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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**Universal Ramifications of Immigration, Brain Drain, and Capital Flight: The Nigerian Lenses.**

Frederick O. Nwosu, PhD  
Faculty, Walden University, Minneapolis, MN

Grace O. Nwosu, PhD  
Faculty, University of Phoenix, Raleigh, NC

Chima E. Nwosu, PhD  
Faculty, Saint Augustine's University, Raleigh, NC

**Abstract**

Among several nations of the world, Nigeria has demonstrated a visible representation in most successful countries. The longitudinal ethnographic study started in 2008. The first data collection exercise took place in 2009. A period of 2 years elapsed in the evaluation of data veracity. A second wave of data collection occurred in 2011. A third and last wave of ethnographic data collecting exercise took place in 2013. The theory of international immigration circumscribed this study. Population for the study consisted of adults residing across the United States. Using the qualitative research method with a snowball sampling method helped in gaining access to participants who would otherwise not have contributed to this study. The same sampling method made it possible to speak to individuals living in other developed countries thereby learning the comparative differences among immigrants on diverse continents. The results of the second wave varied from those of the first wave due to the presence and participation of immigrants who had not entered the United States during the first wave of data collection. The overall results showed that immigrants were not excited about their statuses. They mainly looked forward to the improvement of the lot of their home nations so that they may return. They recommended diverse changes for their home country as well as the immigrant mindset. They sustained their cultural heritage and maintained a commitment to contribute to the improvement of their country of origin.

## Introduction

This study constitutes an ethnographic inquiry into the universality of immigration experiences of diverse global groups, using the American location as a reference point. A triangular perspective enabled us to narrow down global experiences from the three-continent scope to Africa, and subsequently to Nigeria. The choice of Nigeria arose from Nigeria's positioning as the single largest country on the continent of Africa. That choice was also potentially dependent upon Nigeria's pronounced but unintended expatriation of its human capital to diverse nations on the globe (Ayayi (2012). Nigeria was a British colony. Thus, its sons and daughters who thought about international experience leaned more towards Britain than America or any other international territories. Several Nigerians thus received their international education from mainly England and returned to their home country to join hands with others to develop their country. The overarching research question was, *what perceptions do Nigerian immigrants have regarding host and home countries, brain-drain, and capital flight?*

A 36-month genocidal war of attrition engulfed a South-Eastern Nigeria enclave that called itself Biafra because it decided to secede from the rest of Nigeria. Biafra defended itself against the rest of Nigeria in order to survive and demonstrate its self-determination (Harvey, 2012). It lost the war and became part of Nigeria again under duress. Playing the second fiddle in the Nigerian body-politic led to an increase in the population of Nigerians who seek opportunities outside the shores of Nigeria. Among those migrants, more natives from the Biafran enclave stayed overseas than natives of the other parts of Nigeria. Only few natives from the Biafran enclave returned to their home country. The greater number of them lived overseas and only visited their home country. Reports of political instability, frequent military interruptions, treasury looting by leaders, and other leadership lapses (Heilbrunn & Brown, 2013) continued to fuel Nigerian brain drain. Throughout the period of this longitudinal study, indigenes of the Biafran enclave still exhibited the desire to find greener pastures outside the shores of Nigeria.

According to Ayayi (2012), 70% of Nigerians continue to live in poverty despite the more than \$400 billion in oil income as of 2011. He explained that the size of Nigerian's oil market is enough to make the country the envy of other nations. This means that indigenes of Nigeria would probably not have gone to other countries in droves. The research revealed that Nigerian both at home and abroad continued to ask their governments at state and federal levels to use proceeds from oil business to fund agriculture, road construction, electricity, airports, bridges and river basins. Lessons from that research showed also that Nigerian indigenes, home and abroad, were willing to pursue bank loans to establish businesses in Nigeria if the requested amenities were present. Therein were the brain-drain problems.

Heilbrunn and Brown (2013) harped on the cultural diversifications that characterize geographical locations when immigrants settle within that geography. Under such circumstances, individuals whose responsibility it is to identify host and guest populations often run into difficulties and confusion. Success or failure in such identification exercises would depend on the worldview of an observer. In several instances, amidst the confusion and difficulties challenging host countries, those host countries still enjoy the benefits that countries-of-origin lose. On the other hand, brain-drain is the lot of the deserted countries-of-origin. Gaps exist in the area of admittance and assimilation into host country with all benefits, immunities, and privileges appertaining thereto.

The shrinking of talent in countries-of-origin often go unnoticed because of the greed and wanton pursuit for loot on the part of leaders of several countries-of-origin. In the economies where talents find no place for themselves, dreams of greener pastures consume educated and experienced professionals. On the other hand, when those of them who emigrate arrive at new host countries, they often settle for less. The tradeoff is in the relative ease of life compared to their experiences in their countries-of-origin (Harvey, 2012). Harvey found that immigrants express strong desire to invest in their countries-of-origin. However, when the challenges of dwelling in new host countries set in, the attendant new financial obligations of new host countries render the dreams of homebound remittances unrealistic. He stated that international migration fuels brain drain. This means that one man's meat is another man's poison, and as said in the United States, one man's junk is another man's treasure.

Using the *one-man's-junk concept*, deserted home countries may be viewed as unknowingly labeling emigrants junk while receiving host countries may be view as unknowing labeling the immigrants treasure. This view and its counter-view are parts of a divide in thoughts observed in circumstances where anti-immigration sentiments suggest that immigrants may be junk. The disconnect that observers (especially the victim-immigrants) have identified is that host countries often treat immigrants with levity, and create hitherto nonexistent challenges that aim at frustrating the efforts of immigrants in their quest for success in the *Newfoundland* (Harvey, 2012). It is arguable that immigration brings its own social burdens on the host country or neighborhoods.

### **Theory of International Migration**

In 1954, Arthur Lewis propounded a theory that circumscribed international migration. He sought to present to society the pros and cons of immigration. He viewed the crossing of international borders from the point of view of economic attractions. Such attractions pertained to higher rewards for human labor, lower costs of doing business, abundance of natural resources, availability of tools and factors of production, and potentials to profit from the a combination of these factors. According to Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, and Edward (1993), supply and demand were part of the process. They interpreted the supply and demand interface as relating to a demand

for the migrant laborer's time and skills. It also consisted of the potential supply of output arising from the efforts of the migrant laborer. This kind of view is at tangents with the ones that blame social ills on immigrants.

Immigrants across the globe face the situations that this theory embodied. Lewis (1954) set the stage for other scholars to mount and explicate the ramifications of immigration in the context of resource input and profit output. The Nigerian immigrants in diverse situations across the world are variables, victors, or victims in this scenario. The applicability of the theory necessitated its deployment as the measuring stick for the situations that we finally found the immigrants in while we ethnographically interacted with them and asked them the interview questions.

### **The Triangular Lenses: Europe, Asia, and Africa**

Countries of the world have international water frontiers as well as international air space. Ocean-going vessels and aircrafts need clearance to enter as well as exit those frontiers. Consequent upon these restrictions, movement of human beings also face restrictions in order to keep up with population figures, business entities, human resources, expatriate quotas, and other national border ramifications (Hall, VanMetre, and Vedder, 2012). A quick example would be the ease or difficulty with which Mexicans and Texans would cross each other's boundaries. Some American and Canadian communities cross each other's borders to shop and conduct social visits. These kinds of cross-border interactions exist among global nations that have land boundaries. In some instances, rural communities that constitute the terminal parts of nations share language and cultural similarities while their national identifications differ. Emigrating between such neighboring communities would be common, and political response or reaction to such movements may depend on the policies that the subject nations put in place. Memoranda of understanding as well as bilateral agreements may help in dousing any distrust-related eruptions.

According to Hall, VanMetre, and Vedder (2012), the United States is mainly an immigrant nation. They drew attention to the arrival of European immigrants; the overpowering of native-born American, the control of human and material resources, and the imposition of restrictions that create a divide to the chagrin of native-born Americans and to the utter exclusion of any other immigrants. Hall, et al. (2012) cited individuals such as Spencer Abraham, Sen. Edward Kennedy, and Dick Armey who recognized the role that immigration had already played in the United States. They went further to state that the issue of immigration was rather problematic than consoling to America in that those who arrived first cornered the resources, took possession, and arrogated to themselves the powers to release or hold the resources as well as all other opportunities for growth and development. The result was that development became the prerogative of those who arrived first, to wit, the European immigrants. Over time, they no longer viewed themselves as immigrants. First generation immigrants like Steve Jobs are examples of the United States as a land of opportunity where dreams come true.

The European immigrants had become natives. The native-born Americans had become second-class citizens (Moghadam & Redzuan, 2012). The second, third, and subsequent wave of immigrants had statutorily borne the label *immigrants*, some of whom battle to free themselves from the chains of immigration illegality. Ba (2012) described African immigrants as mainly in need of new territories where they may express their diverse competencies. The research study ruled out a dire need for opportunities. The study viewed the African immigrant as one who would transform or want to transform living conditions in their host geographies.

Moghadam and Redzuan (2012) identified interaction among nations as the predominant factor in globalization. This pointer removed attention from known specific political technological, environmental, and socio-cultural factors. However, the explanation that Moghadam and Redzuan (2012) gave showed that the above specific factors of globalization subsist in the immigrants, as the immigrants play the role of cross-pollination among nations. The research study attributed the growth of transnational corporations to immigration. It, therefore, beat the imagination of observers how the stakeholders of the benefitting transnational organizations would, with one hand receive the benefits of immigration, and with another hand, deny the importance thereof.

According to Moghadam and Redzuan (2012), economic development and its attendant globalization include variables such as per capita income, gross domestic product, gross national product, external investments, external trade including import and export of goods, rate of economic growth, and new technology. Denying that immigration is of equal importance is tantamount to brandishing a crystal and pretending that the crystal did not exist. Immigration is, therefore, like the pollen grain that the butterfly carries from one flower to the ovule of a similar flower. This analogy of immigration teaches that the arrival of immigrants introduces new life into the host society (Ba, 2012; Moghadam & Redzuan, 2012).

According to Goede, Neuwirth, and Louisa (2012), societies become strong enough to pursue self-rule. Such independence is possible because of diversity. Goede et al. gave examples with Curacao and St. Marteen that are islands within the Caribbean. The researchers explained that the strength that came from numbers enabled the islands to prove to Netherlands that they could pursue self-determination. Many countries of the world have secured their independence through such number-strength and diversity Goede et al. (2012). The individuals inspire one another through the giving and receiving of life-style orientations. They also consciously, and sometimes unconsciously, share visions and grow stronger because of such mesh of factors. It is a truism that physical connectivity, and the knowledge that arises from it, lead to growth and development. Goede et al. (2012) believed that immigration whether intra-nationally or internationally played essential roles in economic progress across the globe. Therefore, immigration should not lead to second-class labeling of individuals.

Aiyedogbon and Ohwofasa (2012) addressed Nigeria's poverty ranking with United Nations as 158, and recommended job creation as solution, which will directly affect the rate of human emigration out of Nigeria. This poverty-related example applies to several nations of the world. Echoes of Aiyedogbon and Ohwofasa's (2012) resounded in Verkhohlyad and McLean's (2012) research categorically explaining that individuals would not cross borders into neighboring countries if their home government provided them with resources such as infrastructure for business development and social existence.

Asia has continuously demonstrated a conscientious deployment of its human resource skills at local and international frontiers. America's quest for talents in technology, medicine and quantitative subject areas has also fanned the embers of Asia's quest to strengthen itself in those areas, since it already has the talents. According to Ariss, Koall, Ozbilgin, and Suutari (2012), business organizations on the two continents understand the ramifications of skills in the said areas. Therefore, an unannounced battle continued to rage between the continents. The result has consequently been that America has successfully attracted Asian talents to strengthen itself. Those talents have continued to leverage their American sojourn to the financial, educational, technological benefit of their home continent. Ariss et al. (2012), advised that organizations must take steps to demonstrate knowledge of the variances in skill acquisition and defense in order to take advantage of immigrants. On the other hand, the corporations must dissociate themselves from similitude of second-class labeling of immigrants.

To align international needs with the mentalities of nations, Shrestha (2011) suggested a deployment of all known paraphernalia of cooperation, not just one of them. By so doing, nations will not have any limitations in tapping in to the rich pool of talents. Shrestha (2011) alleged that limited and conditional convergences have continued to cause sloth in growth and development. It becomes the responsibility of the different nations to troubleshoot their respective political systems to identify and rid their systems of such sloth factors. In other words, governments must make their stand known to support growth factors, even if those factors include immigration freedoms.

Tokas (2012) explained the universal ramifications of immigration with Turkish, German, Chinese, European, and American lenses. The research paid particular attention to citizenship rights and freedom. From the study, political thought is clearly critical to the acceptance or rejection of immigrants. The study also dwelt on the benefits enjoyed by European and American countries, as the receiving countries. The research study confirmed that immigrants are factors of wealth redistribution, and that benefit spans across mental, ethnic, and cultural realms. Business and cultural entities that immigrants establish have also contributed to national wealth in the immigrant receiving nations (Tokas, 2012).

Human capital reshuffling across international borders came up for discussion in the research study conducted by Lapshyna (2012). Ukraine's immigration posture

necessitated a look at investment aspects of immigration from the points of view of receiving immigrants and losing human capital to emigration. The author learned through the research that government intervention was necessary in creating a balance between emigration and immigration.

Ndhlovu (2012) indirectly blamed Silicon Valley for the good, the bad, and the ugly in the explosion of immigration. Prior to the technological removal of borders, indigenes of different nations knew less about other nations than they came to know when the boundaries were out of the way. While a borderless world might be better, the ills come as a price. Incidentally, under several circumstances, those ills also represent blessings to the immigrant receiving or host nations. According to Ndhlovu, individuals who emigrate face challenges that prompt them to fire on all cylinders. By so doing, they often become more successful than they would probably have become if they had remained in their countries-of-origin (this statement demands some caution in interpretation, as it is not the measurement standard). Immigrant success contributed to the growth and development of host countries in several cases.

A case in point: In the early 1970s, the African country, Ghana, had financial crisis. Due to the presence of an immigrant from Nigeria by name Arthur Nzeribe, Ghana was able to plan its annual budgets for multiple years until it either stood on its feet or realized how shackled it was under just one immigrant (Ofosu-Appiah, 2010). When Ghana forced that immigrant to leave, the immigrant returned to his country of origin with all his financial resources. His departure from Ghana plunged Ghana deeper into financial chaos and quagmire. Countless Ghanaians migrated to that immigrant's country of origin. Many others migrated to some European countries such as Flanders (in Belgium), Cameroon, Gambia, and other West African countries. In line with Lapshyna's (2012) findings, government intervention became Ghana's only option in picking up the pieces in the Ghana-Nzeribe drama. Ghanaian government propped up the devastated economy from ground up (Sam, Boateng, & Oppong-Boakye, 2013; Boon & Ahenkan, 2012).

The case of immigration as seen in scholarly works, and experienced in host countries, indicate that immigration should not be only from the angle of government policy. Corporations in host countries need the immigrants. Indigenes of host countries that are unable to compete with skilled immigrants complain the most about the presence of immigrants in the guise that immigrants deplete social resources and other infrastructural facilities (Ndhlovu, 2012; Van Merhaeghe, 2012). This means that with the advent of high technology, immigrants do not play second fiddle. They jump in to gather new technological knowledge. Corporations have not been able to convey to the populace that the social services and infrastructure resulted from ages of immigrant hard labor, immigrant tax, immigrant countless hours of work. Growth and development of a nation often comes from the maintenance of infrastructure. Research showed that such maintenance required commitment to menial tasks. Indigenes of wealthy nations have always rejected those menial jobs. Immigrants have always embraced those tasks and

made personal successes in such occupations (Sam, Boateng, & Oppong-Boakye, 2013; Boon & Ahenkan, 2012).

Rezpka (2011) warned that the key drivers of globalization must always accompany any thoughts on immigration. This is because globalization is a system that incorporates human and material components. Immigrants constitute major elements of that system. In support, Halocha (2011) stated that the skills of immigrants receive propulsion from the characteristics of their home countries. For that reason, immigrants demonstrate their skills in their host countries, but respond to the emotional attachment they have to their countries of origin through home-country investments and political affiliations. In line with this assertion, several immigrants in history returned to their countries of origin to run for public office (Halocha, 2011; Rezpa, 2011).

While national borders represent important constituents of sovereignty, some governments may remain in denial due to pressures from their indigenes. There may be allegations that boundaries are getting weaker. Law enforcement agents may deploy along borders with barbed wires if the wealth gap between two neighboring countries is steep. This is because indigenes of the poorer nation will continuously make concerted efforts to cross those borders, even if the barbed wires have electrical currents. The main question would then pertain to indigenes of poorer nations who successfully enter a wealthier nation through the airports. If the airports are porous enough for those immigrants to filter through, government policies should reflect such understanding, knowing that such immigrants did not sneak in through ground borders, nor did they swim across a bordering river to beat border patrol agencies (Rezpa, 2011).

Nigeria is on record as a nation with few immigrants, compared to the number that it has sent to other shores. In other words, more Nigerians have gone to foreign countries than other countries' citizens have gone to Nigeria (United Nations Organization [UNO], 2012). Based on the contents of UNDP (2012) report, Nigeria did not request its citizens to go to other countries to represent it. It failed to provide and maintain the amenities that human beings live on. Therefore, the essential nation-building structures were absent. Its citizens began to look beyond its shores. It was unclear if Nigerian leaders had any plans to make Nigeria habitable for its citizens. Therefore, no predictions existed as to the possible return to country of origin on the part of the self-exiled Nigerians. Many of them frequent their home country. However, the purpose of their visits has been to care for their family members who were stuck in the country as well as to seek out potential business opportunities that were incidentally available mainly to individuals with corporate and government connections. Those opportunities were predominantly in the oil sectors. Other sectors of the Nigerian economy also existed with huge business potentials. While some self-exiled Nigerians think of eventually returning to their home country, others rule it out. Those who succeed in securing contracts, appointments, or other business opportunities in Nigeria have either gone home for good or established homes in both their home and host countries (Aluko & Aluko, 2012; Halocha, 2011; Rezpa, 2011). Consequent upon the absence of economic

development incentives or infrastructure, creative minds could not initiate business projects, existing businesses were unable to sustain their successes, unemployment figures continued to rise, people grow increasingly disenchanting, but the governments appear to be unconcerned. A few states within Nigeria that demonstrated concern for their indigenes witnessed gradual return of those who migrated to other lands (Afuape, 2012).

### **Nigerian Lenses**

Using Nigeria as a point of contact in the inquiry into universal ramifications of immigration arose from a curiosity. That curiosity emanated from an Internet find relating to Nigerian organizations in different countries. The CIA World Factbook stated that Nigeria has an estimated population of 174,507,539 as of July, 2013 (CIAWF, 2013). Nigerians have migrated into many other countries of the world. Consequent upon their numbers in their diverse host countries, they created cultural organizations to serve as rallying points. These organizations give them homelike environments on a regular basis, as some of their cultural organizations meet every month with annual conventions where virtually all their groups scattered in different states or countries gather and celebrate what held them together (despite their possible political differences). This migration arose from issues that Olu-Adeyemi (2012) associated with leadership, civil unrest, and poverty.

According to Raimi and Ogujirin (2012), the Nigerian treasury showed interest in a documentation that would reveal the funds that Nigerians in foreign countries repatriate. The researchers believed that government interest should be to attract such funds, especially in form of investments by Nigerians in diaspora. There might be benefits for investing, but other scholars have explained that the absence of infrastructural facilities remained a constant challenge (Heilbrunn & Brown, 2013). Such infrastructure would first improve the living standards of one person, thereafter one community, and so on. Otherwise, the success of only one member of a Nigerian family living in a foreign country would not be enough to support the aspirations of his home country family. By extension, such an individual may be unable to affect his immediate community in his lifetime. Government's ability to close the infrastructure gap is without question, but until the government plays that role, two things will continue to happen thus, (a) Nigerians in diaspora may not be able to support their home country families and establish new businesses in Nigeria; and (b) Nigerians in diaspora may continue to establish business in their host countries where electricity, water, good roads, bridges, airports abound (Heilbrunn & Brown, 2013; Raimi & Ogujirin, 2012).

Determinants of economic growth and development in Sub-Saharan countries and regions included trade openness, government size, income distribution, and traditional influences. These factors are present in African countries including Nigeria. The authors' references to institutional features point to military leadership, which in the case of Nigeria, has changed with high frequency. Each replacement harps on the deficiencies of

the ousted regimes while continuing the legacy of leadership deficiency (Rasha, Alexiou, & Tsaliki, 2012). Such leadership disappointments continued to lead to high unemployment numbers. According to Acey and Culhane (2013), economies should develop green jobs, but they would not. The authors studied the ramifications of green jobs, livelihoods and African communities, and saw practical needs in economies such as Egypt's, Nigeria's, and Kenya's. The continued need for social justice also circumscribed the plight of those economies. In such situations, self-aggrandizement stood in the way of people-centered government, thereby forcing forward-looking individuals to depart from their countries of origin, as the authors observed while conducting the Egypt, Nigeria, and Kenya studies.

Silva, Kovaleski, Gaia, Back, Danieli, Spak, and Moretti (2013) found that only 123 green technology patents existed in nine countries. Those countries did not include Nigeria, even though Innoson motor manufacturing facilities have released their products – cars and sport utility vehicles – to the markets for consumption. Silva et al. (2013) might have been indirectly asking questions relating to the gap between green-job ready economies and those in which companies such as Innoson Motors operates. Filling such a gap remained the obligation of governments through the establishment of infrastructure and making policies that enhance investment opportunities. Juxtaposing the above scenario on the Nigerian lenses gave diverse impressions such as (a) the likes of Innoson still exist in Nigeria, (b) the absence of infrastructure may slow down economic growth and development, but may not entirely prevent it, (c) government's intervention may further speed up progress and attract Nigerians in diaspora back to their country of origin.

Akanle (2013) compared Nigeria with Botswana and found that they were within good proximity of each other in terms of growth and development, even though Botswana was not as endowed as Nigeria in terms of human resources. Akanle (2013) intoned that the similarity between Nigeria and Botswana begged the question on which of the two countries showed more commitment to development. He further revealed that the difference between Nigeria and African countries such as Angola, Congo, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Cote d' Ivoire was Nigeria's high population. In other words, with Nigeria's population, it should demonstrate greater strength than the other countries in economic growth and development, especially because its oil revenues alone are higher than the total revenue of some of the other countries.

Nigerians migrate to other countries for diverse reasons. Abata and Adejuwon (2012) cited mismanagement of public funds, deterioration of facilities, decline in standards, continued poverty, lack of accountability, official corruption, and lack of instrument for good governance as being among the reasons. Establishing international standards in corporate and political arena would probably instill the needed discipline in government (Laudal, 2012). One tool for this establishment is justice and accountability, thus corporate social responsibility (CSR) should become important enough for all segments of society to embrace it and defeat laxity and indiscipline (Abata & Adejuwon, 2012; Graafland & Mazereeuw-Van der Duijn Schouten, 2012; Laudal, 2012).

Garcia, Rodrigues, Gibbon, Bernaudat, and Omedo (2013) found that Africa had the essential ingredients for economic stability if the political systems could reform themselves. They used examples from international programs with partnering countries such as Senegal, Cameroon, Ghana, Gambia, and Nigeria. With such international programs, the Nigerian lenses should not be limited to internal improprieties. However, those internal improprieties were enormous to the point of disrupting growth and development. The extent to which those international programs could turn those economies around was still unclear. The researchers stated that countries such as Seychelles, Kenya, Mozambique, and Tanzania were already showing more signs of progress than the other set of countries. In the middle of those programs were non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Incidentally, Nigeria also has such organizations, but their successes or failures would probably depend on the overpowering influences of political leadership rather than their organizational leadership.

It became difficult to discuss immigration without references to corporate social responsibility (Graafland & Smid, 2012). Governments and corporations should close ranks so that sectorial growth structures would rather help than hinder growth. When such collaborative efforts become attractive to Nigerians in diaspora, they would probably invest the funds that they earn from host countries. The result would be growth and development in their countries of origin, in this case, Nigeria. The types of business relations would not be as important as establishing them for growth and development, just because corporate social responsibility is important to the society (Mason & Simmons, 2013).

An analysis of the economy by Central Bank of Nigeria considered the effectiveness of government's fiscal policies (Swamy, 2012). The researcher expressed concern with the uncertainty of Nigeria's fiscal categorization. He did not agree with West's categorization of Nigeria as a rich country. That disagreement stemmed from the author's view of Nigeria as a nation with high poverty rate. The West may have carried out the categorization because of Nigeria's financial stories. Such stories included earnings from crude oil, worth of small-scale manufacturing ventures, recorded wealth of prominent Nigerians, and news items on looted and siphoned funds. Such categorization might also help the West in shoring up support for denying Nigeria's requests for loan forgiveness.

Immigrants suffer from the kinds of rifts that influenced Swamy's (2012) statements. Robinson (2012) focused on a demand that Western lenders made on Nigeria – to commit to slowing down its population growth. Whether or not the 1988 negotiation produced positive results, Nigeria remained the most populated nation on the continent of Africa. It was not surprising that many of its national would seek greener pastures in other lands, especially in the face of government ineptitude. Based on Robinson's (2012) study, Nigeria's large-family culture ran counter to the demands of the Western monetary decision-makers. Pressure from lender or donor nations/entities still faced challenges because Nigeria was more religious than secular. The two dominant religions favored

child-bearing. Families ignored contraceptives and needed even more children to inherit their land and continue the family names. Politicians were busy focusing on things other than the wellbeing of their citizens. Against these backgrounds, Nigerian families favored individual self-determination and establishment of children-centered family structures. Researchers learned that Nigerians preferred enlarging their families and making personal efforts to fend for their children. Those in foreign lands were also committed to the cultural expectation, making them to share their hard-earned resources in host countries with their relatives in their countries of origin.

### **Methodology**

This study constitutes a longitudinal ethnographic inquiry into the universality of immigration experiences of diverse global groups, using the American location as a host-country reference point, and using Nigerian lenses as country-of-origin reference point. The population sample for this study consisted of Nigerians living and working in the different parts of the United States (Condie, 2012). Since the research study focused on individuals and families, age limits did not play prominent roles in screening because once we were in contact with heads of Nigerian households, it did not matter if they were alone, with their wives and children, indoors, outdoors, at a party, or engaging in business transactions. Demographics did not constitute a threat to validity (Aggarwal, Vaidyanathan & Castleberry, 2012). However, we did not make contacts with minors. We used snowball method to sample our participants because we did not know when and where the next parties would take place. We were also unable to predetermine how many participants we would eventually interview or contact, as one participant introduced us to another, and our interactions and interviews continued until the six-month period assigned to each year's investigation elapsed. We asked questions of randomly available individuals at parties (Marti, & Rodenas, 2012) during our observations and participation at their events. We also asked the same questions to individuals when we meet with them at their homes, offices, or business locations.

Quantitative research method attracted us in conducting this study because of the need to reach potential (immigrant) participants residing across the 50 states in the United States. It soon became clear to us that using the quantitative methodology would only help us to capture a broad spectrum of immigrants. Furthermore, the quantitative method would limit our access to participant perspectives. Therefore, we discounted the quantitative method. In considering qualitative methodology, we saw great potentials in reaching participants and not only hearing them respond to questions, but also seeing them while they carry out their activities individually and collectively (Allwood, 2012). This feature attracted us to deploying the qualitative methodology. The issue of mixed methodology did not arise (Schwartz & Revicki, 2012).

The frequency with which the many Nigerian cultural entities met necessitated a careful selection of research design. We tested the case study approach (Ridder, 2012), but it narrowed down our inquiry into an individual or specific cultural entity. That

limitation took this research activity away from its originally intended course. We tested grounded theory and saw that Nigerian cultures already embodied any theories that would guide our understanding. Since we were not hoping to develop theories, we stopped testing grounded theory (Halaweh, 2012). The use of phenomenology had some appeal, but it had the potential to limit the research study to the specific time of the inquiry as well as to how participants would express their lived experiences as immigrants in America. This limitation rendered the phenomenological design undesirable as a stand-alone approach. We realized that watching the Nigerians in their world, at their events, in their families, and at unguarded moments would yield appropriate data. Furthermore, interacting with them through questions and answers would close any gaps that could have existed in misinterpretation of observed events. We decided to deploy the ethnographic design with elements of phenomenology during the observations, interactions, interviews, and participation in their events.

In 2009, we spent three months testing research designs and rejecting the inapplicable ones. Upon determining the appropriate design, ethnographic, we began to attend their social and cultural events, visit their homes, visit their offices, and transact business with their entrepreneurs (Crowe & Sheppard, 2012). Since ethnography involved living in the world of the participants, we seized every moment of our presence in the world of the participants. We spent the next six months conducting the research activities in 2009. We used the remaining three months of that year to evaluate our data for validity and reliability. In 2011, we spent the first six months conducting those same activities. We tried to vary the organizations whose events we attended on subsequent occasions. We used the remaining six months to evaluate our data for validity and reliability. We used the year that followed to see if any new developments arose that would support or debunk our findings. In 2013, we spent the first six months conducting those same activities. We continued to try to vary the organizations whose events we attended (Street & Ward, 2012). Below are brief descriptions of the activities that we immersed ourselves in during the research periods, especially during interviews (Rowley, 2012).

### **Social and Cultural Events**

Nigerians, like other African nationals, always found occasions to gather. Several members of their community always came together if one of them got married or had a new baby in the family. Such events culminated in parties featuring exotic foods, speeches, and dance. Sometimes a dignitary would visit United States from Nigeria. Close contacts and relatives of the dignitary would invite other members of their community to a party that would feature exotic foods, speeches, and dance. Other events included wake-keeping and funerals of members of their families. On such occasions, the same foods, speeches and dance featured. Whether the event was for fun, or to mourn with those who mourn in their community, people supported the event planners by donating money. They did not know who among them would be next in line for happy or

sad occurrences. We attended these events. We interviewed available individuals at these events (Fernandez, Iguzquiza, Lautre, & Calvo, 2012).

### **Home Visits**

Before the advent of telephones, Nigerians had the culture of visiting their kinsfolk without any formal reason, invitation or notice. The presence of telephones has not changed that culture. Nigerians call their contacts mainly to avoid missing them when they visit. Because of the near-inapplicability of telephones in cultural relationships, telephone interviews did not apply to this study (Fernandez, Iguzquiza, Lautre, & Calvo, 2012). They still practice the tenet whereby they stop by their relatives' homes if they are in the neighborhood. The reason would be to seize the opportunity to make sure that things were well with their relatives and acquaintances. We made such unplanned visits. In the case of this research, it helped us to learn more of the world in which Nigerians live, especially during the interviews (Fernandez et al., 2012).

### **Office and Business Location Visits**

Some Nigerians occupy professional positions in diverse organizations. Others are entrepreneurs in various businesses. Many others served as tenured university professors. The essence of collecting data through office and business location visits was that the ethnographic feature of this research would enable us to immerse ourselves in their office and business worlds. Business language was of importance to the entrepreneurs. Discussion pitch was unique. Discriminatory pricing for products and services that were not on shelves was not easy to comprehend. The entrepreneurs had enough clients to sustain their businesses. Office mien also followed international standards. Personal grooming exhibited styles that Britain conveyed to Nigeria during the years of British colonization. Data collection visits were both spontaneous and by appointment. The participants answered the same interview questions.

### **Annual Conventions**

In 2009, 2011, and 2013, we spent event week-ends in cities where the annual conventions took place. We followed the procedures set up by the organizations. Along with members of the organizations, we made hotel reservations at the event venues. We checked in for the events, attended the meeting sessions, joined them in their dinner parties, and participated in large and small group meetings, held formal and informal individual and group meetings. While all those sessions were going on, we seized opportunities to ask questions of event attendees who were available to us.

The organizations whose events we attended were different each time. Due to the extensive attendance of annual conventions, it was necessary for all three of us to attend in order to cover different aspects of events. We had three ethnographic immersion seasons in 2009, 2011, and 2013. We assigned a focus per researcher on this project. The focus areas were (a) socio-cultural, (b) educational, and (c) political worldviews. The

annual conventions also had adult and youth wings. Therefore, each of us attended the adult individually focused on the socio-cultural, educational, and political worldviews of the conventions for both adult and youth wings of the conventions.

While we immersed ourselves in the study, the interview questions that constituted the questionnaire focused on immigration ramifications. The research questions were as follows:

1. What does being an immigrant mean to you?
2. Describe your immigration status upon arrival in the United States.
3. What do you remember about your home country that makes you want to return home?
4. What do you remember about your home country that makes you want to remain in your host country, United States?
5. What have you seen or heard about Nigerian immigrants living in other developed countries?
6. If your home country satisfied your personal requirements for living well, would you return to your home country?
7. How does your cultural heritage mesh with your host country lifestyle?
8. What events characterize your American growth as against your Nigerian growth potentials?
9. What does brain-drain mean to you?
10. Whether you remain in the United States or return to Nigeria, how interested are you in investing in Nigeria?

### **Findings**

According to Cao, Hirschi, and Deller (2012), some individuals would depart the shores of their home countries to seek opportunities that transform them into expatriates. Such people scheme their way into organizations, and work hard enough to become assets within the organizations. When international opportunities arise, the organizations send them as expatriates to other countries. Such opportunities often arise in the home countries of the expatriates, and they gladly return to occupy enviable positions (Tadesse & White, 2013). In some cases, international opportunities do not arise (Aziz & Makkawi, 2012). but the enterprising ones among the immigrants create those opportunities for the corporations that employed them. At the completion of the third and last ethnographic investigations, we began to analyze all observation data. Interview data were appropriate for analysis using NVivo10 qualitative research tool. Main findings followed the trends of the questions, as the questions arose from a pilot-test during the first three-month testing of research designs.

#### **Being an Immigrant**

Out of all interviewed participants, 89.2% viewed being an immigrant with disgust, not because the host country was bad, but because the home country was responsible for their choice to live in the diaspora. Being an immigrant evoked a sense of

nostalgia in individuals who left Nigeria because they had no other choice. The *immigrant* feeling had two or more faces. Some immigrants were happy to be in the United States. To some, it did not matter where they were, as long as they were not in Nigeria. To yet others, it had to be America or nowhere else. There are individuals who had become citizens, yet they believed that their employers did not reward them according to what they were worth. In the course of all that, the feeling of being an immigrant varied from one person to another.

### **Immigration Status**

Aliens with green cards did not feel enthusiastic about fielding interview questions. Seventy-three percent of those carrying Alien Registration Cards longed for a repair of whatever was wrong with their home country while 27% of them were excited to be away from home. It did not matter to them whether they were in the United States, Canada, England, or Australia. We were unable to speak to some individuals. It was, therefore, difficult to know why they were inaccessible. We did not want to assume, however, that they had immigration status problems. We believed that some individuals would still be making efforts to meet eligibility requirements. Since we did not communicate with any such individuals, it was difficult for us to evaluate the status of immigrants who were out of status.

### **Home Country Attraction**

The main attraction was not America, but the lure of any outside country where they could express their talents and succeed. Individuals who had become citizens of the United States were more outspoken because of the freedoms that existed in the United States. Ninety-two percent of them still loved the Nigerian flag and sang the Nigerian national anthem as emotionally as they sing the Star Spangled Banner. Out of that 92%, 13% of them are making concerted business efforts in their home country. They are establishing business ventures in forms of foreign direct investments. Another 28% of them are already participating in political activities in their home country while working in the host country to fund their home country political ambitions. The remaining 61% merely had dreams of a better Nigeria, but it was unclear if they had enough motivation to either return home, visit home, invest at home, or otherwise engage in any pronounced home country growth and development programs.

### **Home Country Turnoff**

The 61% who merely dreamed of their home country harped on the ills of that society. They appeared to believe that those ills might never give way to positive economic development. They expressed their disbelief in a nation that had grown overweight in political intrigue and manipulation. They believed that the tribes would probably never trust each other. Therefore, there was no basis for home country attraction. Among the 61% and some of the other 39% were individuals who wished for

the return of the Republic of Biafra, as they believed that such a republic would experience more stability than Nigeria offered.

### **Comparisons with Nigerians in Other Countries**

Through the snowball sampling exercise, individuals connected us with their relatives who lived in other developed countries of the world. Though this research focused on the United States, making contacts with Nigerians in other developed countries addressed the universality of immigration ramifications, which constituted part of this study. Few of the countries hosting our research contacts included Germany, Australia, Brazil, England, Saudi Arabia, Belgium, China, France, South Africa, Italy, Holland, Ireland and Russia.

Nigerians in the United States did not envy those who migrated to the other developed countries neither did they feel sorry for those ones. Herein resides the issue of country attraction. Approximately 28% of those in countries other than the United States expressed their preference of where they were over being in the United States. Another 17% stated that they lived in the United States, but after visiting other countries for business, they decided to relocate out of the United States. Nearly 8% of them challenged those living in the United States to show proof that the United States was better than other developed countries.

### **Home Country Efficiencies**

Nigeria still held its lure for even those who were full of disenchantment with leadership. Over 73% believed that Nigeria was still good enough for anyone to live in. They claimed that the purpose of their sojourn in a foreign country was to improve their lot. Their ultimate goal was to go back to Nigeria and live at the level of their dreams. They consistently paid little or no attention to the inefficiencies that have constantly characterized Nigeria. They believed that a *mesaiah* would appear in Nigeria and rid the nation of any similitude of inefficiencies. Therefore, they dwelt on only the efficiencies, whether or not such efficiencies were in existence. Among those efficiencies were the general population described as good people, hospitable, enterprising, survivors, creative, innovative, visionaries, and adaptable. Eleven interviewees requested to place on record that CNN reported Nigeria a country with the happiest citizens.

### **Native Culture versus Host Country Lifestyles**

Nigerians hold their traditional values very dearly. The effects of British colonization still manifested among them in that they wore English suits to work (depending on the kind of jobs they had). University professors among them dressed professionally in such suits. Lawyers, teachers, consultants, physicians, and preachers always appeared in professional attire when in public view. On the occasions of their many social and cultural events, only very few of them appear in suits. They appear in traditional attire of different designs and colors. Because of their tendency to adapt to

alien styles, they easily eat American foods. However, we found during our home visits that they always had their traditional foods at home. Even though they hold their annual conventions at 5-star hotels, they successfully negotiate to bring their traditional foods to those venues. Approximately 82% of the professionals among them use their traditional attire, at least, twice per week. Over 90% of them eat their traditional foods, at least, once a day. They also enjoy the casual dressing that the American society thrives on as well as the benefits of fast food restaurants when they are on-the-go. In the midst of daily American influences, their commitment to Nigerian culture consistently rears its head.

### **Growth Potentials in Host versus Home Country**

For the average Nigerian, growth in America consisted of receiving American education, securing a job, paying all the bills, and saving money. The entrepreneurs among them defined growth in terms of creating money-making opportunities either as employers or as investors with certified portfolios. In the light of this understanding, approximately 78% were not satisfied with their level of economic growth in the United States. Among them were nearly 54% who had become economically successful in the Nigerian economy. However, due to the classification of the dollar as *hard currency*, these accomplished individuals desired to make as much success in the United States as they have already made in Nigeria. Therefore, their growth potentials appeared to be greater in the United States than in their home country.

### **Brain Drain Perspectives**

The expression, *brain-drain*, was understood by 86% of the individuals that we interacted with. However, less than 60% successfully articulated the problem during our interactions. Each of the 60% saw himself or herself as a *brain-drain* variable. They not only expressed exasperation over the ill, but also blamed their home country leadership of placing them in the situation. In spite of all the luxury that America offered, they still longed for a day when someone would right the wrong and change the equation that resulted in mass capital flight out of Nigeria.

### **Investing in Nigeria**

Only 7% of Nigerians shunned the opportunity of investing in Nigeria. It was unclear what was responsible for their spite for such investing opportunities. The remaining 93% of Nigerians were positive about investing in Nigeria. Out of that 93%, 30% had already made substantial investments in Nigeria. Another 40% had commenced diverse development projects including manufacturing and cottage industries. Another 10% explained that they provided consultancy services for different sectors of the Nigerian economy and some arms of government. The remaining 20% were nursing the idea of also investing in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Participants suggested the following:

1. Work hard in the host country and become icons.
2. Explore opportunities in rare and challenging areas of the economy.
3. Prove to America that immigrants can become mainstream contributors.
4. Aspire for public office in the host country.
5. Participate in as many of host country activities as possible.
6. Make concerted efforts to ensure free and fair elections in the home country.
7. Prevent home country leaders who complete their terms from running for office again.
8. Create awareness among the Diaspora Nigerian that they had the power to change the course of events at home.
9. Strategically buy up shares of Nigerian corporations in order to introduce discipline where it might not exist.
10. Make a clarion call to unify the Diaspora Nigerians and bring the tribes together.

### **Further Studies**

During the three investigation seasons, 2009, 2011, and 2013, new questions arose that were outside the scope of this research. Beyond the recommendations that emerged from data analysis, participants also asked questions while answering the interview questions. This is probably one of the benefits of not implementing ethnographic immersion only. The inclusion of a phenomenological design within ethnography enabled us to go beyond living in their world, attending their events, observing them transact or relate with each other, eat their foods, and wear their clothes. The questions that they asked while answering the interview questions threw further light on the predicament of immigrants. Therefore, further studies will help to unravel those aspects of immigration from the mentality and worldview of adults who are second, third, or even fourth generation Americans (whose parents were immigrants). The interview questions used in this study would be appropriate for the research.

### **Conclusion**

A study in immigration could be a daunting task. By way of hindsight, we are glad to have chosen the ethnographic design. Based on the near indifference of several individuals to the subject of immigration, it would have been difficult to use the case study approach or phenomenology. Citizens of the world love their home countries (Banerjee, 2012). Some of them take on governments of their home countries if they perceive deficiencies in those governments. Some of them are willing to die pursuing change in status quo within the governments in their home countries. Oshionebo (2012) found that virtually citizens of all countries partake in the vision of their nations. They want reforms where reforms do not exist. They place demands on leaders to perform to the standard that their electorate expected. This study revealed that immigrants do not lose their minds. While working hard to earn good living, they often spare time to plot mental graphs of the directions that their home countries were going. The Nigerian

immigrants in this study were among global immigrants who make efforts to improve their home countries.

According to Goede, Neuwirth, and Louisa (2012), strategic alliances form part of the necessary elements for growth and development. Whether such alliances exist between countries or among citizens, the involvement of Diaspora members of the global society would immensely contribute to moving nations forward. Bartels, Voss, Lederer, and Bachtrog (2012) noted that such alliances could close knowledge gaps and speed up progress to the benefit of all citizens who would like to contribute to their home countries or benefit from them. Domjahn (2013) gave examples of manufacturing and technological advancements that, of course, arise from human inventiveness. Those advancements place on the map the countries in which they take place. In other words, it did not matter where the inventor was located at the time of the invention. Therefore, if the inventor were an immigrant, such a status would probably not have prevented the invention or advancement from taking place.

Domjahn (2013) drew attention to the application of technology in South Korea, and revealed the irrelevance of the nationality of any individuals who might be behind such developments. Similarly, we noticed some organizations with immigrant influences across the globe. Some of them were USA Africa Chamber of Commerce in Raleigh, North Carolina; United Ngwa Women Association, USA, based in Atlanta, Georgia; International Institute for African Scholars, USA, with headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria; Everlasting Life International Ministries, Atlanta, Georgia; Ngwa National Association, Baltimore, Maryland; The American Nigerian International Chamber of Commerce, Atlanta, Georgia; and Anambra State Association, New Orleans, Louisiana. As discussed, immigration has very interesting ramifications for both host country and home country. Further studies focusing on offspring of Nigerian immigrants will close provide answers to the interview questions from different angles.

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*Frederick O. Nwosu, PhD, is faculty at Walden University with the DBA Program. He served as University Research Reviewer and doctoral research committee Chair. He experiences include Content Area Chair for Finance at the University of Phoenix as well as Professor of Finance at Strayer University. He is widely published.*

*Grace O. Nwosu, PhD, is faculty at the University of Phoenix. She served as new faculty mentor in Jackson, Mississippi; Deputy Content Area Chair for Humanities in*

*Raleigh, North Carolina; and Assistant Professor at Saint Augustine's University, Raleigh, North Carolina.*

*Chima E. Nwosu, PhD, is Assistant Professor at Saint Augustine's University in Raleigh, North Carolina; Chairman, Governing Council of the International Institute for African Scholars, Raleigh, North Carolina.*

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