

FROM STUDENT TO IMMIGRANT: THE DIASPORIZATION OF THE AFRICAN
STUDENT IN THE UNITED STATES

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines African student non-return within the larger historical pursuit of higher education in the United States by African students. Non-return by African students as addressed in this study is a process more than two centuries old extending directly across four defined phases of African student migrations. Key primary documents including the autobiographies of African students, correspondence between African students and other primary agents of African student migrations as well as oral interviews from African students turned permanent settlers from the fourth phase of African student migrations to the United States, are utilized in this dissertation. The perspectives of the non-returning African student in this dissertation address three important areas central to analyzing non-return; first, the factors that shaped the choices of non-returning African students to study in the United States; second, the social and cultural experiences encountered as a part of their educational migrations; and last, the decision to non-return. Non-return as articulated through interviews in this dissertation and supported by other primary and secondary source documentation is identified as a fluid process constantly shifting in response to internal and external pressures as well as historical and contemporary forces.

DEDICATIONS

This work is dedicated to

Baba Aremu Majolagbe Laosebikan and Mama Kikelomo Laosebikan

&

Mr. Olumide Ogunsola

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: THE ORIGINS OF AFRICAN STUDENTSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES	26
CHAPTER 3: ARCHITECTS OF AFRICAN STUDENT MIGRATIONS.....	67
CHAPTER 4: THE NON-RETURNING AFRICAN STUDENT AND THE BRAIN DRAIN ...	93
CHAPTER 5: IN THEIR OWN WORDS	127
CHAPTER 6: IN SEARCH OF HOME	170
REFERENCES	177
APPENDIX.....	188

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of learning beyond the boundaries of one's own community, nation or culture is as old as learning itself...it reflects the ability of human beings to communicate with each other at varying levels and with varying sophistication across the barriers of social particularities.¹

In the fall of 1970, Olumide, a young Nigerian student arrived in the United States, interested in pursuing what Nnamdi Azikiwe the great African statesman, once referred to as the "Golden Fleece." It represented the promise of American higher education as a panacea to the ills of a troubled nation.² Nine years after Olumide first arrived in the United States, he returned back to Nigeria, with Golden Fleece in hand, in the form of a Bachelors of Science degree in Chemistry and a Master's Degree in Economics.³ Olumide's sojourns abroad however were not completed with his return to his native land.

After nineteen years of dedicated service to Nigeria as a civil servant he returned back to the United States in 1998, this time as an immigrant and not a student. In 2009, a decade into what was supposed to be his second brief sojourn in the United States, Olumide now a dual citizen of Nigeria and the United States passed away.⁴ Interspersed among the many mourners at his funeral, were peers of Olumide, many of them former students like him for whom memories of youthful quests in the pursuit of educational excellence in United States institutions of higher education, three, sometimes four decades past, now had to be balanced against the glaring reality

¹ Cora Du Bois, *Foreign Students and Higher Education in the United States* (New York: Carnegie Center for Endowment for International Peace, 1956), 1.

² Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 13. The notion of higher education in the United States as representative of the ancient Greek myth of the "Golden Fleece" is first alluded to by Nnamdi Azikiwe, former African student at Lincoln University and eventually the 1st president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1960. As Azikiwe describes in his autobiography, his father Chukwuemeka drew from the ancient Greek fables to describe his son's ensuing journey abroad for higher education in America in 1925 as the pursuit of the "golden fleece of knowledge." For Chukwuemeka, higher education in the United States represented a world of possibilities, particularly an important counter to the colonial system of higher education offered by Britain, which had colonized Nigeria.

³ William Glaser, *The Brain Drain: Emigration and Return* (Oxford, England: Pergamon Press, 1978)

⁴ Babatunde, 7 August, 2009. Interview by author: Chicago, Illinois.

that what was intended to be a temporary stay had become much more permanent. Olumide's migrations to the United States are an illustration of the complexities that undergird the study of African student migrations and in particular the process of non-return.

Beginning in 1774 with the arrival of two Africans, John Quamine and Bristol Yamma at the Theological Seminary of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) to the present day, thousands of African students have pursued higher educational opportunities in the United States.⁵ Across this time period, the majority of these students after the completion of their studies returned home. Some students however indefinitely delayed their return to their native lands or did not return at all, while others like Olumide returned to their native lands only to immigrate to the United States at a later period.

The issue of non-return since it became the focus of scholarly scrutiny in the late 1950's has remained one of the most significant topics in international student exchange. Non-return is primarily associated with the decisions made by international students or professionals who arrived in the United States on non-immigrant visas to temporarily or indefinitely delay their return home after the completion of their studies. International students as determined by statutes of the United States Immigration Law of 1924 are chiefly defined as non-immigrants, persons allowed to migrate to the United States with a defined purpose, the pursuit of education, the process of which is tied to the expectation that they would leave at the end of the completion of their tasks or the defined period of stay.⁶ The key issue however being that non-return as studied has been narrowly framed around one particular period in the larger history of

⁵ Richard Ralston. "A Second Middle Passage: African Student Sojourns in the United States during the Colonial Period and Their Influence Upon The Character of African Leadership," (PhD diss, University of California, 1972), 3.

⁶ The Statutes at Large of the United States of America, vol 42. *An Act to Limit the Migration of Aliens into the United States and for other purposes* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1925.), 155.

international student migrations to the United States; that is the 1960's to 1980's. Scholarship on African student non-return has yet to consider the larger historical context of African immigration to the United States and its influence on African student migrations and processes such as non-return. This dissertation presents an examination of African student non-return across four phases of African student migrations to the United States for higher education. The purpose is not to examine, analyze or theorize about the African student brain drain but rather to analyze historically the process that underlies the brain drain, non-return.

To accomplish this task, African student non-return is addressed in this study within the framework on African studentship in the United States developed by historian Richard Ralston. In 1968, Ralston wrote a significant dissertation on the sojourns of African students in the United States. In this study he identified three key phases of African studentship which he framed as follows: the 1st phases, 1774-1903; the 2nd phases 1904-1945; and the 3rd and last phase from 1945-1957/1960. Across these three phases, the concerted efforts of primarily white missionaries and philanthropists, various United States and international governmental agencies as well as African students themselves assisted in facilitating the education of African students in the United States. That is to say they viewed African students and their pursuit of higher education as separate from African immigrants.

I believe a fourth phase can now be added to Ralston's framework. This phase extends from 1958 with the implementation of the Mboya Airlifts which ushered in an unprecedented era of African student migrations, to 1983, the numerical height of the African student presence in the United States. In this phase like the first three phases defined by Ralston, scholars have studied the migrations of African students in limited ways. Some focused on the significance of African student migrations to the development of Pan-Africanism primarily in the African

Diaspora or on the African continent. Others centered their studies “either on the consequences of the brain drain to countries of origin or on the benefits to the host countries, but largely neglected to explore the motivations of individuals.”⁷

This study takes a different approach. The focus in this study is on illuminating the perspectives of non-returning African students on three important areas: the factors that shaped their choices to study in the United States, the social and cultural experiences encountered as a part of their educational migrations, and the decision to settle long term or non-return.

The historical study of the non-returning African student is important for many reasons. The record of African students’ voices and perspectives on the United States higher education system and the overall relationship of educational exchange that facilitated their presence in the United States is severely lacking. As policy analyst Barbara J. Walton observed “the influence of foreign students on America is a topic which relatively little research has been done. The reverse side of the coin, the influence of America on foreign students has received far more attention.”⁸ The engagement of African students with higher education as earlier noted can be traced back more than two centuries. The result of this extensive history has been an interchange of people and ideas that have significantly shaped specific aspects of education in the United States and on the African continent. This process has been widely interpreted and addressed as one sided affair with the United States as the primary agent and key influencing force and African students and the African continent as passive recipients.

The engagement of African students with higher education in the United States in particular however has not been a unilateral process or one-sided affair where African students

⁷ Heike C. Alberts and Helen D. Hazen, “There Are Always Two Voices...”: International Student’s Intentions to Stay in the United States or Return to their Countries,” *International Migration* 43, no. 3 (2005): 131-154

⁸ Barbara J. Walton, *Foreign Student Exchange in Perspective* (Washington D.C.: Department of State, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), 49.

passively imbibed the products of higher education in the United States without influencing the system in return. In addition, the history of African studentship and non-returning African students stands as a record of early African immigration to the United States and as evidence of the historical barriers Africans have faced in their immigration to the United States. Where many traditional avenues of immigration remained closed to Africans prior to the Immigration Act of 1965, higher education as acknowledged by John A. Arthur was “the major conduit by which Africans established contact with the United States first as non-immigrants on student visas and later as prospective immigrants and naturalized citizens.”⁹ Early groups of African students in the 1970’s would provide the nucleus for African immigrant communities in the United States.¹⁰

Prior to the Immigration Act of 1965, immigration from Asia, parts of South America and Africa was constrained by repressive United States immigration laws. The United States immigration laws of 1917 and 1924 in particular strictly defined categories for immigrants and non-immigrants, setting severe quotas on immigration from Africa, Asia as well as parts of Europe and Latin America.¹¹ Outside of the quotas set by these immigration laws, the pursuit of higher education was the primary vehicle African immigrants had at their disposal to circumvent these laws. African students, seamen, and businessmen as non-immigrants were allowed to immigrate with few restrictions as their presence was expected to be temporary.

Overall, in the decades before the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, African immigration to the United States remained low. It rarely measured more than one percent of

⁹ Arthur, *Invisible Sojourners*, 101.

¹⁰ April Gordon, “The New Diaspora-African immigration to the United States,” *Journal of Third World Studies* 15, no. 1 (1998): 84.

¹¹ The legal distinction between non-immigrants as foreign nationals in the U.S. for temporary visits (for business, and education) and immigrants as foreign nationals in the U.S. with the intention to live permanently is first delineated in the Immigration Act of 1917 and then in the Immigration Act of 1924. The Immigration Act of 1924 created a wide variety of categories for immigration, the two most popular being non-immigrant and immigrant.

total immigration to the United States. From 1820 to 1961, there were fewer immigrants from the African continent to the United States than any other geo-political body besides the loose collective of nations categorized as “Oceania” in the 1961 annual report of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). A total of 49,370 African immigrants migrated to the United States during this period as compared for example to the 34,683,184 immigrants from Europe, 1,117,267 from Asia and 5,892,794 from other parts of the Americas who also arrived in the United States during this period.¹² In 1850, there were 551 African immigrants in the United States and by 1900 there were 2,538. A significant increase in the African immigrant population in the United States did not take place until the 1960’s. In 1960, there were 35,355 immigrants, but by 1990, this number had rocketed to 363,819 and as of the year 2000, there were 881,300 African immigrants in the United States making up three percent of the total immigrant population.¹³ African immigrants have never made up more than three percent of the total immigrant body in the United States.

In comparison, African students though present in smaller numbers in proportion to the larger category of foreign students to which they are associated, immigrated at higher rates than African immigrants during this period. An important reason for this is that as non-immigrants they had fewer restrictions on their immigration to the United States. Both the Immigration Acts of 1917 and 1924 created barriers for permanent immigration but encouraged temporary sojourns, providing increased access for students and other categories of non-immigrants such as visitors, businessmen, government officials and seamen.

¹² See in particular Table 1.1 from the United States Department of Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (Washington, D.C.: 1961), 41-42.

¹³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Table FBP-1*.

By the beginning of the 20th century, an estimated 68 African students had arrived for study in the United States.¹⁴ The numbers of African students would remain small throughout the early part of the twentieth century. From 1923-1950, an estimated 3,209 African students arrived for study in the United States.¹⁵ This would change drastically in the decades to follow, especially from 1959 onwards with the commencement of the Mboya airlifts, which would bring hundreds of East African students to the United States in the years to follow. In 1960, a year emblematic of African independence with seventeen African countries winning the right to self-determination, the 2,314 African students in the United States made up only 4.7% of the total foreign student body studying in the country. By 1970, the number of African students in the U.S. had more than tripled to 7,607 or 5.6% of the total foreign student body, and by 1982/83 the number was at 42,690 or 12.3% of the entire foreign student body in the United States. Even accounting for most recent statistics this would represent the largest number of African students ever in the United States.¹⁶

The Study of Non-return

There are significant reasons why efforts to study non-return as a historical process have remained stagnant. Simply stated, non-return has proven to be difficult to measure. There are two sets of factors that have made the study of non-returning African students in the United States in particular a difficult process. The first is inadequate statistics and record-keeping. Information

¹⁴ Walter Williams, "Ethnic relations of African Students with Black Americans: 1870-1900," *The Journal of Negro History* 65, no. 3 (1980): 2. Williams based his estimates on the records of key colleges and universities attended by African students. The Institute of International Education initiated in 1949 the systemic collection of annual data on foreign students. Prior to this year, information about foreign students in the United States was collected by individual sponsoring agencies.

¹⁵ International Institute for Education, *Education for One World, Annual Census of Foreign Students in the United States 1949-1950* (New York: International Institute for Education, 1950), 48-50.

¹⁶ International Institute of Education, *Open Doors, 1983* (New York: International Institute of Education, 1983), 15.

on the number of foreign students in the United States is available from three main sources, the Department of State's visa office, the Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services (now Department of Homeland Security) and the Institute for International Education (IIE). Both the Department of State and the INS keep track of the type of visas issued to immigrants and non-immigrants but not the number of visas issued to students. Since J-1 visas for instance can be held by others besides students, it is difficult to distinguish who is and who is not a student. Only the F-1 visa can be held by students and students alone. The last private organization responsible for record keeping, the IIE, largely responsible for recording the presence of foreign students during most of the twentieth century did not start keeping records of students who planned to extend their stay in United States, till 1965. The organization until the 1970's tabulated its annual list of international student in the United States based on surveys returned by higher education institutions. This worked well in the 1950's when rates of survey returns reached or exceeded 92%, but by 1973 the rate of survey returns by institutions was at 68% or less.¹⁷ Though record keeping has vastly improved since the 1970's, it still remains difficult to accurately predict the choices foreign students will make at the end of their studies.

The second set of factors related to the difficulty in studying non-return are tied to the difficulty of identifying non-returnees. Students are different from established professionals in that data collectors can only rely on stated plans and intentions. It was and still remains difficult to judge the risk associated with non-return for each and every individual student. There are also still no consistent criteria for establishing points of non-return which leaves unanswered numerous questions such as when is a student considered a non-returning student? Is a student non-returning if he/she does not return home right after the completion of their degrees? An

¹⁷ Vinod Agarwal and Donald E. Winkler, "Migration of Foreign Students to the United States," *Journal of Higher Education*, 56, no. 5 (1985): 517.

additional factor that increased the difficulty in identifying non-returning students for earlier periods and even to this present day is that students who are circumventing immigration laws to remain in the United States are unlikely to honestly answer questions about their non-return status on voluntary surveys such as those given out by organizations like the IIE.¹⁸

The study of the non-returning African student has also remained constrained by the limitations of Pan-Africanism and the brain drain as theoretical frameworks.

From Pan-Africanism to the Brain Drain

It is not until the late 1950's that the idea of the non-returning African student is considered more than a novel idea. Significant increases in the overall international student population in the 1960's and 1970's raised great concerns about students and professional workers overstaying their welcome in the United States. This phenomenon was termed non-return and its most advertised outcome was the brain drain. Non-return as studied has been primarily associated with the decisions made by international students or professionals to indefinitely delay their return home after the completion of their studies. International students, African students included, have been largely categorized and studied as non-immigrants, individuals in the United States for a temporary period of time. The key issue is that African immigration to the United States was limited until the 1960's when key changes were made to existing immigration laws. These changes allowed for increased access and entry from Africa, Asia and other previously restricted parts of the world. The early history of restrictive

¹⁸ Ibid., 16. For other studies on non-return see Robert G. Myers, "The 'Brain Drain' and Foreign Student Non return," *Exchange* (Spring, 1967): 63-73; Glaser and Habers, *The Brain Drain*. For a more general guide to foreign students in the United States, see Seth Spaulding and Michael J. Flack, *The World's Students in the United States* (New York: Praeger, 1976). This work chronicles over 400 different works produced on the foreign student from 1960-1976. Importantly, the study of African students as a part of the brain drain stimulated much of the wealth of research produced on the overall phenomenon of the brain drain during the 1960's and 1970's. African students in the United States were widely used to portray the overriding concern of the brain drain that developed countries were draining the intellectual resources and capital of developing countries.

immigration laws however structured much of what scholars wrote about African immigration to the United States prior to the 1960's. Much of this body of scholarship is tied directly to the migration of non-immigrant African students. A focus on non-return and the brain drain however has not adequately addressed the historical significance of education as a means for African immigration to the United States.

Prior to the emergence of the brain drain as a field of interest in the late 1960's and early 1970's, much if not all of the focus of scholarship on African students was in relationship to African students and their engagement with elements of Pan-Africanism. Pan-Africanism as it has historically been addressed by scholars has been defined both as a movement and ideology.¹⁹ The movement which peaked in the 1960's with the rise of Kwame Nkrumah as its most prominent spokesman came to fruition in the beginning of the twentieth century as a result of increasing contact and communication between continental Africans and diasporic Africans. They shared in common a resistance to white domination and would plan effective ways to counter this culturally, spiritually and politically. Other aspects of these relationships, particularly a tailored focus on the impact of the United States system of higher education on the development of African leadership have been widely documented and have paid significant dividends in several disciplinary fields. Scholars have addressed the political motivations of West African students in choosing to study in the United States, the historical role of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the training of African leadership elites during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's as well as key relationships between

¹⁹ George Shepperson, "Pan-Africanism and 'pan-africanism': Some Historical Notes," *Phylon*, 23 (Winter, 1962): 346-358. There is a notable history of Pan-Africanism written by numerous scholars including most notably Ekanem E. Ita, "African Students and their Attitudes Toward Pan-Africanism and Black Consciousness in the United States," (PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 1972); Imanuel Geiss, "Pan-Africanism," *Journal of Contemporary History* 4, no. 1 (1969); James Ayodele Langeley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa, 1900-1945* (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1973).

leading intellectuals from the African continent and leading African American intellectuals and political activists. The presence of former African students like Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Kwame Nkrumah in United States institutions of higher education during the early twentieth century also offered important clues to those interested in investigating across the African Diaspora, the relationships between black cultural and ideological exchange and the rise of Pan-Africanism and modern African Nationalism.²⁰

Other prominent and earlier examples of this approach in the historiography of the African studentship include the works of historians, Richard Ralston, George Shepperson, Sylvia M. Jacobs, Kenneth King, and Mildred Fierce. These works offered some of the first in-depth analyses regarding the presence of African students in American institutions.²¹ Many of these studies were case studies and biographies of the first generation of American trained African students like Orishatukeh Faduma, John Chilembwe, James Kwegyir Aggrey, and Alfred Xuma. These African students were all prominent early African nationalists who benefited from an education in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's. While invaluable for their efforts to shed light on the processes that shaped African studentship in the

²⁰ Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe (1st president of Nigeria) was a noted figure in the pre-independence political scene in Nigeria and throughout West Africa. He arrived as a student in the U.S. in 1927 spending time at Storer College, Virginia; Howard University, Washington D.C., as well as Lincoln University, Pennsylvania. Another alumnus of Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, Francis Nwia Kofi Nkrumah (1st prime minister of the Gold Coast, now known as Ghana) known prominently as a key figure in the Pan-Africanist movements from the 1940's onwards, would spend almost a decade in the U.S. as a student (1935-1945). For more on the intellectual development of these two nationalist leaders in the United States see Leonard Bethel, "The Role of Lincoln University (Pennsylvania) in the education of African Leadership: 1854-1970," (Ed.D diss., University of Rutgers, 1975), 11; Horace M. Bond, *Education for Freedom: A History of Lincoln University, Pennsylvania* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976); Evelyn Rowand, "The Effect of Lincoln University Upon the Leaders of British West Africa," (MA thesis, University of Alberta, 1954); Marika Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Years Abroad, 1953-1947* (Legon, Ghana: Freedom Publications, 1996); Gene Ulansky, "Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Myth of America," (PhD diss, University of California, Berkeley, 1980).

²¹ Mildred Fierce, "African-American Interest in Africa and Interaction with West Africa: The Origins of the Pan-African Idea in the United States, 1900-1919," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1976); Sylvia M. Jacobs, "James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey: An African Intellectual in the United States," *The Journal of Negro History* 81, no. 1 (1996): 47-61; Kenneth J. King, "African Students in Negro American Colleges: Notes on the Good African," *Phylon* 31, no. 1 (1970): 16-30; Moses Moore, "Orishatukeh Faduma: An Intellectual Biography of a Liberal Evangelical Pan-Africanist, 1857-1946," (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1987); Edward W. Smith, *Aggrey of Africa: A Study in Black and White* (New York: Richard R. Smith Inc., 1930).

United States and on the lives of African students themselves, the scholars that helped to shape this most important era of scholarship were noticeably silent in regards to the long term settlement of African students or the idea of African immigration.

As a result there are very few historical studies of African immigration to the United States. This dearth in scholarship is also true in regards to studies about African student migrants who established themselves in the United States as long term settlers like Orishatukeh Faduma, James Kwegyir Aggrey, Melaku Bayan, and Ross Lohr among others. In this regard the primary body of literature on Pan-Africanism is prominently characterized by its framing of Pan-Africanism as a process perpetuated primarily by sojourners. The African student presence is framed accordingly in these works as a temporary presence. It is a trend that was only further exacerbated with the emergence of the brain drain as a subject of scholarly inquiry in the middle of the twentieth century.

The systematic study of the non-returning student is best associated with the introduction of the term “brain drain” which is coined in the late 1950’s as a part of efforts by the British government to stem the flow of talented British scientists and engineers moving to the United States. The brain drain as originally defined referred mainly to the “flow of skilled and talented people from less developed and developing countries to highly developed countries.”²² The term was widely used in the decades to follow as a descriptor of the migration of educated citizens and in particular professional, technical and kindred workers (PTKs) of the “developing” to the “developed world.” Many of the studies produced during this period focused principally on addressing the migrations of talented or skilled international students and professionals to the United States within the larger context of national and even global political and economic forces

²² See U.S. Congress, *The Brain Drain into the United States of Scientists and Engineers and Physicians. A Staff Study for the Research and Technical Programs Subcommittee of the Committee on Governmental Operations, House of Representatives, 90th Congress, 1st Session* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office 1967), 96.

structuring international student exchange. Estimates of the non-return of international students during this time varied widely by geography and were generally unreliable. As noted social scientist William Glaser observed, countries differed in the return rates of their students according to factors like ties with home, educational and language barriers and discrimination encountered abroad.²³

One of the first studies addressing this issue of the brain drain was a study produced in May 1958 by the Committee on Educational Interchange Policy, titled *The Foreign Student: Exchangee or Immigrant?* Admitting that a precise accounting of students who stayed permanently in the United States was impossible, the study estimated that the overall rate of foreign students who chose to permanently settle in the United States was 9%. Also, according to the study, Europe had the largest population of students residing permanently in the United States with 12% of its body fitting this description. The African continent had one of the lowest rates with only three students of the 57 African students estimated to be in the United States were permanent residents.²⁴ Almost two decades later, in 1974, Orlando Rodriguez estimated that the overall return rate for international students was between 15-25%.²⁵ The return rates for African students according to most studies of this period varied wildly. Gregory Henderson in his 1970 study of the skilled migration of manpower from developing countries estimated that 80% of Nigerian students chose to not return home. To this finding, Robert Myer's estimation that 1.6% of Nigerian students in 1972 were non-returning students pales in comparison.²⁶

²³ William A. Glaser and G.C. Habers, *The Brain Drain: Emigration and Return* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1978).

²⁴ Committee on Educational Interchange Policy, *The Foreign Student: Exchangee or Immigrant?* (New York: Committee on Educational Interchange Policy, 1958), 5.

²⁵ Orlando Rodriguez, "Social Determinants of Non-Return: A Study of Foreign Students from Developing Countries in the United States," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1974), 19.

²⁶ Robert Myers, *Education and Emigration, Study Abroad and the Migration of Human Resources* (New York: David McKay, 1972), 132.

Other key studies from this period like Das Singh's 1974 study titled "Brain Drain Controversy and African Scholars" analyzed differences in the intention to return home among students from developed and developing African countries. Singh found very few differences between students from developing and developed African countries. For example, 84% of the students from each group of African students he surveyed had intentions on returning home after the completion of their studies as opposed to 16% who wanted to remain in the United States.²⁷ In fact, as highlighted in Glazer's survey of world students, African students had the highest propensity to return home.²⁸

Though the brain drain and the issue of non-return generated alarm, the focus of much of the scholarship on African students in the United States in the 1960's and 1970's was tied to two core areas. The first being exchange programs and their influence in the recruitment, sponsorship and placement of African students. The most influential area of study however was international student attitudes towards the United States, or what Margaret Cormack termed "adjustment during sojourn."²⁹

The emphasis on student adjustment would take center stage in the 1960's as the rising numbers of international students in the United States raised important questions among social scientists about the adjustment of these students to life in the United States.³⁰ Adjustment as a measure however was often narrowly defined using theories of adjustment like Sverre Lysgaard's U-curve hypothesis which suggested that international students begin their sojourn in

²⁷ Man Singh Das, "Brain Drain Controversy and African Scholars," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 9, 1 (1974), 75

²⁸ Glaser and Habers, *The Brain Drain*, 87

²⁹ Margaret Cormack, *An Evaluation of Research on Education Exchange* (Washington D.C.: The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State, 1962), 62.

³⁰ Tamar Becker, "Perceptions and Attitudinal Changes among Foreign Students on the UCLA Campus," (PhD, diss., University of California, 1966); Tamar Becker, "Patterns of Attitudinal Changes among Foreign Students," *American Journal of Sociology* 73 (January 1968): 431-432; Hwa-bao Chang, "A Study of Some Attitudes of Chinese Students in the United States," (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1972).

America feeling positively about themselves and their host country but after a crucial length time begin to feel lonely and unhappy, a situation not resolved until students decided to return home.³¹ Some other factors identified in studies of the international students were financial difficulties, lack of contact with local people, personal depression, difficulty adjusting to climate, difficulty with local food and language.³² Other studies on international students' adjustment for example, advocated shorter sojourns for students, the necessity of students being versed in the "language and culture" of America, and increased interaction with local students versus "voluntary" isolation.³³ Most of these studies relied on quantitative surveys of students to address questions of cultural adjustment rather than the use of qualitative methods like oral history interviews, focus groups or case studies to solicit first hand perspectives of cultural adjustment from the students being studied. Though few, there were some works that attempted to offer the perspectives of international students on their adjustment to the United States.

One of the earliest works that attempted to account for the perspectives of foreign students on their adjustment to life in America was William Marquadt's *The Foreign Student Speaks*. Published in 1958, *The Foreign Student Speaks*, a compilation of student narratives on their presence in American institutions of higher education was one of the first comprehensive works to acknowledge the voices of students on issues of cultural adjustment, perceptions of America, perceptions of American hospitality and perhaps most importantly criticisms of

³¹ Sverre Lysgaard, "Adjustment in a Foreign Society: Norwegian Fulbright Grantees Visiting the United States," *International Social Science Bulletin*, 7 (1955), 45-51.

³² Frank Hull, *Foreign Students in the United States of America* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978); Richard D. Lambert, *Indian Students on an American Campus* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1956); Claire Selltiz, J.Havel Christ and Stuart W. Cook, *Attitudes and Social Relations of Foreign Students in the United States* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1963).

³³ Institute of International Education, *A Guide to the Admission and Placement of Foreign Students* (New York: Institute of International Education, 1958).

America on a range of issues.³⁴ It highlighted a range of experiences and criticisms from positive to negative, from students of a diverse background of nationalities.

More often than not however the majority of studies on the foreign student suggested that foreign students encountered very little difficulty during their stay in America. Studies of foreign students from other “developing” parts of the world during this period also suggested that they encountered very little difficulty beyond issues of cultural ignorance or naivety on the part of their hosts.³⁵ This trend in the scholarship however raised very little alarm. In assessing student attitudes towards the United States many of the studies focused on these and similar issues, rarely taking into account the tenuous nature of study abroad and the unwillingness of international students to present opinions and perspectives that would reflect negatively on their stay. More importantly, international students were often written about as separate entities from the larger immigrant Diasporas they were related to. The dissertation adopts a different approach. It positions the African student and non-return within the larger history of the African immigrant Diaspora in the United States

A Turn to Diaspora

In a widely acclaimed essay, historian Earl Lewis proposed that the history of Africans in the United States be viewed as a complex history of overlapping Diasporas that had yet to be

³⁴ William F. Marquadt, *The Foreign Student Speaks* (Washington: University of Washington, 1958). See also Clarke, Helen and Ozawa, Martha, *The Foreign Student in the United States* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, School of Social Work, 1970).

³⁵ Abdullah Saleh Al Banyan, *Saudi Students in the United States* (London: Ithaca Press, 1980); Richard D. Lambert and Bressler Marvin, *Indian Students on an American Campus* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1956); Babs Fafunwa, “An African Adventures in America,” in *African Treasury*, edited by Langston Hughes (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1961); and John Nagenda, “Pride and Prejudice? Relationships between Africans and American Negroes,” *Race* 9, no. 2 (1967): 159-171 are two of the few existing works that provide personal perspectives into the lives of the African student during this period.

fully explored. Highlighting the impressive diversity of black communities in the Diaspora and most noticeably the lack of scholarship on the origins of these communities, Lewis wrote,

In acknowledging race's powerful hold on black life and the nation's history, we have failed to ask an intriguing and important set of interrelated questions. This disjuncture in the literature is even more curious given the willingness to ask such questions about life during slavery. For that earlier period, we assume that Africans who were imported from the Senegambian region differed from those from Ireland or Angola and each of these groups differed from a creole population in the United States. But what of Jamaican migrants such as Marcus Garvey and Cyrill Biggs who settled in New York? What was the process by which they and hundreds of others existed as both African American and Afro West Indian? How do we begin to understand differences in Black communities? How do we define and refine the process of writing African peoples into a history of overlapping diaspora?³⁶

To borrow from Lewis, we have often ignored the larger connections between the non-returning African student and the contemporary African Diaspora in the United States. Pan-Africanism and the brain drain as theoretical frameworks remain ill-equipped to analyze African students as anything but temporary sojourners. The study of the African Diaspora however offers a different theoretical lens through which to view the experiences of varied black immigrant populations, especially one as extensive as that of African students immigrants. A reason for this is best surmised by Brent Hayes Edwards who notes that Diaspora was “introduced in large to account for difference among African-derived populations in a way that a term like Pan-Africanism could not. Moreover Diaspora points to difference not only internally (the ways transnational groupings are fractured by nation, class, gender, sexuality, language) but also externally; in appropriating a term so closely associated with Jewish thought, we are forced to think not in terms of some closed or autonomous system of African dispersal but explicitly in terms of a complex past of forced migrations and racialization.”³⁷

³⁶ Earl Lewis, “To Turn As on a Pivot: Writing African Americans into a History of Overlapping Diasporas,” *American Historical Review*, 2000 (June 1995): 786.

³⁷ Brent Hayes Edwards, “The Uses of Diaspora,” *Social Text* 66, no. 19 (2001): 64.

It is important to note that the study of the contemporary African Diaspora in the United States is still a fairly recent enterprise whose origins are intimately tied to the experiences of African students in the United States. The term “diaspora” itself was institutionalized in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s for the study of dispersed African communities by historians George Shepperson and Joseph Harris who were responding to a specific set of historiographic needs particular to this period.³⁸ One of these needs was the struggle to explain the impact of new world forces on African students studying abroad in the United States during the early twentieth century.

Shepperson’s initial conception of the “African Diaspora,” which he termed “All-Africanism,” was strongly motivated by his 1958 book, *The Independent African*.³⁹ The book followed the exploits of John Chilembwe, a student from Nyasaland (now Malawi) who through the efforts of John Booth, a radical white missionary traveled to the United States in 1897 to attend Virginia Theological College, a small Historically Black seminary. His radicalism inspired and nurtured by the active black socio-political milieu he encountered in the United States, Chilembwe returned home in 1900 to assume an important role in the active resistance against colonialism in Southern Africa. His actions would most notably culminate in the Nyasaland Rebellion of 1915 which though a century removed replicated the spirit of John

³⁸ George Shepperson, “Pan-Africanism: Some Historical Notes,” *Phylon* 23, no. 4 (1962). Though never explicitly referring to the term “diaspora”, Shepperson outlines in this article the underlying reasons for an all encompassing idea like “diaspora”. It is not until the International Congress of African Historians in Dar es Salaam, Kenya in 1965 that Shepperson formally presents the term “diaspora”. See Shepperson, “The African Abroad or the African Diaspora,” in *Emerging Themes of African History*, ed. T.O. Ranger (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968), 152-176. For Shepperson in particular, it was important to move away from the “Africa interest” approach emblematic of St. Clair Drake and others like W.E.B. Du Bois, Carter G. Woodson and Arturo Schomburg, which often leaned towards a unified and universal articulation of the interests and experiences of people of African descent. Responding to the failure of the growing field of African history to address important differences in the African presence abroad, Shepperson first offers the terms “All-Africanism”, then “diaspora” to challenge this tradition.

³⁹ George Shepperson, Thomas Price, *Independent African*; Brent Hayes Edwards, “The Uses of Diaspora,” *Social Text* 66, no. 19 (2001): 1. Shepperson and his co-author Thomas Price, in *The Independent African* were trying to understand New World influences on African resistance to colonialism but were at a loss to do so using current existing theories or historical models to do so.

Brown's ill-fated rebellion in the United States, in its attempt to free and arm black African workers. Like Brown, Chilembwe's rebellion was short-lived. He was executed by colonial authorities in 1915.

The study of new world influences on African students abroad would not be isolated to the contributions of individual African students like Chilembwe. It had other important contributions, mainly a focus on the documents produced by African students in student periodicals, newspapers and other outlets from the nineteenth century, which were important in addressing the general absence of documented African sources on the continent itself and which served as a way using the document voices of African student "to shed light on local histories, customs and African attitudes towards European colonialists."⁴⁰ These documents also offered important insights into the world that African students encountered in the United States.

Decades after Shepperson first appropriated the term for academic use and discourse, the African Diaspora remains a strongly contested and difficult concept to define. A key issue being as Paul Zeleza notes, that it "simultaneously refers to a process, a condition, a space and a discourse: the continuous process by which a Diaspora is made, unmade and remade, the changing conditions in which it lives and expresses itself, the places where it is molded and imagined and the contentious ways in which it is studied and discussed."⁴¹

As applied in particular to African student migrations such a process suggests a more critical and comprehensive analysis than has previously been utilized. One important critique of

⁴⁰ Joseph Harris, "Introduction to the African Diaspora," in *Emerging Themes of African History*, ed. T.O. Ranger (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968), 147-151. Several African students beginning in the 1920's with Nnamdi Azikiwe would write important works that addressed key political, social and economic issues on the continent. Nnamdi Azikiwe alone would publish several articles on Africa. A short list of these include: Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Nigerian Political Institutions," *Journal of Negro History* 14 (1929): PAGE NUMBERS; Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Murdering Women in Nigeria," *The Crisis* 37 (May 1930): 164; Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Ethics of Colonial Imperialism," *Journal of Negro History* 14 (1931): 287-308.

⁴¹ Paul T. Zeleza, "The African Academic Diaspora in the United States and Africa: The Challenges of Productive Engagement," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24, no. 1 (2004): 262.

scholarship on the brain drain has been the inability of this corpus of scholarship to resolve the differences between immigration for a limited and defined period of time versus permanent settlement. Permanent or long term resettlement is significant to the process of diasporization, the key question in determining diasporization being an understanding of “when...new immigrants become part of the Diaspora.” The answer to this question as Zeleza notes is complicated. He writes,

I would suggest that not every migrant turns into a diasporan. Many Africans who have come to the United States, for example, since the end of the Second World War, have done so for temporary periods as workers, expatriate professionals, business people, students and tourists, and often go back after the realization of their objectives. It does not seem to make much sense to regard such temporary migrants as members of the new Diaspora. But temporary migrants can and often do become permanent migrants even if they maintain connections with home through periodic visits. A precondition for the transition from a migrant into a diasporan is prolonged settlement, followed by permanent resettlement in a new host country. Neither connection need be planned, of course; indeed, many African migrants abroad do not always anticipate staying long or settling permanently, but often end up doing so.⁴²

He further notes:

[the]...issue, then, is not intention, but the duration of stay, the separation of the there of the home country and the here of the host country. It is the offspring of such migrants who complete the transition from migration to diasporization for the families and communities. Thus the diasporization process is a cumulative one beginning with migration, followed by resettlement and reproduced through the offspring of the migrants. Using this schema, I would distinguish between African migrants, diasporized Africans, and African Diasporas. In this context, long-term African-born residents of the United States would be considered diasporized Africans, while their offspring turn into African Diasporas, more fully socialized into the experiences and identities of the historic diaspora.⁴³

Zeleza’s delineation of the differences between immigration and diasporization offers an important framework for contextualizing the study of African student migrations and non-return. Scholars interested in studying African student migrations would benefit from addressing these migrations as a part of the larger historical and contemporary African Diasporas in the United

⁴² Paul T. Zeleza, *Diaspora Dialogues*, 41.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 41-42.

States. Non-return is a continuous process, more than 200 years old that stretches across both historical and contemporary African Diasporas in the United States. It is one of the central forces that has governed African student migrations to the United States.

Sources and Methods

In analyzing the experiences of non-returning African students for the first three periods of African studentship outlined by Ralston, I drew extensively from prominent primary source material on African studentship in the United States, autobiographies and primary writings of African students. Additional primary source material included the autobiographies of African students like Nnamdi Azikiwe, Kwame Nkrumah, Mbonu Ojike and Olumide Fafunwa among others. Other primary sources utilized were from the Horace Mann Bond Papers. Letters between Horace Mann Bond and two chief architects of African student migrations to the United States, Nwafor Orizu and Mbonu Ojike were instrumental in highlighting the early framework of African student exchange in the late 1940's and the role of African and black American students and scholars in facilitating this process.

These materials were supplemented by records from the United States Bureau of the Census and Immigration and Naturalization Service (now Department of Homeland Security) records, both of which offer important extended statistics on African immigration to the United States and highlight the evolution of immigration categories and law for African immigrants and students. In addition, United States Congressional records as well as institutional reports from organizations like the International Institute of Education (IIE), the African-American institute (AAI) and the Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students also served as additional sources.

The most important set of resources however in this study were the actual voices of African students themselves. Oral history is central to this dissertation for several reasons. There is a lack of institutional memory in United States institutions of higher education about African students and to a larger extent, international students. Archives dedicated to African students or international students in general are few. Non-return as addressed from the perspectives of African students has not been well documented except fleetingly in the autobiographies of African students like Nnamdi Azikiwe, Kwame Nkrumah and Mbonu Ojike. These few reports alone do not allow for a historical analysis of non-return. The significance of oral history as Grele notes is that it is central to “giving back history to those everyday people whose lived realities have often been constructed without their knowledge and active contributions.”⁴⁴ The experiences of non-returning African students offer a view of the larger history of African student migrations and of the African diaspora in the United States devoid of many of the political exigencies apparent in the more widely acknowledged narratives of African students like Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah. The former students now immigrants whose voices are represented in this study represent living archives of African student experiences in regards to non-return.

A main goal of this dissertation was to identify individuals who could speak to any of the four phases of African student migrations which structure this study. This proved to be an area of difficulty. Those individuals who were living and available to address this goal were from the fourth phase, 1959 to 1983. Former students now immigrants were selected using snowball sampling methods. The process of identifying individuals began with an initial contact made by the researcher with a personal acquaintance, a former African student now immigrant. This

⁴⁴ Grele, Richard J. *Oral History as Evidence*. In Charlston, T.L.; Myers, L.E. & Sharpless, R. (eds), *Handbook of Oral History* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2006), 38.

contact yielded names and contact information of others who fit the profile needed. These new contacts yielded other names. In total 28 individuals were identified and contacted by email and telephone where possible. These efforts resulted in the interviewing of seven former students now immigrants located throughout the United States. The earliest of these individuals arrived in the United States in 1962 and the last in 1978.

The individuals interviewed do not fully represent a cross section of the larger population of African student non-returnees. Despite efforts to attain gender balance, five of the seven interviewees were males. This is reflective however of the disparities in gender during the fourth phase where female international students made up a small proportion of the larger student body. Repeated attempts to identify female African students who were non-returnees failed. Though unfortunate, this gap strengthens the significance of the narratives of the female students who are included in this study and highlights the need for further scholarship to redress this problem. Five of the seven interviewees identified Nigeria as their country of birth and origin, while the last two interviewees were from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia. As one of the largest body of African students in the United States beginning in the 1970's, Nigerians are not overrepresented in this study. An ideal body of interviewees would have yielded greater diversity in the number of nationalities included however the balance in this particular study of nationalities is influenced largely by the difficulties in studying non-return. There are no formal rosters or directories of non-returning students. This is a process that to be studied requires the informal methods such as peer networks. It is important to note that the interviewees in this study highlight as individual narratives and as a collective whole the contributions that non-returning African students can make to the study of African student migrations but also of the African Diaspora in the United States.

Chapter Outline

The chapters of this dissertation explore the historical forces that have facilitated the non-return of African students in their pursuit of higher education in the United States. The second chapter of this dissertation study is focused on the first two phases of African student migrations as identified by Ralston. The first phase extends from 1774 to the nineteenth century and highlights the important connections between the American missionary movement, the recruitment of African students, the colonization movement, and finally the institutionalization of higher education abroad for African students. The second phase as addressed in this study is focused primarily on two specific case studies of the earliest known examples of non-returning African students, Orishatukeh Faduma and James Aggrey and the significance of their experiences in shaping the larger relationship of educational migration for African students in the United States. Both Faduma and Aggrey experiences in the United States as students and subsequently as missionaries were a function of the earlier efforts of the American missionary movement to institutionalize the education of African students abroad.

The third chapter extending Ralston's framework addresses the third phase of African student migrations during the first half of the early twentieth century. It is focused on an analysis of the active contributions of African students to the recruitment, enrollment and sponsorship of African students in United States institution of higher education during this period. In this Chapter I address the organizational and philosophical structure of the institutionalization of African student education in the United States. The fourth chapter addresses the fourth phase of African student migrations. The time frame of this phase begin with the East Africa airlift of 1959 and extends to 1983, the historical peak of African student migrations to the United States. By the middle of the twentieth century and beginning in the 1960's in particular control over

African student higher education in the United States had switched from private philanthropic organizations to the Federal government. This chapter highlights key political and social factors that influenced the recruitment of African students to the United States during this period including the Mboya airlifts. It also focuses on an assessment of three of the most important educational exchange programs for African students highlighting key factors that influenced the later decision by some students to delay their return home after the completion of their studies. The fifth chapter of this dissertation continues the examination of the fourth phase of African studentship in the United States. It offers experiences, memories of non-return as recounted by former students now immigrants in the United States. Key themes that emerge in this chapter include the continued significance of Christian and philanthropic organizations of influencing the recruitment and sponsorship of African students studying abroad. Non-return as articulated by non-returning African students is identified as a fluid process constantly shifting in response to internal and external pressures as well as historical and contemporary forces. Chapter six, offers a recap of this study of African student non-return. It addresses current approaches and methods to investigating non-return. Though the historical analysis of non-return remains a marginalized area of scholarly interest, this chapter seeks to demonstrate the necessity for further inquiries into the history of non-return and an an acknowledgements of its ties to the history of the African Diaspora in the United States.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ORIGINS OF AFRICAN STUDENTSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES

In 1773 two church ministers, Samuel Hopkins and Ezra Stiles of Newport, Rhode Island proposed a radical plan to link the emancipation of African slaves to the religious colonization of the African continent. The plan when implemented resulted in the training of two Africans, one a freedman and the other a slave as missionaries at the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University). Hopkins and Stile's plan would provide the ideological blueprint for educational exchange between the United States and the African continent in the decades to follow.

Any effort to understand how the arrival of two African students at one of only five existing colleges in colonial America, during a period where formal higher education for Africans in America was virtually non-existent understand has to begin with an analysis of the early origins of higher education for blacks in colonial America.¹ In colonial America, early "education" for blacks often took on the appearance of training, whether for religious or economic purposes rather than the basics of formal education. Africans in colonial America who were able to gain the fundamental elements of literacy; reading and writing, did so primarily as a result of sympathetic masters and their children, and in other instances through their active subversion of anti-literacy laws. The irony however, was that whether for religious or economic purposes the need for literate and trained if not educated slaves during this period in colonial America was undeniable. As historian Henry Bullock observed "in the beginning there was no thought of educating the negroes; yet the necessity to do so was always present. During the early part of the seventeenth century, Europeans and Africans, caught in the tide of empire, were

¹ By 1773 there were only five recognized colleges in the colonies. In order of their founding, they were Harvard in 1636, the College of William and Mary in 1693, Collegiate School (Yale University) in 1701, Academy of Philadelphia (University of Pennsylvania) in 1743 and the College of New Jersey (Princeton University) in 1746.

joined in a system of economic interdependence—a system which would inevitably require that Africans would have to be educated and would aspire to become a part of a society that would encompass the two races.”²

Attempts to educate blacks in colonial America would be taken up by different groups of whites, each utilizing the training of blacks as means to achieve larger religious or economic goals. These early advocates fell into three classes, “masters who desired to increase the economic efficiency of their labor supply; sympathetic persons who wished to help the oppressed; and third, zealous missionaries who believing that message of divine love came equally to all, taught slaves the English language that they might learn the principles of the Christian languages.”³ Beginning in measured stages during the late seventeenth century but in full effect particularly from the nineteenth century onwards, the contributions of white missionaries to the formal education of blacks would surpass those of any other group except for blacks themselves.

The missionary intervention in black education can be seen as early as the sixteenth century, in Spanish occupied North America. By this period, Spanish and French missionaries in North America had identified an education steeped in Christianity as the key to the “salvation” of both Native Americans and enslaved black Africans. The efforts of missionaries in English occupied North America would accordingly follow suit. To this end, the first organized attempts to educate blacks in this region would begin with the labors of missionary organizations like the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) to establish schools systematically across the

² Henry Bullock, *A history of Negro education in the South, from 1619 to the present* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 1.

³ Carter G. Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1968), 2. This seminal work of Woodson’s remains one of the most comprehensive historical works regarding the education of blacks during the 17th and 18th centuries.

American colonies in the early 18th century.⁴ These efforts resulted in the creation of small schools for freed blacks, run by white missionaries. Often serving small populations of mostly freed blacks, many of these earliest missionary schools represented the first efforts to indoctrinate black Africans in colonial America to the basic rudiments of European education.⁵ The training they received however was intended to serve primarily as a conduit for transmitting the message of Christianity to Africans in the “New World” and in this context the bible was often the main literary text used to teach and measure literacy. As historian Carter G. Woodson observed, what was essentially offered to black freedmen, specifically those in the northern colonies where many of the early missionary schools were established, was “religion with letters.”⁶

The efforts of white Christian missionaries to spread Christianity and its purported ancillary benefits like literacy were not without opposition. Resistance to the training of black slaves in Christianity came largely from white slave-owners who were worried about the effects of literacy in particular, in fostering discontent and rebellion among freed and enslaved blacks. The creation of anti-literacy laws in Georgia and South Carolina in 1740 and throughout the rest of the South in later decades were just a few of the measures taken to prevent the training of blacks in letters.⁷ But even those most vociferous in their opposition to the idea of educating black freedmen were willing to allow one exception; the training of Africans as missionaries to assist in the Christianizing of the African continent. While a novel idea for white missionaries in colonial America, the idea of linking Christianity and education to the emancipation of black

⁴ Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, 34. For an accounting of the early history of the SPG see, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, *Classified Digest of the Records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel* (London, 1894).

⁵ This should not be taken to mean that these Africans were not educated prior to their encounters with European education.

⁶ Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, 18-50.

⁷ Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 13-17

slaves had been well tested in other parts of the world by this time with some fair measure of success.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, as historian Elizabeth Isichei notes, the promise of literacy as tied to the Christianizing of Africans had been well utilized on the African continent by European missionaries. The English, Dutch, Portuguese and Danish were among the many European nations that had established missions as early as the sixteenth century and had formal experience in the practice of sending Africans back to Europe for missionary training.⁸ In colonial America, the idea of linking the gospel to the repatriation of enslaved or freed Africans is prominently displayed in 1732 when Ayuba Suleiman Diallo (also known as Job Ben Solomon), a Muslim from a noble family in Senegal, West Africa is enslaved and brought to the New World. Suleiman in one of the exceptional stories of slavery to freedom in the history of North American chattel slavery spends just one year in bondage. Enslaved in 1732, he was freed remarkably after only one year in captivity in 1733. His freedom was purchased by British philanthropist George Oglethorpe who intercepting a letter written by Diallo to his father, was struck by his story, and arranged for his purchase from slavery and subsequent arrival in England in 1733. Oglethorpe's interest in Suleiman is largely motivated by the fact that Suleiman, who was a Muslim was literate, able to speak, read and write Arabic. These seemingly rare traits for an African slave, in combination with his noble heritage would be Suleiman's pass to freedom, resulting in his eventual return to his native land of birth in 1735.⁹

⁸ Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present* (Grand Rapids Michigan: Wm. B. Eardmans Publishing Co., 1995) 59-66.

⁹ For a biography of Ayuba Suleiman Diallo, see Thomas Bluett, *Some Memories of the Life of Job, the Son of the Solomon High Priest of Boonda in Africa; Who was a Slave about two Years in Maryland; and afterwards being brought to England, was set free, and sent to his native Land in the Year 1734* (London: Richard Ford, 1734). Notable body of literature that talks about the impact of Islam in North America during the slave trade include, Michael Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks* (North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 59-87; Sylvaine A. Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas* (New York: New York

Suleiman's story is one of the earliest known examples of efforts undertaken by blacks in colonial America to return back to Africa.¹⁰ It would take another three decades before American missionaries established formal attempts to link religious education and literacy to the repatriation of Africans in America. The model used by American missionaries would be a well tried domestic model honed by the American colonial experience.

The Blueprint

There is very little evidence to suggest that during the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries there were any formal plans to develop and provide institutionalized forms of higher education for blacks in colonial America. Higher education as a whole in colonial America during this period was largely unavailable to the vast majority of whites and virtually non-existent for black Africans, freed or enslaved. Yet interestingly by this period the question of higher education for some non-whites in colonial America had been answered.¹¹ As early as 1617, plans for the development of higher education for Native Americans had been created and in some few cases implemented. The historical precedent for this educational system had been set first in the failed and tragic case of the first colonial college Henrico College, then in the successful establishment of the earliest colonial colleges like Harvard College, the College of William and Mary and

University, 1998). Richard B. Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003) 25–26.

¹⁰ The story of Abd al Rahman Ibrahima is another notable example of an African Muslim winning his freedom due to the attention his religion and status as a literate black slave garnered. Ibrahima was a Muslim prince who was enslaved in 1789 and taken to Natchez Mississippi where he spent the next forty years before being freed and returning home. His life story has been well documented most notably in Terry Alvord, *Prince Among Slaves* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹¹ Historians of American higher education have largely been remiss in addressing the role of Native Americans in facilitating the establishment of the earliest higher education institutions in colonial America. The promise of civilizing the “native” is one of the foundational pillars of American higher education. For a comprehensive discussion of this idea see Bernard Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1972).

Dartmouth College.¹² These were all seventeenth and eighteenth century colleges partly inspired in their creation, to promote the propagation of Christianity and the civilizing effects of European classical culture on American soil through the education of Native Americans. The creation of these colleges followed a well-recognized blueprint for the education of Native Americans established as early as 1607 with the English settlement of Jamestown, Virginia.¹³ As historian Margaret Szasz notes, despite the great diversity in plans and methods put forth for Native American education during this period there were enough commonalities to produce a clear pattern. Szasz writes

First, either the colony or a missionary organization established the fundamental principle necessary for Indian schooling: the need to Christianize and civilize the natives... In the second step, one or more Euroamericans, either missionary or pious layman, emerged as the catalyst for the schooling movement. Invariably, this individual bore several personality traits, including a strong sense of self-motivation, perseverance and financial acumen as well as a certain amount of aggressiveness. His personal direction of the plans was crucial. Notwithstanding all of his efforts, however he stood a good chance of failing unless one other condition prevailed. The third essential ingredient of the planning stage demanded the involvement of at least one Indian. When this individual displayed some degree of competence in the basic tenets of Christianization and civilization, the success of the project was almost assured. The Indian's skills provided the exemplary model, which was then advertised by the missionary/schoolmaster for the express purpose of attaining financial support.¹⁴

Each of the earliest colonial colleges was founded on the promise of instituting higher education for Native Americans. The use of Native Americans to solicit funds for the establishment of the schools was a prominent practice in each of these schools.¹⁵ This model of

¹² Henrico College was intended in its original design to be an industrial school directed towards the indoctrination of Native American youth in Western civilization. Plans for the college were proposed in 1617 and while some few support buildings are built by 1622, the college was never completed due to an outbreak of war between settlers and Native American tribes. The ensuing conflict would devastate both white and Native American populations of Henrico County. It would take another fourteen years before the first higher education institution in the colonies is established. This institution was Harvard University, established in 1835.

¹³ Margaret Szasz, *Indian Education in the American Colonies 1607-1783* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 5.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ The relationship between the Reverend Eleazer Wheelock and his famous student Samson Occam is perhaps the most prominent example of this trend. In the 1740's, Eleazer Wheelock, emerged as one of the leaders

education gained significant traction among white missionaries with the rise of the 1st Great Awakening (1730 to 1760). Missionaries like John Sargaent, John Elliot, Eleazer Wheelock and George Whitefield particularly, utilized the momentum of this religious revival movement to promote the spread of the gospel through the organized education of Native Americans.¹⁶

Another missionary on the fringes of this movement, preaching in the small settler town of Great Barrington, Massachusetts, was the young Reverend Samuel Hopkins. The Great Awakening had a significant influence on a young Hopkins who envisioned his contribution to the movement as directed towards the creation of a society that would on linking the emancipation of slaves to the religious colonization of the African continent. In 1770 he creates the African Mission Society.¹⁷

Hopkins was aided in his endeavors by his friend, the Reverend Ezra Stiles, leader of the Second Congregational Church in Newport and later president of Yale University. Together in 1773 they drafted a letter to be circulated among the various Christian communities of New England. In this letter, the first of only two documented circular's referencing the African Mission, they appealed for funds to send two Africans, one a freedman name John Quamine and the other a slave Bristol Yamma, to the College of New Jersey.¹⁸ Directed towards his largely

of the Great Awakening. Wheelock was a strong supporter of boarding school education for Native American students. He was one of the first protestant missionaries to recognize the financial rewards that could be reaped by modeling and advertising the benefits of using Christianity to transform natives. This would be most apparent in Wheelock's relationship with his best student Samuel Occom. Occom was one of Wheelock's native students, who was ordained as a congregational minister in 1759. Occom is more famously known for his travels to England to preach and raise money for the education of other Native Americans. In his travels abroad he was able to raise more than eleven thousand pounds used by Wheelock to found Dartmouth College.

¹⁶ See John Giles, *Memoirs of Rev. George Whitefield* (New Haven: Whitmore & Buckingham, 1834) for further discussion of George Whitefield.

¹⁷ Edward Amassa Park, Samuel Hopkins and Sewall Harding, *The Works of Samuel Hopkins, vol. 1* (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Society, 1852). This biography of Hopkins is one of the few sources historians have to uncover the life of this man. The Great Awakening was one of the most significant forces in the wholesale conversion of enslaved Africans to Christianity. It helped set the foundation for the creation of black evangelical churches in North America and the West Indies beginning in the 1740's. For more information on the Great Awakening see Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The roots of evangelical Christianity in colonial America* (Yale University Press, 2007), 213-233.

¹⁸ Outside of Hopkin's two letters describing their qualities and qualifications and some few references in the Reverend Ezra Stiles biography very little is known about the lives of the two students at the heart of Hopkins plan, John Quamine and Bristol Yamma. Both were members of Hopkins First Congregational Church and had been

white congregation, Hopkins in his first circular dated April 8, 1773, framed his appeal for funds within the larger goal of helping to promote Christianity on the African continent and to end the evils of slavery. He dedicated the letter “To all who are desirous to promote the kingdom of Christ on earth, in the salvation of sinners, the following narrative and proposal are offered, to excite and solicit their charity and prayers.”¹⁹ The foundation laid, he introduced the two main actors of his scheme, John Quamine and Bristol Yamma and in addition provided key details of his proposed plan, parts of which are detailed below. In his letter Hopkins wrote the following,

There are two colored men, members of the First Congregational Church in Newport, on Rhode Island, named Bristol Yamma, and John Quamine, who were hopefully converted some years ago, and have from that sustained a good character as Christians, and have made good proficiency in Christian knowledge. The latter is a son of a rich man at Annamaboe, and was sent by his father to this place for an education among the English, and then to return home. All this the person to whom he was committed engaged to perform for a good reward. But, instead of being faithful to his trust, he sold him a slave for life. But God, in his providence, has put it in the power of both of them to obtain their freedom. The former is, however, fifty dollars in debt, as he could not purchase his freedom under two hundred dollars; which he must procure by his labor, unless relieved by the charity of others.

These persons, thus acquainted with Christianity, and apparently devoted to the service of Christ, are about thirty years old; have good natural abilities; are apt, steady and judicious, and speak their native language,--the language of a numerous, potent nation in Guinea, to which they both belong. They are not only willing, but very desirous to quit all worldly prospects, and risk their lives in attempting to open a door for the propagation of Christianity among their poor, ignorant, perishing heathen brethren.

The concurrence of all these things has led to set on foot a proposal to send them to Africa, to preach the gospel there, if upon trial, they shall appear in any good measure qualified for this business. In order to do this, they must be put to school, and taught to read and write better than they now can, and be instructed more fully in divinity, &c. And if, upon trial, they appear to make good proficiency, and shall be thought by competent judges to be fit for such a mission, it is not doubted that money may be procured sufficient to carry the design into execution.

What is now wanted and asked is money to pay the debt mentioned, and to support them at school, to make the trial whether they may be fitted for the proposed mission.²⁰

students of Sarah Osborn, a white teacher in Newport who hosted weekly prayer sessions at her house. Osborn on average would have up to seventy blacks both freed and enslaved at her house. It is notable that three of Osborn's students, John Quamine, Bristol Yamma and Newport Gardner would end up in Hopkins missionary society.

¹⁹ Edward Amassa Park, *The Works of Samuel Hopkins, vol 1*, 130.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 130-131.

Outside of Reverend Hopkin's two letters describing their qualities and qualifications and some few references in the autobiography of Reverend Ezra Stiles, very little is known about the lives of the two students at the heart of Hopkins plan, John Quamine and Bristol Yamma. That they were both were from the Gold Coast, and in particular Annamoboe is made evident in the letter of appeal written by Reverend Hopkins. Quamine who was initially sent by his father for an education among the English would gain some elements of that desired education even before his interactions with Hopkins and Stiles. Both Quamine and Yamma were also students of Sarah Osborn, a white female evangelist and teacher in Newport who founded a women's society and in addition hosted separate weekly prayer sessions at her house for all races. Osborn's prayer sessions on average hosted up to freed and enslaved seventy blacks at her house. Her students included leading black citizens of Newport like Quamine and Yamma but also Obour Tanner, close friend of the poet Phyllis Wheatley and Occramar Marycoo (Newport Gardner), who would participate in Hopkins African Mission. It is believed that Hopkins took over Osborn's duties after her death providing him the opportunity to interact with three of her students, John Quamine, Bristol Yamma and Newport Gardner. These three men would be eventual recruits for Hopkin's African Mission, qualified for this venture by their standing as literate black citizens.²¹

In their search for qualified candidates for their African mission, Hopkins and Stiles hoping to recreate the successes of the African born and British trained missionary Philip Quaque, were adamant that prospective candidates for the African mission be literate in Christianity.²² At a minimum they required that candidates for the mission have the ability to

²¹ For more information on Sarah Osborn's efforts to teach black residents of Newport see, Samuel Hopkins, *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Sarah Osborn* (Worcester, Massachusetts: Leonard Worcester, 1799), 77-81.

²² A native of Annamoboe like John Quamine, Quaque was one of three Fanti children to be taken to England by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) to be trained as missionaries in the early 18th century. In 1765, Quaque, the first African missionary ordained by the Church of England, would return home to establish a mission for the SPG. It was one of the first of its kind along the Gold Coast. For more on Quaque see Jeffrey Cox. *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 40-43; Paul Edwards, Dabydeen,

read proficiently from the bible. On April 13th, 1773, Stiles interviewed John Quamine to determine if he was suitable for the African Mission. Overall, Stile's was not impressed by Quamine's expression of literacy and was doubtful of his suitability for the African mission. In his assessment of Quamine's literacy, Stiles wrote the following, "he is pretty judicious, but not communicative, and I am doubtful whether he would be *apt to teach*. He certainly wants much improv to qualify him for the gospel ministry, if indeed, such a thing was advisable."²³ This improvement in qualifications for the ministry for both Quamine and Yamma, as envisioned by Hopkins and Stiles required training of a kind found only in a school of theology.²⁴ As recorded in Stile's diary entry dated November 22, 1774, John Witherspoon, then President of the College of New Jersey was entrusted with the education of Quamine and Yamma. Stiles writes "yesterday morning sailed from hence for N. York, in their way to Princeton, Bristol Yamma and John Quamine, two freed negroes of this town, designed for an African Mission. We have sent them to reside some time at Jersey College, under the tuition of President Witherspoon."²⁵

Little is mentioned of Quamine and Yamma in the diaries of both Stiles and Hopkins before the 10th of April 1776, when a small passage in the second of the two circulars sent out by the African mission society updated the benefactors of the Mission on the progress of Quamine

David, *Black Writers in Britain, 1760-1890* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991); 101-103; Adrian Hastings. *The Church in Africa, 1450-1950* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2004); 178-179.

²³ Ezra Stiles, *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles: Jan 1, 1769-Mar 13, 1776*. Ed., Franklin Bowditch Dexter (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 366.

²⁴ Founded as a result of a schism in the Presbyterian Church, the College of New Jersey is established in 1746 and chartered in 1748. The college originally created like its counterparts like Yale and Harvard to train ministers, in its early years struggles to fulfill this mission. The arrival of the Reverend John Witherspoon in 1763 would herald a new era in the school's history. Regarded as the Revolutionary era's most important theologian in the arena of politics, Witherspoon successfully assisted in the establishment of the institution as a national college rivaling Harvard and Yale. His notable accomplishments included increasing the size of the college's endowment and student body. Less heralded however is his role in facilitating the arrival of the College's first two African students, John Quamine and Bristol Yamma and for encouraging the theological training of blacks. One of John Witherspoon's most prominent black students is John Chavis the famous African American preacher and schoolmaster. Chavis studies as a student for the Presbyterian ministry under John Witherspoon as early as 1892. Witherspoon is thought to have also privately tutored several black students from the West Indies.

²⁵ Ezra Stiles, *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, 486.

and Yamma. The passage from the circular read, “The two men above mentioned have been at school and under instruction most of the time since the date of the above proposal. They have spent one winter at Princeton, under the care of Dr. Witherspoon, President of the college there. And they have made such proficiency, and are in such a measure qualified for the mission proposed, that they would enter upon it directly, were there opportunity to send them to Africa (which there is not at present, by reason of the state of public affairs) and had we money sufficient to them for this purpose.”²⁶

The lack of funds to send Quamine and Yamma would be exacerbated by the outbreak of the revolutionary war in 1776. Besides forcing the closing of the College of New Jersey, funds that would have readily been given towards the African mission prior to the war were instead diverted towards the war effort. Unable to travel to the African continent due to the lack of funds and with the College of New Jersey closed, John Quamine joined the war effort enlisting as a sailor on a privateer. He was killed in battle in 1779. Bristol Yamma returned to Newport after the war and spent the rest of his life as a laborer, passing away in North Carolina in 1794.

In the years after the war, undeterred by the failure of his African mission, Hopkins broadened the scale of his plans to include a focus on addressing the large scale resettlement of enslaved blacks instead of the training of individual black missionaries. He was especially interested in connecting his early vision of the evangelization of Africa to a larger project, the political and economic colonization of the African continent. Inspired by Britain’s colonization of Sierra Leone in 1787, Hopkins proposed the establishment of an American settlement in Africa for enslaved blacks. He believed such a settlement would be beneficial to the expansion of Christianity and “civilization” on the continent, the creation of new avenues for commerce

²⁶ Park, *The Works of Samuel Hopkins, vol 1*, 133. The circular also informed of favorable correspondence with Black SPG missionary Phillip Quaque and the recruitment of another black Newport resident Salmar Nubia for the African Mission.

between America and the settlement, and lastly the eventual end of the slave trade.²⁷ Though Hopkins' revised plans gathered little interest before his death in 1811, they would influence in the early nineteenth century, the later efforts of the American Colonization Society (ACS) to establish a colony named Liberia.

Hopkins was not alone in his efforts to establish a pathway for freed blacks to return back to Africa. Freed blacks during this period had also valiantly initiated attempts to return back to Africa.²⁸ On April 20th, 1773 four freed African residents of Boston submitted a petition for funds to establish a settlement on the coast of Africa. In 1780, Occramar Marycoo (Newport Gardner), a student of Samuel Hopkins and leader of the African Union Society of Newport, Rhode Island, in partnership with Prince Hall and a contingent of black Bostonians presented a petition to the Massachusetts legislature seeking aid for emigration to Africa. Marycoo, Hall and their compatriots were concerned that there was little of promise for freed blacks in the United States. Their fears would be realized with the passing of the naturalization law of 1790 which stated that naturalization was limited to "any free white person who shall have resided within the limits and under the rights of the jurisdiction of the United States for two years"²⁹ The most prominent effort of the early attempts by blacks in the United States to emigrate back to Africa was by Paul Cuffee, the black business man and ship owner/captain who in 1814 petitioned the President, Senate and House of Representatives of the United States for financial support for a proposed venture to transport freed American blacks to Sierra Leone which he had earlier visited in 1811.

²⁷ Park, *The Works of Samuel Hopkins, vol 1*, 138.

²⁸ For an excellent treatment of early black emigration efforts see Edwin Redkey, *Black Exodus: Black Nationalist and Back-to-Africa Movements, 1890-1910* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969)

²⁹ U.S Senate, Forty-first Congress, second session. H.R. 2201: Naturalization Act of 1870. *Congressional Globe* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office) 5176.

Where these efforts met with failure, freed blacks attempted to advocate for other liberties by establishing educational institutions for their communities. In 1787, the New York Manumission society established the first African Free School in New York City. This school as historian Marybeth Armstead notes “became the nucleus for a number of African Free Schools, which in time produced such black scholars concerned with Africa as Alexander Crummell and Henry Highland Garnet.”³⁰ Paul Cuffee prior to his emigration endeavors, in 1797 frustrated at not being able to “procure education for many more African Americans” proceeded to build a school with his own funds.³¹ The building of educational institutions however remained slow and it became increasingly apparent to some freed blacks like Paul Cuffee, Daniel Coker, and Jonathon Russwurm that the African continent offered the most readily available solution to the plight of blacks in the United States. Accordingly they turned to the American Colonization Society (ACS) for assistance in migrating to the African continent. The history of the ACS can be traced as far back as 1816 when it was founded.

In November 1816, a meeting was held in Princeton, New Jersey. The meeting led by former Princeton graduate and retired minister Robert Finley was initiated to attract the attentions of those interested in the creation of a society dedicated towards the establishment of a colony in Africa for freed blacks. His efforts would be successful in the establishment in December 1816 of the American Colonization Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color of the United States. The main goal of the society as laid out in its initial meeting was to establish a plan for obtaining a territory on the coast of Africa “to serve as an asylum for such

³⁰ Myra Beth Young Armstead, *Lord please, don't take me in August: African Americans in Newport and Saratoga Springs, 1870-1930* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois, 1999), 29-32; Elliot Skinner, *African Americans and U.S. Policy Towards Africa, 1850-1924: In Defense of Black Nationality* (Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1992), 24.

³¹ Alfonso Pinkney, *Red Black and Green: Black Nationalism in the United States* (Cambridge, London: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 20-21.

persons of color, as are now free...and for those who may be hereafter emancipated from this commonwealth.”³²

The organization as argued by Allan Yarema represented an interesting paradox. “On the one hand it was founded on the inherently racist assumption that blacks were incapable of assimilation into white society; on the other hand, the movement relied upon the same ‘unassimilable’ people to carry civilization and Christianity to Africa. Colonizationists explained this paradox by arguing that while blacks could not be totally assimilated into white society, they were nevertheless sufficiently civilized and Christianized to benefit their even more backward kinsmen in Africa.”³³ The society’s focus on resettling freed blacks and not slaves allowed it to unite the interests of two seemingly strange bedfellows, Northern abolitionists, and Southern slave owners. It promised to alleviate the fears of both parties about the growing freed black population in the United States and its influence on enslaved blacks. The Haitian revolution of 1790, which granted freedom to thousands of enslaved blacks and the failed attempt of Gabriel Prosser in 1800 to lead a slave revolt in Virginia, had heightened the uneasiness of whites about the growing freed black population in the United States. While in 1790, there were fewer than sixty thousand freed blacks, by 1820 there were more than a quarter of a million freed blacks in the United States.³⁴ The promise of a tenable solution to the “freed Negro” problem allowed the ACS to gain widespread support and in 1819, Congress approved a \$100,000 grant for the ACS, paving the way for the organization to embark a year later on its mission of establishing a colony for freed Black Americans on the African continent. Liberia was established as a colony of the United States in 1821.

³² Aristide Zolberg, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (New York: Harvard University Press, 2006), 121.

³³ Allan Yarema, *The American Colonization Society* (Maryland: University Press of America, 2006), 11.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

For much of the remainder of the nineteenth century the ACS remained the key vehicle of migration to Africa for freed blacks in the United States. From 1816 to 1864 when the organization is officially dissolved “the ACS collected 2.5 million from private and public sources. It resettled over 1,000 captives from slave ships and sponsored the transportation of 12,000 Negroes, most of them recently manumitted from large estates in the Deep South, under conditions close to deportation.”³⁵ While its impact on addressing the question of slavery was negligible at best, the legacy of the ACS as historian Aristide Zolberg notes, is tied to the fact that it helped to confirm and reinforce “the boundary delineated in the naturalization law of 1790: the body politic was to be free and white.”³⁶ The ACS would contribute to upholding the purpose of this law through its commitment to the one-way transfer of freed blacks. This was its main focus. It had little interest in facilitating the migration of Africans to the United States. The naturalization law of 1790 was the first of many legal policies that would frame the presence of both African students and immigrants in the United States.

The ban on the trading of slaves implemented by the United States Congress in 1808, legally ended the importation of African slaves but did nothing to encourage voluntary African immigration.³⁷ It is important to note that though limited, voluntary immigration from Africa during this period existed. According to the United States Immigration Commission, over the 48 years of the ACS’ existence, from 1819 to 1867, 544 immigrants from Africa would arrive in the United States.³⁸ Very little is known about these immigrants beyond the data offered through the records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The country of origin, race, gender

³⁵ Zolberg, *A Nation by Design*, 124

³⁶ Ibid. The ACS would end its transportation of colonists in the 1860’s and is officially dissolved in 1864.

³⁷ Recent estimates as Aristide Zolberg notes, suggest that a quarter of a million slaves were imported illegally between 1808 and the Civil War. Zolberg, *A Nation by Design*, 78

³⁸ Statistics for immigration from Africa compiled from U.S. Immigration Commission, *Statistical Review of Immigration 1820-1910, Distribution of Immigrants 1850-1900* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911), 14-30.

or other demographic characteristics of these immigrants remain largely unknown because measuring the voluntary immigration of Africans to the United States during this time period was an inexact science. The INS did not account for the race of immigrants until 1901 and it is not till the census of 1850 that foreign Africans are even accounted for in United States surveys of immigration. According to the census of 1850, there were 551 foreign Africans in the United States. What part of the African continent these immigrants came from is unknown as there are no designations for nationality or clear racial identifying cues in regards to this population in the census of 1850. Race is also not a factor addressed by the census until the census of 1870 which showed that of the 2,657 foreign Africans in the United States, 623 were categorized as “white,” 1,984 as “colored” and the rest as “other.”³⁹

The year 1870 remains important in African immigration history for reasons beyond the numbers of African immigrants in the United States. During this same year H.R. 2201, the Naturalization Law of 1870 after much debate is passed by the United States Congress. The law allowed, in addition to the naturalization of foreign whites, the naturalization of “aliens of African nativity and persons of African descent.”⁴⁰ As historian James Anderson observed this made “persons of African nativity and descent the first “non-caucasian” race eligible for naturalized citizenship in the United States”.⁴¹ A close look at the Congressional records around

³⁹ U.S. Census of 1870, Table IV, *Population of the United States: As Native and Foreign-Born, and of Foreign-Born Percentage at the Census of 1870* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office), 336. The census of 1870 highlighted Canada, the West Indies and Mexico as the largest sources of black immigrants to America. Race was determined using the prevailing racial measures of the period, primarily skin color as identified by immigration officials. The three racial categories used to categorize immigrants in this census were “white”, “colored” or “Indian”. Of the 2,657 foreign born African immigrants in America in 1870, 623 were listed as “white” and 1,984 were listed as “colored.” No space is given in this census, to explaining what markers of race were used to label these immigrants as “whites” or “colored”. It is important to note that almost every foreign country of emigration including Austria, Belgium, China, Great Britain and Scotland, in addition to their “white” emigrants also had small numbers of “colored” emigrants.

⁴⁰ U.S. Senate, Forty-first Congress, Naturalization Act of 1870, 5176.

⁴¹ James D. Anderson, “Race Conscious Educational Policies versus a “Color-Blind Constitution”: A Historical Perspective,” *Educational Researcher* 36, no. 5 (2007): 253.

the debate on this amendment highlights the complex arguments offered that would eventually result in this claim.

In 1869, Senator Charles Sumner proposed an amendment to the naturalization laws under debate, he advocated for striking the word “white” from the immigration records, allowing all to become citizens. While Sumner’s arguments are particularly focused on the provision of naturalization rights to Chinese immigrants who during this period were at the center of increasingly terse debates on immigration and naturalization, he used the example of “African” immigrants in the United States to highlight the need for the naturalization of all foreign nationals in the United States.⁴² Referencing the particular state of what likely were black immigrants from Latin America in the United States, he wrote “here are Africans in our country shut out from rights which justly belong to them, simply because congress, continues the word ‘white’ in the naturalization laws. These men are humble, but they are none the less worthy of probation. Ay, sir it is your duty to protect them. Even if few, you cannot afford to let them suffer wrong; but they are numerous—in Florida counted by the hundred, and even the thousand.”⁴³

When put to a final vote, Sumner’s amendment to the naturalization laws of 1870 is ultimately rejected but in an interesting turn of events, Senator Willard Warner of Alabama who voted against Senator Sumner’s efforts to have the word “white” struck from the naturalization laws, introduced an amendment that provided foreign Africans the right to become naturalized citizens. Warner, addressing the fact that the vote failed said “now, I presume there is but little objection to extending the naturalized laws to the alien Africans within this country and I offer an amendment to that affect.” The amendment as composed by Warner read “And it be further

⁴² U.S. Senate, Forty-first Congress, Naturalization Act of 1870, 5176.

⁴³ Charles Sumner, *The Works of Charles Sumner, vol. XIII* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1880), 481.

enacted, that the naturalization laws are hereby extended to aliens of African nativity and to persons of African descent.”⁴⁴ The amendment passed by a narrow margin with a vote of 21 *Yeas* and 20 *Nays*.⁴⁵

It is not clear from Congressional records why Senator Warner decided to include an amendment that allowed for the naturalization of alien Africans. It is however rather apparent that Sumner’s reference to foreign Africans in the United States would be influential in shaping the debate on the naturalization law. Various senators opposed to striking the word “white” from the naturalization law, in often disingenuous ways, made clear attempts to distinguish their opposition to Chinese immigration as different and removed from arguments surrounding the rights to naturalization for native blacks or foreign Africans. Senator Oliver P. Morton of Indiana defending his position stated “Nobody I presume, objects to conferring the right of naturalization upon men of African descent or of African blood; but there is a feeling of dread in this country with regard to what might be considered as an inundation or an avalanche of the vast population of china.”⁴⁶ Timothy O. Howe of West Virginia, like Senator Morton offered a seemingly resolute stance for the rights of blacks in the United States that came with certain limitations. He stated “I cannot believe that the fact of a man’s being born black is a reason of itself for excluding him from naturalization, and therefore I cannot withhold finally my vote from the proposition moved by the senator from Massachusetts. But if that be adopted it will *ex vitermini* admit into our society and to the rights of American citizens certain classes of people occupying the eastern coast of Asia, occupying the islands of the Indian Ocean, that I think we have a right under the constitution to exclude, and who I think it is our bounden duty to exclude from these

⁴⁴ *Congressional Globe*, 41st Congress, 2d session, Part VI, 5155.

⁴⁵ Charles Sumner, *The Works of Charles Sumner*, 498. Following this vote and victory, Senator Charles Trumbull of Illinois attempted to introduce a subsequent amendment that would have extended naturalization rights to “persons of the Chinese empire.” That amendment is defeated by a vote of 9 *Yeas* and 31 *Nays*.

⁴⁶ *Congressional Globe*, 41st Congress, 5175.

privileges.”⁴⁷ The final decision to include foreign Africans as one of the two races eligible for naturalization is likely influenced by the relative absence of significant populations of foreign persons of African descent and the perception by Senator Warner and others that few African immigrants would ever take advantage of this Act.

Black immigrants for Senator Warner served as a “model” immigrant group suitable to be juxtaposed against unwanted immigrant groups like the Chinese but also the unwanted masses of European immigrants who were arriving in significant numbers at American ports during this time. As a *New York Times* editorial in 1881 highlights, the sentiments expressed by Senator Warner in framing Africans as a model minority were shared by certain segments of the American public. The author of the editorial argued for the increased immigration of Africans as a viable substitute for labor in Mississippi. He wrote

Appropriations should be made, and liberal ones, to put money at the command of the immigration bureau to charter ships and send to the coast of Africa to persuade or buy immigrants [black] to embark in them for the promised land. If the bureau should have to buy them, they are cheap and would scarcely cost more per capita than the money the state would have to expend in securing the same number of European immigrants. If the bureau should have to buy the African immigrants their chains would fall as soon as they touched our shores and as soon as red-tape naturalization proceedings could be got through the courts, they could go on voting. Since our people prefer the citizens of African descent as laborers they would like the pure original article and take to it. These immigrants might be relied on to be treated like a nigger without a murmur and even more so and proprietors would be delighted with them. Thus Mississippi could be made to blossom like a rose and smell odorous.⁴⁸

This rhetoric of the African immigrant as model immigrant/laborer would be made self-evident as well in the recruiting processes used to recruit African students to the United States during this period. In a twist of events that has not been well studied and could benefit from future study, three years after the passage of the 1870 Naturalization law, ten African students would arrive at Lincoln University. Their arrival would be instrumental in the numerous

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ “More Niggers or None at All: How the Mississippi Bourbon Talk about Immigration,” (*New York Times* article, August 28, 1881), 9.

institutionalized efforts that would follow in preceding decades to recruit, sponsor and educate African students in United States institutions of higher education.

The Second Phase of African Studentship

With the exception of one John Savage who was an American born African American expatriate from Liberia, the other nine African students who arrived at Lincoln University in 1873 were all native born Liberians.⁴⁹ The presence of these students at Lincoln represented the culmination of almost a century of efforts to tie higher education in the United States to the spread of Christianity on the African continent. The process begun by Samuel Hopkins and the African Mission by the middle of the nineteenth century had greatly expanded to encompass the interest of several American Christian organizations in bringing Africans to the United States for missionary training.⁵⁰ The roots of these efforts are tied to the establishment of Liberia as a colony of the United States in 1821. High rates of mortality among both white and black American missionaries influenced the zealous pursuit by American missionaries, of converts capable of withstanding the harsh climates of the African continent. This led to the earliest attempts to recruit Africans directly from the continent to study as students in United States institutions of higher education.

American Church denominations seizing the opportunity offered by the colonization of Liberia used the colony as a foothold for the establishment of church missions in Liberia and in the latter half of the nineteenth century in Southern Africa. By the middle of the nineteenth

⁴⁹ American Colonization Society, "Students from Liberia," *The African Repository* 39 (1873): 223. The other nine students were John Know, Calvin Wright, Edward Davis, Robert F. Deputie, Alonzo Miller, Robert Dillon King, James W. Wilson, Thomas F. Roberts and Samuel Sevier.

⁵⁰ Emma Walker Schulken, "A History of Foreign Students in American Higher Education From its Colonial Beginnings to the Present: A Synthesis of the Major Factors Influencing their Presence in the United States," (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1968), 70.

century many of the leading American Christian organizations had established missions in Liberia, including in 1830, the Presbyterian Church and in 1833, the Methodist Church.⁵¹

Liberia for American Christian organizations was seen as having limitless promise as the colony unlike other African territories had garnered little interest from established European missionary organizations like the SPG. The high rates of mortality however among white missionaries severely tempered the early enthusiasm of these missions in their efforts to convert African souls. The solution to alleviating the significant toll the African climate was having on white missionaries was not far away however. As highlighted in the 1825 report of Liberia's chief administrator, Jehudi Ashmun, the solution was to institutionalize the training of black missionaries.⁵² The push for institutions capable of educating missionaries for work on the African continent would play a significant role in the establishment of higher education institutions in the United States for blacks. The establishment of schools like the Parsippany African School in New Jersey in 1816 would serve as a precursor to the establishment of the earliest higher education institutions for blacks in the United States.

Cheyney University, the first post primary institution for blacks was established in 1838 as the Colored School for the Blind. Lincoln University, the first degree granting black institution in the United States was established in 1854 as the Ashmun institute. Wilberforce Institute, Ohio (later known as Wilberforce University) named after anti-slavery advocate William Wilberforce was founded in 1856 by white Methodists but later acquired by the AME church. Though Wilberforce as early as 1871, played host to one of the earliest documented African students in the United States, Daniel Flickinger a student from Sierra Leone student, it is

⁵¹ Ralston, "A Second Middle Passage," 52-56.

⁵² David McBride, "Africa's Elevation and Changing Racial Thought at Lincoln University, 1854-1866," *Journal of Negro History* 62, no. 4 (1978): 91.

Lincoln University that fully initiates the institutionalization of African studentship in the United States.⁵³

Founded by John Miller Dickey an alumni of Princeton and Presbyterian minister, the institution is named in honor of Jehudi Ashmun the short-lived chief administrator of the fledgling colony of Liberia.⁵⁴ Ashmun institute was a product of an almost unbroken chain of missionary efforts directed at Christianizing the African continent. As noted by historian Horace Mann Bond when John Dickey in a speech in 1853 announced his plans for the creation of the Ashmun institute, he was in essence paraphrasing the ideological designs of earlier advocates “of the first schemes designed to educate American “Africans” for a repatriated life in Africa.” Dickey famously announced in his speech that “the black man in Africa or in the United States is to receive the gospel for the most part, at the hands of the black man and it is the duty of the Christians of the white race to prepare (under God) in this country, these missionaries and teachers for their work.”⁵⁵ “The leaders and saviors of Africa were to be Americans of African descent who were to be trained in Ashmun Institute and from there emigrate to the “ancestral continent” to perform their appointed mission of regeneration.”⁵⁶ This early principle of Dickey’s however would be adopted to account for the severe toll the African continent had on black American missionaries. The ranks of black American missionaries on the continent suffered from high rates of mortality. By the late 1860’s, black colleges like Lincoln had begun to consider the possibilities of recruiting African students to be trained as missionaries. Lincoln as Horace Mann Bond notes “...was the first institution to have absolute faith that the African

⁵³ Walter Williams, “Ethnic relations of African Students with Black Americans: 1870-1900,” *The Journal of Negro History* 65, no. 3 (1980): 246.

⁵⁴ The institute is renamed Lincoln University in 1866 to honor the memory of President Abraham Lincoln who had been assassinated the year prior.

⁵⁵ Horace Mann Bond, *Education for Freedom: A History of Lincoln University* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), 216

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 488.

was as susceptible to instruction in the higher intellectual disciplines as any other human being.”⁵⁷

The historical moment created by the arrival of the ten students who arrived at Lincoln in 1873 highlighted the replication of the blueprint developed by Samuel Hopkins almost a century earlier. One element that stood out in particular was the use of African students to garner financial support. Lincoln’s earliest African students arrived during a time of great financial distress for the institution. Then Lincoln President Reverend Edward Webb, capitalized on the presence of these students to solicit severely needed funds for the struggling institution. He knowingly staged the presence of the students, outfitting them in costumes to reinforce stereotypical images of the savagery of Africa. Lincoln University would take these students on a publicity tour to raise funds for the schools. As Bond notes, these early African students “became the cornerstone on which that extraordinary promoter and fund-raiser Edward Webb, built a new and secure financial foundation for Lincoln University. Their appeal to Sunday schools and churches was irresistible, during a period when the enthusiasm of post-Civil War days for uplifting the freedmen had suffered a sharp decline in the face of unpleasant realities of reconstruction.”⁵⁸ Of the \$7,007.83 generated that year in collections for the school more than a quarter of the funds (\$2,665.54) were given specifically for the support of Lincoln’s African students.⁵⁹ The willingness of Lincoln’s benefactors to provide financial support for Lincoln’s African students and as a result to Lincoln itself was often based however on the understanding that the African students being supported would at the end of their training return to serve in Africa. In the rare cases where students like John Savage decided to remain in the United States, Lincoln’s benefactors chose at their discretion to withdraw their financial support from the

⁵⁷ Ibid., 510.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 492.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

school.⁶⁰

For much of the remainder of the nineteenth century, American missionary organizations both black and white, actively recruited African students to black colleges and universities under a similar philosophy. These students were recruited to be given a religious education and in return were expected to use their education to influence the spread of Christianity in their respective homelands. Another important influence on the presence of African students were American black communities that often hosted the institutions like Lincoln University where African students were being sent during this period. The presence of these African students was important not only to the institutions they attended but to surrounding black communities as well because as historian Walter Williams notes

by the late nineteenth century few people in the United States were African-born and most of them had American backgrounds for more generations than the average white American. With no large African intelligentsia to establish substantial intercontinental communications, as occurred in the twentieth century ... few black Americans had ever seen a real African. With no immigration from Africa, there were few opportunities for black people in the United States to have first-hand contacts with African. Within this context, the coming of African students to black school and colleges in the United States provided the largest number of American contacts between these two groups of people. Because these contacts took place within the most important Afro-American institutions, the schools and churches, they had a tremendous influence on the black community.⁶¹

Williams estimated that between 1870 and 1900 about 68 Africans were recruited as students to the United States. The vast majority of these students were drawn from the two countries where American missionaries (significantly black American missionaries) had by this time made significant inroads. Liberia, which the ACS had colonized at the beginning of the nineteenth century and South Africa, where black missionaries like Bishop Henry McNeal Turner had established important footholds for black Christian denominations later in the

⁶⁰ Bond, *Education for Freedom*, 513.

⁶¹ Williams, "Ethnic Relations of African Students," 228. African students in this period were largely sponsored students unlike later periods where there was more variation among students.

century, were both instrumental in fostering the African independent church movement.⁶²

Though Williams indicates several African students stayed in the United States after the completion of their studies, only three of these students have garnered any notable scholarly attention.⁶³ One of the three students, George Waltham Bell became an Arkansas state senator in 1890 and served for four years in the state assembly. Bell, the son of an Ethiopian rebel exiled to Malta in 1859, graduated from Lincoln in 1883 and later earned a medical degree from National Louis University, St. Louis.⁶⁴

The two other prominent non-returning students noted in William's study are Orishatukeh Faduma and James Kwegyir Aggrey. These two former students, prominent clergymen, religious nationalists and pan-africanists have benefited from much more scholarly scrutiny than Bell or other non-returning African students on Walter William's list.⁶⁵ Both Faduma and Aggrey had prominent roles in influencing religious and cultural nationalist reform efforts during the early twentieth century on the African continent and in the United States. Describing the significance of James Aggrey, Sylvia Jacobs writes "he was an African intellectual created by two worlds, living in two worlds; an African intellectual living in

⁶² Ibid., 245-249. Williams's offered the following breakdown of 68 students: 32 students from Liberia and 17 from South Africa, 11 from Sierra Leone, 4 from the Gold Coast, 1 each from Ethiopia, Gabon and Nyasaland (present day Malawi). The vast majority of these students attended black colleges, with some few students able to attend traditionally white institutions like Oberlin and Yale. Lincoln University had the most students during this period followed by Wilberforce, Fisk, and Central Tennessee College. He notes only one female student, the famous Charlotte Makhomo Manye. Manye is believed to be the first foreign African female student to earn a bachelor's degree from a United States institution of higher education, which she did in 1904.

⁶³ Other known examples of African students who during this period are believed to have stayed in the United States after the completion of their studies include John Knox, Calvin Wright, Edward Wright, Samuel Sevier, and James Wilson.

⁶⁴ Williams, "Ethnic Relations of African Students," 493.

⁶⁵ See Sylvia M. Jacobs, "James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey: An African Intellectual in the United States," *The Journal of Negro History* 81, no. 1 (1996): 47-61; Moses Moore, "Orishatukeh Faduma: An Intellectual Biography of a Liberal Evangelical Pan-Africanist, 1857-1946," (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1987); Moses Moore, "Orishatukeh Faduma and the New Theology," *Church History* 63, no. 1 (1994): 60-80; Rina Okonkwo, "Orishatukeh Faduma: A Man of Two Worlds," *Journal of Negro History* 68, no. 1 (Winter, 1983); Edward W. Smith, *Aggrey of Africa: A Study in Black and White* (New York: Richard R. Smith Inc., 1930); Kenneth King, "James E.K. Aggrey: Collaborator, Nationalist and Pan-Africanist," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 3, no. 3 (1969): 511-530.

America...His education set him apart from the majority of Africans and had made him a scholar on a continent full of farmers.⁶⁶ Similar words would be used to describe Orishatukeh Faduma by Rina Okonkwo who's article titled "Orishatukeh Faduma: A Man of Two World" analyzed the impact Faduma had both on the African continent and in the United States.

Faduma, a graduate of Yale Divinity School and later minister for the American Missionary Association (AMA) and principal of Peabody Academy in North Carolina held an important role as the key ideologue for the ill-fated back to Africa movement led by Chief Alfred Sam of the Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1914.⁶⁷ The movement would be an important forerunner for the back to Africa efforts led by Marcus Garvey and the United Negro Improvement Agency (UNIA) only a few years later. Faduma, who occupied significant roles as pastor, teacher, and theologian for the American Missionary Association (AMA) was inspired to participate in Chief Alfred Sam's movement because like the 60 black American immigrants on *the Liberia*, the ship carrying them to Africa, Faduma was disillusioned with life in the United States and sought a better life in the Gold Coast .

James Aggrey, better known as "Agrey of Africa" or as the "father of modern African education" is best known for his role in the two educational surveys of African education conducted by the American philanthropic organization, the Phelps-Stokes Fund in 1920 and 1924.⁶⁸ Aggrey's legacy is best represented by the title of historian Kenneth King's article,

⁶⁶ Jacobs, "James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey, 59.

⁶⁷ See William E. Bittle and Gilbert Geiss, *The Longest Way Home: Chief Alfred C. Sam's Back-to-Africa Movement* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1964)

⁶⁸ Thomas Jesse Jones, *Education in Africa: A Study of West, South and Equatorial Africa by the African Education Commission, Under the Auspices of the Phelps Stokes Fund and the Foreign Mission Societies of America and Europe* (New York: Phelps Stokes Fund, 1922). The second survey of the Phelps Stokes Commission in 1924 would produce a second report. Thomas Jesse Jones, *Education in East Africa: A Study of East, Central and South Africa* (New York: Phelps Stokes Fund, 1924). The Phelps-Stokes Commissions were central in prompting the push for the establishment of higher education institutions throughout Africa. The presence of Aggrey on the Phelps-Stokes Commissions helped to placate the fears of colonial powers scared of the potential of the "overeducated African."

*J.E.K. Aggrey: Collaborator, Nationalist and Pan-africanist.*⁶⁹ As the title of King's article suggests, Aggrey throughout his life occupied multiple often seemingly contradictory roles. He was a great admirer of Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee industrial education philosophy. As the only black member of both survey teams led by Thomas Jesse Jones, he would have a tremendous impact in helping to promote industrial education as a viable alternative for higher education on the African continent. His standing as a member of the Phelps-Stokes commissions and the striking image he represented of an American educated African earned him great respect from both whites and blacks alike but for widely different reasons. For whites he served as the ultimate example of the good African, "a man who could effect by his powers of interracial sensitivity such a reconciliation of black with white that colonialism could be made acceptable and the black revolution unnecessary."⁷⁰ For young African students like Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah, Aggrey on the other hand he "became a symbol of racial solidarity and of the independent African; in addition he personified the pan-African movement both in its continental aspect, as he, a West African, preached a race pride to mass audiences throughout Africa, and also in its connection with the new world since he represented in an overpowering way the social and educational opportunities which Negro America could offer the African."⁷¹

One defining factor separates the experiences of Faduma and Aggrey from others of their generation who studied in the United States. These were truly men of two worlds, tied to Africa and the United States by their roles as members of the clergy, as educators, as race theorists, as fathers and husbands and ultimately as African immigrants. Both Faduma and Aggrey are important to the historiography of African students for many reasons but as highlighted

⁶⁹ King, "J.E.K. Aggrey, 511-530.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 511-512.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 512. Of Aggrey's influence on Azikiwe and Nkrumah see Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 37-38. Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1957), 14.

specifically in this study for their presence as early non-returning students. The lives of these two men and of Orishatukeh Faduma offer the earliest examples of the diasporization, the long term settlement of African students in the United States. The best evidence of this process is seen in the factors that brought them to the United States, the social and cultural experiences that shaped their presence as religious, cultural and educational ambassadors and finally the factors that would influence their permanent stay in the United States.

The process of diasporization for these two individuals took place even before they arrived in the United States. It is influenced beginning in their young adulthood by their exposure to and participation in the incipient nationalist movements that arose in their respective countries during the late 19th century. By this time, Edward Blyden the dedicated pan-africanist and intellectual and James Johnson the radical African evangelist, among others had begun to organize the small but growing class of African elites in Liberia, Sierra Leone and in Lagos, Nigeria to push for intellectual and religious freedoms. Another equally important factor was the increasing influence of black American Christian denominations in West Africa on the education of Africans during this period.

Outside of Fourah Bay College, the first western oriented university in West Africa established in 1827, there were few options for West Africans interested in higher education. Those interested in furthering their education were limited to the few spaces available for African students in English or French institutions of higher education. The increasing presence of Black American Christian organizations like the AME and AMEZ during the early twentieth century would provide some few Africans in West Africa in particular, another viable option for higher education. Faduma and Aggrey would be beneficiaries of this alternative route towards

higher education. It would be instrumental in shaping their legacies as two of the most important panafrican religious ambassadors of the twentieth century.

Orishatukeh Faduma was born Willam J. Davis in British Guiana (Guyana) to repatriated slaves who migrated to Sierra Leone in the 1860's. Prior to his arrival in the United States in 1891, Faduma at age nineteen moved to Freetown, Sierra Leone, then considered the "Athens of West Africa" and is confronted with a society engaged in "creole racial and ecclesiastical self-consciousness" which among other freedoms won by Creole elites led to the establishment of the Wesleyan Boys High School.⁷² Faduma's secondary education took place at Wesleyan under the guidance of the Reverend Claudius Mays, the first principal of the Wesleyan Boys High School in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Faduma "considered May the shaping influence in his life" for his role in inspiring "his lifelong interest in education and teaching."⁷³ Faduma left Sierra Leone in 1882 to attend Wesley College in Taunton, England, then in 1883 attended the University of London. He returned to Sierra Leone in 1885 as the first West African to successfully pass the intermediate B.A. at London University. Immediately upon his return he assumed a prominent role in the cultural nationalist movement in Sierra Leone particularly the cultural reform movement which "advocated the return to African Dress, names, the study of African traditions and the retention of those customs which were judged to be fundamental to the African way of life."⁷⁴ His participation in the Dress Reform Society which sought to eliminate the dependence of Africans on European clothing traditions was another active space for Faduma. Despite the lack of support and often ridicule Faduma and his fellow activists would face from fellow natives of Sierra Leone, Faduma in particular was persistent in his desire to culturally reform Sierra Leone. He found in the AME church and its African American missionary J.R. Frederick a

⁷² Moore, "Orishatukeh Faduma.

⁷³ Okonkwo, "Orishatukeh Faduma: A Man of Two Worlds," 24.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 25.

wellspring of support for the cultural reform movement and the activities of the Dress Reform Society. Frederick was the AME's representative in Sierra Leone tasked with establishing a mission for the organization in Freetown, Sierra Leone. As Moore notes "the AME presence in Sierra Leone in the person of Frederick provided Faduma with not only the personal acquaintance of another progressive, race conscious minister, but also an awareness of and acquaintance with an African-American ecclesiastical institution which seemed to embody the ideological, ecclesiastical and missiological tenets espoused by himself and his fellow members of the reform movement".⁷⁵ Faduma also extended his relationship with the AME by becoming a subscriber and later a contributor to the *AME Church Review*.⁷⁶ The review provided Faduma with a window into African American society and perhaps more importantly provided him with important contacts in the AME church; contacts that would prove to be beneficial once he made the decision to leave Sierra Leone for the United States. Summing up Faduma's decision to go abroad in 1891, Moore suggests that Faduma hoped to find in the United States "the freedom to better realize that 'unselfish individuality for the race which had been stifled and which had become the source of so much controversy and ridicule in Sierra Leone.'"⁷⁷

Prior to his arrival in the United States, James Aggrey like Faduma had attained the highest levels of education possible for an African at this time and had gained some measure of notoriety for his involvement in the nationalist movement in the Gold Coast. Aggrey was born on October 18th, 1875 in Anamabu in the Gold Coast (later named Ghana). His early education is shaped by the presence of the Reverend Dennis Kemp, a white Wesleyan Missionary who had arrived in the Gold Coast in 1888. Reverend Kemp introduced Aggrey to the church, teaching him as a student at the Wesleyan mission house at Cape Coast. Aggrey completed his education

⁷⁵ Moore, "Orishatukeh Faduma," 98.

⁷⁶ Faduma's contributions to the *AME Church Review*.

⁷⁷ Moore, "Orishatukeh Faduma," 102.

at an early age and at the age of fifteen became a teacher at Abura Dankwa.⁷⁸ In a short period of time, by 1898, he advanced to the position of headmaster of the Wesleyan centenary memorial school. Aggrey at this time was a part of a growing class of educated African elites in the Gold Coast who were pressing for greater rights for Gold Coast natives. He was the secretary of the Gold Coast Aborigines Society. This organization protested measures that could have resulted in West African land alienation, such as that which would occur later in South Africa.”⁷⁹ Aggrey’s activities would draw in particular the attention of John Bryan Small, a black American Bishop of the AMEZ church.

The AMEZ church by this time had made significant inroads in the Gold Coast. One of its main goals in the Gold Coast was to recruit African students to its main college campus, Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina. Reverend John Bryan Small, the principal agent of the AMEZ in West Africa during the late nineteenth century “was convinced that it would be easier for the church to convert educated and progressive Africans who were more receptive to change” and he focused the resources of the AMEZ in West Africa accordingly, recruiting highly educated African students like Aggrey.⁸⁰ Going against conventional missionary practices of the time which featured the prominence of black American missionaries in Africa, Small reasoned that it was “cheaper and more efficient to train Africans instead of black Americans because they would be less expensive for the church to support, they would already know the indigenous language and customs and would have an emotional attachment to the people.”⁸¹ Aggrey was one of three students that Small would recruit in 1898 for Livingstone

⁷⁸ Smith, *Aggrey of Africa*, 39.

⁷⁹ Jacobs, “James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey,” 49.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 52.

⁸¹ *Ibid*.

College.⁸² These students would face few barriers to their immigration. It was understood that their stay was to be temporary.

Faduma arrived in the United States in 1891, Aggrey seven years later in 1898. Each had attained before their arrival, the highest levels of education possible in their native lands, but sought in the United States, an education that would equip them with the necessary tools to address the elevation of African peoples from an ideological and religious perspective. Faduma upon his arrival in the United States in 1891 taught at Kitrell Normal Institute in Raleigh, North Carolina, one of the AME's principal educational institutions. He was hired as an Assistant principal at the school but his stay was short lived as Faduma quickly became disillusioned with the AME and the black church in general and instead joined the white American Missionary Association (AMA) which helped to arrange his enrollment at Yale University in 1891. He graduated from Yale Divinity School in 1894 with honors.

Aggrey like Faduma benefitted from similar educational experiences in attaining positions within prominent religious and intellectual circles in the United States. While a student at Livingstone, Aggrey worked as a "compositor" and found employment in the publishing house of the Zion church in charlotte. He graduated from Livingstone College with a B.A. in 1902 with honors. After graduating Aggrey filled various roles at Livingstone College, he was Registrar, financial secretary and at times an instructor in New Testament Greek and Exegesis as well as a lecturer in Christian Sociology and economics at Hood Theological seminary.⁸³ In November 1903, Aggrey was ordained an Elder in the Zion Methodist Church. In 1912, he was awarded a second degree from the college, the degree of A.M and a D.D. from the theological seminary of Livingstone College, Hood Seminary. Aggrey would remain at Livingstone for

⁸² The two other students who came to the United States with James Aggrey were Frank Atta Osam Pinanko and Samuel Richard Brew Attoh-Ahuma.

⁸³ Smith, *Aggrey of Africa*, 62.

almost twenty years, from 1902-1920. During this time he contributed to the *Charlotte Observer* and was also contributing editor of *The Masonic Quarterly Review*. Aggrey was as well an important member of several important intellectual circles such as the American Negro Academy and the Negro Society for Historical Research.⁸⁴

Both Faduma and Aggrey after graduation from seminary school instead of returning home to Christianize the African continent instead became missionaries to the American south. It is here in the American south that each would gain the experiences central to their future roles as pan-African religious ambassadors. It would prove however to be a particularly difficult and complex process. Contrary to the desires of the American Missionary Association board, which expected that he would “return to Africa as soon as the finances will allow” Faduma after graduation instead of immediately returning back to the African continent accepted instead a position to preach and teach in the south.⁸⁵ He arrived at Troy, North Carolina in 1895 with his African American bride Henrietta to take over supervision of Peabody Academy and the pastorate of the AMA congregational church at Troy. They would live in Troy for over seventeen years raising their two children, Jowo Elizabeth and Du Bois. Living in Troy served as an incubator for Faduma’s pan African missionary ideology.

Addressing Faduma’s time in Troy, and the growth of Faduma’s pan-africanist outlook, Moore writes “Faduma perceived that in many respects the problems of Christian missions and racial development among diaspora Africans were not unlike, and indeed intrinsically related to the problematic faced within the African mission field itself. Troy and the surrounding community became something of a laboratory in which to test and propagate his pan-african

⁸⁴ Moore, “Orishatukeh Faduma, 82-83.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 213.

missiology and pedagogy.”⁸⁶ Some details of Faduma’s pan-african missiology ideology are available due to his avid writing habits in the *Sierra Leone Weekly* and other mediums. In 1898 a recently graduated Faduma writing to readers of the *Sierra Leone Weekly* advertised his intentions while abroad to serve as a vehicle for presenting an African perspective on the American “Negro”. In an editorial titled “Africa and America” Faduma conveyed to his fellow countrymen and women an understanding of the complex racial problems in the United States which he had taken as his job to study. In this editorial, Faduma though only in the United States for six years at this time, displays a keen awareness of issues of race and racism. His discussion of the impact of racism as it affected blacks ranged from political disenfranchisement to social restrictions in the form of barriers to intermarriage. As an observer he detailed for his countrymen and women in plain painstaking terms the plight of the “Negro” in the United States. His analysis was measured yet revealing of the barriers blacks faced in the United States, particularly in the American South.

These are stirring times in the United States. Elections of State Officers for offices of the State and nation is just closing. In some of the Southern States special laws have been put in force to disenfranchise the Negro. The whites are afraid of Negro domination. The white man is restless. The Negro has grown from four millions since emancipation to ten millions in the year of grace 1898. The Negro is rising in spite of caste and prejudice. Here and there he is making his power felt. Nevertheless it is a fact that his presence in America has given to the Nation a gigantic problem to solve. In the Southern states black and white cannot intermarry. In the Northern states they may though the consequence is social ostracism. Illegitimacy is frequent. Thus while the laws of the Southern states forbid intermarriage they cannot forbid illegitimacy. What to do to prevent this intermixture is one of the burning questions here. Opinions are divided. The Southern whites are solidly opposed to intermarriage, the blacks are divided, some for, others against. In the North, the foreign white women are prevalent and as a rule do not fall in with American prejudice. They marry the blacks and prefer them. It is a fact, however that the lower classes among the two races inter-marry in the North frequently. Many a Negro has been burn alive for attempting to approach a white woman in the South even though she is a consenting party. “It requires a philosopher to study the question. I am trying to be one of them”⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Ibid., 238.

⁸⁷ Orishatukeh Faduma, “Africa and America,” *Sierra Leone Weekly*, 24 December 1898, 3.

Faduma though conscious of the plight of African Americans in the United States constantly negotiates his relationship with race in the United States. In most of his writings he attempts to offer what he considers as a balanced perspective on this subject. Addressing specifically the “race problem” in another contribution to the *Sierra Leone Weekly* offers an example of his measured approach to studying race. He writes “in the world stage every race does not play equal parts of the same time. The perfection of the world’s drama requires some take subordinate and others prominent parts. No race is common or inferior.”⁸⁸

Faduma would not be as equally measured in his analysis of Christianity and its role on the African continent. Faduma labored to create a new theology that would be tolerant and understanding of Africa’s fractured history with Christianity. In an address titled, “success and drawbacks of missionary work in Africa by an eye-witness, Faduma laid out the main tenets of this philosophy. Among other points he advocated for an end to the “spiritual, cultural and ecclesiastical chauvinism of western missionaries.”⁸⁹ He would also call for the need for industrial education and development among Africans, an end to rivalry among Christian denominations, and the need for the indigenization of Christianity. To this last point Faduma would argue resoundingly:

The Christian missionary’s main work is not to colonize but to Christianize. You may civilize and yet not Christianize a people. Christianity is of larger content and embraces civilization, while the latter is of less content and does not include the former. A Native African, Indian, Chinese or Japanese maybe a graduate from one of the best universities of Europe or America and yet return home a “civilized” heathen more or less. On the other hand, educate a native to be a Christian and you do not fail to make him the highest of the civilized man. It is well for Christian missionaries to efface themselves as English, German or American and abolish the idea of Anglo-Saxonizing, Germanizing or

⁸⁸ Orishatukeh Faduma, “The Race Problem from a Negro’s “View Point,” *Sierra Leone Weekly*, 2 August 1902.

⁸⁹ Ibid,

Americanizing native peoples. The kind of supremacy needed for native people is neither Anglo-Saxon nor Teutonic; it is the supremacy of Christ.⁹⁰

Faduma's new philosophy would be severely challenged however by the virulent racism he faced in the South and by 1914 he began to give consideration to returning back to the African continent. It is important to note that Faduma had by this become a naturalized citizen taking advantage of the Naturalization law of 1870. As he would come to realize however, citizenship for black immigrants in the United States regardless of geographic origins bestowed few privileges and honors.

Life for black immigrants in the United States in the early 20th century posed a unique set of difficulties. As an observer of this era, sociologist Ira De Augustine Reid's offered some important insights into the lives of black immigrants during this time period. Reid, a black immigrant himself from the Caribbean in his timeless work *The Negro Immigrant* addressed the backgrounds and characteristics of the black immigrant as well as factors affecting the adjustment of black immigrants to life in the racially oppressive society that was the United States in 1930. He would identify cultural adjustment as one of the major barriers black immigrants had to face.

The Negro immigrant to the United States is faced with grave problems of social adjustment. Not only is he an alien by law and fact, but he suffers a complete change in status by emerging from a group setting where he was the racial majority into one where he becomes part of a racial minority. He brings a cultural heritage that is vastly different from that of the American Negro. In the majority of cases he speaks English, sometimes French or Spanish, less frequently Portuguese. His mode of living, his relationship with government, his idea of 'liberty', even his traditions are vastly different. Briefly then, the immigrant who becomes Negro upon his arrival brings to the United States Negro population a different set of mores, with a different life experience. The problem he faces is distinctly one of cultural adjustment."⁹¹

⁹⁰ Orishatukeh Faduma, "Christian Missionary Among Less Developed Races," *Missionary Review of the World*, 30 (1910): 454.

⁹¹ Ira De Augustine Reid, *The Negro Immigrant* (New York: AMS Press, 1970), 35.

The extent of naturalization among foreign-born Negroes is not to be regarded as an adequate measure of the degree of assimilation. The two-fold process of naturalization involving bestowal of the rights of a native citizen upon a foreigner, who in turn, renounces his former national fidelities, frequently means only that and nothing more to the Negro immigrant. In many instances, he renounces more political rights than he gains by becoming an American citizen....Theirs is truly a citizenship with reservations.⁹²

Faduma's writings convey the idea that his becoming a naturalized citizen was a part of his larger mission in the United States to help his kith and kin. Commenting on his decision to become a naturalized citizen of the United States, Faduma wrote "my racial group was considerably handicapped. In order to feel and suffer as my people felt and suffered, I made up my mind to become a naturalized citizen under the stars and stripes of the United States of America. I was willing to pass through the stings of Southern segregation."⁹³ His opinion about tolerating southern segregation would seem to have changed though in later years as he left the United States in 1914 as a part of the African movement led by Chief Alfred Sam. Offering some insight into his decision to leave the United States, Faduma identified the pervasive effects of racism in the American south as significant in his departure. Addressing in stark terms his departure, Faduma stated "that even death in Africa for a worthwhile cause was better than life in the Southern States."⁹⁴ After 23 years in the United States he left as a key member of the African Movement led by Alfred Sam.

The African movement led by the Gold Coast (Ghana) born Alfred Sam was the latest of a long line of organized exodus efforts by black Americans that began in the early 19th century with the activities of the American Colonization Society.⁹⁵ Unlike these other efforts, Sam's movement was led by an immigrant African. Sam is believed to have arrived in the United

⁹² Reid, *The Negro Immigrant*, 161.

⁹³ Moore, "Orishatukeh Faduma, 261.

⁹⁴ Vincent L. Winbush, Rosamond C. Rodman, *African Americans and the Bible: Sacred Texts and Social Textures* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc, 2003), 425.

⁹⁵ See, James T. Campbell, *Middle Passages: African American Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006); Edwin S. Redkey, *Black Nationalist and Back-to-Africa Movements, 1890-1910* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).

States in 1911 and four short years later had gained great success in exporting goods from Africa to America. This expertise in shipping would serve him well in his efforts to create the African movement. The movement had as its purpose “to develop Africa industrially for Africa and the world, encourage the emigration of the best Negro farmers and mechanics from the United States to different sections in West Africa, so that the knowledge of practical and modern agriculture may be quickened by contact with natives.”⁹⁶ This last major point, the emigration of black Americans is what the movement has historically been associated with. Tapping into the vast discontent of black Americans with their lives in the United States, Sam offered the promise of land in the Gold Coast to those interested. Orishatukeh Faduma was one of the 60 emigrants who would set sail aboard Sam’s the Liberia in August of 1914 for the Gold Coast. When he left for Sierra Leone in 1914 as a part of the African movement led by Chief Alfred Sam, Faduma had been in the United States for 23 consecutive years without ever returning back to Sierra Leone.

The African movement due to a hostile reception by colonial authorities in the Gold Coast would ultimately fail and many of the settlers would return back home to the United States. The movement however was a great success for Faduma who found himself invigorated by his experiences with the movement and with his presence on the continent after a prolonged absence. After his involvement in the African movement ended he moved to Sierra Leone where he was first, principal of the United Methodist Collegiate School and then inspector of schools for the Department of Education in Sierra Leone. After an eight year absence upon his return to the United States in 1923, he took on the position of assistant principal at Lincoln Academy. He would retire from the institution in 1934. In the twilight of his career he served for eight years as

⁹⁶ J. Ayodele Langeley, “Chief Alfred Sam’s African Movement and Race Consciousness in West Africa,” *Phylon* 32, no. 2 (1971): 165. For a detailed analysis of the Chief Alfred Sam’s African Movement see William E. Bittle and Gilbert Geiss, *The Longest Way Home: Chief Alfred Sam’s Back-to-Africa Movement* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1964).

Professor and “acting dean” at Virginia Theological seminary and College in Lynchburg, Virginia, an institution noted since its inception for nurturing aggressive race consciousness and evangelical Pan-Africanism.⁹⁷ Faduma died at the age of 86 in High Point, North Carolina in 1946. He is like James Aggrey remembered as one of the most prominent transnational cultural and religious ambassadors of the 20th century.

Upon the completion of his studies, Aggrey chose to stay in the United States. Why he stays in the United States after graduation remains a mystery but E.W. Smith suggests that Aggrey in choosing to stay in the United States was going against the wishes of the AMEZ church.”⁹⁸ Having made the choice to delay his return to his native land, Aggrey began to establish important connections and relationships in the United States.

Aggrey is married in 1905 to Miss Rosebud Rudolf Douglass. They would have four children, two girls (Abna Azalea and Rosebud) and two boys (Kwegyir and Orison Rudolf Guggisberg).⁹⁹ In 1914 in addition to his responsibilities at Livingstone College, Aggrey took over the pastorate of two small black churches, Miller’s Chapel and Sandy in North Carolina. The experience gained as the pastor of these two churches as noted by Smith would be central to his later efforts on the African continent. Of Aggrey’s pastorship, Smith writes “the pastorate was one of the most important incidents in Aggrey’s life. It took him out of an academic atmosphere and introduced him to the actualities of the life led by the American Negro.”¹⁰⁰ These experiences in particular would lead to his attempts to assist in implementing a philosophy of education in Africa particularly in the Gold Coast that emphasized industrial education. Conscious of deep abiding traditions of racism and discrimination against blacks in the

⁹⁷ Moore, “Orishatukeh Faduma, 505-506. Virginia Theological Seminary also counts among its alumni, John Chilembwe.

⁹⁸ Smith, *Aggrey of Africa*, 72.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 85-86.

communities he lived and worked in, Aggrey encouraged by the example of Booker T. Washington tried to encourage an ethos of self-help and economic self-determination that challenged racism indirectly. He had a tremendous role in shaping the Salisbury area of North Carolina. Aggrey played an active role in encouraging the farmers in his congregation to adopt some of the agricultural and industrial techniques put forth by institutions like Tuskegee. He helped these communities form a farmers club, and credit union. He also served short stints as secretary/treasurer of the community Realty Company and director of the building and loan association.¹⁰¹ It would be prudent to note that Aggrey as Smith notes is able to accomplish so many of these actions in part because he is a foreign African and is viewed favorably by whites. Addressing Aggrey's otherness, Smith writes "because Aggrey was an African he the more easily won the regard of many white Americans who looked down upon Negroes." Aggrey's status as an "African" and more specifically as an American educated African who strongly believed in industrial education would bring him to the attention of Thomas Jesse Jones and the Phelps Stokes Fund. After twenty years in the United States Aggrey would return to the African continent in 1920 and again in 1924 as the sole black member of the Phelps Stokes Commissions that surveyed education in Africa. With his emphasis on inter-racial cooperation and the potential of education, in this case industrial education to ease the racial tensions between blacks and whites he would be instrumental in making the idea of industrial education palatable to both black and white Africans. Aggrey would return back to Africa and in particular the Gold Coast in 1925 to assume the position of vice president of Achimota College. Though only in Africa for two years, from 1925 to 1927, Aggrey had an electric effect on the political consciousness of young African students. He was particularly effective in persuading them to consider pursuing education in the United States. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah among others would

¹⁰¹ Jacobs, "James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey, 57.

attest to his impact on their decisions to pursue higher education in the United States. In 1927, Aggrey interested in completing dissertation work towards his doctoral degree and reconnecting with his wife and family, left for the United States. Less than two months after his arrival, Aggrey would meet his untimely demise at a hospital in Harlem, New York.

By the time of their deaths, both Faduma and Aggrey had established important records as pan-African ambassadors to the United States and to the African continent. Their efforts to bring Africa and the United States closer would have significant benefits for the generations to follow.

CHAPTER THREE

ARCHITECTS OF AFRICAN STUDENT MIGRATIONS

No nationalism draws its strength from outside sources primarily, though a period of exile-if only in Harlem, Chicago or a Negro American college-has been a recognized mechanism for the political education of nationalist leaders at least since the 1848 revolutions in Europe.¹

Before 1917, both Orishatukeh Faduma and James Aggrey or any other African immigrant, theoretically, as outlined by the Naturalization Act of 1870 could have become citizens of the United States with little fanfare or controversy. The passage of the United States Immigration Act of 1917 however changed this. The law was another in a series of comprehensive immigration and naturalization laws beginning with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that institutionalized severe racial restrictions in American immigration law.² The Immigration Act of 1917 was the nation's first definitive and comprehensive set of immigration laws that would restrict immigration from other parts of the world besides China and Japan through its inclusion of a literacy test as a prerequisite for entry to the United States. The Immigration Act of 1921 building upon the restrictive foundation of the Act of 1917 would establish the national quota system which defined in the four decades to follow classes of accepted and excluded immigrants. The national quota system would be further modified by the Immigration Act of 1924 under the belief that the Immigration act of 1917 was too basic and not sufficient enough to stand against the large numbers of aliens who desired to enter the United States.

¹ George Shepperson, "Pan-Africanism and pan-africanism: Some Historical Notes," *Phylon* 23, no. 4 (1962): 312.

² Congress under this act banned the immigration of Chinese immigrants, deported resident Chinese and prohibited Chinese from becoming United States citizens.

The Immigration Act of 1924 set that until 1927 national quotas would be fixed at 2% of the number of foreign born immigrants of any nationality in the United States in 1890.³ It also set the foundation for the quota cap system promoted in 1929 with the implementation of the National Origins Formula. The quota cap would limit immigration in 1929 to 150,000 immigrants, with the representation of any individual country set by its level of representation in the United States in 1920. The minimum number of immigrants allowed for any country would be 100 immigrants. The act also defined categories of immigration in particular, immigrant and quota-immigrant and assigned all other entries as “non-immigrant.” Immigrant referred to “any alien departing from any place outside the United States except those entering the U.S. on a temporary basis such as government officials and their families, tourists or visitors, seamen and business men.”⁴ Quota immigrants were any persons who did not fit the criteria of Non-quota immigrants. Non-quota immigrants were unmarried children under the age of 18, wives, and parents over age 55 of U.S. citizens, immigrants born in Canada, Newfoundland, Mexico, Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, “the canal zone or any independent country of Central or South America. Also included on this list were ministers, preachers and professors and finally “an immigrant who is a bona fide student at least 15 years of age and who seeks to enter the United States solely for the purpose of study at an accredited school, college, academy, seminary, or university.”⁵ The act’s definition of students as a class of non- immigrants would help to permanently establish in immigration law the notion of foreign students as temporary sojourners. This had important consequences for the immigration of African students and any possible aspirations they might have had towards naturalization.

³ The Statutes at Large of the United States of America, vol 42. *An Act to Limit the Migration of Aliens into the United States and for other purposes* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1925.), 159.

⁴ Ibid, 154

⁵ Ibid, 155.

In 1930, as recorded by the Institute of International Education (IIE) there were 9,000 foreign students in the United States. Of this number, 5,449 were students from quota restricted countries and were subject to the immigration laws of 1924 as immigrants or quota immigrants, the other half were exempt from it by the same law as non-quota immigrants.⁶ Quota students were primarily immigrants who arrived in the United States under their country's quota with the purpose of permanently settling in the United States but who chose in addition to pursue higher education opportunities. Non-quota students were students from quota countries who were in the United States for the sole purpose of pursuing a higher education degree. These students in order to receive a non-quota visa had to pass a strict list of requirements. They had to possess a certificate of admission from an accredited higher education institution in the United States and in addition students had to pass interviews with the consular office to prove that they had the financial wherewithal to support themselves and that they could speak English.⁷ These were just some of the restrictions that African students faced in their desire to enter the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century for higher education.

In 1929, the United States recognized the sovereignty of only four African countries. These were Egypt, South Africa, Liberia and Ethiopia. Other parts of sub Saharan Africa like French Cameroon, British Cameroon, South West Africa, Tanganyika and Togoland were recognized as protectorates of Britain, France or Belgium. Each of the four recognized sovereign countries as well identified African protectorates were assigned quotas of 100 immigrants. These quotas were particularly injurious to the protectorates as they were also subject to use by their

⁶ Ruth Crawford Mitchell, *Foreign Students and the Immigration Laws of the United States* (New York, Institute of International Education, 1930).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

colonizers.⁸ Students from British West Africa or any other colonized part of Africa who were interested in travelling to the United States had to do so on assigned visas from the colonial homeland. This required that students travel from their country to the larger colonial metropole in Europe to seek permission to travel to the United States. For much of the first half of the twentieth century students from colonized British West Africa like Nnamdi Azikiwe, Kwame Nkrumah, Mbonu Ojike and others who were travelling to the United States had to stop in London to apply for British visas before continuing their trip.

The implementation of immigration laws like the Immigration act of 1924 ensured that students would be defined as non-immigrants or temporary sojourners and also eliminated all possibilities for the pursuit of naturalization or citizenship by interested students as both Faduma and Aggrey had acquired. Those few African students who decided to pursue education in the United States at the beginning of the 20th century were confronted with a country that offered them significantly fewer options outside education than offered to Aggrey and Faduma, yet they still came and would continue to come in ever increasing numbers.

Education in the United States for African youth in the early 20th century was heavily influenced by the presence of both white and black American missionaries and by the experiences of early African students in the United States like Orishatukeh Faduma, Charlotte Manye, James Kwegyir Aggrey, John Langlibele Dube, and Alfred Xuma. This early generation of African students upon their return to their native lands would be largely responsible for helping to create a sustained interest in American education and in particular black American education. Higher education in the United States during this period unlike British higher education would be represented by these students as offering a practical model of education; it

⁸ Mai Ngai, "Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 1 (1999): 74.

was thought to offer more institutions and a greater range of non-traditional disciplines like education, journalism, and political science. These were disciplines traditionally forbidden for African students in British universities. The overall British system of higher education was regarded by many African students including the vocal Nnamdi Azikiwe, as “stiff-necked and elitist” and completely irrelevant to the African life.⁹ The United States system of higher education on the other hand was perceived as offering an opportunity to address the detrimental effects of colonial British education as implemented in places like colonial Nigeria. As Azikiwe observed, it offered the opportunity “to be re-educated from my miseducation.”¹⁰

Ironically European colonial administrators in Africa during the early twentieth century were worried as well about the “mis-education” of Africans. In this case their worries were focused on the education young black African students were receiving in black colleges and universities in the United States. These fears were inflamed by the threat of native uprising “rebellion” like the Nyasaland uprising of 1915 led by an American educated African missionary John Chilembwe.¹¹ The concerns of colonial administrators were further exacerbated by the far reaching influence of Marcus Garvey and the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). The voice of the UNIA, the *Negro World* though officially banned in most of colonial Africa would be significant in firing the nationalist spirits of among others, young African youths like Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah. Colonial governments “were little inclined to allow the exposure of their wards to the climate of Negro America, especially when on the continent they were already having to combat the effects of Garveyite propaganda.”¹² Terrified of the impact

⁹ Mazi O. Ojiaku and Gene Ulansky, “Early Nigerian Response to American Education,” *Phylon* 33, no. 4 (1972): 382.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 383.

¹¹ George H. Shepperson, *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Origins, Settings and Significance of the Nyasaland Native Rising of 1915* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1969).

¹² Kenneth King, “African Students in Negro American Colleges: Notes on the Good African,” *Phylon* 31, no. 1 (1970): 16.

black Americans could have on the African counterparts, Colonial administrations, as in the example of Uganda , blocked all passports for Ugandans wishing to travel to America.¹³

What colonial administrators in Africa wanted was a system of education that would help to create what historian Kenneth King termed “the good African,” an industrially educated, compliant class of African civil servants.¹⁴ The issue however was that there were few colleges particularly in southern Africa that could accommodate these demands. The solution was found in the model of industrial education offered by black colleges like Tuskegee and Hampton.

The Tuskegee philosophy of industrial education as promoted by its chief architect, Booker T. Washington and his mentor Samuel Armstrong, “was designed to develop habits of industry, instill an appreciation for the dignity of labor and primarily to train a cadre of conservative black teachers or ‘guides’ who were expected to help adjust Afro-Americans to a subordinate role in the southern political economy.”¹⁵ For white South African “native” experts, the Tuskegee experience was desirable for Africans because it “reinforced the segregationist creed in terms of buttressing the authority of tribal chiefs and socially engineering cohesive African communities.”¹⁶ Tuskegee and Hampton provided an important counter to the radical liberal arts oriented black American colleges that students like John Chilembwe had attended. The fears of colonial administrators were further allayed by the significant involvement of American philanthropic foundations like the Carnegie foundation and the Phelps-Stokes fund who were invested in transplanting to the African continent, the model of industrial education exemplified by Tuskegee and Hampton. These institutions had strong financial foundations as

¹³ Ibid., 17.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ James D. Anderson, “Philanthropic Control over Private Black Higher Education,” in *Philanthropy and Imperialism: The Foundations at Home and Abroad*, ed. Robert F. Arnove (Boston, Massachusetts, G.K. Hall & Co., 1980), 157.

¹⁶ Paul B. Rich, “The Appeals of Tuskegee: James Henderson, Lovedale and the Fortunes of South African Liberalism, 1906-1930,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 20, no. 6 (1987): 272.

well as popular support which American Christian organizations could not readily draw from.¹⁷ They also importantly, were willing to provide experts who would assist in setting up replicas of Tuskegee and Hampton in Africa. One such notable expert was Thomas Jesse Jones.

The Welsh born Jones earned a Bachelor's of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary, New York as well MA and PhD degrees in Sociology from another New York institution, Columbia University. In 1902, he is hired as the chaplain of Hampton University where his career as a prominent "expert" in industrial education begins. He would later take on the role of Educational director for the Phelps Stokes Fund from 1913 to 1946 and in this capacity help to promote a tailored vision of industrial education for blacks in the United States and on the African continent.¹⁸

The recommendations of Thomas Jesse Jones of Tuskegee Institute and the Phelps Stokes foundation were significant in convincing Colonial governments in Africa that Tuskegee and Hampton could be instrumental in helping to facilitate the education of the "good African." Jones published in 1917, a two volume survey of black education in the American South.¹⁹ The study attempted to affirm industrial/vocational education as the appropriate system of education appropriate for blacks. As Jones noted, industrial education was suited to societies where racial and class divisions were necessary whereas "academic/literacy education was perceived as dysfunctional for the black man because it would open vistas that he could not attain in the rigidly segregated American social structure."²⁰ Jones strongly believed that these principles were applicable to the African continent and advocated that African students sent to the United

¹⁷ Emma W. Schulken, "A History of Foreign Students in American Higher Education from its Colonial Beginnings to the Present," (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1968), 83-123.

¹⁸ Carter G. Woodson, "Thomas Jesse Jones," *The Journal of Negro History* 35, no. 1 (1950): 107-109.

¹⁹ Thomas Jesse Jones, *Negro Education, A Survey of the Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States* (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1917).

²⁰ Edward H. Berman, "American Influence on African Education: The Role of the Phelps-Stokes Fund's Education Commissions," *Comparative Education* 15, no. 12 (1971): 183.

States should attend either Tuskegee or Hampton. “He was convinced that these two schools not only could positively inspire young Africans with the gospel of trade and agriculture, but could be an effective antidote against the corrosion of Garveyism and Du Bois’s pan-africanism.” One of the key selling points of Jones in his efforts to market industrial education to colonial administrators was his guarantee that the Africans studying at either Tuskegee or Hampton “would not be educated to agitate against colonial rule in Africa anymore than Tuskegee had fought against segregationism in the southern states.”²¹

Jones’ 1917 survey helped to foster British interest in Tuskegee and eventually led to his appointment as chairman of the British sponsored Phelps-Stokes Commissions of 1921 and 1924. The two commissions surveyed education in West, South and Equatorial Africa and were significant in promoting the Tuskegee model of industrial education throughout the African continent.²² There were however, important hurdles in the efforts to use the Tuskegee philosophy to educate the “good African” that would not be readily acknowledged by Jones and other industrial education acolytes. For one, despite its best efforts Tuskegee was unable to shelter its African students from the radical influences of leading intellectuals like W.E. B Du Bois, Marcus Garvey and Carter G. Woodson. Woodson himself would speak in 1923 at Tuskegee, critiquing the role of white philanthropic organizations in the development of black education in America.²³ Noting the futility of Tuskegee’s efforts to shelter its African students, King writes “it was manifestly impossible in the Southern states to shield African students from the many indignities practiced against Negroes. In this sphere, an agricultural or even

²¹ Ibid., 18-19.

²² Thomas Jesse Jones, *Education in Africa: A Study of West, South and Equatorial Africa by the African Education Commission* (New York, Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1922); Thomas Jesse Jones, *Education in East Africa: A Study of East, Central and South Africa by the Second African Education Commission under the Auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund and in cooperation with the International Education Board* (London, Edinburgh House Press, 1925).

²³ King, “Africa and Southern States of the U.S.A.,” 25.

theological curriculum was no more protection against developing a political consciousness than was a literary program.”²⁴

African students served as another important reason why the Tuskegee philosophy failed in its effort to create the good African. For African students, the industrial educational model offered by Hampton and Tuskegee was to be admired but not necessarily emulated. As King notes “the primary obstacle to implementing the Hampton-Tuskegee model in Africa was not so much the absence of trained missionaries or the poverty of colonial departments, but the African himself.”²⁵ Students like Simbini Nkomo, who later become a faculty member at Tuskegee and president of the African Students Union (ASU), would despite the conservative nature of Tuskegee, use the institution as a staging ground for numerous pan-african activities, organizing African students in the United States around key political causes.²⁶

Nkomo as other African students admired Tuskegee for reasons contrary to those espoused by colonial African administrations. By the time Nkomo arrived at Tuskegee in 1915, the institution had gained considerable status as a premier industrial education institution due in large to the presence of Booker T. Washington, its principal architect and leader. Washington before his death in 1915 made significant efforts to establish the presence of Tuskegee and industrial education on the African continent. Tuskegee sent missions to Togo and Sudan in 1901 and 1906.²⁷ Even more important was the International Conference on the Negro organized by Booker T. Washington in 1912. These efforts helped to establish Tuskegee as a leading

²⁴ Ibid., 29.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ King’s treatment of Nkomo is one of the only such efforts to address the impact of this most important man.

²⁷ See Kendahl Radcliffe, “The Tuskegee-Togo Cotton Scheme, 1900-1909,” (PhD Diss., University of California, Los Angeles), 1998.

institution of interest for African students. It enrolled over fifty African students from 1909 to 1920 while Lincoln University in comparison enrolled only eight.²⁸

The presence of Tuskegee as a black higher education institution with black faculty and staff, rather than its industrial based curriculum, was the key attraction for African students interested in the institution. Industrial education itself held up as the sole offering for African education, held little appeal for African students. As Nnamdi Azikiwe, observed “certain friends of the African have advocated industrial and agricultural education to the exclusion of academic and literary ones, as a panacea for the African ‘educational problem’...no doubt these philanthropists, missionaries and government officials are sincere in advocating industrial and agricultural education. But this notion is maliciously false and a retrograde tendency.”²⁹

Recognizing the political consequences of a cadre of African intellectuals educated outside the sphere of British influence, British Colonial authorities in Africa beginning in 1937, relaxed restrictions on the enrollment of African students in British institutions of higher education. By this time it was too late to stop the rising numbers of African youths who had identified the United States as a viable option for higher education. The damage had already been done as those who had experienced education in America like Azikiwe “saw that their countrymen needed to be educated for independence” and inspired their countrymen to seek education outside of the reaches of British imperialism.³⁰ As Azikiwe acknowledged “this entailed reeducating...[those] who were brought up to believe in the superiority of British

²⁸ Evelyn Jones Rich, “United States Government Sponsored Higher Educational Programs for Africans: 1957-1970 with Special Attention to the Role of the African-American Institute,” (PhD Diss, Columbia University, New York), 65-66.

²⁹ Benjamin N. Azikiwe, “How Shall We Educate the African,” *Journal of the Royal African Society* 33, no. 131 (April, 1934): 145.

³⁰ Ojiaku and Ulansky, “*Early Nigerian Response to American Education*,” 386.

civilization, who used ‘British’ as a synonym for perfect.”³¹ This process of re-education would be represented by Azikiwe as the “pursuit of the Golden Fleece.”

Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Pursuit of the Golden Fleece

In June 1927, two years after Nnamdi Azikiwe arrived in the United States, James Kwegyir Aggrey took his last breath in a hospital in Harlem, New York. A chance encounter between Aggrey and Azikiwe in Lagos, Nigeria in 1920 is one of the moving experiences that begins Nnamdi Azikiwe’s eventual journey to the United States in pursuit of what he famously called the “golden fleece.” Writing in his acclaimed autobiography *My Odyssey*, Nnamdi Azikiwe recounted his father Chukwuemeka’s description of his son’s proposed journey to the United States for higher education as one similar to that accomplished in the Greek myth of Jason and the Argonauts. Chukwuemeka was convinced that Azikiwe’s generation held the key to ending colonialism and as such imparted the following to his son; “today, you are poised to sail to America in quest of the golden fleece of knowledge that is guarded by the dragon of ignorance which you must destroy as Jason did.”³² His expectation was that Azikiwe and his peers would find that fleece in the United States. Nnamdi Azikiwe would arrive in the United States in 1925 and his arrival provides one of the clearest demarcations of the “shift from the missionary phase to the political one.”³³

The third period of African studentship in the United States is firmly anchored by the role of Lincoln University in the education of African students in the early twentieth century. Though the early aims and goals of Lincoln were directed towards the training of black students as

³¹ *West African Pilot*, 1 May 1947.

³² Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 72.

³³ Jason C. Parker, “Made-in-America Revolutions?”: The “Black University and the American Role in the Decolonization of the Black Atlantic,” *Journal of American History* 96, no. 3 (November, 2010): 728..

missionaries for the African continent, primarily Liberia, this focus by the early twentieth century is influenced by the arrival of successive cohorts of African students in search of tools to dismantle colonialism in Africa. By the beginning of the century, Lincoln had already established itself as the premier American institution in nurturing and training black leadership. It counted among its graduates leading black, statesmen, missionaries and innovators of numerous professional fields. In the years to follow it would play a particularly important role in the development of West African leadership. In its long history it educated as one observer notes “some of the most profound leadership in Africa and played a major part in the struggle for independence and freedom through its graduates, both in Africa and at home in America.”³⁴ From 1854 to 1895, Lincoln trained and graduated 28 Liberian students, many of them missionaries who would return to the continent. Lincoln’s pipeline of West African students particularly of Liberian students which had been strong since the establishment of the institution dried up in the early 1900’s only to be re-initiated beginning in 1929 when Nnamdi Azikiwe arrives as its first Nigerian student. Azikiwe was the herald of a promising future for Lincoln in the education of West Africa’s greatest generation of leaders.

Prior to his arrival at Lincoln, he spent his first years in the United States at Storer College, Virginia before moving in 1927 to Howard University, Washington D.C. It is at Howard with its prominent black faculty like Alain Locke, Ralph Bunche, Kelly Miller and Leo Hansberry, that Azikiwe gains an intellectual grounding in African life and history. This foundation served him well in his efforts to steer the conservative Lincoln towards a greater acknowledgement and appreciation for Africa and its Diasporas. He earned his bachelor’s degree in 1929 and stayed on to complete a Masters degree in Religion. In 1933 he accepted a

³⁴ Leonard Bethel, “The Role of Lincoln University (Pennsylvania) in the Education of African Leadership: 1854-1970,” (Ed.D diss, University of Rutgers, 1975), 11.

position at the school, in the department of history, teaching courses in ancient and modern English history and a course which he fiercely advocated for, African history. Azikiwe's efforts to establish an African history course however were met with strong resistance from Lincoln's white faculty body and administration.³⁵

Describing Azikiwe's challenge of Lincoln's administration, historian Horace Mann Bond in his seminal study of Lincoln University noted that Azikiwe "argued strongly and persistently for the introduction of a course in Negro history; he freely criticized the conventional ambitions of his fellow students and the apparent middle class aims of the institution, sometimes as blatantly materialistic as the attitudes to which he had objected at Howard."³⁶ Bond also credited the hiring of Lincoln's first black faculty member in 1932 to the efforts of Azikiwe, "who thought it was an enormity that a college should have persisted for 86 years before a Negro was appointed to the faculty."³⁷

After his graduation in 1933, Azikiwe weighed the option of returning home versus continuing in his role as an instructor at Lincoln. As he notes in his autobiography the decision was one not easily made. His active role at Lincoln and his perception of the potential benefits of life as an intellectual in the United States structured his consideration of staying in the United States. Addressing in his autobiography his thought process in deciding whether to return home or not Azikiwe writes

I thought of the opportunities I would have in America if I obtained the PHD and had a lifelong job of teaching and inspiring young people, rubbing shoulders with the best brains of the world, and hobnobbing in the academic cloister. I also thought of the difficulties facing my people in Africa: their ignorance of their latent giant's strength; and

³⁵ Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 157. His interest in promoting the formal teaching of Africa is no doubt inspired by his year at Howard University in courses with Leo Hansberry who pioneered the study of Africa in the American academy and who would remain until his death one of Azikiwe's most beloved mentors.

³⁶ Horace Mann Bond, *Education for Freedom: A History of Lincoln University, Pennsylvania* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), 502.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

their innocence of the fact that their homeland seemed to them a paradise contrasted with the homeland of their rulers who lived in the temperate zones, where life was one continuous struggle for existence and survival. I took into consideration the experiences of some African scholars who had previously found themselves in the same dilemma as myself. I thought of Kwegyir Aggrey of the Gold coast, who spent twenty-two years teaching and preaching after his graduation from Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina. I thought of Professor Orishatukeh Faduma of Sierra Leone, who also taught in the school system of North Carolina for over twenty years. And I remembered my contemporary, Professor Ross F. Lohr, of Sierra Leone, who was then lecturing in education at Hampton Institute in Virginia. These men had made names in the academic field, to the glory of Africa.³⁸

The potential impact of Azikiwe deciding to stay in the United States like Orishatukeh Faduma and James Aggrey before him will never be known as he decided to return home. Explaining his decision, Azikiwe wrote “then I made my decision to return to Africa. I was ready to continue suffering personal inconvenience, if need be, in order to do for Africa what the continent needed for a renaissance in thought and action.”³⁹ It is important to note that the choice of leaving the United States for Africa might not have been as selfless an act as Azikiwe attempted to convey in his autobiography. Lincoln University by 1934 had so tired of Azikiwe’s active protests against the University that “they refused to recommend a renewal of his visa thus ensuring the end of his stay.”⁴⁰ As dictated by the Immigration act of 1924, a visa that was not renewed would result in deportation; Azikiwe therefore might have taken the only option available to him.⁴¹

The narratives of other African students in the United States during this period like Kwame Nkrumah, Mbonu Ojike and Aliyu Fafunwa suggest that an encounter with immigration services was a constant fear of most African students in the United States during this period. Faced with the prospect of deportation or worse, arrest if they delayed their stay beyond the

³⁸ Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 160.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Gene Ulansky, “Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Myth of America,” (Ph.D diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1980), 51.

⁴¹ *Immigration Act of 1924*, 43 stat 153; 8 U.S.C. 201.

completion of their studies, most African students during this period either left the United States for another foreign country or returned back to Africa. While some like Mbonu Ojike and Aliyu Fafunwa would prolong their stay in the United States after the completion of their studies the vast majority returned home heartened by the economic and political opportunities at home but also because they were unable to deal with the hostile environments of prejudice and racism which they so often encountered during the completion of their studies in the United States.

Those who returned to the African continent, returned transformed by their experiences in the United States. They would be instrumental in shaping the foundation that would lead to increased presence of African students in the United States. Nnamdi Azikiwe after stops in Liberia and Ghana would finally return back to Nigeria in 1937. Azikiwe's return would have an electric impact on the development of nationalism in West Africa and would accelerate the presence of African students in the United States. As he acknowledged in his autobiography his main objective in returning back to the continent "was to infuse the indigenous African with a spirit of constitutional resistance to foreign rule and to inculcate in him certain psychological disciplines to facilitate the organization of such resistance and the realization of political freedom".⁴² It is in West Africa that Azikiwe emerges as the pre-eminent spokesperson for a growing West African nationalism in the 1930's and 1940's. As a part of his nationalist platform he focused on the training and education of a new and young cadre of African political leaders. He identified an education in the United States as central to this mission. Following in the footsteps of James Aggrey, Azikiwe painted an impressive image of America. He used what he termed "the myth of America" as a rhetorical device to suggest that the most important elements

⁴² Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 252.

necessary to African self-determination could be found in America.⁴³ The “myth of America” was based on several factors including the significance of the American Revolutionary War to American ideals of democracy, the historical impact of which as Azikiwe highlighted was so significant that African students who pursued education in America as he did, “were generally suspected of being disloyal to the [British] king.”⁴⁴ Other factors Azikiwe emphasized included the uniqueness of “American education,” which to him offered three types of knowledge crucial to the liberation of Africa. It offered knowledge of “the black past, knowledge of the black present and an awareness of what it meant to be psychologically liberated.”⁴⁵ In stark contrast to Britain, America offered a model for a new Africa. It was the crucible in which his intellectual and political consciousness had been forged and he highlighted the possibility of this experience for all Africans who choose to study there. Azikiwe’s favorable views of “America” would be widely disseminated through the newspaper empire he built upon his return to Africa in 1934. In this role he functioned as a prolific recruiter for higher education particularly black higher education in the United States.⁴⁶ One of the first students who he influences to study at his alma mater, Lincoln University, is Kwame Nkrumah of the Gold Coast (now Ghana), who would go on to prominence as the foremost African nationalist of his generation. Nkrumah arrived in the United States in 1935. Azikiwe’s crowning achievement in recruiting African students to his alma mater however would be the arrival of a small group of eight fellow countrymen in 1939. The “eight Argonauts” as named by Kingsley Ozuomba Mbadiwe one of the members of this

⁴³ The “myth of America” is derived in part from a similarly named editorial series published in Nnamdi Azikiwe’s newspaper the *West African Pilot* in the 1930’s.

⁴⁴ Gene Ulansky, “Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Myth of America,” 155. It is important to note that Azikiwe readily identified many of the flaws involved in upholding America as a paragon of liberty and democracy but as he points out, from the perspective of a British colonial subject, America represented hope in the face of colonial oppression. In particular, the example of American born blacks who were successfully struggling against seemingly unassailable odds represented a model worthy of emulation in stark contrast to whites in Africa.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁴⁶ Kingsley Ozuomba Mbadiwe, *Rebirth of a Nation* (Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd, 1991), 14.

group included Mbadiwe's brother, George I. Mbadiwe, Etoku Okada, Nwankwo Chukwuemeka, Nnodu Okongwu, Okechukwu Ikejiani, Mbonu Ojike and Nwafor Orizu. As historian Hollis Lynch notes "this group spearheads all the political initiatives of African students in the United States during the Second World War and virtually all of its members were later to play highly significant roles in their respective countries."⁴⁷

Nwafor Orizu and K.O. Mbadiwe: Key Architects of African Education

Though each of the eight Argonauts would later chart their way to prominence and fame as eventual political leaders in West Africa they would prior to these effort unite to implement important initiatives that would have a significant impact on higher education and international student exchange in the United States. One such initiative was the African Student's Association (ASA). It is the blueprint from which later African student organizations who engage in the struggle for African independence from abroad would draw from. In the 1950's the All African Students Union (AASU) was formed and in the 1960's and 1970's the well-known Pan African Students Organization of the Americas (PASOA).⁴⁸ They both would promote a brand of African nationalism and ultimately Pan-Africanism first perfected by the ASA.

Plans for the ASA are drawn up in meetings on the campus of Ohio State University in 1941 between Ozuomba Mbadiwe, John Karefa-Smart, Nwafor Orizu, and Mbonu Ojike. The organization would be launched that same year in New York. Committed to the ideals of Pan-Africanism, membership was open to all African students and to members of the African community in the United States including those Africans in the United States who were pursuing

⁴⁷ Hollis R. Lynch, "K.O. Mbadiwe, 1939-1947: The American Years Abroad of a Nigerian Political Leader," *Journal of African Studies* 7, no. 4 (Winter 1980/1981): 185.

⁴⁸ For a brief introduction to AASU and an excellent study of PASOA, see Anthony J. Mensah, *American College Student Activities and the Rise of The Pan African Students Organization of the Americas* (New York: PASOA, 1965).

other interests besides education.⁴⁹ The leadership of the organization however consisted entirely of West African students, a veritable who's who of African students who had attended Lincoln University. Ozuomba Mbadiwe was the first president in 1941, followed by Kwame Nkrumah in 1942. Other prominent roles filled by Lincoln students include J.A.B Jones-Quartey's position as editor of the organization's official magazine the *African Interpreter*.

As a reflection of the growing consciousness and nationalism of its founders the magazine strongly emphasized the organization's opposition to colonialism in Africa and throughout the "third world." That the issue of colonialism frames the main purpose of the organization is clear in its preamble, with each of the seven principles adopted referencing the organization's resistance to colonialism in Africa. The last point of the preamble exemplified the organization's philosophy, it read "That the African Students Association condemns all nations that think of Africa only as a source of labor and raw materials, or merely as a market; and do emphatically demand that those who claim to be fighting for democracy implement their expressed ideals by considering Africa a sovereign land in all of its glorious heritage and history and in its potentiality as a full and equal member of the family of Nations-to-be."⁵⁰ The promise of the ASA as reflected in its preamble would however never be fully realized. The departure of much of the original board back to Africa, ensured the end of the organization and it shuttered its doors in 1945. Though short-lived, the experiences gained from leading the organization would be invaluable to other ventures initiated by the argonauts.

In 1942, Kingsley Ozuomba Mbadiwe presented a plan to create "an organization led by

⁴⁹ Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*, 43.

⁵⁰ African Students Association, "Charter of Principles adopted at the Second Annual Conference-September 1942," *African Interpreter* 1, no. 2 (March 1943): 4. The magazine served many other purposes including providing students up to date information on events on the African continent, as well as providing updates on the whereabouts and achievements of African students in the United States, a feat that was at this time performed with little success by private philanthropic organizations like the Phelps-Stokes fund. Only five editions of the magazine are published due to difficulties in raising funds for the magazine and ultimately the organization.

Africans that would project Africa favorably and promote its interests.”⁵¹ He was interested in utilizing the de facto position as unofficial ambassadors that many African students in the United States already occupied. Established in 1944, the organization he created, the African Academy of Arts and Research (AAAR) would have a leading role in furthering in the United States increased awareness about the African continent. It brought to the table a diverse group of interested parties including, leading black American icons in education, and entertainment as well as some few white politicians and legislators and lastly, African students. Very few black organizations of this period could prominently claim Eleanor Roosevelt, first lady of the United States, and Mary Mcleod-Bethune, the famous black educator as major donors and distinguished guests at their events. The organization also had the distinction of having an all black board made up of established black leaders like Nnamdi Azikiwe, Mbonu Ojike, Mary Mcleod-Bethune, Elmer Carter of the Urban League, Walter White of the NAACP and the Reverend James H. Robinson of future Trans-Africa fame.

As a part of its efforts to promote interest in Africa and to encourage the struggle for African self-determination, the AAAR focused on using cultural showcases as a way to introduce Africa to Americans, providing grand celebrations of African culture at Carnegie Hall in New York in 1943, 1945 and 1946. It also produced an edited book on Africa titled *Africa Today and Tomorrow* and a movie, *Greater Tomorrow* to raise awareness about the African continent in the United States. The Academy in addition, organized a series of lectures led by leading African graduates in the United States like Mbadiwe, Mbonu Ojike, Ernest Kabilala and Akiki Nyabango.

In its later years the organization would assume a prominent role in facilitating the recruitment, and sponsorship of African students in the United States. In 1947 the AAAR

⁵¹ Lynch, “K.O. Mbadiwe,” 190.

initiated a massive fundraising effort that drew in donors from all over the world including a significant donation of \$2,000 dollars from Emperor Haile Selassie, bought a building to serve as its headquarters and as a social and cultural center for African students in the United States. The building would be named Africa House and was located at 459 w. 140th St, New York. It provided an important meeting space for the educational and cultural activities of the AAAR as well as accommodations for African students, visiting dignitaries and African immigrants.⁵²

The establishment of the Africa House was just one of many notable actions undertaken by African students in this most important period of African studentship in the United States that would also prominently feature the leadership of former African students like Nwafor Orizu and Mbadiwe in directing individual organizations towards recruiting and sponsoring the education of African students in the United States. From 1943, when the American Council on African Education is founded by Nwafor Orizu to the late 1950's when the AAAR founded by Mbadiwe ends its operations, educational exchange in the United States for African students primarily functioned under the supervision of these two individuals and the organizations they led.

The ACAE was founded in 1943 with the primary purpose of securing scholarships for African students to study in American universities. American education as noted by Nwafor Orizu the president and founder of the organization was better suited towards the needs of a nation like Nigeria which at this time was well into the struggle for self-determination. Emphasizing this point, Orizu wrote, "American education is more practical, more down-to-earth than the philosophical abracadabras of the decaying Europe. It is more democratic because it lays emphasis on personality and its development, in terms of the way of enjoying living, through

⁵² Ibid., 197. Mbadiwe himself makes note of his role in the establishment of the Africa House in his autobiography. See also, "African Center Planned: Fund Drive for Home for Students in New York," *New York Times*, 19 February 1947, 23; Mbadiwe, *Rebirth of a Nation*, 18.

individual effort and understanding of the mechanisms of progressive and creative life.”⁵³

The ACAE in 1945 created the twenty five student plan to acquire scholarships to American universities for twenty five African students.⁵⁴ The organization solicited scholarships from prominent black universities like Lincoln University as well as white universities like Ohio State University, Harvard, Wilberforce, Yale, Harvard and Columbia among others. Copies of the plan dated September 1945 provide important details of this enterprise. The composition of this student group was fifteen males and ten females. Plans also show that the organization had drawn up initial plans allocating scholarship funds to pay for annual tuition, room and board, transportation and clothing as well as insurance for the twenty five students. The average cost of attendance for each student was estimated to be \$1,280.60. The average amount-raised was \$726.00, leaving a shortfall of \$554.00 which in the absence of new funds secured by the organization had to be raised by students. In 1947, the initial year that the organization began to implement plans for its fellowship award, an estimated 7,500 applicants submitted applications for 25 spots.⁵⁵ Over the six years it actively engaged in international education exchange, ACAE provided over 121 scholarships to African students. In 1953 alone the organization claimed to have sponsored 71 Nigerian students to study in the United States. In the spirit of pan-Africanism it also claimed that it had awarded sixteen scholarships to non-Nigerian students from Africa from 1947-1949.⁵⁶

Both the ACAE and AAAR would ultimately fade into obscurity due to mismanagement

⁵³ Nwafor Orizu, *Africa Speaks* (Horizontal Publishers: Anambra State, Nigeria, 1990), 68.

⁵⁴ “American Council on African Education: Twenty-Five Students Plan, Sept 1945, Section Four no. 1,” Horace Mann Bond Papers on Microfilm, University of Illinois [Hereafter referred to as HMB papers]. In regards to this plan see also “25 African Students To Be Brought Here,” *New York Times*, 17 November 1946, 17.

⁵⁵ LaRay Denzer, *The Origins of the Popularization of American Education in Nigeria: A Case Study of the American Council on African Education*,” cited in Michael M. Ogbeidi, “Non-Governmental Organisation and the Promotion of American Education in Nigeria, 1941-1953,” *Nebula* 6, no. 4 (2009): 8.

⁵⁶ Ogbeidi, “Non-Governmental Organisation and the Promotion of American Education in Nigeria, 1941-1953,” *Nebula* 6, no. 4 (2009): 14.

of funds and a lack of transparency and accountability in its records and dealings with sponsors and most importantly a wave of claims against them by the very students they aimed to support. Orizu was accused by ACAE students of not providing proper funding, adequate counseling and timely delivery of remittances to students. Other points of contention were the strict restrictions placed on student activities while in the United States. ACAE students were not allowed to stay more than four years in the United States without the explicit consent of a parent or guardian, they had to strictly obey immigration laws and avoid dangerous political entanglements. Students were also not allowed to apply for funding from organizations like the Phelps-Stokes in the United States. Punishments for rule infractions ranged from a change in assistance levels, a refund of funds to the organization or in rare cases the repatriation of the scholar back to their home country.⁵⁷

Similarly, several AAAR students at Lincoln expressed their displeasure with their sponsorship by the AAAR. In a letter to Lincoln University's president, Horace Mann Bond, the students suggested that Mbadiwe overstated his importance in sponsoring the education of Nigerian students at Lincoln. To President Bond, they expressed displeasure with what they considered a mismanagement of funds by Mbadiwe. The parts of the letter addressing this issue read as follows

Mr. Mbadiwe's sponsorship is confined to students who are backed up financially by their parents or guardians. In other words Mr. Mbadiwe and his organization have not awarded a single scholarship to an individual Nigerian, i.e., to one who would never have been able to come here for higher education...Mr. Mbadiwe demands from the parents or guardians of the students that he sends here heavy deposits of money ranging from \$3,000 to \$4,000 each. These deposits are in addition to whatever the parents concerned might have donated."⁵⁸

The student's letter is addressed to President Bond because they viewed him due to his

⁵⁷ Ibid., 11-12.

⁵⁸ "American Council on African Education: Twenty-Five Students Plan, Sept 1945, Section Four no. 1," HMB Papers.

relationship with Nwafor Orizu as a potential mediator in their conflict. Bond had established by this time an important role as the primary American facilitator for the education of African students in the United States. It is a role that began in October of 1945 when Orizu wrote a letter to Bond inviting him to assume a position on the board of the ACAE and to inquire if he would be willing to honor previous agreements made with his predecessor Walter H. White to facilitate the provision of ten tuition scholarships for African students at Lincoln.⁵⁹ Bond in his response back to Orizu promised to honor the commitments White had made to the organization and expressed his strong interest in having African students at Lincoln.

Undoubtedly influenced by the example of Nwafor Orizu and the ACAE, in October of 1947, Mbadiwe, utilizing his ties to Lincoln University as a past student wrote a letter to Horace Mann Bond, then president of Lincoln.⁶⁰ In this letter, Mbadiwe appealed to Bond to consider granting ten full scholarships to African students selected by the academy. In return the academy would contribute to Lincoln, various African art collections which could be turned into a museum at Lincoln.⁶¹ Lincoln was one of many universities that Mbadiwe had established contact with to provide scholarships for African students (primarily Nigerian) to study in the United States.

From 1945 to 1947, Bond's records show that he received at least two other letters petitioning him to provide scholarships to African students. The first of these letters would be written in March of 1946 by David Talbot a black American journalist and editor who had just spent two years in the service of the Imperial government of Ethiopia. Talbot would appeal to Bond to offer "a few scholarship and cut rate tuition courses...to deserving Ethiopian students." Bond would also receive a letter in 1946 from the Reverend Livingston N. Mzimba of South

⁵⁹ A.A. Nwafor Orizu to President H.M. Bond, 23 October 1945, HMB Papers.

⁶⁰ Mbadiwe was a member of the ACAE's original board of directors.

⁶¹ K.O. Mbadiwe to Horace Mann Bond, 29 October 1947, HMB papers.

Africa who would ask Bond to secure twenty five scholarships for South African students. Bond's response to Talbot, Mzimba and Mbadiwe would be similar. He identified the limited resources of Lincoln as the primary reason why it would not be feasible to provide the required number of scholarships desired by these individuals. As a compromise, Bond in response to each appeal offered five scholarships.⁶²

For reasons that have to do mainly with Orizu's persistence but also of the mutual benefits earned through the relationship, Horace Bond would prove the most responsive to Nwafor Orizu's appeals for assistance. The letters between Bond and Orizu highlight a highly efficient system of exchange between these two individuals and the institutions they represented. Orizu recruited the students and raised initial funds to send African students to American institutions, mainly Lincoln, where Bond provided partial, sometimes full tuition scholarships for the students. Bond also maintained control over student finances as directed by Orizu, allocating money for books and outside expenses for students.

The Changing of the Guard

By the late 1950's, with the exception of Nnodi Okongwu, who after graduating with a PhD from New York University had become a professor at Fort Valley State, every other member of the "eight Argonauts" had returned to positions of prominence in Nigeria. Mbadiwe and Orizu now important members of Nigeria's burgeoning political elite, had their attention occupied by the inevitable turn towards independence that Nigeria was facing. Though the criticisms of the students they supported influenced the eroding of their popular support it is primarily the resistance of the colonial administration in Nigeria and mismanagement on the part

⁶² Horace Mann Bond to Mr. K.O Ozumba Mbadiwe, 5 November 1947; Mr. David A. Talbot, 30 March 1946; Horace Mann Bond to Rev. Livingstone N. Mzimba, 28 June 1946, HMB papers.

of both Orizu and Mbadiwe that spelled the end of their organizations.⁶³ The ignominy of their downfall should not overshadow the important foundation they created for the education of African students in the United States. One aspect of their original missions, creating a space for African students at the table of higher education in the United States, would be adopted by a new group of African power brokers.

In 1959, Stephen Awokoya the first minister of education in Nigeria's Western region helped to organize with David Henry, a key administrator at Harvard University what would eventually be the African Students Program for American Universities (ASPAU). ASPAU would emerge as one of the most important international exchange programs in the history of international education exchange. It served prominently to facilitate the education of thousands of African students in the United States. Another key player on the scene was Thomas Mboya, the charismatic Kenyan politician who organized the African airlifts of 1959, 1960 and 1961 which brought hundreds of East African students to United States' universities on government sponsored scholarships.⁶⁴ Ultimately however the education of African students in the United States would be undertaken by a United States government led effort supported by private organizations like the African American Institute (AAI) and the International Institute of Education (IIE). These initiatives would replicate elements of the frameworks used by AAAR and ACAE, such as soliciting scholarships for African students from United States higher education institutions and using students as cultural ambassadors to promote an awareness of the African continent and vice versa. This would be the fourth phase in African studentship in the

⁶³ Michael M. Ogbeidi, "Non-governmental Organisation and the Promotion of American Education in Nigeria, 1941-1953," *Nebula*, 6, 4 (2009), 9.

⁶⁴ For a biography of Thomas Mboya see Alan Rake, *The Young Man of Africa* (New York: Doubleday and Company Inc, 1962). Mboya's involvement in the East African Airlifts are well detailed in the dissertation written by Mansfield Irving Smith, "The East Africa Airlifts of 1959, 1960 and 1961," (PhD diss, Syracuse University, 1966).

United States, the development phase.

The students of this phase were tasked with helping to shape the development of a newly independent continent and they arrived in the United States in unprecedented numbers. In 1960, a year synonymous with the independence of 17 African countries, there were 2,314 African students studying in the United States. This number represented 4.7% of the foreign student population in the United States. By the 1983/84 academic year this number was the highest it has ever been in the historical relationship of educational exchange between the United States and the African continent at 41,690 or 12.3% of the entire foreign student body in the United States.⁶⁵ What began as a loose collective of initiatives organized by religious and philanthropic organizations like the Phelps-Stokes Fund in the early 20th century had been transformed by African students half a decade later into a fully functioning system of educational migrations for African students. In later years the foundation laid by these students would be significant in the later evolution of this system into a fully efficient industry featuring close partnerships between the United States government and private organizations. The future of African studentship in the United States would be irrevocably changed.

⁶⁵ International Institute of Education, *Open Doors, 1983* (International Institute of Education, New York, 1983),

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NON-RETURNING AFRICAN STUDENT AND THE BRAIN DRAIN

The departure of key brokers of African student migrations to the United States like Nwafor Orizu and Kinsley Mbadiwe in the late 1940's signaled the end of an active era of recruitment of African students by African students. It would herald however, in the years leading up to and throughout the Cold War, the increased involvement of the United States government in the promotion of international student exchange as an integral part of its foreign policy towards the "developing world".

In his inauguration speech in 1949, President Harry Truman made reference to the four points on which American foreign policy would be based. The four point plan or "Point Four program" called for the development of "a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of our underdeveloped areas."¹ Truman's Point Four program built upon previous United States foreign policy initiatives like the Marshall Plan and the Smith-Mundt or Mutual Education Exchange act of 1948, which focused on the exchange of technical and professional knowledge with Europe and other parts of the world. In later years, the National Defense Education Act (1958) and the Fullbright-Hays Act (1961) extended this process of explicitly emphasizing education as the vehicle for technical cooperation and development initiatives. Both programs would tie the funding of foreign students in the United States to the foreign and domestic interests of the United States. The roots of this movement however begin much earlier than President's Truman's Four Point Speech.

¹ Ken Hechler, *Working with Truman: A Personal Memoir of the White House Years* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press: 1996), 118.

Early interest by the United States Government in the use of education as a feature of its foreign policy was guided as historian Evelyn Rich notes by “a broad definition of the concept of exchange, the use of funds due to the U.S. government from abroad to finance programs which encouraged mutual understanding, the development of bilateral agreements between the countries involved and the support by the U.S. government for private organizational initiatives which further public policy.”² One prominent example of this philosophy is the involvement of the United States government in the Cuban summer school program in 1900. In the summer of 1900, 1,273 Cuban teachers were transported by the United States military to the Harvard University summer teacher education program.³ In 1908, the Chinese government was effectively forced by the United States government to use funds from the readjusted Boxer indemnity fund to provide scholarships for Chinese students to study in the United States.⁴

Despite these notable actions, the United States government remained largely removed from the active facilitation of educational exchange programs. It preferred instead to rely on religious and philanthropic organizations to take the lead in educational exchange. One important event however would signal an important change in the stance of the United States towards educational exchange programs. From 1959 to 1961, hundreds of East African students would travel to the United States for education as a part of airlifts from East Africa. These airlifts as

² Evelyn J. Rich, Evelyn Jones Rich, “United States Government Sponsored Higher Educational Programs for Africans: 1957-1970 with Special Attention to the Role of the African-American Institute,” (PhD Diss, Columbia University, New York).

³ Walter Crosby Ellis, “An Episode of International Education: The Cuban Expedition to the United States,” *Journal of Higher Education* 34, no. 2 (1962): 67-72. Created by two Harvard alumni, Earnest B. Conant and Alexis Frye, the Cuban summer school program recruited Cuban teachers to study in a six week program at Harvard University. The intent was to help in the development of Cuba’s educational system in the immediate years following the independence of the island nation.

⁴ Michael H. Hunt, “The American Remission of the Boxer Indemnity: A Reappraisal,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (1972): 539.

described by historian Evelyn Jones Rich “were perhaps the most significant event to influence the nature, scope and direction of African student programs in the U.S. during the 1960’s.”⁵

In September of 1959, eighty one students from East Africa were lifted from Nairobi Kenya and landed in New York. Theirs would be the first of three airlifts—the other two taking place in 1960 and 1961—that would announce as never before the presence of African students in the United States.⁶ The airlifts were prominently facilitated by a charismatic young Kenyan senator named Thomas Mboya who working with the American Committee on Africa (ACOA), the African American Students Foundation, Inc (AASF) and supporters like Harry Belafonte, Sidney Poitier, and Jackie Robinson had managed to organize a program to bring students from East Africa to the United States for higher education.⁷ Mboya writing in an op-ed in the *Pittsburgh Courier* described the key focus of the program as directed towards addressing “the grave shortage of facilities for higher education in our own country and also the very urgent need for such education in aid of our overall development and political emancipation.”⁸ Mboya was able to solicit scholarships for the students through agreements with various institutions in the United States. Using all the tools at his disposal including soliciting the assistance of figures of great stature like Martin Luther King, Mboya was able to acquire full scholarships for 30 of the 81 students on the first airlift.⁹ By 1960, Mboya was able to acquire for East African students promises for “200 scholarships with an estimated aggregate value of one million dollars” yet he

⁵ Evelyn Jones Rich, Evelyn Jones Rich, “United States Government Sponsored Higher Educational Programs for Africans,” 100.

⁶ Tom Mboya, “Mboya Thanks American Friends,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 19 December 1959, B4.

⁷ The American Committee on Africa was founded in 1953 and provided support for African struggles against colonialism and apartheid. It also served as a critical intermediary for African leaders and groups seeking support in the United States.

⁸ Mboya, “Mboya Thanks American Friends,” B4.

⁹ “King Seeks Sponsors for African Students,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 19 December 1959, B7.

lacked the funds to provide for the air travel of the students. Initial attempts in 1959 to petition the Department of State for aid in transporting the East African students had been rebuffed.¹⁰

Desperate for financial relief, Mboya and Scheinemann would intervene in the presidential elections of 1960 by trying to solicit support from the two major presidential candidates, John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. The Carnegie, Ford and Rockefeller foundations had all declined to offer funding for the student airlifts and desperate for funding Mboya and the AASF turned to the United States government in their efforts to secure funding. They sought meetings with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and only one senator, a young senator from Massachusetts named John F. Kennedy would meet with them. Kennedy as historian James Meriwether notes “saw an opportunity to act on his interest in African education and student exchanges while bolstering at little cost a weak record on civil rights with a strong stance in African issues.”¹¹ Both Kennedy and Nixon during this time were interested in parlaying an interest in Africa to gain the black vote in the United States; they both saw the African continent as a new frontier in the Cold War and sought to use their political credentials to gain favor. But of the two individuals, it was Nixon who had an established political record in reference to Africa. Nixon took a 3 week tour of Africa in 1957 which culminated in his presence at Ghana’s independence celebrations. Nixon had also notably supported the creation of “the separate Bureau of African Affairs in the State Department to give the continent greater attention.”¹² Nixon however was not willing to extend resources of his office to a virtually unproven field such as international student exchange. When approached by the AASF, Nixon suggested the organization seek private funds to sponsor the airlift. The AASF then turned its

¹⁰ Irving Mansfield, Jr., “The East African Airlifts of 1959, 60 and 61,” (PhD Diss, Syracuse University, 1966), 85.

¹¹ James H. Meriwether, “Worth a Lot of Negro Votes”: Black Voters, Africa and the 1960 Presidential Campaign,” *The Journal of American History*, 3 (December 2008): 753.

¹² *Ibid.*, 743.

attention to John F. Kennedy who would provide the means to solve their financial woes. Unlike Nixon, John F. Kennedy had very little experience dealing with the African continent. Kennedy however understood the well the practical value that providing aid to Africa would provide in his attempts to win the vote of black Americans. As historian James Meriwether writes,

Kennedy understood that efforts to broaden opportunities for education resonated deeply with black Americans, who had long fought—and were still fighting—for equal access to and treatment in classrooms throughout the United States. From the courtrooms of *Brown v. Board of Education* to the streets of little Rock, Arkansas, black Americans had struggled to expand educational opportunity and to hold the nation to its avowed beliefs in uplift and equal opportunity. Now Kennedy had the chance to clear a way for Africans to study in the United States. That gesture would reverberate among black Americans while few white voters would notice a few hundred African students enrolled in American colleges. Furthermore, the airlift offered a way to support Africa without explicitly engaging the controversial matter of exactly when African independence should come.

Unlike Nixon, Kennedy could draw on the important resources of his family and in particular the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation set up in memory of the senator's oldest brother, to support his political aims and goals. He offered the AASF \$100,000 from the Kennedy Fund to support its airlifts. The resulting airlifts would represent the beginning of a period of significant cooperation between public and private United States interests in the education of African students. The United States government which was a late partner to this relationship in later years would become the most central partner in cooperative efforts to facilitate the recruitment, sponsorship and higher education of African students in the United States. The Mboya airlifts would help to initiate important changes in the recruitment, enrollment and sponsorship for African students in the United States.

By 1959, the first year of the airlifts there were an estimated 1,894 African students in the United States. This was 3.5% of the total foreign student body. The population of African students in the United was predominantly male with only 244 female students in this group of

students. The student population was split almost evenly between undergraduate and graduate students. The vast majority of these students were fairly evenly distributed in the sources of support they received with the two main categories being support from their governments, or support through private funds. It is notable that very few students at this time were receiving support from the United States government. Only 22 students out of the almost 2000 African students in the country were listed as being supported by the United States government while a third of students during this year were listed as self-supporting. Many of these students in this year and in the years to follow were non-sponsored students, students who without programmatic support had managed to secure funds to travel and enroll at U.S. institutions of higher education. These students would come from a select few African countries. Egypt was the leading sender of students with 453 students. Other top sending countries included the Union of South Africa (212), Nigeria (209), Liberia (205) and Ghana with 105 students.¹³

By 1963, two years removed from the last of the East Africa or Mboya Airlifts the number of African students in the United States had more than doubled since the airlifts first began. There were 4,996 African students, the vast majority of whom were dependent on sponsorship whether that of their own government, private organizations, the United States government or some combination of these sources. Only 13% of African students this year are recorded as being self-supporting, with the rest of the students receiving some form of support from private or public funds.¹⁴ Most other characteristics of this population stayed relatively similar to previous years. There were still huge disparities along gender lines with only 619

¹³ Institute of International Education, *Open Doors, 1959* (New York: Institute of International Education, 1959), 41.

¹⁴ Institute of International Education, *Open Doors, 1963* (New York: Institute of International Education, 1963), 9. It is important to note that for this period it is believed that the number of African students without financial support was much higher than reported by the IIE. The IIE was dependent on surveys submitted to and filled out by Institutions. The opinions and perceptions of students in reference to support and other issues were not taken into consideration.

female students in comparison to 4,377 males. However, there was little change in the order of leading countries of origin among students as the United Arab Republic (Egypt) maintained its position as the leading country of origin for African students with 1,136 students. It was followed by Nigeria with 813 and most notably by Kenya, a significant beneficiary of the Mboya airlifts, sending 697 students to the United States.

In 1983, twenty years after the last Mboya Airlift there were 42,690 African students in the United States. It is a number that has since been never equaled. African students in 1983 made up 12.3% of the total foreign student body. The population of African students had steadily risen during this period till it peaked in 1983. These drastic changes in the population are influenced by several factors including importantly a reevaluation and change in the accounting system of the International Institute of Education. The IIE in 1975 changed its enumeration practices in assessing the international student population in the United States. It ended its reliance on the completion of coding forms required by the census for each and every individual foreign student at a United States institution of higher education. Instead it turned to administering comprehensive surveys of foreign student populations in institutions that asked institutions to report two key things, total of non-immigrant students and immigrant visa holders enrolled in degree programs. The changes in reported totals would be dramatic. In its 1973-74 report the IIE reported 160,121 foreign students, in its report the following year (1974-75) the IIE report noted 219,721 foreign students, a 37.2% difference.¹⁵ The breakdown of this dramatic change in the number of foreign students would be especially significant for African students.

The IIE's 1973-74 Open Doors report showed 11,778 African students in the United States. In its 1974-75 report it showed 18,400, an astronomical increase from the previous year.

¹⁵ Institute of International Education, *Open Doors, 1975* (New York: Institute of International Education, 1975), 4-6.

There was a 56.23 % change in the number of African students reported in the year between 1974 and 1975. No other major geographic region including Europe, Asia, North America, and Latin America would have such a dramatic change in its numbers of students in the United States.¹⁶

From 1975 to 1983, the number of African students in the United States would double. It would be fueled by the rising fortunes of countries like Nigeria which was beginning to reap the benefits of its discovery of black gold or oil in the late 1950's and could afford to send its masses of high school educated youth to foreign countries in search of development degrees. This population of African students in the United States in 1983 would reflect similar gender disparities as the population in the early 1960's. Women would still make up a small percentage of the number of students.¹⁷ Other notable changes during this period included a change in the order of leading sending countries for African students. Nigeria and Ethiopia as the top two countries replaced Egypt as the leading countries sending students in the United States. From the early 1920's when the Committee on Friendly Relations Among Students begins to keep records of international students in the United States to 1964/65 the top sending country of African students was Egypt.¹⁸ Egyptians during this time made up the vast majority of African students in the United States. Theirs however has been a silent and often ignored history. The vast majority of the studies on African students in the United States during this period focused on black African students from sub-Saharan Africa. The pursuit of education for these students

¹⁶ Ibid., 11.

¹⁷ The gender balance of African students for 1983 is hard to judge since IIE surveys stopped analyzing gender on a country by country basis in the 1970's and instead analyzed this data comprehensively for the entire international student body. It is important to note though that for the years where the data is available from 1959 to 1970, the population of African women stayed relatively small never surpassing 13% of the total African student population. This was consistent however with the overall distribution of female students which from the late 1950's onwards hovered between 23-25%. Institute of International Education, *Open Doors, 1978* (New York: Institute of International Education, 1978), 27.

¹⁸ Institute of International Education, *Open Doors, 1986* (New York: Institute of International Education, 1986), 15.

would bear some similarities to the previous generation but would also feature important differences.

Though many of these students were non-sponsored students spending their own money to get to the United States, a significant proportion of this group were sponsored by programs implemented as a result of the relationships generated years earlier by the Mboya Airlifts. Many organizations would be responsible in the years to follow for the educational migrations of African students to the United States in the years to follow but three organizations in particular had significant roles in facilitating the education of African students in the United States. These were the Phelps-Stokes Fund, International Institute of Education (IIE) and the African American Institute (AAI). In conjunction with the United States government they would be the major organizations that would regulate educational exchange for African students from the early 1960's to the late 1980's. These programs assisted in administering a wealth of international student programs that would recruit, sponsor and place among others, African students in United States institutions of higher education.

The oldest of these organizations the Phelps Stokes Fund was founded in 1911 as a part of the will of wealthy New York philanthropist Caroline Phelps Stokes. Stokes intended for the organization to facilitate the construction of or improvement of apartment buildings in New York for the poor as well as for improving educational conditions for Native Americans, African Americans as well as Africans. The organization gave aid to early students including Ojike, Azikiwe and Nkrumah. Much of its focus however was on collecting and disseminating information about or for African students. By the 1950's, the organization adopted a less direct and involved role with students. While maintaining its financial obligations and responsibilities to students it took on a larger role in administering African student education. Its 1957

publication *African students in the United States: A Handbook of Information and Orientation* sought to provide a “guide to appropriate behavior and a survey of the U.S. and its educational system” to African students.¹⁹ The Fund was also interested in helping U.S. educational institutions form stronger ties with Africa. It assisted in 1957 arranging the Capahosic Conference which brought black colleges to the table to discuss this issue and resulted in had its hand in the formation of the African Scholarship Program of the United Negro College fund, a predecessor of ASPAU.

The Institute for International Education is founded in 1919 by Stephen Duggan “to promote international understanding and world peace through education.”²⁰ Duggan focused on internationalizing “education through educational travel and exchange.”²¹ The IIE was selected to help implement academic exchange under the Fulbright Act. IIE became involved in educational exchanges with Africa after WWII. In 1952, the IIE sponsored 92 African students, 50 of whom were from Egypt.²² The IIE took over for Committee on friend relations and publishes *Open Doors*, a survey of foreign students in the United States. It also published important pamphlets as well on African students in United States.²³

The AAI developed from a small organization founded in 1957 to the primary facilitator during the 1960’s and 1970’s of sponsored education for African students in the United States. It became the most important non-governmental organization involved in the education of African students in the United States during this period. By the early 1960’s, AAI already had a notable record in developing and administering programs to assist African students and this made it a

¹⁹ ASPAU *Guide Book*, 86.

²⁰ Rich, Evelyn Jones Rich, “United States Government Sponsored Higher Educational Programs for Africans,” 32.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

²² *Ibid.*, 36.

²³ Committee on Educational Interchange Policy, *African Students in the United States: A Guide for Sponsors of Student Exchange Program with Africa, IIE Survey of the African Student: His Achievement and His Problems* (New York: Committee on Educational Interchange Policy, 1960)

desirable partner when the United States become more actively involved in Africa especially after Ghana's independence in 1957. AAI had made great progress since its inception in a meeting of six individuals. It had expanded its offices opening offices in New York and on the African continent, landed its first significant government contract with International Cooperation Agency. "In 1958-59 there were nine full scholarships awarded to African students in the U.S. and in 1959-60 the number increased to thirteen full scholarships in addition to seventy-two supplementary ones." From 1954-1960 AAI gave out 438 awards.²⁴ The AAI would dramatically increase its support of African students in the years to follow with its implementation of three important programs for African students. By the late 1950's both the Phelps Stokes Fund and IIE had taken on more administrative roles leaving the AAI as the primary organization to fill the void left behind by these organizations.

The three main programs implemented by AAI during this period were the African Scholarship Program for American Universities (ASPAU) which provided scholarships for African high school graduates to attend undergraduate institutions in the United States. Where ASPAU was for undergraduates the African Graduate Fellowship Program or AFGRAD established in 1963 was for African Bachelor's degree holders who were interested in attending graduate school in the United States. The last of AAI's most prominent programs was the South African Assistance Program (SASP), created in 1961 it was designed to provide educational opportunities for students from Southern Africa who had been displaced from their homes due to their political dissent to apartheid rule in the region. Reflected in the core of these programs was the central philosophy of AAI which stressed "purposive education over general education" and created program which "were designed to train Africans to participate in aspects of the development process, thus accelerating economic growth and political stability. Purposive

²⁴ Rich, "United States Government Sponsored Higher Educational Programs for Africans," 95.

education aimed at developing special skills for specific jobs and was designed to train Africans to plan the policies, to implement the programs, and to replace ex-patriates so that newly independent African governments, now controlled by Blacks, could move toward economic independence as well.” Purposive education stressed the sciences, professional degrees and technical subjects.²⁵ This philosophy worked well for AFGRAD and in relative terms as well for ASPAU but as the AAI was to discover, conflicted with the apartheid conditions faced by students in SASP. A significant outcome of the AAI’s purposive education philosophy was the success of these programs in returning students to their native lands upon their receipt of degrees from United States institutions of higher education.

ASPAU was created in 1960 as a cooperative project linking U.S. colleges and Universities with 32 sub-Saharan African countries to select and place in undergraduate degree programs. It was initiated in response to the “upsurge of interest in Africa during the late 1950’s and early 1960’s when African independence movements were achieving success” and in response to the growing interest and investment by the Soviet Union in the continent.²⁶ A growing demand for scholarships and financial aid by African students beginning in the early 1950’s highlighted the need for a program or organization to comprehensively address the needs of African students. With few opportunities available at home, newly minted nationalist leaders like Stephen Awokoya, then Federal Minister of Education in Nigeria began to look abroad to foreign institutions. Awokoya’s search took him to the United States where he met David Henry, then Director of Admissions for Harvard College. Awokoya encouraged Henry to consider providing a program that would give Nigerian students opportunities to earn undergraduate degrees. Henry agreed to organize a group of American colleges who would be

²⁵ Ibid., xv.

²⁶ African American Institute, ASPAU, *A Report on the African Scholarship Program of American Universities 1960-1970* (New York: African American Institute, 1970), 2.

receptive to receiving Nigerian students and to provide financing for such a venture. The Nigerian Scholarship Program of American Universities (NASP) was created in 1960 with a total enrolment of 24 Nigerian students who enrolled in 24 colleges. The Nigerian government paid travel costs while participating colleges paid the full cost of a four year program for each student. Administrative support was provided by foundations like the African American Institute. NASP would be the foundation for what would become ASPAU. As a pilot project, NASP allowed for a greater cooperative enterprise between American universities, the Nigerian Government, and foundations like the AAI.

From 1960 to 1970 ASPAU succeeded in selecting, placing and financing 1594 African students in U.S. colleges and Universities. Among ASPAU's many sponsors, the Agency for International Development was the most important. AID was the largest contributor to ASPAU giving the program \$18,882,216 over its existence. Total expenditures for ASPAU from 1961-1972 were \$30,780,064 or a cost of \$19,000 per student for their undergraduate degrees.²⁷ In comparison it cost the AAI only slightly more about \$23,000 to educate an African student from his/her bachelor degree to PhD.²⁸ The incentive was there for the organization to provide a sponsored graduate program and it did so beginning in 1963.

AFGRAD was the longest running program administered by AAI. It was in existence for 34 years, from 1963-1997. The program was initiated by USAID in partnership with AAI, American graduate and industrial schools and African governments. It provided fellowships to qualified Africans for primarily graduate training at American universities. The intent was to help to educate/train a new class of civil servants who would assist in the development of newly

²⁷ African American Institute, *ASPAU*, 15.

²⁸ African American Institute, *African American Institute Annual Report, 1976* (New York: African American Institute, 1976), 19.

independent African countries during this period.²⁹ Over the thirty years of its existence the program enrolled 2,516 African students. It would feature however a largely male presence with an increasing female presence in the later stages of the program. The program like most AAI programs during this period had an explicit emphasis on promoting development and though there were a wide range of disciplinary areas of study chosen by African students, Engineering, Economics, and Business were often the leading fields of study that AFGRAD students were studying. A total of 2,934 degree awards were received by students in the program, 59.1% masters, 31.5% Doctorates, 6.5% bachelors and 2.9% non-degree programs (including post doctorate study and research).³⁰

The AAI would aim to address a different demographic of African students in 1961 when it created SASP. Recognizing the unique needs of Southern African students, the United States government in 1961 created the Southern African Student Program (SASP). The program was created by U.S. Department of State as part of the Fulbright-Hayes Educational Exchange Program with the belief that independence would soon take place in Southern Africa. In preparing for what it thought was an eventual return to majority rule in Southern Africa the United States created SASP as both a humanitarian and political tool. As a political tool SASP was directed towards combating the rising influence of communism in the region. The United States government recognized, prior to the beginning of SASP, that scholarship programs established by the communist countries for southern Africa refugee students posed a real threat, especially through propaganda of such programs.”³¹

²⁹ Management System International, “Capturing the Results of 30 years of AFGRAD Training, USAID Project No. 698-0455,” (1995), 1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 5

³¹ Martin F. Madzongwe, “The Southern African Student Program, 1961-1971: An Analysis of a Program to Train Leaders for Southern Africa,” (PhD diss., Clark University, 1973), 7.

Most of the original participants for the program came from a pool of southern African exiles in Zaire, Tanzania and Zambia. The program was different from other exchange programs in that program developers were conscious of the fact that SASP participants could not readily return home at the completion of their studies. These students were primarily from minority dominated apartheid ruled countries. Upon graduation, SASP participants were expected to return to one of the newly independent African countries to await the independence of their native countries. Conditions in southern Africa at the time however would make this virtually impossible for the vast majority of the group.

From 1961-1972, 465 SASP participants received scholarships towards the completion of requirements for an academic degree from U.S. universities (69). At least 85% of all SASP participants came from minority ruled countries. The explicit goals of SASP were to train Southern African Refugee Students for service in their native lands, in the various liberation movements throughout the southern part of the continent and “for service within independent Africa.”³² The students in this program came from a variety of backgrounds but in general were thought to be middle class. “They were largely children of teachers, clerks, businessmen, nurses, civil servants and skilled workers.” They were overwhelmingly male as highlighted by Baron’s study, 293 (94.5%) were male and a mere 17 (5.5%) students were female. The program itself as Baron notes did not have any policy favoring one gender over the other. Initially the state department handled the travel plans of the students issuing them J-1 visas and providing their air tickets. This responsibility was later handled by the African American Institute.³³

The role of the AAI with this program was to primarily ensure students’ travel to and from the U.S., placing students in regular college program, filing applications on behalf of

³² Madzongwe, “The Southern African Student Program, 1961-1971,” 71.

³³ Ibid., 78. The overwhelming presence of males in the program as explained by Madzongwe was tied to the fact that males were more politically active and were more likely to have to flee to avoid political persecution.

students for educational institutions and administered students scholarships. Overall SASP students did not go into what Madzongwe terms “African manpower fields.” because “(1) most of the SASP students lacked sound natural science and mathematics backgrounds (2) some pursued their immediate personal interest and (3) American universities were generally flexible in allowing students to change their fields of study.”³⁴

Those African students in AAI’s programs and those outside of the structure of the organization would generally excel in their academic studies helping to promote favorable impressions of the academic prowess of African students and immigrants that would create significant historical reverberations that can still be felt today. Their impact however was not just in the arena of academics. They also helped as previous generations did to bring the African continent closer to the United States. In 1959, the All African Students Union (AASU) would open up in Washington D.C., the “Africa House,” its first venue for African students in the United States and an important space for numerous cultural events the association would throw. Individual students like Olumide Olatunji or Baba would play a key role in helping to spread knowledge of and about the African continent in the United States. In 1959, Baba was the president of the AASU but he held an even more important role as master drummer and entertainer extraordinaire. Rubbing shoulders with a wide cast of characters from Malcolm X to Bob Dylan, Olatunji helped to spark “a deep sense of pride among African Americans by strongly promoting images of African culture in the United States.”³⁵ These cultural engagements aside, African students in the United States faced major hurdles in regards to their studies in the United States. Among the many barriers that confronted African students in their

³⁴ Ibid., 86-87.

³⁵ Babatunde Olatunji, Robert Atkinson and Akinsola A. Akiwowo, *The Beat of My Drum: An Autobiography* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005), 1.

pursuit of higher education in the United States, two key issues, financial hardship and racism would stand out in particular.³⁶

Financial Hardships and Racism

In 1949, the Phelps Stokes Fund conducted the first recognized institutional survey of African students in America. Despite the reporting of several key areas of concern for African students, the study offered a positive outlook on the African student presence in the United States highlighting an increasing body of students that featured more diversity within the group than ever before. According to the report there were a total of 888 African students in the United States 1949, making up 3.5% of the total foreign student body in the country. This was a far different outlook than the less than one hundred students estimated to be in America prior to Kwame Nkrumah's departure in 1945.³⁷ Another significant factor the study highlighted was the increasing commitment of American institutions as well as the United States government to providing aid to African students. Almost two-thirds of the African students enrolled in American colleges during this time were receiving either full or partial scholarships through the only two independent sub-Saharan black African countries of this period, Liberia and Ethiopia. Other providers of financial aid included as well American philanthropic organizations, American colleges and universities, churches and through private donations from individual Africans and Americans.³⁸ The report though positive identified some few areas where improvements could be made for African students. In particular it acknowledged the presence of what it termed "poorly qualified candidates," African students who were not sufficiently

³⁶ Joseph Veroff, "African Students in the United States," *Journal of Social Issues* 19 (1963): 49.

³⁷ Phelps-Stokes Fund, *A Survey of African Students Studying in the United States* (New York: Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1949), 22

³⁸ Ibid.

prepared to deal with the rigors of American higher education. To this issue it proposed the implementation of uniform standards of admissions for these students. Where the report would identify the lack of academic standards and the need for more academic rigor as significant issues it would refer in passing to the racial climate in the North and South that impaired the educational experiences of African students. The increasing encounters of African students with racism and prejudice the report suggest might be influenced by the decision made by African students to attend black colleges in the South, unlike earlier students who had attended schools in the North. As the report explains “it would appear that as many unpleasant incidents have occurred from the social pattern of color discrimination in the North as from color segregation in the South.”³⁹

Where the experiences of financial hardships and experiences of racism and discrimination encountered by earlier students like Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah would barely gain the attention of observers, by the 1950’s especially with the heightened environment of the cold war, the experiences of financial hardship and racism encountered by African students would be major news.

Though framed primarily as an issue faced by African students who ventured South, some newspapers of the period like the *Chicago Defender* profiled the experiences of African students noting their engagements with racism in the United States. In an editorial written in March 1950 for the *Chicago Defender*, Aliyu Olumide Fafunwa an African student in the United States who would later become the Minister of Education in Nigeria, recounted several incidents with racism in the United States which he considered baffling given the image of democracy the United States worked so hard to cultivate. Assessing his and other African student’s disillusionment with issues of racism in the United States and the failure of American

³⁹ Ibid., 28.

democracy, Fafunwa stated “the denial of the ballot box makes the average African student become a little disillusioned about American democracy. He believed before coming to America that this country is an arsenal of democracy but to his dismay he finds that America is just learning like Africa to be democratic.”⁴⁰

While some individual students like Olumide Fafunwa would use the press to offer stirring analysis on their experiences in the United States, African students would be active in other ways in engaging the new society they found themselves in. The All African Students Union in 1957 wrote an appeal to the Governor of Texas requesting an apology for the brutal beating of Essien A. Essien, a Nigerian student at Southwestern Christian College. The student in question, Essien, was the victim of a brutal beating by a policeman for not understanding that he had to move to “the Negro section of the bus.”⁴¹

By 1965, the conditions faced by African students in the United States had gained such widespread notice that the United States Congress held a special committee hearing on this group of international students. The hearings are influenced by the increasing presence of African students in the United States and the lack of available data on their presence. Evaluating ten years of African studentship in the United States, the Congressional hearings analyzed key issues affecting the presence of African students in the United States like the coordination of student programs, length of stay, African educational facilities, non-sponsored students, financial support, and the reception students received in the United States. The Committee would acknowledge in their report that thousands of students came every year to the United States absent sponsorship from an organization. These students were a vulnerable and at-risk population. Many students were able to find aid from a combination of the schools they attended, or church

⁴⁰ A. Babs Fafunwa, “Nigerian Student Sees U.S. as Baffling, Busy Nation of Paradox,” *Chicago Tribune*, 25 March 1950, 13.

⁴¹ “African Students Protest Texas Incident,” *Washington Post*, 4 October 1957, A17.

and community groups but for the average student 40% of basic need went unmet. The Phelps-Stokes fund as the report notes had taken the lead in providing some aid to these students but it had on average been able to assist less than 50% of the 1,200 students who the three years prior to the report had applied for aid.⁴² The committee recommended immediate and particular attention be given to non-sponsored African students in the United States so as to maximize their manpower value to their own countries. It also called for closer cooperation with African governments, in identifying “at-risk students.” Lastly it called for an augmentation of programs in existence noting that the increased sponsorship of current programs would help to alleviate the financial plight faced by many African students as these programs were already well versed in these and other related matters .⁴³

When addressing the issue of racism as it affected African students, the committee would fail to provide as robust a round of recommendations as they had for the financial difficulties facing African students. The issue of racism, though noted as an important issue facing African student is barely addressed in the hearings. The senate committee in their report acknowledged that the treatment of African students could be handled better, as African students did face incidences of racism. The Committee also called for coordinated efforts to handle the needs of students and to ensure increased positive contacts between students and average Americans but offered little in terms of substantive policies to address this issue. The Committee in failing to address the significant issue of racism glossed over an extensive period of engagement with this issue by African students.

⁴² United States Congress, *African Students and Study Programs in the United States* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 7.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 9.

Very few African students could avoid dealing with the thorny issue of race in the United States.⁴⁴ Even those in sponsored programs like ASPAU and SASP were not immune to the vagaries of racism in the United States. The vast sums of money that ASPAU spent in educating African students did not equip it to deal with factors beyond its control like racism. Despite the best intentions of the facilitators of ASPAU were not able to shield their recruits from experiences of racism. Recruits brought with them an awareness of the racial hostility blacks faced in the United States. In 1961, ASPAU students at Lincoln University and the University of Pennsylvania provided a five week orientation for African students prior to their attending their colleges. A survey conducted of the orientation showed that 56% of the students surveyed were concerned with the race problem. The survey report further notes “it was clear that race relations was a paramount concern of the African students coming to the United States, and it was the most difficult and sensitive problem to deal with, not only in the orientation sessions, but also on the campuses where the students were studying. The programs for introducing Africans to the United States included a lecture on race relations delivered by prominent black Americans. This alone was not sufficient, however, for students needed to express their own concerns and discuss the situation with their contemporaries. The most effective way of dealing with their need was to provide an opportunity for groups of students to meet with an African student who had been in the United States for a year or more for a frank and open discussion in which students could speak freely and be made aware of the circumstances they might have to cope with.”⁴⁵

Very much like their peers in ASPAU, adjusting to life in the United States was a difficult hurdle for SASP students to overcome. One of the big issues for students was culture shock. These students were not non-immigrants like other African students, they were refugee

⁴⁴ Moikobu, “The Relationships between Black-Americans and African Students.”

⁴⁵ Ibid., 14.

students. Other problems students faced were racial and political. Their status as students from minority dominated African countries could not prepare them for the racism they were to face in the United States. There was a complex negation of racism. On one hand they appreciated the warm welcome and interest by America in their well-being and education but on the other hand they were very disturbed by their experiences with racism. Poor race relations as Madzongwe observed

added new destructive dimensions and constituted even more of an emotional irritant. For example discrimination in housing was particularly destructive to SASP student views of the United States. Their limited subsistence-level resources obliged SASP students to reside in or adjacent to ghetto areas, with the exception of those in small cities or who lived in campus. Ghetto living gave some of the SASP students firsthand experience of the plight of the country's dispossessed and at the same time reminded them of their past experience as victims of racism in their homelands."⁴⁶

These types of explicit as well as more subtle racial incidents only made it harder for students to obtain their degrees. These experiences as well as the United States' conservative foreign policy towards Africa would negatively impact the perception of SASP students of the United States. Over 75% of the SASP students that Madzongwe interviewed thought United States foreign policy only bolstered the status quo in southern Africa.⁴⁷

By the middle of the 1960's, the main problems facing African students were well known if not well addressed. Incidents of financial hardships and racial discrimination encountered by African students in the United States had been identified by philanthropic organizations like the Phelps Stokes Fund and African American Institute. These issues had even gained the attention of Congress. The concern was rampant among foreign governments and by the United States government that African students were unfairly suffering during their sojourns. This perception however was not shared by all parties. Some African students would offer a different perspective

⁴⁶ Madzongwe, "The Southern African Student Program, 1961-1971," 94.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

on this issue. In an editorial of its journal, *Pan African Notes*, the African student Pan-African Student Organization of the Americas (PASOA) would critically suggest that the concern around African students was misplaced as these individuals were beneficiaries of the racist largesse of white Americans. As the editorial argued “Black Africans especially in the early sixties were given what amounted to red carpet treatment when they came to the United States to study, while millions of Black Americans continued to bear the yoke of prejudice and discrimination...they (black Africans) received good treatment from the white Americans and became sort of a special class of celebrities sought after by local churches, civic organizations and schools for short talks and discussions on their countries as a whole.”⁴⁸ It is unknown to what extent other African students shared the perspective of PASOA in regards to the claim that African students received privileged treatment. This is a topic that received very little attention during this period. An issue that did occupy the attention of scholars during this period was the brain drain and the experience of non-return.

Non-return

By June of 1972, when ASPAU officially ended its enrollment of African students into the program, only 136 students out of the total 1594 students selected and placed by ASPAU had withdrawn from college before completing their degrees. 1338 or 91% of these students had finished and earned their baccalaureate degrees while 120 were still enrolled. ASPAU officials were very proud of this fact stating “this record of 91% of the students completing their degree programs is remarkable and far better than the 50% record of American students who complete their undergraduate studies.”⁴⁹ Despite a significant graduation rate suggests the overall

⁴⁸ Pan African Students Organization in the Americas, “Requiem for Portuguese Colonialism,” *Pan African Notes*, 4, 2&3 (1974): 33-34.

⁴⁹ African American Institute, ASPAU, *A Report on the African scholarship Program of American Universities 1960-1970* (New York: African American Institute, 1970), 17.

effectiveness of the program was reduced by another important set of data and that was the high rate of non-return.

Table 1: Status of ASPAU Graduates, 1960-1970

Country of Origin	Total Graduates	Returned to Home Country	*Still in U.S.	Outside U.S. But Not Home	Unknown
Cameroon	100	50	46	3	1
Kenya	104	78	22		4
Nigeria	361	137	150	7	67
Rhodesia	89	28	20	7	34
Tanzania	101	58	36	1	6
Uganda	101	55	38		8
Zambia	76	64	6	1	5

Notes: Adapted from African American Institute, *ASPAU, A Report on the African scholarship Program of American Universities 1960-1970* (New York: 1970), Appendix 10.

“As a program to provide trained manpower, ASPAU might be considered only moderately successful, since the records indicate that only 711 or the 1338 graduates (53.14%) have returned to Africa.”⁵⁰ It is important to note as the report does that there were wide variations in return by country. Reasons for this were related to the individual country’s “political developments, the status of the economy, and most importantly to efforts made to provide students adequate, accurate information about employment opportunities and to assure them of jobs which will utilize their training and talents.”⁵¹ Only 50 of the 100 graduates from Cameroon had returned back to their home country with 46 of these 50 still in the U.S at the publishing of this report. 150 of the 361 Nigerian students from the program were still in the U.S. as only 137 had returned home. There were similar results for the other countries surveyed by the report. With the exception of Zambia which had a significant number of its ASPAU students return home, the

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

other countries in this report had significant numbers of students who were non-returning after the completion of their studies.

ASPAU's final report makes it clear that the objective of the program was to train manpower to return home promptly. Because ASPAU did not accomplish this in high rates, the program was considered a failure. Pinning the bulk of the blame for the lack of success by ASPAU in repatriating students the report stated

clearly, ASPAU was not efficient in training manpower for an early return home. Most of the member colleges stressed a liberal education. They believed that each student's talents should be developed and encouraged students to go to graduate school if they had the capacity to succeed at that level. Thus many students did not return home upon completion of their first degrees, but that does not mean their manpower potential should be discounted. ASPAU's effectiveness in educating highly talented individuals who will make significant contributions to their countries and to Africa can only be judged over a long period of time."⁵²

In comparison to ASPAU, AFGRAD was more successful in repatriating its students with 88.1% of students returning to their native lands over the life of the project. It is important though to highlight that repatriation efforts for AFGRAD students were hindered by a complex set of factors. Only 64% of AFGRAD students returned home directly after the completion of their studies. The choices made by those students who did not return home immediately after the completion of their studies were varied. Some stayed in the U.S. for practical training (16%), others for further studies (8%), while others went to other countries for further studies (1%) or other unknown reasons (2%). Only 126 students (7%) of the AFGRAD student body are believed to have stayed in the United States for reasons other than training or further study.

⁵² Ibid., 26.

Table 2: Choices Made by AFGRAD Students after Graduation

Repatriation	Total Data	Alumni
Return Home	1619	64%
Stayed in the U.S. for practical training	398	16%
Went to other country for practical training	3	0%
Stayed in U.S. for further study	207	8%
Went to a foreign country for further study	21	1%
Stayed in U.S. for another reason	176	7%
Went to foreign country for another reason	39	2%
Unknown	53	2%
Total Alumni	2516	100%

⁵³ Adapted from AAI, *Capturing the Results of 30 years of AFGRAD Training*; Chart 7: Alumni Program and Repatriation Rates, 7.

In its goal of training African manpower, SASP of all three programs was the most successful in providing students with a higher education degree from a United States institution. Of the 400 students admitted into SASP, 85% had completed a college degree by January 1, 1972. Putting this into context as Madzongwe does, during 400 years of colonial rule by Portugal in Mozambique the country only produced two college graduates. In only ten years SASP produced 60 graduates from Mozambique. The program however was less successful however with the repatriation rates of its students.⁵⁴

⁵³ Management Systems International, *Capturing the Results of 30 years of AFGRAD: Evidence of Change in Individuals and Institutions Across Africa*, (New York: African American Institute, 1995), 7.

⁵⁴ Madzongwe, "The Southern African Student Program, 1961-1971," 97-98.

Return rates for the program were alarmingly low. Only 98 (20%) SASP students had returned home by 1973. According to Madzongwe the high rates of non-return did not represent the failure of the program because as he suggests the founders of the program knew this was a distinct possibility when founding the program. Referencing the long tenure of distinguished African students like Kwame Nkrumah, Hastings Banda and Kenneth Kaunda of Kenya, he also raised the point that it was too early to judge if those who are in the United States would not go back.⁵⁵ A survey of SASP students by the AAI in 1971 showed that the vast majority of students intended to return home. Only two out of the 65 students surveyed, specifically said they were never returning home.⁵⁶ The majority of SASP graduates who stayed in the United States did so to pursue higher degrees. It is important to note though that SASP students also had the possibility for eventual naturalization where ASPAU and AFGRAD students did not. Public law 91-225 dated April 1970, allowed for SASP students unlike other foreign students to change their immigration status without leaving the United States first. Students were also given I-512 forms which stood as “authorization for parole of an alien into the United States.” These forms guaranteed re-admittance into the United States.⁵⁷

The vast majority of African students in the United States who either made the choice to stay in the United States after the completion of their studies or had the choice taken from them due to unfavorable economic or political conditions at home unlike SASP students were not able to so easily change their immigration status. The type of visas students held was important in their determining the ease with which they could change their status from student to immigrant. Students who held F-1 visas, the most popular category of visa type, could change their permanent residence status without leaving the country if they qualified under other immigration

⁵⁵ Ibid., 99.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 107.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 131.

law regulations including most importantly showing they held gainful employment. Those who held J-1 visas were not so fortunate. In 1956 the United States Congress, at the request of the President and Department of State passed Public Law 555 which set that all J-1 visa holders or exchange visitor visas under the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 would have to leave the United States and reside in a “cooperating country” for at least two years before they could apply for permission to immigrate.⁵⁸

One of the most important factors that would shape the non-return of students during this period would be the passing of the 1965 immigration act. One of the primary factors that would structure the long term settlement of African students would be the 1965 Immigration Act. In her 1965 dissertation “African Immigrants and the 1965 Immigration Law,” Beverly Gale Hawk identified the brain drain as one of the products of the 1965 Immigration Act law as the “brain drain.”⁵⁹ The law eliminated the restrictive national quota system and replaced it with a system of preference categories. These preferences indicated categories of immigrants which the United States preferred to have. One of the few categories that African immigrants could qualify for under the law was the skilled preference category. Preference was given to relatives of American citizens and permanent resident aliens as well as to skilled labor in occupation for which there was currently an insufficient labor force. These preference categories though not as restrictive as the quota system, when initially implemented put certain immigrant groups at a significant disadvantage. Noting the impact of this restriction on African immigration, Hawk suggests that these preferences provided mixed results for African immigrants. Noting the benefits she wrote “more than half of the immigrants from Africa apply in the skilled preference category.

Immigrants from Africa and Asia are generally more likely to apply in the skilled categories than

⁵⁸ Committee on Educational Interchange Policy, 9.

⁵⁹ Beverly G. Hawk, “Africans and the 1965 U.S. Immigration Law,” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1988), 22.

are immigrants from other parts of the world.”⁶⁰ The other side of this policy as Hawk acknowledged was that Africans could not qualify in great numbers under the technical skill category however as the continent in the 1960’s was only beginning in earnest to recover from an extended period of underdevelopment under European colonial rule. Those countries that benefited primarily from the professional, technical and skilled category of the 1965 law remained few. From 1956-65, the top five African countries from which immigrants are admitted under this preference were Egypt (6,986), South Africa (3,171), Morocco (2,867), Algeria (1,554), and Nigeria (677).⁶¹

In 1965, out of the total 3,383 non quota African immigrants admitted to the United States a significant proportion of this number, 505, were admitted as Professional, technical and Kindred workers. For this year, the top four countries of origin for African immigrants were Egypt (1,429), Morocco (280), Algeria (206), Nigeria (280) and “other Africa” (980).⁶² The dominance of Egypt as the county with the most immigrants reflected a consistent trend in African immigration to the United States. From 1956-1965, Egypt had the most immigrants admitted for Africa with 6,986, South Africa not a close second with 3,171. As was the case with the population of African students in the United States, after 1965, Nigeria would become the leading country for African immigrants in the United States.⁶³

One of the only other options for immigration besides education, for African immigrants was to utilize the family reunification preference in the 1965 Immigration Act. Those Africans who could apply were few, as the number of Africans who had immediate relatives in the United

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ United States Department of Justice, *Immigration and Naturalization Service, Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1965* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 51.

⁶² Ibid, 36. Immigrants from the rest of the continent are grouped together under the category or label Rest of Africa grouped “other Africa”.

⁶³ Ibid., 51.

States during this time was minimal. There were some notable exceptions to this policy, most noticeably those African countries with historical ties to the United States. Countries like Cape Verde with a rich relationship with the eastern seaboard of the United States would have almost 100% of emigrants enter under the relative preference and Liberia with its significant historical ties as a former colony would have 84% of its emigrants entered the United States under this preference.⁶⁴

Even though the Immigration Act of 1965 opened up previously restricted avenues for immigration to the United States from underrepresented regions of the world including, Asia, Latin America and Africa, immigration from the African continent in particular does not begin in earnest till the late 1980's and early 1990's.

Scientific study of non-return for African students

The fourth period of African studentship in the United States as identified already in this study was one of the most active periods of African student migrations. This prompted an increased level of interest by scholars and as a result a significant body of literature in regards to African student was produced during this period. These works are important in offering a scientific understanding of the experiences of African students. Much of the scholarship on the brain drain in the 1960' and 1970's focused primarily on the factors believed to structure non-return and not on the process itself. These studies identified a particular set of characteristics that most determined whether a student was likely to return or to stay after the completion of their studies. The actual experience of non-return itself however has remained an elusive subject of study primarily influenced by the fact that students are reluctant to report their intentions to prolong their stay for fear of recrimination.

⁶⁴ Hawk, "Africans and the 1965 Immigration Act," 164.

Beginning in 1968, no doubt influenced by the increasing significance of this issue as highlighted by social scientists, IIE reports included in their surveys and reports, questions and notes on the length of stay of foreign students in the United States. The 1968 report shows that 25 percent or 27,800 of the total foreign student population in America did not answer this question on the survey. The 1968 report further suggested that this statistic represented a ten percent increase since 1954-55 implying that since the earliest IIE reports, students have been reluctant to announce their intentions to remain abroad after the completion of their degrees.⁶⁵

Glazer found that working conditions, professional needs, colleagues, societal settings, alienation and discrimination, politics, citizenship, the influence family and friends, and the interests of spouses and children as the main categories that determined whether students would stay or return. Reasons for migration as Glazer notes varied from country to country. Black African students regardless of nationality for instance were much more prone to identify “alienation and discrimination” as a factor in their choosing to return home.⁶⁶ Some factors like the influence of family ties and the interests of spouses and children were held in common by many students. Hekmati found a significant effect for the influence of family ties to returning home. Those students in her study who returned to their native lands at the completion of their studies were those with strong family ties.⁶⁷ Okediji and Okediji analyzing the loss of Nigerian medical personnel argued that the most significant factors shaping this phenomenon was a combination of family responsibility and a high standard of living in the United States. Chukunta as well argued that those who had significant family responsibilities were likely to delay their return home as there were more opportunities for gainful employment in the United States to

⁶⁵ IIE, *Open Doors 1968*, 5.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁶⁷ Mchri Hekmati, “Alienation, Family Ties and Social Position as Factors Related to the Non-Return of Foreign Students,” (Ph.D diss., New York University, 1970), 125.

support family members back home. A student's major as Chukunta argued could make the difference between staying or returning. Chukunta found that students in the social sciences favored a return home while those in the natural sciences did not.

Christopher Habers noted in his study that women had higher rates of non-return than men.⁶⁸ Rodriguez found that low grades spurred non-return among women and not men, most students in United States expected to return to their countries of origin within at least one year after the completion of their studies and that Canada much more than the United States was identified as a country of permanent immigration than the United States.⁶⁹ He also found interestingly that there were no difference in rates of return as determined by the type of colleges students attended, HBCU versus others or two year, four year or university.⁷⁰

Nigerian student Charles Okigbo studying the expatriation of Nigerian students in America in 1981 as a part of his doctoral dissertation found similar factors as all the previous studies noted above. He found the following factors as significant to the decision of Nigerian students to become non-returnees. They were length of stay; the longer students stay in the U.S. the more they less likely they are to return home; marriage to non-Nigerian spouses; student majors in engineering, medicine and allied health subjects; students who patronize U.S. media; students who appreciate U.S. economic advantages; students with anti-Nigerian sentiments.⁷¹

In studying the African student brain drain, scholars with few exceptions adopted similar methods to analyze this phenomenon. Stephen Nge Konfor 1989 dissertation study was one of those few exceptions. Unique to his study among scholarship on the brain drain is his analysis of

⁶⁸ Christopher Habers, "The Universal Minority: A Study of the Female Brain Drain of Student from Developing Nations in Three Developed Countries," (M.A. Thesis, Columbia University, 1972), 61.

⁶⁹ Orlando Rodriguez, "Social Determinants of Non-Return: A Study of Foreign Students from Developing Countries in the United States," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1974), 97-98.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁷¹ Charles Chiedu Okigbo, "Nigerian Students in the United States: Factors Related to their Expatriation," (PhD diss., Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 1981).

changes in student visa status to permanent resident as a measure of non-return. Analyzing INS data from 1974 to 1985 when this information is first consistently available, Konfor noted that there were a total of 11,138 cases of visa adjustment by Africans over this period. 3,658 of these adjustments were made by students and their spouses on F and J visas. The rest of the visa adjustments were made by a combination of temporary visitors for business or pleasure, refugees, government official and businessmen. The majority of visa adjustments by Africans during this period took place from 1980 to 1985. Over 78% of the total number of visa adjustments by Africans took place over this period as compared to 1974 to 1979.⁷²

Analyzing the data even further, Konfor noted that several countries in particular stood out for their high percentage of student visa adjustments as compared to the total number of visa adjustments from their countries. As an example, of the recorded 2,467 visa adjustments made by Nigerians from 1974-1985, at least 72% or 1,763 were accounted for by students and their spouses. Other countries with high rates of student visa adjustment relative to the total number of adjustments for their countries included Niger, Cameroon, and Gambia. With the exception of Nigeria these other countries with high percentages of visa adjustments by students had relatively small populations of total visa adjustments to begin with. Overall the rates of student visa adjustment for most African countries during the period outlined remained less than 30% of the total number of visa adjustments for a given country.⁷³

In spite of the many factors that structured the intentions of foreign students and African students in particular to stay in the United States, it should be noted that many scholars agreed that most students had in common the intent to return home someday or that they could be

⁷² Stephen Nge Konfor, "Study Abroad as a Strategy for Manpower Development: The Propensity of African Students to Remain in the United States After Graduation (A Close Look)," (PhD diss., Wayne State University, 1989), 12, 84.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 85.

persuaded to return home if conditions at home were attractive enough.⁷⁴ Nwaochei would passionately argue in a 1979 article that Nigerians in particular did not emigrate permanently. Education for Nigerians as he suggested was seen as the most feasible avenue for immigration.

Overall, the scholarship of this period on the African student brain drain suggested that alarm over the brain drain was unfounded and that students generally were more interested in returning home than staying in the United States after the completion of their studies. These studies though important for the period in which they were produced were limited by one major factors. They did not take into consideration the perspectives of African students themselves on their non-return. I attempt to address these and other gaps in the literature in the following chapter.

⁷⁴ Glazer, *The Brain Drain: Emigration and Return*, 18.

CHAPTER FIVE

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

What if I told you that I don't feel like an immigrant, I just have never thought of myself as an immigrant. I didn't immigrate. The space I occupy is one that allows me to traverse. I just go back and forth. To say immigrant is that I packed my bags and baggage knowingly.¹

The previous chapter provided an analysis of the major factors that influenced the recruitment, sponsorship as well as non-return of African students in the United States from what I term the fourth period of African studentship, the late 1950's to the early 1980's. For this period in particular there is a noticeable absence of social science research that takes into account qualitative methods of inquiry like oral history narratives in analyzing the migrations of international students. In this chapter I address the significance of oral history narratives to illuminating the experiences of non-returning African students.

Early Narratives of African Students

African students in the United States have a limited but notable record of scholarship in regards to oral history narratives. In 1947, Mbonu Ojike, one of Nnamdi Azikiwe's protégés published an important memoir titled *I Have Two Countries*. It was and remains today, an important standard in regards to African student accounts of education abroad. Ojike offered in his memoir, a detailed accounting of his seven years as a student in the United States that begins with his arrival on a ship in New York on February 1, 1939 to his departure in 1946. It is a narrative that holds equal value for both African student and immigrant alike as well as for historians. Ojike painstakingly presents detail after detail of his life in this very important period in United States history. Nwafor Orizu another adherent of Azikiwe, from 1945-1946 published an editorial column for the *Pittsburgh Courier* titled "Africa Speaks." Orizu editorials offer an

¹ Pamela, 14 July, 2009, Telephone interview with author.

important comparative perspective of the United States and Africa as Orizu perceived his role as a mediator of culture for his audiences in both geographic spaces.

The most acclaimed of student narratives belong neither to Ojike or Orizu. Both Kwame Nkrumah and Nnamdi Azikiwe years after their sojourns as students in the United States would publish important autobiographies. Nkrumah authored *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* which was published in 1957 and Azikiwe wrote *My Odyssey* which was published in 1970. Both works would contain important sections on their experiences in the United States.² These two autobiographies however were primarily written to address the political achievements of these two individuals and were written with an understanding of the importance of global politics during this period. Nkrumah's autobiography is published in 1957, a pivotal point in Ghanaian history. This was the year that Ghana with Nkrumah as its first prime minister wins its independence from the British. In his new role, Nkrumah was faced with winning new allies and it is not surprising that Nkrumah buried some unpleasant details of his time in the United States that are later exhumed by one of his biographers in particular, Marika Sherwood. Sherwood uncovered evidence that one of the reasons Nkrumah left the United States in 1945 before his PhD dissertation was completed was because he was being hounded by the FBI for subversive activities as a communist.³

The last rounds of narratives by African students of this third period are much more recent and have been written in the twilight of the lives of these students. Works like Kingsley Ozumba Mbadiwe's *Rebirth of a Nation* (1991), Olumide Fafunwa's *To America and Back Alive*

² Mbonu Ojike, *My Two Countries* (New York: John Day Company: 1947); Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1957); Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970).

³ Marika Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Years Abroad, 1938-1947* (Legon, Ghana: Freedom Publishers, 1996), 57-59.

(2003) and Okechukwu Ikejiani's *The Unrepentant Nationalist* (2007).⁴ Similar to Azikiwe and Nkrumah in their accounting of their experiences abroad, Ikejiani and Mbadiwe recount briefly in their memoirs the experiences in the United States primarily to acknowledge the positive impact these experiences had in their development as the nationalist leaders they would end up becoming. Fafunwa's memoir is different and is a comprehensive detailing and analysis of his experiences in the United States. It is an important complement to Ojike's, *I Have Two Countries*.

There was little interest in African student narratives in the 1960's and 1970's and as such there are few studies from this period that address the first hand perspectives of African students in regards to their educational migrations to the United States. One of the few contemporary works in this area is Obiakor and Grant's *African Perspectives on American Education: Invisible Voices*, an edited volume of narratives by former African students now immigrants in the United States, assessing their views of education in the United States. These former students now years and even decades removed from their educational experiences provided rich and vivid details of the hardships, challenges as well as immense successes that have structured their time in this, their now adopted land. They also offered important observations on the United States higher education system in reference to its treatment of African students as well as African immigrants as employees and lastly they affirmed the significant contributions of these individual African student immigrants to the United States higher education system.⁵ Regrettably the issue of non-return is a subject that is rarely focused on in the various narratives of African students in this volume. Other studies that have addressed African

⁴ K.O. Mbadiwe, *Rebirth of a Nation* (Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd., 1991); Babs A. Fafunwa, *To America and Back Alive* (Lagos, Nigeria: West African Book Publishers, 2003); Okechukwu Ikejiani, *The Unrepentant Nationalist* (Enugu, Nigeria: Snaap Press Ltd., 2007).

⁵ Festus E. Obiakor and Jacob U. Gordon (eds), *African Perspectives on American Higher Education: Invisible Voices* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2003).

student narratives have focused on the issue of non-return but have done so in regards to more recent non-returnees and not the students of the fourth period.

Unlike the third period of African studentship which featured several memoirs and autobiographies that accounted for African student experiences in the United States, outside of the aforementioned edited volume by Obiakor and Grant, no similar projects have been undertaken to analyze the experiences of students from the fourth period. The narratives of Ojike, Nkrumah and others provided important material for an important generation of Africanist scholars in particular who were interested in assessing the impact of education abroad on an entire generation of African Nationalist leaders. An entire generation of Africans particularly those individuals who came to the United States as students during the fourth period were influenced by the exploits abroad of such individuals. There is no such existing individual or collective record of those students from the fourth period of African studentship in the United States. This is where oral history narratives of non-returning students can offer an important contribution. The significance of oral history to uncovering and revealing hidden aspects of individuals and communities has been well studied already and the findings are well applicable to the population under investigation in this study.

Oral history is a method of inquiry that allows for the exploration of identity formation and the extrication of significant memories from historical periods. Oral history as Paul Thompson notes

is a history built around people. It thrusts life into history itself and it widens its scope. It allows heroes not just from the leaders, but from the unknown majority of the people... It brings history, into and out of, the community. It helps the less privileged and especially the old, towards dignity and self-confidence. It makes for contact—and thence understanding—between social classes, and between generations. And to individual historians and others, with shared meanings it can give a sense of belonging to a place or in time. In short, it makes for fuller human beings.⁶

⁶ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past* (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1978), 23.

In a larger statement on the significance of oral history to historians and social scientists, Valerie Yow suggests that “oral history reveals daily life at home and at work—the very stuff that rarely gets into any public record.”⁷ Oral history interviews are invaluable to accessing memories and or perceptions of events far removed from the present. They also allow for the capture of thoughts, perceptions and behaviors that are not easily liberated by surveys and questionnaires. Finally as Yow explains “the in-depth interview can reveal a psychological reality that is the basis for ideas the individual holds and for the things he or she does. There is no better way to glean information on how the subject sees and interprets experience than to ask in the context of the life review. For past times, historians searched for a diary or personal journal, only to be disappointed by finding a daily account of weather or a brief synopsis of events. The ones that offered the writers interpretations of the events on a psychological level were rare.”⁸

The Interviews

In order to understand better this process of non-return as it has affected African students, this study includes oral history interviews with former African students in the United States. Single interviews ranging from forty five minutes to an hour were conducted with seven former student’s now immigrants or long term settlers of the United States over the course of a year. There were six males and one female, all former students who came to the United States from 1962 to 1978. They came to the United States primarily from three countries. The vast majority of the students, five in total came from Nigeria, with Liberia and Congo represented by one individual apiece. Each of the narrators for this study, not including their time as students, had

⁷ Ibid., 12.

⁸ Ibid., 14.

been in the United States for a minimum of ten consecutive years. Five out of the seven participants held PhD's and currently worked or had worked in different capacities within higher education in the United States. Participants for this study were recruited primarily through snowball sampling. Initial contacts for participant recruitment were facilitated through the use of informal networks that I the researcher had access to as a Nigerian immigrant. A conscious attempt was made to protect the identities of those who participated in this study. All names included in this study are pseudonyms.

I have attempted throughout the text in this chapter to where possible allow for the responses of the participants of this study to flow uninterrupted. As a result, the comments of participants are structured in large blocks of quoted remarks. This allows for an interrupted flow of the participant's thoughts and observations about the issues raised. It is important to note that the seven interviews in this study at best represent snapshots, moments of time taken out of the larger context of the lives of these students. These experiences alone, while rich in quality are not sufficient to allow for large scale generalizations about the many other unknown non-returning former African students in the United States. What these snapshots underscore though is the significance of oral history narratives in offering "thick descriptions" of the experiences of individual African students in the United States around their reasons for pursuing education, their adjustment to American society and most importantly their perceptions of non-return.

Table 3: Key Demographics of the Participants

Name	Age Bracket	Gender	Country of Birth	Years in the United States ⁹	Highest Level of Education Attained	Profession
Christopher	60-65	Male	Nigeria	39	PhD	Clinical therapist/ Entrepreneur
Etienne	60-65	Male	Democratic Republic of the Congo	48	PhD	Professor
Pamela	60-65	Female	Nigeria	42	PhD	Professor
Ayodele	60-65	Male	Nigeria	27	PhD	Professor
Dapo	60-65	Male	Nigeria	41	MD	Surgeon
Olumide	60-65	Male	Nigeria	41	MA	Retired
William	55-60	Male	Liberia	32	MA	Entrepreneur

Christopher

At the time of our interview Christopher had been in the United States for 39 years. For Christopher, a native of Nigeria who arrived in the United States in 1970, the pursuit of higher education in the United States was a choice made primarily because of the lack of availability of other more preferable options. As he explained, higher education in Nigeria during this period had become highly competitive and with a limited number of universities, Nigeria was unable to accommodate all its growing college age population. Pursuing higher education in Britain, the traditional option for Nigerians by the late 1960's, with increasing fees and stricter immigration laws was less of a possibility than in previous decades. The United States with less restrictive immigration policies for students pursuing higher education and its wide selection of universities

⁹ Refers to the number of years spent in the United States by participants from their arrival as students to the date of the interview. The number of years for some participants like Babatunde and Ayodele was a result of several sojourns to the United States and not a continuous stay.

provided for students like Christopher a pathway to education where few other options existed.¹⁰ These circumstances aside, the primary motivating force in Christopher's decision to pursue higher education abroad in the United States was his uncle who preceded him in the United States in the 1950's. His uncle was of the generation of Nigerian students that followed in the footsteps of Nnamdi Azikiwe in the late 1940's and early 1950's. Christopher's uncle spent twelve years abroad most of these in the United States earning a PhD before returning back to Nigeria in the early 1960's. Christopher following in the footsteps of his uncle would earn several degrees including most prominently a PhD in 1982.

Describing the benefits of having a family member like his uncle who had successfully captured the "Golden Fleece" the United States had to offer, Christopher stated

My uncle had a significant, a highly significant influence on my choices in coming to the United States. My uncle was among the first set of people or second generation that came after Nnamdi Azikiwe, Nkrumah and the rest of those people. It was their generation because the man is 87, 88 years old now and this was the generation that came around 1948, 49 immediately after WWII. They told me about the ghettos and that in America people work and that it was a land that is full of opportunities and that I should focus and that you can achieve your own goals. They really told me that there were beautiful buildings and infrastructure around but they also cautioned me that it was a place that I could really easily get lost and the issue of racism was brought up as something, that people would see you and not because you really did anything they may just despise you for the way you look and that came true. I appreciated that balanced information before coming.¹¹

Christopher's uncle provided him with an outlook on the United States that readied him for the difficulties he would face as a student. There were two main issues that his uncle noted in particular as key issues Christopher had to understand before his arrival in the United States. These were financial hardships and racial discrimination. Christopher like other international students upon arriving in the United States was faced with paying significant sums of money in fees for school. To support himself he had to work several hard labor jobs. He worked for a

¹⁰ Christopher, interview by author, Chicago, Illinois, August 7, 2009.

¹¹ Christopher, interview by author, Chicago, Illinois, August 7, 2009.

paper company assigned to a wide range of duties including operating heavy machinery like a forklift. He worked as a maintenance man. It is at his workplaces and in his living environs in particular that he encountered the most virulent acts of racism and discrimination. Christopher in particular cited several racist encounters that he experienced as a student. These encounters were heightened by the environment he found himself in as a student in a small college town in the heart of Wisconsin in the early 1970's. He described it as a lonely place for black African students like himself. It was a place as he noted where he experienced a virulent and pervasive sense of racism from whites.

In those days, when I was up there going to school, just me and my wife, we were so lonely and we felt to be the only person up there of this color [pointing to his hand and the color of his skin]. On campus I can tell you that there were less than fifteen people of color. Of the people of color I was the only one from continental Africa. So during the summer months after school, those that were from Milwaukee, Chicago, they travelled they go back home. My wife and I would remain. That is when the depression hit, that is when the loneliness hit. That is the time where everywhere you went you didn't find anybody like you. I remember on an occasion when I was walking down the street. The university campus was about one and a half miles from my house. I was walking down the street to go to school and two white children, one boy, one girl. The boy was older than the girl. The boy looks to me like he might have been about ten years old, the girl couldn't have been more than seven or eight years old. And I remember that I was going with my bag, my backpack. The boy said to the girl "hey, like Mary, look, look, Negro! look Negro, Negro!" and then he spat, you know, threw spit out of his mouth in my direction. I remember being very, very upset. So upset and I started wondering where a young child would get this kind of venom, this kind of hatred. I had to stomach that.¹²

Other ugly incidents of racism would take place at his jobs, in his sports related activities as a soccer player for his college, in his search for housing and in various restaurants he attempted to eat in with his wife. The vast majority of Christopher's incidents with discrimination in the United States as he explained took place in encounters with whites. He did note that his negative experiences with whites in particular were moderated by positive experiences he had with other whites who treated him with great kindness. He also acknowledged that whites were not alone in

¹² Christopher, interview by author, Chicago, Illinois, August 7, 2009.

their discrimination towards. He cited negative experiences with black Americans as well, especially around issues of language. Establishing relationships with Black Americans was made more difficult by language barriers. Addressing what he considered to be typical reactions by Black Americans to his attempts to establish he commented “you see certain things, when you believe you're speaking correct English, your brothers and sisters, meaning other black folks, they ask ‘is you speaking English?’ Or they may say something like...if I say something like ‘we are all black people you guys! we are all from Africa!’ You’d hear something like ‘I ain't no damn African, I’m an American.’”¹³ As with his encounters with Whites, Christopher did note that he had many positive experiences with Black Americans as well.

Christopher earned his PhD in 1982 and established himself as a prominent expert in his field of study in the years to follow. He did not return to his native country, Nigeria after the completion of his studies for a wide variety of reasons. In his specific case, Christopher cited the intervention of the Nigerian Federal Government as the reason why he and most of his peers did not return to Nigeria. He was of the belief that the Nigerian Federal Government tricked those Nigerian students in the United States into returning to a situation ready-made for failure. He suggested in particular, that authoritarian countries were not ready to receive the contributions and most importantly opinions of graduates trained in western traditions of education.

Most of us had planned...our plan was never to remain in the United States. Our plan was to get the education and go back. People started changing...we started changing our mind because of what our government. A good percentage of us were tricked into getting back by our government in Nigeria in particular. They came and they dangled this carrot. They recruited a lot of them to come to Nigeria in the name of helping to rebuild the nation but after they got over there those who were in control were not ready for the kind of changes that these American graduates are trying to implement. Therefore all of the knowledge, all of the skills that they've learned in the United States when they took it to Nigeria, they just buried it because they were never given the opportunity to use their skills. For those of us that were kind of, “we chickened out,” ...that didn't follow them. We were watching them from a distance and analyzing and then we said "aha that

¹³ Christopher, interview by author, Chicago, Illinois, August 7, 2009.

country is not ready you see they fooled my friends, they did this, they did that and so on.” How could they justify all of these people with all of this education getting over there and then they losing their job and some of them don't even have a job and they feel kind of useless in a messy system and people want to contribute. So people find themselves repatriating to the United States.¹⁴

Realizing in the early 1990's that a permanent return to Nigeria was increasingly becoming a distant possibility; Christopher took advantage of a change in Nigerian immigration policy that allowed for the first time ever, dual citizenship status to become a United States citizen. He explained that his becoming an American citizen was a conscious decision made with an awareness of the significant benefits that could ease the adjustment and transition of immigrant as well as provide important political and social bargaining power. Addressing his status he explained

I am currently an American citizen. I had to make that choice consciously. You start in America, you start with a green card, then this is where you live, this is where you've worked all your life and if you don't get involved in the political process, then you have yourself to be blamed. To be involved in the political process you have to be a citizen. With your green card you cannot vote. In my house we got six people. My baby is 28, my oldest is 37. We can always use that block to push the interest that we have in the United States. So we took the citizenship test. The children by being born here are automatically U.S. citizens. So that was a little struggle for many many years that we were keeping the green card with the hope that oh maybe things are going to get better in Nigeria.¹⁵

I asked Christopher at the closing of our interview if he saw himself ever returning back to Nigeria to live permanently. His response suggested that he had passed the point where a complete return to Nigeria was possible. The lack of comfort and security in Nigeria as he explained were two key factors that affected his decision to continue prolonging his stay in the United States.

Right now my attitude is this, if it is better in Nigeria and I can live comfortably [then I will go back]. For my own selfish interests as I am getting older and my arthritis is showing up, I know that the warm temperature such as the one that Nigeria provides, Florida provides or Arizona provides or the Caribbean provides will be a place for me to

¹⁴ Christopher, interview by author, Chicago, Illinois, August 7, 2009.

¹⁵ Christopher, interview by author, Chicago, Illinois, August 7, 2009.

go and live. Nigeria is one of those choices. For me to go back and live in Nigeria, I have to take a lot of things into consideration, safety being number one, and then my own comfort level. It borders on safety and the level of comfort for me to want to live in Nigeria and of course affordability. Things are pretty expensive in Nigeria. I could live cheaper in the Caribbean than in Nigeria and still have the same weather conditions.

Etienne

Etienne arrived in the United States in 1962 as a high school exchange student from the then Democratic Republic of the Congo. He was part of an exchange program sponsored by the International Christian Youth Exchange (ICYE) that took him from the Congo to Bowling Green, Ohio. After completing high school he continued with his education in the United States earning a Bachelor's, two Masters and a PhD degree by 1974. He did not return to the Congo after his studies for a wide variety of reasons including the lack of political stability in the country as well as his concerns for the safety of his family. He is currently a distinguished professor at a university in the Midwest. In total he has been in the United States for 48 years.¹⁶

Etienne was the beneficiary of a scholarship from the International Christian Youth Exchange Program (ICYE). He identified the ICYE as the primary vehicle for his pursuit of education in the United States. The ICYE would pay for all his educational pursuits in the United States from the completion of high school to his earning a PhD. The Congo was one of the few African countries including Egypt, Ethiopia and South Africa with which the ICYE extended its exchange program too. Reflecting on his early educational experiences Etienne describes an educational system in the Congo where Church and state were strongly wedded. It was a system as he conveyed that created the conditions for his recruitment into the ICYE sponsoring a national competition that would identify the best six candidates around the nation for the ICYE

¹⁶ Etienne, interview with author, Champaign, Illinois, April 6, 2009.

program. He was one of the six candidates selected. He described the process in the following statements

I went to a public high school but in the Congo as in several African countries particularly those under the British there was close collaboration between the church, particularly the educational system and the government in the sense that as per the recommendation of the Phelps-Stokes Commission of 1924-25, the government provided subsidies to the church schools and the churches were allowed—this is my case—allowed to teach courses in religion or religious studies for people who were Christians, Catholics, protestants and other various denominations. It was in that context that my work as a youth leader in my state led to me being identified as a candidate for the international Christian youth exchange that involved a national competition. All six provinces [of the Congo] were involved in that competition in proposing candidates and I ended up being one of the candidates selected for the scholarship.¹⁷

Etienne further noted that his selection to the ICYE program was not something he had planned.

By high school he had established himself as a youth leader to be reckoned with. Combined with his dreams of becoming either a middle school teacher or governor he was far removed from any ideas of pursuing education in the United States. Addressing his childhood dreams and his path to the United States he explains:

To tell you frankly it was not part of my dream. What I dreamt of becoming was a elementary or middle school teacher after completing my secondary education because we had those options unlike your high school here, high schools in the Congo and in several formal French or Belgian colonies were specialized so the middle school represented the sort of general studies, liberal arts and so on. Those who went into the humanities or math and science sections could go into teaching. All you needed was eventually to earn a certificate after doing some, taking some course and doing internship. So that was my dream and my second dream was to become a governor because I wanted to take care of the...to alleviate the suffering of the people and to modernize our country and I didn't even think of becoming governor of any other province but our province and as luck would have it because I was active in the youth group to be the president of our state youth section I somehow was noticed by not only the local people but people in Kinshasa who sent out reports and the like. So it was a surprise. In other words this is not something that I dreamt of, going to the University in the U.S.¹⁸

¹⁷ Etienne, interview with author, Champaign, Illinois, April 6, 2009.

¹⁸ Etienne, interview with author, Champaign, Illinois, April 6, 2009.

Etienne described a career of political activism around issues specifically related to the African continent and the contracted fights for independence that were taking place during this period.

His political activism is first put into clear focus by the death of his fellow countryman, the Patrice Lumumba the famous Congolese independence and first prime minister of the country.

I was really stricken when I learned about Lumumba's death. In fact I said to myself, while I was still in high school, "that if god spared my life that one of these days I wanted to get into politics and put things right because the Congolese people deserved better than this." It was devastating, as young as I was, I was already politically awakened. Having started with the dream of being a governor you remember and I was only in the middle school at the time I thought of that...my political activism began sort of softly back in the Congo aspiring to do this and in our youth group we discussed issues of our potential involvement with the communities so as to help with certain things like hygiene, how to keep your well clean and house and so on and helping the elderly. Once I got to Bowling Green, I wanted to get involved in the student council but I didn't have the chance being the only black, so I didn't do anything.

Being as he described, the only Black student in his high school in Bowling Green and living with a white host family as a young sixteen year old African student placed certain limitations on Etienne's ability to transfer the passion for political activism that he had displayed as a youth leader in the Congo. He had to acclimatize himself to life in the United States. This process would begin in earnest once he left for college as an undergraduate. At Phillips University, his very first year as a freshman, he would immediately became involved in campus politics and was one of the candidates in position for president of the freshman class. Having failed to win presidency he ran for senate and was a senator for his freshman class and was responsible for social activities. His entrance into student activism in the United States would begin however with his time as a graduate student at the University of Kansas where he would take on a significant role as a part of the African Students Association there in promoting greater consciousness about the continent and in railing against. Addressing this most significant period of his life he comments

In Kansas, I was a member of the African students Association serving as chairman of the social activities and being involved in takeovers of what they call travel logs sponsored by the University. It was interesting. We became much more involved...this was as you know a time of "black is beautiful" and our brothers from here in terms of what we can offer them by way of moral support, background and we became deeply involved in all that kind of effort, in that cultural sort of as it were revolution, while at the same time demonstrating that we were keenly aware of what was going on in South Africa. The University had a lecture series where they would invite people to do a travel log. They would invite the counselor out of the Chicago consulate of South Africa for example to come and talk about life in South Africa. Whenever we learned that there was such a lecture and if we were not told, if the African students Association was not told, we would mobilize the young socialists alliance and other groups...and tell them that this event is taking place, we want them to attend and it was important that they attend because we were going to need their support to present our side of the story about the plight of the African people be it in Mozambique or Angola, where Portugal...was using American bombs supplied by NATO to bomb the freedom fighters. We did that twice I think, successfully taking over programs that were not ours which we were not involved in the planning or in the conception per se.¹⁹

His brand of activism as that of other African students was often focused on addressing issues germane to the African continent. International students as he explains had to be careful not to draw too much attention for fear of being deported. "That is the extent to which we were involved. I tried to avoid, me and my other colleagues being drawn in a visible way in the protest against the war in Vietnam because of our visa status but any opportunity of this sort we took it."²⁰

Now years removed from his youthful days of activism, Etienne is a distinguished professor at a prestigious university in the Midwest. He has been in the United States for 48 years and counting. While in the United States as a student he went back to the Congo, three times, in 1967, 1970 and in 1976 but ultimately after the completion of his PhD he decided to stay in the United States. He made it clear in his comments though that the Congo remains dear to his heart and that when conditions allow he will return home.

¹⁹ Etienne, interview with author, Champaign, Illinois, April 6, 2009.

²⁰ Etienne, interview with author, Champaign, Illinois, April 6, 2009.

In noting the reasons why he chose to prolong his stay in the United States after his graduation, Etienne reminiscing on the events of that period offered two reasons, the worsening political situation in the Congo, and concern for the safety and future of his growing family.

Expounding on these two factors he stated:

The first one [reason] was domestic in the sense that one of my best friends...he and I had a plan that he would go first because he was about to finish his you know dissertation, that he would precede me and that I would follow after I finished my dissertation. He would look things over and let me know in due time how they looked and whether or not I should go home. At that time I already had two daughters, our oldest daughters, ladies now. I was keen on returning to Congo having been retained as a potential teaching assistant. Once he returned or shortly after his return in 74' that Mobutu nationalized the three universities that I referred to before. He nationalized them on the grounds that he wanted to establish a single administrative entity for the three campuses. But it became evident that it was not just for the sake of the universities to reduce administration but rather to redistribute the students from Kinshasa to other campuses particularly on students in political science because they were agitating too much, making demands and would go on strike so often that he ended up requisitioning them, sending them into the army. What really in part broke the camel's back was that not only did he nationalize the universities but he put spies, staff members to spy on faculty and students and individuals. Those who were caught saying something about the regime, criticism or teaching in a way that was critical to the regime suffered a lot of indignities so I said to myself given my political activism and the kind of courses that I am likely to be teaching which were kind of social linguistics with a political tinge because you can't avoid it I will end up in jail. So that was factor number one, events occurring in the Congo related to Mobutu's regime and governance.

The second one was the concern about my children. That in view of what was happening in the Congo, this dictator and brutality and the lack of infrastructure with regard to in part the economic infrastructure that would permit the people to earn a decent living and how the schools were being affected by the sense of gradual abandonment of rigor under which students including myself that it was in my best interest and the children's best interest to stay and let them finish college. That was the plan and then my wife and I would be free instead of sacrificing their potential education where they can move from one grade to another without being obstructed because someone just didn't like their face. So those are the main factors. Once I made that decision, increasingly the Congo was going down instead of forward. The political system, the economic and socially and so on, the decline was so visible that we were talking about lots of crises in the Congo so much so that there are books, volumes of them you know, "Crises in the Congo" became so emblematic of Congo that it was not worthwhile. What am I going to sacrifice myself for? And the rest is history.²¹

²¹ Etienne, interview with author, Champaign, Illinois, April 6, 2009.

Pamela

Is currently a distinguished professor of literature at a university in the Midwest. She has been in the United States for 44 years. Her journey to the United States began in Lagos, Nigeria where she was born and raised and where she spent the formative years of her childhood and early adult education. Reflecting on her childhood education she recalled an early educational foundation that included attending schools run by Anglican missionaries in Nigeria, the experience of which would be central to her early educational experiences in the United States. She arrived in the United States in 1967 landing in Chicago. She spent two weeks in Champaign Urbana before continuing on to Seattle Pacific College in Seattle, Washington to begin her undergraduate studies. She was influenced in her decision to come to the United States by the presence of her high school economics teacher who had studied in the United States and who took her as his protégé. He encouraged her parents to send her to his alma mater, Seattle Pacific College and helped make the necessary contacts to get her enrolled.

Pamela arrived in the United States in 1967 fairly knowledgeable about the country. Her early education in regards to the United States had been gained by her exposure to young United States Agency for International Development Workers (USAID), a young black American and a white couple from the United States as well who were her neighbors in Nigeria. This period was as equally an important period in Nigeria for women. When asked if she saw herself as a trailblazer as one of the few African women to pursue higher education abroad during this time period, she responded by stating that she did not acknowledge anything unusual or unique about her coming to the United States as a woman during this period. She described the 1960's as a period in Nigeria that featured changing attitudes towards the education of women but noted the importance of her family's standing in Nigeria as being a significant factor as well in her

choice to pursue higher education in the United States. Her stepfather was white, British, and a doctor and director of medical services for the then Western Region in Nigeria. Her mother who was of Sierra Leonean extraction was also in the medical field. Acknowledging the contributions of her family background to her early education in Nigeria she noted

Let's face it I come from a very affluent family. So there was nothing that said that girls can't do this boys can do this. My mother was just a hair short of MD status. So education was very prominent and so it didn't matter whether...gender was just not an issue. Well generally in Nigeria, I would say it wasn't an issue to have all girls' secondary schools and in the all girls secondary schools they weren't just teaching domestic science and home-making skills. I mean gosh, we were studying trigonometry and physics and all these meaty subjects and so this wasn't finishing school²² by any means. So quite frankly I don't think the gender thing for the Olaju's, educated folks are called Olaju, erroneously they used the term "civilized," to describe educated folks, by civilized they mean cultured. Well again affluent folk, middle class, upper-class folk sent their children to school, period. And it was almost a status thing to be able to say "oh your child, Omo yin [your child] is at secondary school. Mon lo wo omo yin [I'm going to see your child]. That child could be male or female."²³

Though Pamela thought her educational background in Nigeria was not unique she did acknowledge however that despite the push towards greater educational freedoms for women in Nigeria there were still important disadvantages for women interested in pursuing higher education. Acknowledging some of the privileges her socioeconomic class and background afforded her she explained the decision for her to pursue higher education in the United States as a decision strongly motivated by her western educated father. Addressing her father's position on her pursuing education abroad, she stated "it was clear that I was not going to stay in Nigeria. My father was district director of medical services for back then Western Nigeria and so there was some talk about a scholarship to go to Sweden to study medicine but I had not taken any

²² Finishing school referred to technical schools.

²³ Pamela, telephone interview by author, July 14, 2009.

sciences at all. So that was totally out of the question for me but somehow it was sort of in the works, in the wind that I would go abroad.”²⁴

Aside from some few issues dealing with racism and discrimination which she recounted as being insignificant, Pamela explained that she encountered few if any significant difficulties in the pursuit of her educational goals in the United States. She would earn a bachelor’s degree after only two and a half years in 1970 and her Master’s degree shortly after that in 1972. During this process she did not remember experiencing any culture shock or difficulties in her academic endeavors. Pamela credited her family background as well as her exposure to Americans and American culture in providing her with the knowledge and confidence to overcome most of the issues she did face.

Despite her early exposure to elements of the United States in her interactions with USAID workers there was nothing that could insulate her from experiences of racism. She commented that her education about race and racism in the United States in particular began as far back as her time in Nigeria spent with her Neighbors, who were USAID workers. As she explained,

It started from Nigeria where my neighbors [Kevin and Jeanne] would talk about black people in America and would talk about them from a pathetic, not pathetic, sympathetic tone but then there was something condescending about that. When I got here the first two weeks I spent with them in Champaign-Urbana, by the second or third day I was so bored. I had known them from Nigeria and the plan was they would meet me and introduce me to America. So I flew into Chicago and I spent two weeks with them and Jeanne was supposed to help me with my shopping, winter coat and all that kind of stuff. Two days later after I had done all the sleeping I could do. Everyone had gone to work and gone places so I...there was one son at home and I said "I'll be back, I'll see you," so I left. For the first time I can recall there were no sidewalks as such and here were these busy, they were regular streets but in retrospect they were like highways. So there I was. I was walking into a place they said was town. Jean had called to ask how I was doing and Kevin was beside himself because apparently well I had left, so I wasn't just walking around. This wasn't walking around the parking lot of their townhouse. So when I came back of course, Jean had freaked out and she came back from work. Where did I go? I

²⁴ Pamela, telephone interview by author, July 14, 2009

said I kept my eyes open when they were driving me back and forth and so I took a walk. And oh she begged, begged/scolded and said "don't ever ever do that again" and then that's when she dropped from her mouth, "black people do not live around here, nobody has seen black people, some folks that live here don't even know what black people look like, I could have been hurt and on and on and on." And then of course she had to take me to get my hair done in the so-called black neighborhood. They [the Kerns] had difficulty talking about black people in anything other than a condescending feel sorry for, what a shame they are the way they are and that sort of thing. So that really was my introduction to the Negroes and Negresses I had seen in *Ebony* magazine.²⁵

Her rough welcome to race and racism in the United States would be repeated in several situations throughout her experiences as a student in the United States and as she further notes in her later experiences as an immigrant and professor. Pamela commented on the racial dynamics at her undergraduate institution where the predominant majority of students were white with a smattering of international students but a very small and distinctive population of Black Americans who were all "basketball players" as she observed. These players as she noted were valued mainly for their athletic prowess. In her assessments of her experiences with race she also observed that she had important people in her life who provided her with positive experiences that would counter her negative experiences. Addressing in totality her experience as a student, she made clear that neither racism nor her gender, being one of a small number of African female students in the United States, prevented her from accomplishing her goals. Pamela argued that her greatest strength was her mindset and determination. She never saw herself as she noted as helpless. It is a perspective she still holds today, more than forty years after she first arrived in the United States.

The United States has become home for Pamela but the meaning of home as she described it holds a particular significance for immigrants like herself. What she described was a situation where her emotional investments in Nigeria, her homeland, could be realized even though she was thousands of miles away. She is able to actively pick and choose the amount of

²⁵ Pamela, telephone interview by author, July 14, 2009

time that she wants to spend in Nigeria or in the United States. She also importantly suggested that the term immigrant in particular is wrongly applied to former students like herself who have become long term residents of the United States.

What if I told you that I don't feel like an immigrant. I just have never thought of myself as an immigrant. I didn't immigrate. The space I occupy is one that allows me to traverse. I just go back and forth. To say immigrant is that I packed my bags and baggage knowingly- the only reason why I am approaching it this way is because I teach a course named melting pot, melting pot literature and I start off with a definition of terms, and one of the terms is an immigrant. Who is an immigrant? One who packs bag and baggage?

I would say about 95% of us came to study and of course in the terms of study in that initial, that focal point of leaving country, then you either marry...in our day it was easier after you finished your degree, you had X number of semesters or years to either work for a year or something to use your training. So you had that year, many folks just extended it. After that first year of finishing the BA, then you do a Masters. So you bide time. I mean for some people you buy time that way. I know a couple that I can remember right away who did that. But many kind of just go right on through. If you didn't marry an American citizen which gave you a green card and then citizenship there were other ways that you could remain. I would say that a good 95% of folks came to study and then other things followed.²⁶

Addressing her own individual case she noted that when she first left Nigeria for the United States she had no intentions of staying beyond attaining her bachelor's degree. As she explained the decision naturally evolved from a series of choices made including her marriage to an African American and their becoming parents of two daughters. Reflecting further on her choice to stay in the United States she also acknowledged the important role that her parents had in influencing her to stay in the United States. Commenting further on the role of her parents she stated "I know my mom would always say "ki lo fi'le nbi to un pada bo wa wa?" "You know, what did you leave somewhere here that you think you are coming back to retrieve?" It was sort

²⁶ Pamela, telephone interview by author, July 14, 2009

of always there and I didn't intend to come here with the intent of marrying an American but it happened that way. So this has been sort of home.”²⁷

Ayodele

Arrived in the United States in 1968, in what he described as the height of the civil rights movement. He came to the United States as a self-sponsored Nigerian student on a student visa. Seven years after his arrival he had earned his PhD from a distinguished higher education institution and by 1978 he returned to Nigeria with his African American bride, only to return twenty six years later with his family in tow. Across his two sojourns he has been in the United States for twenty seven years.

Ayodele journey to the United States began with his exposure to the United States as a result of his interactions with Americans residing in Nigeria. In the early 1960's, he attended a high school in Nigeria run by American Baptist Missionaries and lived right across the street from an American Baptist Seminary. The experience of which he described as providing him with an important perspective of the far reaching influence of the United States as well as insights into what the United States had to offer.

In looking at my life I have started writing about being born in a place in Ogbomosho that neighbored America because the whole Baptist Seminary; that was an American colony in Ogbomosho. I could see the missionaries; I could see the way they were living. It looked like it was more leisurely and wealthier than the rest of Ogbomosho. On one side of the road was the rest of Nigeria, hard scrabbled living, and on the other side was America, wide streets, straight. I think my whole experience was unique because I lived on that border between Ogbomosho and America if you like.²⁸

This experience of being exposed to elements of life and society in the United States as a result of his education with the American Baptist Church in Nigeria would be instrumental in his decision to come to the United States in 1968 to pursue higher education. Addressing this

²⁷ Ayodele, interview by Author, Chicago, Illinois, January 1, 2009.

²⁸ Ayodele, interview by Author, Chicago, Illinois, January 1, 2009.

decision, he once again noted the continued influence of American missionaries in his eventual decision to attend Oklahoma Baptist University, Oklahoma as well as the influence of his father. He explained that the decision was one in which he had very little input. It was a decision primarily made by his father, who was one of a handful of western trained Nigerians during this period who had earned a higher degree abroad in Britain. Ayodele's father was interested in the prospects that American education had to offer his son.

My father being principal of the Baptist College and having all those missionary friends of his surprisingly had a very positive attitude towards American education at a time when the recently newly independent Nigeria had been very much influenced by Britain and British education and of course those who went to British schools were the ones running the show. And they made it seem as if American education was some kind of second class citizenship. But my father who was working very closely with the missionaries had a different appreciation. Of course he was trained in Britain, he had a British style education but he had a great deal of respect for the people he was working with. He saw American missionaries, Ms. Rhome, an American missionary, being his very good friend they were first trying to get me to go to Baylor and then there were Nigerians who had been his former students at OBU, Oklahoma Baptist University which is where I finally went. I think left to me I might not have gone anywhere because I was not in a hurry to leave Nigeria yet the opportunity that I had some many people were jealous and would have loved to have it but it wasn't really what I wanted but I just went along. In other words I was the envy of all my friends and all of them came.²⁹

The connections Ayodele's father had with the American Baptist Church meant that Ayodele was exposed to images and ideas of America from an early age growing up in Nigeria. Aside from the things he saw living across the street from an American Baptist Seminary he was also influenced by cultural influences such as the media. Noting the significance of television as a medium for cultural media during this time he describes his first encounter with pivotal moments in American cultural history. "I saw this film, somebody arranged for us to see this documentary, the 1963 march on Washington. We also knew about Cassius Clay. T.V. was very new then, we saw that fight, the fight that didn't last a minute or two with Sonny Liston. We all gathered, to see flickering images on the T.V. Then in those days America also had the United

²⁹Ayodele, interview by Author, Chicago, Illinois, January 1, 2009.

States Information Service. Those places were very important for people who were interested in the world.”³⁰

Growing up across the street from an American Baptist Seminary, attending a high school with a significant presence of American missionaries and having a father who had strong relations with the American Baptist church would all be influential in preparing him for his eventual arrival in the United States. As a young adult he would become sufficiently aware of the larger social and political movements taking place around the world due in large to his exposure to these outside influences. He suggested however that his politicization began in his late teen years in a Nigeria tense with the strife of the Biafran War, Nigeria’s most catastrophic war which is believed by some including Ayodele to have been a genocide.³¹ He would leave a country on the throes of a protracted struggle for rights, only to arrive to a similar scene in the United States.

I came in January 1968. It was a very interesting time to come and a very interesting time to leave Nigeria too. Nigeria was in the midst of a civil war, I had arrived here and this country too was in the midst of a civil war, if you think of the civil rights movement and all that as a civil war. Before I was a year here, Martin Luther King was killed, Kennedy was killed. 68’ in Nigeria, it was just a time of civil war, nothing is worse than a so-called civil war. Nothing! It is a very, very, wrong name for it. There is nothing civil about any war. In fact civility is just the first victim of any war. You start to demonize the other side, people you ate with.....and then I arrived here and it seemed like the same thing was happening. The whole country seemed like it was about to disappear. The powers that be were very challenged, just like it was in Nigeria. The Federal government was at war with a region that wanted to break away. In America, what is described appropriately in what I think is a nice name, it was a counter culture. A cultural narrative of how America is an amazing development, because they challenged everything, everything that people just assumed was natural. The nature of education, teach-ins, people were teaching each other. They challenged the authority of all things in all things. It was challenging the war and the war-mongering and it seemed like it was going to change America permanently.³²

³⁰ Ayodele, interview by author, Chicago, Illinois, January 1, 2009.

³¹ For further information on the Biafran war see Michael Mok, “A War of Extinction and Starvation in Biafra,” *Life* 65, no. 2 (12 July 1968): 20-29; Alexander A. Madiebo, *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War* (Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension Publishing, 1980).

³² Ayodele, interview by author, Chicago, Illinois, January 1, 2009.

In the summer of 1968, less than a year after he arrived in the United States with the intention of spending the summer with a cousin he hitchhiked from his college in Oklahoma to Washington D.C. What he would experience upon his arrival in Washington would be a city awash with civil protest in the wake of the death of Martin Luther King. The Poor Peoples march of Washington took hold of the city for six weeks beginning in May of 1968. The experiences gained that summer would be eye-opening. This experience among others would be influential in his leaving the Baptist college his father had sent him to. He described leaving the comfort of the rural Baptist University he was leaving to attend college in the city as an enlightening experience for him because it exposed him to a side of America that was not as readily available in the cornfields of Oklahoma. Commenting on the informal education he received living in the “big” city he stated,

I was living on Third Street or Fourth Street. It wasn't the worst of the ghettos but it was one of those blighted areas around downtown because I lived with prostitutes, drug addicts. I had a little room. It was forty dollars a week. A room and public toilet. Maybe forty dollars a month. That part of my life was quite remarkable in my view because here I was coming from a higher than middle class in the Nigerian context and in two years or so I was living with the poorest of the poor. It brought me into closer contact with pimps and thieves and nice people and you know quite a mix of people. A pimp with his women, a man across the street, across the hall from me his name was Larry, he liked to steal, burgle cigarette machines; colorful characters and about two other Africans, one from Sierra Leone who was a great cook and an Igbo man. So that was the kind of context in which I was growing up in America. When I look at it all I think that it might have something to do with the comfort that I have continued to feel towards people generally regardless of whether they are poor or not.

The one thing I did in that period was that I started associating with the protest movement against Vietnam. I wrote for the school paper, for the protest paper I think and I attended their meetings. I was very struck by the returning veterans because you know they were enrolled in college and the ones among them who were...I saw that people who had seen war were fairly brave. They were able to articulate the problems of the war. That's the first time I started putting my hand in things that frightened the life out of me later. That continued on when I went to graduate school. I was already a fairly seasoned protest

person. Although you know all this is with tremendous fear. These were the days when you don't have enough due process. You could just get evicted.³³

Addressing what he perceived to be the ambivalence of international students to engage themselves actively in their host societies he suggested that the exchange process was to blame. “I think what begins to emerge is the difficult position the foreign student is in. You are actually encouraged to be like a rubber neck, what do you call this, to parasite if you like on the American society. You are here for a specific thing, you take what you are here for you don't pay attention to what is going on, you just take out of America what you need from it and then you.”³⁴

Ayodele explained that in his various activities as a student activist he was not as radical as might be thought noting that a fear of deportation structured many of the activities that he made himself visible in. Specifically he was much more confident engaging in activities that were international in nature such as protesting against continued colonialism on the African continent or against the intervention of the West in Africa's political and economic affairs. Though he states that he did actively participate in domestic efforts like student protests and rallies against the war and for civil rights, he was much less visible in these efforts for fear that his activities might be monitored. Addressing this particular point he cited the case of Ruwa Chiri, a prominent Zimbabwean student activist and member of the Pan African Students Organization of the Americas (PASOA) who was found dead in New York in 1974 killed as many including Ayodele for his outspoken political positions.³⁵

In 1978, ten years after he arrived in the United States Ayodele returned back to Nigeria with his wife, a black American and their daughter. He had earned his “golden fleece” in the

³³ Ayodele, interview by author, Chicago, Illinois, January 1, 2009.

³⁴ Ayodele, interview by author, Chicago, Illinois, January 1, 2009.

³⁵ Ruwa Chiri has yet to benefit from the scholarly attention he deserves. For a brief note on Ruwa Chiri's death see “Perspectives” *Black World Digest* (July 1974): 55.

form of a PhD but left primarily because he was dissatisfied with his life in the United States.

Ayodele explained his reasons for returning home as both personal and professional.

I never gave a thought to staying. Although you know by the time I went home, I was also going home to help in the development of my country but also trying to find healing for myself. I never stayed and people admired me for going back but it was also because I needed to go back. It was personal as well as public it was because I wanted to do good but it was also because I wanted to heal myself. I wanted to go home, I knew I had become, I didn't like myself, I didn't like what I had become with the success. I was going home to recover as well as contribute to the development of my country. I realize that that is not a simple answer. Things like this are always very complicated. It's never just one thing or the other. There was nothing to hold you here, moreover the discrimination against black folks left nothing to wait for. The longer we stayed here, the home we left behind became more frightening.³⁶

Ayodele spent sixteen years in Nigeria before returning back to the United States in part because of the political instability of the country at the time but also to reunite his wife and their children with her family. More than a decade into his second sojourn in the United States he is exploring ways to return back to Nigeria. He argued that western education instituted an individual mentality that did not always meet the realities with traditions in Africa and that going back allowed people to negotiate this conflict. As he explained, "it is important to go back, it is important because it is a reality check on your education." He also identified family as another important reason to go back stating, "I am saying that it is very important to go back, more importantly you have family. You have people that you have become almost like strangers too. It doesn't get it to be talking on the phone, shouting. I think we also need to go back to recover ourselves. To go back to where we began so we can know where we've been. There is no running away from home even if you are away from it."

Dapo

A native of Nigeria, he was significantly influenced by a childhood education under the guidance of American missionaries. This was a major factor in his decision to pursue higher

³⁶ Ayodele, interview by author, Chicago, Illinois, January 1, 2009.

education in the United States. He would earn three degrees while a student in the United States, a bachelor's, Master's and MD. He is currently a well known surgeon with a highly successful medical practice and has been in the United States for 40 years.

We were very curious. Plus they told us tales, stories men! America is the land of, filled with honey and milk. They showed us skyscrapers, winding streets, big cars. You don't have a chance but just just to drool in the mouth. You just wanna go there, you just wanna take a life like that. They showed us pictures of America, how they dressed, where they lived and of course it was much more than what we had. So then...in the chase of getting the taste of what was good, we started reading American magazines, and listening to American news and finding out what was going on there. We were mostly drawn to America maybe because of the American missionaries however ironically our parents went to England to study just like their parents, parents too. For some reason we didn't think of England a lot and America was the hip, it was the new world. So we were drawn to, we were fascinated; more fascinated by the American everything, including music.³⁷

Expanding on this train of thought, he identified as significant as well, the presence of Peace Corp workers in Nigeria during this period.

Yeah, they sent young Americans in their mid-20's, 24 to 25 to come and teach and live in Nigeria. We related to them, we were in our teens, sixteen, seventeen, fifteen and they were twenty-something, so they were still older than us but we looked up to them, we related to them, we wanted to be like them, dressed like them and listened to stories that they tell us. So that's how the American influence penetrated the city, I mean the country.³⁸

Dapo arrived in the United States in the summer of 1968, where he would enroll at a major university in the West. His choice of attending a school in the West was purposeful. "He my father wanted me to go to the West coast to stay away from ah.....it was a lot of uprisings then. Vietnam, the black movement, the civil rights, he wanted me to go to a school that was closer, a school that was low key. He spoke in glowing terms about the institution noting that he excelled at the institution." Addressing why he thought he was able to excel within the new academic settings he found himself in, at a large traditionally white University in the Northwest

³⁷ Dapo, telephone interview by author, March 25, 2009.

³⁸ Dapo, telephone interview by author, March 25, 2009.

region of the United States, Dapo suggested he and his Nigerian peers in particular shared in common, an intense sense of motivation that would allow them to shrug off any perceived slights or barriers in their pursuit of education.

We were so highly motivated then that I wish I had the level of motivation now, I would do better in my work. We were so motivated. Highly motivated and it's like we were there to conquer, we were there to do something. They show me how to do it and I get it done, something like that. And that was the feeling then. There was no room for laziness. It is the same motivation we had in Nigeria. In Nigeria, there was no, no room for failure. I remember when we were growing up there was a song that said "if you fail you will be begging on the street." It is the same motivation out of doing well in school in Nigeria because if you don't do well they gonna rip you up, you gonna be nobody. So we carried the same motivation to this country and you are more motivated because you are away from home and you want to do well so you can go back home and prove something, show off something. It's like you here to get the Golden Fleece, so you have to make sure you can get it, so you can take it back home.³⁹

Dapo further notes that he and his peers were able to maintain this high level of motivation even in spite of episodes of discrimination they faced from fellow students and peers. Addressing his experiences of discrimination, Dapo identified the questions that were asked of him as the most troubling aspect of his episodes of discrimination.

Some of the questions they asked me was that "do you live on trees?" and I usually made up stories and said Yes we lived on trees and my father lived on the tallest tree and we have monkey and chimpanzees on my father's tree and you could see the look on their faces before they realized that I was being sarcastic and everybody was very curious about you because you are African. All they heard was animals and that we lived with animals and all the taboos about Africa, tarzan taboos. We answered some of those questions but after awhile those questions stopped coming. They got shy about asking those kind of questions.⁴⁰

While he was readily able to identify simple examples of discrimination in regard to his experiences with his American peers, Dapo's analysis of the institutional discrimination he encountered was more complex. He offered mixed reviews of the institutional discrimination he faced. One on hand he acknowledged that the school and local communities were proud of their

³⁹ Dapo, telephone interview by author, March 25, 2009.

⁴⁰ Dapo, telephone interview by author, March 25, 2009.

international students and welcomed them with open arms even inviting some of them to spend the weekend with local families.

The State was very proud of its international community and they treated us the same as they were very proud of their international students. Even if they want to discriminate they don't show it. A lot of white families take us to their homes and keep and invite us for the weekend for the week. I had a family in Salem, Oregon which is about an hour away. I used to go to spend the week, spend my summers.⁴¹

On the other hand he did acknowledge that if one did look closely enough there were signs of discrimination that would be particularly injurious to black Americans.

If you don't read between the lines you probably think that there is no discrimination and it was nothing like in the big cities. Again, they really tried and pretended and maybe for real to accept international students and as a matter of fact, some Afro-Americans then thought black Africans were more accepted in the community, in the school community more than them, that they gave us all the attention and the respect us. They were a little jealous about that at one time or the other because they thought they were being discriminated against. When it come to Blacks from Africa, there was some favoritism, favoritism going on. That they favored us.⁴²

A lack of professional opportunities in Nigeria when he graduated from medical school was the main reason why Adedayo decided to not return home. He had trained to be a highly specialized surgeon in a field that was new in the late 1970's and early 1980's to the United States not to speak of the rest of the world. As he saw it there were no opportunities for him to practice in his field in Nigeria or throughout the rest of the African continent. Describing this situation he stated,

When I finished medical school there was no doubt I needed to specialize to be a surgeon. That took five years. So when I became a surgeon in five years, I needed to work. Even to this day to be a good surgeon you need to work for a while. I started to work and then I entered a super-specialization, bariatric surgery which was just beginning even in America then. Maybe when I started if you had fifty of us in the country you were lucky, fifty or sixty of us. In California, if you had two or three of us you're lucky so it was something beginning in the world. It was being perfected and the only way I could perfect it was in America. There is even no choice of going to Nigeria. It wasn't even perfected in America so it was not something I could go to Nigeria to start. As a

⁴¹ Dapo, telephone interview by author, March 25, 2009.

⁴² Dapo, telephone interview by author, March 25, 2009.

matter of fact they still don't have it in Nigeria now because it is such a delicate specialty that if you don't do it well you kill people left and right, people die like flies. You need to have a very experienced surgeon, a very experienced hospital, a very experienced intensive care unit, so that everything will work smoothly. There was no room for me in Nigeria with my skills. I believe that is my number one reason why I have stayed away from Nigeria. Plus, everyone tells me "ah don't come home, don't come home" including my parents. Plus even if I went home I will have to give the only thing I know how to do very well up which is bariatric surgery and I have done this for about thirty years now that I have forgotten all the other simple, simple surgeries. When I go to Nigeria now I don't even try to do simple surgeries because I will kill somebody! I haven't done it in thirty years. To be a surgeon you need to be doing that over and over and over again.⁴³

Dapo, discussing further his thoughts on returning home, explained that the decision of returning to live permanently in Nigeria is a constantly evolving decision that is not easily made.

I maybe be deceiving myself by saying I never left because I go home almost every six months but I don't have employment at home, I don't really live at...I have a home, I built a home in Nigeria, I have a house in Nigeria and its setup so that when I get there it is like I never left. I made sure that someone lives there and I feel very comfortable when I go home. My wife feels very comfortable. When we go to Nigeria today, we just unpack our things and we are in the street dressed in Nigerian clothes. So I never thought I left but I am deceiving myself, I left because I don't live there, I don't really know what's going on there and I don't function like a real Nigerian, I have been gone for over forty years but at the same time I still feel connected somehow. So I think I should just be enjoying that denial [laughing] until, until the denial finds that I never left, which I know I have been gone forty years but I am still close in terms that I go there every six months. I don't think I will go to stay permanently but my next level, my next, my next step is to go there spend a month, two months then come back here. Then maybe after that step, the next step will be go there spend six months there, come spend six months here. And of course I have to totally retire from medicine here before I can do that because you go and spend six months in Nigeria and leave your practice here before you come back its done. So for now I go every six months I spend you know two three weeks at a time. The next change will be to spend a month to six weeks.⁴⁴

Olumide

A native of Nigeria, he attended Church Missionary Society (CMS) primary and secondary schools in Nigeria. After finishing high school he decided to pursue higher educational opportunities in the United States. He arrived in the United States in 1970 on a

⁴³ Dapo, telephone interview by author, March 25, 2009.

⁴⁴ Dapo, telephone interview by author March 25, 2009.

tourist visa which shortly after arriving he changed to a student visa. After earning both Bachelor and Master degrees he returned back to Nigeria in 1979. He returned back to the United States in 1998, this time as an immigrant where he spent the next eleven years before his life was tragically cut short by a terminal illness in 2009. In total, across his two sojourns he resided in the United States for 20 years.

For a student like Olumide who left for the United States in 1978, the missionary presence in Nigeria during this period though still noticeable was less of a pervasive presence. While noting the influence of having friends abroad who regaled him with tales of the United States as significant in his decision to pursue higher education he highlights as momentous the impact of African American culture, specifically cultural icons like Muhammed Ali who made a three day visit to Nigeria in 1963 while on a month long tour of the African continent.

Describing the significance of African American cultural influences and of Ali's journey to Nigeria in particular, Olumide stated:

My information was through friends who gave me a very good picture, one sided picture of the United States. I didn't know I was coming here to work very, very, hard. They said it "was a land of fortune and opportunity." I didn't know it meant hard work. I thought I would get here and get a plot of gold until my arrival here. Some of my friends who gave me this picture of everything glossy and nice didn't give me the correct picture. I didn't know it meant hard work. The idea of ghettos did not come into the picture; racism did not come into the picture. As a matter of fact, Mohammed Ali came to Nigeria in maybe 1966, 67. He was then known as Cassius Clay. This guy came and the heat in Nigeria must have forced him to kind of loosen his tie. He was coming from a cold climate so he loosened his tie when he got to the airport. As a child we thought that was the fashion. So every time I put on a tie I would loosen it and my friend would say "Cassius Clay." So I would just loosen my tie for my friends to call me "Cassius Clay." Then the Afro thing, you know the big Afro was the in-thing. So I started leaving my hair uncut imitating Cassius Clay.⁴⁵

Ali's impact aside, Olumide noted the primary reason why he came to the United States in pursuit of higher education was his perception that the United States system of higher

⁴⁵ Olumide, interview with author, Chicago, Illinois, August 7, 2009

education was much less restrictive than the system in Nigeria. He described in his comments, a system of education in Nigeria that had been adopted wholesale from the British who had colonized Nigeria. The Nigerian system of education remained faithful to the objectives and goals of the British higher educational system including its glorification of the English language and was resistant to change. Describing the hostility of Nigeria's system of higher education towards the population it was intended to serve, he commented "before 1964 if you had "A's" in seven subjects and had an "F" in English language you would have to repeat the whole year. The West African School Certificate was [uncompromising], if you failed English. We copied the British system, we just photocopied the British system and...the opportunity of getting into higher education even in Britain was also tough. My coming to the United States was a result of their liberal education system."⁴⁶

Olumide arrived in the United States in 1970 on a tourist visa. He had every intention of enrolling once in the United States in an institution of higher education. The visitor or tourist visa was the most accessible way for to come to the United States. Once in the United States he enrolled in an institution in the Midwest and changed his visa status to student. Olumide was confronted with an America that looked much different than what he imagined as a student in Nigeria it would be. He cited two particular issues that contributed to the culture shock he experienced when he first arrived. These were the weather and communication. The weather he noted as being brutal, and something that he was completely unprepared for but that with time he adjusted to. The barrier with communication however was an issue that he cited as significant more than thirty years after he first arrived in the United States as a student. Describing the manner in which communication was an issue for him while he was a student,

⁴⁶ Olumide, interview with author, Chicago, Illinois, August 7, 2009

I had communication problems because of my accent. The regular Negro could not understand me and I couldn't understand them either, that is additional to the weather, communication was a big problem because the Standard English we had spoken everyday, it was not an everyday thing here except in formal occasions like inside the school. Outside the school it was very informal, so in that respect I had communication problems. Then I began to sense discrimination because of my accent. They would say things like "he don't speak no English, he's speaking Swahili."⁴⁷

Olumide stated that this issue of communication also had an effect on his academics. He noted that he received his lowest grade throughout his academic career in a chemistry course where the instructor and his fellow classmates who were white refused to assist him in the course. The memory of this as he noted is something that still haunts him. Drawing from this particular experience, Olumide highlighted the similarity in experiences of alienation and discrimination faced across time by generations of Africans in the United States. Discussing an experience that his son who recently had arrived in the United States had with applying for a driver's license and being refused service because it was claimed the he could not be understood because of his accent, Olumide noted the similarity of his experiences as a student negotiating language barriers to his son's experiences more than three decades later stating, "what we experienced in 1970 still persists today."⁴⁸

Over thirty years removed from his experiences as a student in the United States, Olumide reflects back positively on his sojourn student, the effects of influenced his return back to the United States as an immigrant two decades after he left in 1978. When he left the United States in 1978 to return to Nigeria he had no intentions of ever coming back. Nigeria in the 1970's and early 1980's was flushed with promise as the country had newly discovered oil. Years of misrule and corruption would tarnish the purported benefits that oil was to provide the country. The country as Olumide noted spiraled into an increasing cycle of corruption and

⁴⁷ Olumide, interview with author, Chicago, Illinois, August 7, 2009

⁴⁸ Olumide, interview with author, Chicago, Illinois, August 7, 2009

political incompetence and state violence which all contributed to his departure along with his family from Nigeria to the United States in 1998. When asked if he intended to return back to Nigeria, he was unequivocal in his response identifying the lack of comfort as the primary reason why he doubted a return was possible.

The comfort level, I can't see myself living in Nigeria. My wife up to two days ago was complaining, I think the temperature might have been in the upper 80's [his wife was in Nigeria at this time], "no electricity." They will give them electricity supply, maybe two hours at night, others will be using a top light, generators, they were using lamp, lanterns. Somebody who is used to the comforts of the U.S., going back you have to make a conscious decision. Why would you want to go back there and punish yourself? It is a conscious decision. By the grace of god, and a conscious decision I can't see myself going back to Nigeria to go back and live. I am not denigrating Nigeria but these are the hard facts. They are hard but they are there.⁴⁹

Patrick

Was born in Liberia, West Africa. He completed both high school and his bachelor's degree in Liberia before leaving for the United States in 1976. He was one of a select few recipients of a World Bank development scholarship which sent him as a student to a university in the Midwest where he completed a Master's degree in economics.

Patrick described his coming to the United States as a student in 1976 as a result of the push during this period by Liberian president William R. Tolbert to encourage development initiatives in the country. Patrick was a beneficiary of a World Bank scholarship that provided him the funds to attend a higher education institution in the United States. Addressing this experience he stated,

I was lucky to get a scholarship, at the point Tolbert was president and the country was really at a crossroads. I think Liberia was on the verge of really becoming a Mecca for development for West Africa and Tolbert was pushing education, so there were many people lucky to get a scholarship to come abroad. I was lucky to get a World Bank scholarship to do transportation. In fact I had two or three scholarships but I took the transportation scholarship because it was attached to the World Bank, the stipend was

⁴⁹ Patrick, interview with author, Chicago Illinois, June 26th, 2009

higher and the area of concentration in transportation planning was new for Africa, especially Liberia. My reason for taking that course of study was because there was nobody in Liberia doing that, so I was going to be one of the first.⁵⁰

Patrick's transition to the United States was one where he did initially experience some culture shock. Despite the historical influence of black Americans in Liberia he had very little direct knowledge of the peoples and cultures of United States. He had gained some general understanding of the United States from his education in Liberia.

People think there is a big influence, a big American influence in Liberia. It didn't really affect me because I was more into school and into the international thing, like I would read papers from South Africa, from Russia, I just wanted international exposure. So when I came here I didn't know much about the American culture. I knew some of the history from reading public books like *Drum*, *Drum-Sum* these were books based on slavery in the South. They were based on historical information but not real facts. I read some of those things and knew a lot about the slave story in America, but I didn't know much about the culture, American culture.⁵¹

In describing his early experiences in the United States, Patrick with his words painted a vivid picture of the issues many African students faced in arriving in the United States. He described well his early experiences having to deal with strange weather, food and racist host families as reasons that pushed him to find cultural referents closer to his culture.

I arrived at JFK, I don't know how it happened but I think through the World Bank they gave me a helicopter tour of New York so I saw all these tall buildings and we flew over some areas that looked like industrial camps in Africa but those are just regular homes where everything looks the same everyone has the same yard. They looked like camps so I was kind of disappointed I said "you mean people live in camps here [laughing]" I was a bit disappointed about that and when I landed here I was really hungry. The flight was probably twelve to fourteen hours, Liberia-New York, New York to Chicago and then went directly to the school. I said "yeah." They said "you want some chicken soup." I was a little bit cold because I came in September. They said you want some chicken soup, I said yeah. My mind was on chicken soup in Liberia [laughing]. They gave me this soup which was like a chicken broth; no seasoning, no taste, no nothing. I couldn't eat it [laughing]. This isn't chicken soup, I am in trouble here. Then I was assigned, I was given what they call foster parents which was some rich white folks. They invited me into their home, they knew the real cold was coming; they gave me some coat and stuff to wear. Then they would tell me stories about the Indians and how white people killed the

⁵⁰ Patrick, interview with author, Chicago Illinois, June 26th, 2009

⁵¹ Patrick, interview with author, Chicago Illinois, June 26th, 2009

Indians and they would tell me stories about black people and how I shouldn't pass downtown and that if you pass downtown it wouldn't be good for you. But that piqued my interests because I had seen black people in a few of the movies that I had seen and I had read about them so I really wanted to connect with black folks so once in a while I come and just move on the Southside and see what's happening and that's how I got connected to black people on the Southside.⁵²

These few negative incidents aside the overall perception Patrick had of his experiences as a student was that they were generally positive. He had little financial hardship due to his scholarship, academically he faced no barriers or issues that he could not address and socially he was able to identify spaces and persons with which he shared cultural similarities. While in the process of completing his degree he met and married a black American and with her, he would move back to Liberia in 1980. The move would be short-lived however as the unstable conditions of the country prompted a quick turnaround and return back to the United States. Addressing this period in his life, Patrick noted that when he left for Liberia with his wife he had no intentions of coming back to the United States. Even upon his return he expected his stay in the United States to be short lived. He disclosed that during this period he was applying to work for the World Bank and expected to return back to the continent to work but the demands of family and the extended nature of the employment process would render this an undesirable option.

Presently Patrick is a notable figure in the world of arts, especially African arts in the United States. His introduction to and later passion for the arts he credits to the influence of his late wife who also had a significant role before her passing, in increasing the influence of the arts in the United States. Patrick admitted that his experiences in working so closely with the arts have had a significant impact on his world view. Addressing this issue specifically he stated,

It's kind of insulated me in that it's made me more African. When I initially came I was more Euro-African than traditional African. I have become more traditional in my

⁵² Patrick, interview with author, Chicago Illinois, June 26th, 2009.

thinking. I have studied the cultures, I have met people from all over Africa. I can travel through Africa and not have to live in a hotel. I have come to know a lot of cultures. This business has exposed me to Africa more than I have ever learned in a university or anywhere else. I don't speak the languages but if I meet people I can tell where they are from, if they speak their language I could probably understand a little bit. I can look at materials and probably tell you where they come from in Africa. I will say I have a PhD in African studies just from doing what I do. I could actually teach in a university and do better than people with a regular PhD or traditional PhD.⁵³

From these statements it is clear that Patrick perceives himself as world traveler yet is still tied to his native country of Liberia. When I asked if he planned to return back to Liberia to live permanently he answered that he wanted to go back and was making plans to return to visit soon to identify things that he might be able to do in Liberia that would make his transition back to the country feasible. Patrick is presently not a United States citizen and has not intentions in the near future of becoming one. The reasons why, as he addresses in the following passage mainly have to do with his view that citizenship of any sort, places unnecessary barriers between people.

Once in a while, because I have a friend who is a doctor who told me that if you are not a citizen and if you have some medical issues and need a transplant that you might not get it. At some point in my life I was thinking that I needed to find a regular job and some of those jobs needed you to be a citizen so it crossed my mind but...during the war people from Liberia were becoming citizens so they could bring their families over and I thought about that then. Sometimes I regret it because I could have brought a lot of my relatives over but destiny. I never wanted to be a U.S. citizen. It's not that the U.S. is not a good country, I like the place, I like the people I associate with but just that citizenship is not important to me. Look at people in Zimbabwe they are hostage to their own country, look at people in Iran they are hostage to a few old men who sit down and say this election is this way. Citizenship is...to me social, and cultural connections are more important than citizenship because I am not involved in a world where I have to flash my badge of country. But if I go to Puerto Rico and see people who are cultural and we can relate we will have a great time. If I go to Cuba and see Afro-Cubans and we speak the same cultural language we will have a better time than saying I am Liberian and you are Cuban. Citizenship tends to put a tag on you that I don't care for.⁵⁴

⁵³ Patrick, interview with author, Chicago Illinois, June 26th, 2009

⁵⁴ Patrick, interview with author, Chicago Illinois, June 26th, 2009

Addressing why he thought others, specifically other Africans might be interested in seeking or pursuing U.S. citizenship he suggested that it might have something to do with the purported personal and professional benefits citizenship was supposed to offer. Some people as he argued “take on American citizenship so when they go back home they can tell their brothers and sisters "I’m not part of you anymore, I am American.” I think a lot of people do it for that reason. Some people do it for other reasons because they want a job or for cultural reasons but you can participate without being a citizen. Again I think the job issue will be a motivation for some of the people who become citizens.

Analysis of the Narratives

There are several important themes that stand out in and across the narratives of the seven former students whose experiences have been shared in this chapter. The pursuit of education in the United States for many of the former students who were interviewed for this study began much earlier than their physical arrival in the United States. They were encouraged while in their native lands to seek education in the United States by a wide range of influences including the presence of American missionaries, American sponsored “exchange” programs, and family members or friends who had studied abroad in the United States. The missionary presence in particular is an important factor that is consistent across the stories of all the participants in this study but in particular in the oral history narratives of the former students from Nigeria. For these students, the public schools they attended often featured the significant presence of American missionaries. The significance of this presence to these students was not in the religious training they received but rather the informal education and exposure they received about American society during this period, the 1960’s and 1970’s. Scholars have documented

well the historical significance of American Christian organizations in influencing African student migrations in earlier periods especially during the 19th century. They have ignored the lessened but still impactful presence of these organizations in the 20th century focusing primarily instead on the activities of philanthropic organizations like the Phelps Stokes in influencing the education of African students in the United States. It is important as well that scholars continue to address the significance of both public and private educational exchange programs during this period as these initiatives provided exposure to cultural resources in regards to the United States but more importantly functioned as a direct vehicle for students' educational migration. A testament to the significance of these programs is seen through the experiences of a student like Etienne who came from countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a country that historically during this period sent low numbers of both students and immigrants to the United States. The role of family members is another of the themes that was cited as being responsible for encouraging the participants to pursue higher education in the United States and providing them with information about life in the United States.

Each of these former students gained through their contacts some measure of information and greater understanding of American higher education and society prior to their arrival. The extent to which this prepared them is a topic that they debate in their narratives but what is undeniable is the impression these influences had on them and their pursuit of higher education in the United States.

Confirming the studies of the period that suggested that African students had few academic difficulties while pursuing higher education in the United States but rather had significant issues in dealing with financial hardships and confronting prejudice and racism, the participants in this study identified significant experiences around these two issues.

There were other barriers other than communication that structured the social and cultural experiences of the participants in this study. Other participants cited both explicit and subtle incidents of racism and discrimination. The most explicit acts of racism were perpetuated by white Americans; black Americans in their own manner were perceived as being discriminatory as well. In some instances, some of the narrators did comment on some few special privileges they received that set them at odds with black Americans in particular. It should be noted that almost unanimously they did not consider their experiences with racism and discrimination to be defining factors in their decisions to pursue higher education in the United States and their experiences doing so. They do however acknowledge these incidents as an unfortunate yet integral part of their social and cultural indoctrination into the United States.

In regards to their academic affairs, they noted few if any difficulties in gaining access to higher education institutions of their choosing and in excelling in their academic work. Unanimously they viewed their formalized educational experiences in a very positive light. Most if not all of them seemed to be appreciative of the experiences they gained as students, both positive and negative experiences. For some of the participants in this study their experiences in the United States as students provided the extra benefit of providing a political education. Almost every student noted some connection to a student organization or community organization of African origins during their time as students but for Etienne and Ayodele in particular, the politic maelstrom of the 1960's and 1970's connected well with their backgrounds and they would seize where possible, opportunities to engage in a wide variety of struggles. The effects of these activities as they recounted would be central to their eventual careers in academia. This is another area of study ready-made for interested scholars. There is a notable record of African student organizations in particular during this period like the Pan African

Students Organization of the Americas, the Ethiopian Students Union and the Nigerian Students Association that were actively engaged in addressing protest movements both on the African continent and in the United States.

This question of who is an immigrant is a recurring theme in the interviews in this study. Overwhelmingly the participants in this study did not view themselves or others of their generation as immigrants but rather as temporary sojourners or transnational citizens. They understood their presence as students to in part fulfill the role of ambassadors for their respective countries to the United States. This as they mostly all noted was a role they took seriously.

For all of these former students the choice of whether to return home or to stay in the United States was not one they confronted before they graduated from graduate school as they all pursued higher education degrees. Interestingly enough it is a choice that at least five of the six participants feel has yet to be fully made. These individuals viewed their current status in the United States as that of temporary sojourners despite the fact that they have all attained permanent with Green cards or have become naturalized citizens. Many of them imagined a time where they might eventually return permanently to their native countries. Some however like Pamela, Olumide and Christopher have accepted that a permanent return home is increasingly more and more unattainable. They are seemingly content with maintaining citizenship and lives across both countries free to choose at their discretion when they wish to leave.

It is important to note that all the participants in their interviews were unanimous in stating that prior to leaving for the United States to pursue their higher education studies they had no intentions of staying in the United States beyond the completion of their studies. As generally stated their original intentions in leaving their native countries for the United States, was to pursue higher education. For many of these individuals, the decision to prolong their stay in the

United States as their narratives highlight is a tenuous one, subject to change depending on the potential for positive economic and social change in their native countries. Patrick's experiences suggest that perhaps not enough attention has been given to addressing the cultural contributions that African students and immigrants have offered to the United States as a part of their student migrations to the United States. His poignant point that his vast body of experiences in the arts provided him with a knowledge base which most PhDs cannot begin to equal is powerful especially in light of a growing discussion around the portrayal of African immigrants as a model minority.⁵⁵ The academic achievements of African immigrants though notable and laudable offer only a narrow slice of the larger picture representing the history of contemporary African immigration to the United States. It is also important that scholars continue to ask African students and immigrants about their decisions to come to the United States as it pertains to permanent settlement. Immigrant and non-immigrant classifications alone do not determine the intentions of immigrants.

⁵⁵ Donald S. Massey, Margarita Mooney and Kimberly C. Torres. "Black immigrants and black natives attending selective colleges and universities in the United States," *American Journal of Education* , 113 (2007) 243-271.

CHAPTER SIX

IN SEARCH OF HOME

Human history reverberates with violent upheaval, uprooting, arriving and departure, hello and good-bye. Yet I am not certain that anyone ever leaves home. When “home” drops below the horizon, it rises on one’s breast and acquires the overwhelming power of menaced love.¹

The origins of African student non-return are tied to 18th century efforts by missionaries like Samuel Hopkins to spread Christianity on the African continent through the use of African freedmen and later the recruitment of Africans directly from the continent. The ideological blueprint created by Hopkins venture would be significant in structuring similar yet much more successful efforts in the late 19th century. These later efforts like Hopkins venture were not born of an interest in facilitating the immigration of Africans to the United States. In fact non-return was discouraged, yet it became an unintended and important consequence of this process.

The numbers of African students in the United States remained low in the late 19th century and 20th century making it hard to determine how pervasive non-return was. The passing of the Naturalization Act of 1870 during this period which provided for persons of African descent to become naturalized citizens of the United States raises important questions related to non-return. Though the life stories of Orishatukeh Faduma and James Aggrey are only marginally tied to the discussion around this law, they serve as important examples of the reality that confronted non-returning African students during this period. The lives of these two individuals should provoke important questions about the dearth of scholarship on African student non-return during this period but perhaps more importantly about African immigration to the United States during this time. The African immigrant presence in the United States during this period though very small was consistent yet little to nothing is known about the experiences

¹ James Baldwin, “Every Good-Bye Ain’t Gone” in *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Non-fiction, 1948-1955*, ed. AUTHOR (New York: St. Martins Press, 1985), 645-646.

of African immigrants in the United States for this time. It is important to note that this apathy in the study of African immigration and ultimately the contemporary African Diaspora in the United States extends to further to the early 1920's with the passing of the United States Immigration Act of 1924 which inscribed into law categories for immigration which would drastically alter the trajectory of the contemporary African Diaspora and be influential in the migrations of African students to the United States for higher education. The identification of international students as non-immigrants with a defined objective and period of study versus immigrants with an undefined period of stay created important divides in immigration history the results of which are still present.

The denial in the Immigration Act of 1924 of most rights to immigration to Africa, Asia and other parts of the world is a central factor in the historical and often mythicized pursuit of higher education by these populations. It is also a significant factor in the promulgation of widespread and mostly misinformed news and scholarship about the brain drain. Initial studies on the brain drain addressed the decisions made by international students and professionals to temporarily or indefinitely delay their return home as having negative impacts on their native countries and a process contrary to the purposes in international education exchange. Ignored in these theories was an acknowledgement that the brain drain as a theory does not account for the larger historical context that has shaped the migrations of particular populations such as African students. Though the discussion on the brain drain has shifted to accommodate new approaches such as brain gain and even transmigration, the lack of historical analysis on non-return remains constant. There are important new approaches being developed and utilized in a wide variety of fields that offer great promise in addressing these gaps in the historical analysis of non-return.

In a recent publication, *The New African Diaspora*, noted African scholar and immigrant Isidore Okpewho posed and answered an important question facing many African immigrants in the United States. His question “Can we go home again?” I believe, is central to understanding the future of former students now immigrants, now diasporized Africans like the seven interviewees in this dissertation study. Okpewho’s question is directed primarily towards other African students of his generation who like him left home in pursuit of higher education. Okpewho in asking this question is asking his peers to account for their diasporization, the fact that they have been heavily influenced by the forces of the environment in which they live in. He is also asking that they recognize that “home” however they envision it, has not stayed static as well and is not a place that can easily be returned to. Ultimately, as Okpewho notes those who decide to stay in the United States have committed themselves to a constant back and forth between their native lands and the United States and “have become victims of a schizophrenia that is ultimately the price for taking the decision to separate themselves from home.”²

Accepting that one has become a part of the new or contemporary African Diaspora prompts as Okpewho suggests the consideration of a second question that is “what are the affiliations with our new land?” This as Okpewho notes is a question not as easily answered as determining whether a return home is possible.

There are signs that the pattern of African immigration to the United States is changing. Much of the current population of the contemporary African Diaspora in the United States arrived here within the last two decades. This present boom in immigration began in the late 1980’s and continued well into the 1990’s to the present. African immigrants are beginning to benefit from the relative provisions of the Immigration Act of 1965 which give those with

² Isidore Okpewho, “Can We Go Home Again,” in *The New African Diaspora*, eds. Isidore Okpewho and Nkiru Nzegwu, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2009), 10.

particular skills not well represented in the United States' labor force and those who were the immediate relatives of current U.S. citizens, the opportunity to immigrate to the United States. Forty percent of the 1.4 million African born residents in the United States in 2007 were estimated to be immediate relatives of United States citizens. Even more important is the fact that many of the 1.4 million Africans residing in the United States in 2007 were recent immigrants, having on average been in the United States for less than twenty years. Only 25% of this population had arrived before 1990.³ With an increased presence has come increased visibility and scrutiny.

African immigrants and their offspring today find themselves pushed to the forefront of discourses on race and education in the United States. In some cases they have been accused for unfairly benefitting from the struggles of black Americans. As noted Harvard professors Henry Louis Gates and Lani Gunier highlighted at a Harvard Black Alumni dinner in 2003, and as addressed separately by sociologist Douglas Massey African immigrants and their offspring are disproportionately represented at Ivy League schools like Harvard, to in comparison to native born blacks (described as those who have four native born grandparents).⁴ Ivy League colleges in particular have trumpeted the presence of these students as evidence of their efforts towards increasing racial diversity. In reaction to these claims, the question has been raised by many including Gates and Gunier, if the increasing presence of African students at Ivy Leagues is not at the expense of native born blacks? Answers to this question and others related to the increased presence of African immigrants are still yet to be answered.

³ Aaron Terrazas, "African Immigrants in the United States," Migration Institute (2009) <http://www.migrationinformation.org/usfocus/display.cfm?ID=719> [Accessed 29 September 2011].

⁴ Sara Rimer and Karen Arenson, "Top Colleges Take More Blacks, But Which Ones?," *New York Times*, 24 June 2004, PAGE NUMBER.

The significant rise in the African population in the United States has created fertile ground for researchers interested in investigating the historical roots of African immigration to the United States and the forces that were central to shaping this current. One of the main barriers in this field of study remains the relative lack of valid and reliable historical source material from which to draw significant analysis. As I demonstrated in the fourth chapter of this study, oral history accounts from long term settled Africans students offer an invaluable resource in filling in some of the gaps. African students however represent just one of several groups of Africans that have a long and extended history with the United States.

Cape Verdean immigrants from the late 19th century onward have populated the eastern seaboard of the United States and are now fully entrenched in many communities throughout states like Massachusetts. Historian Marilyn Halter in her ground breaking book *Between Race and Ethnicity* highlighted the significance of Census and immigration records in retracing the lost histories of African immigration to the United States. Halter documented the early history of a Cape Verdean Diaspora in the United States that can be traced as far back as 1860 to the movements of Cape Verdean whalers who plied their trade between the ports of Massachusetts and the islands of Cape Verde.⁵ Using ship manifests to track the movements of Cape Verdean immigration to America, Halter calculated that 23,168 Cape Verdeans immigrated to America between 1860 and 1935.⁶ Prior to the immigration waves of the 1960's and 1970's, this number represented the largest population of African immigrants to the United States. Colonized by the Portuguese for almost five hundred years from 1455 to 1975, and legally defined by U.S. immigration law for this period as Portuguese and white, Cape Verdean immigration represents an example of how immigration law among other forces has functioned to structure the African

⁵ Marilyn Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 5.

⁶ Ibid.

presence in the U.S. Halter's in depth analysis of the categorization of Cape Verdeans of as Portuguese and white is especially insightful as she highlights the significant influence of immigration records in influencing the ability of Cape Verdean immigrants to circumvent restrictive immigration policies which limited immigration from the African continent.

It is important as well that scholars recognize a greater diversity of perspectives regarding nationality, race and gender as important factors in the study of African students and non-return. The vast majority of the literature on African students in the United States including this study to some extent, have focused on the general category of "African" which denies the great diversity of experiences across the numerous African ethnic and national groups in the United States. The experiences of Igbos and Yoruba from Nigeria might be quite different from each other. Similarly the experiences of Black Africans might be different from White Africans or Arab Africans.⁷

The experiences of African women as well have generally gone unaddressed. Scholars would do well to recognize the significance of gender to the study of African student migrations to the United States. African women thought a small proportion of the total body of African students in the United States for any given period made significant contributions to the larger history of African studentship in the United States. These contributions deserve to be acknowledged.⁸

For more than 200 years, the pursuit of higher education structured much of African student migrations to the United States. I have attempted to address in this study one particular

⁷ White Africans from settler colonies like South Africa in the late 19th and early 20th centuries also pursued higher education in the United States. The experiences of these students like those of Arab students have generally gone unaddressed.

⁸ There are positive signs that such an effort is underway. See studies like Nwadiora, Chika, "African Immigrant Women in the United States: An Afrocentric Analysis," (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 2006) and John A. Arthur, *African Women Immigrants in the United States: Crossing Transnational Borders* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

aspect of this process and that is the non-return of African students across four periods of African student migrations to the United States with a featured emphasis on the last period. The significance of acknowledging African student migrations and in particular those of non-returning students addresses a need for critical analysis of non-return. It is important that scholars and educational institutions remain aware of the cross cultural challenges faced by students as well as the historical significance of higher education as an important process of negotiation in circumventing restrictive United States immigration laws. African students and African immigrants themselves would do well to be conscious of the ways in which their predecessors negotiated life in the United States. In these stories of the past are important details that might help current students and immigrants avoid problems and issues that were faced in the past by their predecessors.

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APPENDIX



University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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Informed Consent Form for Dissertation Study Participation

From Student to Immigrant: The Evolution of the African Student in American Higher Education, 1960-1980.

My name is Olanipekun Laosebikan, I am a graduate student, working on my dissertation in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana (UIUC) under the supervision of my advisor Dr. Christopher Span. I would like to ask for your participation in a study that seeks to contribute to documenting the historical presence of the African immigrants in America by exploring the higher educational experiences of African students in America in the 1960's and 1970's.

As a part of my study, I will be conducting interviews with African immigrants who were admitted and enrolled for at least one academic year or more at an American accredited institution of higher education during the aforementioned time period. I will be asking questions about your formal (institutional) and non-formal (non-institutional) experiences in American higher education and exploring the ways, if any, these experiences affected your personal and professional development during your time in the United States.

I will ask participants to participate in a series of individual audio-taped semi-structured interviews. These interviews will be conducted in person or by phone. All data collected in interviews will be kept confidential, stored in a locked cabinet and on password protected hard-drives. No identifying information from participants will be used on any documents used in this study. All participants will be offered a copy of interview transcript(s) and will have the right to edit as they see fit.

This study will contribute to existing historical and contemporary works on the African immigrant in America. It seeks to help provide a broader picture on the identity and experiences of the African immigrant in America and will provide an important foundation to addressing many of the historical and contemporary problems facing this immigrant group in America.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw without penalty at any point during the study. No risk other than what one might have in normal life is anticipated from participation in this study. Details of this study will be shared with members of my dissertation committee. However all identifying information of participants will be kept confidential in all written and published documents pertaining to this study. If you have any questions, or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me at laosebik@illinois.edu or you may contact the Responsible Primary Investigator (RPI), Dr. Christopher Span at cspan@illinois.edu. You may also call the RPI if you feel you have been injured or harmed by this research. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in

this study, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 or via email at irb@uiuc.edu

Participant Signature

Date

Interview Questions

Background questions

1. When and where were you born?
2. What are some of your earliest childhood memories of education?
3. What type of schools did you attend? Private, public, religious or secular for (grammar, primary, or secondary school)
4. What is the highest level of education either of your parents completed?
5. Was either of your parents or any other family members educated abroad?
6. What factors were significant in your decision to study abroad?
7. What factors influenced your choice of the United States as the host country for your education abroad?
8. What level of education had you completed by the time you left your country for study abroad?
9. What perceptions of the United States did you have growing up? Where did you get your information about America?
10. Did you have any contact with Americans growing up? If so, what was the nature of your contacts with these individual(s)?
11. Prior to arriving in the United States did you have or know of relatives, friends, associates who had already been to America were currently in America?
12. What was the extent of your contact with Americans prior to arriving in the United States?
13. Was America your first choice for higher education?
14. What did you know of higher education in the United States before you decided to study there?
15. How did this information shape your decision to pursue higher education in American institutions?
16. What factors influenced the types of Universities and/or colleges you applied to?

Higher Education in the United States

17. When and where did you first arrive in the United States?
18. What institutions did you attend for higher education in America?
19. Was the geographical location of the school(s) you attended a factor in your decision to apply for admission?
20. What was your field(s) of study?
21. What factors motivated your choice of this field(s) of study?
22. Were any of your professors and peers significant in your educational experiences in America? If so, how were they influential?
23. If part of a government sponsored program, what were the stipulations/conditions of the program?
24. What types of resources (institutional and non-institutional) did you utilize in adjusting to life as a foreign student in America?

25. Did you have to work as a student to pay for school and basic living expenses? If so, what types of jobs did you have? If not, how did you pay for school and day to day living expenses?
26. Were there other African or foreign black professors, students or staff at the institution(s) you attended? If so, did you have any interactions with these individuals?
27. Were you aware of African or black immigrants (non-students) who lived outside the university community. If so, what type of interactions did you have with these individuals and/or communities?
28. Did you observe any differences between African students and African immigrants during this period?
29. Were you able to travel home to your native country while a student in America?
30. If married, did you meet your spouse while a student in America?
31. During the period in which you came to the U.S. were there as many opportunities for non-students to consider coming to the U.S as there were students from Nigeria in particular? If you had not come to the U.S. as a foreign student how likely would it have been that you would have come to the U.S. as an immigrant from Nigeria during this same period?
32. At what stage in your time in the U.S. did you become more aware of the African immigrant in the U.S. and what shape or form did this awareness take?
33. Did you as well as other African students during the period you were attaining your higher education in the U.S. differentiate between yourselves as African students and African immigrants? If so, how and why?
34. In light of your arrival in the U.S as a foreign student from Africa on a student visa, how did you self-identify as a student and how if any way did this self-identification change as you transitioned from being a student to a more permanent resident.
35. What role if any in the overall history of African immigration to the U.S. do former African students like you who stayed in the U.S. after the completion of their studies occupy?

Socio-political environment of America

The following set of questions are designed to understand what types of informal educational experiences African students encountered in this period under investigation, that of the 1960's and 1970's. As per your experiences:

36. How did you self-identify as an African student in the U.S.?
37. What role did race, gender and religion if at all play in your self-identification?
38. What impact did the racial, gender, and class demographics of the school(s) you attended have on your educational experiences? What impact did they have on your personal development?
39. Did the socio-political movements taking place on college campuses and throughout America in the 1960's and 1970's have any impact on your educational experiences? If so how?
40. How was the African immigrant portrayed and viewed in the United States popular culture and media in the period you were here as a student?

41. What were some of the more prominent stories on Africa that you encountered as a student either through the media or through every day interactions with people?
42. How did these perceptions impact your presence as an African student in America?
43. What were some of the factors that influenced perceptions of Africa in the United States during this period?
44. In your decision to attend the institution(s) you attended was any attention given to the surrounding communities in which this or these institutions were located?
45. What was the demographic makeup of the community or communities you lived in as a student?
46. As a student did you live on-campus or off-campus? Did you face any difficulties in acquiring a place or places to live as a student? If so, what type of difficulties did you face?
47. What role if any did your status as a black immigrant play in your housing inquiries or attempts?
48. How did you adjust to life outside of the University? What difficulties did you face and how did you resolve them?
49. Were you active in any community organizations (church, social-service agencies, and outreach programs)?
50. What was your understanding of racial prejudice or discrimination before arriving in the U.S.?
51. Did your understanding of racial prejudice and discrimination change after arriving in the U.S.?
52. Did you experience episodes or incidents of racism while a student in the United States? What contexts did you have these experiences (educational settings, private settings)?
53. If yes, how did your identity as an African student affect your experiences of racism?
54. What resources if any did you use to negotiate these experiences?

Post College

55. What is your current profession?
56. What impact did your experiences as a student in the United States have on your current profession?
57. How if at all did your educational experiences as a student influence your life in the U.S. after the completion of your studies? Were your educational experiences helpful in your transition (if there was one) from student to immigrant?
58. Are you a U.S. citizen? If so why did you choose to pursue U.S. citizenship?
59. If not, what factors influenced your decision to prolong your stay in the United States after completing your higher education degree(s)?
60. Do you intend to settle permanently in the United States? If not, do you know where you would like to settle permanently and why?
61. How long have you lived in the United States?