in injury alone, and calls for the harnessing of transnational global connections as channels for economic growth, and an integral part of a beneficial circulation of people, commodities and images.

African immigrants in the U.S. are embroiled in the intricacies identified in the postcolonial discourse as the legacy of colonialism. Because of their socialization in social contexts that manifest the transformations brought about by colonial rule, they embody, albeit differentially, Ngugi's depictions of the ravages of colonial rule and imperialistic cultural domination, but at the same time occupy a vital position in Mbembe's prescriptions for an African renewal. While these immigrants must often navigate the murky waters of alterity in social milieus that tout freedom and self-determination, they have chosen for the most part, as this study shows, to deemphasize their alterity as a prime determinant of the outcomes of their struggle. Being evoked as crucibles for a new Africa puts these immigrants in a pivotal position for the achievement of desirable change, the type of change sought by postcolonialists to unravel the devastating impact of colonial domination and reveal a redemptory African identity (or identities). In this study, the African organizations studied confirm enormous investments of resources in the economic development of their various African nations, but also manifest a departure from the victim image decried by Mbembe. They have set in motion

a remarkable dynamic that potentially provides new dimensions for the politics of identity which postcolonial scholars view as the nexus of their discourse.

The manifestation of postcolonial strife in the lives of African immigrants can only be an etic creation. They live postcolonialism and do not actively identify it so that they can manipulate it in their efforts at identity construction. They are pulled by the remnant force of strings from decades ago. Their choices and directions for agentic activity are not free from colonial imprints and entanglements. African immigrants do not have a dual consciousness but multiple layers of consciousness attended by multiple layers of identity which they subconsciously juggle in order to adapt successfully to the host society. This underscores the reality of an African philosophy as a backdrop for the appreciation of the unique and particular tensions that the African immigrant must confront in their daily individual and collective lives. Adeeko (2002) in a review of Mbembe's *On the Postcolony*, states:

> "Those interested in the African postcolony, therefore, have to begin to explore the profound repercussions of the past four centuries of the rule of bestiality. Africa's colonial 'entanglements' have something far more fundamental than gross historicity to do with its present state ...colonialism will not forget Africa despite the effect of the pill of forgetfulness which many of us who are younger Africanists have swallowed under the direction of certain theories of flux identity. (2)

If the concept of a monolithic Africa has been problematic for academia, the commonalities of its historical experience of subjugation provide a homogenizing starting point for the purpose of analysis. While the "geographical accident" of its reality is not subject to debate, its pre-colonial realities and conditions ought to be mined more deeply for conceivable common attributes. When convincingly disinterred, these commonalities

should shed much needed light on the potentials of immigrant agency and their proclivity toward unity, beyond the homogenizing role and potentials of their host society.

The place of structure

The persistence of alterity as part of the social reality of African immigrants living in contemporary Western societies is a feature of the structural minefield they must learn to navigate. The results of the study suggest the possibility of feelings of powerlessness about effecting changes in problems that are structurally imposed. Though the immigrants in the study did not significantly "feel powerless to make [their] life better", (only 12% said they felt powerless), and did not see the feeling of powerlessness as the most important problem (0 respondents did) The relevance of the social organizations as expressions of collective (Corporate) agency is undermined by the lack of a strong presence in their agendas of problems related to immigration laws, education on individual constitutional rights, or career development orientations that may help the immigrants acquire skills for improving their professional lives, and by extension, alleviating their income concerns. The immigrants in this study acknowledge the existence of structural constraints in the form of immigration laws, and to a lesser extent, racism, though one respondent wrote next to racism "definitely a curse!." Others state that the government does not care about African immigrants. Another possible explanation that can be made from the relative absence of structurally imposed constraints from the organization's agendas is that the organizations may presume the ability of the individuals to address the problems related to career and income at that (individual) level, possibility through their presumed ability to activate their resources

and connections to other people. This presumption is enabled by their socialization in the homogeneous elements of an African worldview, that of the inseparable nature of an individual's connections with others. This presumption also suggests that connection with the community left behind in Africa, and whose identity the group shares, is placed at a higher level of priority. In this study, however, one group, the Nigerian alliance, has departed somewhat from a communitarian orientation, and has moved beyond normalcy for the immigrant organizations in the study, to exercise agency toward personal financial development through their investment endeavors.

American anthropology is heavily influenced by Levi-Strauss who almost single-handedly founded the modern field of structuralism. Levi-Strauss believed that the underlying logical processes that structure all human thought operate within different cultural contexts, and that consequently, cultural phenomena are not identical but they are the products of an underlying universal pattern of thought. But beyond the differentiating patterns of thought, Levi-Strauss also contended that one of the first and most important distinctions a human makes is between self and others. Immigrants living in the context of a host society that is new to them exercise agency and construct identities in a context of difference where their patterns of thought meet those of people who inhabit their host society. The existing cultural differences between them and their hosts compel them to differentiate between themselves and the others, between themselves and their host, causing them to forge identities that are also produced by their deep patterns of thought that are universal within their world, a separate entity from the world of the host society.

This structural view of society lends weight to the need to include the origins of immigrants in any analysis of their actions within transnational contexts. For African

immigrants, it means that African philosophy which describes the deep patterns of thought that are sources of structure for the immigrants must be an important foundation for understanding what they deterritorialize (from Africa) when they arrive in America and come to be embedded in the social realities. The American society is likewise a product of the deep patterns of thought that form the social realities of American people and determine their culture. When the immigrants come to America, the cultural production that ensues is chaperoned by a meeting of two deep cultural patterns, theirs, and those of Americans. This is reminiscent of Moya's (2005) argument that immigrants' pre-migratory backgrounds should be part of studies of their lives in a new society.

To borrow from a disciplinary neighbor, Rubinstein (2001) provided a sociologist perspective on the meaning of structure. According to him, it is the structure of opportunity – that is the array of costs and benefits available to the actor. In his effort to find a synthesis between cultural explanations of behavior and those that emphasize opportunities, or costs and benefits, he defines agency as the degree to which persons are authors of their own conduct, or are controlled by "external" social forces: cultural training, and or the structure of costs and opportunities. (x) He argues that autonomy can be achieved relative to cultural and structural determinism, and that social structure can mean relations between groups, configurations of social roles, the degree of inequality in society, and so on. This sociologist view of agency within social structure is beneficial in understanding what immigrants think about their environments and how they decide to act or not to act on what they see. In the realm of social structure, immigrants calculate the contents of their environment and they act based on their evaluation of costs and

benefits of exercising agency. This implies that immigration law restrictions is a strong presence in their social structure, but they do not act on it in any significant way because they do not see a connection between the agency they are capable of exercising, and meaningful benefits in the direction of alleviating the constraints imposed on the immigrants by immigration law.

Attitude of Americans toward immigrants

An aspect of social structure that is germane to this study is the attitude of Americans toward immigrants and immigration. As pointed out in my introduction, immigrants have America's attention, a situation that was recently underscored by the astounding numbers of people that marched, including immigrants and non-immigrants, demanding immigrant rights. In a collaborative study by National Public Radio, the Kaiser Family foundation, and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, a nationally representative sample of 1,888 respondents 18 years of age and older, comprised of 1104 non-immigrants and 784 immigrants were interviewed between May 27 and August 2, 2004. The focus of the study was immigration in America. The findings had important implications for how Americans feel about immigration, and the thoughts of immigrants about their American experience.

The study finds that although attitudes are less negative than they have been in years, many negative attitudes toward immigration persist. The public is divided on whether the large influx of recent immigrants has been good for the country, with 30 percent saying good, 39 percent saying bad, and 28 percent saying it hasn't made much difference. Immigrants see things differently: 56 percent of them say recent immigration

has been good for the country, and only 16 percent say it has been bad. In a matter that is of paramount importance to the subject of this study, Americans express ambivalence, if not downright unease, about the cultural impact of immigration. Many non-immigrants believe immigrants are changing American structure and values when they ought to be adopting them. Sixty four percent of non-immigrants, interestingly, believe that America is a country made up of many cultures and values that change as new people come here, rather than a country with a basic American culture and values that immigrants take on when they come here. When asked what type of country the United States should be, 62 percent believe it should be a country with basic American culture and values, and 33 percent say it should be a country made up of many cultures and values. Native-born Americans with higher levels of contact with immigrants have more positive views of immigrants than those with less contact.

Immigrants preponderantly (81 percent) feel that they work harder than other Americans, and that their hard work and talents strengthen the country rather than burden the country because they take jobs, housing, and health care, and 61 percent feel that they have been unfairly discriminated against. The study also found that immigrants keep some ties to their home country, though not as much as some believe, and that immigrants who arrived in the past 10 years are more likely to make financial remittances to their country of origin than those who arrived earlier. Of the 51 percent of immigrants who are U.S. citizens, 22 percent say they want to return to their country of origin some day. An astounding 83 percent say it is at least somewhat important to keep the culture and traditions of their country of origin. Immigrants like the economic opportunities in America, but more are ambivalent about the culture. But, notably, children of immigrants

have views more like native-born Americans. The differences in the immigrant children's views reflect some of what their parents feel about immigrants being more hard-working than Americans, and about immigration being good for their communities.

This study reflects or validates the findings on Atlanta African immigrants to a great extent. This is noteworthy in the areas of primordial loyalty: wanting to return some day, and wanting to hold on to their culture, and in transnational agency in terms of remittances and maintaining ties with the country of origin. Though the NPR study did not describe the make up of their immigrant sample in terms of country of origin, it is noteworthy that the nationwide study indicates similarity in immigrant experience and beliefs with the sample of this study. This suggests that there is what may be called an "immigrant culture" which deserves closer study by anthropologists, and applies a conceptual break to Foner's (2003) warnings about generalizing observations too broadly from one immigrant group to another. At least areas of generalizable homogeneities among immigrant groups may be identified.

Reflections on the impact of native anthropology

This study of social organization as expression of agency among African immigrants is being conducted by an African immigrant who has experienced and participated in the phenomena she is studying. My being African phenotypically, in dress (during data collection), verbal, and non-verbal communication, mannerisms, presumed understandings, cannot be separated from my personal interest in the research topic, nor from the process and the depth of the data generated by the interviews I conducted. During the interviews, especially the in-person, semi-structured ones, my nods, smiles,

and frowns of acknowledgment or displeasure, unavoidable ejaculatory comments because these are “my people”, and in some cases, the use of the native language to clarify aspects of the guiding questions written in English, or to clarify responses, conflate the emic with the etic to generate an ineluctable conceptual complicity of self-reflexivity and native-anthropology. My identity as the anthropologist in this study fostered an atmosphere of easier trust among the respondents who completed the questionnaires enthusiastically, and then hung around to chat with me animatedly about their place in the American society. The chats provided informal insights that were perspectival lighthouses for the quest of this study. In the semi-structured in-person interviews, the probes for detailed perspectives were in many cases made possible by my prior first-hand knowledge of the important implications of the issues being discussed and my desire to hear them stated from the point of view of my informant, exhaustively, leaving nothing to deductive or inferential conclusions.

African immigrants have been racialized and phenotypically grouped with African Americans, along with all the prejudices and stereotyping attached to that racial identity. As immigrants, Africans face compounded challenges that go beyond race or phenotype. They are often underemployed, and they possess a distinct culture that differentiates them from African Americans which, according to Selassie (1996), might even pose problems in their efforts to adapt to their new society. Anthropological research should be obliged to further emphasize this differentiation, since culture persists as the centerpiece of their discipline. It is easy to view African immigrants as American Blacks and to extrapolate research findings on American Blacks to African immigrants. This makes African immigrants invisible, and their particular experiences insufficiently

studied. When transnational identities are added to the cultural differences and their racialized identities, African immigrants represent a distinct and complex group, iconoclastic in both racial and transnational studies. They bring multiple facets of identity consciousness that reflect their histories and the tensions created by these histories, including religious, political, social and cultural imprints of pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial epochs. Because of the lingering presence of these complexities, African immigrants cannot be known to the academic world unless they are studied in isolation from other people who might look like them, but do not share their dire complexities.

With the high stakes ascribed to such knowledge, to aspire to anything less than accurate and apolitical would be risky and self-defeating, rendering the research study futile. A native anthropologist is an asset in this relatively uncharted terrain in anthropological research. Not all studies are amenable to a hidden agenda, or to the usual presumed "need to make the study population look good". There are studies that are aimed at providing information on a hitherto unknown or obscured population, and nothing more. Besides, not all native anthropologists are equally knowledgeable and primed on the subjects of their research. There are some whose "nativeness" ends with biological origin, and excludes social orientation or awareness. Not all native anthropologists entertain the same degree of passion toward social phenomena in their communities. Dispassionate knowledge is always a possibility. These distinctions need to be made in order to unpack the "native" label of anthropologists. When there are no immediate tangible political benefits to the outcome of a study, a native anthropologist's place in a study must not be undermined by broadly applied concerns of subversive subjectivity.

There is indeed more to gain from presenting social phenomena about African immigrants as they really are, than from a politicized version that stands to be more vulnerable to challenge. The instrumental value of uncontestable results of such a study is higher for the native anthropologist than for her non-native counterpart. The emphasis is on “such a study” and should be on the type of study and its purpose. I am the anthropologist, and at the same time one of the informants, so to say, in my own study. I am an instrument of data collection as well as a ‘subject’ of my own research. I am a part of this population, and exposing their realities gives me a place in the world, as much as it gives any and all African immigrants in the United States. This unique ‘position’ necessitates the aspiration, as much as possible, to the truth, to results that are apolitical, and to a knowledge production process that facilitates obtaining these results. Belonging, therefore, enables rather than impedes the research process, and is therefore largely unproblematic.

12. LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While the sample of this study is nonrandom and cannot be considered representative of sub-Saharan African immigrants in the Atlanta metropolitan area, significant efforts to randomize the respondents bring the sample close to a reflection of 'reality' which at this point remains a matter of conjecture. However, extrapolations of the findings of this study to other African immigrant communities, evn those of the Atlanta metropolitan area, should be made cautiously. It is very difficult to obtain and document demographic data on immigrants because of sensitive political and personal issues such as an illegal status. If I had included a question on immigration status, there is a strong possibility that I would have lost many of the subjects, or those that would have stayed with the study would have been forced to lie and make up answers to hide illegal statuses. For example, Selassie (1996) commenting on African immigrants in Washington D.C. states that "[t]he fact that many Africans stay with expired visas or questionable legal status and work in Washington's 'twilight' service economy largely accounts for the city's official underreporting of Africans."

In addition to difficulties with reliable statistics on African immigrants or a formal sampling frame, generational questions are also beyond the scope of this study. Anthropological literature acknowledges the relevance of generational difference to such fundamental concepts as primordial loyalty, and the dual consciousness that characterizes transnational lives. It is possible that the perspectives represented by African immigrants in the sample of this study may change as the African immigrant population matures, and the second generation comes increasingly into focus. The age profile of the sample

should therefore stimulate future comparative research interest in the relationship between what I call “immigrant tenure” or length of time in the U.S. and formal sociability, or better still, socio-cultural constraints.

The immigrants in this study sample were not distinguished based on how long they have lived in the U.S., but were expected to reveal their main problems as they adapt to American society, and precisely what social organization dynamics may characterize their adaptation efforts. Length of stay in the U.S. was not isolated as a variable in this study but its potential for differentiating among immigrant cohorts on such questions as ‘top problems’ or ‘most important problem’ may be investigated to provide further clarity on the adaptation dynamics of African immigrants, or any other immigrant group. It is also noteworthy that this study did not include the life stories and experiences of the immigrant sample. The presentation of immigrant experiences has been somewhat a ‘tradition’ in studies of immigrants. These types of studies often seek to evaluate to what extent the pursuit of economic dreams and opportunity are materializing for the immigrants, and what socio-cultural challenges are at play. This study explores a fairly uncharted territory, and has set its parameters strictly within the instrumentalities of social organizations, purposely deemphasizing the individual immigrant as the unit of analysis. This was done to enhance the analytical focus on collective data describing commonalities of social constraints and instrumentalities of social organization, rather than on details of individual experiential narratives which should not significantly facilitate the understanding of a collective expression of agency. A profile of the sample was deemed sufficient, while ‘sub-Saharan African immigrant’ was seen as the most pertinent identity for the purpose of this study.

Children of African immigrants born in the United States were not included in this study because though they are exposed to and are affected by transnational living and experiences of their parents, they are very likely to be second generation African immigrants, born in America, or relatively young when they arrived in America. They would therefore not be the best source of comparative evaluation of an African society and an American society for the purpose of identifying problems and constraints to adaptation. Also, refugees were not included in this study. The number of Liberians in the study was closely monitored and restricted to avoid including refugees from among them. The experiences of refugees are significantly mediated by the state and its policies and are very different from those of voluntary immigrants, the focus of this study.

Just as African immigrant populations reflect diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, they show commonalities too. While the jury is out on how much we can know about the tendencies and impetuses of this population's agency directions with African philosophy as a guiding light, the diversity of circumstances presented by the different regions of the American society hold potential insights. Most immigrant studies are directed at the largest of American cities such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles. The dynamics of immigrant adaptation in mid-sized American cities such as Columbus, Ohio, Phoenix, Arizona, or Bloomington, Indiana, should reveal structural relevancies that have not been studied. In the case of African immigrants, this should contribute immensely to the understanding of the role of social structure in such group cohesiveness as has been observed to hold great potential for undermining tribal divisions and tensions.

A logical follow-up of this study, besides duplicating it in other American big cities for comparative analyses would focus on why African immigrant social

organizations do not include in their missions and agendas plans for addressing the impediments constituted by immigration laws. This should increase anthropological knowledge about the processes of selection of agency directions and perceptions of success as reflections of how these immigrants view social structures. It is conceivable that reducing the strains imposed on the lives of members of the community by immigration laws would be ascribed high instrumentality. But it would be helpful to identify the underlying dynamic of calculations of success that determine where the organizations choose to expend their resources. This should then inform and clarify African immigrants' perceptions of the structural realities of American society, particularly those represented by the state. Studying women's organizations as illustrations of genderized transnational agency, and a comparative component of a study that separates them from men's organizations, or mixed-gender organizations should reveal transformations of African immigrant women who are often seen as cast in the shadows of their male counterparts. A comparative study of African refugee social organizations juxtaposed with voluntary immigrant social organizations can also shed light on the role of the state as structure and mediating factor in immigrant adaptation.

That America's diversity can only increase is not subject to debate. With the immigration Diversity Visa Lottery program, the United States of America is consciously and methodically constructing the society it wants. But the arrivals of a diverse slice of the world's population on American soil is only the beginning of a tortuous journey, the odysseys of thousands of people and a non-spatial odyssey for the United States society itself on its own land. The potential to transform the United States politically, socially, and culturally, will find expression to a conceivably noteworthy extent, on the agencies

of immigrant groups. Anthropological research is paying attention to these trends, but must move faster beyond economically driven actions and decisions as both individual and collective agency. Trouillot pointed out that not all immigrant actions and agencies are economically driven. The consequences of social capital amassed by immigrants in their own native communities deserve study. In the context of global flows, a lot more than finances move, and some of the motions and flows in question are no longer unidirectional. African immigrants are engaged in culture production, not only in the United States, but also in their native communities. These realities present new opportunities and challenges for multi-sited anthropological research. For Africa and African immigrants, it seems clear that postcolonialism is about to open a new chapter, that of transnational agency and its transformations that transcend economic development, and begin to construct a new scaffolding for social change.

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Appendix A

Survey Questionnaire

Title of Study: Agency and Transnationalism: Social Organization among African Immigrants in Metropolitan Atlanta.

Please follow the instructions for each of the questions below and provide the information requested honestly and to the best of your ability. There are no right, and no wrong answers, all pieces of information or responses you provide are of equal importance and value.

1. Are you an African immigrant living in the United States of America?

   Yes |____| No |____|

2. Which of the following best describes the part of Africa you come from?

   South of the Sahara Desert |__| North of the Sahara Desert |__|

3. Please put a check mark next to the range that includes your age.

   18 – 25 |__| 26 – 35 |__| 36 – 45 |__| 46 – 55 |__|

   56 – 65 |__| 66 – 75 |__|

4. What is your gender? Female |__| Male |__|

5. Which of the following best describes your education level?

   High school or equivalent |__|

   Associate Degree/Two-year college |__|

   Bachelor's Degree/Four-year college |__|

   Master's Degree |__|

   Ph.D |__|

   Professional Degree (e.g. Pharm. D., M.D., J.D.) |__|

6. Which of the following best describes the work you do?

   i) Clerical (e.g. administrative assistant, receptionist, front desk, secretary, collections, word processor, etc) |___|

ii) Service (e.g. janitorial, firefighter, law enforcement, customer service, sanitation worker, cashier, chef, waitress, etc.) |___|

iii) Academic (e.g. school teacher, instructor, professor, teacher's assistant, etc.) |___|

iv) Medical/Health (e.g. physician, nurse, pharmacist, dentist, physiotherapist, nurse's aide, medical assistant, etc) |___|

v) Domestic (e.g. nanny/babysitter, housekeeper, elder sitter, housecleaner, etc.) |___|

vi) Retail/Sales (e.g. department store, car sales/dealer, grocery store, etc) |___|

vii) Technical (e.g. computer industry, auto mechanic, equipment service or maintenance, etc) |___|

viii) Self-Employed |___|

7. In the following list, please place a check mark next to the 3 (three) issues or problems that are most important to you as an African immigrant living in the United States.

a) I do not make enough money to meet my needs. |___|
b) It is difficult to hold on to, or express my culture. |___|
c) Immigration laws separate me from my family. |___|
d) Being a 'black' person is a big problem. |___|
e) Too many obstacles prevent me from improving my life. |___|
f) No time to socialize with people that share my culture. |___|
g) My life is torn between my native country and the U.S. |___|
h) Hard to raise my children in the African culture. |___|
i) The U.S. government does not care about Africans. |___|
j) I feel powerless to make my life better than it is. |___|

8. Take another look at the 3 (three) items you have selected in item number 7. In the box below, please enter the letter next to the selection that is most important to you or concerns you the most.

[ ]

9. Which of the following types of organization do you know that **exist** in the African community here in the U.S.? Place a check mark next to all the organizations you know (even if you are not a member).

a) Organizations promoting business/professional networking. |__|
b) Organizations promoting or observing African culture. |__|
c) Organizations promoting awareness of your rights. |__|
d) Organizations addressing immigration problems. |__|
e) Organizations of people from your town, tribe, country. |__|
f) Organizations connecting Africans with other blacks. |__|
g) Organizations that address religious or spiritual issues. |__|
h) OTHER: _____ |__|

10. Of which types of organizations are you a member?

a) Organizations promoting business/professional networking. |__|
b) Organizations promoting or observing African culture. |__|
c) Organizations promoting awareness of your rights. |__|
d) Organizations addressing immigration problems. |__|
e) Organizations of people from your town, tribe, country. |__|
f) Organizations connecting Africans with other blacks. |__|
g) Organizations that address religious or spiritual issues. |__|
h) OTHER: _____ |__|

11. Which organizations would you like to join/support if they existed? (Please do not check any organization you checked in item # 10)

a) Organizations promoting business/professional networking. |__|
b) Organizations promoting or observing African culture. |__|
c) Organizations promoting awareness of your rights. |__|
d) Organizations addressing immigration problems. |__|
e) Organizations of people from your town, tribe, country. |__|
f) Organizations connecting Africans with other blacks. |__|
g) Organizations that address religious or spiritual issues. |__|

h) OTHER: _____ |__|

12. How do you feel about being regarded as a 'black' in the U.S.?

It is appropriate. |__| It is not appropriate. |__| It does not matter. |__|

13. Do you feel that you or your community can benefit in any way by collaborating with other people or communities known as 'blacks' in the U.S.?

Yes |__| No |__|

THANK YOU for your time and assistance with this survey. If you would like to mail your questionnaire, please place it in the envelope provided and drop it in the mail. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Research Topic: Agency and Transnationalism: Social Organization among African Immigrants in Atlanta

Conducted by Felicia Chigozie Anonyuo

For Organization Leaders

1. What prompted the founding of this organization?
2. What year/when was the organization established?
3. What is the mission or objective of this organization?
4. What are the criteria for membership?
5. How many members do you have?
6. What are the most important achievements of the organization since it was formed?
7. What types of challenges or problems has this organization experienced?
8. How do you address the problems and challenges?
9. What are the future goals of this organization?
10. What plans to you have or how do you hope to accomplish the future goals of this organization?
11. Do you have any literature about your organization that you would like to share with me? OR Does your organization have a website?
12. Anything else you would like me to know about this organization?

For Organization Members

1. When did you become a member?/For how long have you been a member?
2. What prompted you to become a member of this organization?
3. What role do you play/what activities do you tend to participate the most in the organization?
4. What benefits do you derive from being a member of this organization?
5. What needs do you have that you feel are not met by this organization?
6. Are there any other ways that you feel these needs might be met?
7. What would you change about this organization if you could?
8. What other organizations are you a member of?