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The development of ethnic minorities: A case study of west Africans in South Africa

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CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter reviews relevant literature on key aspects of the study. Each of Chapters four, five, six, and seven begin with an introduction, and some references to related literature before heading on to the discussion and analysis of the data collected. Although much of the literature on immigrant minority groups stem from the United States and Europe, with different backgrounds and settings, most of the activities and experiences of immigrant minority groups in their new destinations can be usefully applied in South Africa and her West African immigrates. Case studies in the United States and Europe will be examined, critically reviewing immigrants' international experiences, such as discrimination and xenophobia, processes of identity formation, strategies of surviving and coping in their new destinations, bring out their relevance to the present study.

The first body of literature in this Chapter examines international migration, to enable a better understanding of why these immigrants emigrated from their country of origins, to pick up residences and live as minority groups in different countries. Some concepts of ethnicity and identity formation will be examined in relation to immigrant minority groups as ethnic minority groups in their countries of new destinations. The second body of literature in this chapter will critically examined international experiences of immigrant minority groups in the United States and Europe, the major problems they encounter, how they resist and cope with these problems, and finally, their survival strategies, bringing out their similarities and dissimilarities with those of West African minority groups in South Africa. The Chapter concludes with recommendations from lessons learnt from international experiences.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND THE FORMATION OF ETHNIC MINORITY

In its simplest understanding, international migration is the movement of people, goods and services across political boundaries. Golini, Bonifazi and Righi (1993) observed that even though only a small proportion of the world's population is involved, international migration has an importance that goes beyond the actual figures. Kritz and Zlotnik (1992) used a system approach in explaining international migration, pointing out the important role of goods and services in international migration, which has been favored by improved technology, communication and transport network. The approach further cautioned that the study of international migration should include colonial ties, historical and structural conditions, and the economic and political linkages between the sending and the receiving countries. Bedford (1992) sees international migration as one of several types of resource transfer between states. According to Bedford, international migration is not just the movement of people across national boundaries, but also includes amongst others goods, services and skills (Bedford, 1992). The discussion of this section will begin with international migration in the US and Europe, leading immigration regions of the world.

International migration especially to the United States and Europe in the early 1990s led to a series of dramatic events in the receiving countries. The May 1992 Los Angeles riots for example was initially portrayed as black-white race riots, but a closer look showed that existing ethnic and social divisions better described it as multi-cultural or multi-ethnic riots (Castles and Miller, 1993). In August and September 1992, there were Neo-Nazi onslaughts on refugees' hostels in Germany. Ethnic cleansing, concentration camps, and shelling of civilians in Yugoslavia, which led to millions of people seeking refuge in nearby countries adding to their already insolvable refugee problems (Castles and Miller, 1993). All these happenings can be linked to growing international migration with the attendant problems of diverse cultural and ethnic mixing. In the east, the movement of immigrants from the former Soviet Union to Israel equally created serious political tension.

In Africa, immigration precipitated by wars, political instabilities, socio-cultural, economic and environmental catastrophes in the continent have also led to tension in receiving countries. Inequalities between the developed and the less developed worlds, political stabilities in some countries, major changes in international relation in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, such as the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the apartheid regime in South Africa, wars and famine in Africa, rapid growth and development in some Asian countries, new but debt-plagued and unstable democracies in Latin America, growing economic and political integration in Western Europe have all contributed to the high rates of international migration world wide (Castles and Miller, 1993; Golini, Bonifazi and Righi, 1993).

One social phenomenon resulting from international migration is a cultural and ethnic diversity, which in most cases has lead to the development of immigrants' ethnic minority groups in their countries of new residence. Castles and Miller (1993) observed that migration leads to new cultural diversity, which often brings into question national identity. The issue of ethnicity and identity will be discussed later in this Chapter. Some similar characteristics of immigrants' communities have been observed (Rex, 1996). First, they seek to maximize economic profits, and second are oriented to securing their position and winning rights in their countries of new residences. Third, they seek to retain their culture, may have a kind of myth of returning to their homeland, may seek to acquire property there, may retain an interest in its politics and, use their position in their host country as a base to support some political interest in their homeland (Rex, 1996). Rex pointed the important role of familial connections within a larger bounded framework of immigrants' ethnic communities, which is defined in terms of language, customs and historical myth (Rex, 1996).

While it is not possible to exact the number of international migrants in the world, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimated the number to be over a hundred million (Castles and Miller, 1993). Doyle (2002) estimated that there are one hundred and fifty million people living outside the country of their birth, and makes up about 2.5% of the world's total population. Though this number may appear large

enough, in the individual immigrant receiving countries, immigrants form only a small proportion of the total population in their respective countries of new residence. They subsequently often become an immigrant minority group in their countries of new residence. Castles and Davidson (2000) argues along similar lines, that the millions of people moving across national boundaries often end up as distinct ethnic communities, which may in certain circumstances become immigrant ethnic minorities. Why people emigrate from their country of origin, and immigrate into a country of new residence to settle as immigrant ethnic minority groups will be central in the discussion of this section of the Chapter. But first, the next section will examine the direction of flow of modern migration patterns.

Contemporary global migration flow

Castles and Miller (1993) have mapped the geographical direction of modern migration movement since 1973. Cohen (1992) observed four main directions of migration patterns since the post-1945 period. First, the 1945-1975 periods saw the importation of third world laborers to Europe and the United States. Second, the movement of migrants within third world countries such as rural urban movements, then to export oriented industries in the 'Newly Industrialized Countries' (NICs). This was followed by attraction of managerial, professional and unskilled workers to oil-rich countries, finally and very recently to the so-called 'world-cities' linked both to changes in the internal labour markets, and to illegal and contract migration. Castles and Davidson (2000) hold the same views as Cohen (1992), highlighting two distinct periods of migration flow. The period of postwar economic boom in Western countries which attracted labour from the less developed countries, and from mid-1970s when new immigration countries emerged in southern Europe, the gulf oil-rich region, Asia, Africa and the Latin Americas. White (1993) outlines three waves of international migration namely, from labour migration, to family reunion and finally to post-industrial movement. White (1993) argued that the increasing wave of international migration especially asylum seekers can be attributed to the more restrictive immigration policies forcing would-be immigrants to attempt to claim refugee status.

While few changes have occurred in the flow direction of international migration, it continues to change the demographic structure of most classical immigration and emigration countries. In classical immigration countries like the United States, Canada, Britain, Germany and Australia, their populations contain many immigrants from elsewhere (Zlotnik, 1992). During the past six years for example, the US and Western Europe have been receiving 27% and 21% respectively of the world's international migrants, and the US Census Bureau projections estimated that if the trend continues, the US population will grow by 129 million in the period from 2000 to 2050 (Doyle, 2002). In emigrating countries the demographic, economic and political implications are obvious (Martin, 1993). The directions of contemporary global population movement continue to flow towards more developed and industrialized regions, and in better off countries than immigrants' countries of origin. This however is not to ignore Ravenstein's (Bogue, 1969) law of migration; that for every flow of migration, there is a counter flow. Hence, while the main flow of migration stream is towards developed and industrialized regions, counter flows to underdeveloped and less industrialized regions continues in the form of human and technical aid, researchers, tourist, and for business purposes.

In the United States, the last thirty years have experienced large influxes of immigrants from all over the world notably, Asian, Africa and Latin American countries (Zlotnik, 1992; Castles and Miller, 1993). In the 1980s for example, there were over fifteen million immigrants in the United States and this number continues to increase each year (Peach, 1992). In Europe, virtually all of Northern and Western European countries have experienced increase in their immigrant population especially after the years following the Second World War. This trend still continues, and by 1970 alone there were 12 million immigrants in Europe (Castles and Davidson, 2000). Of recent, Southern and Eastern European countries, which were long areas of emigration, are beginning to experience increases in their immigrant population. In the Middle East developments in the 1970s saw most countries in the region both as 'receiving and sending' countries of population (Castles and Miller, 1993; King and Rybaczuk, 1993). By mid-1970s for example, some 748, 000 workers from other Muslim countries entered the oil-rich Saudi Arabia (Cohen, 1992). Millions of Turks also emigrated from their country to work as

migrant labour in Germany and other Western European countries. After the end of labour recruitment system, family reunion, and refugees' movement maintained the flow of population towards industrialized and developed regions. At the same time, persecuted ethnic Turks, and Muslims in Eastern Europe, Iranians and Kurdish refugees saw a safe haven in Turkey. Syria and Jordan, play host to large numbers of Palestinian refugees, while oil-rich Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are acting as hosts to many Arabs and Asians following the oil boom of the 1970s (Castles and Miller, 1993).

In Asia, Afghan and Pakistani refugees are seeking refugee in Iran. India is host to immigrants from Bangladesh, Sir Lanka and Nepal. Japan, Taiwan and Singapore emerging industrial powers in Asia are hosting millions of immigrants seeking employment and a better life. In Latin America, the main stream of migration flow has been towards North America, but, Venezuela, Brazil and Argentina are also immigrant-receiving countries.

In Africa, colonialism had established a migrant labour system, which directed the flow of migration towards the plantations and the mines of the continent. Castles and Miller (1993: 7) observed that: *"the largest internal recruitment system was set up by South Africa, and continues to function in a modified form".* An historical overview of cross border migration in Southern Africa particularly to South Africa has been examined by Crush (2000). Crush observed that: *"Cross border migration between South Africa and its neighbors is nothing new…in its modern form, migration to South Africa from the region dates back more than 150 years"* (Crush, 2000: 12). Gay (2000) analyses the migratory relationships and networks within the Southern African region. Gay observed that frequent visits to South Africa, ease of traveling in the region, employment opportunities in South Africa, and pioneer workers in South Africa are all contributing factors to the high rates of influxes of immigrants into South Africa. Other researchers in the sub-region have been more focus on the migration of citizens from particular countries into South Africa. For example, Zinyama (2000) examines cross border movement from Zimbabwe to South Africa, de Vletter (2000) examines labour migration from Mozambique to South Africa, Frayne and Pendleton (2000) focused on Namibian

immigration into South Africa, and Dodson (2000) looks at Lesotho, Mozambicans and Zimbabwean women into South Africa.

In recent times, there has been a shift from the continent's mines and plantations to the major industrial centers and cities of Africa. South Africa, particularly the Johannesburg metropolitan center with its industries and factories being amongst the most noticeable. Elsewhere in the continent, especially in the former French colonies, the main direction of flow is towards France. Garson (1992) observed the migration system between France and Africa, bringing out the origin of Franco-African migration, and the settlement of African immigrants in France. Makinwa-Adebusoya (1992), traced the historical roots of West African migration system, linking them to the changing political, economic and social fortunes of the region. Still in Africa, and from a more general perspective, the refugee problems, and the humanitarian crisis of the continent (Rasheed, 1996), have seen most countries in Africa as immigrant receiving and producing countries (UNHCR, 2001). Such crises have placed the continent top on the list of refugee host in the world. In this light, the Human Rights Community of South Africa noted that the continent has over seven million refugees and the largest refugee host in the world (HRC, 2000). After examining contemporary migration flow, the next section will review factors influencing international migration.

Factors influencing international migration

There is an abundance of literature on the factors influencing international migration (Bogue, 1969; Castles and Kosack, 1973; Castles and Miller, 1993; Clifford, 1994; Golini, Bonifazi and Righi, 1993). Others are more focused for example in Africa, Hussein (1993), Rasheed (1996), Mitchell (1989), Rogerson (1997a), Boullion (1999a), Peberdy (1999), and MacDonald *et al* (1999), in Europe, Loescher (1992), Gomel (1992), MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000), Black (1994), Cohen (1994), and Coleman and Salt (1992). In the US, the works of Foner (1987a), Marshall (1987), Kraly (1987), and Schiller and Fouron (2001) have been influential in international migration studies.

Different academic domains have adopted different theoretical approaches and methodologies in explaining the causes of international migration. From a more general perspective, migration has often been considered as a tendency for people to move from densely to sparsely populated areas, and/or low to high-income areas. Although there are many theories explaining migration phenomena, it is generally true that: *"Human organisms tend to remain at rest until impelled to action by some unsatisfied need or by the threat of discomfort"* (Bogue, 1969: 753). An overview of some of these theories of migration will be examined, bringing out their relevance to the present study, to better understand West African immigration into South Africa.

Theories in Migration

The Gravity Model

This theory states that larger towns are more attractive to migrants than smaller towns (Bogue, 1969). Though it mostly applies for internal migration, it can also be applied in international migration notably, more developed countries will be more attractive to immigrants than less developed countries. Hence, it would explain why in Africa most West Africans are attracted to South Africa, which is relatively more developed than elsewhere in Africa. But, it does not account for what makes South Africa more attractive, and what makes immigrants' country of origin less attractive. The model also fails to predict future migration patterns, and the trajectories involved in migration. However, the model correctly predicts the direction of migration flow, from less developed to more developed countries. The latter having generally more and larger towns.

Zipf's Inverse Distance Law

Zipf's model of migration states that, the volume of migration decreases with distance from the origin, resulting from the obstacle between the place of origin and that of new destination (Zipf, 1946). Zipf defined these obstacles as a simple inverse function of distance. In Figure 3 of Chapter Four of this research, obstacles of West African migration are illustrated as difficulties and the red tapes involved in migrating to Europe and the United States. As a result of these obstacles, potential West African immigrants

are left with South Africa as the best available option. Unlike the Gravity model, Zipf's model failed to map the direction of migration flow, and, it is however doubtful if the number of West African immigrants heading to South Africa decreases in any significant way before their arrival in South Africa.

Stouffer's Law of Intervening Opportunities

According to Stouffer, the number of migrants moving from one point (A) to another (C) is directly related to the opportunities available at point (B) but inversely proportional to the number of intervening opportunities between point (A) and point (C). For Stouffer, obstacles are opportunities migrants encounter on their way to the new destination. Accordingly, Stouffer argues that, because migration is an expensive venture, immigrants will cease to move as soon as they encountered an opportunity on their way (Bogue, 1969). With regards to the present study, it will be noted that potential West African immigrants target South Africa, ignoring all intervening opportunities on their way. Some immigrants interviewed for this research for example, claimed they could afford flight tickets only as far as Zimbabwe, but, despite any opportunities they might have come across, they decided to continue their journey to South Africa.

Ravenstein's Laws of Migration

Based on studies carried out in the United Kingdom in the 1880s, Ravenstein developed 'The Laws of Migration' (Bogue, 1969). According to Ravenstein's Laws:

- Under normal conditions the migratory movement will be a gradual one; it will proceed step by step, and will well be transmitted from rural to urban areas.
- The greatest body of migrants travel short distances
- The migrants move towards commercial centers, and the motive for migration is largely economic.
- Each current of migration has a compensating countered current in the opposite direction
- Urban populations are less migratory than rural population.
- Males migrate more over long distances and females migrate more over short distances

- Technological developments tend to support grate rate of migration.

Bogue (1969: 756) observed that: *"They are not flexible 'laws' without exceptions, and to explain the exceptions it is necessary to import the situational model"*. The present study will suggest that Ravenstein's laws are not universally valid. The bulk of immigrants in the present study travel long distances notable, from the West African sub-region to South Africa. No counter stream of migration in relation to the present study has yet been made. It is doubtful if any significant number of South Africans migrates to the West African sub region. Also not all West African immigrants in South Africa are economic migrants, as there are other categories of West African immigrants in the country, such as refugees and asylum seekers. Finally, there is little empirical support for models built upon a set of generalized laws describing geographic mobility. Bogue (1969) also observed that the model is weakened by its inability to account for personal and situational factors, which influence people to move. In Chapter Four of this thesis, the present study examines personal and situational factors influencing West African immigration to South Africa.

The Push-Pull Theory

The 'push-pull' theory of migration states that immigrants have reasons why they decide to leave their country of origin (push reasons), and equally have reasons why they are attracted or choose to live in another country (pull reasons). This theory has been used extensively in Chapter Four of this research, in explaining West African immigration to South Africa. Although the 'push-pull' theory will not explain why immigrants choose particular countries rather than others, for example why West Africans chose South Africa rather than Zimbabwe, in my research I observed that no single factor will initiate international migration. It is a combination of a myriad of push and pull factors that initiate international migration. Martin, (1993: 4) explains further in the following words: *"Migration occurs because of demand pull factors that draw migrants into industrial countries, supply push factors that push them out of their own countries, and networks of friends and relatives already in industrial societies who serve as anchor communities for newcomers"* Some of the most salient push/pull factors influencing West African immigration to South Africa have been discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Much of the theories discussed above failed to present specific reason as to why people move from one region to another. Apart from the 'Gravity Model' and 'Ravenstein's Law of Migration' which give an indication of the direction of movement, the theories are not specific on immigrants' area of new destination, nor, do they predict future migration movements and direction. In addition, the assumption that people will move from dense to sparsely populated areas is only plausible. Most traditional immigration countries in Europe like Germany and the Netherlands are densely populated countries (see Castles and Miller, 1993). Similarly, in Africa, South Africa as an immigration country is amongst the highly populated in the continent. In recent times, within the African continent, the flow has been from the Western, central and Eastern parts of the continent to the Southern parts of the continent particularly to South Africa. Castle and Miller (1993) predicted that migration will continue to grow in the present century because of growing inequality in wealth between the North and the South. These inequalities will propel people of the South to move in search of better living standards in the North. They further pointed out that political, ecological and demographic pressure might force many people to seek refuge outside their own country.

From a 'push-pull' theoretical perspective, Castles and Miller (1993) observed that push factors often include demographic growth, low living standards, lack of economic opportunities and political repression, while demand for labour, availability of land, good economic opportunities and political freedom make up the pull factors. Bogue (1969) observed earlier that there are positive and negative aspects to migration provoking situation. That when migration occurs as a search for an opportunity to improve one's life, the place of destination exerts a pull on the migrant, while, when migration occurs as a flight from undesired social economic and political atmosphere, the situation will constitute an expulsive push on the migrant. Castles and Kosack (1973) observed similarly that: *The pull factors are a combination of economic, demographic, and social developments in Western Europe*…while: *The push factors which cause migrants to leave their countries of origin are unemployment, poverty, and underdevelopment".* In Chapter Four of this thesis similar push and pull factors influencing West African immigration to South Africa will be discussed.

THE FORMATION OF IMMIGRANTS' ETHNIC MINORITIES

Definition

Ethnic minority group has been variously defined. For example, Barth (1996) defined it as categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and thus has the characteristics of organizing interactions between people. Barth identified certain characteristics common with most ethnic groups. First, the population is largely biologically self-perpetuating. Second, they share fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms. Third, they make up a field of communication and interaction, and finally, have a membership, which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order (Barth, 1996). Conversi defines ethnic minority as: *"A collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood"* (Conversi, 1999: 562). For this research purpose, ethnic minorities will be defined, as a subset of a population within a dominant population, which can either be an integrated integral part or excluded entity from the main population. Ethnic minorities often fall somewhere between these two extremes, and it appears West African ethnic minority groups in South Africa are more skewed to the latter than the former.

Castles and Miller (1993) defined ethnic minority as a group having some of the following characteristics. First, it is a subordinate group in complex societies, with special physical or cultural characteristics, which are held in low esteem by dominant groups in the society. Second, they are self-conscious groups, bounded together on the one hand by language, culture, and feeling of shared history, tradition and destiny, on the other hand by a common position. Finally, membership is to an extent transmitted to subsequent generation by decent. These characteristics appear to fit the West African ethnic minority groups in South Africa. They are subordinate groups in South Africa, with special physical and cultural characteristics. They are bounded by their culture, language and have a feeling of shared history, and membership to the West African ethnic minority groups in South Africa is largely by descent. Drawing from these definitions therefore, it appears that ethnic minority group identity depends on how those

in the dominant population see those in the minority group, as well as how those in the minority group perceive themselves within the dominant population. The varying sociological perspective on defining ethnic minority has been termed 'others definition', and 'self-definition' respectively (Castles and Miller, 1993; Castles and Davidson, 2000), depending on how much factors external or internal to the group are stressed. In almost all the cases though, the simultaneous interplay of 'others' and 'self' definition leads to ethnic minorities. The following paragraphs will examine the formation stages of immigrants' ethnic minority groups, relating them to the present study.

Towards an immigrant ethnic minority group

It is not just an individual decision to migrate or displace ones self to live in a totally new society. Especially true in contemporary African migration, the decision to move, who to move and for how long usually involves the strong influence of the whole family (Goldstein and Goldstein, 1981; Adepoju, 1995). Such decision to migrate to a new country has far reaching implications for the rest of the migrant's life, as well as the whole society both in the sending and receiving countries (Castles and Miller, 1993). In the receiving countries, immigrants' communities often developed as ethnic minority groups. Castles and Miller (1993) argued that this is because they come from a different society with different traditions, religion, language and Socio-political institutions. Martin (1993) holds that it is because they are unwanted in the sense that, as illegal aliens, settled guest workers, or rejected applications for asylum are not expected to be residents. In addition, immigrants may be visibly different, with different phenotypical characteristics like skin color, height, dressing and hairstyles. They may also be concentrated on particular type of jobs and in particular areas. Castles and Miller (1993) observed that they are generally of low status in both respect. Henderson and Karn (1987) argued that ethnic minorities live in low income residential areas, because of the development of avoidance strategies based on fear or experience of discrimination and/or racial harassment, which has promoted what some have referred to as market segmentation or a dual housing market. As a result, ethnic minorities often restrict their search for accommodation to a spatially limited, usually inferior section of the housing market. Immigrants usually are in the position of foreigners or non-citizens in their

country of new residence; as a result, they are discriminated against with regards to legal, economic, and socio-cultural rights (Castles and Davidson, 2000). These observations tie in with West African minority groups in South Africa. They exhibit numerous visible differences from the common South African, amongst which, their height, skin colour; hair and dressing styles are the most noticeable. They have different traditions, speak different languages and are largely concentrated in Hillbrow, which can be termed a low-income residential neighborhood in Johannesburg (see Morris, 1996). These differences between immigrants and citizens in the country of new residence can be summed up in the concepts of ethnicity and identity formation, which will be discuss later in this Chapter.

Depending on the particular immigrant receiving society, and the prevailing government policies towards immigration, immigrants are either often absorbed or excluded from the main population. If the former: *"openness to settlement, granting of citizenship and gradual acceptance of cultural diversity may allow the formation of ethnic communities, which can be seen as part of a multicultural society"* (Castles and Miller, 1993: 26). If the latter, immigrants often mobilize themselves into groups of common solidarity, language, place of origin, to resist marginalisation and to fight for their survival. By so doing they developed into immigrants' ethnic minority groups. In much the same way Rex (1996) pointed out a number of responses to incoming immigrants from members of the host society. The host society for example, may seek to keep immigrants out by expelling, attacking or killing them, the host society may see immigrants presence as temporary, regarding them as second class citizens, or demanding the immigrants to abandon their culture and identity, and become assimilated into the host society. Another response can be the pursuit of policies of multiculturalism by the host society. The first three responses namely, expelling, attacking, and killing immigrants, seeing immigrants presence as temporary, and regarding them as second class citizens appears to be very evident in the South African society. Rex (1996) however cautioned that the dangers of multicultural policy might not necessary go along with an insistence of equality, since the culture of immigrant groups would be accorded recognition but their members and children would be treated as inferiors. As Castles and Miller (1993: 25) observe:

"Sometimes settlers are quickly absorbed into the majority population, but often processes of economic, social and cultural exclusion lead to the emergence of distinct ethnic minorities". It appears Castles and Miller's observations are particularly true when considering the West African/South Africa situation.

In a snapshot model Castles and Miller (1993) came up with four stages leading to the formation of immigrant ethnic minority groups. The first stage begins with temporary labour migrants of young workers sending remittances and maintaining strong home ties. In the second stage, immigrants develop socio-economic networks based on kinship, common area of origin, and the need for mutual assistance. This is followed by the reunion of family and friends, and the emergence of ethnic community's and institutions. The fourth and the final stage will depend largely on government policies towards immigration, and the community's attitude towards immigrants. If government policies and community's altitude towards immigrants are positive, immigrants may secure legal status, marriages might lead to citizenship, prolonged and permanent settlement with eventual integration into the main society. If government policies and altitude are negative towards immigrants, social, economic, cultural and political marginalisation might lead to the formation of permanent ethnic minority groups (Castles and Miller, 1993). The negative case seems to fit the situation of Congolese immigrants in Paris (see MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000).

West African immigration to South Africa also appears to fit with Castles and Miller's model. Although West African immigration to South Africa was not initiated on a temporary labour migrant bases, they notwithstanding came as remittance earners and seemingly maintain strong family ties with their home countries. Further more, even though West African immigration history to South Africa is quite recent (Hussein, 1993; Rogerson, 1997a; McDonald *et al*, 1999), these immigrants enjoy an existing and complex network system based on kinship, common origin, and a common solidarity. Family reunion appears to be gaining popularity amongst West Africans in South Africa, while at the same time; the prevailing circumstances in the country (discrimination, xenophobia, SA affirmative action) seem to be prolonging their stay in the country. The

argument is, the immigrants remain unemployed for most of their stay in the country, and so find it difficult to send remittances, visit their home countries, and/or relocate in another country where conditions might be better. They have various scio-economic, cultural and political organizations, ethnic shops and Cafes, some of which have been examined in Chapters Six and Seven of this thesis. Finally, to an extent, immigration policies in the country make it possible for some immigrants to gain legal status such as through marriages with South African citizens. Not withstanding, to a greater extent, political exclusion, socio-economic and cultural marginalisation have mobilizes these immigrants into smaller ethnic minority groups. Nigerian and Cameroonian immigrant ethnic minority groups in the country are glaring examples. The premise is, because immigrants are excluded and marginalized in their new communities, they tend to live on the fringes of their new societies (Castles and Miller, 1993). This process creates boundaries thus reinforcing the concepts of ethnicity and identity formation discussed below.

Ethnicity and identity formation

Ethnicity and national identity are usually addressed from one of two angles. One strong sociological tradition sees ethnic and national identities as pre-given (Rex, 1996). More recent writers, concerned with globalization and Diaspora stress the constructed, changing nature of ethnicity. In this study, I try to steer a middle course. Of course, as will be seen in this study, social identities do undergo change. But these identities are constructed out of pre-existing 'building blocks' of language, culture, tradition, religion and style. They do not emerge from a vacuum. So whereas I will show West Africans in South Africa create new identities, these are made from pre-existing components.

Rex (1996) has noted that ethnicity has a mysterious quality of primordiality. According to Geertz (1996), primordial relation derives from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and follow particular social practices. Ethnicity therefore appears to be that social relations and networks into which individuals are born (Rex, 1996; Geertz, 1996). Schiller and Fouron (1990) highlighted that ethnicity is used to indicate cultural differences in sectors of a

single population, pointing out that an ethnic group is socially defined on the basis of its cultural characteristics. They pointed out that:

> Ethnicity or the sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group, thus implies the existence of a cultural or subculture in which group members feel themselves bound together by a common history, values attitudes, and behaviors, in its broadest sense, a sense of people hood" (Schiller and Fouron, 1990: 331).

Conversi defined ethnicity as: *"A perception of commonality and belonging supported by a myth of common ancestry"* (Conversi, 1999:561). It is a belief in putative decent that is, a belief in something which may or may not be real (Conversi, 1999). These relations and networks are more of a natural and not just merely from social interactions. Rex (1996) argued that such primordiality stem from the fact that every human being has a kinship group, and of a neighborhood, as well as sharing with some others, language, culture, religious belief, customary practices or come from some particular region. Geertz argues along similar lines, noting that:

> These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering coerciveness in and of themselves. One is bound to one's kinsman, one's neighbor, one's fellow believer, *ipso facto,* as the result not merely of personal affection, practical necessity, common interest, or incurred obligation, but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very ties itself (Geertz, 1996: 42).

This primordialist position supports the view that natural social relations are given in a very special way, which constitutes the net work into which human individuals are born (Rex, 1996). The primordialist position also supports the view that identity is actually acquired from birth.

According to Geertz (1996), primordial ties differ from society to society, individual to individual and from time to time. Eller and Coughlan (1996) observed that Geertz offers no notion of how such a natural and underived phenomenon could vary, nor any language to describe such variations. But, Geertz observed that: *"But for virtually every person, in every society, at almost all times, some attachments seem to flow more from a sense of natural-some would say spiritual affinity than from social interaction"* (Geertz, 1996:

42). Ethnicity can be seen as that natural belonging to a group, and Rex identified three important features of such group. First, the group members must share some emotional satisfaction, or a feeling of emotional warmth from belonging to the group. Second, the members share a belief in a myth of origin, or the history of the group, which makes clear the boundaries of the group. Finally, social relation within which they live is regarded as sacred including both the living and the dead. These features give groups their special and overpowering quality, and: *"such small groups into which we all enter at birth are sometimes called 'ethnic', and in this sense we all have ethnicity"* (Rex, 1996: 83).

Individuals are born in particular societies which bestow their ethnicity and hence their identity. As they grow up, and interact with individuals from other groups, they develop their own individual personality. In this way, their ethnicity can be influenced, for example through elite mobilization as pointed out by Brass (1996), they can define themselves as they think fit as suggested by Hecter (1996), and or locate themselves according to their believes as pointed out by Geertz (1996), and Rex (1996). Primordalist position can also be seen as the bases of ethnicity, since it gives an individual a sense of belonging or of being attached to some particular community with some particular people (Geertz, 1996).

With regards to the present study, despite the diversity amongst Cameroonians and Nigerians in South Africa, they are linked by common elements. They all have assumed blood ties, similar phenotypical characteristics, language, come from the same region with similar religion and share similar customs (see Geertz, 1996). The immigrants in this study have their national identity in which they were being born, but as they interact with South Africans, they redefine themselves as they think fit. In this way, they develop their own new personal identities in South Africa out of their previous identities and new experiences. Ethnicity creates boundaries and divisions between groups. But the criteria outlined by Geertz (1996) might not necessary be enough to define ethnicity. For a Cameroonian born and bred out of his country still feels and knows he/she is a Cameroonian. The criteria for ethnicity in this case might not be an objective one as suggested by Geertz, but a subjective one. Hence for this research purpose, ethnicity is

defined as people's perception about themselves, the assumption of commonality, and the subjective understanding amongst people about their roots and origins. Cameroonian and Nigerian immigrant ethnic minority groups in South Africa for example appear to be united because they have that subjective understanding of their roots, and because they come from a common land. They define themselves as they see fit, and themselves as discriminated people in South Africa, who must survive even if it means transgressing boundaries out side the margins of the law.

Against the primordalist are theorists who see ethnicity as highly constructed and changeable. I will now discuss some of these writers. Barth (1996) adopted a different approach in solving the abstruse understanding of the concepts of ethnicity. Adopting a situationalist position, Barth outline common characteristics of ethnic minority groups, and explores the different processes that seem to be involved in generating and maintaining ethnic groups. Barth states:

> The organizational requirements area clearly, first, a categorization of population sectors in exclusive and imperative status categories, and second, an acceptance of the principle that standards applied to one such category can be different from that applied to another. Though this alone does not explain why cultural differences emerge, it does allow us to see how they persist (Barth, 1996: 81).

Barth (1996) argues cogently on the central importance of 'common cultural' in determining ethnicity, warning that to identify ethnic groups by their morphological characteristics of the culture of which they are the bearers entails a prejudged view point, both on the nature of continuity in time of such units, and the locus of factors which determine the forms of the units. More so, Barth continues, if culture becomes the central foci, then the attention is drawn to the analysis of culture and not of ethnic organization. Barth argued that ethnic boundaries depend on the situation or on the project in which the group is engaged.

Cohen (1996) advanced points, which can help isolate the phenomenon and processes of ethnicity. First, and contrary to *'the glue theory of tribalism'*[23], contemporary ethnicity is the result of intensive interaction between ethnic groups, and not the result of complete separatism. Cohen observed contrary to 'the glue theory of tribalism' that during the colonial period; there was a great deal of integration between constituent tribal groups, giving rise to increasing interaction between these groups. Further more, the struggle for power mobilized caused many tribal groups to organize themselves politically to fight the struggle more efficiently (Cohen, 1996). Second, in a changing system with varying cultures, each group will tend to set increasing greater value to their own culture: *"Since this expresses the dominant cleavage"* (Cohen, 1996: 84). Third, Cohen relates ethnicity to political phenomena noting that: *"Traditional customs are used only as idioms, and as mechanism for political alignment"* (Cohen, 1996: 84). Eyoh (1998) for example has examined the historical foundations of regionalism in Cameroon, pointing out how Anglophone elites in the country offer contending explanations for the roots of, and vision for the best political solution to the so-called 'Anglophone problem'[24]. Finally, Cohen noted that ethnic groups are essentially informal and does not form part of the official framework of economic and national power within the state. If they do, then the focus becomes one of nationalism and not ethnicity. Cohen concludes: *"It is only when, within the formal framework of a national state or of any formal organization, an ethnic group informally organizes itself for political action, that we can say that we are dealing with ethnicity"* (Cohen, 1996: 84).

Brass (1996) highlighted on the cultural base of ethnicity, noting that objective attributes, subjective feelings, and in relation to behavior are the three ways of defining ethnic groups. Although the objective definition assumes that there must be some distinguishing cultural features that clearly separate one group of people from another, it is often very difficult to determine boundaries of ethic minorities using cultural features (Brass, 1996).

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[23]The theory states: "During colonial period, colonial powers had acted as glue in sticking together within the framework of new, artificially established centralized states, some diverse tribal groups, and that once the glue was removed when the colonial powers withdrew, each package state began to disintegrate and fall into its original parts" (Cohen, 1996: 83).

[24] The English speaking minority (made up of two provinces) struggling to have equal political and economic rights with the French speaking majority (made up of eight provinces)

With regards to the subjective feelings or definition of ethnicity, Brass argued that, it is not clear how a group of people arrives at subjective self-consciousness. More so, the behavioral definition, which suggests the specific ways in which ethnic groups behave and do things in relation to and in interaction with other groups, can also be problematic. Hence Brass argues:

> …The existence of explicit codes of behavior and interaction is rather more characteristic, more all-pervasive, and more evident in simple than in complex societies in which people may establish their separateness with reference to specific attributes without adopting an entirely distinct code of behavior (Brass, 1996: 85).

According to Brass (1996) therefore, the cultural base of ethnicity differentiates ethnic categories from other social categories base on class, gender, age or grades. Hence, Brass defines ethnicity as a: *"sense of ethnic identity"* (Brass, 1996: 85), consisting of a subjective symbolic or emblematic use by a group of people, of any aspect of culture in order to create internal cohesion, and differentiate themselves from other groups. Brass called this type of ethnic group (that uses cultural symbols) a *'subjectively self-conscious community'* that establishes criteria for inclusion into, and exclusion from the group (Brass, 1996). Brass is of the view that cooperation between internal elites and external authorities usually leads to a situation of persistent ethnic differences among the mass of people. He concluded that ethnic self-consciousness, ethnically based demands, and ethnic conflicts can occur only if there is some conflict either between indigenous and external elites, authorities or between indigenous elites. Brass (1996) therefore holds the view that identity amongst ethnic groups is defined through elite mobilization in their quest to gain power or enhance their power.

Hecter (1996) holds a different view from Geertz and Brass using the rational choice theory, which assume that each individual may have a set of preference that is unique, to support his point. Hecter argues that individuals defined their identity and not ethnicity per se. Hecter pointed out that peoples identity can easily change especially when some personal interest is at stake. Hecter argues:

> Rational choice considers individual behavior to be a function of the interaction of structural constraints and the sovereign preferences of individuals. The structure first determines, to a greater or lesser extent, the constraints under which individuals act. The course of action ultimately chosen is selected rationally: in Parson's words, individuals adapt means to their ends in such a way as to approach the most efficient manner of achieving them (Hecter, 1996: 90).

Although it is difficult to predict the behavior of every single individual to come out with the general behavior of any community, Hecter is of the opinion that: *"...the law of large numbers allows predictions for the aggregate to be rather precise"* (Hecter, 1996: 90).

Other researchers and theorists emphasise the role of spatial movement in constructing identities. Mandaville (1999) for example observed that identity and place travel together, noting that as the process of translocality continue to occur, and people carry their identity with them. Malkki (1992) highlighted on the changing nature of identity amongst urban and camped refugees. Malkki observed the important role of urban refugees integrating with the dominant population, and how in due cause affects their identity. Agnew (1999) examines the diminishing hegemony of states over its citizens as a result of processes of translocality, and how individuals define and conceptualized themselves away from home. Agnew also observed that, interaction between groups can change people's definitions of who they are. Conversi (1999) explores the concept of ethnic boundaries and ethnic content, noting that because ethnic boundaries are directly related to subjective self-perception, it is relevant to the study of identity formation than ethnic content. Clifford (1994) throws more light on the concept of Diaspora, showing how it represents experiences away from home, highlighting how, which experiences are accepted or rejected by Diasporic communities, and how these experiences construct their identities. Finally, Clifford examines transnational networks, multiple attachments, and political ambivalence as factors that prevent Diasporic communities from becoming a purely nationalist population. These factors in themselves have implication on the identity of immigrant minority groups in their respective new destinations.

CASE STUDIES IN THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE

The next section of this literature review will examine various works on case studies of migration in America and Europe, leading immigration regions of the world. The problems faced by immigrant ethnic minority groups, how they adjust, cope, and resist discrimination, and their coping and survival strategies in their host countries will be central in this second part of the literature. It will appear in the substantive part of the thesis that these studies cast important comparative light on the South African material.

EXPERIENCES IN THE UNITED STATES

In the United States, the controversies faced by immigrants ranged over every aspect of American life. Nevertheless, the economic aspects of adjustment particularly have been cause for concern (Handlin, 1959a). The complex social and economic conditions, and the prevailing circumstances in the United States appear to be forcing immigrants to adjust themselves in many ways. First, there has always been a need for American immigrants to enter those aspects of American life, with which they had contacts. In addition, the ability to find a good job, learn English and create educational opportunities for their children has been central in achieving their adjustment motives (Handlin, 1959a; Foner, 1987a). Foner (1987a) argues that finding a good job, and learning the language are in themselves adjustment strategies used by most immigrants in the United States. Furthermore, self and group integration into the American society are equally common strategies used by immigrants to achieve their aims (Handlin, 1959a; Foner, 1987a). Although the United States has a longer immigration history when compared to West African immigration to South Africa, in the long run West Africans might be using similar strategies to enable them better integrate into the South African society. Learning the local languages in South Africa, adopting South African hair and dressing styles, having friendly relationships with South Africans, changing legal status, and joining social clubs and organizations have been observed as strategies adopted by West African immigrants to integrate into the South African society. Some of these strategies are discussed in Chapter Six of this thesis.

From a more specific perspective, Puerto Rican immigrants in the US are worth examining. The early history of Puerto Ricans immigrants in becoming part of the American community created tension between the immigrants and the dominant American community. Such tension necessitated the need for these immigrants to adjust in their host society. Handlin (1959b) observed that, adjusting to the American society was not an easy task especially as immigrants were socially excluded and discriminated against. The need to survive therefore forced these immigrants to seek employment from all directions irrespective of the wage paid. Handlin (1959a) observed similarly that Puerto Ricans occupied the informal sector of the economy, and were employed in low paid jobs. Notwithstanding, they were able to make life better than they had experienced in their home country. The experiences of Soviet Jews and Vietnamese immigrants (Gold, 1992), Chinese immigrants (Wong, 1987), and Asian immigrants (Schiller, 1999a) in the United States are not different from those of Puerto Rican immigrants in the United States. Similarly in South Africa, high levels of xenophobia and tension between West African immigrants and South Africans have been widely acknowledged and documented (Hussein, 1995; Rogerson, 1997a; McDonald *et al.,* 1998; McDonald *et al.,* 1999; Peberdy, 1999). Such marginalisation of West African immigrants in the country is forcing some of these immigrants to operate in business activities out side the margins of the law (reference Chapter Seven). Handlin (1959b) further observed that, Puerto Ricans in the United States were poor, unemployed, occupied inferior houses and faced lots of difficulties in adjusting in their new society, more especially because of their skin colour. Castles and Miller (1993) had pointed out that physical and cultural characteristics can differentiate one ethnic group from another, which can lead to serious discrimination. This seems to be very evident in the South African society. Although West African immigrants in South Africa share the same skin colour as most South Africans, they are easily identified and discriminated upon from their distinct ethnic and phenotypic characteristics. In addition, and similar to Hadlin's observations about Puerto Ricans in the United States, the majority of West African immigrants in South Africa are unemployed, socially excluded, and live in 'inferior' crime infested neighborhoods like Hillbrow (see Clay, 1982; Morris, 1996; Morris, 1999).

New York City with the most number of immigrants and more ethnically diverse than any other city in America (Kraly, 1987; Foner, 1987a) is considered by most immigrants as a home away from home. For some, it is a safe haven, where they can make life better than was experienced in their home countries. Amongst the many factors that attract immigrants particularly to New York City include the change in the United States immigration law in 1965, which abandoned the 'national origins quota' system favoring Northern and Western Europeans. This move saw thousands of immigrants in the city particularly from the West Indies, Asia, and Latin America (Kraly, 1987; Marshall, 1987; Foner, 1987a). The availability of employment opportunities also attracted immigrants from all over the world. Immigrants usually feel a sense of security afforded by an established immigration community with strong social networks[25], and high prospects of assistance from their fellow countrymen. For example, research work observed that, relatives who are already settled in New York provide transportation, initial housing and jobs for many new immigrants (Reimers, 1985; Foner, 1987a; Marshall, 1987; Pessar, 1987; Stafford, 1987). The city of Johannesburg parallels that of New York in many aspects. Since South Africa's democratic elections in 1994, Johannesburg has emerged as a 'world-class' multiethnic city, accommodating immigrants from all over the African continent and beyond. Pioneer immigrants in the city appear to have developed a strong network, which assures potential immigrants a sense of security, and assistance from fellow compatriots. In addition, the socio-economic facilities, and opportunities in the city seem to act as strong pull factors on potential immigrants from other parts of the continent. The factors attracting West African immigrants into South Africa are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Another common adjustment strategy observed from most immigrant communities in New York City is the formation of informal and formal associations. This has resulted in ethnic niches, which provide consumption services and economic livelihoods for most immigrants in the city. Immigrants' employment sectors in enterprises organized and controlled by immigrants have been observed to generate jobs for substantial number of

[25] Individual interactions with other persons, providing mutual aid between parties, reciprocal friendships, creating specific linkages among a defined set of persons with the additional property that the characteristics of these linkages may be used to interpret the social behavior of the persons involved (Bopape, 1993; Lorrain and White, 1977).

immigrants in the US (Foner, 1987a; Foner, 1987b; Stafford, 1987; Wong, 1987). Notwithstanding, some researchers have argued that immigrants' successes in adjusting in the American society depend on their cultural backgrounds, race and ethnicity, the social and economic class of the immigrants, demographic factors, and the particular American city in which immigrants find themselves (Rollwagen, 1975; Foner, 1987a; Wong, 1987; Kraly, 1987; Marshall, 1987).

In Johannesburg, West African niches such as Nigerian eating-houses, Cameroonian drinking and eating-houses, hair dressing salons, fruits and vegetable shops, and Zairian nightclubs have developed in Hillbrow. This research observed that West African niches employed mostly West Africans, and act as a sort of security for new comers, still in search of initial capital to start their own business. However, it is unlike the United States situation, where adjustment attempts were largely supported by the American immigration policy programs, have opened up employment and new opportunities for new immigrants, encourage ethnic mixing and equal opportunity for all (Foner, 1987b; Wong, 1987). The reverse seems to be true in South Africa, considering the South African affirmative action, discrimination, and the high rates of xenophobia in the country, one can argue that immigration policies in the country are more of exclusion rather than inclusion (see Crush, 1998; MacDonald *et al* 1999; Peberdy, 1999; Reitzes, 1994). Some of these policies have been critically examined in Chapter Five of this thesis. The preceding section examines some international experiences of immigrants in Europe.

EXPERIENCES IN EUROPE

Unlike in the US, adjustments and coping strategies for most immigrants in Europe are not always easy. The early 1990s for example saw a peak of hostility to increasing numbers of immigrants particularly asylum seekers (Cohen, 1994). Poverty, political instability, and environmental hazards in most third world countries, coupled with the collapse of state socialism in the Soviet Union accounted for the increasing rate of immigrants in Western Europe (Cohen, 1994). Though these immigrants were welcome with limited tolerance, Cohen (1994) observed that Western European government felt

themselves compelled to respond to the escalating entry of immigrants and asylum seekers. The intervention of European Governments in other to control immigration in their respective countries increased the complexities of adjustment for most immigrants in Europe. In addition, immigrants particularly asylum seekers enjoyed limited freedom especially as the state and not the individual claimants grant the right to asylum and/or citizenship (Cohen, 1994). In South Africa, the collapse of the apartheid regime, socio-economic and political instabilities in most African countries, have favored the large volume of immigrant is the country since the early 1990s. This research observed similarly that the right to grant asylum in South Africa is solely determine by the state with asylum seekers having little or no say on their future in the country. This in itself has increased the difficulties immigrants especially asylum seekers experience in the country.

Since the Second World War, the United Kingdom for example has grown as a multiracial and ethnic society, with increasing number of immigrants from other parts of the world (Coleman and Salt, 1992). But in recent years, the UK has become more hostile to asylum seekers and immigrants, and racism has been a persistent problem. Coleman and Salt (1992) identified some common survival strategies of immigrants in the UK, amongst which, concentrating in one geographical location, concentrate around their jobs and areas of suitable accommodation, and of the location of initial settlement close to ports of entry. The findings of the present study parallel Coleman and Salt observations. The immigrants under study concentrate around their informal activities in Hillbrow, with cheap accommodation, while at the same time still remain closer to the main port of entry the Johannesburg International Airport (see appendix 1, Table 6). Why West Africans particularly Cameroonians and Nigerians are clustered in Hillbrow has been discussed earlier in Chapter One of this thesis.

Germany has been considered a leading immigration country in Europe especially to guest workers, asylum seekers and ‘economic refugees’ from other parts of the world (Black, 1994; Musterd, Ostendorf and Breebaart, 1998). In this light, a review of immigration affairs in Germany might bring out some interesting similarities and/or contrasts with the West African situation in South Africa. Jones (1994) observed that in

Germany as in most European countries, subsistence and accommodation are granted to asylum seekers and refugees, pointing out that since 1991 asylum seekers have been allowed to work. This notwithstanding, Jones (1994) also reported that, though asylum seekers and immigrants have been observed to engage in poorly paid jobs, much of the financial and other assistance rendered to immigrants are usually withdrawn when the immigrant becomes gainfully employed (Jones, 1994). In South Africa the story is different, as asylum seekers are not allowed to work or study in the country until their status has been determined. Experience shows that the status determination process in South Africa can take as long as two to three years before completion. The relationship between West African immigrants and the DHA is examined in Chapter Five.

Another difficulty faced by most immigrants in Germany which renders integration difficult, is the problem of language. Jones (1994) argued that immigrants' inability to speak and/or write the German language is a major handicapped to integrate and adjust in the German society. Cameroonian and Nigerian immigrants in South Africa experience similar handicaps. Although English is an official language in South Africa, local languages such as Zulu, Sotho, Xhosa, and Afrikaans are mostly spoken. The inability of West African immigrants to speak the modal languages in South Africa exposes them as potential targets of xenophobia. Perhaps this explains why some West African immigrants in South Africa are learning some local South African languages. Xenophobia in South Africa especially towards West African immigrants has been discussed in Chapter Six of this research. Jones (1994) equally observed with 'Eastern ethnic German' immigrants that, they solve their numerous problems by concentrating with families and friends to strengthen a network of social contacts. A similar situation seems to exist amongst West African immigrants in South Africa. On the contrary, while retraining programs for 'Eastern ethnic Germans', including compulsory German classes were implemented to equip them for the labour market (Jones, 1994), in South Africa no such program seems to be a priority. More so, a project of this nature can be far fetch since West African immigrants have different migration histories and backgrounds. Such socio-cultural differences might exert a strong influence on their integration chances and/or impede on the success of any such program.

Another difficulty faced by 'Eastern ethnic Germans' in integrating into their new society was their inadequate skill levels when compared with the high standards of the sophisticated German labour markets. Acquiring language skills and/or upgrading work skills usually involve withdrawal from the labour market for at least one year. Notwithstanding, studies show that, 'Eastern ethnic Germans' are still disadvantaged even after completing such training courses (Jones, 1994). Discrimination towards immigrants in the job markets in their host countries appears to be a common phenomenon. In South Africa for example, studies have shown that immigrants especially from the 'new source countries' are better educated than those from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region (Rogerson, 1997a). Notwithstanding, only a small proportion of these immigrants are formally employed in the country (see appendix 1, Table 8), or care to upgrade their skills before entering the job market (see Table 11, Chapter 7). It is likely assumed that whether or not they upgrade their skills, the South African affirmative action will continue to place them in a position of disadvantage (Sikhosana, 1996; Herholdt and Marx, 1999).

In southern Europe, the Bangladeshis community in Italy makes another interesting study. Their concentration in Rome the major city makes them similar to the concentration of Cameroonians and Nigerians in Johannesburg. What attracted Bangladeshi immigrants in Italy was the first immigration law passed in 1986, but it was only when the 'Martelli Law of February 1990' was passed, that large numbers of Bangladeshis started entering Italy (King and Knights, 1994). This law offers legal status in Italy to any one who was residing illegally in the country before 31st December 1989. Consequently, this provoked large influxes of Bangladeshis and illegal migrants all seeking to falsify their entry-date to benefit from the legislation. There were however difficulties encountered, and King and Knights (1994) observed that, such difficulties force Bangladeshis immigrants to form associations such as the United Asian Workers Association (UAWA), and the Bangladeshis Association (BA). These associations were in-charge of negotiating with local authorities, obtaining legal documentation, residence permits, better housing and other social facilities. Setting up of small business activities, cooperatives, supplying capital to fellow Bangladeshi immigrants as initial business

capital, were observed as some survival strategies of Bangladeshis immigrant's community in Rome. The present study came up with similar findings. The Association of English speaking Cameroonians in South Africa (AESCA), les Association des Cameroonais en Afrique du Sud (ACAS), Association des Ivoiriens en Afrique du Sud (AIAS) and the Nigerian Family Meeting in South Africa (NFMSA), were observed and they strife to achieve similar objectives (reference Chapter Six). The next section of this chapter will focus on how minority groups elsewhere resist discrimination and their survival strategies, relating them to the present study.

Minority groups and resistance to discrimination

The problems faced by minority groups in their dominant societies worldwide have been focus of much research. Researching this phenomenon (minority/majority problems), mostly dealt with groups within a particular society, or with particular groups that faces prejudice and discrimination in their society (Eitzen, 1973). There seems to be universally underlying features of minorities' situation in their dominant societies (for example Eitzen, 1973, Boehnke, *et al.,* 1998; Ford, 1992; MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000; Waldinger *et al.,* 1990; Foner, 1987a; Wong, 1987; Wilson and Martin, 1982). Much of these studies illustrate how minority groups resist discrimination and refused to be assimilated into the dominant culture. Similar occupational interest, target of commercial jealousy and/or discrimination, being stereotyped by members of the dominant group, victims of xenophobia and human right abuses, and survival strategies are some of the futures of minority groups that apply in cross cultural settings.

Research conducted by Eitzen (1973) on Jews in Europe and Chinese in South East Asia also observed that resisting assimilation into the dominant culture is also a common feature of minority groups. For some researchers, when members of minority groups engage in activities outside the margins of the law, then it is a means of resisting discrimination (Johnson, 1973; MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000). Even though the studies of MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000), Johnson (1973) and Eitzen (1973) are conducted in diverse cultural settings, and in different times, they are worth examining as they eventually developed generalizations about minority groups, which

hold up cross-culturally, and equally apply in the case of West African immigrant minority groups in South Africa.

In a recent study carried out in the United States, Schiller (1999a) observed that many Japanese and Chinese responded to the discrimination and exclusion by keeping their stake in America but also maintaining their home ties through a complex system of cultural practices. The studies also indicated that, these immigrants returned home to marry when possible, send a son born in the US home to preserve family and cultural ties, invest in social status in their home countries, like building schools and ancestral temples, and by identifying with the state and nation from which they emigrated (Schiller, 1999a). Schiller (1999b) in a similar study equally observed that Chinese and Japanese immigrants in the United States respond to discrimination in the US by developing loyalty to their ancestral homeland and participating in transnational activities to build their homelands. The next section will review how Congolese immigrants in Paris response to majority hostility and discrimination bringing out their relevance to the present study.

The Congolese response to majority hostility and discrimination

The manner through which Congolese immigrants in Paris resist discrimination and fight for survival makes an interesting study, which can be likened to West African minority groups in Johannesburg. MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000) examined the lives of Congolese Immigrants in Paris who are engaged in trading activities of various kinds, and operate outside the law to resist discrimination. Portrayed as people who have been deprived both in their home and outside their home country, Congolese immigrants in Paris adopted certain strategies to fight discrimination and oppressive laws. To contest the oppressive laws, Congolese immigrants transgress many boundaries by operating outside the margins of the law. The study also found that contesting margins of the law were to ensure their survival in France. Some of these survival strategies include engaging in trading particularly on cultural goods and African foodstuffs. These sorts of survival strategy have been observed with West African immigrants in South Africa. Some West African immigrants have been observed to freight electronic goods to their

home countries, and in turn they bring in West African goods, and culture into South Africa. Through trade, other activities, and their search for profitable opportunities they each day contest boundaries of various kinds, and operate outside the law.

Congolese minority groups in Paris were observed to engage in trading in second economy, operating unlicensed trade, and evading visa and customs requirements. Street trading in Paris is also one aspect where boundaries are being contested, and in a way resist discrimination. Similarly with West African immigrants in Johannesburg, buying from wholesalers for retailing purposes, and at the same time, getting supplies of ethnic goods from home their countries for sale in South Africa are common survival strategies. Acquiring venture capital amongst Congolese immigrants in Paris is also another resistance strategy adopted which is equally practiced by West African immigrants in South Africa. This type of capital is usually got from banks loans, earnings, support from family back home and money from activities outside the margins of the law. In this way minority groups resist state regulations, which are out to eliminate or discriminate against them. Further more, the Congolese immigrant minority group created their own form of order to cope with the prevailing disorder. This they achieve through constructing their own reliable relations as basis of this order and make some areas of organization work without the support of the state (MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000).

Resisting discrimination and ensuring survival was made possible through the establishment of personal ties, which facilitates transactions, reassured self-confidence, guarantees security and helps cope with risks. Among West Africans in Johannesburg personal ties often called *'connections'* are quite strong. In most cases business transactions, sending goods and remittance back home often depend on personal ties. Personal ties also serve as the basis for the organization of trade outside the law. Through personal ties, immigrants can raise money from one another, and remittances back home strongly depend on the personal ties with a fellow compatriot. Through such personal ties, immigrants can remain in trade as they get a continuous supply of goods back home; and family and friends can easily raise venture capital, look for customers and beat any form of competition. Credit worthiness, an essential tool for trade depends on personal

ties, confidence and trust. Personal ties also create a viable social environment in a foreign land, and usually attached on the basis of ethnicity, religion, family ties, and friendship from the same locality or workplace (MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000).

CONCLUSION

The increasing number of immigrant ethnic minority groups in most developed and industrialized countries appears to be the result of increasing international migration. However, inequality between the developed and less developed countries, political instabilities, famine and other natural catastrophes especially in the African continent, major changes in international relations, rapid economic growth and development in some countries especially in the East have been the main causes of international migration (Castles and Miller, 1993; Golini, Bonifazi and Righi, 1993).

International migration will in most cases lead to cultural and ethnically diverse societies, which often lead to the development of immigrant ethnic minority groups in the host societies. The Puerto Ricans, Chinese, Soviet Jews in America, the Congolese in Paris and West Africans in South Africa are notable example. As people move across national boundaries to new destinations, they form minority groups within their dominant population. Such ethnic minority groups are common in most immigration and refugee receiving countries. This research observed that population will continue to flow towards more developed and industrialized regions, and in regions which are better off than immigrants' countries of origins. Hence, within the African continent, the flow of West Africans into South Africa is not surprising as South Africa appears better off socio-economically and even politically than most West African countries.

Immigrant ethnic minority group has been variously defined, such as in Barth (1996), Conversi (1999), and in Castles and Miller (1993). When immigrants move out of their countries of origin to settle in new destinations, they often end up forming immigrant ethnic minority groups. Castles and Miller (1993) are of the opinion that because the immigrants portray certain different physical characteristics from the dominant

population, they will always come together to fight discrimination and marginalisation. In the process, they might develop into immigrant ethnic minority groups. Martin (1993) thinks that because the immigrants are being discriminated against, they often unite to form ethnic minority groups. Henderson and Karn (1986) hold the same opinion as the earlier authors supporting the fact that, because of discrimination, immigrants tend to concentrate in common geographical location which eventually might developed to an immigrant ethnic minority group.

Castles and Miller (1993) argue that, immigrants may either be absorbed into their new country, leading to a multicultural society, or rejected in their new society leading to the mobilization based on a common solidarity, language, place of origin, just to fight marginalisation and discrimination. In whichever situation immigrants find themselves in, the chances of forming an immigrant ethnic minority group are often very high. Rex (1996) holds the same view as Castles and Miller (1993) suggesting that whether immigration policies support the integration of immigrants minority groups into the dominant population or not, and whether the attitude of the dominant population towards the minority group encouraging integration or not, the emergence of immigrant ethnic minority groups in multicultural societies are inevitable. When these ethnic groups develop, they preserve their community identity as well as personal identity as it serves as bases for identification, differentiates them from the dominant population, and act as bases for membership into the community.

Immigrants, and ethnic minority groups are often faced with difficult socio-economic, cultural and political circumstances in their host countries. Experiences of immigrant ethnic minority groups in the United States and Europe are not very different from those of West African immigrants ethnic minority groups in South Africa. Because of such difficult experiences, immigrant ethnic minorities are forced to make certain adjustments to fit in their new communities. Some of these adjustments include, amongst others, learning the local languages, engaging in small business activities, transgressing boundaries of the law, adopting the local culture, concentration in common geographical location, changing their legal status, getting marry to citizens or members of the

dominant population, and forming formal and informal organizations. Such adjustment strategies were observed amongst Puerto Ricans, Soviet Jews, Vietnamese, and Chinese immigrants in the United States, Similar observations were made with other immigrant ethnic minority groups in Europe, the case of Congolese in Paris is very evident. The relevance of these comparisons will become clear in the following chapters.