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**Nigerians in the United States:
Potentialities and Crises**

by
Paul E. Udofia

RESEARCH REPORT

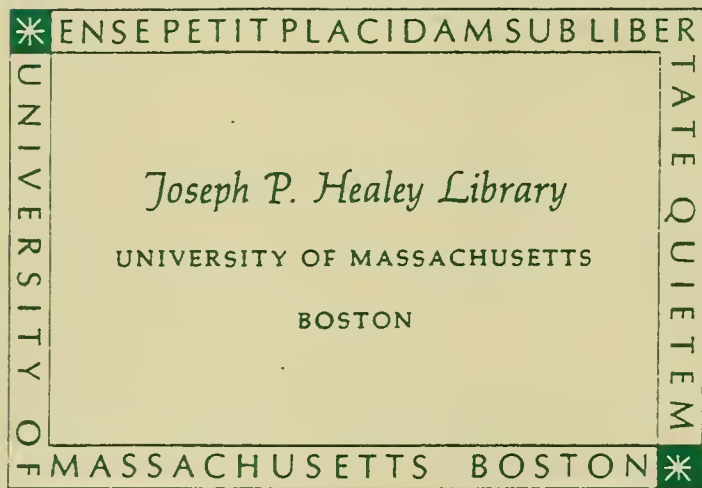
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Nigerians in the United States: Potentialities and Crises

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Paul E. Udofia

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This Research Report examines the various waves of Nigerian immigration, community and leadership development, as well as crises in the United States. Paul E. Udofia is a Research Associate at The William Monroe Trotter Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston.

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Foreword

Through this series of publications, The William Monroe Trotter Institute is making available copies of selected reports and papers from research conducted at the Institute. The analyses and conclusions contained in these articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions or endorsement of the Trotter Institute or the University of Massachusetts Boston.

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Introduction

Chinua Achebe once commented that “Any Nigerian who is old enough to remember October 1, 1960, cannot forget the high and heady feeling of hope and optimism that marked our dawn of freedom from foreign rule.”¹ In “those days,” Chinua Achebe who “traveled frequently” recalled “how good one felt to be a Nigerian abroad and carry the new and exciting green passport.”² Today, however, Chinua Achebe, world-renowned novelist, is in the United States, wheelchair-bound, with an “unexciting green passport.” Although not every Nigerian would make the same claim as Achebe, considering that the birth of Nigeria was not a “planned development,”³ given its size, wealth, and large pool of educated citizens, Nigeria was expected to play a more prominent role in Black Africa’s transformation. What is less clear, however, is why its leaders chose the path of self-destruction, even after recognizing the profound incrimination accompanying its birth:

In January 15, 1966, a bloody coup d’état dominated by Ibo military officers ended the First Republic: Gen. A. Ironsi, an Ibo, became the first military head of Nigeria. In July 1966, Ironsi was assassinated mostly by northern soldiers; Lt. Col. Y. Gowon, a Christian from the north and former Chief of Army Staff, emerged as head of state. In May 1967, the East, under Col. C. O. Ojukwu, an Ibo, declared itself “Republic of Biafra.” In July 1967, the Nigerian Civil War began, ending in January 1970. On July 29, 1975, Gowon was overthrown. Gen. Murtala Mohammed, a northern Muslim, became head of state. Six months later, Mohammed was assassinated by Lt. Col. S. Dimka. Gen. O. Obasanjo, a Yoruba, became head of state and the first leader to voluntarily relinquish power to an elected president. In December 1983, President Shagari was overthrown by Maj. Gen. Mohammed Buhari. On August 27, 1985, Buhari was brought down by Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Babangida. Babangida finally relinquished power on August 26, 1993, after annulling the presidential election favoring Chief M.K.O. Abiola, and handpicking Chief E. Shonekan as head of an interim government. In October 1993, Maj. Gen. Sani Abacha’s circle began.⁴

The annulment of the Nigerian 1993 presidential election marked the height of an increasing pessimism among Nigerians living in the United States about the status of Nigeria as a nation-state.

Their public sentiment, widely acknowledged in the United States affirmed :

All Nigerians abroad share the pain that most Nigerians at home are undergoing because of the political impasse in Nigeria. We commend our brothers and sisters for the patience they have exercised so far, especially for their wise conduct since the annulment of the presidential results. . . . It is time for a decisive change in governance from an appointed leadership to an elected leadership. Nigerians elected a president on June 12, 1993. It is therefore the obligation of all Nigerians and friends of Nigeria to ensure the execution of the democratic decision of the Nigerian electorate.⁵

From an American hide-out, Achebe wrote:

Today, Nigeria is in a hopeless mess. Its economy is in shambles; crime is rampant; our judiciary [system] is a standing joke; our universities have crumbled; our hospitals are without basic facilities and drugs. A once vibrant and proud people have been reduced in a few years to destitution and shame. A recent visitor to Nigeria . . . could not remember any place he left with greater relief. Our best brains are seeking a living abroad in ever increasing numbers. . . .⁶

It is not surprising, therefore, why, in responding to the Nigerian crisis, Randall Robinson, President of TransAfrica, sadly remarked that Nigeria which “should be the bellwether state of sub-Saharan Africa . . . is [instead] verging on economic collapse.”⁷ Backed by prominent Black Americans, TransAfrica took the following stance:

We will oppose the Nigerian government with as much tenacity as we opposed the [former white] South African government, with as much tenacity as we opposed the military regime in Haiti. . . . It is not easy [for Black Americans] to openly criticize black leadership. It is uncomfortable and disquieting. But we are left with no alternative.⁸

A more expressive reaction on the part of Nigerians living in the U.S. immediately accompanied the TransAfrica uproar. A renowned Nigerian openly pondered: “What kind of society are we leaving behind for our children?”⁹ “Nigeria,” Wole Soyinka added, is a “vast prison yard;” its military leaders, a “terrorist gang.” Yet another stated: “being in the United States of America, the most powerful nation on earth, gives you all the tools to influence what happens in Nigeria.”¹⁰

Under what settings, then, can one evaluate Nigerian indices in the United States? Are American-based Nigerians unconsciously being prepared as the carriers of nation-state transformation back in the homeland? If so, how are the recurring circles of Black America shaping this development? In this paper I shall trace the development of Nigerians in the U.S. as part of an organic process in which traditional culture, vocational certainty, individualism, religion, tribal and ethnic allegiances, and American and the homeland crises have all converged as the measure of potentialities and crises. I will also attempt to show how the varying circles of Black America have impacted this development.¹¹

This study is divided into three parts. Part I begins with a brief historical overview of the Nigerian background and crises, thereafter showing the patterns of Nigerian immigration to the U.S. and their varying characteristics from 1970 to 1995. Part II analyzes the many ways in which Nigerians have attempted to adjust into the American mosaic, resulting in the emergence of a Nigerian community. Part III focuses on the three types of Nigerian leadership systems that have largely shaped, and continue to influence, their organizational structures in the United States. The study concludes with a summary of the major points addressed in the paper as well as suggestions for Nigerian economic and political empowerment in this country.

Part I: Patterns and Characteristics of Nigerian Immigration to the United States

Nigeria: A Brief Historical Overview

Nigeria came into being in 1914. In October 1960, Nigeria finally became an autonomous nation free from British colonial rule. With an estimated population of 100 million people, Nigeria

is the most populous nation in Africa. And, of its 250 varying ethnic confluences, the Moslem Hausa-Fulani peoples in the north constitute the largest population bloc, followed by the Yorubas in the southwest, the Ibos in the southeast who are mostly Christians, and other smaller ethnic. Luckily, Nigeria's differing dialectics are harnessed by the use of English as the official language of business and political transactions. This language factor is the most evident legacy of the British imperialism.

As the richest and the most populous African country, American interests in Nigeria have grown significantly since independence. The viability of Nigeria emerging as a pro-western democratic leader has been the cornerstone of American policies.¹² Since becoming an independent nation, Nigeria has had a closer economic relationship with the United States, especially in the realm of the oil business than any other sub-Sahara African country. In 1973, for instance, Nigeria emerged as a major oil supplier to the United States due to the Middle East war and the subsequent oil embargo that accompanied that crisis. Ali Mazrui documented that, "Had Nigeria joined in the Arab oil embargo in 1973-1974, the economic consequences for the United States would have been serious indeed."¹³ In the 1980s, Nigeria also occupied an important economic position with regard to the United States, largely because of its oil revenue.

Politically, however, the relationship between Nigeria and the United States has been strained. As Ali Mazrui noted, ambivalence existed between the two countries particularly during the eras of Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan. As the strongest economic power in Africa, Mazrui observed, American policies toward other parts of Africa required some consultation with the Nigerian government. Sadly, such was not the case. During the Nixon and Reagan presidencies, the relationship between the United States and Nigeria was often one of disagreement over issues of concern to the majority of Africans.¹⁴ These attitudes were largely governed by the Cold War belligerence and stratagem.

Of course, it is also possible that the absence of a substantive diplomatic base in Nigeria may have influenced how its relationship with the United States was coordinated. For example, during the mid-1970s and the 1980s, the activities and official attitudes of the Nigerian diplomatic corps in the U.S. revealed neither a clear perception nor a good understanding of the contextual and institutional dysfunction of Nigeria; neither did their attitudes reveal any clear mastery of the social crises of Nigerian immigrants.¹⁵ This ineffectual representation of Nigeria and Nigerian immigrants might have been a by-product of the crisis of the 1960s, which influenced both the decision of its eastern region to secede from the rest of the federation, directly resulting in the Nigerian Civil War.

So, in May 1967, eastern Nigeria, under Colonel Ojukwu, declared its new sovereignty as the “republic of Biafra.” It was this act which marked the climax of the Nigerian civil unrest and immediately triggered the so-called “War of Nigerian Unity.”¹⁶ By the time the “War of Nigerian Unity” began, “Biafra” had neither a clear strategy for resolving the central concerns of its varying smaller ethnic minorities, nor the precise forums to direct its interests in what would certainly have been an Ibo-centered government. By all the available criteria, “Biafra” was an experiment which a majority of Ibos nearly accepted while the peripheral but strategic minorities openly rejected.¹⁷ The euphoria of the northern Hausa-Fulani based federation to re-unite Nigeria lacked a concise vision of national direction; their initiative toward “Nigerian Unity,” through the creation of states along ethnic lines, seemed to be a basic strategy for dismembering Biafra. Fundamentally, the Nigerian Civil War lies in the irreconcilable backgrounds of the 1940s and 1950s.¹⁸

Thus, military intrusion in the affairs of Nigeria or their claim to save the republic from politicians who were ruining it,¹⁹ could not have meant that they would be more effective in directing the delicate marriage between culturally-dissimilar groups and regions. Even if the resulting “War

of Nigerian Unity” began with the understanding that national stability and pride in the oneness of Nigeria would be restored, evidence of such rationalization was long openly rejected.²⁰ From the beginning of the civil war in 1967 to its end in 1970, neither the resolute determination of the northern influenced federalism to re-unite the country, nor the Nigeria that emerged under their leadership applied itself properly to policies that would resolve the crises which directly led to war. The end of the war was rather remarkable for the emergence of a more structured ethno-centrism, along with accompanying mismanagement and corruption at the highest places of leadership.

But, in retrospect, the manner in which the first republic was terminated may explain why there is today a more direct Moslem Hausa-Fulani dominance of political power in Nigeria. The death tolls accompanying the first coup d'état dominated by Ibo military officers which affected the Moslem Hausa-Fulani Nigerians more than the Nigerian Christians further galvanized deep-seated suspicions and fears among the major political contenders. Worse still, the succeeding military government of General Aguiyi Ironsi failed to demonstrate a proper contextual mastery over the delicate set-up of the Nigerian peoples and regions. Predictably, his thrust toward a unitary government, amidst the existing political ferment, only helped to deepen the crisis and to increase the northern fears of a possible southern domination of the federation.²¹ General Ironsi's "unification decree" was totally at variance with the northern interests:

Despite enormous support in the South and the army for the abolition of regionalism and inauguration of a unitary state, the very mention of amalgamation with the south, other than on the basis of northern control, was enough to send the North on the war path, which was exactly what happened.²²

To surmise, however, that "the basis of northern control" alone explains the alternative to the "war path" in Nigeria is somewhat misleading. If the counter-military coup of 1967, dominated by

Hausa-Fulani officers, is seen as a direct reaction to the one dominated by Ibo military officers, the alternative to the “war path” may ultimately be traced to a web of irreconcilable ethno-regional differences that were simply compounded by the miscalculation accompanying the first coup d’état.²³ Furthermore, at stake was a much larger crisis of cultural variances in regard to regional politics and perception following the overthrow of the *first republic*. It might not have occurred readily to some sectors in Nigeria, particularly in the southeastern region, that a change of government which succeeded in eliminating principal political and cultural figures of the Hausa-Fulani dominated north was, by Islamic principles, an act of war. The strive toward a unitary government which could not diffuse the perceived variances in regional and cultural attitudes only added further aggravations to an historically sensitive intersection of Nigeria’s philosophical direction. Between 1943 and 1948, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) advocated “a federal system of government for Nigeria based strictly upon tribal unit.” But, according to James Coleman, “at the NCNC convention held at Kano in September 1951, the NCNC leaders suddenly decided to abandon federalism and switch to a unitarian position, because of their belief that the government and anti-NCNC Nigerians were using federalism as a cloak for dismembering Nigeria.”²⁴

By overthrowing the first Federal Military Government, the northern Hausa-Fulani ushered in leaders who have since dominated the political life of Nigeria. The northern military counter-offensive not only had a swift advantage over the weakness of the Ibo-dominated coup, but it brought along a clear and resolute will to influence the direction of the nation. Thus, it may be said that the present day crisis in Nigeria bears strong links to the built-in incrimination of its southern and northern peoples by the British in 1914. It is this background, perhaps more than any other, which directly impinges collaborative efforts toward national stability in Nigeria. Since the 1960s, Nigeria’s journey as a nation-state reflects the scope of its differing contentions and disparity in terms

of regional and national preferences.²⁵ Consequently, nation-state culture in Nigeria is highly dysfunctional because it has never been properly instituted and because it is deeply ingrained in vigorous tribalism and ethnocentrism.

Yet, the extent to which the preceding background—including official corruption, bribery, greed or excessive display of tribalism—justified even the overthrow of the *first Republic*²⁶ is still a subject of debate among Nigerians.²⁷ And often these debates have seemed irreconcilable. It is unimaginable that between 1960, when Nigeria became an autonomous nation, and 1966, when the military intervened, that its leaders could have mastered all of the complex terrains of a young nation-state that was more internalized within the tribal and ethnic centers of its citizenry. It is significant that, from the early to mid-1960s, what the British colonizers anticipated and strategically calculated by way of *indirect* and *direct* rule, Nigerians themselves were to hasten the consummation. This poor grasp of Nigeria's contextual incrimination, to a large extent, determines how Nigerians relate to their country, to each other, and to the vital course of international affairs in an era of explosive competition. If Nigeria's national crisis is more operative within its tribal and ethno-regional lanes, this is precisely because its center has for too long been paralysed by political opportunism among its hegemonic blocs.

Granted, since gaining its independence in 1960, Nigeria has moved through five different stages of government: military dictatorship (1966-1979), presidential democracy (1979-1983), military dictatorship (1983-1993), make-shift interim civilian/military government (1993), and back again to military dictatorship (1993). Either as a result of administrative expedience, or mere political juxtaposition, Nigeria, which only had four regional governments at the time the military came to power, now has thirty states governments. As Figure 1 shows, the "Multi-Statat Configuration of Nigeria"²⁸ is defined in accordance to ethno-regional impulses, not national ideology.

Figure 1. Map of Nigeria with its States



Source: Consulate General of Nigeria, *Nigeria Information Service*, 575 Lexington Avenue (New York: New York, 1994).

Confronted with incessant political metamorphoses, the absence of a stable center in Nigeria has meant further centrifugal crises for its diverse and differing populace. With poor management, misrule, and decline in its oil revenue and foreign exchange reserve in the 1980s, Nigeria accumulated a vast amount of debt, with liabilities in the millions.²⁹ For example, between 1985 and 1990, “Nigeria’s external debt” grew from \$12.7 million to \$35 billion.³⁰ By 1992, Nigeria’s mismanagement was much serious:

Nigeria has gone from the fertilities or riches of the 1960’s and 1970’s to the fallows or failures of the 1980’s. . . . The 1970’s brought abundant but ill-managed oil resources and revenue to Nigeria. The future of the 1980’s include the unabated sky rocketing public expenditures and the mismanagement of the funds thereof. Cost efficiency and cost effectiveness were utterly ignored.³¹

From the late 1970s, the deteriorating crises in Nigeria began to have a profound impact on Nigerians studying abroad. Once among the foremost group of immigrants to return home after their studies, they began to reverse that pattern. The devastating changes brought by military involvement in Nigeria also led many Nigerians to migrate in greater number to the United States. By the 1990s, these Nigerians represent the largest concentration of what Kofi Apraku correctly entitled, *African Emigres in the United States: A Missing Link in Africa’s Social and Economic Development*.³²

American Concentration and Immigration

As shown in Table 1, between 1960 and 1990, the general population of African immigrants in the United States increased rather rapidly. During the three decades preceding the 1990 Census, their population grew by 228 percent for the 1960-1969 period, 225 percent for the 1970-79, and 82 percent for the 1980-90 period.

Table 1
Population of African Immigrants in the United States
by Decade, <1960-1990

Decade	All Immigrants	African Immigrant	Percent Growth Increase among African Immigrants Over Previous Decade
<1960	9,738,091	18,737	
1961 - 1970	9,619,202	61,463	228%
1971 - 1980	14,079,906	199,723	225%
1981 - 1990	19,767,316	363,819	82%

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States Colonial Time Till 1970 (11)*—1980 Detailed Population Characteristics, Chapter D, *U.S. Summary*; “Socio-Economic Characteristics of the U.S. Foreign-Born Population,” detailed in Census Bureau Tabulation, Release CB84-17, *United States Department of Commerce News* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, October 17, 1984), Table 1, p. 5; and The Foreign Born population in the United States: 1990, CPH-L-98, *Ethnic and Hispanic Branch Population Division* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Commerce, 1980), Table 14, p. 85.

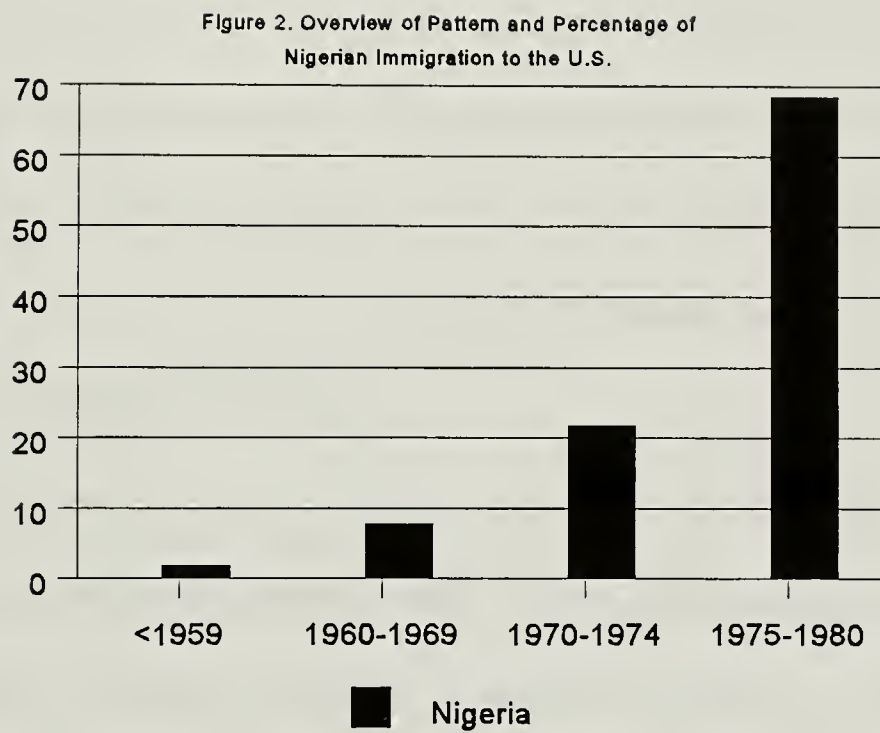
In 1980, Nigerians were the largest sub-Saharan African-born group (25,528), and those with the highest ancestry group figure (47,847) in the United States.³³ In 1990, Nigerians represented the largest African-born group (55,350) compared, for instance, to Ethiopians (34,805), South Africans (34,707), and Ghanaians (20,889).³⁴ Between 1980 and 1990, their growth level rose to 46 percent. Table 2 indicates that in 1990, when the sub-Saharan African “Ancestry Group” figures increased slightly by 0.1 percent, the Nigerian population (91,688) was the highest compared, for example, to Cape Verdean (50,772), Ethiopian (30,581), and Ghanaian (20,066). If the Nigerian ancestry group figure in 1980 was compared to that of 1990, the overall growth over that particular decade would be 31 percent.

Table 2
The Sub-Saharan African Ancestry Group
in the United States, 1990

African	Number of Individuals
Cape Verdean	50,722
Eritrean	4,270
Ethiopian	30,581
Ghanian	20,066
Kenyan	4,639
Liberian	8,797
Nigerian	91,688
Sierra Leonean	4,627
South African	17,992
Sudanese	3,623
Ugandan	2,681
African, others	20,607
Total	260,343

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, *1990 Census of Population: Supplementary Reports, 1990 CP-S-1.2, Detailed Ancestry Groups for States*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990), Table 2, p. 4.

As Figure 2 shows, there were three clearly identifiable waves of Nigerian immigration to the U.S. prior to the 1980s. During the first wave, Nigerians made up less than 10 percent of the total number of African-born immigrants in the U.S.³⁵ This background might imply that the Nigerian Civil War did not really result in an immediate emigration.



Source: Based on "Socio-Economic Characteristics of U.S. Foreign-Born Population" detailed in the Census Bureau Tabulation, *United States Department of Commerce News* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census [CB84-179], October 17, 1984), Table 1, p. 5.

The second wave of Nigerian immigration began between 1970-1974, with a strong leap in the numbers admitted to the U.S., ultimately raising their growth level to about 22 percent. It is possible that this sharp increase in the growth of Nigerian immigration was a by-product of the civil turbulence of the 1960s and the consequent oil boom economy accompanying the end of the Civil War. The early 1970s was a period when Nigeria enjoyed enormous wealth and when a sizeable number of its immigrants in American colleges and universities were either on federal government scholarships or were funded directly by their regional governments.³⁶ Additionally, the early 1970s pattern of Nigerian immigration was closely linked to the beginning of serious political and economic crises in Nigeria. This was the period when the Federal Military Government of Nigeria seriously

mismanaged the enormous oil resources of the country on policies that were inimical to Nigeria's future as a nation. As a result, the 1970-1974 wave of Nigerian immigration reflects a mixed group: those who were on government scholarships and those who were self-sponsored, and those who left Nigeria because of the mounting national crises that were to result in the overthrow of General Yakubu Gowon in 1975. The 1970-1974 configuration marked the very first clearly-identifiable phase of Nigerian concentration in America.

The period between 1975 and 1980 marked the third wave of Nigerian immigration to the U.S. During this phase, immigrants admitted to the U.S. from Nigeria recorded well over 68 percent (see Figure 2), compared to Angola, for instance, with almost 70 percent.³⁷ Like their predecessors, Nigerians who migrated to the U.S. during that period were mostly students. Taken as a block, the second and third waves of Nigerian immigration constitute a major proportion of their American build-up. The bulk of these predominantly student immigrants did not all return home after their studies; they were to form the nucleus of the Nigerian community in the United States. The third wave of Nigerian immigration can be explained in terms of ancestral linkages with Black America. For example, when Black America voted approvingly for Jimmy Carter in 1976, his resultant policies generated internal changes more favorable to African Americans and African states. In retrospect, the African build-up in that period reflected the kind of domestic and international policies which the Carter Administration generated.³⁸

The pattern of African immigration during the 1970s shows that Nigerians were the most identifiable group with wide ranging national support for further studies in the U.S. During the 1979-1980 academic year, Nigeria alone sent more college and university students to the U.S. than any other country in Africa; its 16,000 student body represented 37 percent of their ancestry group.³⁹

Also, these Nigerians had substantially higher educational statuses, particularly among the sub-Saharan African groups in the U.S.: 96.7 percent had their high school diplomas while 48.7 percent were college graduates.⁴⁰

From the early 1980s, however, the official U.S. immigration policy toward the so-called Third World began to be stricter. During this period, the allotment accorded to African immigrants compared, for example, to the Asians and Europeans also became smaller.⁴¹ It is not surprising that Nigerians admitted to the U.S. between the mid-1980s and early 1990s were those in such highly-skilled specialties as the medical and technical sciences, academia, and administrative positions.⁴² Only a very small number were in non-technical fields and fewer still had student visas.⁴³

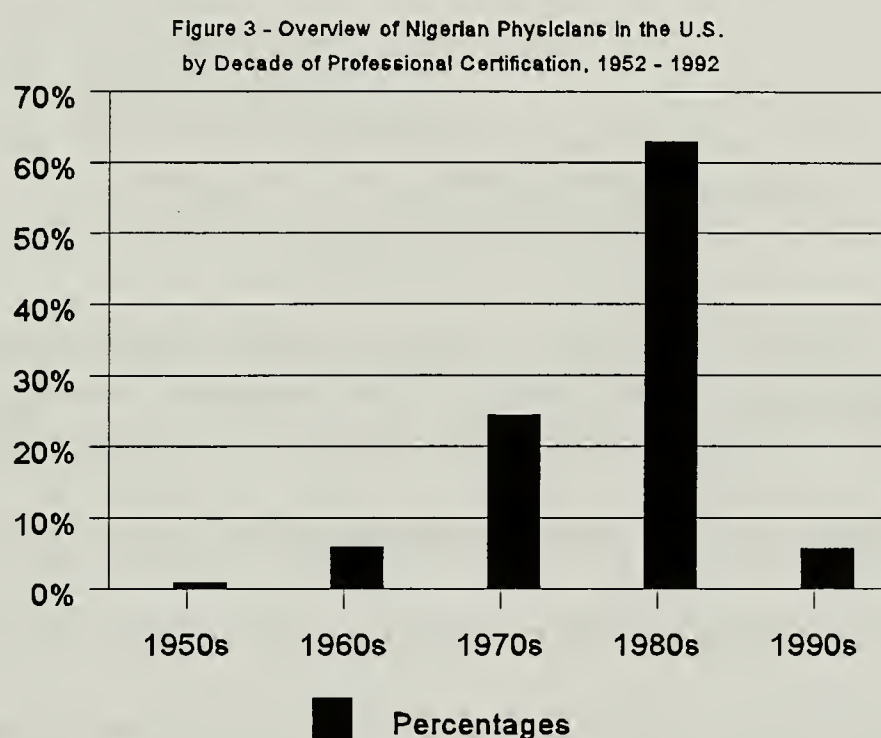
Table 3 shows the number of Nigerian physicians practicing in the United States by region of professional certification. Based on the data in Table 3, more than 1,300 Nigerian physicians were recorded in practice in the U.S. as of 1994.⁴⁴ Of this number 60 percent were trained in Africa, 34 percent in America, and 5 percent in Europe.

Table 3
Nigerian Physicians in the United States
by Number and Regions of Professional Certification,
1952-1992

Region of Professional Certification	Number	Percentage
Africa	789	60%
America	446	34%
Europe	60	5%
Middle East	14	1%
Russia	5	.4%
Total	1,314	

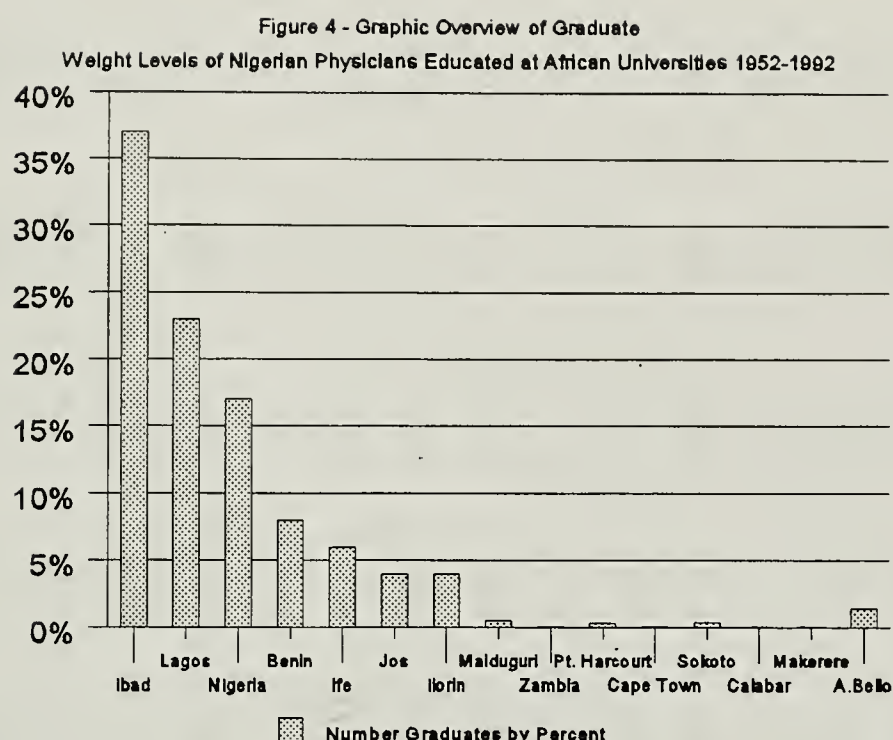
Source: Yinka Shoroye and Acho Emeruwa (Eds.), *Directory of Nigerian Physicians in the United States* (Riverside, CA: Nigerian Medical Directory, 1994), pp. 1-102.

About 24 percent of Nigerian physicians currently practicing in the U.S. were certified in the 1970s, while a majority, representing 64 percent, were certified in the 1980s (see Figure 3). Thus, the likelihood of an American emigration, particularly for those trained in traditional African medical schools, must have been at an all time high during the 1980s and thereafter.



Source: Graphic tabulation is based on data from the *Directory of Nigerian Physicians in the United States*, The Nigerian Medical Directory (Riverside, CA: Author, 1994) pp. 5-102.

In fact, if one were to examine the crisis in Nigeria more critically, the links between years of professional certification of Nigerian or African-trained physicians and American emigration would have been much clearer. For example, as shown in Figure 4, a majority of these physicians came from the more established medical schools in Nigeria: University of Ibadan (over 35 percent), University of Lagos (over 20 percent), and University of Nigeria, Nsukka (over 15 percent).



Source: Graphic tabulation is based on data from the *Directory of Nigerian Physicians in the United States*, The Nigerian Medical Directory, (Riverside, CA: Author, 1994) pp. 5-102.

Apart from some intermittent leads by Ethiopia during the 1981-1995 period, more Nigerians were admitted to the U.S. than any other sub-Saharan African group (see Table 4). This pattern of immigration can best be described as the “merging” of the first, second, and third waves that also incorporates a succession of related waves that came much later. What this meant is that a majority of Nigerians in the first, second and third waves (1960s-70s) who did not return home after their studies were among the first to establish their base on American soil and that those who were still students also settled along similar pattern upon completion of their studies.

Consequently, the fourth wave of immigration began from the early to mid-1980s as the political and economic turbulence in Nigeria deepened. This wave of emigration consisted mostly of American-educated Nigerians who had returned to Nigeria when the country was in a more stable condition. With despair and increasing instability, they seized upon the slightest opportunity available to emigrate back to the U.S.

Table 4
Major Sub-Saharan African Immigrants Admitted to the U.S., 1981-1994

Countries	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Angola	144	126	116	146	120	116	146	110	143	141	132	107	92	75	81
Cameroon	69	95	92	145	123	130	132	157	187	380	452	236	262	305	506
Ethiopia	1749	1810	2643	2461	3362	2737	2156	2571	3389	4336	5127	4602	5191	3887	5960
Ghana	951	824	976	1050	1041	1164	1120	1239	2045	4466	3330	1867	1604	1458	3152
Guinea	16	27	23	11	17	21	26	33	45	67	84	91	102	97	289
Ivory Coast	28	29	54	55	57	55	63	78	98	184	347	259	250	268	10
Kenya	657	601	710	753	735	719	698	773	910	1297	1185	953	1065	1017	1419
Liberia	556	593	518	585	618	618	622	769	1175	2004	1292	999	10500	166	1929
Nigeria	1918	2257	2354	2337	2846	2976	3278	3343	5213	8843	7912	4551	4448	3950	6618
Senegal	65	74	71	59	91	91	92	130	141	537	869	135	178	213	506
S. Africa	1559	1434	1261	1246	1210	1566	1741	1832	1899	1990	1854	2516	2197	2144	2560
Sierra Leone	277	283	319	368	371	323	453	571	939	1290	951	693	690	698	919
Tanzania	423	304	364	418	395	370	385	388	507	635	500	352	426	357	524
Uganda	410	304	332	369	301	401	357	343	393	674	538	437	415	391	383
Zaire	77	87	101	85	109	135	102	139	140	256	238	196	233	237	355
Zambia	165	165	160	146	169	168	161	182	259	209	228	210	225	198	222
Zimbabwe	167	162	193	200	222	221	252	216	230	272	261	296	308	246	299
Total	9231	9175	10287	10434	11787	11590	11784	12874	17713	23115	25300	18500	18736	15707	25732
Total Africa	15029	14314	15084	15540	17117	17463	17724	18882	25166	35893	36197	27086	27783	26712	42456

Source: United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Statistics and Demographics Branch* (Washington, D.C., 1981-1995).

The fifth wave of Nigerian immigration included those mostly educated in Nigeria, or outside the American system, who emigrated to the U.S. due to the same turmoil which compelled their American-trained counterparts to flee the country. A more recent and evolving phenomenon, the sixth wave of Nigerian immigration, is comprised of political exiles who, fearing persecution for harboring views that are contradictory to the ruling military dictatorship, are fleeing in increasing number. The fifth and sixth waves represent the most direct loss of educated man power drain to Nigeria.⁴⁵

One major difference between Nigerians who emigrated to the United States prior to the fifth migration wave and those who came afterwards is that a sizeable number of them—like their foreign-born counterparts, particularly those with technical and medical training—are often required to undergo further professional training or orientation, depending on their fields. Others who had studied in fields not directly explicable to the American job market are primarily among those returning to either full-time or part-time schooling to re-orient their earlier backgrounds, or even to take up new professions altogether. Although a large number of Nigerians in the United States are either American-educated or have come under the direct influences of American institutions, their numerical edge does not constitute substantive power. Of the 131,487 naturalized African-born Americans in the U.S. between 1950 and 1994, only 13,544 were Nigerians.⁴⁶

An understanding of the contextual distribution of Nigerian immigrants is crucial at this point. This is necessary because Nigerian establishments are not truly united in terms of interaction among their varying groups, nor in terms of linkages within Black or mainstream America. While their American concentration reflects serious splits within their predominantly southern build-up, their income status, which has improved significantly since the 1970s,⁴⁷ appears to have accelerated their power.

Nigerians in the Southern United States

It is in the southern United States that the fullest scope of the Nigerian dynamics can be gauged. The make-up of this southern heartland reflects not only an understanding of favorable geographic, economic and population settings of Black America, but a necessary leaning towards its institutional mechanisms. To be sure, while these factors are found in other regions, they are more directly identifiable in the south where Nigerians can be defined culturally and demographically along African-American lines. Incidentally, immigrants from southern Nigeria constitute the largest bloc of this Nigerian settlement in the south (or the entire United States). This might imply that the population of Nigerians from northern Nigeria in the U.S. is not as much. If so, the emphasis is that, given the ascendancy of the predominantly northern Hausa-Fulani based leadership in the homeland, their adherents who are more likely to fare better within the system are also less likely to emigrate.

Table 5 shows that Nigerians have a much broader distribution across the major geographical regions than their counterparts. They are concentrated more in the South (26,033), South Atlantic (13,614), Northeast (13,501), Middle Atlantic (11,202), South Central (10,693), Midwest (8,053), and the Pacific (6,669). Taken as a block, the entire southern geographical landscapes control more than half of the population of Nigerian immigrants. This strong southward pull can be explained by geography, economics, and cultural history. Likewise, these regions have a large concentration of African Americans as well as Black colleges, Black political action groups, and cultural and economic centers catering to the Black community.

Table 5

CENSUS POPULATION OF MAJOR FOREIGN BORN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICANS IN THE UNITED STATES, BY
AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS, BY NON-CITIZENSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP, 1990

COUNTRIES	NO. FOREIGN BORN	NATURAL- IZED CITIZEN	NOT A CITIZEN	M. EAST	SOUTH	MIDDLE ATLAN- TIC	WEST	SOUTH ATLAN- TIC	MID- WEST	NEW ENGLAND	SOUTH CENT- RAL	E. N. CENT- RAL	PA- CIFIC	W. N. CENT- RAL	E. S. CENT- RAL	W. S. CENT- RAL
AFRICA	363,819	123,933	239,886	123,760	115,619	89,789	82,902	77,026	41,538	33,971	32,418	30,350	73,301	11,188	6,175	9,601
ANGOLA	2,252	871	1,381	1,471	272	685	416	226	93	786	30	90	360	3	16	56
CAHROON	3,161	453	2,698	612	1,943	371	178	1,309	428	241	574	271	156	157	60	22
ETHIOPIA	34,805	6,900	27,905	4,661	14,154	3,378	11,918	10,464	4,072	1,283	3,225	2,496	10,536	1,576	465	1,382
GHANA	20,889	5,180	15,709	9,751	6,596	8,426	2,045	5,018	2,497	1,325	1,378	2,019	1,780	478	200	265
KENYA	14,371	3,743	10,628	3,491	5,244	2,704	3,530	3,080	2,106	787	1,882	1,559	3,292	547	282	238
LIBERIA	11,455	2,713	8,742	5,021	4,052	3,688	891	3,126	1,491	1,333	761	884	826	607	165	65
NIGERIA	55,350	10,036	45,314	13,501	26,033	11,202	7,763	13,614	8,053	2,299	10,693	5,918	6,669	2,135	1,726	1,094
SENEGAL	2,287	332	1,955	1,484	374	1,228	284	304	145	256	56	116	253	79	14	31
SIERRA LEONE	7,217	1,259	5,958	1,954	3,853	1,603	843	3,171	567	351	552	351	801	216	130	42
SOMALIA	2,437	667	1,770	701	1,128	484	397	920	211	217	163	133	299	78	45	98
SOUTH AFRICA	34,707	13,537	21,170	8,566	9,900	5,978	12,577	5,824	3,664	2,588	3,225	2,785	10,989	879	851	1,588
TANZANIA	6,282	2,466	3,816	1,701	2,166	1,439	1,695	1,636	720	262	457	595	1,418	175	73	277
UGANDA	6,684	2,403	4,281	1,929	2,040	1,373	1,303	1,454	1,412	556	478	1,109	1,189	303	108	114
ZAIRE	3,387	735	2,652	806	1,396	633	662	1,175	523	173	199	298	563	225	22	99
ZAMBIA	2,954	808	2,146	524	1,104	408	830	710	496	116	294	345	773	151	106	57
ZIMBABWE	4,767	1,373	3,394	1,106	1,568	851	1,575	871	518	255	510	327	1,313	191	187	262
																510

Source: Susan J. Lapham, "The Foreign Born Population in the United States: 1990 (CPH-L-98)," *Ethnic and Hispanic Branch* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990), Table 13, pp. 21-33.

Within the southern confluence, the Nigerian-owned and pastored churches are the most effective nerves of ancestral rejuvenation with African Americans.⁴⁸ If the total number of African churches in the U.S. were tabulated, the Nigerian-owned churches would certainly be one the largest.

In fact, it has been observed that

the Nigerian churches have approximated the African-American base with a certain degree of success; and may even become the nerve center for the spiritual rejuvenation of Afrocentricism linking African Americans and Nigerians as the larger carrier of Pan African renewal.⁴⁹

African Americans who attend these Nigerian-owned churches see some of them as emanating from the not-too-altered Africanity of their century-lost kindred cohesion.⁵⁰ There are other reasons for the latter development, however. First, and by far the most important, nearly all Nigerian churches in the U.S. operate under the auspices of the *Euro-American Judeo-Christian setting*. Second, these churches use English as the official language of worship, so African Americans who attend the services have an easier time assimilating. Third, some African Americans who attend these churches are married to Nigerians; hence, along with their American-born offspring, they represent an effective organ of direction. This is a two-way flow of ancestral exchange because some Nigerians are also regular supporters of the Black church.

African Americans who attend Nigerian-owned churches are harnessed into a simple but instructive instrument of ancestral solidarity. In this development, Nigerian church owners may have been fortunate. As confidence in traditional American-patterned churches erodes, due perhaps to excessive displays of racism and materialism, African Americans who fully accept the message of Afrocentricism are more spontaneous in their response to and relationship with the churches of their ancestral kin. This type of development is more likely to be seen among Nigerian churches which lay

claims to “messianic mission” from the “motherland to Black America.” The *Brotherhood of the Cross and Star Church* is a good example of a Nigerian church in the U.S. which has attempted to explain its missions in terms of messianic imperatives sometimes closely linked to the southern Black base. Unlike other Nigerian churches, the “Messianic” imperatives of the Brotherhood church appear to be a basic reconstruction of the notion of Christian deification of Jesus Christ. Within its Christian rituals, an African essence of the origin of its “Holy Father Olumba Olumba Obu,” and a Nigerian incarnation of the “Word” sometimes overtake the established canons of the Western-world’s notion of “Christ”. But both in Nigeria and in the U.S., despite the fact that the Brotherhood attracts people from all racial and class backgrounds, and has a world-wide representation, it is a phenomenon that many Nigerians are likely to show some mixed feelings about.⁵¹ Founded by Leader Olumba Olumba Obu, and headquartered in Calabar, Nigeria, this church has been in the United States since 1971.⁵²

The spectrum of ancestral relationship of the Brotherhood church within the southern Black belt provides an important basis for understanding how a particular dynamic of the Nigerian culture has attempted to shape African Africans. Its Messianic rhetoric, as reflected in *The Herald Of The New Kingdom*, has been compared to that of Dr. Martin Luther King who vigorously protested racist and discriminatory practices in the U.S. towards minority groups. However, three decades after the Civil Rights Movement,

. . . the world still looks hamstrung; and the living can bear true testimony to Luther King that peaceful co-existence has eluded man after all.

Thus, man appears powerless when faced with oddities: life now seems useless to him. Global economic recession, political instability and social inequality now experienced by man, is borne out of his desire to acquire for himself all the rich bounties of nature. The results . . . are violence [and] hunger. . . .⁵³

Olumba Olumba Obu declared:

Do not preach division and segregation. Do not say that some people are not [brothers] or that some are not children of God, but rather preach that all human beings are brothers whether they be Moslems or Christians, Buddhist, or Hinduism, or Bahal, or Necromancer. . . . Do not base your assignment on the color of your body or on name, or place but know that we are all one through the spirit, and brethren, who should love one another.⁵⁴

To Bishop James C. Ellerbe, the notion of “The Stone the Builders Rejected,” forms the core of the rejuvenation of Blacks, the fulfillment of “History”, and the coming of “God to the Rescue.” This trend, Bishop Ellerbe would argue, bore more directly to the strong consciousness among African Americans about their ancestral homeland, as evidenced, for example, by changes of their names.⁵⁵ It is, then, the historical crisis of Black America which compelled the “Messianic” mission of leader Olumba Olumba Obu:

The Holy Spirit has now descended on this earthly plane in human form, bearing the resemblance of one whose hairs are like wool, eyes like flames of fire and feet like brass. Leader Olumba Olumba Obu having fulfilled that entity, is now telling the world to embrace the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star which is the new Kingdom of God; now on earth. The Holy Father also fulfills the text of Isaiah 63:1-2.⁵⁶

Coincidentally, the development of “Black America,” which began in the church, appears consummated by Bishop Ellerbe’s message that the Holy Spirit incarnated had now descended to earth in person. Whether realistically, or even fanatically, some Black Americans have been led back to Nigeria, while others have been elected as carriers of the prophetic horn. As one admirer stated:

Prior to mid-April, this year [1988], neither I nor anyone I know in Atlanta University Center had heard of Olumba Olumba Obu, Biahapan, Nigeria, “Kingdom of God on Earth”, or Brotherhood of the Cross and Star. Then, on a rainy afternoon, many students of my faculty heard about the Afrocentric Christianity that contains ideas, aspirations, and traditions that are strange and wonderful to our ears as well as give solace to our hearts. . . . Now, those numerous students, the department’s student-majors and faculty, student’s friends . . . other teachers have heard about Olumba Olumba Obu . . . and I know that virtually everyone wants to hear more!⁵⁷

Surprisingly, the preceding emphasis does not quite imply that Nigerian immigrants and African Americans have been able to evolve effective mechanisms of ancestral empowerment in the U.S. If they are culturally and demographically aligned, they are markedly dissimilar in some critical characteristics even as two related and historically affected groups; both cultural and socio-economic forces determine how the two kindred groups perceive each other.⁵⁸ Along with other reasons,⁵⁹ therefore, the southern concentration of Nigerians exhibits a loose communal settlement along African-American lines. Unlike Asian, Latino, and European immigrants who often settle along their ancestral lanes, in the south or elsewhere in the U.S., Nigerians are neither consciously organized under a neighborhood-based structure among themselves or side by side with African Americans, nor are they emboldened by the mainstream notion of an American amalgam. Seriously seeking to assimilate but rejected despite their higher educational status, their hard-won success, which is part of the all-time “American myth of the triumph of the common man,”⁶⁰ warrants greater pathos as it bears directly on how they have attempted to rise above the social ostracism and denigration which confront them to participate in the free enterprise system.

Part II: Toward A Nigerian Community: Adjusting into the American Mosaic

Similar to other sub-Saharan African immigrants, as Nigerians became entrenched as a largely “voluntary exile” group, they began to show greater interest in settling in the United States and in gaining citizenship. The policy of the Nigerian government which allows dual citizenship for its citizens living abroad has made it easier for them to re-orient themselves more effectively between the two worlds.⁶¹ The fact that the Nigerian federal government did not recognize dual citizenship

for its citizens until 1990 may have accounted for the low rate of Nigerians who have U.S. citizenship.

The most expedient angle of refocusing which Nigerian immigrants have undertaken in the U.S. has been in their occupational choices. In the 1970s when the political ferment in Nigeria was less turbulent and the oil wealth was the plausible magnet for American courtship, most American universities flooded the Nigerian regions with applications for students who responded enthusiastically by coming to the "New World".⁶² This was a period when the average Nigerian immigrant sought a degree granted by an American institution due to its perceived economic and social status back in the homeland. This was also the period when Nigerian immigrants had more *faith* in university degrees.⁶³ As the hope for educational reward began to wane in the early to mid-1980s, due to the political crisis in Nigeria, a small number of Nigerian students who were stranded and who could not adjust readily became more directly susceptible to some negative American lifestyles. The latter development might have been influenced by the social and immigration policies proposed and implemented during the Reagan Administration.

Also, either as a consequence of limited economic viability within the American confluence, or even racism, the social circumstances which confronted Nigerians during that period drastically reduced their level of productivity. With neither the right job experience after their training, nor the necessary financial base to function independently in a capitalist society, this class of educated but largely underutilized Nigerians began a slow but painful retreat into self re-discovery.⁶⁴ In their exploration, perhaps unconsciously, they rediscovered patterns of survival mechanisms typical of 19th century Black America when the compulsions of Euro-American racism implied that the Negroes had to develop technical and industrial skills for their economic survival.⁶⁵ Pressed by the demand for

technical skills as a survival stratagem, some Nigerians went back to school and “traded” their bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate degrees for associate degrees in economically high-demand fields such as electronics, auto mechanics, nursing and electrical engineering.⁶⁶ This sad realization led Ken Igboanugo to lament that “[i]t is unfortunate for Nigerians to have spent four years or more getting the college degree(s) before realizing . . . the job market requires . . . a very smart move.”⁶⁷

If the job market strategies for Nigerians implied an adjustment through community colleges for the necessary survival skills, their relationship to universities implied more control over their occupational independence and status:

Today in America, Nigerians who focus on technical education are the beneficiaries of the opportunities of this land. . . . Those who remain in the areas of academic are doing fairly well. However, those with technical knowledge are even more enterprising.

The technicians like plumbers and auto mechanics are investing their skill in the challenge of America—the land of opportunity. Realizing that there is no free lunch in America, they have taken out time to evaluate the reality of living in America: what Nigerians ought to be doing.⁶⁸

The particular case of a Nigerian, chef Abu Abukokha Amed, of Philadelphia, is worthy of note here for Chef Abu’s background offers a more explicit overview of the general trend of the refocusing of Nigerian immigrants in the 1980s. Chef Abu himself observed that:

Back in the 1980s, the first thing I noticed upon my arrival in the U.S. was the near total lack of African restaurants, despite the fact that America had a sizeable population of continental Africans.⁶⁹

So, after graduating with a bachelor’s degree in business management, Abu, who was immediately absorbed by the “Bloomingdale’s department store” as a sales person, began to explore “what venture was most promising in terms of financial security and satisfaction.”⁷⁰ Assured that he

could apply his background in business studies to a restaurant-based exploit, he began his “lunch-truck business” on a “trial and error” basis. To further acquaint himself with the kind of make-shift business dynamics he intended to pursue, Abu started selling such American fast food as “hot dogs, cheese, hot sausages, and things like that.” Then, after mastering the market and determining his potential audience, he made a very personal but important decision: “I . . . decided to sell what other traders did not provide—African food; this was the only chance I saw open to me for economic survival. And so I started selling the so-called ethnic food.”⁷¹

Kwame Okoampa-Ahoafe, Jr., chronicler of “Chef Abu of Philadelphia,” indicated that, when Abu began to count his triumphs, he never forgot those who helped “to make me what I am today.” Underneath Abu’s pleasant and personable ways of not forgetting the human forces that were instrumental in his success was a most revealing aspect of the kind of social adjustment undertaken by most Nigerians in the 1980s. As Abu stated,

You know, I never thought I was going to end up working in a food truck . . . my *traditional African mentality* taught me that a scholar should always work at a white-collar job. This attitude prevented me, for a long time, from seeing myself the way I am today.⁷²

Accompanying the success of Nigerians’ adjustment were efforts to organize themselves into their national settings within the American mosaic. They not only started to extrapolate the beauty of their cultural diversity to the mosaic, but, along with their inherent entrepreneurial spirit, they began to stamp their marks on society. Table 6 shows various types of cultural groups that cater to the general direction of Nigerian cultures in the United States.

Table 6
Sample Profiles of Nigerian-U.S. Based
Entertainment and Cultural Groups

African Network TV, LA	Atlantic Club of Greater Kansas City, Kansas City, KS
The Majestic Ekimogun Club, USA, Inc., Providence, RI	Nigerian Cultural Association, St. Louis, MO
Calabar Cultural Dance Club, Washington, D.C.	People Club of Nigeria, USA Branch, Houston, TX
The Greater Owerri Club, Houston, TX	African Herald, Dallas, TX
Enugu State Women Cultural Group, Houston, TX	African News Weekly, Charlotte, NC
Oyemekun International Club, USA, Inc., Baltimore, MD	African Business Source, Houston, TX
Nigerian Club International, Seattle, WA	African Imagination, Houston, TX
Fredimo Cross Cultural Production, Philadelphia, PA	African Fabric and Accessories, Atlanta, GA
The Nigerian Foundation, Houston, TX	African Profiles, New York
Igbo Language Service, Washington, D.C.	People's Club of Nigeria, Houston, TX
The Nigerian Club of Tampa, FL	The Nigerian Family, Sicklerville, NJ
Itsekiri Cultural Club, Southern California	The Wazobia Club, Washington, D.C.
The Ogor Okpalá Women's Cultural Group, Houston	Nigerian Club, USA, Hackensack, NJ
Umuahia Cultural Dance, Houston, TX	Nigerian Power Club, Washington, D.C.
Owo Heritage Club, Dallas, TX	The Nigerian Democratic Alliance, Washington, DC
Nigerian Eagle Soccer Club, Inc., Washington, D.C.	Global African Independent Cable TV Network
Akwa Ibom State Women Association, Houston, TX	Readville, MA

Source: Exploratory Survey of Nigerians in Major U.S. Cities (1990-1995).

There can be no doubt then that nearly all the tools needed for the development of a Nigerian community in the United States were fairly well in place by the early 1980s. By the mid-1980s, Nigerians were already well ahead of the fact that the decisive questions in America's civic and democratic future were those concerning whether it would be truly possible to incorporate ideas of multi-cultural inclusiveness. In fact, by the late 1980s, they had already envisioned the context of their American interaction and their efforts in the realm of entertainment, cultures and economics were beginning to rest on the certain but complicated foothold that Julia Teresa Quiroz discussed in her book, *Together in Our Differences*.⁷³ These Nigerians understood that changing and forging a social contract that is imaginative and inclusive within the American confluence would require much assertiveness, due to the racial crisis of American society. To them, the varying concept of America's multi-cultural inclusiveness, or even its exclusiveness, was not very difficult to fathom. Even those

of them who did not understand had other ways of responding. But, those who understood immediately saw their proximity to Black America as an important foothold to explore opportunities. With emerging economic implications of Afrocentric renaissance, these Nigerians were among the first to discover that African Americans were interested in African artifacts and Afrocentric wares, and could become important liaisons in the effort to market the African identity. By the mid-1980s, the bulk of their cultural mechanisms was readily identifiable within the Black base, both as a natural impulse of its ancestral relationship as well as an imperative of *racial* identity.⁷⁴

Thus, by the early 1990s, the grounds for optimism with regards to the success of Nigerian adjustment into the American culture were fairly obvious in cities like Houston, Dallas, and Atlanta. At the present time, the communal dynamics of Nigerian immigrants can be seen in how they have harnessed the American free enterprise zone with its blend of individualism along with their inherent aggressiveness for survival. The fact that today there are many Nigerian-owned businesses and private property in such heavily-populated cities like Atlanta, Dallas, Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, New York, Washington, D.C., and Houston is an eloquent testimony to the emergent strength of Nigerians within the American capitalist system. For these are highly-populated industrial centers of the U.S., where there exist unmistakable evidences of Nigerian professionals in the computers, law, academics, automobile dealership, medicine and the real estate industry. These are also centers where Nigerian professionals are often seen displaying their hard-won success in such grandiose styles as the kinds of cars they drive, the neighborhoods in which they live, their style of dressing, and even accentuation to the names of universities or colleges they had attended.

Today, many Nigerians who reside in the United States have acquired the material status that has surpassed that of many Americans.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, if the version of free enterprise and

individualism to which Nigerian immigrants have adapted themselves is inherent in the American cultural psyche, it is also based on that of their homeland background. That is, they have adopted their traditional ethics to the American setting and transformed them. As Ali Mazrui writes, capitalism among Nigerians “is relatively assured” due to their “vigorous level of individualism,” and because they have a “highly developed acquisitive culture.”⁷⁶ But, in Nigeria, Mazrui also notes, there is an “underlying attachment to liberal values [which] embodies structural pluralism in the society, diversity of power centers ethnically, regionally, and in terms of religious differentiation.”⁷⁷ Thus, the idea of individualism as it touches on the character of Nigerians and Americans is as similar as it differs operationally. While a typical American individualist, for example, often isolates himself or herself into a personal world,⁷⁸ the Nigerian isolates more into his tribe or ethno-national settings. While an American operates more on the level of selfhood and very often recognizes the essence of the nation as a necessary umbrella,⁷⁹ the Nigerian operates more within the tribal and ethno-regional point of selfhood and often compromises the essence of the nation.⁸⁰ The character of hard work, therefore, forms a much clearer picture of similarity between the two distant cultural groups. Yet, the strong consciousness of tribalism and ethnocentrism of Nigerian immigrants does not really imply that the idea of their national center is lost; but rather that their varying languages, tribal and ethno-regional aspirations, which have lacked focussed leadership, are often in conflict with the direction of the Nigerian nation. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Nigerian community is still very unstable within the scattered debris of the American mosaic.

Part III: Leadership in the Nigerian Community⁸¹

By the early 1980s, three phases of leadership were visible among Nigerians in America, and continue to exist in their organizational structures. They are: the Ethnic-Conscious Leadership, the Elected-Type Leadership, and the Attorney- or Representative-Type Leadership.

● **Ethnic-Conscious Leadership**

The ethnic-conscious leadership of Nigerian immigrants, which reflects a strong consciousness ethnic affiliations, is made of community brethren who are senior members of the community. Usually charismatic, knowledgeable, and wise about the traditional values of their people, ethnic-conscious leaders are not always democratically-elected in the manner in which the Western world defines the concept. Yet, the process for nominating them implies nomination with the full consent of the clansmen, and the consent of the clansmen becomes a vehicle for using traditional modalism to harness democratic mannerisms. As pivotal traditional links to the needs of their ethnic community, these leaders serve as immediate rallying centers and support transfers in times of crisis. Among Nigerians in this class are those who are highly educated and those who are in good standing within their clansmen communities, some of whom are addressed by the official title of “chief”.

Depending on the traditional set-up of a given community, ethnic-conscious leadership often reflects the brunt of a carry-over of tradition from the homeland; that is, there are Nigerians in this class who would still have been leaders even if they were not in the U.S. The fact that they left their native communities for further studies in the U.S. does not abrogate being recalled home to assume traditional responsibilities. If they are in the U.S., this becomes an asset to those who recognize and rely on them. Some Nigerians in this class have had to step down from academia to take up their rightful titles as traditional rulers back home.⁸²

Luckily, some of the specificities governing how ethnic-conscious leaders are nominated or elected have the merit of defeating the wider conflict of the “tyranny of the majority” inherent in traditional Western models of democratic leadership.⁸³ But, leadership within this ethnic enclave is where Nigerians, perhaps more unconsciously, are more likely to be drawn away from their national center as well.

In the event there is no rightful figure to rally his clansmen, the role of an ethnic-conscious leader can be assumed through consultations with clansmen. It is wrong for any Nigerian to assume the role of an ethnic-conscious leader without the consent of the people. This is because group solidarity among Nigerians is much stronger within their ethnic bases than within larger national relationships. Whether democratically elected or chosen in accordance with existing traditional norms, ethnic-conscious leaders are very much effective within their specific ethnic group as well as the larger ethno-regional sector.

At this point, an explanation may suffice as to why the ethnic-conscious leadership is seen as a powerful mechanism among Nigerian immigrants. First, Nigerians are strongly aligned along ethnic lanes. Their approximation to one another, as to language, cultures and traditional customs, compounds a much-needed sense of trust not readily evident in their spurious center. Second, the essence of ethnic-conscious leadership, by itself, reflects the real brunt of the historical crisis of sub-nationalism back in Nigeria and among American-based Nigerians. Seen in this context, it is the consciousness of the ethnic kinfolds, as well as the hegemonization of regional power at the center, that is the major carrier of the ethnic-conscious leadership.⁸⁴ One sees also in this web of complex setting that without any concise line of national community, the *soul* of the country is bound to become exhausted through the gruesome journey from specific ethnic enclaves to the larger ethnic regions and to the national center.

Overall, on matters of national interests, both the peripheral and hegemonic blocs of an ethnic leadership have to converge through a democratic process to examine relevant issues. Thus, efforts to direct ethnic clansmen on larger issues of traditional values, regional well-being, and the nation are the very imperatives which make ethnic-based leaders circumspect to a composite democratic assemblage, markedly dissimilar from the much limited community-clansmen type. It is not, therefore, unusual for ethnic-based leaders to embody the real crux of democratic leadership at the larger apex of sub-regional and national movements of Nigerian immigrants.

It seems to be this strong ethnical cleavage of Nigerians along petty “Multi-Statal” lines, as Kwame Ahoofa, Jr, would argue,⁸⁵ which justifies their balkanization back in the homeland as well as compels the elective contest of an ethnic-based leadership in the U.S. Against the imperatives of regional variations, these leaders often attempt to fashion their roles in such a democratic manner as will include all the inter-related interest groups within the region(s). Through elective representation, often governed by a written constitution, their leadership has proven effective in directing ethnic affiliates within the specific clansmen’s enclaves and within wider geographical lanes.

- **Elected-Type Leadership**

In contrast to the ethnic-conscious leadership, the elected-type leadership is more operationally an elected body of Nigerian immigrants with the Nigerian national outlook at the core. Unlike the elective rampart of ethnic-conscious leadership, elected-type leadership is more likely to rely on a working constitution to frame memberships’ aspirations. Like the ethnic-conscious leadership, however, the very fact of cultural and regional diversity of Nigerians creates a composite climate for inter-group conflict and coalition for the alternately aspiring democratic tenet of

leadership. While not claiming to be ethno-centric, elected-type leadership attempts to espouse its mission in terms of linkages that cut across regional lanes to the national center. But since ethnic consciousness is very strong among Nigerians, it also exudes with a vivid sense of ethnic and regional pandering.⁸⁶

At the very least, the elected-type leadership of Nigerian immigrants is more definitive in terms of duration of time required for service. Governing officers who are not trustworthy in the eyes of their electorates either voluntarily resign at the end of their tenure or are expected to face rigorous re-election contests by presumably more trustworthy class of freshmen brethren. As often is the case during these changes where the leadership machineries of the national chapters are not well structured, the peripheral or affected units break apart to form independent associations. This might very well explain why there are various ramifications of national chapters claiming to serve Nigerians. This is the central dilemma confronting many Nigerian organizations with elected-type leadership in the U.S.

The elected-type leadership of Nigerian immigrants may be said to operate under two central contexts. That is, while each American state may have a body of elected officials, sometimes their functionaries are accountable to the national chapters. Depending on how the center is structured, the national chapters oversee the other regional bodies and keep records of events. Aside from the complex coordination of activities under the elected-type leadership, both the local and, indeed, all its regional affiliates and auxiliaries are to actively support the national chapters. Within the U.S., elected-type leaders constitute a more likely class to be seen attempting to examine the Nigerian crisis. This is the class of leadership charged with the responsibility of catering to the varied interests of Nigerian immigrants locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. As well, it is the class of

leadership most likely to be seen re-directing the concerns of Nigerians to the Nigerian Consulates and reporting back to the mass, either with the directives of the Nigerian government or the American government. In this way, elected-type leaders embody the diverse interests of the electorates whom they represent.⁸⁷

Qualification for both the state and national levels of elected-type leadership often requires an ability to connect with the wider spectrum of ethnic structures, especially those of the minorities who may not always be fairly represented. Thus, the elected-type leadership blends with a deep consciousness of ethnic class; sometimes this consciousness is a source of conflict for those who are not well-connected.⁸⁸ This does not mean, however, that an elected-type leader cannot evolve from among the ordinary branches of Nigerian immigrants. The emphasis is that the likelihood of success in such an occurrence will require a substantial degree of organizational activism and grassroots mobilization of community brethren during elections.⁸⁹ It must be noted, nonetheless, that the apparent signs of stronger solidarity among Nigerians at the ethnic level are important locales for understanding the make-up of the Nigerian leadership crisis even in America.

- **Attorney- or Representative-Type Leadership⁹⁰**

Of the two structures of Nigerian leadership discussed thus far, the attorney- or representative-type leadership is markedly different, and certainly more independent. While it is based on legal modalities of the American world, the related legal services directly pivotal to Nigerian communities compel its representative nature. The attorney wing of the Nigerian leadership might even be the real parameter for understanding the class of Nigerian professionals with substantive influence over the rest of their homefolks. Although this class of leadership is not always

democratically elected, as attorneys and representatives of their brethren, their roles are inevitable. Yet, since most of them are heads of Nigerian organizations, they have to be democratically elected. What really determines the direction within the attorney-based leadership is the kind of credibility they have in their respective communities.

Of course, there are more fundamental reasons for the pre-eminence of attorney-type leadership of Nigerian immigrants in the American context than one might say of their other leadership branches. First, the characteristics of American institutional mechanisms make it possible to say that Nigerians are more likely to be influenced by the *attorney wing* of their native leadership structure. The racism that confronts Nigerian immigrants living in the U.S., along with their ensuing image crisis, provides testing battle lines for Nigerian attorneys to develop their professional clientele even before qualifying for practice through the rigorous bar exam. These attorneys are the true patrons and spokesmen of Nigerian communities and, in fact, may be said to rely on their community brethren for professional stability. By actively supporting their brethren's communities and representing their kinfolks in varied court cases, they are better able to compete on a professional level.⁹¹

Second, if Nigerian immigrants are to be effective participants in the American mosaic and are to develop the kind of institutional mechanisms that other ethnic groups have developed, it would most likely be done through the legal wing of their native professionals. Indeed, in some American cities, they have attempted to lay the foundation for developing investment outlets to enhance economic growth and inter-cultural networking through such notable organizations as the Nigerian and African Chambers of Commerce.⁹²

Although the economic status of Nigerian attorneys is not very easy to gauge, the evidence suggests that they have done quite well. Nonetheless, such evidence is not clearly indicative of an overall economic stability. There are, indeed, reasons why one should expect a much limited financial security among a majority of the attorney-type leadership of Nigerian immigrants than might be the case, say, for Whites, Asians, and African Americans. Certainly the color-line crisis of the American world is one factor. Moreover, the duration of professional stability in a stratified society accounts for their disadvantage as a foreign-born group. Though some Nigerian attorneys have clients who are Americans, such a market is already saturated by stiff competition from American-born attorneys. In the end, this background explains the extent to which they are closer to their brethren and their influence over them. Whether and in what manner they are financially stable is not as important as the fact that they understand the American judiciary system and, therefore, are often those consulted by community clansmen for assistance.⁹³

Unlike their American counterparts, some Nigerian attorneys are addressed as “Doctor”, according to the official insignia of “Doctor of Jurisprudence” degree awarded them. Between the Nigerian “Juris doctors” and academic doctorates (including Ph.D.), there is a tilt of professional class consciousness.⁹⁴ Reportedly, Nigerian attorneys who subscribe to the more prestigious but less title-conscious name of “attorney” are more able to woo their brethren as clients; that is, they connect at a level more acceptable to the professionally less-established community brethren.⁹⁵ However, some Nigerian attorneys who prefer to be called “Doctor” had had doctorate degrees before taking up legal study.⁹⁶ On the other hand, they come from backgrounds where achieved and social statuses go hand in hand with the notion of success.

Obviously, class consciousness among Nigerian immigrants is not only one of perception and status but one reflecting the texture of their crises along ethnic and national lines. In fact, class consciousness among Nigerians—like African Americans—reflects a continuing crisis of the black identity. Perhaps moreso for Nigerians than African Americans, success among the professionally-secure class is sometimes seen as a by-product of proper orientation and acceptance by mainstream America. This is particularly the case for those who attended prestigious, ivy tower institutions. Sometimes such ivy tower-based claims encourage misunderstanding between them and the ordinary community brethren, leading directly to crises. In this manner, unbeknownst to most Nigerians, they have reconvened almost along similar lanes of continuing crises in their homeland.

The humble manners of the democratic citizenry, which are a remarkable characteristic of Americans and which are still evident in the attitude of their professionals, cannot be said to have permeated the leadership structure of Nigerian immigrants in any substantial way. If, however, there are Nigerian leaders with less consciousness for prestigious titles who are fully cognizant of the humble responsibilities of community leadership, they are an isolated minority.⁹⁷ More established professionals such as physicians, academicians, and engineers are in the minority. The extent to which they have influence over the vast majority of Nigerians is not readily determined, nor are their influences readily visible within a capitalist structure that has absorbed them.

It would be presumptuous, however, to expect so much so soon from Nigerian skilled-class establishments within the capitalist system. Not only are they bound to have minimal influences as one of the most recently-arrived groups; their professional stability requires some time for the necessary development of institutional powers. Nevertheless, the emphasis is that their numerical power is already at a level where they can fare better much earlier if they choose to adjust into their

communities as a first step. To some extent, the notion of the Nigerian or even African “skilled class,”⁹⁸ is vague due to the “instability” in their American and African worlds. Particularly within their African sector, this “instability,” which is not truly economic, means that the upward professional mobility of the more established Nigerians over the less-fortunate brethren often creates a magnet for social and cultural stress. Where linkages between the more-established skilled class and their less-established mass within the capitalist system are largely dysfunctional, converting their numerical power into a collaborative channel of nation-state development back in Nigeria is bound to be imprecise.

Conclusions

Since the 1970s, Nigerian-born populations in the United States have increased rather steadily. Whereas in 1980, there were 25,528 Nigerians in the U.S., by 1990, that number rose to 55,350, representing a 46 percent growth within one decade. The survival stratagem of most Nigerians in the United States is a basic replay of the 19th century scheme of Black America. Their American gravitation, which is mostly southward, is also linked to Black America. While Nigerians and African Americans can be defined along similar lines, their residential or neighborhood settlement patterns are loosely linked. Thus, efforts toward constructive development in Nigeria on the part of African Americans require more substantive framework, partly because it is in the interest of Black America to *faithfully* labor for Nigeria’s [Black Africa] economic and political regeneration.

This bond between Nigerians and African Americans are strongest at the intergeneration level. The general thrust of this development points toward a possibility of sustainable network between Nigerian offspring and African Americans in the spheres of cultural, economic, political linkage.

Furthermore, American-born offspring of Nigerian immigrants represent a conciliatory generation to Black America.⁹⁹ This means that the earlier crisis of historical dislocation has finally caught up with a more definitive nerve of an ancestral regeneration. Although this trend is not specific to the experience(s) of Black America and Black Africa, nonetheless, it can be seen as an imperative of their more profound historical crises, which, although slightly dissimilar to those of Jewish America,¹⁰⁰ appears geared toward similar rejuvenation and continuity. Therefore, what is needed at this juncture is an orderly interface of the machinery of ancestral relationships between African immigrants and African Americans.

Of the three phases of Nigerian leadership, the attorney- or representative-type leadership is the most viable for economic and political transformation of the Nigerian immigrant community. Nigerian attorneys are more directly linked in professional training and services to American institutions and Nigerian communities.

The human resource-power of Nigerian immigrants is immeasurable for nation-state transformation back in Nigeria. But only a careful coordination can enhance their chances of development. Any concerted vision of development linking Nigerians in the U.S. to the homeland will require, as a first step, *a serious re-ordering of their national attitudes*. There are still no readily acceptable lanes among them to channel issues of national development and fellowship. Efforts toward constructive changes in Nigeria can have adverse consequences if the American interplay of Nigerians is misunderstood. This study suggests that it may be unrealistic to underestimate the crisis of Nigeria's equilibrium, which provides a road map for understanding its immigrants. Among American-based Nigerians, tribal and ethno-regional reliance shrouds over the generic assumption of national fellowship. If, while on American shores, Nigerians are unable to reconcile their national

differences, chances are they will be unable to do the same back in the homeland. What the American confluence represents to Nigerian immigrants will be a subject of considerable inquiry by students of Nigerian affairs in the twenty-first century.

To begin, Nigerians in America may be well off if they re-examine the extent to which alien rationales about development affect the context of their national crises. There is nothing wrong in outsiders' ideas that are meaningful to advancement. The "Western Barbarians," as Michael Wood would argue, did so successfully.¹⁰¹ What is wrong is when such criteria violate the pathway to the real imperatives of national sovereignty. Without proper caution, Nigerian immigrants (Africans), seeking to influence the course of their homeland development, may very well succeed in furthering their contextual and national dysfunctions.

What is needed at this juncture is the ability to recognize those aspects of the outsiders' civilization crucial to the Nigerian component—and rejecting those that are not. More serious efforts must be made by American-based Nigerians to understand the context in which western principles can be successfully extracted. Similar efforts are required from Nigerian immigrants interested in the far eastern world concept. This approach is all the more necessary if the idea of Nigeria ever remaining one country is to be taken seriously. In turn, this implies explaining linkages with the maturity of the emergent global alignment. What Nigeria will be like after the military era is an issue that Nigerian immigrants have to tackle honestly, and in its proper context. If the crises in Nigeria are necessary to trigger more concise lines of rational regeneration, they are pivotal.

For historically, Nigeria's retardation is a reflex of the failures of its peoples to reorder themselves from the manner in which they were drawn into alien camps. American activism by Nigerians to effect changes in Nigeria can only lead to a lasting peace if they align themselves

properly in the emergent global set-up. If they do, wisdom will be sought through a re-evaluation of the generational experience of Black America. Is this the proper intersection in which to understand *The Bell Curve* argument?¹⁰² What, then, does *The Bell Curve* and Paul Kennedy's thesis on *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century* really imply?¹⁰³ So there is a certain weakness in comparing Nigeria's (Africa's) pace of development to that of Asia without addressing its profound polarization and contextual entrapment within the European and the Asian global network.¹⁰⁴ Such a weakness must be corrected immediately and made an integral part of a new rethinking toward economic and political empowerment in the United States.

Endnotes

1. Chinua Achebe, "Anniversary of Regrets," *African News Weekly*, Vol. 4, No. 33, October 1, 1993, p. 9.
2. Ibid.
3. Most Nigerians recognize that Nigeria was a function of tribal and ethno-regional allegiances trying to merge into a nation. To them, were the citizenry more cognizant of this background, the crisis of the 1960s could have been viewed very much differently. Nigerians did not develop a national community before 1960, and have not done so ever since. A three-year bloody Civil War could not have reconciled them. A majority of them did not even understand that war and may repeat that circle with a similar result. Nigeria is a country of 100 million or more people, 250 differing ethnic confluences—all bisected into 30 multi-statal lanes. For further information, see Joseph Okpaku (Ed.), *Nigeria: Dilemma of Nationhood, An African Analysis of the Biafran Conflict* (New York: The Third Press, 1972), pp. 1-69, 77-115; and James Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1958), pp. 11-45, 319-367.
4. This background is based on analyses of the major phases of national crises in Nigeria. See, "Important Dates in Nigeria's History," *African News Weekly*, Vol. 4, No. 33, October 1, 1993, p. 3.
5. Quoted from excerpt of the Nigerian Democratic Movement, a Nigerian-U.S. based union press release from Washington, D.C., on August 26, 1993.
6. Achebe, op. cit., p. 32.
7. See Kevin Merida, "Black Americans To Press Nigeria For Democracy," *The Washington Post*, March 24, 1995, p. A1; and Karen De Witt, "Black Group Begins Protest Against Nigeria," *The New York Times*, March 17, 1995, p. A10.
8. Ibid.
9. The background inferred here is based on a summary of the keynote speeches delivered during a forum held at the University of Massachusetts Boston, on July 23, 1995.
10. Sunday Edition of *The Boston Globe*, August 6, 1995.
11. The greater portion of this research report is based on my earlier study of Nigerian/African immigrants and African Americans in the United States. This research was community-based, utilizing an exploratory research method and American-world background. Over a four-year period, I examined Nigerian/African business directories, professional class structures, organizations, and regional distribution in the U.S., along with field work and interviews. Borrowing from the crisis of American civilization, I assumed that there were antecedents that would tie Nigerians [African-born groups] and African Americans more closely together—aside from facts of ancestral relationships. I was not much inclined, for instance, toward the opinions of experts who have attempted to examine

African immigrants on the basis of their “skilled class,” but I relied on, and, indeed, accepted some of the premises of their conclusions. I wanted to understand how the African-immigrant community functions in terms of interactions between its grassroots and uppity class structures—as well as among varying groups. Thus, apart from the necessary background review on Nigeria, this study is based more on information derived from my ongoing study of the U.S. context of Nigerian/African communities, and some portions of the conclusion in my unpublished Master’s Thesis entitled *Nigerian Immigrants and African Americans in the United States*, submitted to the Department of American Civilization, University of Massachusetts Boston, June 1994.

12. See *African Observations on the Impact of American Foreign Policy and Development Program in Six African Countries: Report of a Congressional Study Mission to Zimbabwe, South Africa, Kenya, Somalia, Angola, and Nigeria, August 4-22, 1981*. Submitted to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives (Washington, D.C.: Government Press, June 1982), pp. 50-1.

13. Ali Mazrui, “The World Economy and the African/Afro-American Connection,” in Adelaide M. Cromwell (Ed.), *Dynamics of African Afro-American Connection: From Dependency to Self-Reliance* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1987), p. 52.

14. Ibid., pp. 50-1; *African Observations on the Impact of American Foreign Policy and Development . . .*, op. cit., pp. 51-7.

15. Udofia, *Nigerian Immigrants and African Americans in the U.S.*, op. cit., p. 81.

16. Sir Rex Niven, *The War of Nigerian Unity* (New Jersey: Rowland and Littlefield, 1971).

17. See Peter N. Ekeh, “Citizenship and Political Conflict: A Sociological Interpretation of the Nigerian Conflict,” in Okpaku (Ed.), *Nigeria: Dilemma of Nationhood . . .*, op. cit., pp. 105-111.

18. See earlier backgrounds on Coleman, op. cit., and Okpaku, op. cit.

19. Olusegun Obasanjo, *Nzeogwu: An Intimate Portrait of Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 1987), pp. 82-99.

20. Ibid. Incidentally, General Obasanjo’s effort is an example of how former military leaders addressed the assumptions of military oligarchy in Nigeria.

21. Ibid., p. 107; also see, “The 30-Month Tragedy: A Nation is Engulfed in Fratricidal War,” *African Concord*, No. 151 (Ikeja: Lagos, July 21, 1987), p. 16; and Thomas Sowell, *Preferential Policies: An International Perspective* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1990), p. 75.

22. Ibid.

23. General Obasanjo’s account states that “Nzeogwu was by nature and upbringing, incapable of planning, let alone executing a coup d’état to deliberately suppress one tribe politically.” See Obasanjo’s *Nzeogwu: An Intimate Portrait of Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu*, op. cit., p. 107.

Thus, the Nzeogwu or "Ibo-dominated" coup d'état represents an important intersection of Nigerians' contextual miscalculation, which, in fact, directly sums up the southern complex in dealing with the north. This means that there is much sympathy for the fallen heroes, but not really for the explanation which Obasanjo offers.

24. Coleman, op. cit., pp. 347-8. Also see, Moyibi Amoda, "Background to the Conflict: A Summary of Nigeria's Political History From 1914-1964," in Okpaku (Ed.), *Nigeria: Dilemma of Nationhood* . . . , op. cit., pp. 52-60, and 167-8; Ekeh, op. cit., p. 94.

25. Ibid.; Sowell, op. cit., pp. 73-5.

26. Obasanjo, op. cit., pp. 82-99.

27. Nearly all the chapters in Okpaku, op. cit., are attempts to substantiate this background. Also see, Moses S. Osaghae, "What Have We Achieved?" *Nigerian News Digest*, Vol. 2, No. 35, October 4, 1991, p. 6; and Part 1 & 2 of Monday O. Anigboro's article entitled, "Has Nigeria Fared Better Under Military Regimes?" *African Business Source* (May 1992), pp. 26-7, and (June/July 1992), pp. 26-7. As a matter of fact, these debates are getting much stronger as Nigeria's crises deepen.

28. For further details, see Kwame Okoampa-Ahoofe, Jr., "Balkanizing African Unity: Nigeria's Multi-Statal Configuration," *Nigerian News Digest*, Vol. 2, No. 45, December 20, 1991, pp. 20 and 22.

29. "The Light That Failed: A Military Coup Brings an Abrupt End to Nigeria's Democratic Experiment," *Time*, Vol. 123, No. 3, January 16, 1984, p. 24.

30. Samuel Esemuede, "The Good Borrower, A Desirable Title?" *Nigerian News Digest*, Vol. 3, No. 45, December 31, 1991, p. 4.

31. Onochie S. Ikeduonwu, "Perceptual Creation of the New States: A Mythical Conception," *Nigerian News Digest*, Vol. 3, No. 3, February 14, 1992, p. 4.

32. Kofi K. Apraku, *African Emigres in the United States: A Missing Link in Africa's Social and Economic Development* (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1991).

33. See "Socio-Economic Characteristics of the U.S. Foreign-Born Population," detailed in Census Bureau Tabulations, Released [CB84-179] October 17, 1984, *United States Department of Commerce News* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1984), Table 1, p. 5; and the "Ancestry Group Report for the United States," detailed in the Census of the Population (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1980), Table 2, p. 13.

34. See configurations in Table 5 of this report.

35. See "Socio-Economic Characteristics of the U.S. Foreign-Born Population," *United States Department of Commerce News*, op. cit.

36. Apraku, op. cit., pp. 13-14; see also, James P. Allen and Eugene J. Turner, *We The People Atlas of America's Ethnic Diversity* (New York: MacMillan, Inc., 1988), pp. 150-1.
37. "Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Foreign-Born Population," *United States Department of Commerce News*, op. cit., p. 5.
38. Udofia, op. cit., pp. 106-108.
39. Allen and Turner, op. cit., pp. 150-1; and "Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Foreign-Born Population," *United States Department of Commerce News*, op. cit., Table 2, p. 5.
40. Ibid.
41. According to the C-SPAN-2's personality news review (February 16, 1993), "The current immigration quota for the Soviet bloc is about 100,000 compared to 6,000 from the Black bloc." See report by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *The Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 1990 CPH-L-98, Ethnic and Hispanic Branch Population Division* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990), Table 14, p. 85; and Michael Fix and Jeffrey S. Passel, *Immigration and Immigrants: Setting the Records Straight* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, 1994), pp. 10-29.
42. See, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization report on the analyses of national categories, admitted by country and region of birth and major occupation groups: Fiscal years 1985-1995, *Statistics Division, Demographics Statistics Branch* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1985-1995).
43. Possibly, increasing negative reports on the activities of some Nigerian immigrants accounted for the small size of immigrants admitted from Nigerians to the U.S. See Jeff Ohanaja's response (President, Nigerian Foundation), and Hakeem Olajuwon in Houston, Texas, in Norma Martin, "Nigerians Here Say Heroin Cases Wrongly Tarnish Image," *Houston Chronicle* (February 9, 1992).
44. According to the *Directory of Nigerian Physicians in the United States* (1994, p. 1), "This maiden edition lists all Nigerian Physicians—about 2,000—currently in the United States." However, after examining this "maiden edition," the total count of Nigerian physicians was found to be 1,314—a bit way off for the expected number. Yet, other factors suggest that there were more than 2,000 practicing Nigerian physicians in the U.S. by 1993. The information on the *Directory of Nigerian Physicians in the United States* was summarized in October 1993 for publication in 1994. Moreover, not all the Nigerian physicians accessed during my exploratory survey of African professional establishments in the U.S. (1990-4) are shown in the Directory. Along with newer arrivals and graduates, the number of Nigerian physicians is probably much higher than that represented in the Directory. See, Yinka Shoroye and Acho Emeruwa (Eds.), *Directory of Nigerian Physicians in the United States 1994* (Riverside, CA: Nigerian Medical Directory, 1994), pp. 1-102.
45. This is where my configuration of the Nigerian exiles and Nigerian/African trained physicians in the United states fits. For Nigerian physicians, perhaps this build-up reflects the core migrants base of physicians that were to break "the umbilical cord." See excerpt of the farewell oration, 1981 graduating class, University of Ife Medical School, Nigeria, entitled "The Umbilical Cord Must Be

Cut,” in the *Directory of Nigerian Physicians in the United States*, op. cit., p. 103.

46. See reports released on *Persons Naturalized by Region and Selected Country* (Washington, D.C.: Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1950-1994).

47. By 1991, according to a report in the *African Business Source Magazine*, July 1991, p. 19, “A Nigerian Earns \$4 Million Annual salary in U.S.” Also see *African Business Source* (December/January, 1992), pp. 7 and 16. Additionally, Apraku’s study is suggestive, op. cit., pp. 1-17.

48. This view is based on an exploratory survey and analysis of the African/Nigerian-owned and pastored churches, particularly in the southern United States. It was possible to decide, based on attendance, that many African Americans who attended these churches were married to Nigerians and were involved as members in key roles such as announcers and directors of social events. Further examination showed that they were an important source for rallying other groups of African-American attendants into the churches; Udofia, op. cit., pp. 17-18, 166-8, and 282.

49. Ibid.

50. Bishop James C. Ellerbe, “The Stone The Builders Rejected.” A lecture delivered by Bishop James C. Ellerbe at Morehouse College, Atlanta University Center in April 1988. See, the U.S. Special Edition, *Herald Of The New Kingdom, Brotherhood of the Cross and Star* (Calabar, Nigeria, May, 1888), pp. 3-4.

51. See, Sir Eddie C. O. Osuagwu, “Brotherhood of the Cross and Star Holds Anniversary,” *The Good Hope News: The African Perspective*, Vol. 2, No. 11, Dallas, November-December, 1991, p. 4.

52. See *Herald of the New Kingdom . . .*, op. cit., p. 13.

53. Ibid., p. 1.

54. Ibid., p. 10.

55. Ibid., pp. 3-4.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid, p. 12. My continuing research confirms that the status of the Brotherhood church with Black Americans is not much different from the 1988 settings.

58. As confirmed in my examination of the African American coverage by Nigerian/African media, these are the most likely areas of crises that affect the two ancestral groups. Unless the socio-political, cultural, and economic imperatives of the American civilization are carefully mastered by African-born groups, linkages with African Americans are certain to be problematic. Equally true, of course, is the fact that African Americans who approach the resolution of African crises without

proper consultations with African-born groups in the U.S. are likely to enhance greater instability in the process. Thus, while Black America is in a better position to advance the course of African transformation, its power must be measured (Udofia, op. cit., pp. 54-60, 104-5, 112-113, 254-63, 285-291). Some aspects of Apraku's framework on African immigrants/African Americans also enhance an understanding of this background; See Apraku, op. cit., pp. 19, 106-110.

59. Such crises as violence in Black neighborhoods and cultural differences, for example, abound as reasons which determine where Nigerians reside in the U.S. However, Nigerians' pattern of neighborhood distribution appears to require further information. For other factors like social prestige and their homeland crises influence their neighborhood cleavage.

60. See L. Jesse Lemisch, *Benjamin Franklin: The Autobiography and Other Writings* (New York: A Signet Classic, 1961), pp. vii-xiii; John William Ward, *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age* (New York: 1955), pp. 1-46; and Richard Hofstadler, *The American Political Tradition & The Men Who Made It* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), pp. 18-32, 118-123.

61. See, "Nigeria Adopts Dual Citizenship," *African Business Source Magazine* (November, 1992), p. 28; Frederick Nwankwo, "U.S. Citizenship Can Empower Africans," *African Newsbreed* (July, 1991), p. 34.

62. The relationship of most American universities with Nigeria during the heyday of the oil boom was very attractive. During the 1970s, for example, some 16,000 Nigerian students were spread across the Ohio State University (Franklin County), the University of Wisconsin (Dane County), Kansas State University (Riley County), Alabama A&M (Madison County), Texas Southern University (Houston, Texas), and Howard University (Washington, D.C.). See, Allen and Turner, op. cit., pp. 150-1; "Nigerians Image," *Houston Chronicle* (February 9, 1992); and "TSU—Nigerian Connection: Africans Give Granville Sawyer Princely Responsibility," *The Houston Post* (February 11, 1979).

63. Ibid.

64. Ken Igboanugo's Nigerian community information handbook provides some insight into the crises of Nigerian immigrants in the United States. There is much wisdom in Mr. Igboanugo's information. It is my opinion that if this community repertoire were studied in its simplicity, where its wisdom can be gleaned, it might even provide a logical outline to examine Nigerians [Africans] in the U.S. I might add, however, that the credit that is due to Igboanugo, comes not from the scholarly organization of his information. It would be misleading to state that his powerful insights were interfaced with some of the pandering of academia, which, of course, could have given him much credence. Rather, his insights reflect the genius of the "Ibo-type Nigerian," who, even when the vision is bound to be disturbing, makes his mark. In this manner, Igboanugo's information represents an important intersection in my effort to examine the Nigerian experience in the United States. Admittedly, his information is a focus on the Nigerian-American experience, from the lenses of those Nigerians—like himself—who adjusted successfully into the American mosaic. See Ken Igboanugo, *The Experience: Nigerians in America* (Houston, TX: Global Publishing House, 1992), pp. 1-105.

65. Udofia, op. cit., pp. 116-117.

66. Igboanugo, op. cit., p. 40.

67. Ibid., pp. 75-76.

68. Ibid., p. 33. However, it is my opinion that this re-education of Nigerians for economic survival varies in accordance to areas of training. Additionally, these Nigerians see education in two terms: (1) for long-term survival which involves developing skills in areas of need while they remain in the U.S., and (2) for controlling their unstable foothold and destinies which involves developing skills to master the-racial character of the American world.

69. Kwame Okoampa-Ahoafe, Jr., "Chef Abu of Philadelphia," *Nigerian News Digest* (October 11, 1991), p. 20.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. Julia Teresa Quiroz, *Together in Our Differences: How Newcomers and Established Residents are Rebuilding American Communities*, Findings from the Community Innovations Project (Washington, D.C.: The National Immigration Forum, 1995), p. 1.

74. As I pointed out at the start of this study, and have tried to show all along, Black America frames not only the status African-born experiences in the U.S. but the general context of their American development. My earlier conclusion (Udofia, op. cit., pp. vi-vii, 187-191, 264-5) and, indeed, ongoing research confirm that both economic and political circles of Black America have had alternate predisposition to the security or insecurity of African immigrants. African immigrants have largely succeeded by tapping into the economy of the Black base. Black America, on its own, accelerates its vision of democratic changes in Black Africa with and for similar gains. But, this background now requires a closer appraisal. First, because the end of the twentieth century seems poised to mark an important intersection in the development of Black America and Black Africa. Second, there seems to be a strong historical pull affecting all peoples of African descent, perhaps because the end of the European Cold War has ushered in relative decline in the spirit of European global polarization which has affected the black race more directly since the 18th century, the era of European mercantilism and state power formation. Thus, the concept of a "New World Order" requires more substantive evaluation to the key question of African and African-American global equations politically and economically. This, in turn, implies that African Americans and African immigrants will do well to examine their relationships more contextually as the twentieth century wanes. It also implies that the footnote of historical arguments should not be underestimated. Compare Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict From 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987) to his *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century* (New York; Random House, 1993), and to the "Response" by E. U. Essien-Udom in Adelaide M. Cromwell (Ed.), *Dynamics of the African-Afro-American Connection: From*

Dependency To Self-Reliance, (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1987).

75. See earlier background notes; Apraku, op. cit., pp. 1-9.

76. Mazrui, op. cit., p. 51.

77. Ibid.

78. Robert N. Ellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, *Habit of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (New York: Harper Row, 1985), pp. 3-20.

79. Americans are generally very patriotic in spite of their self-serving individualism.

80. Earlier notes on the Nigerian background confirm an American pattern of this crisis among Nigerian immigrants. Dr. Bedford Umez's articles cited here are very direct qualifications of the Nigerian crisis in America. I examined this background in 1994 in "The Crisis From Within: The Literature of Discontent." See Bedford Umez, "My case with a typical Nigerian," *The Good Hope News: African Perspective*, Vol. 2, No. 9, September 1991, pp. 12 & 14; _____ "State-creation in Nigeria is Bunkum," *The Good Hope News: African Perspective*, Vol. 3, No. 2, February 1992, pp. 12, 14 & 15; and Udofia, op. cit., pp. 204-210.

81. Throughout this chapter the term "ethnic-type leadership" will be used interchangeably with tribal leadership. This definition is based mostly on my efforts to conceptualize the inter-group consciousness and leadership dynamics of Nigerian immigrants. While there may be other underlying leadership variations of Nigerians, I have identified *three* as fundamental to understanding their intergroup relationships and organizational direction. This leadership dynamics of Nigerian immigrants can be explained as the blending of the homeland attitudes and cultures with the modalities of the American-world requirements. For example, *Ethnic-Conscious Leadership* is defined in accordance with the strong tribal and ethno-regional set-up of Nigerian immigrants; the *Elected-Type Leadership* is defined in accordance with the mechanisms of elected leadership; the *Attorney-Type* or *Representative-Type Leadership* is a definition based more on professional classification. What determines the direction in the *Attorney-Type Leadership* is basically the American institutional mechanisms; hence, its *representative* imperative does not always imply an *elected* office as the name suggests; see Udofia, op. cit., pp. 125-136.

82. Helen Okpokowuruk, "Nigerian Professor Turned King," *Nigerian News Digest*, Vol. 2, No. 3, January 31, 1991, pp. 1 and 14.

83. In his examination of *Democracy in America*, de Tocqueville, made a keynote comment regarding the "Tyranny of the Majority." According to the discerning French social scientist, "the majority possesses a power that is physical and moral at the same time, which acts upon the will as much as upon the actions and represses not only all contest, but all controversy" (p. 263). Yet, how the Tocquevillian postscript explains the controversy of the majority could be far more dangerous for Nigerians who are adherents of ethnic-conscious mind-set. First, ethnic-conscious leadership operates within a divisive national setting. Second, not every Nigerian understands that the problem

of ethnocentrism has a subtle effect on how they understand matters of governance at their center. Thus, while the wisdom of ethnic-conscious leaders is commendable, even as a survival stratagem, this is also where Nigerians—like any other national group—become entrenched in a pattern they worry very much about. See Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. 1 (New York: Vintage Book, 1990), pp. 263-86, and 271.

84. Ethnic-conscious leaders are more often seen operating on the basis of ethnic solidarity in the U.S. This means that leadership in this category is strongly attached to a consciousness of the ethnic clansmen. In the final analysis, this class of leadership must reflect the consent of the clan members within the U.S. and, sometimes, in the homeland, depending on the scope of established power.

85. Ahoofa, Jr., op. cit.

86. Even this Elected-Type Leadership of Nigerian immigrants exudes with strong traits of ethnic allegiance. Only at its seats of “National Chapters,” which might be called the seat of power (headquarters), could a somewhat more genuine phase of elected leadership be seen. This could also be the locale to see Nigerians interested in sharing genuinely with one another views on their national progress and unity. Perhaps, the elected-type leadership might very well be referred to as “a more democratic extension of ethnic-conscious leadership.” Aside from receiving its central impulse from a sense of ethnic solidarity, it is closely determined by how accessible ethnic supports across regional lanes are driven to the center through a democratic process during an electioneering exercise.

87. See earlier notes; Udofia, op. cit., pp. 129-30.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid., pp. 130-131. As stated earlier, the Attorney-Type or Representative-Type Leadership is not always a democratically-elected body. The idea is based more on professional influences and American institutional mechanisms. The Nigerian attorneys are those who defend their young communities from negative images and crises that confront them. They are those most likely to serve as liaisons to Nigerian consulates in Washington, D.C. They are also those who communicate more with the American press about their brethren because they understand the judiciary process. See, “Nigerian Ambassador to Try to Ease Tensions in Visit Here,” *Houston Chronicle* (March 17, 1989), p. 19a; Onukegen Nwachukwu, “Preying on the Weak: KXAS TV Zeroes in on Nigerians,” *The Good Hope News: The African Perspective* (November/December, 1991), pp. 1-11; Norma Martin, “Nigerian Image,” *Houston Chronicle* (February 9, 1992); “African Bar-Association Formed,” *African News Digest* (March 3, 1993), p. 1; and KHOU TV documentary, *Let Me Tell You About Africa* (February, 1993).

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid.

95. In the fieldwork undertaken in the course of this study, an interview with a Nigerian attorney led me to the conclusion that their attorneys (like the gentleman interviewed), who were less title-conscious, were better able to contact their brethren as clients. But, it must be noted here that even this attorney did not see anything wrong among his colleagues who choose to be addressed as “Dr.” since “That is what the degree is.” Of course, some American attorneys are also addressed as “Dr.”

96. In examining the qualification and educational background of Nigerian professionals who often wrote or advertised in the Nigerian community media, it is possible to deduce that some of them have had doctorate degrees before switching to the study of law. Even those of them without doctorate degrees—who subsequently switched to law—are mostly those with one or two master’s degrees, unlike most Americans and related ethnic groups, for instance.

97. This background is based on analyses of the Nigerian professional structure in the U.S.

98. It is my opinion that the notion of the “African skilled class” in the U.S. is somewhat indeterminate because it lacks precision within its context. While the notion of the African “skilled class” is accepted, the problem is that the links between them and their communities are not known to be strong. For example, Apraku’s methodology was not constructed to measure how tribal, ethnic, and national differences in the U.S. were affecting the stability of the African skilled class. This background might affect the entire thesis of the African skilled class in the U.S.

99. Udofia, op. cit., pp. 152-156, 267-270.

100. See how Elliott P. Skinner outlines his framework in “The Dialectic Between Diaspora and Homelands,” in Joseph E. Harris (Ed.), *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1982), pp. 17-25.

101. This view is made in reference to Michael Wood’s TV documentary, *The Western Barbarians*, shown, June 1, 1992, on the Public Affairs Channel. This documentary was a very good example of how European civilization had benefited from Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Ironically, while through exploitation of cultures and natural resources Europe developed the principles of power formation, these early civilizations either deteriorated, or even vanished. Even then, a contrast between the Asian-world experience and African-world experience within the Eurocentric setting, for example, appears necessary against the general background. I believe there are some fundamental imprecisions in comparing the rising scepters of Asia to that of Africa. This is my keynote query in appraising “Nigerian Immigrants: Their Search for the Asian Miracle,” (Udofia, op. cit., pp. 213-219.

102. See Charles Murray and Richard J. Herrnstein, *The Bell Curve* (New York: Free Press, 1994).

103. Kennedy, *Preparing For The Twenty-First Century*, op. cit., pp. 1-35, 47-94, 65-82, 193-227, 290-314; and *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, op. cit.

104. What is painfully revealing in the manner in which some Nigerian (African) scholars in the U.S. espouse the notion of development is that their framework is inherently contradictory. Without explaining the ambivalence of the Nigerian professional establishments within themselves, and their national polarization along tribal and ethnic lanes, effective consultation to their country becomes suspect to question. Moreover, without explaining the homeland phase of factionalism among African emigrants in the U.S., the exhortation to the ability of its "skilled class" to influence the course of change becomes seriously flawed. Thus, it becomes more disturbing when the modes of the changes in Asia, Europe, and North America are compared to Nigeria/Africa without explaining the historical context, and continuing impingement by the hegemonic powers. See how Adedeji B. Badiru approaches "A Strategy For Expertise Transfer To Nigeria," *Nigerian News Digest*, Vol. 3, No. 1, January 31, 1992, pp. 4 and 20. Also see how Kofi Apraku adopted African indices in the U.S. to reach important conclusions; Apraku, op. cit., pp. 1-2.



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