ETHNIC MARKETS IN THE AMERICAN RETAIL LANDSCAPE: AFRICAN
MARKETS IN COLUMBUS, CLEVELAND, CINCINNATI, AND AKRON, OHIO

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by

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CHAPTER ONE

THE AFRICAN MARKET/GROCERY STORE

Introduction

Self-proprietorship is a pathway to economic progress for many immigrants (Sanders and Nee 1996). The demand within immigrant communities for food, movies, and music from their homeland creates opportunities for ethnic stores to develop. American supermarkets have not fulfilled all the needs of sub-Saharan African consumers. This shortcoming of American grocery retailers has created opportunities for some sub-Saharan African immigrants to open grocery and convenience stores they call “African markets” that sell food and other products to sub-Saharan Africans and the larger American consumer.

What is a Market/African Market?

The term market refers to “the group of consumers or organizations that is interested in the product, has the resources to purchase the product, and is permitted by law and other regulations to acquire the product” (Internet Center for Management and Business Administration, Inc. 2002-2010:1). This definition describes the demand side of the market. According to FreeDictionary.com, a market is a store or shop that sells a
particular type of merchandise or a subdivision of a population considered as buyers, while a store is a place where merchandise is offered for sale. This dissertation is about the African market. Based on these three definitions of market and store I define the African market as a unique group of people, usually sub-Saharan African immigrants who buy food and products produced and known from their homeland and other places such as Europe, Asia, Canada, and the United States.

The market as a place concept is known to sub-Saharan Africans in America as sites in Africa where they go to buy and sell items. Such specific places of socioeconomic interaction have names like Asafo Market, Kumasi Market, and Makola Market in Ghana, and Oshodi Market and Ibadan Market in Nigeria. Sub-Saharan Africans have constructed and given similar places abroad such names to attract them. However, these places are not large open areas that are typical of the African settlements/cities; instead, they are confined to specific buildings of about 5,000 square feet or less. The sellers in the markets in Africa are many, but in the transnational African market, the sellers may be one or two people who usually are the owners of the business. It is this place concept, which is the building that is a space of utility selling African food and other similar items that is termed “African market.” In this dissertation, I call such meeting places where the sale of the food ingredients and other products takes place African grocery stores. At these sites there is also interaction between the sub-Saharan Africans from within the country. At times, however, the interaction takes on an international flavor when some individuals call their relatives in Africa from the stores. These grocery stores act as socioeconomic and cultural canopies/umbrellas under which socio-economic and cultural
transactions of sub-Saharan African immigrants can occur. The African grocery store thus embodies the cultural characteristics of the target population where transactions involving the sale of the traditionally known food and other convenience items from America, Asia, Latin America, and Europe occur, and social, economic, and cultural interactions take place. It is in this physical building called the “African market” where cross-cultural, socioeconomic, and international transactions take place in the settlement experience (Scott 2010) of sub-Saharan Africans. This dissertation seeks to discuss its nature and how this place of transaction was started by and acts as a mooring place (Chacko 2010) for sub-Saharan immigrants in the United States.

Research Goals

This dissertation is exploratory in nature and focuses on five goals. The first goal is to determine what factors influence some sub-Saharan African immigrants to establish African grocery stores in the following four cities in Ohio: Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Akron. Three models of ethnic entrepreneurship – structural, cultural, and interactive model of business involvement – are used as the theoretical basis of this investigation.

The second goal is to provide a snapshot of some of the resources that sub-Saharan African immigrants use to establish the African grocery stores.

The third goal of this dissertation is to evaluate the information sources used by the sub-Saharan African immigrants in reaching their decision to start the African grocery stores in the four cities.
The fourth goal is to explore the nature of the labor used in these grocery stores. Is this labor free or paid? How is this labor obtained?

The final goal is to examine the marketing strategies used by the sub-Saharan African entrepreneurs to reach their customers.

**Significance of the Research**

This research contributes to the knowledge about the establishment and management of ethnic stores, especially the African grocery stores called “African markets.” Although some documentation exists on the ethnic businesses that are established and operated by Asians and Hispanics (Wang 2004; Shepherd, Tsalikis and Seaton 2002; Korgaonkar, Silverblatt and O’Leary 2001; Raijman and Tienda 2000; Korgaonkar, Karson and Lund 2000), documentation on those that are opened by sub-Saharan Africans is missing. It is this void regarding the participation of sub-Saharan African immigrants in the United States economy that this dissertation will fill. I pursued this investigation (sub-Saharan African participation) by using Q methodology as the major tool.

**Organization of the Dissertation**

This dissertation has seven chapters. Chapter One is a synopsis of the dissertation. Chapter Two evaluates the existing theoretical opinions underpinning immigrants’ entrance into self-employment. This examination seeks to provide an illumination of the
theories and thus offer a better understanding of these ethnic business models. The advantages and criticisms of the models are provided.

In Chapter Three are discussed the factors that promote the growth and building of sub-Saharan African immigrant communities who form the consuming market. This chapter posits that the socioeconomic conditions on the African continent and American immigration laws are important in the evolution of sub-Saharan African immigrants’ presence in the United States. The resultant chain migration, relocation, and family union often led to concentration of sub-Saharan African immigrants in certain American cities.

Chapter Four discusses the geography of the African grocery store and also examines how these stores developed.

Chapter Five discusses the study areas where the study took place. It discusses why these areas were selected for the study. The reasons include the economic base that attracted the immigrants.

Chapter Six describes the research design and procedures used in the study. In this chapter I discuss Q methodology and how it is applied to the African grocery stores. Other aspects such as the concourse construction, which are the Q statements and conditions of sorting and mechanics, are also discussed.

In Chapter Seven are the findings from the field, which involve Q methodology. The chapter examines why sub-Saharan African immigrants started their grocery stores. In the analysis, three factors emerged as important in explaining sub-Saharan African immigrants’ decision to invest in African grocery stores. The chapter also explains the
individual reasons for starting their African grocery stores for each of the three emergent factors.

Chapter Eight ties the findings from the Q analysis to the operationalization of ideas that culminated in the formation of the grocery stores. This involves some of the resources that were used in making the creation of the stores feasible.

Chapter Nine focuses on location models and discusses whether the stores fit into these models. It turns out that in Columbus, the stores are clustered and two of these mimic the spatial competition model of Hotelling and Christaller’s central place theory’s sphere of influence.

Chapter Ten presents the conclusions of the study.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Many immigrants arrive in the United States every year and become active participants in the nation’s economy. Light (1972); Light and Rosenstein (1995); Aldrich and Waldinger (1990); Waldinger (1986); and Raijman and Tienda (2000) have been interested in how immigrants develop their ethnic businesses. They have provided documentation that helps our understanding of the participation by immigrants in economic activities. In this chapter some of the theoretical foundations of the ethnic entrepreneurship that govern immigrants’ involvement in economic activities are examined.

Review of Theories

The blocked mobility and the cultural theories have been discussed by Raijman and Tienda (1999), Sanders and Nee (1996), Teixeira (2001), and Waldinger (1986); the middleman minority theory and the enclave economy by Portes and Jensen (1989) and Waldinger (1986); and the interactive theory of ethnic business development by Teixeira (2001); Aldrich and Waldinger (1990); and Waldinger (1986). These ethnic models have
been used to explain the geography of self-employment by immigrants in host countries.

In this dissertation, the review begins with the blocked mobility theory.

**The Blocked Mobility or Disadvantage Theory/Structural Model**

According to the blocked mobility or disadvantage theory, immigrants usually receive low wages for reasons that have no bearing on their productivity (Light and Rosenstein 1995). This suggests that qualified individuals may work hard but receive low remuneration that is unequal to the effort they put in. This workplace discrimination against individuals who are qualified can later affect their skills. According to Li (1993) and Teixeira (2001), immigrants such as the Chinese often faced cultural obstacles when they tried to enter jobs that Americans had rejected. Do sub-Saharan African immigrants face similar workplace challenges in the United States? This is likely for cultural reasons such as skin color or language. In such situations, some of the immigrants find other avenues to participate in the American economy.

In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act changed the Chinese migration into the United States (Light 1972). The institutional racism that the Chinese experienced in the United States barred them from wage labor and pushed some of them into laundry and restaurant jobs, which many Americans had rejected (Li 1993; Light 1972). This Chinese engagement in economic activities rejected by Americans was therefore a way for them to achieve upward social mobility (Light 1972). From a different perspective, the Chinese participation in low wage services may be seen as an opportunity (Teixeira 2001) for them to fit into the American economy. Pursuing this viewpoint, it can be argued that the
Chinese experience did not arise from a cultural trait of hard work (Li 1993), but arose because of cultural and linguistic barriers they faced in the United States and the presence of opportunity.

The blocked mobility theory also describes the experience of Koreans (Raijman and Tienda 2000). Koreans and Middle Eastern/South Asians chose self-employment because of language barriers and in some cases because their home-earned educational qualifications were not acceptable in the United States (Raijman and Tienda 2000). The language problem, for example, made it difficult for them to gain access into jobs where fluent English-speaking was important. This language problem also seems to affect sub-Saharan African immigrants who are perceived to have an accent. Consequently, many sub-Saharan African immigrants maintain that they are employed below their qualifications. This was evident in a study by Konadu-Agyemang (2003: 110) in which many sub-Saharan African immigrants characterized their job situation as “‘job is for the uneducated,’ ‘no future growth potential,’ ‘low wages,’ and ‘job not challenging.’” This situation meant that in order to enter high wage jobs the sub-Saharan African immigrants had to attend school to upgrade their education. This model suggested that there were certain experiences that pushed them into ethnic businesses.

Another factor necessary for opening businesses that could enable immigrants to become socially mobile is capital. However, the unequal financial resources that exist among ethnic groups (Light and Rosenstein 1995) affect immigrants who want to go into business (Teixeira 2001). Along these lines, having low capital input could affect sub-Saharan African immigrants who have an interest in opening businesses.
Generally, many African Americans and Puerto Rican Hispanics lack the personal wealth, banking contacts, and political influence that are leverage to financial and credit institutions (Light and Rosenstein 1995). Consequently, many enter the labor market with low levels of capital and poor salaries that prevent some African Americans and sub-Saharan African immigrants from accumulating enough wealth to open businesses (Light and Rosenstein 1995).

While the structural model tends to help us understand why immigrants enter self-employment, it does not address the high participation of some minorities in small businesses (Teixeira 2001). Furthermore, the model does not suggest the reasons why Blacks who are seen as disadvantaged and should therefore have their own businesses are usually not self-employed (Teixeira 2001).

**Cultural Thesis**

The cultural theory is about the transplanted endowments or abilities of immigrants that support them when they decide to start their own jobs at their destination (Light and Rosenstein 1995). This thesis focuses on the view that transnational migrant groups have traits and behaviors that enable them to open businesses (Waldinger 1986) and it suggests that the culture of people has an influence on business development (Kaplan 1997). For example, immigrants who were entrepreneurs in their homelands tend to be entrepreneurs in their host countries (Light and Rosenstein 1995). But it is unlikely that all the immigrants who owned businesses before immigrating would go into self-employment in the host countries.
The cultural model highlights resources such as the attitudes and manners of immigrants that are crucial in business establishment (Chavan 2005; Teixeira 2001). The Chinese, for example, are immigrants who arrived in America with their own culturally derived consumer preferences and economic organization (Light 1972). Added to the Chinese experience are characteristics such as perseverance, frugality, and cultural affinity (Li 1993). In essence, this ethnic solidarity is important for immigrants who wish to open businesses in the host country (Waldinger 1986; Li 1993). While culture has an influence on business creation, Phizacklea (1988) argues that the explanations of immigrant participation in economies in terms of cultural traits are racist in nature.

Using the entrepreneurial abilities of the Cubans and Koreans in the United States, Light and Rosenstein (1995) posited the view that cultural factors alone cannot explain their success and that there could be other non-idiosyncratic cultural tradition factors that helped them in their involvement in business. Similarly, for sub-Saharan Africans who may go into business, the motivation may be the aspiration to succeed or an opportunity created by the lack of provision of immigrant service by the American and other ethnic retailers.

While there are cultural explanations as to why some immigrants go into entrepreneurship, many immigrants, however, do not become entrepreneurs. Thus, there are differences among immigrant groups as to their level of participation in businesses. For example, sub-Saharan African immigrants come from the same African continent, yet they do not have the same culture; in fact different customs, values, and attitudes will affect their behavior at the destination.
Furthermore, not all immigrants from even the same country go into self-employment; some may seek or start their own wage employment. There may even be variations in the rate at which the immigrants would own businesses. For example the self-employment participation varies among immigrants from Jamaica (12.1 %), Haiti (6.1 %), and sub-Saharan Africa (9.8%). These figures suggest that immigrants have different rates of entrepreneurship (Camarata 2000). It is possible that the population of some immigrants may be higher than others and therefore have better chances of opening businesses than the country with smaller population.

For visible minority immigrants such as Blacks from sub-Saharan African countries “self-employment is a default option resulting from discrimination in the wage labor force” (Maxim 1992: 181). If the assertion of Maxim were accurate, then it is expected that all sub-Saharan African immigrants, for example, would be self-employed. However, the observation of the American business landscape indicates that not all sub-Saharan African immigrants own their businesses; many of them work in wage sector jobs in American businesses.

Despite these shortcomings, the cultural thesis has some relevance to sub-Saharan African immigrants. Usually, the ethnic businesses are created by immigrants to service compatriots of the same ethnic background (Fadahunsi, Smallbone, and Supri 2000; Agrawal and Chavan 1997). This business support emanates from “pooled savings for start-up, preferential patronage by co-ethnic customers, cheap or free labor from kin, in-group networks of trade and information exchange” (Fadahunsi, Smallbone, and Supri
2000: 230). Thus these businesses usually develop from community resources with networking support of the family and community members who may help them.

**The Middleman Minority Theory**

The middleman minority theory was put forward to model economic behavior of sojourning communities (Fernandez and Kim 1998). An example of the middleman minority phenomenon is the rapid penetration of the Japanese in small-scale agriculture, food retailing, and wholesaling (Bonacich and Modell 1980). It has also been used to explain economic activities of Korean, Hispanics, non-Hispanic Whites, Middle Eastern/South Asian entrepreneurs, Chinese in Southeast Asia, Jews in Europe, Armenians in Turkey, and Asians in East Africa (Raijman and Tienda, 2000).

The middleman model assumes that retailers at the labor marketplace prefer hiring co-ethnics, but evidence indicates that German-Jew employers hired non-Jewish women at their jobs (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). This hiring might have resulted because there were few German-Jews who were willing to take those jobs. Another criticism of the middleman model is its assumption of the existence of classes, elites, and masses in America. However, Kashima (1982) argues that no such stratification had existed on the West Coast of the United States where Bonacich and Modell (1980) applied this concept.

In its application to the United States one question is, which racial groups would be classified as elitists, masses, or middlemen? Nobody is sure which ethnic groups fit this taxonomy. The theory assumes that the ethnic group exploits the host society
This dissertation is about sub-Saharan African immigrants in Ohio. Is the middleman concept applicable to them? An examination of the model indicates that one group acts as go-between between a dominant and a subordinate group (Kaplan and Li 2006). According to this middleman minority theory, the ethnic groups occupy intermediate positions (Agrawal and Chavan 1997). Other characteristics of the theory are that sojourners form their own communities, establish their own languages, and cultural schools (Agrawal and Chavan 1997). This model cannot be applied to the sub-Saharan Africans because they do not have segregated residential areas in the United States; they live in mixed neighborhoods. Another reason that makes it difficult to apply this model to sub-Saharan African immigrants is that they do not have ethnic schools; their children may go to public and private schools. Based on these shortcomings, in this research the middleman model cannot be applied to sub-Saharan African immigrants who are not segregated.

**The Enclave Economy**

The enclave economy characterizes the development of small business activities in ethnic neighborhoods where businesses are often concentrated in one section of the
city (Butler and Herring 1991). The enclave economy relies on the ethnic urban concentration, immigrant employment, and structured ethnic solidarity of networks in order to function (Greve and Salaff 2005; Li and Chunhong 2007). The enclave has its own workforce that consists of co-ethnics (Chacko and Cheung 2006; Agrawal and Chavan 1997; Portes and Jensen 1989). Emphasizing the basic characteristics of the enclave economy, Li and Chunhong (2007) contend that rather than being limited by language and cultural barriers, ethnic solidarity and the cultural uniqueness of the community are the foundations of labor recruitment. The success of the enclave economy thus depends on the immigrant population from which it obtains human capital and resources such as labor and co-ethnic social networking.

In writing about the enclave economy concept, Kaplan and Li (2006) contend that few ethnic enclave economies truly exist. Another aspect of the debate is that the enclave economy in labor and market relations is structured mainly upon ethnic solidarity (Li and Chunhong 2007; Zhou and Lin 2007). Wilson and Portes (1980) also argue that the enclave economy brings positive returns to its residents. However, Sanders and Nee (1987) assert that the immigrant managers of businesses that are set up benefit at the expense of the employees in the enclave economy. Also, Gilbertson (1995), who studied immigrants in an enclave economy, concluded that there is co-ethnic labor exploitation. Zhou and Logan (1989) argue that the educated male employees in New York City's Chinatown were paid higher than their female counterparts even though they worked similar jobs. This contention suggests that there is gender discrimination based on remuneration paid out to the workers.
The enclave economy characterizes the Chinese, Italian, and Japanese people who have created districts such as Chinatown, Little Italy, and Little Tokyo (Collins 2006; Lo 2006; Teixeira 2006). These immigrant communities are grounds where capital, labor, and social networking emerge and generate the necessary conditions that support the ethnic business.

For enclave economies to exist, they must have high concentration of particular immigrants (Martes and Rodriguez 2003). But the population of sub-Saharan Africans in the mixed neighborhoods and suburbs is not large enough to warrant the development of enclave economies. According to Martes and Rodriguez (2003: 182) “enclaves are formed when large and relatively homogeneous groups … grow to become a distinctive presence in the urban environment.” While this is typical of Chinese who form close communities in United States, sub-Saharan Africans in the country are not residentially concentrated but are scattered and prefer to reside in the suburbs (Scott 2010; Yeboah 2008; Owusu 1999). Based on this characteristic, the enclave concept may not be applicable to sub-Saharan African immigrants. This is because immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa are not a homogeneous group; they are heterogeneous and interact among themselves based on their geographical affiliation and similarities in their cultures.

**The Interactive Model of Ethnic Business Development**

The interactive model of ethnic business development addresses deficiencies in both the structural and cultural theories (Teixeira 2001). This model suggests that the ethnic businesses flourish because of the existence of demand and resources that are
needed to support market conditions (Agrawal and Chavan 1997). As a result of the demand and resources, some immigrants go into entrepreneurship (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). The interactive model involves three components: opportunity structures, group characteristics, and ethnic strategies (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). These components are discussed below.

Opportunity Structures

The opportunity structures component focuses on market conditions and the blocked mobility theory (Teixeira 2001). Initially, the ethnic entrepreneurial opportunity is limited because the supporting ethnic population is initially small, yet may serve the large but non-ethnic populations (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). This is possible as there may be a large supporting native population who may demand the services that are provided by the immigrants. A typical example is the pizzeria industry in Australia, which is Greek-controlled but has Australian clientele (Agrawal and Chavan 1997). Demand for a product constitutes a market opportunity that emerges as a new ethnic community develops (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). In such new societies, the potential ethnic entrepreneurs who have knowledge of the consumption needs of the immigrants may emerge to provide those needs that are not met by American grocery retailers (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990).

In relating the interactive model to sub-Saharan Africans, it is likely that prior to the recent migration from the African continent the number of sub-Saharan African immigrants in the United States was small, a factor that affected the size of the demand
for the African-based products. However, with the immigration laws of the United States such as those of 1965, 1986, and 1990, many sub-Saharan Africans have subsequently arrived in the country. Other conditions that stimulate the concentration of immigrant communities are chain migration and residential succession (Raijman and Tienda 2000; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990) and natural increase.

These conditions breed essential market conditions that are necessary for the development of African-based businesses. This is because the population generates a critical mass of ethnic consumers that is necessary to support the ethnic business activities (Raijman and Tienda 2000). Residential concentrations of Chinese, Koreans, Cubans, and Hispanics in the United States, for example, favored generation of their ethnic stores (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990; Light, 1972; Raijman and Tienda 2000). The increased participation of sub-Saharan African entrepreneurs in the American economy suggests a growing demand for African food products. Some opportunities that immigrants take advantage of are the demand for culinary products, tropical goods, or oriental specialties (Waldinger 1986). The sub-Saharan African traders are adept and know how to identify and handle African food products (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). As experts in the food needs of their co-ethnics they can perform this food retailing job because they have knowledge about these products that have direct connection with their homelands (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990; Waldinger 1986).

In the retail space, the opportunities that are available for business creation are not equal for all ethnic groups (Agrawal and Chavan 1997). For example, the large Hispanic population in the United States gives them an advantage in the establishment of ethnic
stores over other residentially scattered immigrant groups with low population numbers (Agrawal and Chavan 1997).

**Group Characteristics**

The group characteristics of the interactive model (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990) include factors that contribute to the immigrants’ entrepreneurial success (Teixeira, 2001). Some of these factors are human capital and sociocultural aspirations (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). Immigrants with education may have skills that give them an advantage in setting up and managing a business over others without these qualities (Sanders and Nee 1996). Other features of sub-Saharan Africans that help them to open businesses include lineage (Goldschmidt 1963), which is an aspect of ethnicity. Ethnicity as a cultural institution has gone global according to Mercer, Page, and Evans (2009). It has been trans-nationalized out of the African continent to America where it is adapted to present circumstances (Goldschmidt 1963). The support that is given to co-ethnics suggests that ethnicity is important to any constructive business development by the immigrant in the host country, especially when ethnicity as institution is considered as a resource that is exploited for business promotion (Agyeman and Casterline 2003; Kaplan 1997).

In the United States and other parts of the world, many sub-Saharan Africans think of themselves as sub-Saharan Africans (Drake 1963). However, sub-Saharan Africans are not a monolithic group but are of different ethnic cones that can be differentiated and nested from the country to the village level. For example, in Ghana
there is the Akan ethnic group and within this group can be found other groups such as Asante (Ashanti), Fante (Fanti), Brong (Abron), and Akuapem (Bendor-Samuel 2011). Within these cultural groups too is the lineage or clan.

Related to the issue of ethnicity are invisible social connections (Mercer, Page, and Evans 2009), which link lineages as found in sub-Saharan African countries. A lineage is a closely tied web of kinship with bonds of intimate social expectation from members in which members evoke the idea that brothers and sisters are each other’s keeper and even distant cousins are considered brothers and sisters (Drake 1963) and members are expected to help others.

The lineage obligations permeate everything the individuals engage in. For example, members may extend mutual aid to one another in cash or kind when a member is undertaking a business activity (Drake 1963). Another area where this mutual support is exhibited is in seeking information, for example, about a business opportunity and potential retail space. In such cases, the members become an active set of individuals (Fadahunsi, Smallbone, and Supri 2000) who act like the eyes, ears, legs, and feet of the would-be investors. Such help is sought because the investors believe they could not do it alone.

Another area where the concept of ethnicity plays a role is in capital accumulation. In some traditional sub-Saharan African communities, lineages can establish modern corporate entities for the accumulation of development capital (Goldschmidt 1963). The lineage could act either as a joint-stock company or limited liability corporation (Drake 1963) accumulating funds for development purposes.
Another characteristic of immigrants is that they tend to form township, ethnic, or national associations (Armony, Barriga, and Schugurensy 2004) that enable them to survive at the new destinations. In addition, many sub-Saharan African immigrants have sociocultural structures such as religious and voluntary organizations that some entrepreneurs use indirectly to promote their businesses (Anarfi, Kwankye, Ofuso-Mensah, and Tiemoko 2003; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). Aldrich and Waldinger (1990) contend that the Catholic Church has been influential in supporting and promoting the businesses of Polish and Slavish fraternal and communal groups. These fraternal and social institutions have resources such as capital accumulation and provide pools for labor recruitment (Teixeira 2001; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990).

Despite its laudable nature in providing support to other members, ethnicity as a cultural institution is criticized. For example, it is criticized as a family parasitism that encourages laziness among co-ethnics, and leads to bribery and corruption (Drake 1963). In fact, this family back-riding is at odds with the individualism that is critical in business development in Western societies like the United States. In the American retail space, the different sub-Saharan Africans groups have their own dynamic networks that are a combination of traditional and American linkages (Mercer, Page, and Evans 2009).

However, in the United States, this ethnicity concept – which is understood by sub-Saharan Africans as a vehicle for business development – is either under stress, breaking down, or already even broken among some co-ethnics (Agyeman and Casterline 2003).

As observed earlier, some sub-Saharan Africans in United States are highly educated (JBHE, 1999/2000), but their educational achievements have not translated into
high paying or respectable jobs (Konadu-Agyemang 2003; JBHE 1999/2000). This is because some foreign-earned certificates are not valued by many employers in the United States (Sanders and Nee 1996). This situation may push some sub-Saharan African immigrants to work in either low paying unskilled job and/or become self-employed (Sanders and Nee 1996; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990) as a way of integrating into the American society.

*Ethnic Strategies*

The ethnic strategies of the interactive model refer to how immigrants use ethnic resources available to them to promote their integration into the communities they live in (Kaplan 1997). These strategies result from demand by the people and their culture as the ethnic entrepreneurs develop methods to use the available resources to serve their co-ethnics (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). This is reasonable because the entrepreneurs are from among themselves and therefore know the needs of the consumers, their co-ethnics. Therefore they can culturally engineer strategies to reach their co-ethnic clientele who have a particular food culture.

The methods they employ to reach their co-ethnics include cultural cues such as inserting “African” or a locality in their country as part of store name to announce the presence of the grocery store. The use of these and other cultural symbols thus help to construct conditions that can draw the immigrants to this created space, called the “African market.” Another strategy used to reach co-ethnic consumers is word of mouth, either physically or by the telephone. Through such modes of communication, co-ethnics...
transfer information to others about the grocery store by describing, for example, the products and services the management offers. Again, the entrepreneur may be a member of an ethnic voluntary national/town and/or religious association. By having a presence at these associations, the entrepreneur may inform and sell ideas about the grocery store. The entrepreneur may even use a saying like “you do not frustrate the efforts of an ethnic member who wants to invest, make money to send to your country; you need to come to our stores and you can get what you want.” By using such processes and referrals the entrepreneurs do not need to pay to advertise their grocery stores.

Furthermore, the entrepreneur can combine tailored personalized customer service with the traditional American “the customer is right” attitude to reach the sub-Saharan African clientele. The inventories of the storekeepers may include all the ingredients that are necessary to prepare African cuisines whether the customer is African, Asian, Hispanic, or American. Besides these techniques, the entrepreneur stocks many diverse food items and articles that are not typically found in American supermarkets or other ethnic grocery stores. In essence, the entrepreneur may try to make the grocery store a one-stop shopping center for the sub-Saharan African consumers so that they may not visit other similar grocery stores. By these personalized techniques, the entrepreneur may become better positioned than others to maintain a loyal band of customers.

**Summary**

This chapter has provided an overview of theories of how immigrants enter into businesses. This synopsis was applied to the sub-Saharan African immigrants who are in
the United States and have established African grocery stores called “African markets”. Self-employment that comes through the establishment of the African grocery stores does not come in a vacuum. It depends on the demand conditions provided by the sub-Saharan African population. Chapter Three discusses the growth of the sub-Saharan African population in the United States and therefore in Ohio cities, which provides the salutary conditions for the growth of the sub-Saharan African market and thus leads to the creation of the grocery stores.
CHAPTER THREE

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN MIGRATION

Introduction

The Sub-Saharan African population is growing in the cities of the United States. This growth provides the environment for the establishment of African businesses and grocery stores in the country. The constellation of the sub-Saharan African immigrants stems from the salutary “push” factors from the sub-Saharan African continent and the beckoning “pull” forces from the United States. This chapter discusses how these conditions help to create the upsurge of sub-Saharan African migration to United States, especially to the cities in the state of Ohio.

Migration as a Social Process

Generally, migration signifies some disparities in the progress and job availability that an individual perceives between two contending places (Adepoju 1998). This desire for improved living standards sometimes means a change of residence for the individual. This decision affects all groups of sub-Saharan Africans, which makes the process of migrating to the United States complex and varied. The groups range from diplomats to academicians, professors, students, business people, tourists, refugees and asylum
seekers, and the undocumented. Their presence in the United States has unintended consequences such as family reunion and sponsorship. In essence, the decision of any of these groups to migrate to a new area, whether it is voluntary or involuntary, is often linked to the perceived value that the individual has of the place of destination in comparison to that of the present place where he or she resides. The perception these individuals hold is an outcome of conditions in the sub-region.

**Configuring Sub-Saharan African Immigration to the United States**

Sub-Saharan Africans have experienced a lot of migratory movements, either internally on the African continent, or across international borders (Takyi and Konadu-Agyemang 2006; Adepoju 2001). One country where sub-Saharan Africans migrate to is the United States of America. The conditions that impel them to come to the United States can be examined under the rubrics of “push-pull” processes according to Konadu-Agyemang (2003). Generally, the unfavorable conditions in a country or region may cause people to move to new areas because of the apparent attractions of these new areas (Takyi and Konadu-Agyemang 2006). Consequently, sub-Saharan African immigrants migrate to the United States because of the inequalities they perceive between the two cultural areas. These disequilibria may include cultural, economic, political, ecological, and xenophobic conditions, structural adjustment, globalization factors, and United States immigration laws (Adepoju 1998; Takyi and Konadu-Agyemang 2006). These are discussed in some detail below.
Worsening Economic Conditions in Sub-Saharan African Countries

The economic performance of sub-Saharan African countries such as Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and others over the past two decades has manifested itself in deteriorating social services, declining per capita consumption, and poor living conditions (Adepoju 2001). Other problems are famines, worsening balance of payments, declining foreign exchange earnings, negative growth of national incomes, and the indebtedness of the countries (Takyi and Konadu-Agyemang 2006; Konadu-Agyemang 2003). The stagnating conditions that the countries experienced in 1980s were grouped and dubbed the “lost decade” and compelled many of their citizens to migrate to the United States (Adepoju 2001). However, to promote the economic growth and reverse the dismal conditions of the countries, the International Monetary Fund crafted economic policies that were designed to ameliorate the economic problems such as debt repayments.

Structural Adjustment Programs

The growth of sub-Saharan African immigrants in the United States is manifested in the economic changes that affected their countries. Several of the sub-Saharan African countries such as Cameroon, Chad, Ghana, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, and Zambia became indebted during the 1980s and early 1990s (Takyi and Konadu-Agyemang 2006; Stock 2004; Konadu-Agyemang 2003; Adepoju 2001; Konadu-Agyemang 2000). The debts resulted from the increased government expenditures (Aryeetey Attoh 2010; Stock 2004; Konadu-Agyemang 2000). To effectively promote the debt reduction of the countries, the
World Bank used a pruning mechanism called structural adjustment for that purpose (Aryeetey Attoh 2010).

With the adjustment program, the affected countries were to reduce the cost of running their governments by cutting back on public services (Stock 2004). This cost-cutting method meant a retrenchment of many of the employees of the government. As the governments were major employers, the International Monetary Fund cost-reduction tactic caused the loss of many public jobs (Stock 2004). The resultant loss of jobs and other deregulation measures such as the removal of subsidies on social services put a lot of stress on the countries. Many of their citizens became impoverished and standards of living fell, causing both the skilled and the unskilled individuals to leave for a democratic country like the United States (Takyi and Konadu-Agyemang 2006; Konadu-Agyemang 2003; Adepoju 2001). These economic dislocations caused severe stresses that affected the political conditions on the sub-region.

**Instability of the Sub-Saharan African Political Landscape**

The scramble for Africa and the consequent partitioning and occupation of the continent by European colonial powers in the 1880s took no consideration of the ethnicity, religion, or political organizations that were in existence (Stock 2004; Best and Blij 1977). The division of the continent cut across ethnic groups. As a result of this action by European powers, President Nyerere of Tanzania commented that the existing boundaries of African countries were “ethnographical and geographical nonsense” (Chachage 2005: 5). Thus, without any understanding of these borders, adjacent countries
were prone to foment conflict among themselves. Consequently, some contemporary leaders demand that the colonial boundaries be adjusted to accommodate the sociocultural realities of the current countries by regrouping the ethnic groups (Adepoju 1998). Some leaders like Siad Barre of Somalia pursued this irredentist attitude and made the sub-region a theatre of conflict and wars (Adepoju 2001). This push to include similar ethnic groups across borders have brought pugilistic confrontations between the countries like Somalia and Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Cameroun (Adepoju 1998), and Somalia and Kenya (the Shifta War) (Wanambisi 1984). These belligerent conditions have generated population displacements from such countries, including some who fled to seek refuge in countries such as the United States.

Bad governance has also caused the migration of sub-Saharan African immigrants to the United States. Democratic elections in the African political arena have brought many sub-Saharan Africans to the presidency and leadership positions. Some became dictatorial and often used treacherous and totalitarian tactics such as the Preventive Detention Act of 1958 in Ghana (Williams 1978) and frequently introduced divisive policies to curb freedoms and intimidate opponents (Asante and Gyimah-Boadi 2004; Adepoju 2000). These policies often caused series of migratory tendencies of sub-Saharan African immigrants and some fled into exile and came to the United States to seek asylum and become political refugees (Adepoju 2000).

Political leaders of some sub-Saharan African countries like Zimbabwe, Congo Democratic Republic, Ghana, and Guinea some time past abhorred political pluralism and brutally gagged their opponents by arrest, detention, torture, and killing (Akwawua
2003). Some sought to entrench themselves in power and even refused to step down after losing elections. For example, in the December 27, 2007 election in Kenya, about 125 people died after the opposition charged the incumbent of rigging votes (Dixon and Soi 2008). This perhaps sparked the migration of some Kenyans into the United States.

Apart from the precarious democratization process that makes some parts of the African political landscape unstable and volatile (Adepoju, 2000), military leaders had used corrupt practices and mismanagement as pretexts and tools for removing their democratically elected governments. Using such toolboxes, the soldiers had elected and projected themselves into political power. These methods of changing governments have occurred in countries such as Ghana, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Uganda, Liberia, Sudan, and Nigeria (Takyi and Konadu-Agyemang 2006; Akwawua 2003; Konadu-Agyemang 2003). For example, between 1960 and 2002, over 85 successful coups d’état occurred in 35 sub-Saharan African countries (Stock 2004). The gun-politics and dismissal of rule of law caused many sub-Saharan African citizens to abscond from their countries. Some of them arrived as refugees and political asylum seekers in the United States as the following numbers indicate: 1997 (7,533); 1998 (4,132); 1999 (2,138); and 2000 (3,310) (INS 1997; 1998; 1999; 2000).

In addition, clashes between academicians and politicians and military usurpers have often led to the closure of some higher education institutions (Akwawua 2003). This has forced many professors and students to flee from countries such as Ethiopia, Sudan, Ghana, Uganda, Nigeria, and the Congo to the United States in order to preserve their lives (Akwawua 2003; Konadu-Agyemang 2003).
Furthermore, full scale armed civil combats erupted in countries like Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, South Africa, and Uganda (Takyi and Konadu-Agyemang 2006; Konadu-Agyemang 2003; Akokpari 1998). These disturbances generated thousands of migrants who found themselves in the United States. For example, in the internecine warfare between the Hutus and the Tutsis, thousands became refugees and over two million Rwandans fled the country (Stock 2004; Adepoju 1998; Akokpari 1998). Between 1996 and 2005, 1,349 of these Rwandan refugees were given permanent residence in the United States (DHS 2005). Between 2002 and 2005 other sub-Saharan Africans sought asylum in the United States because of conflicts in their countries. Illustrative are three countries where civil wars further caused massive migration, as discussed below:

1. In Liberia the promotion of the Krahn ethnic group by President Samuel Doe and the marginalization of the Gios and the Manos after the ousting of the entrenched Americo-Liberian ruling aristocracy of President Tolbert plunged the country into a civil war (Akokpari 1998). This war caused over 700,000 Liberians to flee and become refugees in neighboring countries and the United States. Between 1996 and 2005, for example, 25,260 Liberian refugee applicants were granted permanent residence in the United States of America (DHS 2006).

2. In the case of Sudan, the attempts by the ruling government to rule along Islamic Sharia laws in opposition to the Christianized south forced many Sudanese into exile (Akokpari 1998). This country – with the longest protracted civil war in
Africa – has, in the process, lost some of its highly educated manpower through migration (El-Khawas 2004). The current skirmishes in the Darfur region of Sudan might have also helped to generate migration from the country. Some of the displaced individuals may have made their way into the United States.

3. The Democratic Republic of Congo also epitomizes the unpredictable political landscape on the African continent. The attempts by the copper-rich province Shaba (Katanga) to secede spawned thousands of refugees and some of them fled into neighboring Angola (Akokpari 1998) and the United States. In 2006, 631 Congolese refugees from the Democratic Republic were given permanent residence in the United States (DHS 2006). The presence of such immigrants usually precipitates racial attitudes in the neighborhoods where they reside.

**Xenophobic Attitude**

Often the indigenes of a country blame immigrants among them for taking jobs from them, and this assertiveness precipitates discrimination and xenophobic behavior (Okome 2006; Adepoju 2000). Attacks have occurred against sub-Saharan Africans such as Malians and Senegalese in European Union countries like Portugal, Germany, and France, causing some to migrate to the United States (Okome 2006; Adepoju 2000). Some immigrants from Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe who entered the Republic of South Africa were not welcomed; they were accused of taking jobs from South Africans and were attacked (Taylor 2008). Such racist attitudes caused some sub-Saharan Africans in the country to migrate to the United States.
Unequal Environmental Resources Distribution

Environmental resources of the African environment have created conflicts that have indirectly generated pulses of migration and refugees (Akokpari 1998). Germaine to some of the environmental resource allocations are the ongoing skirmishes in Sudan (between the Muslim north and the Christian and animist south) along ecological borders that separate the richer south and poorer north (Akokpari 1998). Another area that has witnessed protests and the migration of opponents is the oil rich Niger Delta of Nigeria where Ogonis demand more oil revenues (Stock 2004; Akokpari 1998). This conflict still rages on and caused many of the local people and leaders to flee, some of them to the United States.

Besides the unequal environmental resource distribution that indirectly bred population displacement and migration, other natural hazards contributed to population restructuring and relocation on the continent (Konadu-Agyemang 2003; Akokpari 1998). In the 1970s and 1980s the massive droughts occurred in the Sahelian region of Africa and resulted in crop failures, which forced thousands of people to migrate (Konadu-Agyemang 2003; Akokpari 1998). Among the countries that experienced these acts of God were Ethiopia and Sudan. This situation forced some to migrate to the United States.

Not all sub-Saharan Africans who entered the United States were pushed out of the African continent by bad economic conditions; pull forces from the United States also encouraged them to come. The country serves as a cauldron that constructs fertile and stable conditions that draw immigrants, including sub-Saharan Africans such as
Tanzanians and Zambians. Among these pull conditions are historical, cultural, and economic factors, globalization, and immigration laws. The first of these factors to be discussed is the historical.

**Historical Factors**

The African continent has had historical contacts with the United States through the institution of slavery. Through slavery, many sub-Saharan Africans from the present-day locations of Ghana, Central Africa, Nigeria, Benin, and Angola (Coniff and Davis 2002) were transported to the Americas about 400 hundred years ago. The abolition of the slave trade in 1865 in the United States did not end the links (Conniff and Davis 2002). This was because some African leaders were later trained in the United States. Among them were Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana who was educated at Lincoln University in Philadelphia in the 1930s and 1940s (Nkrumah 1957); Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, educated at both Howard and Lincoln Universities (Azikiwe 1970), and Kamuzu Banda of Malawi at the University of Chicago (Pendelbury 2010). These individuals opened the gates to the United States and many sub-Saharan Africans from English West Africa, Ethiopia, and southern Africa followed to study at American institutions of higher learning (Bigman 1995). Though these students completed their education, some did not go back to Africa but chose to stay in America.

Besides these historical contacts, other connections between sub-Saharan African countries and United States are the study-abroad exchanges with the land-grant institutions and historically black United States colleges and universities (HBCUs).
(Conniff and Davis 2002). These institutions of higher learning paved the way for the next generation of sub-Saharan African students in the United States. These students are not only from West Africa and Ethiopia, but also from countries such as Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya. This connection has become an anchor by which many sub-Saharan African immigrants arrive in the country.

**Cultural Factors**

Many sub-Saharan African countries became independent in the 1960s. These became part of the growing body of sovereign nations of the United Nations Organization. In 1960 alone, seventeen diplomats of the independent sub-Saharan African countries arrived in the United States (Romano 2000). To promote cooperation with other countries, the governments also sent their citizens as ambassadors to countries like the United States.

Again economic reconstruction became paramount and highly qualified sub-Saharan Africans were needed to replace the colonial manpower. Consequently, these governments sent some of their citizens to countries like the United States for higher education (Takyi and Konadu-Agyemang 2006). Some of them faced racial discrimination in the country and were not willing to stay because of this. As a result of this attitude some of the students returned to their countries, with an eagerness stemming from their conviction of “home sweet home” (Banful 2003).

American racial discrimination was also experienced by sub-Saharan African diplomats (Romano 2000). The diplomats in the United States described their experiences
as “humiliating” and themselves and their staffs as “hurt,” “bitter,” and “cut-off” (Romano 2000: 6). To receive courteous service at the American restaurants, for example, the African envoys had to wear African dress (Holder 1983). A diplomat who received such a rough treatment was Ambassador Malick Sow of Chad who was turned away by a waitress of the Bonnie Blue Diner who said she did not recognize him as an ambassador (Borstelmann 2003; Life Magazine, December 8, 1961; Holder 1983). According to the server, the diplomat looked “‘like just an ordinary run-of-the-mill nigger to me. I couldn’t tell he was an ambassador’…. She, therefore, treated him as though he were an Afro-American” (Holder 1983: 39). With even diplomats receiving such xenophobic attitudes, many sub-Saharan Africans accepted as the reality of discrimination in America that Blacks had no respect irrespective of their status. These humiliating conditions discouraged many graduates from staying in the United States. In the mid-1960s the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 made racial discrimination in public places, like theaters, restaurants, and hotels illegal (The Dirksen Congressional Center 2006). This act created salubrious conditions for some students who entered American schools and had completed their education to stay and enjoy the booming economic conditions in the United States.

**Economic Conditions and Living Standards**

The United States is one of the Western countries that have high living standards. These economic and social developments have manifested themselves as the centripetal forces that pull and beckon immigrants such as sub-Saharan Africans to Europe and the
United States. Usually the information about the United States is spread in the sub-region by others who had previously been residents in America. Others obtain such information from the Internet, print paper, and films. Furthermore, their compatriots on the African continent are attracted by the automobiles and other electronic gadgets some returnees from America bring when they go back (Konadu Agyemang 2003). As a consequence of the images and real goods, which are presented by those from America, some become enticed and seek ways, legal or illegal, to enter the United States.

The United States Immigration Laws

The immigration laws of the United States are favorable policies towards immigrants such as sub-Saharan Africans. These laws have direct implications on the transformation and growth of their population in the country. Among the legislative instruments are the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), and the 1990 Diversity Program (Frazier 2006; Takyi and Konadu-Agyemang 2006; Akwawua 2003; Konadu-Agyemang 2003; INS, 2002).

The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) abolished the quota system of apportioning visas to immigrants and gave emphasis to job skills, refugee standing, and family reunion as important criteria for the entrance of immigrants into the United States (Frazier 2006; Akwawua 2003; Konadu-Agyemang 2003). This legislation thus enabled sub-Saharan Africans to file for and sponsor their immediate relatives, whether their spouses, children, or parents (Akwawua 2003; Konadu-Agyemang 2003).
Family reunion, however, has an unintended effect of creating a chain migration between the sub-Saharan African immigrants. This is because the kinsmen already in the United States form a bridge between the United States and the place of origin (Chacko and Cheung 2006; Konadu-Agyemang 2003). In such a process, sub-Saharan African immigrants who arrived first in the country help to support individuals by sponsoring them and some even reside with those who they sponsor when they arrive in the United States. East Africans such as Kenyans, Ugandans, and Tanzanians who arrived as academicians and skilled health professionals live in the United States. In 2006, 565 immediate relatives and 69 diversity visa recipients of Tanzanians entered the country. In the same year, 142 Tanzanian refugees and asylum seekers were granted stay in the country. Also in 2006, 583 Ugandans were able to join their families while 69 received sponsorship to enter the country from their compatriots or others such as foreigners with whom they had once been once associated.

Another immigration act that has helped to build Senegalese, Malian, Gambian, Ethiopian, Tanzanian, Ghanaian, and Nigerian and other sub-Saharan African communities in American cities was the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986. This act helped to regularize the status of immigrants who had arrived in the United States illegally before 1982, or had abused their legal status or overstayed their visas (Konadu-Agyemang 2003). This law enabled about 39,000 Africans to regularize their stay and become legal and permanent residents in the United States (Konadu-Agyemang 2003). This process also set in motion a chain migration for other sub-Saharan African entrants to enter the United States.
Besides the INA of 1965 and IRCA of 1986, another immigration law facilitating an increase in the number of sub-Saharan African immigrants in the United States is the 1990 Diversity Program. This program, also called Visa Lottery, is a lottery system, sponsored by the United States Congress, which makes available 55,000 visas to countries that have low rates of their citizens in the United States (INS 2002). This law has allowed and is allowing many sub-Saharan Africans to enter the United States. For example, 12,363 sub-Saharan Africans were given Diversity Lottery visas to enter the United States in 2006 alone, which included some 61 Zimbabweans, 31 Zambians, and 108 from Benin (DHS 2006). This also has implications of allowing whole families and later their affiliated co-ethnics to arrive in the United States by sponsorship and family reunion.

The Displaced Persons Act of 1948 was the first refugee legislative instrument enacted by the United States Congress (Refugee Council USA 2004-2011). This was to help the individuals who had been displaced from their countries because of political opponents, civil wars, and ethnic strife. Since that Act, many individuals from sub-Saharan Africa countries that have been plagued by military regimes, political conflicts, and civil wars have entered the United States as refugees. Upon entering, they have sought protection and taken steps to be incorporated into the American culture. While some refugees arrive in America by their own efforts, others have arrived with the support of voluntary agencies (VOLAGs).

There are eleven such refugee resettlement organizations in local communities in the country. These agencies include: the Chaldean Federation of America, the Church
World Service (CWS), the Ethiopian Community Development Council, the Episcopal Migration Ministries, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), the International Rescue Committee, the Kurdish Human Rights Watch, the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, the United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)/Migration and Refugee Services (MRS), and the World Relief (Refugee Council USA 2004-2011). Five of these VOLAGs exist in Ohio: USCRI (Akron and Cleveland), HIAS (Beachwood and Columbus), USCCB (Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Dayton), CWS (Columbus), and Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS) Columbus (State of Ohio 2012).

In Ohio, the sponsoring organizations have the responsibility for placing refugees with one of their affiliated offices such as: the International Institute of Akron, Inc., the agent for USCRI that has offices in Akron and Cleveland (The International Services Center); US Together, which is affiliated with HIAS and has its offices in Cleveland and Columbus; Migration and Refugee Services, associated with USCCB with offices in Cleveland; Catholic Charities, which is affiliated with USCCB with offices in Cincinnati; Catholic Social Services in Dayton, which has connections with USCCB; and Community Refugee and Immigration Services, Columbus, which is the agency looking at refugees sponsored by DFMS (State of Ohio). These affiliated organizations initially provide services such as housing, essential furnishings, food, clothing, community orientation, and assistance with access to other social, medical, and employment services, for the refugees’ first 30-90 days in the United States (U.S. Department of State 2011).
It has been discussed that push conditions have generated large volumes of sub-Saharan African immigrants to several parts of the world. However, due to humanitarian efforts in the United States, some of these refugees have arrived in Ohio cities such as Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Akron. As a result, Columbus is the home of refugees from Somalia. According to Ohio Refugee Services, between December 2004 and April 2005, 37 families comprising 221 individuals arrived in Columbus with support from CRIS and US Together (The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services 2011). Somalis are not the only sub-Saharan Africans in the city; others are Ethiopians, Ghanaians, Liberians, Nigerians, Senegalese, Sudanese South Africans, Rwandans, and Tanzanians. The presence of these immigrants provides huge economic opportunity for public, private, and ethnic businesses in the state capital.

Through the sponsorship of another VOLAG, Migration and Refugee Services that is associated with USCCB, 175 Liberians now reside in Cleveland. The Lost Boys of Sudan also reside in Cleveland. In Cincinnati is the Refugee Resettlement Program of Catholic Charities of Southwestern Ohio, which supports asylum seekers from Burundi and Eritrea (Curnutte 2010). Some Liberian refugee families are also located in Akron. These groups of refugees provide a market for the American economy and African-based businesses such as African grocery stores that sell products that at times are imported into the United States.

**Internationalizing Sub-Saharan African Academic and Professional Skills**

Information technology development has shrunk the size of the world and through globalization all countries have been brought together and nearer. One outcome is that
individuals from sub-Saharan African countries have knowledge about opportunities in the Western world. Among such awareness is the imbalance in the wages between countries for identical jobs. For example, nurses in the United States are paid $3,000 to $4,000 a month (Schrecker and Labonte 2004). As a result of such information dissemination, many health practitioners from Ghana – about 50 per cent of the doctors from that country – are practicing in the United States (The Guardian 2005). In addition, the World Bank data on immigration indicate that about 12,000 Nigerian professionals are working in the United States (Adepoju 2000). Some health personnel from Zambia and Tanzania are also in the country. All these professionals have helped to swell the number of sub-Saharan Africans in the United States, thereby creating a huge economic opportunity for American and ethnic businesses.

Conclusion

The arrival of sub-Saharan Africans to the United States is embedded in “push” and “pull” model of migration. Push factors on the African continent include political instabilities, worsening economic situations, full scale civil war, and racist attitudes, all of which have compelled some sub-Saharan Africans to migrate to the United States. The growth of this population in the United States has come from a conglomeration of both push and pull factors. These have created pockets of sub-Saharan African cultural identity in the United States in the cities in which these immigrants reside.

At this point I am going to restate the goals of the dissertation specifically in terms of sub-Saharan Africans and recast those questions precisely to the African grocery
store. This is because the creation of African grocery stores is inseparable from the growth and geographical concentration of the sub-Saharan African population in the United States. This growth has connections with both American and African-based businesses, because population growth opens a huge opportunity for these sectors of the American economy. The geographic concentration of sub-Saharan Africans also operates as a potent group resource that will unlock their access to labor, markets, and job opportunities (Kaplan 1997). One resource that will help is social-networking that has been used among sub-Saharan Africans as a method of social contact prior to the emergence of the popular Facebook. This social-networking is a social safety net of support for these immigrants. Another opportunity is economic in nature, in the form of the demand for traditional African food ingredients. How this food culture impacts the formation of African grocery stores is explored in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE AFRICAN GROCERY STORE

Introduction

As already indicated in Chapter One, the “African market” is a composite of African consumers, a venue, and sellers. It has a cultural connection with sub-Saharan Africans and traditional African food products. The consumers of the specialty foods and items are brought together in a building, which is the grocery store. It is this grocery store that is named the “African market,” where the food needs of sub-Saharan African consumers are sold. The “African market” is thus an important place concept in the examination of the business experience of sub-Saharan African immigrants in a place such as Ohio. In Chapter Three; I discussed the migration processes that led to the growth of the sub-Saharan African population, which is the market. In this chapter I throw light on the nature and some characteristics of the African grocery store itself.

The African Grocery Store Creation: A Scenario

This is the genesis of the African grocery store. Imagine two immigrants such as a British and a sub-Saharan African who come to the United States to reside there permanently. These individuals have to adjust to the conditions in the country. One
adaptation in is their food and dietary choices. For the British immigrant, food choices in the United States would be similar to those in England, though the nomenclature might change; it is generally the same food but with different names. For the British individual, assimilation would be easy in the United States.

The sub-Saharan African immigrant, on the other hand, would be confronted with three choices in the food products selected to eat. The first option is to forget about African foods completely and eat American foods. The second option is for this individual to look for food ingredients similar to those used in Africa from the existing ethnic grocery stores operated by Asians, Cubans, or Mexicans. The third option is for this individual to demand a grocery store that sells all the African food items. Generally, no American, Asian, or Hispanic entrepreneur is willing to open a grocery store solely for one or two sub-Saharan Africans because of their food needs. However, as the population of sub-Saharan Africans increases, someone with knowledge of the African foods will decide to create a grocery store to service that need. This scenario offers an insight into the establishment of the African grocery store that sells tropical food products that the sub-Saharan Africans want. What is the nature and characteristics of the African grocery store? This is what I am going to discuss in this chapter – the resources and geography of these stores.

The African Grocery Stores–Processes of their Creation

A scenario of the creation of an African grocery store was discussed earlier in this study. It suggests that these stores develop because there is a lack of such service for the
immigrants and someone steps in to fill that gap. When sub-Saharan Africans migrate, they retain aspects of their culture at the new destination. A cultural trait that is maintained is food and dietary preference. This behavior creates an economic opportunity for some entrepreneurs who take advantage of it and serve this market condition. The individuals who translate their mental image of the market condition and actually create these niche stores such as African grocery stores are cultural entrepreneurs (Agrawal and Chavan 1997). As has already been indicated, some African grocery stores evolve initially by directly selling items (Blackwell, Miniard, and Engel 2001) like clothes, meat, fish products, and phone cards to co-ethnics. Such sales usually begin at the residence of the operators. Other African grocery stores start through encouragement by family members and discussions with compatriots.

*Information Sources*

Family members, co-ethnics, and acquaintances can encourage and steer some individuals to establish businesses such as African grocery stores. This suggests that co-ethnic networking is important at the initial phase, as these networks help to provide information and advice on the creation of the African grocery stores. Usually the co-ethnic investors enlist their co-ethnics to help them search for information and resources that are necessary for opening the stores. The co-ethnics are charged specifically to look for information on the ethnic population and where they are located, labor, and supply sources. As a result, the co-ethnics scout for data that they think would be appropriate for opening the grocery store.
**Startup Capital**

The decision to start an ethnic business such as an African market involves family and co-ethnic financing (Walton-Roberts and Hiebert 1997; Sanders and Nee 1996; Phizacklea and Ram 1995; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). Some of the family finances are personal sources from the sale of property (Arthur 2000; Fadahunsi, Smallbone, and Supri 2000) or money that is accumulated from working one or more paid jobs (Walton-Roberts and Hiebert, 1997), vacation pay, and tax refunds. At times, the spouses and relatives combine their personal savings to start businesses (Walton-Roberts and Hiebert, 1997). Such actions make these businesses family businesses. In addition, some acquaintances can make contributions to start ethnic stores (Walton-Roberts and Hiebert 1997; Li 1993).

Another avenue by which the startup capital is accumulated for investment is through the informal savings and credit system called *tontine or susu*, which is a rotating credit association that is rooted in African tradition (Brooke 2010; Goldschmidt 1963). In Africa, the tontine or susu scheme works because there are social pressures that back them, as the members do not want to default on their loans (Brooke 2010). Based on their function to promote grassroots efforts in capitalism (Brooke 2010), tontines could offer the individuals finance capital in the United States. However, how will this grassroots money supporting system work in individualistic America for the sub-Saharan African investor?

Some individuals obtain their initial startup capital for investment from banks (Phizacklea and Ram 1995). While this is a conventional way of obtaining financing,
Black entrepreneurs sometimes face barriers when they want to access this method of investment (Teixeira 2001; Arthur 2000; Walton-Roberts and Hiebert 1997). Furthermore, support-agencies that guide and give entrepreneurial advice on how to obtain investment exist. However, few immigrants utilize this form of support for their business activities (Fadahunsi, Smallbone, and Supri 2000; Phizacklea and Ram 1995).

**Workforce Support**

African grocery stores, like some other ethnic businesses, are usually small-sized and family-oriented in nature (Teixeira 2001; Sanders and Nee 1996). They may be operated as ‘one-person’ or ‘family-oriented’ (Teixeira 2001) such as in partnerships between the husband and wife and kinsmen such as brothers, sisters, and in-laws. African grocery stores depend on the labor of the operators, their children, and co-ethnics (Teixeira 2001; Sanders and Nee 1996; Phizacklea and Ram 1995; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). The status of pay for the family members in the ethnic businesses is free (Phizacklea and Ram 1995; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990).

Some operators of the African grocery stores do not hire outside help. The spouses provide the labor, which reduces the cost of operating the facility. Some operators, however, hire co-ethnics and even non-co-ethnics. One process of hiring is informal in which the employers depend on their personal networks, their workers, and kinsmen to recruit from their own people (Teixeira 2001; Fadahunsi, Smallbone, and Supri 2000; Walton-Roberts and Hiebert 1997; Sanders and Nee 1996). This reliance on co-ethnic labor has advantages (Teixeira 2001; Walton-Roberts and Hiebert 1997;
Sanders and Nee (1996) as it is easily obtained and lowly-paid or unpaid, which helps
reduce costs to the business (Phizacklea and Ram 1995; Teixeira 2001). An added
advantage is that the workers can refer other co-ethnics to the store by suggesting
alternative products to the customers. The employees can also spread information to other
co-ethnics through word-of-mouth. The use of co-ethnics as employees allows easy
interaction and communication between buyers and sellers and creates a familiar
environment to the immigrants (Teixeira, 2001).

The operators and workers of the African grocery stores use some African local
languages, English, or French to communicate with their customers. The use of such
vernaculars helps to encourage trust and confidence between the two groups who are
culturally linked (Teixeira 2001; Fadahunsi, Smallbone, and Supri 2000). The use of the
African languages at the stores acts as a grease, which promotes communication and a
friendly atmosphere between the co-ethnics. In addition, the multiplicity of languages
helps to increase the customer-base from co-ethnics to include other ethnic groups who
may need some of these tropical and exotic items.

Products Types and Sources of Supply

Most of the products at the African grocery stores are familiar and specialty items
which the American grocery stores and ethnic grocers do not serve. The products are
mainly meats/fish and tropical food roots and tubers (Figures 1 A and B).
The meats include beef and cow parts such as oxtail, cow hide, and legs (Figure 1 A). There is goat and lamb venison prepared to suit both Muslim (which is Halal) and Christian religious groups. These meats and burnt goat meat with skin (bone-in-flesh) are prepared to suit the taste of the sub-Saharan African clientele. In some of the grocery stores, pork, cow tripe, and entrails are sold. Pork products are not sold at the Muslim operated stores. The chicken and turkey products are of tough flesh. Apart from the meats, there are various fish types, including gutted, smoked, dried, or frozen (Figure 1 B).

Other products include roots and tubers such as fresh yams, green and ripe plantains (Figure 2), and boxes and bags of potato, cassava, and corn flour (Figure 3).
There are also varieties of rice such as Asian Best, Uncle Bens, and scented and brown rice (Figure 4). In addition to these there are tinned products such as palm fruits, corned beef, sardines, and garden eggs (Figure 5).
Some of the products that are displayed at the African grocery stores are known not only in Africa but are also familiar in Asia and Latin and North American countries. This means that items sold at the African grocery stores are not all truly African because they are obtained from several continents.

The supplies that are used to fill the African grocery stores are produced in or obtained from countries in Africa, North America, Asia, and Latin America. These areas include Columbus, Cleveland, and Cincinnati, and beyond the local areas cities such as New York, Chicago, Newark, Washington D.C., and Toronto in Canada. The operators are not the importers of the products at the African grocery stores. The products are brought into the country by both co-ethnics and non-co-ethnics (Fadahunsi, Smallbone, and Supri 2000). Some grocery stores have their own brand of food items, which is a strategy used to forge links with customers (Emslie, Bent, and Seaman 2007). Generally, many operators of African grocery stores do not formally advertise their activities on television or in newspapers. Their activities are mainly spread through the co-ethnics themselves.

Reaching Consumers

Advertising is an attempt used by a business to position itself differently from other businesses (Blackwell, Miniard, and Engels 2001) and thus win their customers. While this technique seeks to retain and bring in new clientele (Emslie, Bent, and Seaman 2007), the African grocery stores do not advertise their stores, but actually publicize their products by traditional word-of-mouth (Money 2004). As my family moved into Ohio
from another state, a friend informed us about an African grocery store that was in the city. This technique helps the African grocery store operators reach a greater part of their consumers, to whom they offer customer centered personalized service and a “customer is right” strategy to penetrate, grow, maintain, and enjoy the loyalty of their clientele. The Internet, ready to provide driving directions and other information, and the Yellow Pages help others locate these stores, especially other ethnic groups such as Asians (Bhutanese and Nepalese), Hispanics, African Americans, and Whites who have had contact with the continent and its people and may also shop at the stores. Thus, the African grocery store is not exclusive to the sub-Saharan African but is an inclusive place for all ethnic groups.

To increase their exposure to the general public, store operators also use the services of members of various voluntary ethnic organizations and institutions such as hometown associations and religious institutions like churches and mosques who spread information about the grocery stores (Ocran 2005; Teixeira 2001; Fadahunsi, Smallbone, and Supri 2000). At times, some operators help to sponsor national festivities such as the Independence Days of sub-Saharan African countries. Other events that bring them and other community members together include weddings, naming, and funeral celebrations. The operators may not actually perform these functions, but they indirectly benefit when posters that communicate these events are displayed at their stores. The proprietors get to know where the action is and give their flyers, brochures, and business cards to the invitees. They can even ask the organizers to tell their co-ethnics about what items the store has to offer. These become strategies to penetrate, maintain, and expand their
grocery stores among their co-ethnics. These techniques help to shift some consumers of other stores to their own African grocery stores.

**Competition at the African Grocery Store Landscape**

Operators of African grocery stores usually tie their stores to immigrants from their own country. However, immigrants from other sub-Saharan African countries can visit this store as it is not monopolistic and exists to serve all the other groups. This makes the African grocery stores not exclusive to only the population from one particular sub-Saharan African country. In the cities that have more than one African grocery store, there would be competition for shoppers by the grocery stores. Where the operators are from the same country, the competition would be intra-country in nature. However, where the operators are from several sub-Saharan African countries, the grocery stores would compete for customers from their own and other countries. In such situations, inter-country competition would develop between the operators of the grocery stores.

Besides the competition among the African grocery stores, the stores compete with Asian, Hispanic, and American grocery stores where they exist. This competition occurs because these grocery stores have some food alternatives to the traditional sub-Saharan African foods. Consequently, the African grocery store landscape is not dominated by one particular grocery store. The presence of other grocery stores in the American retail place presents many shopping choices for the sub-Saharan African consumers. The African grocery store is not only a shopping space for the sub-Saharan
African clientele, but it performs other functions that are important in adjustment and mooring them in the United States.

The African Grocery Store as a Sense of Place

The African grocery store is a cultural canopy that offers preservation, practices, and cultural support to sub-Saharan Africans in American cities, and helps preserve aspects of their culture in America. It connects the immigrants with their roots through items such as foods and other products sold at the store. Usually the owners of the African grocery stores emphasize their ethnicity by inserting popular names of places such as a regional area, popular cities, and local stores familiar on the African continent to the immigrants. At the same time, these characteristics recreate a sense of place and belongingness to the immigrants. These stores reconstruct emotional satisfaction for the sub-Saharan African consumers in the country.

The African grocery store is an adjustment sanctuary for the sub-Saharan African immigrant. It helps sub-Saharan Africans to adjust and integrate into the United States and at the same time retain some cultural roots with Africa. The African grocery store is a cultural canopy, a space of convergence, desire, and contentment for the immigrants. Chance encounters of co-ethnics occasionally occur inside or in the immediate surroundings of stores. This is because some old and far-flung acquaintances may meet at this place (Chacko 2010). I have met people from Africa (Cameroon, Congo, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Tanzania), Asia (Bhutan and Nepal) and Central America at one of these stores. Chronicling such an encounter, one paper made the comment that “People
sometimes meet old friends here from Africa that they didn’t even know were in Minnesota” (Diasporian News 2004). Thus, the grocery store fosters interaction between sub-Saharan Africans who are scattered residentially in the cities. By this social networking, old networks are cemented and new ones are even forged. This action helps to further support other co-ethnics by giving them access to jobs, other information, and social relations.

The African grocery store acts as a communication center that allows immigrants to learn about events and services in the community and their homelands. Some of these events include births and naming ceremonies, marriages/weddings, and obituaries that are found on posters on doors and within the stores (Figure 6). Some immigrants and non-immigrants who have businesses oftentimes leave business cards and flyers to announce their jobs and services in boxes at the stores.

Figure 6. A poster at a door of an African market
Photo credit: Faith Odom, 2010
These jobs and services mainly target sub-Saharan Africans. Some African grocery stores, however, act as money wiring centers that transfer money to other countries for the immigrants. At times, the immigrants who want to send the money to their relatives immediately contact the recipients by using international phone cards bought at the stores.

Based on the plurality of services and support they provide, the stores not only serve as shopping places, but are informational and socializing centers. The grocery stores combine economic, social, and cultural functions to help the unfamiliar and newly arrived to negotiate conditions such as the unfamiliar food situation in America. These cultural sites offer space where sub-Saharan Africans can maintain their identity and also help their children who had not been to Africa identify with products from the continent. These ethnic meeting points where a rich mix of relationships converge, integrative and economic activities take place, and social events disperse and reach others, could be called “socioeconomic cultural centers.” These centers offer a sort of sociocultural safety net for the co-ethnics, as they act as repositories of some aspects of African culture. At times, the information that the stores relay transcends and spills beyond the city boundaries. This occurs when other immigrants from the cities without some African grocery stores occasionally visit the cities and purchase items.

An outcome of the assemblage of information and acquisition of startup capital, labor, and a supply of items is the creation of the African grocery store, whose structure is discussed below:
The Morphology of African Grocery Stores

As has already been discussed, a market is a set of consumers (Jones and Simmons 1990) and the market of African grocery stores is mainly sub-Saharan Africans. In the United States these ethnic-based consumers do not meet in an open air place that is typical of sub-Saharan Africa; instead, they meet in a building. Though the buildings are called “African markets,” they are generally stores. These are grocery stores modeled on the American supermarket because of some of the equipment that the facilities operate.

The African grocery store buildings are not freestanding but are previously used retail centers mixed with other convenience grocery stores at strip malls or shopping plazas. They are usually small to medium in size and are rented. Thus they exist with American, Hispanic, Asian, and other sub-Saharan African immigrant businesses such as churches, hair salons, and tax preparation offices. In some cities, the stores cluster together, as is evident in Columbus, which has many of these grocery stores. What are they like? How do the interiors look when one enters? These are described below:

Internal Structure of African Grocery Stores

A general portrait that depicts the geography of African grocery stores is described in this chapter. The reader is likely to find these features in various forms that may not deviate very much from each other. The infrastructure of the grocery store building includes shelves (gondola display and retail types); walk-in beverage bottle coolers and refrigerators; one or two cash registers; bone and meat cutting machinery; a twist-tying machine; retail food weighing counter scale(s); television; price gun; and
security cameras with a monitor. Some of these items in the African grocery stores are described below.

Shelves

Retail shelves at the African grocery stores are similar to those at American retail grocery stores and supermarkets. These fixtures are called gondola shelves and are made of metal or plastic. These allow maximum use of the floor and wall space at the stores. These fixtures are usually of various levels but the preferred type is the five tiered display. These are either freestanding (Figure 7) or wall mounted (Figure 8). The freestanding unit has shelves on both sides.

Figure 7. Two double-sided grocery store shelves
Photo credit: Hyiamang Odoom (2012)
The freestanding unit is also called aisle shelving. These fixtures allow customers to browse the merchandise on both sides of the gondola shelves. The use of the gondola grocery store displays allows the division of the grocery store into zones or clusters (Larson 2006). This facilitates easy recognition and browsing of items for sale. The use of wall-mounted shelves helps in transforming unused wall space into extra display merchandising areas (Easy Rack 2011).

![Wall-mounted grocery store fixtures with items (DVDs and cloths)](image)

Figure 8. Wall-mounted grocery store fixtures with items (DVDs and cloths)
Photo credits: Hyiamang Odoom (2012) and Faith Odoom (2010)

The number of freestanding shelves ranges from one long double-sided shelf to more than six, depending on the floor space of the building. The wall-attached gondolas also allow many additional products to be displayed. In addition to the gondolas, there are showcases that display some of the items. Wide spacing between two gondola displays...
fosters smooth consumer traffic at grocery stores. However, at some African grocery stores the aisles are narrow. This limitation between aisles prevents accessibility by customers as they browse food products (Larson 2006). This could cause some customers to bump side-ways into each other as they browse the different merchandise.

Coolers and Refrigerators

To keep the food and other products for sale very fresh, cold, unspoiled, and in better usage condition, they are stored in coolers and refrigerators (Figures 9 A and B).

Figure 9. A cooler (A) and refrigerators (B)
Coolers - Photo credit: Faith Odoom (2010)
Refrigerators - Photo credit: H. Odoom (2012)
The number of coolers depends on their size. The coolers usually carry beverages produced in Africa, Latin America, Europe, Canada, and the United States itself. Such bottled or canned products include soda pop, beer, African palm wine, malt drinks, mirinda, guava, mango drinks, and Fanta drink. The deep freezers and refrigerators have frozen vegetables, gutted tilapia and red fish, lamb, goat (skinless and burned skin), beef, oxtail, cowhide, and cow legs. In addition, there are smoked fish and smoked turkey and other poultry products such as hard chicken, which are popular to the immigrants. These are weighed, bagged, and priced.

**Other Equipment at an African Grocery Store**

The African grocery store has some other paraphernalia that are used to support its activities. Among these is the retail food counter weighing machine (Figure 10 A). The counter weighing machine may be analog or digital in nature. Some of the items that are sold are not pre-weighed and priced. As the food counter weighing machine suggests, this equipment is set on the counter near the cash register and is used to find the weight of some of the un-weighed items.
Another piece of equipment typical at the African grocery store is the meat and bone cutting machine (Figure 10 B). This machine allows the meat and fish products sold to be cut into smaller pieces. The bone and meat cutting equipment is also used to remove fish fins and cut them into the desired size. The meat, poultry, and fish are weighed on a scale and priced in the backroom. The cutting and weighing of meat and poultry in the back working room indicates that these African grocery stores have two scales; one at the checkout counter at the cash register and another at the backroom.

A twist-tying machine (Figure 11 A) is used to tie the plastic bags in which the cut or weighed items are put and priced with a price gun (Figure 11 B).
Other items that are part of the geography of the African grocery store are medications, beauty aids, and international phone cards (Figure 12 A and B).
The wall iconography of some stores consists of flags, paintings, or artwork from the operator’s country or from the countries of the customers, or video racks. Some of the stores have television sets that show a video or music video from the operator’s country or other sub-Saharan African countries. These movies and videos are shown as an act of entertainment or advertisement. In addition to these, there are CDs and cassettes of popular music artistes from the sub-region.

**Conclusion**

The African grocery store is an ethnic-based socioeconomic and cultural sanctuary for sub-Saharan African immigrants. The store helps in mooring the immigrants in the country. They are opened with ethnic resources. The store infrastructure and other geography of the African grocery store have been discussed. Why did sub-Saharan Africans decide to open these African grocery stores called “African markets” in some cities in Ohio? This demands going into the field to ask the operators who can best provide the answers. The processes to do so are the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE STUDY AREAS

Introduction

It has been discussed that sub-Saharan Africans are the primary users of African grocery stores. This is because – like many immigrants – sub-Saharan Africans hold onto their immigrant identity at the destination (Kent 2007). This identity helps them to create businesses that focus on sub-Saharan Africans. Where are these consumers located? Why were these cities chosen as study areas? What is the distribution of these immigrants in the cities where they are found? It is thus important to discuss the location of the consumers or the people who gave the sub-Saharan Africans the reasons to establish the grocery stores. These are some of the questions I examine in this chapter for four settlements in Ohio that were chosen for the study: Columbus in Franklin County, Cleveland in Cuyahoga County, Cincinnati in Hamilton County, and Akron in Summit County, all of which have African grocery stores.

Reasons for Choosing the Study Areas

I selected these cities for three reasons. First, these settlements have concentrations of sub-Saharan African immigrants with resources (ethnic resources) that
can be used to open the African grocery stores. The sub-Saharan Africans are consumers; they also provide labor in the grocery stores.

Second, I want to examine whether the decision of the sub-Saharan Africans to open African grocery stores mimicked Light’s assertion about immigrants’ participation in the general economy that “Unable to find work in the general labor market, or unwilling to accept the work that the general labor offers, or just reluctant to mix with foreigners, immigrants and ethnic minorities have the option of employment or self-employment in the ethnic economy of their group” (Light 2004: 3). The sub-Saharan Africans were chosen because their numbers are large and their demand for African foods encouraged the need to establish grocery stores to service this African market. This satisfaction of demand I believe provides them an opportunity to service that unfilled gap.

Thirdly, I selected these cities because they have African grocery stores.

In the introduction of this dissertation, I defined the “African market” as a group of individuals, usually with sub-Saharan African roots, who demand African foods and other goods that they were used to in Africa. This retail activity is a survival strategy of sub-Saharan Africans in the Diaspora, which also provides an employment avenue for the owners and workers. Also, it helps the immigrants to adjust to this new environment.

In Chapter Three, I discussed the migration processes that led to a huge population growth of sub-Saharan African immigrants. Generally, population growth confers benefits by virtue of the population’s demand for specific goods. In Chapter Four I discussed the African grocery store. In this chapter I discuss the study areas where these stores can be found.
The Development of African Grocery Stores

Basic factors of retail location according to classical location theory are labor, raw material, capital, and population that create the potential demand. In this chapter I am going to discuss how these factors apply in particular context to the African grocery store. A critical condition for the sub-Saharan African entrepreneur in the establishment of the African grocery store is the size of the population that constitutes the demand/market. Based on this, African grocery stores are associated with areas having high concentrations of sub-Saharan Africans. In Ohio, based on this logic, the likely places for the establishment of African grocery stores are Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Toledo, and Akron, all of which have high concentrations of these immigrants.

These five major cities in the state create ideal conditions, with a captive sub-Saharan African customer base, for the establishment of African grocery stores. The population has other attributes such as supplying sources of labor and information that are important for sub-Saharan African entrepreneurship. For the sub-Saharan African entrepreneurs, the ‘rules of thumb’ (Jones and Simmons 1990) of where to start the African grocery stores are areas with high concentrations of their compatriots who have a demand for specialty foods, meats, and so on. To this end, an understanding of the locational strategy of African retail grocery store depends on an analysis of the distribution of the sub-Saharan Africans in these cities. This is discussed at two scales: at the intermediate size (meso-scale), which is at the state level, and at the city-level, which is the micro-scale.
Meso-scale Analysis of the Five Large Cities in Ohio

At the state or meso-scale, five cities in Ohio have high concentrations of sub-Saharan Africans. These cities are Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Toledo, and Akron (Figure 13). The composition of the first ancestries of sub-Saharan Africans in the cities is summarized in Table 1.

![Ohio State - The Five Most Populated Cities](image)

Figure 13. State of Ohio showing the Five Most Populated Cities

Table 1 shows the various concentrations of sub-Saharan Africans in the cities. In Columbus the sub-Saharan Africans number 6,873; Cleveland: 379; Cincinnati: 829;
Toledo: 269; and Akron: 162. It is likely that there are some undocumented sub-Saharan Africans in the cities, according to some community leaders, and therefore actual numbers could be higher.

Table 1. First Ancestries of Sub-Saharan Africans Reported in the Cities, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Columbus</th>
<th>Cleveland</th>
<th>Cincinnati</th>
<th>Toledo</th>
<th>Akron</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>711,644</td>
<td>478,393</td>
<td>330,662</td>
<td>313,587</td>
<td>217,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verdeans</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopians</td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghanaians</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenyans</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberians</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigerians</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegalese</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leoneans</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalis</td>
<td>2,824</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africans</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudanese</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ugandans</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zairians</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabweans</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africans</td>
<td>6187</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africans</td>
<td>8,601</td>
<td>5,594</td>
<td>6,160</td>
<td>2,466</td>
<td>3,506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sub-Saharan Africans</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sub-Saharan Africans</td>
<td>6,851</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000: (PCT16 Table) [http://www.census.bureau.gov](http://www.census.bureau.gov)

According to Table 1, the Somalis formed the highest concentration in Columbus. Their number was 2,824. The next largest ethnic group in Columbus was the Ethiopians at 1,202, followed by Nigerians – 802; Ghanaians – 731; Liberians – 166; Senegalese – 95; and Sierra Leoneans – 88; among others. Apart from these there were also 664 sub-Saharan Africans whose countries were not given. In Cleveland, Nigerians (159) formed
the ethnic group with the highest number of people. Ethiopians numbered 43; Liberians – 40; Ghanaians – 28; and Cape Verdeans – 25. In addition, there were 29 people in Cleveland whose ethnic origin was unknown.

Nigerians numbered 218 in Cincinnati; Ethiopians – 143; Kenyans – 65; Ghanaians – 54; Sudanese – 36; and others – 193. The ethnic composition of sub-Saharan Africans in Toledo indicated this distribution: Nigerians – 130; Liberians – 64; Kenyans – 19; Ghanaians – 12; and others – 8. In Akron, the distribution of sub-Saharan Africans was as follows: Nigerians – 51; Ghanaians – 39; Zimbabweans – 15; and Liberians – 14. Given that the potential for the establishment of African grocery stores depends on high population, then all five cities of Ohio should have African grocery stores.

Empirical evidence emerging from the city of Toledo, with a high population of sub-Saharan African immigrants, contradicts the assumption that it should have an African grocery store. It had no African grocery store at the time of the survey, though Akron – with a lower concentration of sub-Saharan Africans – had one. A possible reason for this anomaly is the lack of a voluntary resettlement agency (VOLAG) in Toledo. As has already been indicated, VOLAGs are voluntary resettlement agencies that work with the United States State Department to place refugees throughout the United States (THHSC 2010). VOLAGs also provide services directly or arrange for them to be provided by local government agencies or other social service organizations, such as faith- or community-based organizations (CDSS 2008). Some of the groups served by VOLAGs are adults who had formed their eating habits before migrating.
Five counties in Ohio have refugee resettlement agencies. These are Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Montgomery, and Summit Counties. Some of the faith- or community-based organizations in these counties that offer support to refugees are Catholic Charities (Cleveland-Cuyahoga County), Community Refugee and Immigration Services (Columbus-Franklin County), Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) in Columbus and Cleveland, United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) (Akron-Summit County), and Church World Service (Columbus-Franklin County). Since Dayton, in Montgomery County, is not among the five-top ranked cities in sub-Saharan African population in Ohio it was not included in the study. Apart from this it had no African grocery store at the time of the study.

In addition to these VOLAGs are non-profit volunteer-based organizations. The Friends of the Sudanese Lost Boys of Cleveland (FSLBC) is dedicated to assisting the Sudanese Lost Boys in Cleveland to live the American Dream (Brett 2008), while another non-profit organization called Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services (ETSS) provides outreach services to the Ethiopian community in Columbus. The distribution of these non-profit groups may explain the concentration of sub-Saharan Africans in certain cities such as Burundians, Eritreans, and Somalis in Cincinnati (Curnutte 2010). These areas are fed by the regular processes of migration and have suddenly become very fertile for the establishment of African grocery stores because they are mainly individuals who have formed the behavior of eating African foods and identified with these foods. Thus it seems that VOLAGs that provide a regular stream of immigrants can help to explain why four cities -- Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Akron – have African grocery stores
but Toledo does not (Figure 14). As Toledo lacks an African grocery store, at the time of the study, the other four cities were chosen for the study.

Figure 14. The State of Ohio showing the Study Areas
The VOLAGs have made the four cities shown in Figure 14 super-ideal centers for the African market and thus for the grocery stores. It is a combination of these two conditions – migration and the VOLAGs – that is likely helping to precipitate and predispose these cities to generate conditions for the establishment of the African grocery stores.

The Cities at Micro-scale

It has been discussed that these four cities in Ohio have conditions that help to promote the opening of African grocery stores by sub-Saharan Africans. Each of these cities is discussed below, starting with Columbus. The analyses begin with their economic-base and the distribution of the users of the African grocery stores.

The City of Columbus

The City of Columbus is the capital city of the state of Ohio. Columbus was founded in 1812 and incorporated as a city in 1834 and since that period, it has annexed its outlying cities (Nasser 2003; Hunker 1996). This annexation policy helped to increase size of the city from 191 square miles in 1990 to its current size of over 225 square miles (Nasser 2003). The city’s manufacturing activities and its position as the state capital have combined to shape location decisions of businesses to the city (Hunker 1996) (see Table 2). The economic-base of the city is rich and diverse and this has been influential in attracting population. In 2000, the city of Columbus had a population of 711,644, an increase of 12.4 percent over the 1990 population of 632,910. As a result of this attraction
many of the economic sectors have large numbers of workers in educational, health, and special services (72,220), retail trade (50,528), and professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management (40,626).

Table 2. Columbus: Industrial Classification (2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>18,635</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>33,520</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>13,695</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>50,528</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and warehousing, and utilities</td>
<td>19,704</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>14,919</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing</td>
<td>38,455</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, administrative, and waste management</td>
<td>40,626</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational, health, and social services</td>
<td>72,220</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services</td>
<td>34,152</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services (except public administration)</td>
<td>16,151</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>21,594</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>374,891</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2000–2011 Pearson Education, publishing as Infoplease
Columbus, Ohio, Economic Statistics

The city has seven universities – The Ohio State University, Columbus State Community College, Franklin University, Capital University, Columbus College of Art and Design, Ohio Dominican University, and Mount Carmel College of Nursing.

Columbus has racial groups such as Whites, Blacks, American Indians, and Asians.
Table 3. Racial Groups – Columbus 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Group</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White alone</td>
<td>484,052</td>
<td>68.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black alone</td>
<td>171,493</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native alone</td>
<td>2,666</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian alone</td>
<td>24,743</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some other race alone</td>
<td>7,367</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>21,068</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>711,644</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (Table P6) Census 2000

Table 3 shows the various ancestries that were represented in the city of Columbus in the 2000 census. Sub-Saharan Africans are included in the black racial group.

In the 2000 census, the number of first ancestries of Africans that was reported in Columbus was 15,474 (2.2%) of which 6,873 were sub-Saharan Africans (Table 1). In addition to these documented sub-Saharan African immigrants in the city, it is likely there are others who have no residential permits but live in the city.

Columbus has attracted a large share of Somalis from Africa. They account for 41 percent of the sub-Saharan Africans in the city. The city has been attractive to Somalis for economic, social, and cultural reasons. In the maps that follow the City Hall represents the city center.
Somalis are scattered throughout the city, with the highest concentration in the suburbs, especially in the Northland neighborhood. The Northland neighborhood was once a white and black working-class neighborhood but is now multiethnic and the residence for many Somalis (Nasser 2003). The map of Somali residential distribution (Figure 15) shows a spatial location towards the suburbs. This residential trend towards the suburbs has implications for business location decisions of sub-Saharan African entrepreneurs in the city.
The next group in Columbus comprises Ethiopians. They account for about 17.5 percent of the city’s sub-Saharan Africans. They reside in a corridor that extends from the inner city of Columbus. The map of Ethiopians (Figure 16) mirrors a spatial location towards the suburbs in the east.

![Ethiopian Settlement Pattern in Columbus, 2000](image)

**Figure 16.** Ethiopian Settlement Pattern in Columbus, 2000
Nigerians make up 12 percent of the sub-Saharan Africans in the city. They are dispersed but are highly concentrated in the north, east, and west suburbs of Columbus (Figure 17). They are located in these neighborhoods because they followed where earlier groups of Nigerians lived.

Figure 17. Nigerian Settlement Pattern in Columbus, 2000
According to the 2000 census, there were 731 Ghanaians living in Columbus. These are dispersed and reside in the north, northwest, and southeast suburbs of Columbus (Figure 18). Some are scattered while others are concentrated within some neighborhoods.

Figure 18. Ghanaian Settlement Pattern in Columbus, 2000
Liberians are concentrated in suburbs in the northern and southeastern parts of the city (Figure 19).

Figure 19. Liberian Settlement Pattern in Columbus, 2000

The distribution maps of the sub-Saharan Africans in Columbus infer a spatial duality in their residency; in terms of dispersion and concentration. Liberians are widely scattered in pockets, but they cluster in some suburbia neighborhoods, with few residing near the city core. It is these established and concentrated areas in the neighborhoods with sub-Saharan Africans that are predisposed towards the establishment of African businesses. Thus, it seems that the suburbanization process of sub-Saharan Africans will
drive the location of the African businesses such as grocery stores to these suburban locations. The owners of the grocery stores will therefore respond to the sub-Saharan African demand by bringing the stores to the doorstep of the buyers in the suburbs.

Suburbia would be preferred because that is where customers of the ethnic-based African grocery stores are located and these geographical spaces will offer positive opportunities (Kaplan1997) for the sub-Saharan Africans. In one way, in the suburbs would be found an opportunity, in the form of demand, which is offered by the sub-Saharan African consumer. Again, the suburbs are concentrated with sub-Saharan Africans from whom pools of labor and other resources could be cheaply obtained. Furthermore, the suburbs present conditions that can enable the sub-Saharan Africans to achieve their aspirations for migrating, which is to attain a high standard of living for themselves and their families.

**The City of Cleveland**

The city of Cleveland is at the junction of the Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie. It is the capital city of Cuyahoga County, in Northeast Ohio. Cleveland was transformed into a commercial city in 1832 when it became the terminus of the Ohio and Erie Canal that had linkages with the Ohio River and the New York State Canal (Margulis 1996). The improved transportation that the city enjoyed increased its industrial growth. This state of affairs consequently created opportunities for the city’s population growth as jobs were guaranteed to immigrants who moved into the city (Margulis 1996).
Table 4. Cleveland - Industrial Classification (2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>8,105</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>32,929</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>5,646</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>17,973</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and warehousing, and utilities</td>
<td>10,868</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>4,478</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing</td>
<td>12,339</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, administrative, and waste management</td>
<td>15,402</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational, health, and social services</td>
<td>37,756</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services</td>
<td>16,219</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services (except public administration)</td>
<td>8,737</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>9,725</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2000–2011 Pearson Education, publishing as Infoplease
Cleveland, Ohio, Economic Statistics

Table 4 shows the economic base that made Cleveland attractive to the population. The employment sector with the largest number of employees is education followed by manufacturing, retail trade, and arts and recreation. As a result of these activities, many people migrated into the city. There are numerous higher educational institutions in the city of Cleveland, which include Case Western Reserve and Cleveland State Universities, Cleveland Institute of Art, Cuyahoga Community College (with ten campuses), David N. Meyers College, and ETI Technical College.

The immigrants in Cleveland are of different ancestries (Table 5) and arrived through chain migration, relocation from other cities, family reunion, sponsorship, and natural increase.
Table 5. Racial Groups – Cleveland, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Group</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White alone</td>
<td>199,594</td>
<td>41.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black alone</td>
<td>242,481</td>
<td>50.685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native alone</td>
<td>1,406</td>
<td>0.294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian alone</td>
<td>6,878</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>0.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some other race alone</td>
<td>17,234</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>10,604</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>478,393</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (Table P6) Census 2000

The city of Cleveland had experienced setbacks in terms of its population growth. In 1990, the city had a population of 505,616, but by 2000 this size had dwindled to 478,393. Cleveland has sub-Saharan African immigrants who reported themselves as first ancestries (Table 1). These are the consumers of the African grocery stores. Among them are Nigerians, Liberians, South Africans, and Ghanaians whose settlement distributions are discussed below. The discussion starts with Nigerians (Figure 20).
The distribution of Nigerians in Cleveland (Figure 20) shows that they were scattered throughout the city, with concentrations in the east and southeast in the inner suburbs of the city. They became concentrated in these areas because they followed their co-ethnics who lived in these areas.
Another group of sub-Saharan Africans whose presence is important in the opening of African grocery stores are Liberians. They are dispersed in the northeast and east of the city (Figure 21) and reside in the suburbs.

Figure 21. Cleveland - Distribution of Liberians in 2000

In recent years, the city of Cleveland has received a number of Liberians through Catholic Charities, a VOLAG. This was perhaps designed to help rejuvenate the city as it had lost population as of the 2000 census.
Besides these groups of sub-Saharan Africans, there are South Africans in Cleveland (Figure 22).

Figure 22. Cleveland – Distribution of South Africans in 2000

The South Africans are concentrated in five neighborhoods. They live away from the inner city just like the other sub-Saharan Africans in Cleveland.
Cleveland has been a residential area for Ghanaians. The map (Figure 23) shows their distribution in the city. They are concentrated in the eastern side and live in the suburbs.

Figure 23. Cleveland – Distribution of Ghanaians in 2000

These Ghanaians and other sub-Saharan Africans prefer the peripheral neighborhoods of the city because rents at the inner city center are often high. They also prefer these areas because they want to stay near their compatriots who can give them
support. Living near co-ethnics thus creates ethnic clustering as immigrants seek their own ethnic groups and others with similar backgrounds (Frazier 2010). The presence of these co-ethnics provides robust incentives to other co-ethnics to form businesses such as African grocery stores to help immigrants negotiate their adjustment to the city by reliving the African culture in faraway Cleveland and other cities, such as Cincinnati.

The City of Cincinnati

The City of Cincinnati was founded in 1788, chartered as a village in 1802, and incorporated as a city within Hamilton County in 1819 (Stevens 1869). The city is located on the Ohio River at the junction of the states of Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky. This location has made Cincinnati an important commercial and industrial center.

Table 6 shows the economic base of the city of Cincinnati. At the apex is the educational, health, and social services sector, which employs 34,899 people. This is followed by professional, scientific, administrative, and waste management (18,746); manufacturing (18,487); arts and entertainment, etc. (15,447); and retail trade (15,333). These economic activities of the city also provide ancillary support for the other existing activities. As a result this mix, the manufacturing activities of the city are diversified and products from these industries are globally known (Stafford 1996).
Table 6 – Cincinnati - Industrial Classification (2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>7,136</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>18,487</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>4,512</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>15,333</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and warehousing, and utilities</td>
<td>7,143</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>4,432</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing</td>
<td>11,029</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, administrative, and waste management</td>
<td>18,746</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational, health, and social services</td>
<td>34,899</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services</td>
<td>15,447</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services (except public administration)</td>
<td>7,028</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>6,198</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150,574</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2000–2011 Pearson Education, publishing as Infoplease

Cincinnati is also an educational center with educational institutions such as the Art Academy of Cincinnati, Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, and University of Cincinnati. The presence of these educational institutions and economic activities has drawn a large influx of several ethnic groups to the city.
Table 7. Racial Groups – Cincinnati, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Group</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White alone</td>
<td>175,262</td>
<td>53.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American alone</td>
<td>141,616</td>
<td>42.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native alone</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian alone</td>
<td>4,962</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some other race alone</td>
<td>2,264</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>5,648</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>330,662</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (Table P6)
Census 2000

Table 7 shows the first ancestries of ethnic groups in the city of Cincinnati at the 2000 census. Among them were sub-Saharan Africans. The settlement patterns of the major groups are discussed below; beginning with Nigerians (Figure 24).
Figure 24. Cincinnati – Distribution of Nigerians in 2000

Cincinnati is a destination preferred by Nigerians, who are dispersed all over the city. However, major areas of concentration are near downtown Cincinnati while others prefer the northern and southwestern suburbs of the city. The concentration of Nigerians downtown suggests that these could be students and other academicians at the University of Cincinnati.
Ethiopians also live in the city. Figure 25 indicates their locations. This settlement pattern shows that Ethiopians are concentrated towards downtown Cincinnati and the suburbs in the northern part of the city. It is possible that these are also students and/or academicians.

Figure 25. Cincinnati – Distribution of Ethiopians in 2000
The next group, South Africans, reside in suburbs, away from the downtown. They are mainly found in the north and northeast of the city.

Figure 26. Cincinnati – Distribution of South Africans in 2000

Some Ghanaians have made the city their home. As shown in Figure 27, Ghanaians reside in the northeast and southwest, away from downtown Cincinnati.
The City of Akron

The city was founded in 1825 near the Ohio-Erie Canal (citi-data.com 2006). The city had been a center of manufacturing in the past. However, many of the industries that made it very popular have relocated elsewhere or are derelict. Despite the industrial decline the city suffered industrial activity such as Goodyear Tire Company and other
manufacturing companies are still located there. In 2000, the economic base of the city showed the following statistics (Table 8).

Table 8. Akron - Industrial Classification (2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>5,212</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>18,482</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>3,301</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>12,106</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and warehousing, and utilities</td>
<td>5,520</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>2,490</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing</td>
<td>5,742</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, administrative, and waste management</td>
<td>8,094</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational, health, and social services</td>
<td>20,030</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services</td>
<td>9,068</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services (except public administration)</td>
<td>4,961</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>4,197</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>99,310</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2000–2011 Pearson Education, publishing as Infoplease

The city’s economic activities include healthcare, research, and educational functions that continue to attract population. The University of Akron is an important educational institution as are others such as the Akron School of Practical Nursing, Brown Mackie College, and Summit College. The city boasts of plasma research, three hospitals, and many private businesses. Of the economic activities that impact the city, educational, health, and social services account for a little over 20 percent of employment. Other industrial classifications that make the city attractive to residents are
manufacturing, retail trade, and arts, entertainment, recreation, and food services. The people attracted to this city are of different ethnic configurations. Table 9 shows the ethnic diversity of the city in the 2000 census, when the city had a population of 217,074. The groups with highest number were Whites followed by Blacks or people of African descent. There were 162 Sub-Saharan Africans in the city of Akron (Table 1).

Table 9. Racial Groups – Akron, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Group</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White alone</td>
<td>145,965</td>
<td>67.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American alone</td>
<td>61,287</td>
<td>28.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native alone</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian alone</td>
<td>3,148</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some other race alone</td>
<td>1,075</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>4,944</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>217,088</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (Table P6)
Census 2000
The sub-Saharan Africans in Akron include Nigerians, Liberians, Ghanaians, and Cape Verdeans, though the size of individual groups was small, according to the 2000 census. A composite map (Figure 28) indicates their settlement pattern in the city.
Conclusion

This chapter considers the African grocery store and its role in helping sub-Saharan African immigrants adjust to life in America. The geography of this business activity has also been considered. This retail format has been made possible in the four cities included in the study due to the presence of a robust and growing community of sub-Saharan Africans who are tied to African food ingredients in their food preparation. The emerging African grocery stores are multifunctional in character as they act as sources of economic activities, social functions, advertisement, and community centers. In addition, these niche stores are avenues of self-employment for some sub-Saharan African immigrants.

In the cities of Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Akron, most sub-Saharan Africans reside in the suburbs, which is consistent with findings by Yeboah (2008) and Teixeira (2001). Given that immigrants take advantage of the presence of their co-ethnics, the suburbs where the stimuli to eat African food ingredients exist become geographical spaces that offer positive opportunities (Kaplan 1998) to entrepreneurs. This is a shift from Euro-migrant businesses that locate at the core of cities (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). What images do sub-Saharan African immigrants who opened these stores have that encouraged the storekeepers to start these niche stores called “African markets”? Finding such images involved going to the operators to ask them why they started these stores. This is the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER SIX

THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

This study presents exploratory research on African grocery stores and is not designed to test any geographical or mathematical models. In the previous chapter, I discussed the spatial dimensions of African grocery stores, which dealt with an observation of African grocery stores in the study areas. In this chapter, I will examine the attitudinal aspects of the study, a new perspective that is based on the owners of the stores. This aspect is subjective in character in that it deals with what the owners think and do, and seeks to find the processes that encouraged them to open the grocery stores. The science of discovering such individual viewpoints is by Q methodology. Q methodology has not been applied to study sub-Saharan African immigrants in African grocery stores. This technique, and how it is used to explore these subjective and attitudinal viewpoints, is discussed next.
Q Methodology

This section deals with the application of the Q technique. Q methodology is an exploratory method that seeks to provide an orderly examination of human subjectivity through statements of opinions that are ranked by an individual (Brown 1980). This qualitative-quantitative methodology (van Exel, de Graaf, and Rietveld 2011; Akhtar-Danesh, Baumann, and Cordingley 2008) probes the decision making process of individuals by grouping those who share similar opinions (Durning and Brown 2007). Q methodology is used in disciplines such as political science, communication, psychology, advertising, health science, public policy, and other fields (Tolymbek 2007; Brown, 2005; Oswald and Harvey 2003; Thomas and Watson 2002). In addition to its popular usage in several social sciences, it is now making inroads among human geographers (Bischof 2010; Eden, Donaldson, and Walker 2005; Robbins and Krueger 2000). This research technique was invented by William Stephenson for studying human behavior in 1935 (Stephenson 1935). This method allows groupings of commonalities and differences in subjective opinions of a sample to be analyzed (Brown 2004).

Q methodology studies can be intra-subjective or inter-subjective (Brown 2004). Intra-subjective data are obtained from an individual on numerous issues of interest (Brown 2004). In this technique, the individual may be asked to sort a series of statements on a variety of constructs that reveal his/her viewpoints on an issue under investigation (Brown 2004; Brown 1980). When examined in total, the findings may reveal similarity of patterns that this person has on the issue (Brown 2004).
The inter-subjective studies, on the other hand, aggregate the viewpoints of a group of people on single or multidimensional issues (Brown 2004). This method, which reveals traits of a cluster of like-minded people on a particular issue (Brown 2004; Brown 1980), fits this study about African grocery stores. This is because the study seeks to find principal opinions that encouraged not only one sub-Saharan African entrepreneur, but several sub-Saharan African individuals to establish African grocery stores in the four cities in Ohio. Q methodology is therefore used to investigate the mental images that the sub-Saharan African immigrants had about this kind of retail job. This behavior is represented in a testable form by modeling them by Q sorts (Sunoo 1972). Q method was appropriate as I was interested in the self-referent reasons (Robbins 2005) that motivated the entrepreneurs to open their grocery stores. I wanted to find out if the opinions of the operators would coincide with the ethnic business models.

Several investigative methods such as ethnography (Yeboah 2008) and multivariate analysis (Kang and Kim 1998) have been applied to study immigrants’ participation in ethnic businesses in the United States. However, the Q technique has not been applied to study sub-Saharan Africans in ethnic grocery stores or to study a section of immigrants in economic activities in the United States as far as I know. Using this technique would therefore make it the first of its kind in its use in ethnic businesses and also in its application to sub-Saharan African immigrants in African grocery stores in the four Ohioan cities.
Images of Ethnic Stores of Sub-Saharan African Immigrants

Images regarding the presence of sub-Saharan Africans exist in the minds of some immigrants. Some images are based on the growing number of the immigrants as a source of potential economic activity that needs to be exploited. On the one hand, this opportunity has probably emerged as a result of sub-Saharan African consumption behavior, which is the desire to eat one’s traditional African cuisines in America. African cuisine is not one type; it is as varied as the different groups in the sub-region. It can be fragmented broadly into Central African, East African, South African, and West African dishes. In fact, these foods can be further divided into ethnic preferences. Thus, in West Africa, foods such as amala, eba, fufuo, moimoi, jolof, ampesie, and dodo exist. In East Africa Zambia has nashima and ifisashi; Tanzania – ugali and Ndizi Kaanga; Ethiopia – njera; and Somalia – sambusas and basmati rice. These are not all but are just a slice of the dishes available to the sub-Saharan African and the consumer can find the ingredients needed for their preparation in these African countries.

On the other hand, this opportunity is a repercussion of the inability of American and other ethnic grocery stores to satisfy the food needs of the sub-Saharan Africans. Thus the migratory decision of this group has brought not only demographic changes but has spun off of economic activities, which are voids that need to be filled.

Sub-Saharan Africans who migrated to the United States brought with them their traditional African cultural upbringing that includes eating specific foods and dietary preferences. This consumer demand thus spawns economic activities. In this case, there is a close linkage between the population growth and the emergence of the stores. Usually
individuals have different ways of processing information and my task was to find the reasons that encouraged the sub-Saharan Africans to open the grocery stores to satisfy the growing sub-Saharan African population.

This investigation into the starting of African grocery stores was explored by using Q methodology. This was because as a science for examining subjective human perceptions, it would help to enrich our understanding and appraisal of immigrant entrepreneurship. Specifically, the technique would help in providing an understanding of the viewpoints of the operators on what prompted them to open the grocery stores. In essence, Q technique would help me to answer why these sub-Saharan Africans opened the African grocery stores. This is because the data from the field, in the form of the viewpoints, could be tested and mapped with factor analysis by grouping common viewpoints of the respondents. Also with the mathematical-factor analytic Q technique, the work can withstand the robustness of the scientific method.

Objectively, several reasons interact when an individual makes the decision to establish a business. Such reasons may include a lack of entrance into a wage job, a presentation of an opportunity, a desire to continue an old job at the current destination, or the desire to be self-employed. These decisions are subjective in nature as each individual has his or her own interpretations for making that choice. But how does one know what influenced an individual to go into a particular business unless you ask him or her? This knowledge is attained by discovering the individual’s subjective viewpoints, because “subjectivity is the arbiter, the pre-selector, the grid of the various actions
actually taken by the individual” (Sunoo 1972: 417), a process that can be examined by Q technique.

Subjectivity can be conceptions or wishes within a mindset of an individual. In terms of ethnic businesses such as African grocery stores, the operators may have varied reasons for opening the stores, such as the presence of other sub-Saharan Africans in the city or the absence of a grocery store that serves the needs of that group. Again, the decision to start may be due to lack of wage employment or the presence of an opportunity. As the operators themselves know what caused them to make that decision, the researcher therefore cannot speak for the operators of the African grocery stores. The operators can therefore speak for themselves and they can provide reasons why they opened the food stores. As these viewpoints are subjective in nature, Q technique was used to test these opinions on statements that are related to ethnic businesses that include grocery stores.

Ethnic business studies deal with immigrants’ involvement in economic activities at their destination. Generally the decision to participate in the economy of the host country is entirely dependent on the individual (although there could be counseling, the final choice rests with the individual decision maker) and Q methodology is used for investigating this human subjectivity (Tolymbek 2007). According to (Light 1972: 4) “Self-employment has still an undeniable appeal to the unskilled, the unemployed – indeed to anyone disadvantaged in the general labor store.” Thus by Light’s (1972) assertion, immigrants enter into a self-employment because of the problems they encounter at the destination. This study therefore sought to explore whether the sub-
Saharan African immigrants experienced problems such as low wages or racial discrimination and, if so, whether these problems caused them to establish the African grocery stores. It was for this reason that I decided to find out from the immigrants themselves what prompted them to start these stores. To find answers to this question, I had to interview the owners or operators of the African grocery stores themselves.

**Operators Selection: The Structure of the P–Set**

The sample of operators in Q is the “person-set,” or P–set (Dahlstrom et al. 2005; Brown 1980) and the operators are the actual persons in the general population who have opinions that are relevant to the problem under investigation (Brown 1980). In this study, the P–set consisted of sub-Saharan Africans who were owners/operators of African grocery stores in the four cities of Ohio. The operators had been in the country for at least five years. They were further distinguished by gender/sex, age (young and old), and class as represented by education (the highly educated and those with low education). The African grocery store P–set design is shown in Table 10.

**Table 10. P–set Structure for the African Grocery Store Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Effects</th>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Gender</td>
<td>a) male</td>
<td>b) female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Immigration Status</td>
<td>c) old arrival (5+ years)</td>
<td>d) new arrival (&lt;5 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Education</td>
<td>e) college education</td>
<td>h) no college education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ABC = (2) (2) (2) = 8 combinations
Based on the P–set, eight (8) combinations representing some characteristics of immigrants in ethnic business were generated. The characteristics included immigration status (whether old or new arrival); gender (whether male or female); and education. The P–set structure thus cuts across various demographic characteristics such as gender, education, and length of stay in the country. Based on this diversity, it is possible that these immigrants had different experiences or viewpoints in their decision to open the African grocery stores.

During the preliminary study it was discovered that these businesses were operated by two individuals, either by spouses (husband and wife) or relatives (mainly brothers). Sixteen African grocery stores were identified that became the target of the study. The P–sample was comprised of heterogeneous groups of sub-Saharan Africans mainly from Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, and Somalia. This provided a diversity of sub-Saharan African groups for this exploratory study. Viewpoints obtained from interviews with some of them formed some of the statements that were incorporated into the Q research instrument.

**The Q Sample**

A Q sample is a set of statements relating to the problem under discussion (Robbins 2005; Brown 2004; Brown 1980), which is the opening of the African grocery stores. The population of statements or concourse, which provides a comprehensive list of the issue (Akhtar-Danesh, Baumann, and Cordingley 2008; Robbins 2005; Brown 1980; Stephenson 1978), is “the entire universe of existing views and opinions that relate
to a particular issue or question” (Tolymbek, 2005: 68). The concourse is therefore a set of subjective statements on any issue (Brown 2005) which comprises primary and secondary source quotes on a variety of materials including scholarly publications and newspaper articles (Tolymbek 2007; Eden, Donaldson and Walker 2005; Robbins 2005; Brown 2004). According to Stephenson (1978: 97) “the statements have no normative value; they are like equal marbles in a bag and gain their saliency only in the act of Q sorting… Meanings are what the given situation and Q sort instruction require.” Thus these statements may be meaningful and interpreted by the operators based on the experiences they encountered at their cities of residence.

In the discussion of models of ethnic enterprise, it was found that the structural, cultural, and interactive models had relevance to the sub-Saharan African immigrants’ entrance into African grocery stores. These models therefore provided the foundational basis for the development of a comprehensive theoretical framework for generating some of the statements for this study. The Q sample structure of the African grocery stores comprised main effects and levels (Table 11), culled from the writings on ethnic businesses by Aldrich and Waldinger (1990), Teixeira (2001), Waldinger (1986), and Raijman and Tienda (2000).
In this study, the models were reduced into their main effects and categorized and transformed schematically into the block-design (Brown 1980) as shown in Table 11. In the schematic design, from the structure was (ace), (bdf), (acf), etc. In block-design, the groups ABC produced 12 combinations (2x2x3 = 12 combinations). Each of the 12 cells was replicated m = 3 times; that is, three statements of each combination were generated. These generated many statements of which a total Q sample size of N = mABC = 36 was selected. This number seemed to be reasonable for this study. This number did not mean all the statements or issues that were related to the African grocery store landscape had been exhausted.

The literature of ethnic stores represents many statements, views, and opinions of researchers and operators of ethnic businesses themselves. This situation allows an
unlimited number of statements to be drawn (Stephenson 1978) as the literature keeps on increasing (Brown 1980). In this study, some of the statements were self-referent opinions (Brown 1980; Sunoo 1972) and were obtained from the operators of African grocery stores through interviews, as already indicated. In addition, some statements were drawn from literature on ethnic businesses.

From these two sources, 138 statements were assembled. The statements included cultural statements like “I went into business largely with the support from my business friends who told me that the business was good,” and “All the family and co-ethnic labor is not free.” In the case of the structural/disadvantage model, some of the statements were “Low wages I was given encouraged me to open this African grocery store,” and “I encountered difficulties when I was looking for money to open this grocery store and the problem prevented me from opening this store.” Some interactive statements were “Sub-Saharan Africans have unique sets of wants and preferences that are best served by a member of sub-Saharan African immigrant member like me,” and “The presence of sub-Saharan Africans who wanted their traditional food and the desire of my family to help me enabled me to open this store.”

The statements were sorted to reduce redundancy and the remaining were representative of a panoramic view of ethnic businesses that included African grocery stores. After purging the statements, the 36 statements that were representative of African grocery stores were used as the sample. Thus the eventual Q sample was “a purposive selection of statements…chosen to include a relatively comprehensive and diverse subset of the full set of statements in the concourse” (Brown 2005: 1). The statements that were
drawn contained the “main features that are found in the statement universe in the same way that a sample of persons has features similar to those in the population” (Durning and Brown 2007: 542). The statements were randomly assigned, serially numbered, printed, and taped on index cards for administration to the operators.

The research questions included: What were sub-Saharan African immigrants’ images of African grocery stores? Did the operators go into African grocery stores because they could not get wage employment? Was the African grocery store an opportunity to service a niche market in the locality because of the absence of similar stores for their co-ethnics? Was the opening of the store an avenue to self-employment?

Researchers have propounded theories in respect to ethnic businesses, but some people may question whether the ethnic theories have any equivalence in the images (Sunoo 1972) held by African grocery store operators. Q methodology is able to test these assertions by modeling the viewpoints of the sub-Saharan Africans in the structure of Q-samples (Sunoo 1972). To test these assertions, some ethnic business referent statements and the African operators’ self-referent views on African grocery stores were generated, constructed, or obtained from the literature to form the concourse. These statements (Appendix I) and other questions (Appendix II) were pretested before they were given to the operators to complete. This pretesting was to find out if these could help in answering the questions posed by the study.
Research Questions

This research was conducted to answer the following questions about the African grocery stores in Ohio:

1. What influenced the opening of African grocery stores; that is, what reasons spurred the sub-Saharan African immigrants to start the African grocery stores in the cities in the study? Q methodology was to help in answering that question.

2. What are the sources of information used in opening the African grocery stores?

3. What are the sources of the capital used to open the African grocery stores?

4. What is the type of labor used, which is the source of labor, and how is this labor obtained? What advantages are obtained for using this type of labor?

5. What are the supply sources for the African grocery stores? Are they local or external?

6. What methods are used to reach the consumers of these grocery stores?

7. What competition do these African grocery stores face?

Finding answers to the questions posed in the study involved interviewing the operators of the African grocery stores themselves, which meant some African grocery stores had to be identified for the study.

The Sampling Frame

The units of interest were African grocery stores and their operators and what influenced them to open these stores. To discover the reasons, there was a need to obtain first-hand information from the proprietors. This was undertaken by the survey method.
Prior to the survey, scouting was conducted to identify the units of study and to contact some of the owners. The Yellow Pages and Internet were used to identify some of the grocery stores through their names. Some stores were absent in these media and a number of operators helped in identifying other stores that were not found in these registers.

The observations made in the preliminary survey were helpful in the preparation of the survey instruments. This primary survey yielded 16 African grocery stores distributed among the settlements as follows (Table 12):

Table 12. The Number of African Grocery Stores in the Study Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Number of stores</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>81.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akron</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Internet, Yellow Pages, and storeowners

All 16 identified grocery stores were purposively incorporated into the study. In scouting for the stores, some of the operators were asked questions about their business. Some of the information was modified, made into statements, and incorporated into the Q sample. These statements/viewpoints were added as first-hand experiences of the operators of the African groceries themselves, and did not reflect the views of the researcher, who was just a bystander trying to explain why the operators started these stores. These statements and others from ethnic literature were then incorporated into the
questionnaires, within the cell of the block-design in which they fit. These statements and others were tested on some storekeepers of an African grocery store.

**Questionnaires and Pretesting**

To answer the questions that were raised about what influenced the opening of African grocery stores involved the preparation of questions that were related to the grocery stores. The questions involved two categories:

One category of the questionnaire was on Q methodology. Decision making is subjective because every individual has personal opinions relating to any issue. As decision making is subjective, Q methodology is the vehicle for unraveling and examining subjective forming opinions (Brown 1980). To this end, 36 statements (Appendix 1) relating to ethnic businesses that include African grocery stores were constructed for completion by the African grocery owners. These statements were pretested on some operators to find out if they could help to answer the research questions.

Another questionnaire involved the profile of African stores and operators in the American retail landscape. This part was made up of 26 closed-and open-ended questions (Appendix 4), which profiled the African grocery stores. Among these were questions about the sources of information and money, the labor store, the sources of supply, the strategies of doing business such as keeping their customers, and competition. Other questions asked about their previous background in retailing and the year in which the grocery store was opened.
Pilot Testing of Questionnaires

Pretesting is important in surveying. It involves a questionnaire that is used in a small pilot study to ascertain how well the questionnaire works to answer the questions the study asked (Hunt, Sparkman Jr., Wilcox 1982: 269). This pretest is an iterative process in which aspects of a project are checked and revised until the questions communicate very well with the priority population (Brown, Lindenberger, and Bryant 2008). The pretest helps to remove some questions and correct mistakes so that the research questions being asked in the study could be answered by these statements (Drennan 2002). The questions to be used in the study were first sent to two operators of African grocery stores to complete. This was to find out whether there was any need to make corrections to the questions before they were taken to the other grocery store operators. After this testing and refining, the questionnaires were ready to be given out. These were composed of two sets of questionnaires – one on Q methodology and the other on store profile.

Prior to the sending the questionnaires, some potential grocery storeowners were approached personally. Some were approached through friends, who introduced me and explained what I was doing and why I needed their help. Three sets of questionnaires (one store profile and two Q sorts) were sent to each store; one person was to complete both the store profile and one Q sorting questionnaire, and the other person was to complete only one Q sort. Accompanying the questionnaires on the Q methodology were the instructions on how to complete it.
Instructions for Sorting Q Statements

The instructions on the questionnaires were that they had to read over the 36 statements carefully in order to understand what they were about. The grocery store operators were asked to respond to the statements about their experiences when they made the decision to open the store. In responding to the statements, the operators could choose to agree, disagree, or indicate that they had no idea of whether or not it supported them in the decision of starting the grocery stores. To this extent the respondent was to group the statements on the index cards into three categories, with respect to the way in which the information in the statements (1) supported/helped, (2) affected him/her negatively and did not help, or (3) was neutral. In essence, the statements were to be grouped into three categories: (A) were those that the operator agreed with; (B) were statements that he/she disagreed with; and (C) were statements that the operator did not agree or disagree with, the neutral ones, which were to be scored under ‘0’ on the score sheet (Appendix 3).

Of the statements that the operator agreed with (under A), the operator had to select one of the statements that he/she regarded as most important in the decision to start the store and rank it as +5 and write that statement number on the score sheet. After this the operator was to select the next statement (in group A) that he/she agreed with but did not consider as important as the first statement. This was to be scored +4 and its serial number written under +4 on the score sheet; the score sheet had space for two such 4-point statements. After these two statements, he/she was to consider the next three statements and evaluate them in terms of importance of how they helped in the store and
rank the three of them under +3. Of the next nine, four statements that he/she was
certainly in agreement with but was not as important as the 3 statements were to be
ranked +2 and their serial numbers written under +2 on the score sheet. Of the last five,
the operator was to write the serial numbers of the statements under +1 as their
importance was diminished when compared to the rest of the statements with which
he/she had already agreed.

The respondent was to repeat what he/she did for the first 15 Q statements with
the 15 statements in index card pile B that he/she disagreed with because they did not
encourage him/her in the opening of the store. In this case, the statement that the
respondent most disagreed with was to be ranked –5 on the score sheet, and so on,
following the ranking steps that were used in ordering the statements with which he/she
agreed.

In the process of sorting, the operator would work back and forth on the
statements, making sure that each statement actually reflected his/her actual experience
and therefore was scored accordingly. Also, in working through the scoring, the operator
could make changes if a given statement did not capture the real situation. A completed Q
sort score sheet (Appendix 3) would be look like Figure 29.
Consent to Administer Questionnaires

After the completion of the questionnaires, approval was obtained from Kent State University Institutional Review Board (See Appendix 2). Such permission was a policy of the institution when the respondents were human beings, and satisfying this condition enabled the research to begin. A disclosure of the review board was that an individual had a right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Administration of Q Sorts

Some of the operators were contacted by telephone and arrangements were made for a personal meeting with each of them. The operators were from the cities of
Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Akron. Administration of the questionnaires began in December 2008 and ended in March 2010. Generally, the operators were given two weeks to complete the questionnaires. However, it took more than that time in some cases. At the end of the period 20 operators, made up of 11 males and 9 females, sorted the 36 Q statements.

Mechanics of Q Sorting

The operators provided valuable information to the researcher. They had confidence that they were able to respond and complete the questionnaires. According to the instructions, operators were to keep on sorting until they were satisfied that the responses on the score sheet (Flitcroft, James, Freeston, and Wood-Mitchell 2007) reflected their experiences. The operators were to give the statements with which they agreed a score of +5. However, the strength of the agreement diminished, tapering off in value to +1 and finally to a neutral position ‘0’ in the middle of the score sheet. The statements that were not agreed with were to be scored from –5, tapering off to –1 and again reaching 0 in the middle of the score sheet. Zero (0) represented statements that the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with, which is the neutral position (Brown 1980). The geography of sorting the statements then suggests that level of agreement or disagreement tapers off from both sides of the score sheet towards the middle, or neutral position, quantitatively suggesting that these statements had no effect on the issue under discussion.
In Q methodology, all the statements are equal (Brown 1980). As a result, each can be measured as +5, –5, etc. In Q methodology, as it was used in this African grocery store study, the operator represents his or her viewpoints as accurately as possible. This mechanism means that the individual can appraise and change the ranking of each statement until he or she is satisfied that the factors that influenced his/her establishment of an African store was truly represented. This means each operator implicitly has to make a total of \( \frac{1}{2}(N)(N - 1) \) = 630 considerations in comparing and sorting the 36 statements to represent the picture he/she had that influenced him/her to start the African grocery store. A typical picture or mind-set is given by the operator identified as A1 (Table 13), who loaded highest on Factor B.

Table 13. A Completed Q Sort of Operator A1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Disagree</th>
<th>Most Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-5  -4  -3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3  +4  +5</td>
<td>2   20  3   4   19  31  12  18  6   34  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10  11  16  23  32  15  21  36  7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9   14  27  33  25  22  8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1   28  13  26  24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29  35  30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 13, it can be seen that respondent A1 agreed with statement 5 and disagreed with statement 2, which read as follows:
5. I wanted to be self-employed so I used my personal money to open this grocery store.

2. I obtained my money for this grocery store money from my country’s rotating credit union.

The operator used to work at a used car dealership and was interested in owning his own business (statement 5). On the other hand, the operator disagreed that the money he used to open the store was from a credit union. These statements were from the individual’s own viewpoint. The experiences of this operator may be different from another operator, even from the same shop, and therefore their responses may not be the same. If their experiences were the same, their score sheets would be similar. I collected or received the completed questionnaires for analysis.

Collection of the Q Sorts, Problems, and Research Involvement Rates

Prior to the collection of the questionnaires, the operators were called on the phone or visited to find out about the progress of the research. Several visits were made to the storeowners before the questionnaires were ready for analysis. Guidance on the sorting was provided and interviews were conducted to ask about their reasons for rating some statements positive and higher than other statements. These interviews were a type of follow-up, providing an in-depth understanding their experiences.

The research met a barrage of problems that included obtaining the questionnaires from the respondents. Another one was the identification of the African grocery stores, as some did not appear in the Yellow Pages or Internet. A number of store owners and sub-
Saharan African immigrants helped in locating of some of the grocery stores. While this method yielded identification of some stores, it was possible some might have been missed.

Building rapport between the researcher and some of the grocery store owners was not easy. In some grocery stores contacts were made personally. In a number of cases contacts were made through telephones and the friends of the storeowners. Some grocery store operators were very enthusiastic and willing to help in the project and requested the questionnaires. Other storeowners, however, refused to accept the questionnaires. Some accepted the questionnaires but after reading the questions, they declined to be a part of the study even when they were told they would not be identified by name.

Another problem was language. The questionnaires were in English and were given to operators who spoke African vernaculars but for whom English or Arabic was a second language. As a result of this, operators had to translate the questions from English and understand them in their native languages. This process could have changed the meaning attached to these questions and thus affect the results of the study.

Also, the number of questions and statements might have been too many for some of the operators; consequently, the willingness to complete the questionnaires was a problem. Again, there could have been lack of control over the setting of the responses. The questionnaires were left with the operators to complete at their own pace. This development made it difficult to know the atmosphere under which each operator completed the questionnaires.
In addition, it was probable some of the storeowners were suspicious of the intentions of the researcher, perhaps thinking that he wanted to look into their activities. As already indicated, some of the operators initially accepted the questionnaires but later refused to complete them despite the assurance of anonymity. Furthermore, some of the operators might have had the notion that the researcher had been given some money and that they should be remunerated for volunteering this information to the researcher. By the end of 15 months, 10 out of the 16 African grocery store operators had completed the questionnaires. Twenty of the questionnaires involved the use of Q methodology while 10 were on the profile of the stores. This yielded a response rate of 62.5%.

**Conclusion**

African grocery store operators go into the business for various reasons. These reasons are subjective in nature as everyone’s viewpoints may not coincide with those of the others. One way to examine why the sub-Saharan African immigrants decided to open African grocery stores was by Q methodology. Statements relating to the study were generated from ethnic business models and from some of the operators of the African grocery stores. In the end, 36 statements relating to this retail format were selected, serially numbered, randomized and pretested before their final administration in the study areas. The problems related to collection of the data have been discussed. The next chapter discusses the results from the study.
CHAPTER SEVEN

RESULTS OF Q METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The discussion on the structural, cultural, and interactive models in Chapter Two supposed that theoretical reasons underlie why immigrants such as Sub-Saharan African immigrants open their own businesses. However, are the reasons as indicated by these models empirically exhibited by Sub-Saharan African immigrants in their decisions to start the African grocery stores? Reasons for deciding to open a venture such as a store are personal in nature. Research to reveal the images of African grocery stores as they exist in the minds of sub-Saharan African immigrants was done through Q methodology.

Method of Analysis

To find answers to the research questions, fieldwork was undertaken in the four settlements. This was designed to capture the views of the African grocery store operators about the reasons that encouraged them to open the stores. Are the views of the operators who completed these questionnaires consistent with the explanations in the ethnic business models? To address these issues and thus answer these questions, original empirical data were obtained through questionnaires completed by the operators. The
firsthand responses would help to illuminate the sub-Saharan African entrepreneurs’ motives for opening African grocery stores. The PQMethod program that utilizes factor analysis was used to analyze the views of the 20 operators of the grocery stores.

**The Q Method Program**

PQMethod is a computer program that is specifically designed for Q-sort data (Schmolck and Atkinson 2002). It begins by facilitating entry of the statements that were used in the study. It then prompts the analyst to enter each Q sort (maximum n=120 sorts). Once the data are entered, the analyst selects an option (from a menu), such as principal component analysis to extract unrotated factors. Once the original factors have been extracted, the analyst has the option of rotating them either by varimax criteria or judgmentally (Brown 1980, 1996). I chose the varimax in which the program selects the factors needed to be selected. The final step, which is from the program’s menu, involves the calculation of factor scores and the incorporation of the tables into an output file (Brown 1996).

Factor analysis was used to discover resemblances and variations in the factors that influenced the operators of African grocery stores to open them. This is because factor analysis searches “for groups of Q sorts which, on the basis of their correlations, appear to go together as a group, or type” (Brown 1980: 207).

The reason for the analysis in this study was to find out whether the African grocery store operators had similar experiences and had rated the 36 statements similarly.
(van Exel, de Graaf, and Rietvel 2011), an indication that the grocery operators had common opinions about the stores (Akhtar-Danesh, Baumann, and Cordingley 2008).

A transitional stage between the raw field data and factor analysis is the correlation matrix (Brown 1980). This matrix is shown in Table 13, which is a cross-tabulation of the responses from the 20 respondents with the decimal points omitted.
### Table 14: Correlation Matrix between Operators of the African Grocery Stores Study

|   | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | 100 | 55  | 48  | 37  | 49  | 32  | 31  | 22  | 13  | 51  | 39  | 7   | 40  | 41  | 42  | 68  | 6   | 67  | 59  | 56  |
| 2 | 55  | 100 | 37  | 48  | 40  | 35  | 48  | 46  | 3   | 28  | 44  | -3  | 23  | 61  | 28  | 48  | 27  | 20  | 44  | 54  |
| 3 | 48  | 37  | 100 | 14  | 1   | 20  | 31  | 23  | -21 | 20  | 12  | 2   | 14  | 43  | 36  | 34  | 16  | 28  | 39  | 42  |
| 4 | 37  | 48  | 14  | 100 | 70  | 36  | 75  | 59  | 52  | 26  | 26  | 30  | 40  | 68  | 20  | 73  | 57  | 42  | 72  | 63  |
| 5 | 49  | 40  | 1   | 70  | 100 | 43  | 41  | 51  | 47  | 44  | 41  | 25  | 30  | 42  | 28  | 64  | 42  | 47  | 63  | 47  |
| 6 | 32  | 35  | 20  | 36  | 43  | 100 | 39  | 42  | 25  | 36  | 43  | 24  | 19  | 40  | 31  | 53  | 28  | 29  | 50  | 52  |
| 7 | 31  | 48  | 31  | 75  | 41  | 39  | 100 | 46  | 27  | 30  | 11  | 22  | 27  | 74  | 20  | 68  | 60  | 29  | 61  | 70  |
| 8 | 22  | 46  | 23  | 59  | 51  | 42  | 46  | 100 | 15  | 23  | 44  | -5  | 43  | 55  | 18  | 43  | 52  | 19  | 59  | 39  |
| 9 | 13  | 3   | -21 | 52  | 47  | 25  | 27  | 15  | 100 | 11  | 14  | 22  | -7  | 18  | 4   | 48  | 28  | 30  | 43  | 26  |
| 10| 51  | 28  | 20  | 26  | 44  | 36  | 30  | 23  | 11  | 100 | 18  | 22  | 35  | 22  | 45  | 44  | 28  | 58  | 20  | 39  |
| 11| 39  | 44  | 12  | 26  | 41  | 43  | 11  | 44  | 14  | 18  | 100 | -2  | 31  | 37  | 26  | 32  | 28  | 17  | 29  | 41  |
| 12| 7   | -3  | 2   | 30  | 25  | 24  | 22  | -5  | 22  | 22  | -2  | 100 | 12  | 9   | 14  | 16  | 8   | 33  | 5   | 0   |
| 13| 40  | 23  | 14  | 40  | 30  | 19  | 27  | 43  | -7  | 35  | 31  | 12  | 100 | 39  | 18  | 39  | 14  | 40  | 24  | 36  |
| 14| 41  | 61  | 43  | 68  | 42  | 40  | 74  | 55  | 18  | 22  | 37  | 9   | 39  | 100 | 41  | 71  | 68  | 25  | 63  | 75  |
| 15| 42  | 28  | 36  | 20  | 28  | 31  | 20  | 18  | 4   | 45  | 26  | 14  | 18  | 41  | 100 | 40  | 17  | 43  | 40  | 57  |
| 16| 68  | 48  | 34  | 73  | 64  | 53  | 68  | 43  | 48  | 44  | 32  | 16  | 39  | 71  | 40  | 100 | 42  | 60  | 80  | 76  |
| 17| 6   | 27  | 16  | 57  | 42  | 28  | 60  | 52  | 28  | 28  | 28  | 8   | 14  | 68  | 17  | 42  | 100 | 12  | 40  | 52  |
| 18| 67  | 20  | 28  | 42  | 47  | 29  | 29  | 19  | 30  | 58  | 17  | 33  | 40  | 25  | 43  | 60  | 12  | 100 | 52  | 46  |
| 19| 59  | 44  | 39  | 72  | 63  | 50  | 61  | 59  | 43  | 20  | 29  | 5   | 24  | 63  | 40  | 80  | 40  | 52  | 100 | 71  |
| 20| 56  | 54  | 42  | 63  | 47  | 52  | 70  | 39  | 26  | 39  | 41  | 0   | 36  | 75  | 57  | 76  | 52  | 46  | 71  | 100 |
Table 14 depicts correlations ($r$) between the operators and these fall between +1.00 (indicating identical views) and −1.00 (indicating completely opposite views) between any two operators (Brown 1980). Instances of complete agreement or disagreement between two operators in the study did not occur; and is a rare event (Brown 1980).

In this study, correlations that exceed $+0.41$ indicate that there is significant agreement in viewpoint between the two operators, and those in excess of $−0.41$ depict a significant disagreement in viewpoint. This figure ± $0.41$ was computed using the standard error formula $\sigma_e = 1/\sqrt{N}$ where $N$ is the number of Q statements (Durning and Brown 2007), which in this study was 36 statements, hence $\sigma_e = 1/\sqrt{36} = 0.16$, and under the normal curve, 99 percent of randomly generated responses would fall between $2.58 \sigma_e = 2.58(0.16) = \pm 0.41$.

Factor analysis is used to study the common patterns of relations among many viewpoints (Akhtar-Dansh, Baumann, and Cordingley 2008). By this robust mathematical technique it is possible to identify the operators of African grocery stores who have similar views about African grocery stores and aggregate them together. A factor is a composite rank-ordering of the statements by the individuals who define that factor (van Exel, de Graaf, and Rietveld, 2011; Akhtar-Dansh, Baumann, and Cordingley 2008). If all the operators had the same reason for starting the African grocery stores, then only one reason, or factor that embodied this commonality in opinion would emerge. If there were two mindsets that prompted the operators to open the grocery stores, then two clusters of operators, or two factors, would emerge and so on. In the case of the African
Among the important outputs from PQMethod are unrotated and rotated factor matrices with eigenvalues of all the extracted factors. Unrotated factors have eigenvalues. By convention, an eigenvalue that is greater than 1.00 determines the significance of a factor (Brown, 1980) (though Brown [1980] argues against this, see p.40). Based on the conventional eigenvalues greater than 1.00 rule, an unrotated eight-factor solution was produced in this study. The eigenvalue of Factor A was 8.3920, which accounted for 42 percent of the variance in the total viewpoints of the African grocery operators; Factor B (1.9387) accounted for 10 percent of this variance; Factor C (1.7896) accounted for 9 percent; D (1.2623) accounted for 6 percent; E (1.0948), 5 percent; F (0.9680), 5 percent; G (0.8010) 4 percent; and H (0.6748) 3 percent. In this case five factors with eigenvalue above 1.00 emerged, which determined the selection of these five factors.

Therefore, an examination of the eigenvalues of the images that sub-Saharan African entrepreneurs had about African grocery stores suggests that five factors should have been selected to explain their entrance into the African grocery business. However, a certain condition made it impossible to select all five factors and also affected a four-factor solution. This was because with the four-factor solution, one of the operators (A6) lacked a defining factor, which fell short of ±0.41. While a two-factor solution was possible, this would have accounted for few of the different kinds of strong reasons that encouraged the sub-Saharan Africans to create the African grocery stores. Consequently, the four- and two-factor solutions were rejected and the three-factor solution was selected
as each of the 20 operators had a defining loading of ±0.41. This suggested that three viewpoints existed among the sub-Saharan African grocery store owners.

The unrotated three-factor solution that emerged had eigenvalues that were above 1.00; Factor A was (8.3920); Factor B (1.9387); and Factor C (1.7896) (Figure 30).

Figure 30. Eigenvalues of unrotated factor scores

These three accounted for 61% of the variance in the total explanation.

Another rotation method is the varimax. In the varimax rotation, the computer rotates the factors and one has to decide on the number of factors to be flagged. Once flagged, these represent the emergent factors of the study. In this study, three factors emerged. In the varimax rotation, Factor A accounted for 29% of the variance in the total
viewpoints of the African grocery operators; Factor B accounted for 21% of this variance; and Factor C explained 11%. See Figure 31.

An important output table of Q methodology is the rotated factor matrix (Table 15).
Data in Table 15 indicate that the respondents had been in the country for over five years and were of various education levels. The length of residence may help them in their experience in terms of opportunities that are in the country. The length of residence in the city will also help in identifying the best location for a store and make the individual aware of the size of the sub-Saharan African population, especially those from a particular country, whether Somalis, Ghanaians, Nigerians and so on. Again by the length of stay in the locality, the individual may get involved in social organizations, whether religious, hometown, or general community, that are important in business
creation. From such associations, the individual may know and capitalize on the social networks that have been created among compatriots.

Education levels of the respondents varied, and this may affect the way the individual views opportunities and potentials. Respondents who loaded high on the three factors classified their education as 2-year or 4-year college. Education can help the individuals, and those with high levels can develop strategic marketing skills such as organizing and making useful analysis about the feasibility and profitability of a business, especially for those with past retailing skills. Again, a question that arises is did they go into business because something was wrong with their education? It should be noted that A1 was a car dealer and others had gone to school since entering the United States. Did the individuals with such levels of education enter this business because it was the only way to be mobile upwardly? Did they go into that sector because they were earning low wages? Were they avoiding years of retraining by going into self-employment (Scott 2010) like other sub-Saharan Africans who become highly educated and attain professional degrees? The study will throw light on some of these.

Table 15 shows that operators A2, A6, A7, A8, A11, A14, A17, and A19 had similar reasons for opening the grocery stores and these were loaded on Factor A. Their opinions differed from operators A1, A10, A13, and A15 who loaded on Factor B; these had identical opinions for starting the African grocery stores. In the case of Factor C, operators A9’s and A12’s reasons were similar. Thus, three factors emerged, suggesting that three different views encouraged the respondents to open the grocery stores. Thus emergent factors were considered as attitudes that the respondents operantly defined in
terms of their experiences as they ranked the statements according to their own opinions on African grocery stores (Brown 1980).

Why would the operators who were from the same sub-region have differences in opinions regarding the starting of the grocery store? The answers to this behavior are based on the scores given to the statements, ranging from +5 to –5, that indicate their experiences. The factor scores are expressed as z-scores (McKeown and Thomas 1988) that are converted into whole numbers that represent the locations on the scale used (–5 to +5) (Flitcroft, James, and Freeston 2007) (see Appendix 1). In this dissertation, the highest score was assigned +5; the next two z scores were assigned the value of +4; and the next-highest three scores +3. In the case of negative scores, the first lowest score was assigned –5; the next two were assigned –4 and so on (Brown 1980).

The factor scores, in three arrays under factors A, B, and C, reflect the operators’ experiences regarding the extent to which these factors supported or hindered their decision to open the grocery stores, as their subjective responses to the 36 statements indicate. Thus, understanding the mind-set of the operators on Factor A demands an examination of each of the statements in comparison with the other statements on Factors B and C. This means the factor arrays “are interpreted directly by comparing and contrasting the rankings of Q-sample items (factor scores) in factor arrays” (Dziopa and Ahern 2011: 41). Thus a ranking of +5 that was assigned to a statement was stronger than a +4 and was more important to the individual than the statement that received +4. These statements express the uniqueness of each factor and its differentiation from the other
factors (Akhtar-Danesh, Baumann, and Cordingley 2008; Flitcroft, James, Freeston and Wood-Mitchell 2007).

The strongest statements reflecting the operators’ experiences – both the most important and most unimportant experiences – are those that are placed at the extreme ends of the sorting continuum. In relating these to the study then, the statements at both ends of the sorting scale would indicate the most important reasons that affected the operators in their decision to open the stores. These statements are used in labeling and interpreting each factor (Akhtar, Baumann, and Cordingley 2008).

**Explanatory Reasons for Opening of African Grocery Stores**

Evidence from Table 15 indicates that there are two major groups of attitudes: the pure cases and the mixed cases (Brown 1980). The pure cases are shown in bold fonts/parentheses, and occur where the factor loadings are in excess of ±0.41 on a single factor. The mixed loadings comprise 6 operators, who are A3, A4, A5, A16, A18, and A20 and have correlated viewpoints in common with more than one factor. Of these 6 mixed cases, 2 sorts (A3 and A18) are significantly correlated with Factors B and C; 2 sorts (A4 and A5) with Factors A and C; and 2 sorts with Factors A and B. Such mixed viewpoints are important but I will not focus on them in this analysis. The focus of my discussion is on the respondents who stand alone, which are the pure cases that are in bold fonts and not those factors that are a combination of two or more factors.

Eight operators define the pure cases (Brown 1980) for Factor A in Table 15. These are operators A2, A6, A7, A8, A11, A14, A17, and A19; they do not share their
perspectives on African grocery stores with others, as indicated earlier. They have their own unique views on why they opened the grocery stores. Factor B defines A1, A10, A13, and A15 who have their own mental picture about African grocery stores and these are different from those on Factors A and C. Operators A9 and A12, who load on factor C, have similar viewpoints about African grocery stores that are different from Factors A and B.

The three factors have been labeled: Factor A is Demand-Opportunity; Factor B is Cultural-Resources; and Factor C is Independence-Aspiration. The labeling was based on the distinguishing statements that are typical of each of the factors. In designating these names, I based them on the statements ranked as important by the grocers. Each reader may conclude differently in giving a label that is appropriate through his or her own inspection and understanding of the shared meanings of the individual statements that received high factor scores, either positively or negatively, on each extracted factor (Appendix 1). In the next sections I discuss the reasons that encouraged the establishment of African grocery stores in the study areas.

**Factor A**

An output from the PQMethod program is a table of factor arrays that depicts factor scores of the study. The first emergent factor, labeled Factor A, was based on the statements with shared meaning in comparison to the other factors. As a result of the observation of the distinguishing statements that are related to demand, I classified and named factor A as Demand-Opportunity. The operators who load on this factor are A2,
A6, A7, A8, A11, A14, A17, and A19 (see Table 15). The respondents whose entry into
African grocery stores were represented by Factor A greatly valued the potential demand,
especially the opportunity created by the presence of the immigrants, most of whom ate
foods from their country of origin as an avenue to self-employment. These statements,
grounded in what the respondents had experienced, created the necessary and tipping
conditions to influence them and make the establishment of the African grocery stores
feasible. Responses by the sub-Saharan Africans to some of the statements (with scores
for all factors A, B, and C) that portray and describe this characteristic behavior are
indicated below (the scores in parentheses are for factors A, B, and C, respectively):

6. I opened this African store because American grocery stores do not serve food
 products that sub-Saharan Africans need to prepare their cuisines. (+5, 4, –2)
5. I wanted to be self-employed so I used my personal money to open this African
grocery store. (+4, +4, +5)

12. Sub-Saharan Africans demand for their traditional African foods encouraged me
to use my personal money to start this African grocery store. (+4, +3, +4)
4. I based my knowledge on the presence of sub-Saharan Africans and my past skills
in store management and decided to look for money to open this store. (+3, -3, 1)
21. Immigrants such as sub-Saharan Africans have unique sets of wants and
preferences that are best served by a member of the sub-Saharan African
immigrant community like me. (+3, +2, -1)
25. I decided that with so many sub-Saharan Africans living in this city I would look
for money to open an African store. (+3, -1, 2)
Statements 6, 5, 12, 4, 21, and 25 are important in influencing the decision by the operators to open the African grocery stores. Such viewpoints, which are characteristic statements of Factor A, are important because they focus on demand and opportunities that are important in the development of that business.

The most important response on Factor A was statement number 6, which scored +5. Statement number 6 emerges from the opportunity component of the interactive concept of immigrant enterprise. Most sub-Saharan Africans in the diaspora have roots with their homelands through dietary and food choices. At the destination, most of the immigrants prefer to eat the local cuisines to which they were accustomed on the African continent, but have difficulty finding in typical American grocery stores.¹

The presence of the sub-Saharan Africans confers immense potential opportunities on the immigrants themselves (Kaplan 1997). Consequently, this vacuum and the concentration of immigrants create an opportunity that the sub-Saharan Africans try to fill by investing in the community in which they reside. It is the existence of such market conditions – both the demand for specific products and the lack of service – that encouraged the entrepreneurs to open the stores. At the same time, opening the stores helped to provide self-employment for the immigrants.

¹ In America, few grocery stores sell many of the sub-Saharan Africans’ food ingredients. According to Kaplan (1997), American retailers invest little in immigrant neighborhoods because the social environment does not offer much potential to them. This suggests that American grocers do not invest in African food products because they may not benefit from them. A possible reason is that the Americans do not have adequate knowledge of African food ingredients.
Self-employment is one way immigrants forge ahead in the United States (Maxim 1992). Such employment becomes possible if the individual takes advantage of the opportunities which are available to them at the destination (Raijman and Tienda 2000; Light 1972). As an avenue of economic integration in the American economy (Kaplan 1997), self-employment also helps explain why some operators open grocery stores. Thus statement 4 is scored +4 on Factor A: operators wanted independence and to be their own bosses, an attitude that goes with self-employment.

Statement 12, which states that “sub-Saharan Africans demand for traditional African foods encouraged me to use my personal money to start this store,” is also central to the formation of African grocery stores. This statement is drawn from the opportunity structure of the interactive model, which asserts that store conditions may favor businesses that serve ethnic needs (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). An implication is that the consumption behavior of an immigrant community can provide an economic niche and this characteristic behavior of sub-Saharan Africans is an opportunity and an incubator of an immigrant business (Kaplan 1997).

The chain migration and relocation of sub-Saharan Africans have led them to concentrate in certain neighborhoods. This residential concentration confers benefits by virtue of their presence (Kaplan 1997). The presence of sub-Saharan Africans fits into the interactive model, specifically the opportunity structure, while the “past skills” condition fits into the characteristics of the group. The geographical concentration of the immigrants opens potential avenues for job creation. In such areas, the prospective operators have access to labor, capital, supplies, and markets (Kaplan 1997), while some
operators utilize the past skills they brought from their homelands or acquired in this
country. In the case of past skills, the individuals who possess them are in more
advantageous positions than others who lack those traits. Within this context, statement 4,
which states, “I based my knowledge on the presence of sub-Saharan Africans and past
skills in store management and decided to look for money to open this store,” focuses on
the concentration of sub-Saharan Africans and past skills as appropriate in setting the
stage for the opening of the African grocery stores. The presence of these immigrants
provides a core group of consumers as well as individuals with past skills that can be
harnessed to open the grocery stores. These factors, therefore, provided some individuals
with feasible conditions to start African-based grocery stores.

Statement 21, “Immigrants such as sub-Saharan Africans have unique sets of
wants and preferences that are best served by a member of the sub-Saharan African
immigrant community like me,” has a close connection with demand-opportunity. This
statement is crucial in creating the conditions for opening African grocery stores. This is
because it focuses on the characteristics of the operators, which are their familiarity with
the items sold and the tastes and buying preferences of the target population (Aldrich and
Waldinger 1990). These characteristics are thus converted into economic assets (Kaplan
1997) for exploitation by the immigrants. For an African grocery store to open, then, the
sub-Saharan African immigrants who are familiar with the products they sell and how to
handle them must exist. These qualities are often beyond the knowledge of American,
Asian, and Hispanic grocery retailers, who may lack many of these qualities on their
grocery retailing resumé.
Statement 25 is among the conditions that encourage sub-Saharan African immigrants to start the grocery stores. The residential concentration of immigrants is an opportunity structure that arises through chain migration, relocation, and natural increase, which helps to build-up a potential market for the entrepreneur (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). The concentration of immigrants in a neighborhood offers the entrepreneur a pool of co-ethnics from which the operator could easily obtain low cost labor (Teixeira 2001; Kaplan 1997; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990).

The operators who defined Factor A accepted the idea that market conditions are critical in opening the African stores, but certain experiences posed barriers to this opportunity. However, the operators disagreed that such experiences prevented them from utilizing the opportunity that had emerged from the demand for African food ingredients by sub-Saharan Africans. The experiences that they disagreed with had high negative scores. The strongest negative scores that emerged out of the factor analysis were connected to issues of getting finance and lack of employment. The operators who scored the statements disagreed that negative consequences such as lack of satisfaction at the job forced them to open the grocery stores. Some of the operators’ responses that suggest the viewpoints they disagreed with are indicated below. The most extreme unfavorable responses to the statements were from –5, –4, or –3 and the scores in parentheses are for Factors A, B, and C in that order:

2. The money I used to open this store was obtained from my country’s rotating credit union (susu/tontine). (–5, –5, –3)
16. I found no work in my professional area so I decided to start this store with the trading skills that I had. (−4, −2, 0)

22. I was not satisfied at my former job so I decided to start this store for Sub-Saharan Africans in this city. (−4, 0, −2)

14. The prior business experience enabled me to obtain credit to begin this store. (−3, −3, 0)

20. I encountered difficulty when I was looking for money to open this store and the problem prevented me from opening this store. (−3, −4, −3)

28. I wanted to open a store to serve the traditional food needs of the members of the Sub-Saharan African communities in this city but I could not get financing. (−3, −1, 2)

An important factor in opening an African grocery store is finance. The source of business funding may be personal, rotating credit unions (tontine/susu), or loans (Light 2003; Huggins 1997; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). The operators on Factor A disagreed with the viewpoint in statement 2 that the source of the money used to start the stores was from rotating credit unions because they used their own money instead. Statement 2 was scored −5 on both factors A and B and −3 on Factor C.

In traditional sub-Saharan African societies, lineage members supported others with investment money (Drake 1963). It was expected that their lineage members would support their co-ethnics with investment money by way of financial contributions. In the study it was discovered that some sub-Saharan Africans had home town and other welfare associations in the cities. These made financial contributions to support their
association. However, while these diaspora home town associations remit their homelands with money for development, they do not offer help to individual businesses (Mercer, Page, and Evans 2008).

By disagreeing with statement 2, the respondents were implying that in their quest for self-employment, they did not depend on financing from rotating credit unions. Evidence from this finding that the owners used their personal money to open the stores suggested that the communal support in this direction was weakening or had broken down and was being replaced by private interest (Agyeman and Casterline 2000).

Statement 16 is from the structural model of the immigrant enterprise. The lack of jobs results from reasons such as racial discrimination or lack of English language skills (Teixeira 2001; Raijman and Tienda 2000). According to the structural model, immigrants do not find jobs in the mainstream and thus go into self-employment. The operators rejected the idea that they were not employed and that was why they decided to start the African grocery stores. Rather, the operators indicated that they were already employed and were encouraged by the existence of a potential market that no one was serving. And that engaging in this could enable them be self-employed.

Statement 22 is also from the structural model. This statement suggests that the operators encountered problems at the workplace. Among the problems that immigrants face when looking for jobs are racial, ethnic, unaccredited educational qualifications, and language skills (Light 2003; Raijman and Tienda 2000). These problems, people believe, cause immigrants to start their own businesses (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). The operators disagreed with statement 22 that they were pushed into opening the African
grocery stores because of the problems they faced at their workplaces. If the workers faced problems at their workplace, was the operation of an African grocery store the only option they had? Could not the immigrants have gone into other businesses instead of African grocery stores? If they could have gone into other areas but decided on this, then it was likely because they saw that the opportunity and prospects were good given the increasing number of sub-Saharan African immigrants arriving in the country.

Statement 14, “The prior business experience enabled me to obtain credit to begin this store,” is from the interactive model of immigrant enterprise. It is expected that prior business experience on a loan application form would enable an individual to be granted a loan. However, this information on the loan application form of those who applied did not translate into the granting of the loan. As a result of this, the operators disagreed that their previous business helped them to obtain funds to invest in African grocery stores. Prior buying and selling experience of immigrants is important when investing in business (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). Incidentally, the operators could not turn to their past businesses as part of their portfolio to obtain support from the banks. This was because these operators had no personal business history with American banks that could be used as a security basis on which they could be granted loans (Light 2003). Their past business skills were in Africa and this did not help them here in the United States as they were unknown.

According to Light (2003), the conditions of borrowers, such as their credit worthiness, comes through pledging their assets and a personal history of repayment of loans. However, these are characteristics that these immigrants lacked because their past
businesses were not based in the United States where the financial institutions could investigate and verify. As a result of these barriers, the operators disagreed that their previous jobs from Africa helped them to obtain funding from loan granting institutions. They did not obtain loans from these financial institutions. However, now these stores, after operating, are becoming visible to their bankers. According to one grocery store operator, some banks were willing to give him credit after they saw the practical evidence of his work.

Statement 20, “I encountered difficulty when I was looking for money to open this store and the problem prevented me from opening this store,” comes from the structural model. The idea that blacks are a financial risk (Light 2003) is a stereotype among lenders and has created a difficulty for them in obtaining financial support from banks (Teixeira 2001). According to Light (1972), Blacks have difficulty in obtaining loans from the banks and sub-Saharan Africans fall into this category because they are black, and therefore they are refused support because of such labeling. The banks usually argue that immigrants, the unemployed and ethnic minorities are not creditworthy (Light 2003). As a result of their non-creditworthiness, immigrants such as sub-Saharan Africans already have barriers placed before them when they are seeking finances to start businesses. This lack of finance usually means the cessation of the business (Teixeira 2001; Fadahunsi, Smallbone, and Supri 2000). However, the grocery store operators did not allow this lack of finance to stop them from opening the African stores and disagreed with statement 20. They financed the grocery stores by using their own personal money, as already stated.
Statement 28, “I wanted to open a store to serve the traditional food needs of the members of the sub-Saharan African communities in this city but I could not get financing,” is from the opportunity structure (a component of the interactive model) and the structural model. The high concentration of ethnic communities constitutes spaces where ethnic stores could easily develop, which depends on easy access to money (Martes and Rodriguez 2003). However, the banking institutions often reject the applications from immigrants and minorities as they are considered financial risks (Light 2003; Teixeira 2001). While this could cripple immigrant businesses (Light 2003), immigrants such as sub-Saharan Africans did not allow this to prevent them from taking advantage of the opportunity that the immigrants offer. As a result, they had to depend on their own sources in order to finance their grocery stores. As the sub-Saharan African immigrants funded their stores through their own sources they disagreed with statement 28 that stated that they could not find funding for their stores.

In sum, the views of the operators who are on Factor A are anchored on demand and opportunity that had been created by the presence of sub-Saharan Africans. These factors include the emergence of an immigrant community whose members adhere to their food and dietary culture despite their presence in the United States. The operators of the grocery stores have observed and recognized the existence of a potential sub-Saharan African market and have been encouraged to invest in it. They opened the stores because they could handle the opportunity that had arisen out of the concentration and consumer behavior of the sub-Saharan Africans. This immigrant behavior is an ethnic resource.
(Kaplan 1997) as it could be converted into a business asset (Waldinger 1986) and harnessed, which could be used as a pathway to self-employment.

**Factor B**

Immigrants have values and traits that become resources (Kaplan 1997) to entrepreneurs who are aware of them and devise strategies to exploit them. Strategies are ways and means by which an objective is accomplished, which depend on the actions of the individual (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). The desire of any business operator is to make a profit, which depends on what he/she uses to exploit the available resources. These traits of Factor B, which I labeled Cultural–Resources, are what the individual uses to support the business. A resource is anything that is useful to people who are willing to exploit the resources to achieve the desired result (Bergman and Renwick 2008; Lloyd and Dicken 1977). An example of such a resource is a concentration of sub-Saharan Africans whose consumption behavior creates a demand for African foods.

Thus the food culture of immigrants may influence the opening of ethnic stores. This food culture is an ethnic identity that is a powerful mechanism for store segmentation. Usually the operators create the grocery stores for immigrants who share similar characteristics as themselves. Therefore, they know the right food ingredients that their compatriots want. The idea that the co-ethnics of the operators would come to them to buy implies an advertisement (Teixeira 2001). This idea persists because the operators and the main customer-base come from the same country and have some knowledge of the products they want. The preference of some immigrants to do business with
entrepreneurs from their own country stems from the belief that when their businesses become successful, it would be beneficial to the immigrants from their own country in that some of them could be their workers. In another way, these group characteristics may be classed as ethnic resources, which would work to the advantage of the entrepreneurs. To take advantage of these resources, the entrepreneurs recruit their country folks as their customers and helpers such as laborers so that they can utilize these ethnic resources.

I labeled Factor B Cultural-Resources in as much as the immigrants bring their culture that also confers benefits and opportunities to the sub-Saharan Africans. It is the culture that influences the immigrants to open the African grocery stores. This factor also fits into the interactive model component of the immigrant enterprise because it (the culture) bifurcates into cultural value and resources, which are the consumption behavior and information and labor that assist sub-Saharan African business activity. As a result, the operators were influenced by the neighborhood concentration of their co-ethnics and decided to utilize their country folk’s consumption behavior as a potential resource and also their presence to open the African grocery stores. The operators who valued the presence of their co-ethnics as cultural values and resources are represented by A1, A10, A13, and A15 (Table 15) who load on Factor B. The Q statements that indicate this viewpoint and that received the highest scores on Factor B are:

1. My decision to offer a friendly, efficient, clean, safe, and tidy premise will promote the loyalty of my customers. (+2, +5, –1)

2. I wanted to be self-employed so I used my personal money to open this African grocery store. (+4, +4, +5)
6. I opened this African grocery store because American grocery stores did not serve food products that sub-Saharan African need to prepare their cuisines. (+5, 4, –2)

7. The financial support from my family members helped in supporting me when I decided to open this store to serve the grocery needs of my country folks. (0, +3, –5)

12. Sub-Saharan Africans demand for their traditional African foods encouraged me to use my personal money to start this African grocery store. (+4, +3, +4)

36. I use the “customer is right” attitude as a strategy to attract, bring, and keep my customers. (–1, +3, +3)

The operators whose opinions were representative of Factor B valued the characteristics of the ethnic groups (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990) as a platform and condition for starting the African grocery stores. For example, from the immigrants the entrepreneurs could obtain labor to work in the store and at the same time the immigrants would act as the market.

Statement 8 suggests a deliberate entrepreneurial action that is designed to divert consumer traffic from other retailers to their store. The technique is that such operators placed themselves in a better position in comparison to the other retailers at the African grocery space. One of these techniques involved finding and locating the stores in areas that they believed were safe and the atmosphere was friendly. Another method was the provision of good and efficient customer service. These strategies are self-reinforcing and act as good references to other consumers, who may not be even from the sub-region.
This is because the stores do not serve only sub-Saharan Africans but provide services to some Asian and Hispanic immigrants in the cities in the study.

Statement 5, “I wanted to be self-employed so I used my personal money to open this African store,” has cultural resource embedded in it, through the money that the individual provides. The personal money is converted into an economic asset within an immigrant neighborhood (Kaplan 1997). The operators with money were thus encouraged that they could make a profit by investing their money.

Statement 6, “I opened this African store because American grocery stores did not serve food products that sub-Saharan African need to prepare their cuisines,” is also a resource. This situational advantage is a void that provides an economic niche (Kaplan 1997) for the sub-Saharan Africans. This stems from the fact that this under-service of sub-Saharan Africans was seen as a potential resource that the immigrants could service. Thus the starting point of African grocery stores emerges out of the demand for and absence of local grocery stores that serve the food product needs of the African consumer. Generally, the American grocery firms do not have the expertise to organize and handle many of the products that have origins in tropical lands such as Africa. This shortcoming therefore provides a resource for the sub-Saharan Africans to create their own business economies (Kaplan 1997).

Statement 7 stresses that “The financial support from my family members helped in supporting me when I decided to open this store to serve the grocery needs of my country folks,” and is about the financial support that immigrants receive from their family members. To start a business, one needs financing. Such funds are obtained from
personal sources, financial institutions such as banks, friends, relatives, and other community members (Light 2003; Fadahunsi, Smallbone, and Supri 2000). Often entrepreneurs do not have enough money to finance their business, which means they have to rely on other avenues for such support. In addition, financial institutions do not offer support to immigrants and other minorities (Light 2003). In such cases, the immigrants turn to those they know, who are often family members, to look for the seed money. This situation allows some operators to combine their money to start the grocery stores. Some of the storeowners depended on such institutional support among themselves for their business.

Inherent in statement 12, “sub-Saharan Africans demand for their traditional African foods encouraged me to use my personal money to start this African grocery store,” is a consumption lifestyle of sub-Saharan Africans. This cultural trait offers a strategy to the operators in as much as this could be assessed as a business asset. This demand for traditional African food ingredients helps to influence the decision to open African grocery stores. The geographical concentration of sub-Saharan Africans in the study areas has led to the demand of African foods that corresponds to the creation of business activity (Kaplan 1997). This demand condition by the concentrated group of sub-Saharan Africans provides a potential resource that the sub-Saharan African entrepreneurs utilize in creating the African grocery stores. From the sub-Saharan Africans, the operators could take advantage of the cheap labor and a secured captive customer-base (Kaplan 1997) to create the grocery stores.
The “customer is right” could be considered a resource by virtue of its philosophy that the retailer accepts what the shopper says. This philosophy gives an assurance to the consumer that if there is something wrong with an item, it could be exchanged. This attitude could be used in business settings and bring success (Borna and Stearns 1998) and advantages to the retailers. It could unlock a flow and maintenance of customers, which can promote the development of the stores. This viewpoint has the salutary effect of bringing referrals of other sub-Saharan African customers to their stores who could become loyal to the store. Consequently, this attitude can be a resource and an effective avenue for bringing a large traffic of customers to their grocery stores.

The decision of operators on Factor B was based on the experiences they had in the cities, which encouraged them to invest in the African grocery stores. The operators took advantage of certain cultural traits such as the concentration of the immigrants and their consumer demand as resources that assist the opening of the sub-Saharan African grocery stores.

The statements that offered the sub-Saharan Africans advantages, whether cultural or as resources the operators used to open the grocery stores, have been elucidated. These viewpoints helped to support the immigrants to create their own unique economic niche that offered authentic and cultural foods from Africa and other continents.

While these immigrants provided the cultural resources used to open these niche stores, other experiences affected the decision making of the operators on Factor B in this quest to open the grocery stores. The following statements help to understand the barriers
that the operators faced in opening the stores. The statements on Factor B and their scores are shown in parentheses for A, B, and C, in that order:

2. The money I used to open this store was obtained from my country’s rotating credit union (susu/tontine). (−5, −5, −3)

10. I wanted to be rich quickly so I decided to use my former skills to open this store. (0, −4, −4)

20. I encountered difficulty when I was looking for money to open this store and the problem prevented me from opening this store. (−3, −4, −3)

4. I based my knowledge on the presence of sub-Saharan Africans and past skills in store management and decided to look for money to open this store. (+3, −3, 1)

9. My prior business knowledge did not help me to develop business strategies/methods to open this store. (0, −3, 2)

14. The prior business experience I had enabled me to obtain credit to begin this store. (−3, −3, 0)

The experience that posed a challenge to the opening of the African grocery stores was related to obtaining credit financing through susu, money from their compatriots. Respondents whose viewpoints were represented by this factor scored −5 to statement 2, with which they disagreed. This was because the money they used to open the stores was not from such financing. To open a business, some depend on formal institutions such as banks and semi-formal financing agency like susu, which is a co-ethnic saving and credit lending association (Brooke 2010; Light 2003; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). The stereotypes and barriers that minorities like sub-Saharan Africans encounter when they
want loans for businesses prevent them from applying for credit (Light 2003; Teixeira 2001). As a result of such viewpoints held by the immigrants, some may depend on the traditional rotating credit unions that they were used to in Africa to obtain money to start their businesses (Chacko 2010). However, these respondents stated that the startup money to open the grocery stores came from their own resources. Consequently, the operators rejected the view that the capital they used to start their grocery stores was obtained from rotating credit unions.

Sub-Saharan Africans possess cultural resources or traits such as labor and demand that encourage them to create their African grocery stores. The starting of such grocery stores could make them rich (Sanders and Nee 1996), but the respondents did not indicate that they opened the grocery stores to be rich. In this light, the operators disagreed with statement 10, which is “I wanted to be rich quickly so I decided to use my former skills to open this store,” and scored it –4.

The residential clustering of an ethnic group and the skills they came with can constitute resources that can lead to the generation of ethnic enterprises (Kaplan 1997). In a similar manner, the geographical concentration and the past skills of sub-Saharan Africans are important in bringing into existence the African grocery stores. The target population provides avenues to information and labor while the population itself offers the market. Again, the past skills that the immigrants come with provide them some strategies in store management. While this group resource (the presence of the Sub-Saharan Africans) and past skills are important to opening businesses such as grocery stores, the operators on factor B rejected the view that they based their “knowledge on the
presence of sub-Saharan Africans and past skills in store management and decided to look for money to open this store.” In trying to understand their response, a further interview of the respondents stated that the money was already available before the decision to open the grocery stores was made. According to the operators, if this opportunity did not arise the money would have been used for something else.

Statement 9 helps the reader to understand how previous store management is important in starting a related business. Ethnic groups may possess working skills before coming into the United States. These past skills can help them to create their own businesses. In the cities exist captive Sub-Saharan Africans who act as the market that demands cultural foods. The sub-Saharan African respondents with previous occupational skills capitalize on the opportunity created by the presence of the immigrants and thus invest in the grocery stores. As the immigrants were able to utilize their prior working skills, through the opening of the grocery stores, they rejected the idea that their past skills were not important in opening the grocery stores. This statement was scored –3 on Factor B.

Statement 14 indicates that experiences that immigrants had prior to coming to America enabled them to obtain financing (Light 2003). This suggests that the business experience of the operators would be a guarantee for granting loans by the financial institutions. Some of the operators had operated stores and other businesses in Africa before coming to America, but such experience was unknown to financial institutions. As these experiences were not familiar to the lending agencies because the operators did not have any business and job history in America (Light 2003), they could not secure loans
through their past business experience. As a result of this experience, the operators stated that their prior business experience did not enable them to obtain credit from financial institutions to begin their stores. This statement scored –3 on Factor B.

It has been found that cultural traits provide resources that some sub-Saharan Africans used to open their African grocery stores. There were some challenges, but they did not allow these to be impediments in their quest to open the stores. Through the utilization of the cultural resources, the immigrants could be on their own as they tried to be upwardly mobile in America.

**Factor C**

The third factor loading that emerged from the PQMethod analysis was Factor C and I labeled this Independence–Aspiration. The decision to use this label this for factor C was based on the strongest experience that was related to the need to aspire to be self-employed and independent. The operators whose views were represented by Factor C greatly valued the desire to be their own bosses. Respondents whose views were similar were A9 and A12 (see Table 15). The statements that manifested these views with their scores for Factors A, B, and C are:

5. I wanted to be self-employed so I used my personal money to open this African store. (+4, +4, +5)

1. All the employees in this store are from my country. (–2, +1, +4)

12. Sub-Saharan Africans demand for their traditional African foods encouraged me to use my personal money to start this African store. (+4, +3, +4)
3. My past store skills enabled me to develop methods to reach my consumers. (+2, −2, +3)

27. This group of people is a resource so I decided to use my money and past skills to open this store to serve the needs of the members. (−2, −2, +3)

36. I use the customer is right attitude strategy to attract, bring, and keep my customers. (−1, +3, +3)

Factor C, Independence–Aspiration, suggests the desire of the operators to become economically self-sufficient. The immigrants want to reach this goal by creating jobs and the way they felt they could attain this was to open the African grocery store. They based this view on the idea that there was already a concentration of sub-Saharan Africans in the cities where they reside. Apart from this, many are arriving every year from Africa because of the favorable United States immigration laws on family reunion, Diversity Visa, students, refugees, and even business people who, for a short stay, want the African foods to eat. Besides these, the operators enjoy a set of advantages in the form of free information from the sub-Saharan Africans who also provide labor and serve as an advertising agency. With these advantages they believe they could become independent and be their own bosses.

The reason that influences the operators on Factor C to open the African grocery stores is the desire for independence. The operators want to be their own bosses, which allow them to decide on the day-to-day management and other issues on their own. The operators do not want to work under others. The decision to open their own businesses, the African grocery stores, affords them the chance to help and direct their own affairs. It
was this wish to be self–employed that influenced the operators to risk their personal 
money to start the African grocery stores. Thus statement 5 scored +5 on factor C.

The sub-Saharan African community is a secured customer base (Kaplan 1997) 
and the demand for ethnic food ingredients offers a potential opportunity to serve. This 
demand is there because the immigrants have retained their nostalgic urge for foods 
from Africa, creating opportunities that entrepreneurs have exploited by opening niche 
grocery stores called “African markets.” It is statement 12 that brings into focus the 
opportunity that created an aspiration for the operators to open African stores. This 
statement scored +4.

A major risk for the sub-Saharan Africans was to leave the African continent and 
migrate to America because they had no idea of how the journey would end. Many left 
with the intention of improving their standard of living. As a result, they are willing to 
work even low wage jobs in order to achieve that goal. Consequently, the existence of an 
underserved captive market in the form of Sub-Saharan African immigrants with 
resources to service was an opportunity. From this community could be accessed labor of 
similar cultural background. The workers are from the community and therefore 
understand the language, manners, and products. In addition, they can be recruited by 
informal means and also be offered low wages. The workers can even recruit customers 
to the store. These conditions make it lucrative to depend on the workers who are from 
their countries. As a result of the advantages that go with employing people from their 
own countries, the operators agreed that the employees at their store were from their 
country, and statement 1 scored +4.
Some sub-Saharan Africans possess advantages that help them to start economic niches (Kaplan 1997). One such advantage is the skill set that the immigrants bring with them from Africa. Some were workers and had jobs as retailers of goods. Through such activities they were able to acquire skills in retail management that they could utilize in this country, especially when they see an opportunity they could serve with those skills. Consequently, the presence and concentration of the sub-Saharan Africans constitutes an opportunity that opens business niches for their compatriots with such skills (Kaplan 1977).

The past skills of immigrants confer benefits to their holders as they could help them aspire towards their goal. They enable the sub-Saharan Africans varieties of techniques by which they can reach their customers. They have had experience in store management and the knowledge of how to penetrate, attract, and maintain customers. Though such experiences took place in Africa, they could tweak these in tune with the “customer is right” mentality. Such experiences of operators on factor C whose views were typical of such experiences scored statement 3 + 3.

Statement 27, “This group of people is a resource so I decided to use my money and past skills to open this store to serve the needs of the members,” helps to suggest the goal of operators. The concentration of the sub-Saharan Africans may create a potential group resource (Kaplan 1997) that makes feasible the creation of sub-Saharan African businesses. Sub-Saharan Africans possess certain cultural (their demand and preference for ethnic products) and situational (lack of American retailers involvement in many ethnic products) benefits that create economic niches for them to serve. The group also
acts as a source of cheap labor and a consumer base, which are assets that the operators use in starting these self-employed businesses. The respondents whose experience led them to conclude that the sub-Saharan African population was a resource scored this statement +3.

Ethnic businesses can be an effective avenue for economic mobility for immigrants (Kaplan 1997) such as sub-Saharan Africans, which means they have to know the right keys to strike so that customers could be brought in and retained. One experience that could help the operators is number 36, which is “I use the customer is right attitude to attract, bring, and keep my customers.” This is a policy which, when used at the opening of the stores, seeks to foster cordial links among the storekeepers and customers. This technique allows the customers who were not satisfied to seek redress through product exchange or replacement, or the return of cash paid for products. This avenue enables the operators to recruit and retain customers as this could build trust among the two parties. This experience was scored + 3.

The operators had the desire to be independent, but certain experiences they encountered seemed to prevent this effort towards private entrepreneurship. These challenges are evident in the statements with which the operators disagreed. The statements and their scores on factors A, B, and C in that order are:

7. The financial support from my extended family members helped in supporting me when I decided to open this store to serve the grocery needs of my country folks.

(0, +3, –5)
10. I wanted to be rich quickly so I decided to use my former skills to open this store. 

(0, –4, –4)

13. I was not able to obtain information that supported me to open this store through my family members, relatives, and friends. (+2, +2, –4)

2. The money I used to open this store was obtained from my country’s rotating credit union (susu/tontine). (–5, –5, –3)

11. The people from my country did not provide me information about how to obtain money to start this store. (1, –2, –3)

20. I encountered difficulty when I was looking for money to open this store and the problem prevented me from opening this store. (–3, –4, –3)

Ethnic economy comprises the business owners who are indebted to co-ethnics for startup capital, labor, and a loyal customer base (Kaplan 1997). This suggests that co-ethnics support investors with inputs such as money. Almost all sub-Saharan Africans migrated to America because they wanted to improve their standard of living (Halkis et al 2007). This suggests that the immigrants came to America to become successful, which is a private and not a community goal. As a personal goal it was going to be difficult to convince other co-ethnics who they do not know support them with money to open the African grocery stores. As the respondents did not receive any financial support from their co-ethnics, they disagreed that the financial help from their co-ethnics enabled them to start the African grocery stores. This experience led respondents to score statement 7, –5.
A goal that encouraged respondents on Factor C was to become self-employed; their end-game was economic success through the sale of exotic goods (Maxim 1992). This is because the operators could capture a lot of customers in their protective position compared to American retailers who do not offer some or all of the tropical food products the immigrants desire. The general idea as expressed by Maxim (1992) is that self-employment leads to richness. However, the operators disagreed with this opinion that they wanted to get rich quickly so that is why they started the stores. The assertion of the operators is consistent with the view that being self-employed is not the solution to the fast track to income advancement that many immigrants hope for (Maxim 1992). This statement was scored –4.

The concentration of immigrants provides unlimited access to informal and inexpensive information (Teixeira 2010). Such information includes location, labor, and business advice (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990) that comes through social networking among the co-ethnics. The operators inform their co-ethnics about their intention and that if they find anything suitable they should notify them. The existence of such social networks of co-ethnics who assemble invaluable information to facilitate the creation of the grocery stores suggests that the storekeepers do not mobilize the resources. The co-ethnics more or less become the eyes, ears, and legs of the operators in the opening of the grocery stores. As a result of the information the operators received from their co-ethnics, the operators disagreed that their country folks did not support them in seeking information. This statement 13 was scored –4.
Banking institutions have often neglected small business, immigrants, and non-whites (Light 2003; Teixeira 2001). In the absence of support from the banks, the next line for financial support could be the rotating credit unions or susu the operators knew of in Africa (Chacko 2010). However, these operators did have financial support from their co-ethnics (see statement 7; score –5). In the absence of the institutional support from their co-ethnics, the operators have to depend on their own personal savings (Fadahunsi, Smallbone, and Supri 2000; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). It was within this context that the operators disagreed that the money they used to begin their African grocery stores was from rotating credit unions. As result of this experience, statement 2 was scored – 3.

Statement 11 offers an insight into how the availability of information given by co-ethnics influenced the operators’ decision to start the African grocery stores. An aspiration to succeed in the country is a goal of the operators and doing so would make their migration to America meaningful. Their success emanates from recognizing and exploiting opportunities that are available in the environment. To the operators, the absence of traditional consumer food products familiar to sub-Saharan African immigrants in their residential areas was an opportunity that needed attention.

Given the availability of such a potential market means the operators must have access to some information to make the opening of a grocery store feasible. Some operators obtained business advice such as accessibility to loans from co-ethnics. The advice was that if they had no money, the financial institutions could give them loans once they are permanent residents so that they could start the store. Also if the financial institutions observed that the store was physically visible and their savings were made
through them, these could be bases to unlock barriers to loan and credit granting. Generally the operators received some information and they therefore rejected the idea that the people from their country did not offer them any information about how to obtain money to start the grocery stores.

Another statement that was seen as a barrier to the fulfillment of the human-aspiration of the operators was number 20. This statement refers to structural barriers that minorities and immigrants encounter in their wish to establish businesses. Financial institutions like banks often base their loan-granting services on the payment history of the individuals (Light 2003). The operators are new in the retail industry in the United States and therefore do not have such data on them. Given that the operators lacked such history on their business credentials, they could not obtain money from the banks and other financial institutions. Though the operators encountered difficulties in their quest for loans, they disagreed that this barrier prevented them from opening the stores.

**Consensus**

Three factors emerged in this exploratory study on factors that influenced and challenged the operators of the African grocery stores when they were starting the stores. The experiences of the operators that promoted the formation of the stores have been examined. Despite the emergence of important statements that the operators agreed and disagreed on, there were other statements that all the operators agreed on in the starting of the African grocery stores, and the scores were almost the same for all the factors. It is these consensus statements that are discussed next.
Factors A, B, and C have been interpreted using both the positive and negative scores that emerged from the PQMethod analysis. The consensus viewpoints do not distinguish between any pair of factors and are non-significant at \( P > .01 \), which may be positive or negative, could be used to interpret the study (Nyirabu 1981). In the study, some of the statements were identified as consensus that produced nearly identical scores but for different reasons. In the current study, the following consensus statements emerged:

19. Past business skills influenced my decision. \((-1, -1, -1)\)

33. American culture I was exposed to enabled me to develop marketing strategies/methods to promote my store \((1, 0, 0)\)

The emergent three factors indicated that three distinct viewpoints influenced the sub-Saharan African respondents to start the African grocery stores. The three factors share the opinion about the past skills they had. Statement 19 indicates the unimportance of past skills in the quest to open the stores for these respondents. This can be interpreted as meaning that one did not need to have any business skills to start a store, as the scores were towards the center, where scores reflect almost non-importance or does not matter (Brown 1980).

Statement 33 is a positive on Factor A but neutral on Factors B and C. The varied opinions may be based perhaps on different experiences encountered in the residential areas, thus affecting the way the operators viewed that statement. This also suggests that those in the neutral position did not feel that this statement had any effect on the creation of the store as they were going to deal with non-Americans.
Summary

The findings of this exploratory study on factors that influenced sub-Saharan African immigrants’ entrance into the African stores revealed three main perspectives. These are the creation of opportunities, group characteristics embodied in their cultural resources, and ways and means to achieve self-employment. All seem to resemble the theoretical viewpoints of the interactive model. In this exploratory study, the assumption was that the decision to open the African grocery stores would mimic all the ethnic enterprise models that were used as the theoretical foundation of the study. It was apparent from the findings that only one of the three viewpoints, the interactive model of the ethnic business models, was evident. It appeared the other two models – cultural and disadvantage/structural models – used in the study were not perceptible in the decision of sub-Saharan African immigrants to open the grocery stores.

Factor A is a demand-opportunity condition enshrined in the interactive model. The operators identify with the conditions that promote the establishment of African stores. The sub-Saharan African immigrants in the community generate store conditions in the form of their demand to eat food products from Africa. However, the American and other ethnic grocery stores have been unable to satisfy that demand. This lack of service created a gap that the operators responded to, which resulted in the opening of the African grocery stores. Thus there is a convergence of demand and a response from the sub-Saharan Africans to fill that void.

Operators on Factor B identify with cultural-resources, which involve the identification and a mobilization of a cultural lifestyle as “cultural resources” of the
immigrants for economic development. This is an aspect of the interactive model that is assessed for ethnic business development. In this the operators recognize the cultural resources, which are group characteristics, as a pathway to development. The operators find that the characteristics that the immigrants retain while they are in the country are potential group resources for economic development. This recognition is critical as it makes them innovators who recognize the existence of cultural resources that can be tapped for business activity.

Operators on Factor C depict the character of human-aspiration that is based on the goals of the operators. This factor involves the strategies the immigrants use as their survival toolkit, which is also an aspect of the interactive model. The operators recognize that they could use the cultural resources and demand for the African food products as a means to an end, which is self-employment. This avenue would make them independent. They use these techniques to position themselves economically at a higher level in relation to their co-ethnics. The individuals on Factor C know the target population and consequently shape their actions to meet the needs of customers who form the basis of the grocery store.

**Individual Interviews**

An important constituent of Q methodology is individual interviews. The follow-up interview gave the subjects the opportunity to explain why the statements were sorted in a particular way (Brown 1980). To find the logic from the operators for sorting that way, I had in-depth interviews with some of them. This occurred after I had finished
analyzing the Q sorts and recognized the best representatives of each of the three emergent factors. I went to see the respondents and they were willing to clarify their statements while they worked. Such clarifications were to permit the researcher to go into the minds of the operators, and thus help him to resolve why the respondents preferred to rank the statements as they did. These post-interviews were clarifications that were to help the readers understand why the operators opened the African grocery stores.

The interviews were held soon after the analysis. The respondents who granted the interviews were A14 on Factor A; A1 on Factor B; and A9 on Factor C. The operators were asked about their reasons for agreeing or disagreeing to the statements and why some statements were ranked +5, +4, +3, +2, +1, and not –5, –4, –3, –2, –1, or 0. They were also asked to clarify why a particular statement needed to receive the score of 5 and not 1 and so on, given that all were equally important. Notes were taken as the operators gave their views on the statements that pertained to their decision to open the grocery stores. For the sake of anonymity, I will refer to the operators Mr. Kamara for Factor A, Mr. Mensah for Factor B, and Mrs. Amponsah for Factor C.

Factor A: Mr. Kamara

Mr. Kamara is operator number A14. This operator is a male from a country in the western part of Africa. He owns an African grocery store with his spouse. He has been a resident in the United States for 17 years but the store was opened about 6 years ago. The country from which he originally came has been unstable because some ethnic conflicts there generated into civil wars. These conditions promoted the migration of
citizens from this country and some came into the United States and finally some arrived in the city where this grocery store is located.

The conversation with this operator lasted over one hour. The interview was often broken by his periodic attendance to the phone to answer a customer on the line or to attend to some customers. The operator was asked what prompted the couple to begin the African store just recently instead of when they arrived in the country some 17 years ago.

According to Mr. Kamara, not many of his country folks were in the city when he arrived. According to him, he was also interested in eating African foods. He found one or two such food ingredients at the grocery stores in the city in which he was a resident. He discovered that in recent years many people from his country were settling in his area. This discovery gave him an inkling as he knew his people were interested in African food ingredients just like himself. He was of the opinion that other sub-Saharan Africans would buy such products as some whom he met often asked if there were places where African food products were sold. His conclusion was that the under-service of African food sales by American and ethnic grocery retailers was a gap that should be filled. He discussed this with his spouse. To test the viability of the store, about 6 years ago he started selling some African food products from his home. He noticed an increase in the number of people from his country in his neighborhood and decided to increase the size of the store. He has moved two times, from his home to another location, and then to his current location, where he keeps the facility with his spouse.

Having asked what prompted his decision to operate an African grocery store, the discussion continued into whether he had any other information on which he based this
conclusion to start the store. He agreed that that he was not able to obtain any information from his co-ethnics, which agrees with statement 13 that scored +2. It looks like he had some information, but perhaps a limited amount. According to him, he based the greater part of the decision on anecdotal information about the presence and concentration of the people from his country. He discovered that some other sub-Saharan African families from other countries were in the city and outlying areas. He also found that there were students from the African sub-region at the higher institutions in the city and nearby cities. He could count these diverse groups as his customers. He had other information in the form of voluntary ethnic associations, one of which he belonged to, as pointers that opening the African store would be feasible. He further discussed this discovery with his spouse. The couple, encouraged by what the husband had found in the form of the presence of sub-Saharan African immigrants in the city, decided to open the store (statement 25, score +3 on Factor A).

A factor necessary for the establishment of the African store is money. The operator and his spouse were customers of a bank from which they sought a loan. However, this bank was not ready to lend them money to open the grocery store. Despite this lack of support from the bank, the couple put their money together to start the store (statement 2, score on factor A –5). They then decided to add the name “African” to where the store was located to attract the captive sub-Saharan African immigrants who were to be their customer base and from whom he could obtain labor.

Free labor in ethnic business enterprises is documented by researchers such as Teixeira (2001); Kaplan (1997); Phizacklea and Ram (1995); and Aldrich and Waldinger
The operator was asked about the source of labor and pay status. His reply was that he did not pay himself or spouse and kids when they worked there occasionally. This was consistent with what has been documented about ethnic businesses (statement 23, score –2 on factor A) as indicated earlier.

He mentioned he had past skills in trading (statement 4, score +3 on Factor A) and this and other statements like 6 (score +5), 12 (score +4); and 25 (score +3) afforded him an opportunity and encouraged him and his spouse to invest in this potential sub-Saharan African market. He disagreed that difficulties that he experienced when he was looking for money prevented him from opening the store (statement 20, score –3). He mentioned that the demand opportunity was too big to ignore. He thus started an African store because of the encouragement and pull of the available population in the city in which he was residing. His customers were not only people from his country but other sub-Saharan Africans, Asians such as Nepalese and Bhutanese, and Hispanics in the city and its surroundings. The co-owner is also going to college to attain skills in the health care industry.

**Factor B: Mr. Mensah**

Mr. Mensah is the operator who is identified as A1. He is a representative of Factor B. He is a co-owner of an African grocery store with his spouse. He comes from a country in the western part of Africa with some periods of political instability because of economic mismanagement. Some military leaders in this country exploited such a dismal economic period to take over the government. The unintended effect was that some
citizens of this country used these military takeovers as a pretext to seek refuge in many European countries. Some of these refugees later came from Europe to the United States and later arrived in the state of Ohio and finally settled in the city of this operator. Also the Diversity Visa lottery of the United States has enabled many citizens from the country from which Mr. Mensah comes to enter America. Apart from these immigrants from Mr. Mensah’s homeland, immigrants from other sub-Saharan African countries also live in this city. This clustering of the immigrants from his country and other sub-Saharan African countries offered him a cultural resource that encouraged him to open the African grocery store with his spouse.

The operator used to be a second-hand car dealer in the city. I asked him how he got into the African grocery store business knowing he was already employed. He mentioned that he saw important potential in the growing number of immigrants from his own country and other sub-Saharan African countries. Also a friend encouraged him to take advantage of the African grocery store as a good investment. From this potential, which is the people from his country who are his customers, he could obtain labor.

He was asked about the sources of information that encouraged him to start the store in 1999. He stated that he discussed this with several people who came to his business and others at his church. He was already in discussion with his spouse and as a result of such discussions and some advice from a friend who was already in this type of business he decided to open this grocery store. He scored statement 18 that deals with this +2. The advice was on attributes of opening a store, in areas like the site, the target population, the name, and where to obtain store supplies. He mentioned that some people
from his country encouraged him by noting that he could obtain labor from his country, especially the newly arrived. He stated that the store would depend on the immigrants from his own and other sub-Saharan African countries in the city. This city is the capital, and as a social and cultural center other immigrants from other cities occasionally visited it. He believed that when these other immigrants came to the city they would buy some of the African food products. Based on these considerations, he made the decision to open the African grocery store after discussing this decision with his spouse.

In the interview, I asked whether he contacted the banks. He mentioned that he and his wife sought a loan from a local bank but the bank did not support them. However, the lack of bank support did not stop them from establishing the grocery store. I asked him if his co-ethnics have a rotating credit union that offers monetary support. He said “in America who will give you his or her money for your business, what about his or her own”? He did not believe that his co-ethnics would support him in monetary terms even if any existed. He stated that they did not obtain any money from rotating credit unions and they used their personal savings to buy the African grocery store.

Literature on ethnic models asserts that a resource that immigrants depend on is labor that is free and unpaid (Teixeira 2001; Kaplan 1997; Sanders and Nee 1996). The operator was asked whether he and his wife work at the store and receive pay. His reply was that they did not receive pay for working at the store (this statement 23 was scored 0, it was not important to him). However, he had two workers who were on the payroll of the store. He stated that in sub-Saharan Africa it was possible to have free labor from co-ethnics. But how could you obtain free labor from other people from your country? He
asked further whether this individual came to America because of you, when even some
of our children who we feed want payment for mowing the lawn? The decision to pay co-
ethnics working for an individual suggests that in America there is lack of continuity of
free support from co-ethnics (Goldschmidt 1963). This suggests that in impersonal
America this co-ethnic support system was breaking down or is in the process of being
eroded.

Factor C: Mrs. Amponsah

Mrs. Amponsah is an operator of another African grocery store. Operator A9
came into the United States from a country in the western part of sub-Saharan Africa.
Some parts of western Africa have experienced civil wars and worsening economic
conditions that had prompted some citizens from this sub-region to immigrate. However,
the country from which she came has enjoyed relative peace and stability, apart from the
coups that prompted some of the citizens of this country to migrate to Europe and who
later entered the United States. There were others who arrived in the country through
family reunion, diversity, student visas, without visas, and classified as undocumented
immigrants. She has been educated in the country since the arrival of the family more
than 15 years ago. She is identified as a case of Factor C and was interested in self-
employment, which is independence-aspiration.

According to Maxim (1992), self-employment is the minority immigrant’s
pathway to upward mobility. Self-employment however, does not just spring up
anywhere; it must result from an emergence of an opportunity. It is this emergence that
manifests itself in self-employment for the individual who risks and invests in the opportunity that has surfaced. Thus for self-employment to occur in a particular job, there must be demand for what the investor wants to sell. According to Maxim (1992) self-employment is a default option for immigrants who face discrimination in the wage labor force that pushes them into self-employment. However, for Mrs. Amponsah, the decision to open the African grocery store was not due to low wages, but was the result of an opportunity she found in the city where she lived with her spouse. She believed that this opportunity could enable her to be self-employed. Thus the opportunity was the existence of the demand by sub-Saharan Africans for African products and their lack of supply by American and other ethnic grocery retailers. The action of this operator suggested that her self-employment did not come from wage discrimination but emerged through an opportunity that arose in the city in which she lived with her family and the desire to be independent.

The interview lasted about one hour while she was responding to the questions. There were breaks when she answered the telephone or served the customers. According to her, the goal to be self-employed came through independence and this could allow her to become her own boss. This statement, 5, was scored +5. She was asked why she did not get into other sectors knowing that there were other areas in which these immigrants needed services. She stated she did not see any potential elsewhere that could give her the satisfaction she needed apart from this. She recounted how her spouse desired to eat African foods that were prepared from African food ingredients known to him. However, they found a limited amount of similar food ingredients at the American, Hispanic, or
Asian grocery stores that could meet their needs. To her a solution for fulfilling the needs of her compatriots and that of her family was to start one such grocery store to cater to those needs. Consequently, she thought of strategies to put one into existence with her husband.

She based her idea of self-employment through this opportunity on the demand for African foods by the sub-Saharan Africans (statement 12 that scored +4 on Factor C). Another factor that encouraged her was the presence of co-ethnics in the city (statement 25, score +2 on factor C). Though these were co-ethnics from her country, she stated that the store will not depend only on people from her country but also had other ethnic groups in mind. She also mentioned that the Diversity Visa lottery was bringing many sub-Saharan African immigrants into the United States and the city in which she was a resident. She mentioned that some of the diversity lottery winners needed sponsors who lived in the study area. She also had the idea that the city had jobs and some of these immigrants would relocate in that city. This meant that the population of the sub-Saharan Africans in that city would increase in future as the current immigrants would pave way for the later ones. She did not forget that some sub-Saharan Africans were in the city as students. Many of these students, like their brothers and sisters from Africa, loved to eat their local African diets instead of the American foods. Based on these, she decided that it would be in her best interest to enter this sector to provide the food needs of immigrants from her country, an action that would even affect those from other countries.

Asked about receiving any information that encouraged her in making real her decision to open the store, she explained that at the store where she bought items, a
discussion often went with some customers on the idea that if an African market existed
the sub-Saharan Africans (Africans) would buy. This discussion encouraged her to think
about one. She discussed this with her spouse and she decided to open one. Thus she
disagreed with statement 13, which is “I was not able to obtain information that
supported me to open this store through my family members, relatives and friends.” She
disagreed with that statement because she had some information from others in the desire
to open the store. This action was a strategy towards self-employment.

How did she get money to open the African store? Was the money for the African
grocery store obtained through the bank or a rotating credit union? Her reply was that the
money for the grocery store was the couple’s own personal money. They had not even
heard of any of these associations except about those she heard of in her country and
people were even suspicious of them. Some of the money collectors often ran away with
the cash they had collected. Also she was of the opinion that the immigrants like her
came to America to look for money and it was unlikely that other sub-Saharan African
immigrants would work and commit their money to support them, especially for the
people they knew only casually. The banks also did not help them initially in their quest
for seed money. However, the appeal to be her “own boss” in a store where she was the
manager did not discourage her but she was given support by her husband and the two of
them pooled their money to open the store.

I asked about who were her employees. According to Mrs. Amponsah, all her
employees were from her country (Statement 1; she scored it +4). She was enthusiastic
about employing co-ethnics. She could work with anyone as long as the person was hard
working. Thus she plans to employ Hispanics as a strategy to extend the influence of her African store through referrals from these bilingual workers. Free and unpaid labor is a critical component of ethnic business creation (Teixeira 2001; Phizacklea and Ram 1995). Was the labor she was using free and unpaid? No, she laughed. The African store has some workers in addition to the labor provided by the two owners. The store has some workers who were paid. This decision to pay co-ethnics means the free labor that is glamourized is not always true in impersonal America.

I mentioned that some people claim that those who open African stores are often dissatisfied at the workplace and they also earn low wages. She disagreed that she opened this grocery store because she was paid low wages and was dissatisfied at the work place. According to her, after her education, she was offered a high paying position at a big company, but the lure of self-independence through the African grocery store was a powerful attraction. This operator is an opportunist who fit Factor C and what it embodied, which is aspiration and independence.

Was she rich? She said no and that was expected as people do not want to expose their wages or revenue to others. While she declined to say yes, she laughed at that question. While earnings are not public, some stores are being expanded, and some are moving from their old place to new areas. Others are being established while some old ones are folding up. These changes suggest that this retail landscape may be volatile and results in high incidence of failure (Scott 2010). This could be an area for further research, which is looking into the profitability of African grocery stores.
Conclusion

The study has considered the mental geography of sub-Saharan Africans about African grocery stores and applied Q methodology to discover their business creation tactics from the operators themselves. The study found that three different reasons prompted them to open the grocery stores. Documentation on ethnic stores indicates that certain reasons were already known about business creation by immigrants and this work corroborated some of them. Through individual interviews, some of the respondents gave us insight into why they opened these grocery stores. In short, the issue of African grocery store creation is complex; it depends on an intimate knowledge of the target population, their consumption behavior, and their preferences (Jones and Simmons 1990).
CHAPTER EIGHT

TYING Q METHODOLOGY AND OTHER FACTORS IN STARTING THE AFRICAN GROCERY STORES

Introduction

This stage of the dissertation involves linking findings with previous research or development of new theories (Akhtar-Danesh and Baumann 2008). The study suggests that the decision-making of the respondents is operational as their perception has been actualized through the establishment of the African stores. This revelation was a corroboration made through the Q methodology findings. This stage is to tie the Q findings with the actual opening of the grocery stores. This is because thinking of an idea is one dimension and actually implementing it is another. In this study it was discovered that the respondents had put into practice what they had in mind.

Certain factors influenced the sub-Saharan African operators to start the African grocery stores. These include the population, information, capital, and labor that are resources for business development. In the following section, a discussion is made concerning how these resources converged and afforded the opening of the African grocery stores.
Sources of Information

Information sources are important in the establishment of businesses (Teixeira 2001) such as the African grocery stores opened by the sub-Saharan African immigrants. Seeking a store rental space in the cities, for example, could be an overwhelming and costly enterprise (Teixeira 2010). The data from the field suggested that there were several sources available to the operators during the period they decided to begin the grocery stores (Figure 32).

![Figure 32. Sources of Information (number of responses)](chart.png)

Family members and friends were the main sources of information (16 responses) that provided useful advice during the process of starting the stores. Traditionally in sub-Saharan African countries, co-ethnics tend to support others with free information. Such information sharing, typical in Africa, continued in the United States. As a result, the co-ethnics assisted and scouted for information for the entrepreneurs at the start of the stores,
in addition to the efforts of the respondents themselves. Sequeira and Rasheed (2004) and Fadahunsi, Smallbone, and Supri (2000) reached a similar conclusion that family members used social networks and sought advice and reactions from other people at the initial stage of establishing a business.

This cultural continuity of lending social support (Goldschmidt 1963) is important for the sub-Saharan African immigrants. This is because the operators do not have all the knowledge pertaining to all aspects of the African grocery store creation. They sought advice in areas such as the target location, the population concentration of neighborhoods, supply sources, and an attractive name for the store. Apart from family and acquaintances, non-Sub-Saharan Africans, ethnic newspapers, and ethnic institutions were sources of information (3 responses) as were the Internet and other mass media and government (2 responses). This supports a similar finding by Fadahunsi, Smallbone, and Supri (2000) where the operators stated that they did not depend on formal networks in the development of their businesses. The finding lends support to a goal of the dissertation that operators of African grocery stores depended more on family members, co-ethnics, and ethnic institutions as sources of information than on the government and media in starting their African grocery stores. The data on sources of information suggested that the sub-Saharan African immigrants found advice by family members and friends important when they were starting the African grocery stores.

Tying Q methodology empirically to the data from the field revealed that there were variations among the operators in terms of their experiences. The evidence from Figure 32 helps to answer questions about the sources of information that was used in
opening the African grocery stores. The findings indicate that family members and co-ethnics were a major source that sub-Saharan Africans used to open the grocery stores. These co-ethnics gave advice on areas such as the location, labor, and potential supply sources. In general, the operators used the informal social networking as an inexpensive cultural link that offered them access to advice on retail information to start their grocery stores. Such information encouraged the operators to look for capital to start the African grocery stores.

**Sources of Finance of the African Grocery Stores**

Several sources of financing investments are available to those who have interest in investing in business enterprise. One way is through individual sources. Another is by jointly financing the venture with others, whereby investors pool their money. In addition to these sources, capital can be raised through rotating credit unions and other financial institutions (Brooke 2010; Light 2003; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990; Light 1972; Goldschmidt 1963). Thus in the decision to start the African grocery stores, the operators had the choice of using one or more of these ways to obtain the seed capital.

The operators were asked about the sources of money they used to establish the grocery stores. According to the respondents, they used their own money. Martes and Rodriguez (2003) found that Brazilian immigrants used their own capital for their businesses. For the couples, the decision involves the two pooling their money together. In some situations, an extended family member may join another with his/her contribution.
Another source of seed money is from rotating credit associations (Light 1972; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). While this was important in obtaining the seed money in their original homelands, the operators disagreed strongly that they obtained their funding from any such institutions. The response to Q statement number 2 (”money was from credit union” with scores – 5 on Factor A, Factor B –4, and Factor C –3) throw light on this. These negative scores tie in with the empirical data from the responses that the operators gave on the statement 2. This non-dependence on rotating credit unions such as susu financial support suggested that this traditional support system from sub-Saharan Africa was weakening or had eroded and the individuals had to fund their businesses by their own efforts.

One operator agreed that the money he used for opening the grocery store was from a financing institution. This operator stated that a bank loan was used to open his African grocery store. This indicated that some operators are given loans by formal institutions to open the African stores. This finding seemed to counter the view that minority businesses are not given financial support at the initial stage by banks.

Another respondent who applied for bank loan claimed that his request was rejected. This echoes Light’s (2003) observation that borrowers must be creditworthy, have assets to pledge, and have a personal history of repaying prior loans before they are given support. This store was started in 2004; at a period when the operators were unknown to the banks. Since that time, the store has grown and the bank has become willing to offer them a loan as it had evidence of what the operators of this African
grocery store could do. Apart from that, the store is an asset that could be used as a pledge for the loan.

Banks are expected to give loans to borrowers (Light 2003). As indicated, only one operator obtained a loan to support the business. The operators were asked why they did not obtain any bank support. The response was that they knew they would not be given any support. This viewpoint seems to coincide with a similar opinion about Black entrepreneurs in Toronto that “credit and financing is one of the largest difficulties we have encountered in trying to establish our businesses” (Teixeira 2001: 2062). While the lack of financing is seen as a limiting factor in business development for Blacks, sub-Saharan African immigrants do not allow the lack of bank support to act as hindrance to their business decisions. Usually the immigrants went ahead to start the stores (this could affect size of the business), given the recognition of the potentialities and opportunities in the form of African consumer demand and resources available for the establishment of African grocery stores. This decision ties in with the Q statement 20 that states “I encountered difficulties when I was looking for money to open this store and the problem prevented me from opening this store.” This statement scored –3 on Factor A, –5 on Factor B, and –3 on Factor C. The immigrants did not get any financial support, but they did not allow this lack of money to become a barrier to their business creation. They went ahead to open their stores with the money they had. The experience of the operators in the form of lack of monetary support from financial institution helps to answer the research question that African grocery store operators are more likely to depend on their own private sources of money when starting their grocery stores.
Labor Force of the African Grocery Stores

Family labor is important in ethnic businesses and it helps to promote the success of the business (Teixeira 2001; Arthur 2000; Kaplan 1997; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). The labor market of the African grocery stores comprised the owners and employees who were co-ethnics. The number of workers per store ranged from two to five people. Family members comprised the husband and spouse. Some of their children helped at times during the weekends or on vacation period.

The workforce of the grocery stores was composed of individuals of similar background who were from the storeowners’ country and the same locality. Some were not from the same locality though they were from the same country. At some stores, the employees were from another sub-Saharan African country. This characteristic in the African grocery stores suggested a preference for certain types of individuals who worked at the stores. The operators were asked if they were to hire people at the store, what would be the hiring order.

![Graph showing potential hiring order at African Grocery Stores](image)

Figure 33. Potential Order of Hiring at African Grocery Stores
The responses (aggregate) given by the operators are in Figure 33 and show that the African grocery store operators have views about the different groups of people who they employ or would seek to employ at the grocery stores. Five operators had a preference for immediate family members. Some (3 operators) preferred people who were from the local area. One had a preference for people from the same country. One operator even liked to employ sub-Saharan African workers who were from countries other than his own.

In the Q study, the operators were asked about the country from which the employees came and their responses showed variation. The respondents on Factor C scored +4 on statement 1, meaning that the country from which the employees came was very important in the operators’ aspiration to self-employment. On factor A the score was –2, which showed that the operators disagreed that all the employees were or would be from their country. They were willing to work with anyone who suited them.

The operators were asked to explain why they preferred to use family members at their workplace. The responses for this preference ranged from trust and the language to a knowledge of the products sold at the store. Some however, opposed the use of family members at the grocery stores. One owner stated that “they will not employ them [family members] as they will help to destroy the business.” This was also echoed by another who added that “family members can destroy the store.” Another operator said the “African grocery store is something you do not have to use family labor because there could be lack of trust; you cannot discipline the individual if something went wrong; and they could create problems for the business.”
These observations of some African grocery store operators echoed similar views about native-born white Americans who condemned the mixing of family and business as ill-advised (Light 2003). Walton-Roberts and Hiebert (1997) reiterate that problems occur when family relationships are used in the business sector and conclude that people should be careful in romanticizing a combination of family and ethnic networks at the workplace.

Some of the operators of the African grocery stores had added to jobs by employing co-ethnics. The operators were asked how they would find employees if they were to hire, or for those who have employees, how they were hired. The responses were that both informal and formal methods were employed (Teixeira 2001). They stated that they relied on friends, workers, and leaders of their associations to find people. While some used inexpensive informal methods, others preferred formal methods, by using help-wanted advertisements that were posted at the stores. In both situations the applicants were interviewed before they were employed.

The respondents were asked why they had preference for sub-Saharan Africans as employees and particularly for those who were from their countries. Their expectation to use this type of labor was that the stores were to target sub-Saharan Africans. For that reason, the operators employed people with cultural backgrounds similar and familiar to the customer-base in order to achieve the goal of serving the needs of the clientele. Some of the workers had been born and raised in the sub-Saharan African culture and they recognized and ate similar foods (the children ate the foods the parents ate), and spoke the local language as well as English, or French. These skills helped the workers to
conceptualize (Chow 2011) the goals of the African grocery store as the workers were well placed to help the customers. In essence, the employment of individuals who knew the culture of the customer base was a marketing strategy that sought to provide personalized service to the clientele. The operators wanted to create a miniature of the African culture at the store as they spoke the language and used terms and phrases with which the customers were familiar (Chow 2011). While sub-Saharan African labor has permeated the African store landscape, one of the storeowners was planning to employ Hispanics; the intent was to penetrate the Hispanic market as some of the customers were from South and Central America.

Ethnic business literature documentation indicates that family members do not receive wages for the work they do (Phizacklea and Ram 1995). To discover the picture at the African stores, the operators were asked about the pay status of workers at the stores. The responses of the owners are indicated in Figure 34.
In six of the stores the family members did not receive any payment for working (Figure 34). However, in four stores, the operators paid themselves for working. This suggests that there were differences between the respondents on the question of free labor because some of them were paying themselves while others were not. This suggests a shift away from free labor as researchers such as Phizacklea and Ram (1995) indicate. This also perhaps calls for additional research to determine the parameters of “what free labor is.”
Sources of Supply of the African Grocery Stores

A key to the running a retailing business is to have effective supply sources. The operators had a variety of supply areas, both local and regional. The local areas were Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Youngstown and items were obtained from both ethnic and non-ethnic wholesalers. The regional areas were from other states like Illinois (Chicago), Maryland (Washington, D.C.), and New Jersey (Newark). From these supply areas the operators obtained products that are imported into the country from Africa, Asia, Hispanic America, and Canada.

The supplies reached some owners by trucks. Some of the stores had their own transportation that they used to bring in their supplies. The inventories were sent to the stores and were paid for on arrival. Some stores have their own brand of items, however, none of the stores surveyed in this study had their own brands. Some owners, however, pointed out that they intend to have their own store brands in the future. The availability of products from local and regional sources would allow the operators to capture a larger clientele.

Strategies to Reach Consumers of the African Grocery Stores

In the study it was discovered that the major consumers of African grocery stores were nationals from the countries of the operators. There were other consumers who were non-Sub-Saharan Africans, such as Hispanics, Asians, and Americans who had a past or other connection with the continent. The patronage of these ethnic groups suggested that
the African grocery stores were not exclusive but were inclusive in nature and served the needs of other racial groups.

Retailers have strategies they use to penetrate any market. The strategies include word-of-mouth and advertisements through mass media such as radio, Internet, and television. The operators were asked about the strategies that they used to reach their customers. These marketing strategies are shown in Figure 35.

Figure 35. Some Promotion Strategies at African Grocery Stores (number of responses)
The key strategies used to promote the store included word-of-mouth (8), accepting welfare checks (8), availability of goods (6), location of the store (6), store name (5), and meeting customers’ requests for products (4). The most important methods that the operators seemed to use in reaching their consumers were word-of-mouth, acceptance of personal checks, product availability, and location of the store. Through these diverse strategies, the operators are able to win customers from other stores.

The word-of-mouth was propelled by the storeowners and some of the customers themselves. Through their discussions they were able to direct other customers to the stores. This had a “domino buying effect” that had a ripple effect, and the subsequent chain reaction and cumulative outcome were that more consumers visited that particular African grocery store. As a result of this influence, the African grocery stores did not advertise and depended on word-of-mouth (Blackwell, Miniard, and Engel 2001). They are found in the local Yellow Pages and on the Internet. These media enabled sub-Saharan African immigrants to be aware of African grocery stores in the study areas. In essence, the African grocery stores in the study areas were known in the cities by just being there (Halkias et. al. 2007).

**Competitors of the African Grocery Stores**

The African grocery stores in the study areas are not the sole providers of African grocery goods. There are other retailers who provide similar goods and services that sub-Saharan Africans and other immigrants can use. As there were alternate services for the immigrants, the existing storeowners were thus in competition with all these other
groups, including other sub-Saharan African, Hispanic, Asian, and American grocery retailers. The operators were asked to indicate who were competing with them for customers.

Data from the field suggested that the geography of the African grocery store had about five types of competitors.

![Figure 36. Competitors of African Grocery Stores (number of responses)](image)

The responses are seen in Figure 36: storeowners from the same country competed with themselves (8 responses), with other sub-Saharan African storeowners from other countries (7), and with American grocers (3), Asian stores (2), and Hispanics (1). According to the operators, the storeowners from their own countries competed with them strongly. Where grocery operators were from the same country in the same city, this competition was intra-country. The reasons they gave were that the storeowners knew the ingredients the consumers from their country wanted and often had them at their store.
Another reason was that the operators had co-ethnic acquaintances that were loyal to
them because they came from their country and wanted to shop at their stores.

Other African grocery stores that were operated by sub-Saharan Africans who did
not come from their country also posed competition. In a city such as Columbus where
the operators were from different sub-Saharan African countries, an inter-country
competition developed between them. A cultural attachment often developed between the
operators and the immigrants from their country because the operators from their
countries knew the items that they wanted. As a result, some consumers bypassed stores
that were nearer them to shop at stores of their compatriots farther away (Oppong 2010).
Let me illustrate. In Columbus, there are many Ghanaian-owned grocery stores. These
Ghanaians are more likely to visit a Ghanaian-operated African grocery store than one
not operated by a Ghanaian. Thus this individual would bypass a non-Ghanaian store that
is near and visit the distant Ghanaian-operated store. In a similar manner, a Somali is
more likely to shop at a Somali owned store than one not operated by a Somali. In a way,
non-visitation of certain stores by groups could prevent them from getting good deals at
these stores or perhaps avoid bad service.

Other sub-Saharan Africans may visit these grocery stores too. For example a
Ghanaian may visit a Liberian-operated shop where these co-exist, which gives them a lot
of places to shop. Such visitation of shops by people from different countries indicates
that African grocery stores are not exclusive to immigrants from their own country. Apart
from the sub-Saharan Africans who are their customer-base, Asians, and Hispanics also
visit the African grocery stores. This is because the stores sell some ethnic food products
that these groups use. Sub-Saharan Africans also visit Asian and Hispanic ethnic stores and American grocery stores. The sale of tropical foods by other sub-Saharan Africans, Americans, Asians, and Hispanics therefore creates competition among the various stores. This competition can affect consumer traffic and thus revenue.

**Conclusion**

The creation of African grocery stores that started in the minds of the immigrants became operational in the creation of the African grocery stores. Several resources were utilized in the process. The next chapter discusses the spatial outcome of the decision by sub-Saharan Africans to act on the images (in terms of demand, opportunity, resources, and an avenue to prosperity) that they had about African grocery stores.
CHAPTER NINE

THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF AFRICAN GROCERY STORES IN COLUMBUS

Introduction

Operationalization of the images that sub-Saharan Africans had about the food needs of their co-ethnics has led to the formation of African grocery stores. This is a case of the supply side responding to the demand side and rendering these operational, and some spatial patterns emerge that become part of the urban fabric.

It has been discussed that sub-Saharan Africans are mainly suburban-based. Given that suburbia is the preferred location of sub-Saharan Africans, then logically, the African grocery stores that are ethnic-based would be established in the suburbs. In essence then, the sub-Saharan African entrepreneurs are pursuing their consumers who live in the suburbs with this business (Scott 2010). This is evident in all four cities under study where the African grocery stores are found in the suburbs.

Location Models of African Grocery Stores at the Micro-scale in Ohio

Configurations emanate from human actions. Some individuals have observed certain patterns that result from human activities in the real world and have come out with models to describe them. This geographic inquiry is called spatial analysis.
(Bergman and Renwick 2008). Columbus has many more African grocery stores than the other settlements in Ohio; how do the locations of these stores fit or mimic these retail models? To discover this requires a discussion of some of the representations that are used to model retail activities. In the diagrams, the City Hall is used to represent the city center.

A composite map of the African grocery stores in Columbus (Figure 37) presents a search for a model that mimics one or more of these retail models at the micro-scale level. Four of these models that are discussed are the von Thünen’s theory of land use, Christaller’s theory of central place, Weberian industrial location, and Hotelling’s theory of spatial competition.

The von Thünen land-use theory of agricultural land use (Liu 2000) is essentially concerned with rent-maximization (Hanink and Cromley 2005) and this occurs at the core of cities. According to this theory, root crops that yield high economic rent are grown near the farmsteads or the core (Liu 2000). Incorporating this into the African grocery store location suggests that operators who want to maximize their profits should position their facilities near the city center. While the von Thünen concept suggests that the city center is an ideal location for maximum profits, the African grocery stores are generally spatially located in the suburbs. This juxtaposition of the African grocery stores at the periphery of the city instead of the core is at variance with the theory of von Thünen. This conflict makes the von Thünen model not relevant to this research. The von Thünen model of spatial location has relevance where the highly valued horticulture occupies space near large modern urban cities (McCulloch and Ota 2009; Annorbah-Sarpei 1998).
However, transportation and technology can affect this general pattern in that these crops may be grown farther away from cities and be transported efficiently to the cities.

Another concept that is used to model land-use in the retail industry is the central place theory (Jones and Simmons 1990). This idea considers the approaches of Walter Christaller (1933) and August Losh (1941), which models market areas of firms under monopolistic competition (Ishikawa and Toda 2000).
Figure 37. Location of African Grocery Stores in Columbus
The central place theory is based on two critical market characteristics: a threshold that is the population needed to support a minimum operating scale of an activity, and the range, which is the spatial extent of an activity’s market (Cromley and Hanink 2008; Greene and Pick 2006). According to the central place theory, small populated settlements have only one or a few thresholds, and consequently a limited variety of activities, while large cities have large populations or hinterlands that can support a large number of activities (Cromley and Hanink 2008; Greene and Pick 2006). The logic is that small cities do not have a large sphere of influence in comparison to large settlements. At times, however, information from a small city can spread beyond even national boundaries.

Not all consumers of African grocery stores in Ohio reside in Columbus. Some live in cities that have no African grocery store(s). This absence enables other sub-Saharan Africans who visit the city regularly to purchase some basic items when they come. At certain times some co-ethnics in other cities piggyback others who were going to the city and ask them (as my spouse often does) to purchase items from one or more African grocery stores for them. This action helps to extend the sphere of influence of African grocery store beyond the city limits.

In some cases patrons of the grocery stores in the city may by-pass African grocery stores that are nearer to them and buy items at a store that is farther away from their residence. This is because the distant stores may have the items they want while those near them lack these items. For such consumers the actual distance may not be as important to them (Jones and Simmons 1990) as the food ingredients they want.
Consequently, such consumers would by-pass non-co-ethnics’ stores to patronize the store that is owned by a co-ethnic. Such patronage of customers may cause the sphere of influence grocery stores to overlap, to extend into others, or spill beyond the city borders. At times the spouse of the researcher mailed a check to a co-ethnic in Columbus to buy items, which were then collected when we went there or when another co-ethnic came to the city in which we lived. On occasions such as a funeral or engagement, some co-ethnics who did not live in the city came to purchase items or asked others to purchase items for them. These conditions of the African grocery store landscape in Columbus make the range of the store extend beyond the city limit. This sphere of influence, an aspect of the central place theory, generates more consumers that allow the operators stay in business (Greene and Pick 2006). However, other settlements with one African grocery store can exhibit similar conditions.

The classical Weberian location theory also explains the site choices of business people. This location paradigm asserts that the sources of raw material are the best places to locate, where the cost of transportation of heavy industries can be at a minimum (Rodrigue et al. 2009). However, modern developments in technology and other conditions have obliterated and altered this locational behavior in such a way that industries are now located at certain areas without much consideration to the Weberian location model (Rodrigue et al. 2009; Lloyd and Dicken 1977). For example, efficient transportation, the telephone, the Internet, and other conditions such as political considerations have revolutionized and brought alterations in the world such that many businesses do not follow this location concept of Weber.
How relevant is the Weberian location theory to the African grocery store? According to the Weberian location model, business managers locate their enterprises near the immediate source(s) of raw materials (Lloyd and Dicken 1977). African grocery stores do not locate near sources of raw materials/supplies. Their supplies are brought into the United States from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. Even those that obtain some of their supplies from the United States do not do so near the sources. Given that the storekeepers do not set up their stores near their sources of supplies, then the Weberian location model cannot be applied to this study.

Another retail model of interest to this study is the spatial competition concept of Hotelling (Jones and Simmons 1990). This framework analyzes the spatial strategic interactions of groupings of retailers (Baudewyns 2000). In this retail landscape setting, similar businesses cluster at a single location. This agglomeration is typical of restaurants, hotels, and automobile dealers (Fox, Postrel, and McLaughlin 2007). Others include gas stations, pharmacies, grocery stores, and stores at shopping malls. The retailers do not advertise as the consumers can move from one retailer to the next for similar products and this facilitates multi-purpose shopping (Fox, Postrel, and McLaughlin 2007). Again, the agglomeration strategy permits the consumers to purchase many different kinds of goods without wasting time and money to commute between the retailers (Brandao, Correia-da-Silva, and Pinho 2010).

The Hotelling location strategy facilitates concentration and benefits retailers. This location strategy seems to apply to the African grocery stores in Columbus, especially those in the Morse Road-Cleveland Avenue-Karl Road triangle and those in
the southeast part of the city. Empirically, these grocery stores are clustered in accordance with Hotelling’s concept of spatial competition. This makes it relevant to this study when the stores in Columbus are taken into consideration (see Figure 37).

**Evolution of the African Grocery Stores in Columbus**

Individuals respond to stimuli that can profoundly change the morphology of a city. One such case is the response of sub-Saharan African entrepreneurs to the cultural and situational conditions of the consumer behavior of sub-Saharan Africans in the city of Columbus. This retail need has created economic opportunities for the entrepreneurs who fill and service the void by starting the African grocery stores.

Table 16 shows the spatio-temporal process of the African grocery stores. A store was bought in 1999. In the following year, 2000, another was established. In 2002 and 2003, one each was started; two were opened in 2005; one in 2006; two in 2007; and one in 2010. There were two stores that were opened, along Morse Road and Livingstone Road, for which there were no dates indicating when they were established. The period 1999 to 2007 corresponds to the time during which 725,000 sub-Saharan Africans migrated to the United States as permanent residents.
Table 16. Year, Number, and Location of African Grocery Store(s) Established in Columbus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Stores Established</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cleveland Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Morse Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Huy Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Franksway Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Morse Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Karl Road, Kathy Run Lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Morse Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cleveland Avenue, Dublin Granville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Crossroads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Livingstone and Morse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It seems that this demographic growth was a catalyst that precipitated a proliferation in the growth of the grocery stores. The growth of these grocery stores in these years is important in analyzing the retail structure of the African grocery stores in Columbus. Between 1999 and 2002, two of the stores opened along the Morse-Karl-Cleveland Road axis. Between 2005 and 2007, four opened along the same arterial roads. The stores are within a mean distance of about 3.5 miles, emphasizing their clustering. The emergence of the nine stores could perhaps be the result of the demonstration effect, whereby one grocery starts and others follow. The clustering suggests the Hotelling spatial location strategy where similar businesses group together. Sub-Saharan Africans are clustered in some apartment buildings near where the stores are sited. Such clustering might have helped in shaping the decision making of the entrepreneurs to locate the African grocery stores at these places. Some of these businesses may be among the 180
business that were granted licenses in Columbus from 2002 through 2010 along Morse Road between Karl Road and Cleveland Avenue (Ferenchik 2011). The location of these African grocery stores along Morse Road in a way might have helped in rejuvenating the old retail centers and neighborhoods into new and revitalizing centers (Jones and Simmons 1990).

One of the African grocery stores was opened in 2003 in the southeastern part of Columbus. Two stores were started in 2007; one in the northwest and the other in the southeast; and in 2010, another was opened in the same southeast sector. The one in the northwest is an outlier in comparison to the others as it stands alone. The other three in the southeast are segregated from the others. In all, the analysis shows that three clusters - Cluster A; Cluster B; and Cluster C -- of the African grocery stores exist in Columbus (Figure 38). The clusters are based on nearest neighbor analysis of K-cluster analysis.

Figure 38 Clustering Based on K-Cluster Analysis
Figure 39. The Three Clusters of African Grocery Stores
Cluster A (Figure 39), is the African grocery store among businesses of different ethnic groups. In relationship to Clusters B and C, Cluster A is an outlier and segregated from the African grocery stores in clusters B and from the others C. As a cutoff, it seems it is being granted local monopoly. Again, by its segregation, it diverts or reduces competition from the other African grocery stores. The same situation applies to Cluster C that is found in the southeastern part of the city.

Cluster B (Figure 39) is made up 9 stores, which are sited along the Morse-Karl and Cleveland arterial roads. These are clustered and typify the Hotelling theory of spatial competition. These stores can benefit from each other by locating close together. This will enable their consumers to move from one store to another at a lesser cost. The consumers may be satisfied that they could obtain their bundle of goods within a small geographical space. Cluster C (Figure 39) is located in the southeastern part of the city and is composed of three African grocery stores.

There are no African grocery stores in the western side of Columbus and no such stores exist in the downtown or the south. A possible reason for this phenomenon is the absence of either cheap store space to rent or a population of sub-Saharan Africans. Perhaps the area around Morse Road had been renovated or gentrified (Jones and Simmons 1990) and the owners were using the “goodwill” status that the area had acquired, which is a converging place for shoppers, as the basis to locate their businesses. Another possible reason is that the owners were depending on the other stores as anchors to their own stores.
The discussion on the location of the grocery store in the suburbs illustrates a particular marketing strategy (Jones and Simmons 1990) to market its products to its consumers. The siting of African grocery stores in the suburbs is a tactical strategy of the sub-Saharan African entrepreneurs. This is because the suburbs form alternate market areas outside the conventional central business districts (CBDs) of the cities. The stores are biased towards the periphery of the cities because the CBDs are high-land valued areas and have high rents that the African grocery stores cannot afford. The operators prefer the suburbs with gentrified space and low rental rates. In addition, the CBDs are space-deficient and lack extensive, inexpensive parking while shopping spaces of suburbs offer large and free parking areas. Furthermore, the target market on which the African grocery stores lean is not CBD-based but is found in the suburb. Consequently, the African grocery stores that are ethnic-based are following the spread of their consumers with their wares (Scott 2010). Thus the African grocery store location template is following the model of the mall that affords the shopper a huge and free parking area (Jones and Simmons 1990). These stores are also connected with secondary arterial roads that bring their consumers to their doorstep. They are also sited near apartment buildings that house many of the sub-Saharan Africans. The stores are not freestanding but are located in areas with other stores, whose items the immigrants may also need.

All the cities are cosmopolitan. However, Columbus is chosen to be discussed as it has many African grocery stores. Sub-Saharan Africans are not a monolithic group but are heterogeneous and segmented into country-specific groups such as Somalis, Ethiopians, Nigerians, Ghanaians, Liberians, Senegalese, Gambians, and Sudanese. It is
entrepreneurs from these groups that had established the African grocery stores in Columbus. Each of these groups has a food culture that has not faded but has been kept alive despite the thousands of miles separating their homeland and the United States. It is this nostalgic consumer behavior that has led the entrepreneurs to establish country-tied African grocery stores for their compatriots as they know the food ingredients needed to prepare their cuisine.

At the time of the survey, 13 of the African grocery stores were in Columbus. Ghanaians (731 according to the 2000 census), who formed 11 percent of the sub-Saharan Africans in the city, operated six grocery stores, dominating in this service. This number of Ghanaians has grown through students, business people, and other travelers who have changed their status to permanent residents. Other ways for this growth are through family reunion, relocation, and sponsorship. The newly arrived Ghanaians often anchor at residential neighborhoods already settled by other co-ethnics, especially in apartments. It is at these residential areas where some Ghanaians seeking upward mobility have established their African grocery stores (Figure 40). Thus the operators were willing to take advantage of the opportunity in the form of the growing number of Ghanaians as the city has become their destination. Others established these grocery stores because of the inadequacy of similar food services for Ghanaians and other groups from the sub-region. However, to understand this Ghanaian preponderance of stores needs further research.
Somalis also live in the city. Columbus is the home of 2,824 Somalis according to the 2000 census population. They constitute a little over 18 percent of the sub-Saharan
Africans in the city but have four of the stores. According to some community members about 40,000 Somali refugees reside in city (Omar 2007). In addition to these are those who arrive through the Diversity Visa program.

Figure 41. The location of African grocery stores and residential distribution of Somalis in Columbus
Apart from these groups are individuals who arrived earlier and could sponsor others and the population has grown through relocation and family reunion. The Somalis are concentrated in the Northland neighborhood of Columbus. It is in this neighborhood and around Huy Street and Cleveland Avenue that the stores are located (Figure 41).

Some Liberians reside in Columbus. Some had arrived as refugees of the civil war that engulfed the country in the 1990s. They are scattered throughout the city. However, a greater number of them are concentrated in the southeast part of the city (Figure 42).
Figure 42. The location of African grocery stores and residential distribution of Liberians in Columbus

It is in this area that a niche Liberian African grocery been established to serve mainly a group of their compatriots. However, this is not exclusive to Liberians but is visited by other ethnic groups that live in the city.
Gambians operate two African grocery stores in the city of Columbus. One is located in the Morse-Karl-Cleveland road axis while the other is in the southeast part of the city in Cluster C of the African grocery stores (Figure 43). The Gambian stores serve not only groups from their country, but also other groups that live nearby them, whether in the northern or southeastern parts of the city.

Figure 43. Gambian African grocery stores and residential distribution of Gambians in Columbus
This discussion has so far focused on the African grocery stores found in Columbus. This is because it has the majority and greatest diversity of grocery stores. However, this analysis is not extended to the other three cities in the study because each has just one African grocery store.

The Opening of the African Grocery Stores

Many businesses usually begin with small pedestrian objectives (Lloyd and Dicken 1977). This was so with some of the African grocery stores in the study area. The African grocery store at Akron was initially home-based. With the demand for its products increasing, the owners later moved from the house to a strip mall. However, with demand still increasing, the couple moved to the present location of the store, which was a bigger space in the strip mall building. Such initial growth and expansion satisfies the concept of the wheel of retailing as new entrepreneurs enter and penetrate to serve a small number of consumers who later acquire bigger premises to serve the increasing number of consumers (Levy, Grewal, Peterson, and Connolly 2005).

Some of the stores, such as the one in Cincinnati, were bought from another immigrant. According to the owners of one of the grocery stores in Columbus, the store was begun at home and later a premise was found and an appropriate name to attract their compatriots was selected. Some others along Morse Road and Cleveland Avenue in Columbus were bought from other co-ethnics. According to one of the present owners, the initial owners started with a small building that had one door. However, as the business improved, the owners sought a double door building that was bigger at the same
location. They have not moved since they purchased this store. This helps the business, as customers are familiar with that location and the operators are familiar with the consumer traffic and do not want to lose the goodwill that the location had acquired. Rebuilding is going on along Morse Road and this will attract new African grocery stores given the popularity of this area as a popular commercial corridor (Ferenchik 2011).

The geography of the African grocery stores in Columbus shows that they are in three clusters. The stores in Clusters A and B are located in neighborhoods with a high concentration of sub-Saharan Africans. The spatial distribution of sub-Saharan Africans suggests many of their residences gravitate towards the suburbs. This suburban location of sub-Saharan Africans is a shift from the concentration of European immigrants who lived at the city core (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). This suburban concentration of immigrants has therefore pushed the location of some of the sub-Saharan African economic opportunities to the suburbs. This suggests that the entrepreneurs of the African grocery stores are responding to the population demand and are following the residence of the immigrants with their stores in the cities.

**Conclusion**

Human activities that individuals undertake in cities tend to create patterns that shape the urban fabric. Some individuals have made observations that have led to the construction of models to depict these human activities. The suburbs form the space that the African grocery store operators prefer over the CBDs to open their stores because of the advantages the suburbs have over the central district. These are the places where the
immigrants reside. As the immigrants live in such areas, these stores have become the 
custodians of their culture and help them (immigrants) to adjust, integrate, and survive in 
impersonal America. In Appendix 5 are the individual stores that were studied. They are 
identified by numbers.
CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION: AFRICAN GROCERY STORES IN THE STUDY AREAS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to find the factors that influenced the establishment of African grocery stores in four cities in Ohio by sub-Saharan African immigrants. In order to achieve the set objectives, the study reviewed some of the models that governed the ethnic enterprises. The models were structural/disadvantage, cultural, and interactive. These theories provided the foundations in the discussion about sub-Saharan African immigrants’ involvement in African grocery stores. The models and viewpoints of some of the operators provided the statements that were used to evaluate sub-Saharan African grocery store entrepreneurship in the state of Ohio, United States. To discern the influences that promoted the sub-Saharan African immigrants’ decision to establish African grocery stores, Q methodology was used. In the process, 20 operators of African grocery stores sorted 36 statements that were related to ethnic enterprises. These theoretical viewpoints give an insight into the reasons that influenced the sub-Saharan African immigrants to open the African grocery stores.

To discover and understand what influenced the operators, some individuals who were on the three factors that emerged out of the analysis were interviewed. These
interviews helped in understanding their experiences in the opening of the African grocery stores. In the study, three factors emerged, suggesting that three distinctive opinions influenced the decision of the sub-Saharan Africans to open the African grocery stores. I named the three emergent factors: Factor A as Demand-Opportunity, Factor B as Cultural-Resources, and Factor C as Independence-Aspiration. The actions of the operators suggested that decision making was a complex issue and the operators had several reasons that prompted them to start the grocery stores. This indicated the diversity of opinions among the operators which emerged out of the study, which were the contexts and experiences in which they found themselves. It was these environments experienced by the operators that were helpful in understanding their actions. This participation became significant when some representatives of the factors that emerged were interviewed individually.

According to ethnic business models, immigrants go into self-employment because of the disadvantages they face (Maxim 1992). Some of these discriminatory factors are language and race that push them into low wage jobs (Teixeira 2001). The cultural viewpoint suggests that immigrants arrive at their destinations with particular cultural characteristics (Teixeira 2001; Agrawal and Chavan 1997; Light 1972). The interactive theory, however, is a cross fertilization model that integrates both the structural and cultural models (Teixeira 2001). According to the interactive theory, ethnic business flourishes where there is congruence between the demands of the ethnic population and informal resources that are needed to service that market condition (Agrawal and Chavan (1997).
Several models are used to analyze immigrant enterprise. However, the study was based on the structural, cultural, and interactive models, which researchers suggest are some of the pathways that immigrants use for self-employment. Q methodology, using the responses from the operators, was able to unearth the diversity of experiences that encouraged them to start the African grocery stores. In this exploratory study, it was discovered that the interactive model fit the sub-Saharan African immigrants’ situation.

The study discovered three factors – Factor A: Demand-Opportunity; Factor B: Cultural-Resources; and Factor C: Independence-Aspiration – as the experiences that influenced the sub-Saharan African immigrants to start the African grocery stores. This finding has implications for issues of entrepreneurship. The study demonstrates that a variety of experiences influence the starting of the African grocery stores. The different opinions suggest the operators have different experiences. The study can help in guiding other immigrants who are considering becoming entrepreneurs in this country and even other countries as well.

The study shows that issues of starting of business are complex and subjective and the actions depend on the individuals and the circumstances in which they find themselves. Some immigrants may depend on the demand for, and the lack of, food service for sub-Saharan African immigrants as opportunities to open the African grocery stores. Others would use the presence and concentration of the immigrants as resources from their culture that afford the creation of business activity such as African grocery stores. Others who aspire to own their own business may utilize the concentration of sub-Saharan Africans and their food demand as a means to accomplish that goal.
The perceptions and speculations of sub-Saharan African immigrants perhaps encouraged them to start the African grocery stores. Before immigrating, some did not envisage starting African grocery stores. However, in the country, they discovered that this opportunity could help them to improve their standard of living. As immigrants they were willing to utilize any opportunity and resources that could empower them to achieve that goal. The immigrants saw the gap in the provision of African food products and moved in to fill that void. Their decision to enter this retail sector suggests that they were not pushed into opening of the African grocery stores. Rather, they were pulled in to provide a cultural response to some of the food needs of the sub-Saharan Africans in the city in which they lived.

The discovery of three different viewpoints that encouraged the immigrants to open the stores suggests that researchers do not agree that there is only one pathway by which immigrants arrive at self-employment. This study indicates that there are several avenues by which immigrants such as sub-Saharan African immigrants can achieve entrepreneurship. The avenues to self-employment are subjective and are dependent on their experiences and aspirations. One group of sub-Saharan African immigrants may see the market conditions (population and demand) as opportunities; another group may see the cultural traits as resources to exploit; and still another group may see the independence that results from owning the business as a way forward towards prosperity and success. The responses from the operators enabled readers to actually consider their thinking and thus helped people to understand their actions.
The decision of sub-Saharan African immigrants to start the African grocery stores is based on the availability of opportunities, lack of African grocery stores, and desire to be independent. These opportunities are the demand for African foods by the huge presence of sub-Saharan African immigrants and lack of American retailers to support that need. The operators valued and emphasized these opportunities and resources as essential for business activity and responded by using some of the cultural resources to provide those needs. Thus the decision to open the African stores was not just a state of mind, but became realistic when the grocery stores were actually opened.

The decision to establish the African grocery stores can be understood through the responses to the Q statements that emanated from the experiences of the operators. The operators had different reasons for starting the grocery stores. The market conditions that one individual experienced encouraged him/her to start an African grocery store. However, other immigrants discovered the ethnic resources as the potentials that they had in their residential areas. The availability of these conditions stimulated the immigrants to think about how these resources could be utilized to help them to decide on entrepreneurship.

How were these African food stores started? These opportunities, lack of services, cultural resources and characteristics, and aspiration constituted the basis of starting of the African grocery stores at the environment they found themselves. These conditions, resources, and aspiration converged and interacted to facilitate the creation of the African grocery stores. A framework that helps to illustrate the conditions is shown in Figure 44.
The African Grocery Store Conceptual Model

Market Condition

This conceptual model (Figure 44) is based on findings from the fieldwork. First, there are market conditions in the form of consumer demand and lack of African food retail service for the sub-Saharan African immigrants. There are also resources such as labor. These conditions stimulate the operator to seek information on the status of the population and other resources.

Market Condition and Initial Information

Thus the first stage of the decision-making process of the sub-Saharan African entrepreneur who wants to open an African grocery store, whether it is afforded by opportunity, group characteristics, or the desire to be independent, involves an evaluation of the market (population) conditions in the study area. During this stage, the operator has to assess the presence of the population that will use the African grocery store. Also important is the location of the population, which is where the potential population could be found. In most cases the knowledge about the population is anecdotal. The operators observe community activities of sub-Sahara Africans in areas such as their participation in religious and home and town meetings, weddings, funeral celebrations, and other ethnic gatherings. The presence of these immigrants gives an indication to an entrepreneur about the potentiality of the market.
Another condition that influences the geographical foundation of African grocery stores is the lack of service by American and other ethnic grocery retailers to serve the needs of sub-Saharan African immigrants. This gap affords an opportunity for the sub-Saharan African entrepreneur to fill.

At the initial stage the entrepreneur gathers some of the information and may also obtain some from co-ethnics. This is because the entrepreneur knows that one cannot search for information all on one’s own. At this stage the co-ethnics become the entrepreneur’s legs, ears, and eyes in the information quest. The use of co-ethnics becomes beneficial and reduces the cost and time necessary for carrying on this search.
From the information gathered, the operator is able to recognize whether the presence of the group of sub-Saharan Africans constitutes a potential resource on which he/she can depend. The entrepreneur sees the potentials in terms of location, labor, and market.

**Resources of the Operator**

The geographical concentration of the sub-Saharan African immigrants provides the operator accessibility to labor, supplies, and a market, and thus an effective means for self-employment of the entrepreneur. The grocery store creation actually becomes possible when the operator assembles important resources such as capital, labor, and skills. The operators, usually spouses and relatives, pool their finances, which are personal financial sources to finance the store. Usually the entrepreneur does not depend on banks and rotating credit unions to fund the African grocery store.

Another resource necessary for starting an African grocery store is labor. The family labor is usually the first. In some instances the entrepreneur may hire labor to support and augment operations at the store. The processes of recruiting employees by the entrepreneur are informal or formal means. The operators may pay or may not pay themselves for working at the grocery store. Situations where the owners pay themselves is inconsistent with what many researchers such as Teixeira (2001); Phizacklea and Ram (1995); and Aldrich and Waldinger (1990) have observed.

Another characteristic of the African grocery store is that the labor is usually homogeneous like the population the grocery store was designed to serve. Other resources that are necessary for opening the grocery store are the skills and strategies of
the entrepreneur. These resources have a direct impact on the entrepreneur’s ability to penetrate, maintain, and expand into the grocery stores already in existence. A personalized customer service, which is the “customer is right” attitude and gifts at Christmas and New Year, are important in attracting and maintaining their customers. Generally, the customers of the African grocery store are not only sub-Saharan African immigrants; the customers may include Asians, Hispanics, and even White and Black Americans who have had connection with sub-Saharan Africa and its people.

Informing the presence about the African grocery store is through the word-of-mouth. Consequently, the entrepreneur does not advertise in the mass media. At times the entrepreneur uses the name “African” as an advertising resource. The storeowner inserts and incorporates it with one or more other names from their countries to evoke cultural linkage to the continent. Such insertion is a good publicity strategy that is designed to attract, persuade, and obtain a loyal group of sub-Saharan Africans to shop at that store, an action that diverts them from going to other grocery stores.

**Competition**

In opening the African grocery store, the entrepreneur is likely to meet stresses in the form of competition from other grocery retailers already in the American marketplace. The competitors are African grocery store operators who come from the operators’ own country; storeowners from other African countries; ethnic grocers like Asians and Hispanics; and American grocery retailers. All these grocery retailers sell some familiar African food products or their alternatives.
In sum, the African grocery store formation model shows how sub-Saharan African cultural food demand influences some of their compatriots to think opportunities and use the conditions and resources as a means to open the African grocery stores. After the entrepreneur recognizes the stimulus (demand and the underserved market by American and ethnic grocers), the entrepreneur may access the resources that are necessary to start the market. The status of the African food demand condition, the resources, and the aspiration to be independent, becomes a focus and thus helps in influencing the entrepreneur’s decision to start the African grocery store.

The resources of the operator are a means to the entrepreneur and they enable him/her to start the grocery store once the decision has been made. These resources include capital, labor, advice, skills, and strategies. The capital may be from personal sources. The labor may be provided by the family, with hired ones in some situations. The entrepreneur may obtain advice from acquaintances on some needs that are necessary to start the store. Past marketing skills are important as they provide prior knowledge or experience (Clydesdale 2008) to the immigrant as he/she enters and penetrates the grocery retail space.

**Significance/Contributions to Ethnic Business Involvement**

The migration of sub-Saharan Africans into the United States and to the Ohio cities where the study was undertaken has created economic opportunities and resources. These are resources that the immigrants can access and utilize to promote entrepreneurship. The study fills a gap in the body of research that addresses sub-Saharan
African immigrants’ involvement in business enterprises in the four Ohio cities and by implication refers to other cities in the United States.

A major contribution to knowledge is the discovery that Hotelling’s spatial competition exists among the African grocery stores in Columbus in the Karl Road-Morse Road-Cleveland Avenue axis. Another clustering exists among the stores that are located in the southeast sector of the city.

Another finding that emerged from the study is the sphere of influence of the stores. The stores in each of the study areas offer services for other sub-Saharan Africans who do not live in those areas. In this case their sphere of influence extended beyond their boundaries, which followed an aspect of Christaller’s central place theory.

This research also contributes to the generation of new hypotheses. This experience of sub-Saharan Africans in terms of how business is created could be utilized by other immigrants who are considering entrepreneurship. The experiences of these immigrants are important as they will give insight to other immigrants who are considering self-employment. The study further helps readers to understand that the issue of decision making in entrepreneurship by sub-Saharan African immigrants is complex in nature.

The establishment of African grocery stores is related to the interactive model. The presence of the immigrants has generated opportunities, resources, and also strategies that have motivated sub-Saharan Africans to act. The action of these immigrants is not imaginary but empirical as practically they have been able to open the African grocery stores, which leads to entrepreneurship. The extent and zealousness with
which the immigrants would start this business niche depends on the aspiration of the individuals, cultural resources, and available opportunities (market conditions). Thus it is when all these resources and opportunities converge and are coupled would the immigrants be able to create African grocery stores that are called “African markets” in the American retail landscape.
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## APPENDIX 1

### Factor Arrays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Combinations</th>
<th>Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>All the employees in this store are from my country.</td>
<td>eac</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The money I used to open this store was obtained from my country’s rotating credit union (susu/tontine).</td>
<td>fbc</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>My past store skills enabled me to develop methods to reach my customers.</td>
<td>gad</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I based my knowledge on the presence of sub-Saharan Africans and past skills in store management and decided to look for money to open this store.</td>
<td>fbd</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I wanted to be self-employed so I used my personal money to open this African market.</td>
<td>ebd</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I opened this African market because American grocery stores did not serve food products that sub-Saharan Africans need to prepare their cuisines.</td>
<td>fac</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The financial support from my extended family members helped in supporting me when I decided to open this market to serve the grocery needs of my country folks.</td>
<td>ebc</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>My decision to offer a friendly, efficient, clean, safe, and tidy premise will promote the loyalty of my customers.</td>
<td>gac</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>My prior business knowledge did not help me to develop business strategies/methods to open this market.</td>
<td>gbd</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I wanted to be rich quickly so I decided to use my former skills to open this store.</td>
<td>ead</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The people from my country did not provide me information about how to obtain money to start this store.</td>
<td>ebc</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africans demand for their traditional African foods encouraged me to use my personal money to start this grocery store.</td>
<td>gbc</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I was not able to obtain information that supported me to open this store through my family members, relatives, and friends.</td>
<td>gbd</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The prior business I had experience enabled me to obtain credit to begin this store.</td>
<td>gbc</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The population size and hard work attitude of my people encouraged me to open this market.</td>
<td>eca</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I found no work in my professional area so I decided to start this store with the trading skills that I had.</td>
<td>fad</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Arrays</td>
<td>Q Statements and Scores</td>
<td>Factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The presence of sub-Saharan Africans who wanted their traditional food and the desire of my family to help me enabled me to open this store.</td>
<td>fbc</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>The information that I received from people from my country influenced me to open this store.</td>
<td>ead</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Past business skills influenced my decision.</td>
<td>fbd</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I encountered difficulty when I was looking for money to open this store and the problem prevented me from opening this store.</td>
<td>fad</td>
<td>−3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Immigrants such as sub-Saharan Africans have unique sets of wants and preferences that are best served by a member of the sub-Saharan African immigrant community member like me.</td>
<td>fac</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I was not satisfied at my former job so I decided to start this store sub-Saharan Africans in this city.</td>
<td>ebd</td>
<td>−4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>All the family and co-ethnic labor is free.</td>
<td>gac</td>
<td>−2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>With my knowledge and skills about traditional African foods I am able to sell my goods at low prices to my customers.</td>
<td>gad</td>
<td>−1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I decided that with so many sub-Saharan Africans living in this city I would look for money to open an African market.</td>
<td>ebc</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>I doubt I would have been able to make it without the financial support of my co-ethnics.</td>
<td>gbc</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>This group of people is a resource so I decided to use my money and past skills to open this store to serve the needs of the members.</td>
<td>ebd</td>
<td>−2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>I wanted to open a store to serve the traditional food needs of the members of the sub-Saharan African communities in this city but I could not get financing.</td>
<td>fbd</td>
<td>−3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>I decided to open this store so that members of my African associations (church/town/Islam) could shop there.</td>
<td>eca</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Low wages I was given encouraged me to open this African grocery store.</td>
<td>gbd</td>
<td>−2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>I have worked in a store before so I decided to find money to open store and sell African food products to my people.</td>
<td>ead</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>My ties in the community enabled me to start this store.</td>
<td>fbc</td>
<td>−1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>American culture I was exposed to enabled me to develop marketing strategies/methods to promote my store.</td>
<td>gad</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>I wanted to be self-employed that is why I bought this store when the opportunity came.</td>
<td>fad</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>I went into business largely with the support from my business friends who told me that the business was good.</td>
<td>fac</td>
<td>−1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>I use the “customer is right” attitude as a strategy to attract, bring, and keep my customers.</td>
<td>gac</td>
<td>−1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2

Consent form from Kent State Institutional Review Board

December 3, 2008
Hyiamang Safo Odoom
Geography

Re: 08-755: “Ethnic Markets in the American Retail Landscape: African markets in Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Akron, Ohio”

Dear Mr. Odoom:

I am pleased to inform you that the Kent State University Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved your Application for Approval to Use Human Research Participants as Level I research. This application was approved on November 26, 2008 and is effective for a twelve-month period, expiring on November 26, 2009.

Kent State University IRB policy requires that research be reviewed at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk, but not less than once per year. The IRB has determined that this protocol requires an annual review and progress report. The IRB will forward an annual review reminder notice to you by email as a courtesy. Please note that it is the responsibility of the principal investigator to be aware of the study expiration date and submit the required materials. Please submit review materials (annual review form and copy of current consent form) one month prior to the expiration date.

HHS regulations and Kent State University Institutional Review Board guidelines require that any changes in research methodology, protocol design, or principal investigator have the prior approval of the IRB before implementation and continuation of the protocol. The IRB must also be informed of any adverse events associated with the study. The IRB further requests a final report at the conclusion of the study.

Kent State University has a Federal Wide Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP); FWA Number 00001853.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 330-672-2704 or tfrederick@kent.edu.

Sincerely,

Tonya Frederick, R.N., B.S.N.
Research Compliance Administrator

Cc: Dr. David Kaplan
APPENDIX 3

Q Sort Score Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Disagree</th>
<th>Most Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-5</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

249
APPENDIX 4

Basic Information about African Stores

Aim: this questionnaire is to collect information about you and your African market. It seeks information about your decision to open this store and other resources used in setting up this store. It also seeks information about strategies of reaching consumers and how you obtain supplies among others.

Thank you

1). What was your previous background in retailing? Please check mark (✔)
   □ had previous experience in ethnic marketing/store/business
   □ working in mainstream marketing (grocery/departmental stores, etc)
   □ had other experience in other businesses (specify) ………………
   □ None

2). Where did you start trading in ethnic goods? Please check mark (✔)
   □ Door-to-door □ in-house trading □ flea market □ Other area……

3). Year African was opened …

4). Decision to open was… Please mark all that apply.
   □ I was unemployed ………………………………………………………
   □ I was earning low wages………………………………………………
   □ I wanted to make money quickly………………………………………
   □ Had difficulties at my previous job(s)…………………………………
   □ Desire for independence/to be self-employed………………………
   □ A friend did the same…………………………………………………
   □ It is a family tradition …………………………………………………
   □ I saw a potential market………………………………………………
   □ Other reason (Specify) …………………………………………………
Sources of money

5). Please indicate all your sources of money used to start the store. Please check mark (√)

□ My own financing
□ Joint financing (e.g. with spouse/brother/sister/in-law/father/etc)
□ Bank loan/credit (credit cards)
□ Government grant (tax free)
□ Association funds
□ Susu (rotating funds)
□ Other (Specify) .................................

Sources of Information

6). How important did the following sources of information affect your decision to start this store?

Please check mark (√)

1 = very important 2 = important 3 = not important 4 = no idea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family members/friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-ethnics (Non-family members from my country)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers/flyers/brochures of my country people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic organizations/institutions (town associations, churches)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends (not from my country)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television/Internet/newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government (federal/state) institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7). How important was the information given to you affect your decision about the following?

1 = very important 2 = important 3 = not important 4 = no idea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The target location/site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (present/size)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential employees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government regulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential capital sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers’ attraction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good will availability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggesting a name</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Labor Market

8a) Number of Workers _________

8b). If you were to hire people for your store, in which order will it be?

Please indicate:

1 = very important 2 = important 3 = not important 4 = no idea

Family members (father/mother/children) ______

Friends (people from the same area/region) ______

Country people not from the same area/region____

People who are not from my country___________

8c). Why will you hire people in this order?

__________________________________________
9). Please which of the following groups of individuals work for you? Are they paid or not?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Paid</th>
<th>Not paid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate relatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People from same ethnic group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People from same country</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sub-Saharan Africans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10). If you were to hire people, how would you find them to work in your store?

Please check mark (✔)

- By my own personal contacts………………………………………………… □
- By posting ‘help wanted’ (advertisement) in my store………………………………… □
- Recommendation by others (workers/friends/leaders of my association)…… □
- Through my church…………………………………………………………… □
- Through my ethnic organization………………………………………….. □
- I talk to my friends………………………………………………………… □
- Through social gathering/funerals and naming ceremonies/weddings……… □
- Talk to customers in the store ……………………………………………… □

Data indicate African market operators employ people from their area/group

11). How important are/were the following factors in hiring people to work at your store?

Please indicate as

1 = very important  2 = important  3 = not important  4= no idea

We speak the same language _________________________________
They have experience in ethnic store_____________________
They are willing to work odd hours______________________
We are from the same country __________________________
They are friendly ____________________________________
They are familiar with the goods sold at the store___________
They can suggest alternate goods to customers___________
They are hard workers________________________________
They can learn the work_______________________________
This will help them get some money _____________________
They can get reference to future jobs ___________________

Sources of supply

12). Please mark all your supply sources
Local area (e.g. Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Akron)………………..
West coast (e.g. Los Angeles)...................................................
Midwest (e.g. Chicago).............................................................
East coast (e.g. New York)........................................................
Canada (e.g. Toronto, Montreal)...............................................Outside North America (e.g. South America, Africa, Europe, etc)………

13a). Do you go for supplies yourself?........................................... □ Yes □ No
13b) Are they and have them shipped to you?.............................. □ Yes □ No

14). Do you call and have supplies shipped to you on credit?........ □ Yes □ No

15). Do you have your own brand of produce?.............................. □ Yes □ No
16). How important are the following factors in your decision to change your source of supply?

1 = very important  2 = important  3 = not important  4 = no idea

Cost ________________________________
Transport______________________________
Reliability_____________________________
Quality _______________________________
Quantity______________________________
Manufacturing my own brand___________
Availability of credit__________________

Strategies to reach consumers

17). What strategies do you adopt to reach customers? Indicate their importance.

1 = very important  2 = important  3 = not important  4 = no idea

Giving new look to the store (painting, etc) ____________________________
Advice from family/friends__________________________________________
Advertisement____________________________________________________
Meeting requests of customers for new products________________________
By word-of-mouth___________________________________________________
Visits to voluntary organizations (town, etc) ___________________________
Visits to faith-based organizations (churches)_________________________
Acceptance of EBT (welfare cards)___________________________________
Acceptance of personal checks, credit cards___________________________
Low prices_________________________________________________________
Ensure the availability and quality of popular items_____________________
Store name________________________________________________________________
Location of store _____________________________________________________
18). How important are the following methods in informing people about this store or getting people to come here?

1 = very important  2 = important  3 = not important  4 = no idea

Media (e.g. TV) advertisement ______  Word-of-mouth _______
Visits to organizations/churches ____  Flyers/brochures _______
Product availability ________________  Low prices_____________
Membership in association___________  Business cards ___________
Accepting invitations to events ____  Name of store ___________

Competitors

There is competition in retailing.

19). Please indicate how important the following groups are in competing with you for customers.

1 = very important  2 = important  3 = not important  4 = no idea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storeowners from my country</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other African storeowners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic storeowners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian storeowners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americans grocery stores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20). Is your business expanding or shrinking?................. ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes continue on Question 21, please, if it is shrinking, please go to Question 22
Strategies to expand/business shrinkage

21). What strategies did you adopt to expand your business? Indicate their importance.

1 = very important  2 = important  3 = not important  4 = no idea

Increased the size of facility_______________________________________
Moved to a new location_________________________________________
Advice from family/friends________________________________________
Advertisement________________________________________________________________
Meeting requests of customers for new products____________________
By word-of-mouth________________________________________________
Visits to voluntary organizations (town, etc)_______________________
Visits to faith-based organizations (churches)______________________
Acceptance of EBT (welfare cards) ________________________________
Acceptance of personal checks, credit cards ______________________
Low prices_________________________________________________________________
Ensure the availability and quality of popular items ________________

Please after Question 21 go to Question 23

22). Reason(s) for shrinking of business. Please indicate their importance

1 = very important  2 = important  3 = not important  4 = no idea

Competition from other ethnic stores □ □ □ □
American stores offering ethnic foods □ □ □ □
Loss of interest in the store □ □ □ □
Shrinking size of ethnic population □ □ □ □
Changes in ethnic food choices □ □ □ □
Changes in street pattern □ □ □ □
Prices of items □ □ □ □
Non-availability of items □ □ □ □
No reason □ □ □ □
23). Sex: M……  F……

23b). Country of Origin  …………………

24). Length of stay in the USA
   Under one year  ……  One to five years……  Over five years……

25). Education
   Elementary ________________  Middle school______________
   High School ________________  Post-Secondary______________
   2-year College______________  4-year College______________
   Teacher’s Training___________  Graduate__________________

26). Residential Zip Code __________
APPENDIX 5

SINGLE PORTRAITS OF THE AFRICAN GROCERY STORES

Introduction

The aim of this appendix is to provide a picture of the grocery stores surveyed in the study areas. This draws on field notes information taken from the respondents and also from observation. This combines a survey questionnaire and interviews to create a description of each store. These are tied to the country of the entrepreneurs. There are differences that are crystallizations from the images that they had in their minds. To preserve anonymity, the stores are numbered from one to ten and referred to as a “market” as they call these retail formats. This begins with the African Market Number One.

African Market Number One

The African market identified as Number One was bought in 1999. It is among some American and other ethnically-operated businesses along a strip mall. There is a lack of parking space at this store. This store is named after a popular city in a country in the western part of Africa. Many of the other ethnic businesses at this strip mall are named after towns and places in this country in Africa.
This store is family owned and operated by the couple. It has four workers: the two owners and two employees. The store has six shelves that are four levels high. It has a security camera that monitors the movements and other situations in the store. At the right as the customer enters the store is a section with one cash register and a weighing scale. This section has a shelf that has medications, beauty aids and oils, and some advertisements. The medicines are mostly prepared and brought in from the owners’ country as they know and can best explain how these herbal preparations work. The customers also know them. At the same corner hangs a television set that may show some African-themed videos produced in Ghana or Nigeria as entertainment or advertisement for the customers. This section too may have the licenses that permit the store to operate.

The spaces between aisles in African market Number One are narrow, which may not allow two shoppers abreast to browse for items to buy. The store has other infrastructure such as cold storage facilities that hold frozen and dried meat, fish, and other food delicacies. It has equipment for cutting, weighing, tying, and pricing meat and fish. The meats that are sold include cow hides and legs; and goat with burned skin and without skin. There is poultry made of hard chicken and smoked turkey and other delicacies like snail. In addition, there is fish that is frozen, dried, smoked, or salted. These usually sent out a strong smell that wafted through the store. Some of the tinned fish are mackerel called tinapa, sardines, and the Titus brand among others.

The store sells rice of various brands. These include bagged scented rice such as Asian best and boxed Uncle Ben’s rice. These are usually piled on wooden sleepers with the prices marked on them. In addition to these grains are ground flours of corn (in boxes
and bags), cassava (gari), yam (iyan), and potato (Kotoko fufuo). Some powdered flour of plantain and cocoyam are in paper packages.

There are vegetables like fresh okra, pepper, and tomatoes. In addition to these are tinned tomatoes, palm fruits, garden eggs, spices in bottles, peanut butter, beans, other dried vegetables, bagged chips. The store sells beverages like Milo, Ovaltine, custard, and baby foods like Cerelac. This store wires money. One of the owners prepares taxes, which tends to draw many people during the period of tax preparation.

This store has a small box near the cash register, which acts a communication center. This has business cards and small flyers that announce services for the sub-Saharan Africans and other immigrants who frequent the store. Against the wall are advertisements of voluntary associations such as churches that display their activities. Some of the flyers are about events such as weddings, funeral celebrations, and naming ceremonies. The store targets immigrants from the operators’ country. However, immigrants from other sub-Saharan African countries also visit this store.

African Market Number Two

The African market identified as Number Two is located in a shopping center and is operated by two brothers who are Muslims. It was started in 2002. The store has one cash register in an area that serves as the office and has a computer. Behind this counter are items such as perfumes and scented oils from Middle Eastern countries. There is a security monitor that displays events at random times from various locations within the store. This is a corner store that is located in the same area, called a Professional Center,
with other businesses – such as a beauty store, a tutoring center that provides General Education Diploma (GED) classes, and an immigrant tax preparation center. The store has a fairly big parking area at the front and behind the building. In its glass window are items in which the store deals.

The infrastructure of the store includes five standing shelves that have four levels, refrigerators, a weighing scale, and cutting, tying, and pricing equipment. The aisles between the shelves are narrow. The items on the shelves include beans, grains, spices in big and small plastic bags, and oils – olive, groundnut/peanut, and other vegetable oils. In addition to these items are flours of grains. On the floor are wooden slabs that are packed with sacks and boxes of rice of various varieties such as basmati rice. The store has refrigerators that have fruit drinks of coconut and mango in addition to soda pop.

The store has a butchery section where Halal meat is prepared. Halal is meat from animals killed according to Muslim law. The meats are from goat, sheep, and beef. The store does not sell pork or pork products. The meats are cut into pieces, bagged, and priced. In that section can be found a group of young men who help at the store. The store has workers who work in shifts. These employees are in addition to the two owners. The owners receive wages just like the employees. The main clientele are from the northeastern part of Africa. The store accepts state food support program checks in addition to credit cards and cash. The languages that are used at the store include Somali and English. However, other sub-Saharan Africans and other immigrants also visit the store for their bundle of goods.
African Market Number Three

The African market that is identified as Number Three was bought in June 2007. It exists a little distance away from African Market Number Two. This African grocery exists in a shopping center that has American and some Northeastern African ethnic stores. Among the immigrant businesses are a calling center and a restaurant. African Market Number Three has a single cash register and three shelves with four levels. There is a security monitor near the cash register that is near the door. It does not have a television as is found in some of the African grocery stores. It is operated by spouses and employs two other employees. It also operates a bakery. The shopping center at which this African grocery store is located has a parking space that can accommodate more than 60 vehicles. However, this parking lot is filled most of the time because of the many ethnic businesses that exist there.

On entering this store, near the front, one could see on the wooden pallets, piles of sacks and boxes of food products like rice and ground corn. The market sells vegetables like tomatoes, fresh pepper, ginger, and onions, among others. This African market has varieties of tinned products – fruits, vegetables, fish, and meats. The oils that are sold include groundnut/peanut, soy, corn, and olive. It has also dried, bagged, and priced foods of corn, flour, and potato chips of different types. There are boxed foods such as cereals of various types.

In addition, there are milk varieties such as cow and goat milk and eggs in the refrigerator that also has sections with meats and frozen fish. There is meat classified as Halal – goat, sheep, and cow/beef. These are cut, bagged, and priced. The Halal section is
at the back of the building. The store also sells poultry, either whole or cut into smaller pieces. In essence, this African grocery store seeks to provide one-stop shopping for the customer. It also sells other items such as silk blankets and rugs from the East.

There is a financial center inside the store. In addition, the store serves as a community center that caters to the community needs of this group of immigrants in the city. The major patrons of this store are from Northeastern Africa. However, other sub-Saharan Africans and other immigrants visit this store for their needs.

African Market Number Four

African Market Number Four was started in 2005 and is operated by a couple from a country in the western part of Africa. Prior to the establishment of this store, the man sold clothing and other articles to sub-Saharan Africans in his neighborhood. This store has two workers who come from another country different from the operators. This African market is located among a cluster of American businesses and an African church, an ethnic food restaurant, and a bakery. The locality showed signs of blight as some buildings are locked and boarded up. This African market has a closed-circuit security television monitoring activities in the store. In addition, it has a satellite television that offers international news, which on some occasions shows ethnic videos from Ghana and Nigeria. It has a vehicle that is used to pick up its inventories from its suppliers.

African market Number Four has two free-standing shelves at four levels. It has a cash register. Iron bars bolt the doors of the store. On the doors of the store are posted flyers of “help wanted ads,” jobs, events, and services. Inside the store is a container that
holds business cards and other smaller flyers. These are print-outs of advertisements that were placed there by other sub-Saharan African immigrants who have businesses and services and want to connect with other sub-Saharan African immigrant consumers who may need their services.

The grocery store provides a one-stop shopping experience to the customers like the other African grocery stores. In that case it has vegetables such as onions, tomatoes, pepper, peanut/groundnut butter, and other spices for sale. There are dried beans and groundnuts on the shelves of the store. It stocks plantains and giant tubers of yam from Ghana. In addition, there are varieties of yam, potato, and cassava flours in plastic bags and tins for sale. It has prepackaged bags of beans, cassava grains (gari), and plantains or bananas. It has tinned beverages such as Ovaltine and Milo; bottled drinks like Fanta and Mirinda; and soda products in its refrigerators.

It stocks frozen fish like croaker, red fish, and tilapia, which are cut in pieces and priced. Some of the fish are also salted and dried and send their smell throughout the store. Some of the fish are tinned, such as the Titus brand and mackerels of various brands. The store has a meat cutting section where goat meats with burnt skin and without skin are prepared. There are tough cut beef parts like skin and legs in the refrigerators. There are tinned meats such as corned beef on the shelves. Some of these food products are in plastic bags.

The store sells some international phone cards. This store, like the other African grocery stores, is a community center where customers meet other immigrants and share ideas. English and vernacular are used in the store.
African Market Number Five

African Market Number Five is located among a cluster of American and other ethnic stores at a shopping center. It was opened in 2005. This store has a single cash register near a weighing scale on a counter at the checkout. At that same section are international phone cards. Behind the cash register is the section with beauty aids such as Ever Sheen cocoa butter crème, Mercy Cream, Angel Cream, Nku Cream, and others that are familiar to the sub-Saharan African population. It also sells flags and other symbols/logos of some sub-Saharan African countries. Below the counter on which the cash register stands are three shelves with compartments, which have items such as clothes and herbal preparations from the homeland of the owners.

Within the store infrastructure are two double-sided gondola shelves, each with four layers. On these shelves are stacked items such as Indian Head corn, cooking oils of different brands, and spices such as rosemary, bay leaves, thyme, and nutmeg. Against one side of the room are three refrigerators with all sorts of meat and fish that are popular with the sub-Saharan African immigrants. The names of the products have been embossed to make it easy for the consumers to select items in which they are interested.

The named meat varieties have tougher cuts such as oxtail, cow feet, cow skin, goat with burned skin, goat with no skin, and are named for easy recognition and selection. The meat products have bones in them compared to the ground and boneless meat cuts in American grocery stores. This store offers poultry products, such as chicken and turkey drumsticks, necks, and wings, which are tough in texture. This store offers specialty products like snails, and seafood such as crabs, croaker, smoked tilapia, fresh
grouper, fresh “kuta,” and mackerel. There are also smoked/smelly varieties of tilapia, stick fish, herrings, and catfish in its cold facilities.

Besides these meats, seafood, and poultry, the store offers fresh tomatoes, onions, pepper, and cherry balls (Khwahu nsusua). Some of these vegetables are dried or canned. It also has canned palm fruits and garden eggs as well as palm oil on its shelves. On the shelves too are dried cassava grain (gari), potato flour, and flours of plantain and cocoyam. It sells giant yams from Ghana, and has sacks and boxes of different varieties of rice, tea bread, and balls of kenkey, a Ghanaian food made from corn (corn pudding).

The store has coolers that are filled with beverages like “Fanta” “Mirinda” and “Milo” that the immigrants know. These are in addition to beverages manufactured in the United States like soda, fruit juices, and Goya malt. In addition, the store has cutting tools and other equipment.

This store acts as a social communication center. It has business cards, flyers, and posters from many individuals and businesses in the community. Some of the cards and flyers are contained in a bin. Other flyers are posted on the doors of the store. It has DVDs and CDs for sale of some artists from sub-Saharan African countries. It has a security monitor and on the television may be shown Ghanaian and Nigerian DVD movies. The store sells huge plastic containers/drums that the immigrants use to ship items to Africa.

The customers are not only from the owners’ country; rather, they also come from other sub-Saharan African countries. Hispanics also visit this store to shop. The main languages used in this particular store are English and the owners’ vernacular. According
to the owners, at times some of the customers call them to find out about some products. It has two other workers in addition to the owners. The workers and owners are paid just like the owners themselves.

African Market Number Six

African Market Number Six was begun in 2002. This store is operated by a couple. The store is among American businesses that are sited along the street. It does not have a parking lot; shoppers have to park at a parking lot and cross to the other side to enter the store. This store has one standalone shelf. It has a cash register and a television on which some of the videos that are sold to the customers are shown. It faces competition from another African market near the city boundary.

This store has one refrigerator in which frozen fish and smoked fish are kept. Some of the frozen fish are cut up in sizes and bagged while some are just whole varieties of tilapia, red fish, and croaker. The smoked fish such as herrings and salted fish announce their presence by the smell that wafts through the store. Apart from the frozen and smoked fish, the store has in stock tinned fish products such as sardines, including Queen of the Coast and Titus brands. One of the Titus brand has hot red pepper. Other meat products that are sold by the store are cow skin and legs, and goat meat – both skinless and burned skin.

The store has a collection of ground/milled food ingredients such as ground maize (Indian Head), cassava grains (gari), cassava starch, potato granules (Kotoko fufuo), and yam flour (iyan pounded yam). The store sells tins of potato starch in addition to boxes of
powdered cocoyam and plantain. It also sells raw and tinned tomatoes, onions, garden eggs, and pepper, as well as red and black-eyed beans and shelled groundnut. This store has African clothes for sale in addition to health and beauty products like shea butter. It also sells international phone cards.

African Market Number Seven

African Market Number Seven is among some stores along a side street in a city in the study area. It was set up in 2005. The parking space of this store is a short strip at the front of the store, which accommodates few vehicles. Through the glass doors of this store could be seen some designer-African dresses. The owners are moving to a bigger space in the same building.

African Market Number Seven has one long double-sided shelf that has four layers. Also against one side of the walls of the store is a shelf that has five layers. It has four refrigerated cubicles. It has a cash register and a weighing scale on the front counter. At the section with the cash register is a multi-tiered shelf that has varieties of phone cards of different prices, beauty aids, and medications. It has equipment for cutting, weighing, and tying bags of items in the backroom. The office is behind where the cash register is located.

African Market Number Seven has three refrigerators with frozen vegetables such as cut and whole okra, bagged pepper, and frozen cassava leaves. There are frozen whole gutted or cut pieces of tilapia, croaker, or red fish in the refrigerators. There are also bags of smoked catfish, pinfish, herrings, and tilapia in the refrigerators. There are cut up and
priced bags of frozen meat such as cow and pig feet/legs, oxtail, and burnt skin-on or skin-less goat venison. The store stocks poultry such as tough smoked turkey and chicken, which are whole or cut into pieces and priced. The store has the pricey salted kpanli fish, which is also cut into pieces. There is cow tripe for sale. The names of these products are written on the refrigerators where they are found.

On the shelves of this store are tinned vegetable products such as palm fruits, and garden eggs. In plastic bottles are spices such as adobo, ordinary salt, seasoned salt, curry powder, and other spices. Also on the shelves are palm oils, groundnut oils, tinned tomatoes and sardines such as Titus, Exeter corned beef, and varieties of geisha mackerel. There are sachets of beverage drinks like Lipton tea, and other beverages like Milo, Ovaltine, and soda pop. This store also stocks flours of cassava, yam, and corn in either in paper bags/containers or boxes. It also has raw yams, green and ripe plantain, onions, and ginger roots. It has stocks of varieties of sacks maxi-bags and boxes of scented rice, brown rice, and Uncle Ben’s.

The store sells African films on video cassettes and DVDs. It has a stand that displays African clothing and carvings. Near the door of store stands a box with business cards, handbills, and flyers. These items have information that links people to jobs, services, and activities/events in the community. Some have information that has linkages to immigrants beyond the city. African Market Number Seven also has an international money-wiring business.

This store, according to one of the owners, started as home-based job, retailing items to other immigrants from the birth country of the operator. This later matured and
was moved from the home to another location when the couple saw the potential was there for its growth. The store then moved to its present location and it is moving again to a bigger building. The customers of this store are not sub-Saharan Africans alone but include Asians from countries such as Nepal, Bhutan, and Hispanics.

**African Market Number Eight**

African Market Number Eight is located in a shopping center. Other businesses found near this store are a bank, a pharmacy, a restaurant, and American and other ethnic businesses. The shopping center has a big parking lot. The store was bought in 2007 from some immigrants who were from the same country as the current owners. This store has the name “African” added to its vernacular name of the country of the owners, which is an important magnet in attracting the sub-Saharan African shoppers. The store is situated near apartment buildings that house some sub-Saharan African immigrants. It faces competition from three similar stores from a nearby city. It has a security monitor and a television set on which are shown DVDs and videos made particularly by Ghanaians and Nigerians. It has one cash register and four double-door upright standing refrigerators/freezers. At the section where the cash register is situated are tiny but pricy items such as tubes of medicines such as Angel Cream, Rob Cream, and the herbal Kooko denden among others familiar to sub-Saharan African immigrants. It has shelves against the wall that hold varieties of items.

The four freezers of this particular store hold cuts of burnt goat meat, cow skin and legs, smoked or frozen, cut and gutted tilapia, and parts of hard chicken and turkey.
The location of the tough offal is indicated by the handwritten signs on the refrigerators. These meat products are sold by the pound, and their prices are written on them. The store sells salted and smoked fish such as herrings, shrimp, and tilapia whose smell permeates the vicinity whenever their containers/refrigerators are opened. It has corn or banana leaf-wrapped cornmeal or pudding called kenkey for sale in addition to corn flour in bags and Indian Head.

The store sells onions, tomatoes, garden eggs, eggplant, okra, and pepper. The store offers canned garden eggs, canned palm fruit soup, and African peanut butter for sale. It sells assorted varieties of rice and beans, and flours of cassava and yams. In addition to these ingredients, the store offers its customers fresh yams imported from Ghana and green plantains from Central American countries. This store sells gari (made from cassava); red and black-eyed beans, boxed powdered plantain and cocoyam, in addition to potato flour and pounded yam used in the preparation of fufu/fufuo. There is a section for clothes, java print brands that are popular with sub-Saharan African immigrants.

The store offers varieties of cooking vegetable oils for sale. It sells sacks of rice, mainly the scented Asian brands. These are piled on wooden boards at a part of the store. The store has beverage drinks like Milo and Ovaltine, with which the sub-Saharan Africans are familiar. It also stocks Jamaica ginger beer, soda products, and white sugar.
African Market Number Nine

African Market Number Nine is located at a shopping center. This shopping center has a mix of American and immigrant businesses in the vicinity. These include a beauty supply and hair salon shop and an American laundry. A large parking lot is available to the shoppers at this shopping plaza. Not far away from this store is a cluster of apartments.

African Market Number Nine was opened in 2006 and sells varieties of items that are familiar to sub-Saharan African immigrants. The items on the four-layered shelves include cooking oils, canned palm soup, bottled peanut butter, and spices like nutmeg, bay leaves, and curry powder. In addition, it offers tinned mackerel like geisha and tinapa, sardines, and corned beef. These food ingredients include goat meat, tough poultry products like the neck, tail, and drumstick; cow hide, palm oil, and smoked fish like tilapia. There are food spices and hot pepper sauce called shito usually prepared from dried shrimp and other ingredients.

It has three refrigerators that have varieties of boxes of whole pieces of fish and huge coolers that have cut-up meats and fish varieties. Their names and prices have been written on the bags that hold them for easy identification and purchase by the customers. The customers are not only sub-Saharan Africans, but other immigrants shop there as well.

The store has a section containing various infrastructures that are used to prepare some of the items that are sold in the store. They are the cutting, weighing, pricing, and tying machines. These items are placed in the refrigerators and shelves for the customers.
At the center of the store are pallets on which are placed a variety of items ranging from bags of corn, gari (fried cassava granules), and rice.

Near the door stands a chest of business cards and flyers that advertise businesses and events to Africans in the neighborhood and even beyond the study area. Some advertisements are displayed on the glass doors of the store. In addition to these, the store is a point where some sub-Saharan African immigrants usually meet to conduct business, or seek information from others.

The store has two other workers in addition to the owners, all of whom are paid. The workers are from the owners’ country. The languages used in this store are English and a vernacular. The owners provide personalized service to their customers. According to the owners, their customers are not only people from the city, but some come from beyond the city. This they know because they often receive calls from beyond the city from people who ask about some of the items they sell. This means that the sphere of influence stretched beyond the boundaries of this city.

African Market Number Ten

African Market Number Ten is located in a shopping center with other American and ethnic businesses. It has a huge parking lot. This store was started in 2004. It has three shelves and one cash register. The shelves are four levels high. It has three refrigerators that are filled with products that sub-Saharan African immigrants use to prepare their cuisines. This store has a security camera and television that shows videos that are produced in Africa, particularly from Ghana and Nigeria.
Among the other infrastructures at this store are cutting, tying, and two weighing scales. One of the scales is near the cashier for use when items such as plantain have to be weighed. At the section with the cash register are international phone cards, which are supplied by a non-co-ethnic. The food products on the shelves that this store serves include vegetables and fruits, which are raw, bottled, canned, or dried. The raw vegetables include onions, egusi (akatoa) ginger, pepper, okra, and garden eggs. The canned vegetables and fruits include tomatoes, garden eggs, and palm fruits; the bottled ones include adobo, ground pepper and other spices, like thyme, rosemary, and nutmeg. There are dried bagged red and black-eyed beans.

On the shelves are bagged flours of yam (iyan), potato (Kotoko), cassava (gari), semolina, corn, sorghum (for koko), beans, and egusi. The canned ones include the 5-pound instant potato mix; and the boxed cocoyam (taro) and plantain flours. In addition to these are oils like palm, groundnut/peanut, canola, and soy oil. There are beverages like Lipton and other teabags, Milo, Ovaltine, and baby foods like custard and Cerelac. Some of the beverages are bottled like malt, vimto, and Jamaica ginger beer, as well as American soda products. Some tinned fish found on the shelves include brand named Titus sardines, geisha, and other brands of mackerel.

In the three refrigerators are cut parts of tough cow legs, oxtail, and cowhide; goat with or without burnt skin; and smoked turkey necks, tails, and drumsticks. Sections of these refrigerators contain frozen gutted tilapia, croaker, and red fish as well as smoked catfish, herrings, tilapia, and other species of smoked fish imported from Africa. These
items have a strong odor that permeates the store when their space is invaded. On the floor are wooden slabs on which are sacks and boxes of rice and corn.

The owners have two employees who come from their country. This type of labor made it possible for this store to provide personalized service for the customer-base. As the customers are from sub-Saharan Africa, the owners sell logos such as flags from these countries. The consumers of this store are not only sub-Saharan Africans, but also Asian and Central and South American immigrants.