ABSTRACT

AN EXAMINATION OF GHANAIAN IMMIGRANT INSTITUTIONS IN GREATER CINCINNATI AREA OF THE SOUTH WEST OHIO, USA

By Kewku Siripi Ocran

This thesis examines Ghanaian immigrant associations in Cincinnati, Ohio and how they fulfill social, economic, religious and cultural needs of their members. It assesses the role immigrant institutions play in maintaining Ghanaian heritage and identity, and also help in facilitating the settlement processes of members into the mainstream American system. By examining the nature, purpose, functions and formation of these associations, the thesis unravel not only the problems and successes they encounter, but also, how they have continually undergone restructuring to help members overcome many barriers and discriminations in their experience and adaptation processes.

An in-depth discussion on four identified Ghanaian immigrant associations in Cincinnati, Ohio, reveals fluctuating but dynamic changes in membership, functions and resource generation. In spite of many teething problems they confront, the associations have increasingly become the avenue for many Ghanaian immigrants to adapt and cope with the American system. These associations have therefore become agencies for sustaining not only the immigrants’ unique socio-economic, religious and cultural needs but also reinforcing Ghanaian identity.

This study provides some understanding to the African immigrant experience through associational life and how it compares and compliments experiences of the Europeans, Asians, and South Americans in the USA. The findings suggest and readily support the assertion that Ghanaian immigrant associations in Cincinnati are continually striving to meet the needs of members to settle but have not yet achieved the full potential to mobilize resources to undertake socio-economic development projects and/or transnational activities with their country of origin.
AN EXAMINATION OF GHANAIAN IMMIGRANT INSTITUTIONS IN GREATER CINCINNATI AREA OF THE SOUTH WEST OHIO, USA

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of Miami University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of Geography

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2005

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Acknowledgements

This thesis was made possible with the immense help, contributions and support from a variety of people who must be acknowledged. First, I am very thankful and indebted to the Almighty God for his mercy, blessings, and protection, and for bringing me this far. Second, my deepest gratitude goes to the following individuals in the Department of Geography at Miami University of Oxford, Ohio. Dr. Ian Yeboah my advisor, who relentlessly supervised and contributed constructively to the thesis project. Dr. Thomas Klak, Dr. Patricia Ehrkamp, and Dr. Bruce D’Arcus who read and provided valuable input and suggestions to fine-tune the final product. To Dr. Howard Lloyd who inspired me, I say thank you. I would also like to thank Mrs. Debbi White, the administrative secretary of the department for her kindness and selfless assistance. God richly bless you. Third, my sincere gratitude goes to Mrs. Janet Stuckey, Suzanne Hagg, Barbara, and Jackie of the Special Collection department of the king library. You folks are like family to me, and your love, prayers and support really strengthened me to make this project a reality. Fourth, I have to recognize and thank the executives, leaders and founding members of the various Ghanaian associations in Cincinnati for their valuable information and insight. Finally, my gratitude to Patience (my spouse), Karen and Kevin (my children) and my extended family whose prayers, compassion, love and support has enabled me complete this thesis. To the many people who in diverse ways helped but could not be mentioned for lack of space, I say “thank you” and God bless you all.
CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to examine Ghanaian immigrant associations in Cincinnati, Ohio and if they fulfill social, economic or cultural needs of their members. It assesses the role of the institutions in maintaining Ghanaian heritage, and also facilitating the acculturation and assimilation processes of Ghanaian immigrants into the mainstream American system.

Ghanaian immigrants, like many others in the USA, enjoy much higher economic benefits than what they would have in their countries. Yet they continue to experience social and political barriers in the host society. These barriers include racial discrimination in housing, employment, and in other spheres of life (Henry, 1994; Hulchanski, 1993). The nature of problems new immigrants face (economic, social, religious, or cultural) must be viewed in light of how they adapt and assimilate into the American system. Many immigrant associations are created to serve as ‘buffers’ or institutions to cushion and smoothen the adaptation process of most immigrants, especially the recent arrivals (Owusu, 2000). Therefore, the adaptive and coping strategies of immigrants are embedded in the types of associations available at their places of settlement. Hence, the role these associations play in the lives of their members is related to sustaining members’ unique economic, social, religious and cultural circumstances and needs (Owusu, 2000).

Chapman (2000) argues that even though immigration continues to provide important contributions to US national development and evolution, there are advocates for more restrictive immigration policies. This situation has been strengthened since the September 11 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. In response, the US Government has implemented stringent immigration policies including tighter border restrictions and control, and other domestic policies such as cutbacks in welfare programs. These policies have put greater pressure on extended families and household members to support new arrivals (Chapman, 2000). There is also the tendency for older immigrants to share residence with family members as government subsidies dwindle (Glick, 2000).

Political debates on immigrants’ welfare programs have been tense, and for example the vote on Proposition 187 in California spurred a complex nature of anti-immigration sentiments and ‘nativism’ from, not only American citizens, but also the media and politicians towards new arrivals (Clark, 1998). So, the concern of USA’s ability to support resident immigrants and
whether they threaten USA’s national security, identity and social cohesion is an on-going debate (Chapman, 2000). Further, the withdrawal of budget support for education, health care and household welfare programs for immigrants has added more problems to their plight (Camarota, 2001).

In spite of the above mentioned drawbacks the immigrant population (legal and illegal) in the USA continues to increase. Census data indicate that the immigrant population has increased from 9.6 million in 1970 to 28.4 million as at 2000 (US Census Bureau, 2000). These estimates may be conservative since sizeable portions of the immigrant population are illegal and not accounted for in the census. The continued experiences of racism and discrimination from the American host society (Chapman, 2000) have been adequately documented. Immigrants are denied employment opportunities and discriminated against through selective housing allocations (Clark, 1998). In response to this plight, marginalized immigrants prefer to locate in less quality, affordable houses (Vliet, 1996), since their earning capabilities and opportunities are limited (Wright, et al. 2000). It is within this framework that immigrants get segregated into enclave settlement patterns. Yet, Wong (1999) argues that immigrants are increasingly living in mixed and diverse ethnic communities in the mist of segregated housing, residence, and ethnic enclaves in many areas in the USA today. In spite of the foregoing problems face by immigrants, Ellis, (2001) argues that recent spate of inter-racial marriages is likely to increase to a sizeable proportion of the population people with mixed heritage.

Most literature on the immigrant experience in the USA is focused on Latin Americans and Asians (Castro, 2003) to the exclusion of Africans, even though recent evidence shows that the African component of the immigrant population in the USA is growing. Hence, research on immigrants in a multicultural country like USA, must not be limited to only the Latinos and Asians (Castro, 2003). In general, literature on immigrant experience in the USA relates to arrival, adaptation, acculturation, assimilation and survival strategies (Castro, 2003). This is because new immigrants must adapt to the mainstream American way of life in order to survive and function. They must be familiar with English language use and other cultural attributes to become accepted into mainstream American society (Feliciano, 2001). Even though immigrants come to the USA for a variety of reasons (e.g. to acquire education, employment and better socio-economic benefits provided by the new society, (Arcia et al, 2001; Knipscheer et.al, 2000), their experiences vary.
Five factors have contributed to the growing African population in USA. These are globalization and integration of the world economy, economic and political development failures in Africa, immigration and refugee policies in the USA, Anglophone background and historic ties of sending countries to the USA (Gordon, 1998).

The literature on how African immigrants cope in the USA is limited but the few that has been documented researched on a variety of issues. Amoo-Dodoo (1997) for instance compares the assimilation differences among Africans, Caribbean and African-Americans. He found out that Africans earn more than both Caribbean and native-born blacks, but concluded that when relevant earnings-related endowments are controlled, Caribbean’s earn above the two groups. This is because African immigrants who hold college degrees earned outside the USA receive very little rewards for their academic achievements. McSpadden et al. (1993), argue that Ethiopian/Eritrean refugee women accept changing roles and status easier than their male counterpart because of cultural perceptions of gender roles held in Africa. The idea of status, employment, educational aspiration, and opportunities are expressed in such ways that men find difficulty in accepting low positions in the newly settled environment. Perry (1997) finds that Senegalese immigrants in New York have succeeded in carving out distinct niches as street peddlers of African artifacts, ‘gypsy’ taxi driving, and performing cheap and menial jobs in warehouses, hotels, and factories, in spite of their socio-economic background. Similarly, the Nigeriens have also taken up street market vending to build social capital and create niches among other West African Traders on 125th street in New York City (Stoller, 1999). These approaches adopted by African immigrants do not only serve as economic ventures but also survival strategies (Stoller, 1999).

Literature on Ghanaian immigrant experience and associations is also particularly limited. Owusu, (2000) argues that soon after immigration Ghanaian migrants in Canada establish associations to meet their social, economics and cultural needs related to settling in the new country. My interest to examine the immigrant experience through associational life is reinforced due to the fact that many immigrants rely on these institutions to survive new destinations. There is also the desire to add to the limited literature on Ghanaian immigrant experiences. Further, the growing Ghanaian immigrant population in USA reflects the need to investigate their experiences. For instance, census data for 1990 reported an African population of 7059 and a Ghanaian component of 226 for the state of Ohio. Records for the same period
show that 393 Africans and only 13 Ghanaians lived in the Greater Cincinnati area. However, estimated projections for 2000 census reported an African and Ghanaian population of 29,414 and 4,247 respectively for the state of Ohio and approximately 8,500 and 1,500 for Africans and Ghanaians respectively living in the Greater Cincinnati area (US Census Bureau, 2000).

The relative increase of Africans in general, and Ghanaians in particular, and the corresponding increase in the number of emerging social and religious associations, provides the basis for this thesis. One reason for the increase in Ghanaian population is the Diversity Visa Lottery program (DVL) that guarantees legalized immigration into USA. This program provides Green Cards (resident and working permits) for winners (Stalker, 2001). The DVL has enabled many Ghanaians to relocate to the US legally. The State Department identifies Ghana as one of the top beneficiaries of the Diversity Visa Lottery program over the years (The Triennial Comprehensive Report on Immigration for Africa, 1999). However, this opportunity for genuine immigration into US has not reversed illegal entry. The proportion of illegal entry into US is quite high and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has not been able to capture exact members, veracity and intensity. Ghanaian illegal entry into US includes visitors who overstay legal visa permits, and those smuggled or trafficked into the country with or without official connivance. Others use forged or false documents to enter the country without official detection (Stalker, 2001).

Despite the paucity of literature on Africans, and particularly on Ghanaians, in the USA, Owusu (1998, 2000), Konadu Agyemang (1999) and Attah-Poku, (1996) have researched Ghanaian immigrants’ experience in North America. Owusu (1998) for instance, argues that home ownership among Ghanaian immigrants living in Toronto, Canada is low because they are recent arrivals with relatively low income and small household sizes. He further attributes the low home ownership to the fact that most Ghanaians desire instead to own houses back home in Ghana rather than in Canada since their intension is to return permanently to their home country. On immigrant associations in Canada, Owusu (2000) argues that since the late 1980’s “Ghanaians in Toronto have established a relatively large network of national, ethnic, and township associations to address some of their economic, social, cultural and political needs” (Owusu, 2000: 1154). Konadu- Agyemang argues that most Ghanaians living in Canada “have completed a series of step-wise moves which may have started from their home towns via the regional capital and across the borders to a number of countries before arriving in Canada”
(Konadu- Agyemang, 1999: 400). Attah-Poku’s (1996) research based on Ghanaians in New York City points out that social networks have provided effective interactions among members of “Asanteman” ethnic association thus serving as mediums for survival, adjustment, and problem solving. He states that through networks, members receive assistance and support in times of grief (death, illness), joy (out-dooring of newly born, marriages) and conflicts resolution (Attah – Poku, 1996).

The focus of this thesis is to build on the initial findings of these studies about Ghanaians in the USA in particular by focusing on the role and nature of their associations. The specific purpose is to find out if immigrant associations play any significant role in the life of their members in their adaptation and assimilation into mainstream American society. By so doing, this thesis provides a broader understanding of social and religious institutions commonly formed by Ghanaian immigrants, their nature and roles in the settlement and survival processes of their members.

1.2 Research Questions

This thesis examines the nature, origin, evolution, interactions and reasons behind the formation of Ghanaian immigrant associations, and relates them to the role associations’ play in the settlement processes of their members in greater Cincinnati, Ohio. The emphasis is on how immigrant associations negotiate both the Ghanaian heritage and American systems and to sustain the identities of Ghanaian immigrants. In addition, the successes, challenges and future prepositions of these associations are examined. The thesis addresses the following broad research questions:

1. What types of Associations do Ghanaian immigrants form and for what purposes?
2. How do Associations help Ghanaian immigrants to settle in their new society?
3. Do Associations play any role in sustaining the identity of Ghanaian immigrants?

As will be made apparent in Chapter Two, these questions originate from the literature on the concept of associations, social networks, acculturation, assimilation and identity that form a framework for studying Ghanaian immigrant experiences.
1.3 Research methodology

Research literature indicates that the nature of the subject of enquiry, the focus of investigation, the purpose of study, and the specified research questions, combine to shape the method(s) of investigation (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Hay, 2000). This research is mainly an ethnographic, qualitative one, focusing on Ghanaian immigrant associations. Qualitative research includes a family of methods, which can be applied best to research with a small sample size and with limited time (Padgett, 1998). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) suggest an array of terms that can be used to refer to this family of methods, and these include ethnography, grounded theory, narrative analysis, constructivism, phenomenology, cultural studies, and postmodernism. In this thesis data was gathered from two parts: Interviews with leaders of associations and participant – observation of the whole groups.

1.3.1 Study Area

The study area covers the greater Cincinnati region including counties of Butler, Hamilton, Warren, Westchester, Springfield and outlier vicinities of Dayton and Covington in Northern Kentucky, where some members are located (Figure 1). This area covers approximately fifty square miles. Wimmer and Dominick (1997) note that researchers should gain understanding of what is possible from a site and be certain that the site holds the potential for fruitful data collection. Other reasons that contributed to the researchers choice of Greater Cincinnati include:

1. The rapid increase of the Ghanaian population in Greater Cincinnati, which the census data supports. In 1990 there were only 13 Ghanaians living in this area, but increased to about 1500 in the year 2000 (US population Census estimates for 2000).

2. The evidence of the increase in the number of emerging social and religious institutions, of which four of them have been selected for this study (Ghana Association of Greater Cincinnati (GAGC), Mens’ Association of Ghana (MAG), Church Of Pentecost (COP) and International Christian Fellowship Center (ICFC)).

3. The researcher being a Ghanaian easily identified with the Ghanaian immigrant community. This position was very crucial in gaining access to subjects as they saw me as part of them.
Map of Cincinnati and Outlying Regions

Source: Esri data

Figure 1

Map of Cincinnati – Study Area

Sources: MapQuest.com

Figure 2
1.3.2 Selection of Associations

As mentioned above the choice of GAGC, MAG, COP, and ICFC is because these associations are the most prominent among the others in terms of the magnitude of their membership, activities, and the social, economic, cultural and spiritual impact they have on the Ghanaian immigrant community. Two of the associations are social in their emphasis and the other two are religious. Some of the characteristics of the selected associations are as follows:

**Ghanaian Association of Greater Cincinnati (GAGC):** was formed in 1982 and has a register or directory of over two hundred (200) people mostly of Ghanaian origin or other nationals married to Ghanaians. GAGC holds meetings quarterly unless there is a reason for a called meeting. The association organizes summer picnics, annual parties, dance, and cultural activities for the Ghanaian community in Cincinnati. It has a constitution and is registered with the state of Ohio as a non-profit organization. GAGC has a clause in its constitution that does not make any Ghanaian an automatic member unless he or she has paid the annual membership dues.

**International Christian Fellowship Center (ICFC):** was formed in 1998 as a church by an individual Ghanaian Pastor. Its congregation is made up of about 70% educated Ghanaians, and English language is used as the medium of communication during regular Sunday services. Membership of the church is through regular attendance and paying of tithes contributions. There are few other Africans as member within this congregation.

**Church of Pentecost (COP):** was formed in 1995 by an elder and a couple of friends. The church is an affiliate of a parent church with its headquarters in Ghana. The church is under the supervision of the Ghanaian pastor of a sister assembly in Columbus, Ohio. A presiding elder with appointed leaders’ are responsible for the running of the church, and 98% of its members are Ghanaians with relatively low educational backgrounds. A Ghanaian language called Twi was previously the only language used for service, but this has been combined with English in recent times. Membership is by regular attendance, commitment to church activities and payment of tithes.

**Men’s Association of Ghana (MAG):** was formed in 2001 and restricted to young Ghanaian men of ages between twenty to fifty years. Membership of MAG is by virtue of being a Ghanaian male, registered with the association, and attending regular meetings. Since this
association is in its infancy, its constitution has not been written yet, so meetings are held in an adhoc manner.

1.3.3 Units of Analysis

The thesis is an ethnographic study, which examines and assesses Ghanaian immigrant associations. Respondents were chosen from those who have been involved in the formation and running of these associations. Executive members, Elders, Founding members, Pastors and Patrons were selected and interviewed to provide information needed. Membership to these associations is erratic, and therefore changes from year to year. So, it was appropriate to focus on the leadership since they are easier to identify and have insights of the associations. Also, the researcher being a Ghanaian did not have difficulty immersing himself into the Ghanaian community to recruit respondents for the interviews. The interviews and field observations were done between May and July 2002, but follow-up observations continued until the final thesis was completed. The researcher visited the churches and participated in many of the activities organized by these associations.

Since the researcher interviewed nineteen leaders from the four selected association to solicit their opinions on the formation and day-to-day running of these associations. The breakdown of respondents is as follows: Six respondents were chosen from Ghana Association of Greater Cincinnati (GAGC), four from Men’s Association of Ghana (MAG), five from Church of Pentecost (COP), and four from International Christian Fellowship Church (ICFC). The specific individuals interviewed are:

**GAGC:** Patron, two founding members, the President, the Secretary and the Treasurer.

**MAG:** Founding Member, Interim President, Interim Vice President and Interim Secretary.

**COP:** The Presiding Elder, the Secretary, two elders and one deaconess.

**ICFC:** The founding Pastor, the Secretary, and two elders.

These respondents provided information on the reasons for the formation, nature, origin and evolution of Ghanaian associations.

Ideally, it would have been desirable to interview the general members but for reasons that most members are detached from the day-to-day running of the business of associations this cannot be done. The general membership has relatively limited knowledge about their associations as they allow leaders to run and take decisions on behalf of associations. Leaders of
associations are the most reliable to provide better reflective opinions and information to the requirement of this research than the ordinary members. Also, general members could not be relied upon because the constitution and byelaws of the associations specifically defines membership to be only those who have paid the current annual dues, and not necessarily any Ghanaian. This clause made it difficult to identify members who can contribute to this investigation as the numbers for membership fluctuates seasonally or periodically according to the number of paid people. The members of the churches were also determined by regular attendance to church services and activities, as well as financial contributions through monthly payment of tithes for the physical and spiritual welfare of the church. This clause also made it difficult to identify who is currently a full-fledged member and those who are not.

Focusing on the leadership did not imply that the ordinary membership was ignored in the research. Individual members formed a part of this study through researchers observation and interaction with them. I immersed myself in the activities of these four associations and participated in church services, picnics and parties they organized. This participant-observation technique gave me the opportunity to observe how these associations’ function and how individual members also function within them. This ethnographic technique (Sanjek, 1990, Agar, 1980, Wolcott, 1988) provided an opportunity to interact with members and elicited their opinions. This approach also enabled me to gain intuitive knowledge and insight about Ghanaian immigrant associations and the private opinions of members. Views of non-vested Ghanaian members were also sort so that a broader picture of Ghanaian view was collected. Photographs were also taken to reinforce objectivity and holistic representation of activities that associations engage, and also to supplement descriptive information provided by respondents as well as researchers personal observations on the field.

1.3.4 Interview Methods

Researchers recognize that individual, face-to-face interviews provide opportunities for a more appropriate context within which respondents have the confidentiality and relaxation to discuss their perceptions and experiences of the matter under investigation (Hannabuss, 1996). The researcher was introduced to some GAGC executives during the 2001 summer picnic by the then outgoing President, who happens to be the researcher’s advisor. The researcher described the purpose of the study to the selected respondents through a series of telephone calls and they
volunteered to participate in the research on a scheduled day. Other respondents reached through a snowball effect as those interviewed referred or contacted others on the researchers behalf before providing phone numbers to schedule interviews.

With regards to the two churches COP and ICFC, the researcher attended Sunday church services and talked to the elders and pastor about the study and invited them to participate in the study. Almost all the elders I contacted accepted and participated in the interview session except one elder from ICFC who though accepted the interviews had an emergence and traveled to Ghana before an interview date was scheduled. All interviews took place in the homes of the respective respondents, where the researcher was afforded a private and cordial setting.

Human subjects regulation guided this research. Prior to the actual interview, each participant was given an informed consent form stating the conditions of the research, and that he or she was participating voluntarily, and could withdraw from the study or avoid any question at choice. Each interview lasted between one and two hours.

Qualitative data comes in a variety of forms. These include notes, interview transcripts, documents, diaries and journals (Wimmer and Domminick 1997), but the research made use of notes and interview transcripts. They are usually designed to secure an in-depth understanding of phenomenon in question (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). During the interviews summary notes were taken, in addition to audio recording. The primary data for this thesis is mainly from the in-depth interviews and field observation, which provided useful insights for analysis. The continued visits and participation in associations’ activities by the researcher offered further opportunity to redress and capture some more, other information that the interviews could not address in the fieldwork.

1.3.5 Specific Research Themes

Interviews formed the primary source of information collected from the field. The questions were semi-structured and interviews proceeded through discussions in addition to my in-depth participant observations (Schensul and Lecompte, 1999). Face-to-face interviews conducted were on broadly presented open-ended questions of which specific questions were asked. These specific questions were derived from main research questions generated from research themes. The researcher allowed respondents enough time to answer all the questions in an orderly manner.
The semi-structured questions centered on main themes of nature, origin, evolution, interactions and formations of associations. These were generally, themes that emerged from the conceptual framework provided in the literature review. The review provided sets of variables that were identified to answer the research questions and objectives. Information on related variables were categorized and summarized under individual concepts so that response to specific questions can be related to particular concepts.

Specific themes that were used to gather information were as follows:

**Origin:**
Who were the founding members?
How did the association begin?
Can you account for some reasons for the formation of this association?
What is the age of your association?

**Nature:**
What type of association is this?
What kinds of interactions exist among members of your association?
How many members do you have presently and how does one become a member?

**Activities:**
What kinds of activities does your association engage in?
What are some of the benefits members derive from your association?
What languages do you use for associations’ business?
What cultural expression do you see in associational life?

**Formation:**
Which methods are employed in your associations’ recruitment process?
What factors accounts for the growth of your association?

**Future:**
What kinds of relationship exist between your associations and other associations?
What changes have occurred within your association since its formation?
What are some of the problems and challenges your association face?
Can you identify some of the successes and/ or failures your association has chalked?

Apart from the responses collected from the interview process, the researcher engaged in participant observation in a variety of social, religious and cultural activities the associations
organized. These approaches were a great source of information to the researcher. Photographs taken during these observations are to support remarks and explanations made in the thesis. Secondary source of information from newspaper articles, website information, newsletters, flyers, constitutions, and brochures were of additional importance to this thesis.

### 1.3.6 Data Analysis

Organizing, analyzing and making sense of available information from qualitative research pose special challenges for students. In this research, interviews, field observations and other qualitative techniques employed are more generally useful for description and explanation of phenomenon rather than measurement and quantification (Sayer, 1992; Johnson, 1996; Johnson et al., 2000). Wimmer and Dominick (1997) observe that collected field data are grouped into appropriate categories from which meaningful explanations emerge. The analysis of data collected was done with qualitative descriptive methods by comparing and contrasting responses within and between associations. On each theme, responses were collated on specific questions in a table, and conclusions drawn from the observed patterns. This technique helped to unravel similarities and differences within and between associations. The underlying reasons from observed patterns and conclusions drawn are then related to either confirm or reject findings associated with literature on immigrant experience and associational life, assimilation, social networks and identity, particularly to Africans and generally to Asians and Latin Americans.

Parametric methods of analysis are not used because the sample size is small and no assumptions about the populations’ origin are known. Non-parametric testing was also not considered because the data gathered were easily categorized and explanations provided for patterns that emerged. As will be made apparent in chapters three to six, the tables provided show only trends and do not prove any statistical difference. The content teased out only unravels differences and similarities observed within and between associations.

### 1.3.7 Interpretation of Tables

The data presented in the tables show two things from responses collated: one seems to portray a static view, and the other, a dynamic view of these associations. Respondents have different perspectives to questions posed, and their responses reflected the aims, objectives and achievements during their individual tenure as executives of associations. As the profiles of
these selected respondents differ in time and agenda as executives, data collated reflect both horizontal and vertical perspectives of different times of service to the associations. In as much as views of respondents’ do conflict, differ or overlap in some cases, the data unravels pertinent changes, continuity and dynamics that permeate associational life among Ghanaian immigrants in Cincinnati. It is also important to caution readers not to be confused with the interpretation of the numbers shown in each table. The categories in each table represent the themes that emerged from the questions, and the number of interviewees who responded to it is tallied in the box for all corresponding associations. Readers are not to assume that the total responses from all categories must add up to the total number of respondents for each association. Rather, the number in every listed category of a table must equal or be less than total number of respondents for each association.

1.4 Organization of Thesis

The thesis is organized into seven chapters. Chapter One introduces the thesis. Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature for the study. Important concepts used are association, social networks, assimilation, acculturation and identity. Main themes and missing links in the literature on each of these concepts are identified. Chapter three deals with the analysis and discussions on two kinds of associations formed by Ghanaian immigrants in Cincinnati, Ohio. It further examines the origin, nature, formation and activities of these associations. Chapter Four examines the social networks that emerge as a result of the formation of these associations. It assesses the interactions both among members and between association and how these help members in their settlement process. Chapter Five relates to the role Ghanaian immigrant associations play in the acculturation of its members in the American society. By an examination of cultural attributes that is manifested in associational life, such as food, language, dresses, dance and music, we are able to see how these cultural manifests have either changed or been sustained in the face of dominant American cultural influence. Chapter six further discusses how the process of assimilation has shaped the way Ghanaian immigrant associations organize themselves in order to cope with the American way of doing things, and how this is communicated to the membership. Chapter Seven concludes the thesis by bringing all the findings together in a coherent whole to point out the role Ghanaian immigrant associations play
in facilitating the smooth transition and incorporation of Ghanaians into the mainstream American society and also in the maintenance of the Ghanaian heritage and identity.
CHAPTER 2
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on five specific concepts: association, social networks, acculturation, assimilation and identity. These five concepts provide the framework upon which this research is based. Five key research questions emerge from the literature review and these are:

1. To what extent have immigrant associations facilitated or helped maintain Ghanaian culture and religion under the dominant American system?

2. In what ways have Ghanaian immigrant associations play vital mediating roles to sustain the survival strategies of members in the host society on one hand and also assist places of origin on the other?

3. How do Ghanaian immigrant associations provide network opportunities for members in the negotiation of their new identities in the host society?

4. What role do Ghanaian immigrant associations play in the settlement and identity creation of members?

5. What is the role of Ghanaian immigrant associations in the acculturation process, and what contribution do they offer to create new identities for members?
2.2 Conceptual Framework of thesis.

Five concepts are examined in this research to capture and understand the role of Ghanaian immigrant associations in their negotiation of immigrant identity within the American system.

![Conceptual Framework Diagram]

Source: Researchers Design

These concepts are *Associations, Social Networks, Assimilation, Acculturation* and *Identity*. They provide the relevant basis upon which Ghanaian immigrant associations’ purposes, aims and objectives in Cincinnati, Ohio can be understood. However, the concepts of social network, acculturation and assimilation have been structured in this research to play vital and interactive roles to define overarching structures of identity that Ghanaians express through their associational life. This occurs by virtue of the fact that the associations provide the forum requisite for building social networks either partially or totally to facilitate both acculturation and assimilation processes. This role helps members to survive, cope, and define their identity within the broader American society.

2.3 Identity

In this thesis, the concept of identity has been used as the overarching structure under which the other four concepts interrelate to achieve and express the goals of the associations. Identity is a complex phenomenon, shaped by individual characteristic, family dynamics, historical and social factors and political contexts (Tatum, 2000). It is a process located in the
core of the individual and yet also in the core of their communal culture. In psychological terms, identity employs a process of simultaneous reflection and observation, that take place on all levels of mental functioning, by which an individual judges him or herself in the light of what he or she perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to a typology significant to him (Erickson, 1968). This “looking glass self” is not a flat one-dimensional reflection, but multidimensional in many aspects of oneself and also, a product of these many dimensions (Tatum, 2000). Identity is also seen as an embodiment of the social, cultural and historical vicissitude of the individual, and integrates one’s past, present and future into a cohesive, unified sense of self, which begins in adolescence and continues for a lifetime (Erickson, 1968). In this case, particular aspects of our identity vary at different moments in our lives, because the process of integrating the component parts of our self-definition is indeed a lifelong journey.

Identity has also been argued as a sense of self in relation to others, defined by two main views within the discourse (Dimitriadis et. al., 2003). The first is the “essential” or “authentic” character and a “natural” basis, which provide the foundation for the construction of a stable sense of self. The other is derived from the Hegelian and Marxist perspective, which argues that identity is constructed in relation to our “Other” in which a struggle pertains in either the privileged or subordinated and resistant identities. This presupposes that identities are social constructions, constructed in the mirror of “Other”. Further, the use of language in discourses from philosophy to psychology have reinforced complex relationships between for example, blacks and whites on subjects like class, power, hegemony, politics and difference in many narratives (Hall, 2000).

Studies on immigrant identities have also been based on a variety of settings, in which social categorization, context of discourse, and power relations have enabled the understanding of the processes of identity production (Jenkins, 1994). This has resulted in our understanding of “self – image”, public image, and also how dominant groups use power and authority to categorize and construct others. Immigrant identities can therefore be portrayed on a multiple, fluctuating, and situational character (Hall, 2000; Nagel 1994). In this sense, a given individual for instance may have more than a single ethnic identity, and the relative significance of one identity over the other will shift across different time, space and situations (Kibria, 2002). In support of this assertion, Nagel (2002) points out that several ways including social, economic and political force create and recreate ethnic and cultural identities through external agencies by
defining boundaries in either official or unofficial circles. Nagel (1994) also reveals that the construction of ethnic identity is the result of both structure and agency that is dialectically played out between ethnic groups and the larger society. Using West Indian immigrants located at Britain and New York as a case study, Foner (1998) distinguishes how immigrants from the same ethnic group or background are differentially categorized and defined as a result of their location.

Identity formation and construction for immigrants, therefore, can be said to operate in continuum that fluctuates with time, space and situation. Ghanaian immigrants and their associations are no exception to this phenomenon in the USA. These associations have emerged to play a mediating role as agencies within which members can define ‘themselves’ within the larger American society. It is within this framework that the thesis draws on the other concepts to address to question, “To what extent have immigrant associations facilitated or helped maintain Ghanaian culture and religion under the dominant American system?”

2.4 Associations

An association is composed of a group of people with similar identity and/or common interest for specific goals (Smith, 2000), and of common purpose (Bowers, 1990). Associations can be based on politics, professions, finance, hobby or ethnicity (Barkan et. al, 1991), but in most cases they are voluntary and non-profit in nature (Smith, 2000). Most differences found in associations relate to their types and functions, even though they all strive to enhance knowledge, friendship, and pursuance of collective interest of their members (Bowers, 1990). The Hudson institute (1991) points out that values of associations include the following:

a. Serving members’ interest not met sufficiently through individual actions:

b. Providing communications through publications, seminar, meetings and conventions:

c. Harnessing some amount of voluntary labor from its members; and

d. Educating members to see beyond self – interest.

Barkan et. al., (1991) classify voluntary associations into six categories according to function, membership, and context of operation. These are Civil Virtue, Shadow State, Bulwark against State Power, Local Growth Machine, Intermediary Broker or Linkage, and Attachments to Place of Origin. These classifications indicate how associations are multi-faceted in nature; however,
for the purposes of this research, it is those associations in the category of *Attachments to Place of Origin* that are the focus. These associations galvanize deep and lasting commitments from members to reaffirm their sense of place and attachment to places of origin (Bellah, 1986). Even though the above classifications were done solely for hometown associations found in African countries, it is applicable to international migrants as well. Attachments to place of origin is relevant to Ghanaians and many other immigrants in United States since they organize themselves into associations based on nationality, ethnicity, regional, district, hometowns, or clans at new places of settlements (Owusu, 2000; Campani, 1992; Burnet and Palmer, 1988; Okamura, 1983).

The establishment of immigrant associations, group people and function to meet the needs of members (Kerlin, 2000), and to some extent undertake development projects in their country of origin (Attah-Poku, 1996, Okamura, 1983). The decision by immigrants to join one or more associations is to access a wide range of accruing benefits, which encourages the formation of many associations at international destinations (Schoeneberg, 1985). Apart from the fact that most immigrant associations’ formation is based on homogenous geographic or ethnic backgrounds, some form based on religion, social, political, business or educational values and aspirations of members. Chinese immigrants in Canada for example, recruit members based on surnames that portray kinship (Wickberg, 1982). The Hakka associations of the Chinese in Singapore base their formation on social relations using family, clans, society, occupation or trade as yardsticks (Cheng, 1995). Fillipinos in Hawaii form associations along tribal lines (Okamura, 1983). Africans in the Diaspora have also shown a blend of recruitment based on national, regional, ethnic, and hometowns (Owusu, 2000, Attah-Poku, 1996) and also religious affiliations (Babou, 2002). The process of migration therefore can bring about new identities placing people with different ethnic, educational and socio-economic backgrounds into groupings that may not have occurred in their home country (Owusu, 2000).

In spite of the diversity of recruiting basis, most immigrant associations perform a variety of functions. First they assist members to settle in destination country. Second, they mobilize resources to undertake socio-economic development projects at their home of origin (Okamura, 1983, Attah-Poku, 1996, Kerlin, 2000). Third, they promote and protect the common interests of members in areas of politics, economics, religion, recreation (Barkan et al, 1991, Babou, 2000), culture (Attah-Poku, 1996) and small enterprise (Yuk et al, 1997). Fourth, they serve as
mediating and development agents, and provide a platform for members to harness opportunities available for them in order to cope and survive difficult encounters at new places of living (Schoeneberg, 1985). These imply that the impact of immigrant associations on both individual and collective interest and behavior is enormous.

The Asanteman ethnic association in New York, the Guinea-Bissaun hometown associations in Portugal and the Filipino hometown associations in Hawaii are good examples of organizations that provide a variety of assistance to members in their assimilative process and in their maintenance of the culture from their home of origin. These associations are also noted for generating resources to execute development projects at home of origin. In some instances ethnic minority businesses, particularly of Asian-immigrant’s small businesses, have existed and succeeded as a result of benefiting from the social resources of rotating credit associations, protected market, and available labor resource within Asian American communities (Yuk et al, 1997).

Activities of immigrant associations are not limited to one specific goal rather, they exhibit a combination of emotional and material interests that draw and hold members together to demonstrate a sense of ethnic and national identity through membership and participation in order to reinforce their common identity (Moghaddam et al., 1992). However, as immigrants perpetuate their stay they acquire statuses such as wealthy businessmen, professionals and scholarly intellectuals that come to lie outside their ethnic framework (Burnet and Palmer, 1988), or reside farther away from ethnic enclaves, their passion for associational life diminishes (Owusu, 2000).

The formation of immigrant associations in most cases is initiated by a few educated and successful individuals (Barkan et al, 1991), and supported by others who share similar aspirations and identity (Jenkins, 1988). Some factors that account for the growth, sustenance and proliferation of immigrant associations include efforts to serve specific needs that individual members share with fellow ethnics (Owusu, 2000), provide contact with others of same background to perpetuate language and culture (Giberovitch, 1994), and to serve as strong vehicles for social networking (Portes, 1995). These attributes provide new immigrant arrivals with a basis of familiar relationships and interactions upon which they begin to build new lives. Immigrant associations survive on ethnic affiliations in general, but they can also be understood as a response to specific social and economic circumstances, opportunities and limitations that
immigrants face in newly settled areas (Reitz, 1980; Yancey, et al., 1985). The persistence of rejection, racism, discrimination and marginalization experienced by immigrants from the host society (Hall, 2000), encourages an elaboration and expression of ethnic and/or associational ties that provide a reliable system of support for these groups distinguished by race, nationality or language (Nelson and Tienda, 1983).

Immigrant associations (just like any other association) are widespread and among the most enduring group around the world today; yet, they are among the least recognized by society in terms of capability to influence its members (Bowers, 1990). They impact social and economic benefits that touch many, but, because their work is done quietly and behind the scenes, public perceptions vary widely about what they are, what they do and what contributions they make. In spite of this perception, immigrant associations continue to proliferate, attracting new members who find them as channels for surviving new places of settlements and as means of undertaking development projects in their countries of origin.

While indicating the unnoticed importance of immigrant associations and connection to issues reviewed in the literature, there are some missing links. The literature focuses on forms, nature, types and values of associations with specific emphasis on membership composition, how they are formed and the types of activities they engage in. These important attributes will guide this research but effort will also be made to provide answers relating to ages and performances, social classes and means of membership recruitment, and also inherent problems faced by these associations. By examining the origin, formation and nature of these associations, the research will provide answers to some of the missing links in the literature. The fact that associations take different forms with varying recruitment strategies, different memberships composition, and formation for different purposes provides reliable framework for this research to harness.

This literature review provides the foundation to find unravel the role Ghanaian immigrant associations play in mediating and sustaining the Ghanaian heritage within the broader American experience, and their links to countries of origin?"
The specific research questions generated for this purpose are:

- What type of association is this?
- Who are the members of the association?
- What is the educational and socio-economic status of members?
- What kinds of activities do associations engage in?
- What purposes do these activities serve?
- What benefits do associations provide?

These specific questions unravel the types, membership, activities, benefits and purpose of associations that tie to the theme of nature of the associations under investigations. Associations therefore provide a framework for Ghanaian immigrants to mediate their new Americaness with their old Ghanaianess and this creates an identity, similar to finding on Arabs in London (Nagel, 2002). The specific question to answers is “in what ways have Ghanaian immigrant associations’ play vital mediating roles to sustain the survival strategies of members in America on one hand and country of origin on the other?”

2.5 Social Networks

One way by which immigrants mediate their emerging identities in host societies is through social networks. The concept of social networks lacks a general conceptual definition because of the relatively undeveloped state of the field of network analysis. Consequently, this nascent state has lead to the proliferation of terms and definitions (Bagchi, 2000). However, few researchers have attempted a broad definition of network analysis. Scott (1991: 39) defines social network analysis as “a set of methods for the analysis of social structures, methods which are specifically geared towards an investigation of the relational aspects of these structures.” In general, the structuralist approach to social network analysis, see it as a process to uncover the ordered arrangements of relations and the exchange among members of social systems, and the effects of these patterns on the behavior of individual members of these structures (Wellman and Berkowitz, 1988). In spite of the wide range of topics studied through this perspective, all models incorporate two basic properties, namely nodes and connections (Scott, 1991). Others however prefer to use the terms actors and social ties respectively (Bagchi, 2000). The network metaphor appears in many diverse subjects including job finding (Granovetter, 1973), corporate structure (Zeitlin, 1974) and immigrant decision - making (Massey et al 1987).

Particular to immigrant studies, Mitchell (1969) first identified social networks as specific sets of linkages among a defined set of persons, with the additional property that the characteristics of these linkages as a whole may be used to interpret the social behavior of the persons involved. Massey (1986) conceptualizes migrant networks as sets of interpersonal ties that link migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas by ties of
kinship, friendship and shared community origin. This emphasizes strong ties between relatives, friends or community members.

Waldorf (1996) provides the understanding that gives greater attention to the role networks play in return migration and concludes that every movement between origin and destination modifies the size and composition of the immigrant stock and thereby its aggregate power in influencing further migration flows. The emphasis on dynamics that occur between the network structure of sending and receiving areas have also be articulated by Fawcett and Arnold (1987) who argue that a variety of linkages exist which influence individual immigration decisions. These include family, fellow natives in a destination country, the exchange of information, and the existence of occupational niches that operate either to encourage or hinder individual migration. In similar fashion, it has been argued that social networks are sets of recurrent associations between groups of people linked by occupational, financial, cultural or affective ties between relatives, friends and community members, and the fact that network structures of both sending and receiving areas are subject to change (Bagchi, 2000).

Social networks provide important sources of economic and social life for the acquisition of scarce capital, information resources and relationships, but their size and density dictate the extent of relationships and also differentiate one social network from others (Portes, 1995). Large networks often present difficulties to interrelations and interconnections so people prefer low-density networks (Boissevain, 1994). However, because large and dense networks are effective in developing normative expectations and in enforcing reciprocal obligations, they constitute immediate settings that influence goals and constraints of actors (Portes, 1995). They also create significant bonds in people’s personal networks within the larger social networks to mold everyday life, manage crisis and decision-making (Schnegg; Scheweizer; Berzborn, 1998).

Social networks rely on embedded trust (Busken, 2002), and serve as strong vehicles that provide new arrivals with familiar relations and interactions on which they begin to build their new lives (Owusu, 2000). They facilitate immigrant job searches and housing within the immigrant economy among Latinos (Light et al, 1999), and employers utilize the social networks of their immigrant Hispanic employees to recruit new workers (Johnson-Webb, 2002). Social networks have provided effective interactions among members of Asanteman ethnic association in New York and serve as medium for survival, adjustment, and solving problems of members.
Through networks members receive assistance and support in times of grief (death, illness), joy (out-dooring of newly born, marriages) and conflicts resolution (Attah – Poku, 1996).

Social networks are very important trans-nationally because of the links and ties they create between migrant sending and receiving areas (Kivisto, 2001, Joskish and Pribilsky, 2002). Most immigrant associations have developed transnational networks by mobilizing resources for development projects in their home of origin. For example, the Asanteman ethnic association in New York has rehabilitated the female Orthopedic Ward at the Okomfo Anokye Teaching Hospital in Kumasi, Ghana (Attah – Poku, 1996). Many local communities in Nigeria have benefited from networks of hometown associations in the provision of school buildings, medical facilities, staffing of health clinics, electricity, telephone lines, water, roads, public-meeting halls, and postal services (Barkan et al, 1991). The Pelundo hometown associations in Portugal have developed institutional links with other immigrant associations, the state, and civil society in both Portugal and Guinea–Bissau to facilitate socio-economic development projects in Pelundo, Guinea–Bissau (Kerlin, 2000). The Murid migrants of Senegal in New York and Dakar exploit social networks and brotherhood solidarity to build adequate social capital for their vending business and contribute regularly to resources needed to execute development projects back home (Babou, 2002). Strong social relations and networks within association allow traders to access informal credit and information based on trust to operate their businesses (Lyon, 2003).

Networks within communities also assist in providing social resources like customers, loyal employees and financing as the basis for the success and survival of many Asian immigrant businesses (Bates, 1994). Chinese business networking and transnational entrepreneurship rely on social networks and connections to form and sustain their business in the global arena (Liu, 2001). Bull (2002) argues that most immigrant merchants rely on family and kinship relations from the household, regional and international network structures to build their merchant businesses.

Recent technological advances have played crucial roles in extending and sustaining networks as increasingly, marginalized social groups of Latin America explore social networks by using and taken advantage of the Internet technology to fulfill their own goals (Burch, 2002). Wellman (2001) concludes that computer networks are social networks because they have global connectivity that enable people to connect to social networks rather than into communal groups. This is because in personal and computer-mediated communication, communities are integrated.
rather than personalized. Filipinos in the diaspora use websites to socially network with others around the world to foster and represent their national identity (Tyner and Kuhlke, 2000).

Social networks are important and reliable in the migration process, and also strengthen the interconnections among socio-cultural lives of people. They provide migrants with valuable information, assurance, safety and linkages before, during and after migration. Networks are dynamic in nature and could involve the negotiation of new relationships and maintenance of old bonds and affective ties (Joskish and Pribilsky, 2002). Networks that emerge from the immigration process often bring about new identities for people, placing them in groupings with others with whom they may not have associated with in their home country (Owusu, 2000). Networks can however be maintained, changed, modified or transformed overtime between sending and receiving areas of migrants (Tilly, 1990). It can also be strengthened or weakened with time differentially for different segments of the immigrant community (Hagan, 1998).

So, social networks, irrespective of their forms thrive on ties, links and trust, but subject to the dynamics of change. They operate differentially on household, associational, community, national and global levels, and can impact either positively or negatively on actors involved. The research focuses on networks that operate within and between Ghanaian immigrant associations, on one hand, and their transnational relationships on the other. The key research question here is “How do Ghanaian immigrant associations provide network opportunities for members in the negotiation of their new identities in the host society?”

Specifically, the following questions were examined.

1. What relationships exist between various associations? This question explains the size of social networks created within an association for members to harness.
2. What interactions exist between one association and other associations? This question emphasizes on density of social networks available for members to tap.
3. How do social networks support Ghanaians in their settlement process?
4. To what extent have social networks enabled transnational activities?

2.6 Acculturation

The term acculturation refers to cultural changes that emerge from intercultural contact (Castro, 2003). It leads to changes at the population level when the source of change is contact with other cultures. Acculturation involves two or more groups, with consequence for both, but
the contact experiences have much greater impact on the non-dominant group and its members (Berry, 1995). Recent trends in acculturation research have focused more on the process of mutual change (Berry, 1997, Bourhis et al, 1997), involving both groups. The concept of acculturation must not be confused with enculturation and cultural change because these are specific to one culture. Enculturation according to Berry (1997) involves individuals learning the culture (language, norms, values etc) of his or her group. Cultural change refers to processes that lead to changes at the population level when the source of changes is internal events such as inventions, discoveries and innovations within a culture (Castro, 2003).

Immigrants’ adoption to the values, attitudes, culture and language of receiving society can be slow for many individuals or groups, as parent tongue may of choice or necessity be retained as an ethnically identifying feature even after fashions of dress, food, and customary behavior have been substantially altered in the new environment (Fellman et al, 2001). Adaptation to the new environment has been commonly referred to as the level of “fit” between the acculturating individual and the mainstream cultural context (Berry, 1997). Confronted with the dominant American culture (which is the host culture) immigrants responses have been documented to show a variety of acculturation processes. Studies on acculturation have focused on the adjustment of newcomers and analysis has either been from a group level or an individual level of acculturation (DeBiaggi, 2002).

The adjustment and acculturation process of immigrants has been guided by two distinct sets of models: linear- bipolar (e.g., Gordon, 1978) and two- dimensional or multicultural models (e.g., Berry, 1980). Phinney (1990) provides a linear- bipolar model, which assumes that as the immigrant immerses in the mainstream society, acculturation necessarily means that the customs and values of the majority culture replace that of the culture of origin (which is usually understood in scholarship as syncretism). In effect, the dominant culture is adopted. This model (a more traditional one) when applied in the United States assumes that as people take on the values, customs and language of America, they drop the values, customs, and language of their source culture (Azar, 1999). The linear- bipolar model has been questioned because immigrants do not necessarily throw away their old values, customs, and language to replace them with those of the dominant society. Moreover, in the United States (a multicultural country), there is no monolithic culture that immigrants assimilate into. The result is a blend of two or more cultures and this is what Rumbaut (1997) refers to as ‘melting pot’.
In contrast the two-dimensional process model proposes that immigrant’s do not relate only to the predominant culture but also to their culture of origin (Cuellar, Harris, and Jasso, 1980; Berry, Kim, Power, Young, and Bujaki, 1989). Thus, adaptation to the new environment is multi-dimensional and occurs at least in two directions or bicultural, (although not necessarily at the same rate in both directions). From a bicultural perspective, immigrants can acculturate in many different ways. The multi-dimensional process of adaptation in ethnically plural society considers that during the process of acculturation individuals and groups are confronted with two basic issues. First the decision to maintain one’s cultural identity and patterns, and secondly to engage and participate positively in inter-group contacts (Castro, 2003). Four possible outcomes of adaptation that emerge when evaluative responses to these dimensions are dichotomized are integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization (Berry, 1997). These are known as acculturation strategies.

It is, therefore, imperative to formulate theoretical and empirical studies to describe and measure the degree of acquisition of cultures of receiving society and retention of original cultures by immigrants. This process depends on certain characteristics and demographic features like gender (Dion and Dion, 2001), generation (Gans, 1997, Buriel, 1987), education (Reitz, 2001), social class, marital status, age at immigration (Portera, 1985), and kinds of associations (Owusu, 2000, Kerlin, 2000, Attah- Poku, 1996, Schoeneberg, 1985, Okamura, 1983) immigrants engage in. In addition these factors may be influenced by immigrants’ motivation and level of participation in the migration process (DeBiaggi, 2002). Mendoza and Martinez (1981), argue that an individual who leaves his or her country of origin out of dissatisfaction and with no intention of returning would probably have more positive attitudes toward the culture of the receiving society than would an individual who left out of economic necessity and had strong desires to return home.

Since the core of the acculturation concept results from cultural interactions, it is necessary to recognize that in most cases cultural groups in plural societies have unequal access to socially valued resources like wealth, income, property, and cultural products. Likewise, cultural groups vary in ways in which they come into contact with dominant society. The consequences of racism, structural inequalities and nature of contact imply that in practice the acculturation process mostly has greater impact on and is more evident among immigrants and ethnic minorities than among members of dominant culture (Castro, 2003).
The literature reviewed above focuses both on individuals and group acculturation processes and not specific to immigrant associations. This research seeks to examine the role Ghanaian immigrant associations’ play in the acculturation process. It will assess if these roles serve as a medium for American and Ghanaian cultures to interact or not, and also find out the possible outcome of these strategies. Even though the literature points out that immigrant groups’ acculturation strategy could be integration, assimilation, separation or marginalization, the research will clarify the strategy applicable to Ghanaian associations in Cincinnati. Irrespective of the way in which immigrants acculturate into host societies, it is certain that personal traits, demographic characteristics and associational life play important part. It is within this framework that the research questions “What role do Ghanaian immigrant associations play in the settlement process to contribute to the creation of new identities for members?”

The following specific research questions are addressed in this section:

- To what extent has the use of English language affected the use of the local vernacular of Ghanaians in the business of associations and, members day-to-day activities?
- How do associations help immigrant member’s cope in their acculturation process?

These questions relate to the concept of acculturation and will enable the research unravel the origin and evolution of Ghanaian immigrant associations.

2.7 Assimilation

Assimilation describes the adjustment of immigrants and ethnic minority members to the larger society because several changes occur in their social structures, cultural patterns, and psychological features from one generation to another (Gordon, 1978). Gordon employed the term assimilation to describe the following sub processes:

- Cultural assimilation or acculturation defined as the gradual acquisition of cultural patterns of the host society;
- Structural assimilation (i.e., the entrance into the social networks of groups and institutions of the society);
- Marital assimilation or amalgamation indicated by a greater number of large-scale interethnic marriages;
- Identificational assimilation, which referred to the self-identification as a member of the host society; and
- Attitude receptional assimilation, behavioral receptional assimilation, and civic assimilation, which refer to cultural pluralism.

As the definition suggests, assimilation is a gradual process of absorption into host society at both group and individual levels (Castro, 2003). Even though, assimilation dictates the cultural patterns of either or both parties, it occurs spontaneously and often unintentionally in the course of interaction between Americans and immigrants. However, structural pluralism rather than cultural pluralism is a more accurate description of this process (Alba et al., 1997). Gordon (1978) further explains that the dominant group in America has not assimilated new immigrants in entirety but rather, integrated them without a complete loss of individual identity and culture. This cultural amalgamation or “civilization” has been a vital resource that has contributed to the advancement and progress of the USA.

Phenomenal issues that regulate the degree of assimilation into the American society include social class, length of stay, educational and occupational level and the historical background of country of origin (Gordon, 1978). Theoretically, assimilation could have different outcomes according to what kind of inter-group relation is desirable in a society (e.g., melting pot or cultural pluralism). Vital intrinsic cultural traits of a groups’ cultural heritage like religion, music and tastes defines the cultural standard that represents the direction and emotional outcome of acculturation than extrinsic traits which ‘tend to be products of the historical vicissitudes of the groups adjustment to the local environment’ and less central to group identity (Gordon, 1978). Another area where this concept has received a lot of research attention is spatial assimilation (Portes et al, 1996, Waldinger, 1989, Haverluk, 1998, Allen and turner, 1996). This is important because newly arrived immigrants rely on social networks to settle, and familiarize with the American system through the assistance of friends, kin and co-ethnics (Alba et al, 1997, Massey, 1987). It is not strange to find new arrivals locating within ethnic enclaves or communities with peoples of the same cultural background.

In the most general term, assimilation can be said to be the decline of immigrant culture, and at its endpoint the disappearance of an ethnic and racial distinction and the cultural and social differences that express it (Alba et al., 1997). When assimilation implicates both the majority (Americans) and minority (immigrant) groups, the assimilation of minority involves
changes that enable them to function in the mainstream society. Normally, the complete integration of an immigrant into the new society by undergoing new cultural and language settings different from that of origin is the situation where assimilation is said to have occurred. From this point of view, acculturation takes place in the direction of the mainstream culture, even if on another plane that culture is itself changing through the ingestion of elements from immigrant cultures. Overtime, then, the cultural and social distance that immigrant group traverse while assimilating may narrow (Alba et al., 1997).

Rumbaut (1989) however, refutes the linear assimilation model and attributes the inherent flaws of such representations to structural, analytical and phenomenal rhetoric in the discourse propagated by some researchers. He argues that even though the American society composes of diverse cultures, recent assimilation processes are of multiple variations. Therefore, researchers must endeavour to critically analyse issues and provide supporting evidence to prove that current assimilation processes are not linear but rather a converged, diverged or multi-faceted one dependent on the groups’ experiences. In spite of differences of opinion, assimilation still remains a key concept for the studies of inter group relations (Alba et al., 1997). Its multi-dimensional scale has encouraged both individual and group research on a variety of issues. However, the literature on assimilation has not examined the role immigrant association’s play in the assimilation processes. The research question therefore is “What is the role of Ghanaian immigrant associations in the acculturation process, and what contribution do they offer in the creation of new identities for members?”

The following specific questions are addressed:

- How long have associations been in existence?
- How have associations coped with challenges of the American system?
- What accounts for the growth of associations?
- To what extent do associations serve as agents of change?

These questions relate to the formation and evolution of Ghanaian immigrant associations and their role in immigrant assimilation.
2.8 Conclusion

By reviewing the concepts of associations, social networks, acculturation, assimilation and identity I have shown how they form a conceptual framework.

1. Associations emerge to meet challenges that new immigrants face in their host society.
2. In order to meet these challenges, associations facilitate the building of social networks for members within the association and between other associations.
3. The new identities they possess in the host countries are not complete change, but a blend with that of host country that the associations help to mediate as their members adjust and settle.
4. The process by which associations do this is by facilitating and negotiating the Ghanaian heritage and American cultures, so that members can smoothly assimilate and be part of the mainstream American society.
CHAPTER 3
Nature of Associational Life of Ghanaian Immigrants

3.1 Introduction

An association is composed of a group of people with similar identity and/or common interest for specific goals (Smith, 2000), and of common purpose (Bowers, 1990). Associations can be based on politics, professions, finance, hobby or ethnicity (Barkan et. al, 1991), but in most cases they are voluntary and non-profit in nature (Smith, 2000). Most differences found in associations relate to their types and functions, even though they all strive to enhance knowledge, friendship, and pursuance of collective interest of their members (Bowers, 1990).

This chapter addresses the nature of Ghanaian immigrant associations and how they facilitate to maintain Ghanaian heritage under the dominant American experience. The key research question is what role do Ghanaian immigrant associations play in helping Ghanaian immigrants mediate their Ghanaian heritage and American cultural experience? It does this by asking questions about types of associations, membership composition, educational status of members, activities engaged in by associations, and the purposes of immigrant associations. Data on these variables reveal the structure of associations but will also be used to assess the role Ghanaian immigrant association’s play in the settlement process of its members.

To better understand the data presented in the tables, the researcher wants to point out that there are few issues that must be made clear to guide readers on how the itemized responses shown on the tables must be interpreted. First, the responses were of individual or personal opinions of selected interviewees and not general associational view. Second, some respondents provided more than one response on broad issues categorized. Third, since respondents were chosen from different generations with different visions when they were in office as executives (longitudinal perspective) responses to questions sometimes differed from majority opinions on specific attributes.
3.2 Types of Associations

Associations found among the Ghanaian immigrant community in Cincinnati have five main attributes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Voluntary</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from field data

First, Table 3.1 indicates that there are two types of associations. These are social and religious in persuasions. While GAGC and MAG are social, COP and ICFC are religious. Second, all the four Ghanaian immigrant associations under study are voluntary and non-profit in nature, similar to findings by Smith, (2000) on grassroots association. Third, the relationships between these associations are mutually exclusive due to differences in functions and purpose. Fourth, on the one hand, GAGC and MAG have the sole aim of mobilizing members within the Ghanaian community for collective interactions, social and mutual benefits. Okamura (1983) validates this assertion with similar findings on Filipino immigrants in Hawaii. COP and ICFC, on the other hand, are churches that focus primarily on preaching and teaching members the love of God and principles of the bible for spiritual development. Babou (2000) supports this finding that Islamic religious associations formed by immigrants in New York perform similar functions. Fifth, in spite of differences in functions, all four associations are seen as media for mobilizing Ghanaians and pooling resources for the common good and welfare of members’ survival and coping with American society.

The reason why Ghanaian immigrants form associations of this nature include the ease with which social and religious activities bring people together for a common cause and desirable interest (Bowers, 1990). Also, the ease with which non-profit voluntary associations meet the registration requirement of the American system helps in their formation. Ghanaians in Cincinnati have formed only two types of immigrant associations, which is similar to that discussed by Okamura (1983) and differs from those formed for political, financial, and professional purposes (Barkan et. al, 1991), and small business development (Yuk et al, 1997).
Table 3.2
Members of Associations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ghanaians</th>
<th>Ghanaian Men</th>
<th>Non - Ghanaians</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Compiled from field data*

Table 3.2 indicates that membership of Ghanaian immigrant associations is predominantly Ghanaian. Yet ICFC in particular, and GAGC, have members from other countries. Two main reasons account for the increased involvement of other nationals in associational life. First, spousal memberships and interested foreigners who admire the ideals of Ghanaian associations are encouraged to join. The constitution of GAGC, for example, provides non-Ghanaian spouses of Ghanaian members automatic membership if only the Ghanaian partner has honored registration procedures and paid annual dues. Americans and other African nationals who desire to join are made ex-officio members. Some ex-officio members have actually visited Ghana and have developed an interest in Ghanaian affairs and their associations.

Second, ICFC, founded by an individual Ghanaian pastor with the motive of salvation for members and also to make some money uses an open door approach to attract members from different African countries. Yet membership of ICFC is predominantly Ghanaian with a few members from Cameroon and Zimbabwe. Occasionally, Americans from other churches join this congregation for joint worship. The inclusion of other African members as well as the diversity of ethnicities among membership, of especially ICFC, necessitates the use of English language for church activities.

MAG is the only association with exclusively Ghanaian males as members and also gender specific (males only). It restricts membership to men of Ghanaian nationality. This is a tradition of exclusive men’s club found sporadically in certain places in Ghana, and has been introduced into the American system. The researcher for example is still a member of “Menkrofo” one of such men’s association in Tema, Ghana and continues to pay up annual dues even though absent from Ghana.

The conclusion on membership is that membership in all four associations are predominantly Ghanaian because members can identify with each other and share common
heritage and experience in the host society. They also feel that strength and survival of Ghanaians in Cincinnati lies in coming together to solve common and related problems. Few members coming from other nationalities are due to automatic membership from marriage and interest, or those who share common belief as in the churches. The literature suggests that membership of immigrant associations depends on geographical location and nationality (Owusu, 2000), ethnicity and hometown (Attah Poku, 1996), business acumen (Yuk et al, 1997) religious beliefs (Babou, 2002) and kinship (Wickberg, 1982). Ghanaian associations in Cincinnati are dependent on geographical location and nationality, religion, and gender for membership.

3.3 Kinds of activities
Ghanaian immigrant associations engage in a variety of activities that enhances their presence and identity in Cincinnati. The kinds of activities they engage in help members in both their assimilation into the mainstream American system and also maintain their Ghanaian identity. Whether in social, religious, or cultural activities, which are the three major activities associations engage in, the aim is to bring members together for a common purpose of identity. In specific terms religious preaching and teaching, cultural reinforcement and socialization through parties and picnics are activities associations engage in to express identity. Other activities such as organization of lectures and seminars on issues pertinent to Ghanaian immigrants like health care, educational opportunities, legalization of residential status etc are geared towards assimilation processes of members.

Table 3.3
Kinds of activities Associations engage in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Cultural</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from field data

Table 3.3 indicates that all associations engage in social activities. The churches do this in addition to their religious duty of preaching and teaching the word of God. GAGC, in particular, and MAG, on a minor scale, engage in cultural activities. One reason that account for
associations’ engaging in social activities has to do with the Ghanaian attitude and culture disposition of communal relationship built on family, community and societal relationships that foster trust and friendships among members (Assimeng, 1999; Sarpong, 1974). Engaging in social activities enhances contacts, and flourishes links and ties among members. These activities are paramount in the creation of viable friendships among members in order to cushion against the vagaries of new settlement.

Social activities range from parties, picnics, lectures and many other functions that bring members together. GAGC for instance organizes a Christmas party and either an Independence Day or Republic day party, summer picnics, soccer galas and other fun games. Funeral services and other traditional activities like out-dooring of the newly born; engagement and wedding celebrations organized by individual members but supported by associations are also on the increase. The churches also engage in some social functions like summer picnics, conventions and crusades, as well as assisting members in the organization of christening, naming and in funeral ceremonies. GAGC in particular has in previous years organized cultural activities of traditional Ghanaian art exhibitions, dance, music and food bazaar. Generally, most social functions organized have always incorporated a variety of cultural traditions in a form of dresses, dances and foods in traditional flavours.

The churches’ whose basic function is to preach and teach the word of God to its members has been strong and growing amongst COP and ICFC. They also engage in harvest, baptisms, solemnization of marriage, and regular socialization programs to foster unity among its members. In all these activities there are elements and traces of Ghanaian traditional expressions in dresses worn, language used, and food served during these functions.

In conclusion GAGC and MAG engage in social activities, and GAGC engages in cultural activities as well. ICFC and COP engage predominantly in religious activities but also engage in social activities. These associations undertake socializing activities in order to foment group interest that identifies members as a people with similar backgrounds. By so doing they provide the medium where cultural heritage, sameness and identity can be expressed and maintained (Nagel, 2002). Research findings in the literature indicate that immigrants form associations to undertake various activities. While some immigrants associate for social reasons (Okamura, 1983; Owusu, 2000), others do so for cultural identification and expression (Attah-Poku, 1996), others also do for religious identity and development (Babou, 2002), others for
business and small enterprise development (Yuk et al, 1997) and others for providing transnational development activities for home country (Kerlin, 2000). The literature therefore provides enough support to the findings in this research. The variety of activities that immigrant association engages in therefore enhances member’s identity as Ghanaians and also a forum to participate in the American society.

### 3.4 Purpose of Associations

The purposes for which associations form as shown in Table 3.4 are varied. These include the provision of forii to educate members on a variety of issues, provide welfare support, enhance the creation of networks, assist members settle, and helping in the spiritual development of members. These reasons are crucial first for identity formation and second for the coping and survival of Ghanaian immigrants in the American system. The capacity of associations to make these functions available is central to their formation (Bower, 1990) and provides the conduit through which many Ghanaians maintain their identity and also survive the American system. Associations therefore serve as facilitators in the process of identity creation of their members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of Associations</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Welfare Support</th>
<th>Networks Creation</th>
<th>Settlement Assistance</th>
<th>Spirituality</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Compiled from field data*

Table 3.4 indicates that associations serve as agency or facilitators for building social networks and assisting members to settle in Ghanaian community. GAGC focus on providing members with vital information concerning the American system through seminars educating members on settlement issues. These coping mechanisms are all geared towards facilitating the acculturation and assimilation processes. GAGC and MAG provide welfare and financial support to needy members, while the churches assist in the spiritual development of their members. These are strategies that provide members with accessibility and smooth transition into the American society and yet maintaining their Ghanaianness.
These services occur both formally and informally through the day-to-day activities of the associations. Social networks that emerge are important and facilitate, to a large extent, the ease with which new immigrants settle into the Ghanaian community in Cincinnati. All associations announce during meetings the presence of new arrivals and the need for possible assistance. Others encourage members to take up personally the responsibility of assisting new arrivals with free accommodation, transportation, and links to available jobs till they can stand on their own. By providing the forum that furnishes new arrivals with valuable information and services, the associations reinforce a sense of belonging, assurance, security, trust and reliance among members (Massey, 1990). Yet they enable members create their new identity in America.

The welfare support systems provided by associations benefit members financially and morally. In grief or joy, associations’ share in member’s situation through a welfare benefit and support, and this has become an important factor in membership attraction. Associations encourage members to morally support others who have been hospitalized, given birth, and bereaved with private individual visits, and monetary as well as material assistance. Reliance on this support mechanism or system by majority of members in the low-income bracket has resulted in GAGC incorporating a welfare package in its constitution. The constitution of GAGC stipulates the following amounts of money for the following specific events: a member blessed with a child receives a $50 gift certificate; a bereaved family member receives $200; a death of a spouse or a member receives $500; and a member who is hospitalized receives a bouquet of flowers. Members are increasingly placing more emphasis and importance on welfare support system than on parties and picnics. People are joining associations in anticipation that welfare support and benefits will be forthcoming in times of difficulty. For example GAGC was able to mobilize all other associations in Cincinnati to raise over $6,000 each for the families of two Ghanaians who died in Cincinnati. Generally, cash contributions from association as well as personal donations and gifts from members are meant to alleviate financial and psychological stress on members during difficult times. Okamura (1983) identifies that similar entitlement benefits among Filipino hometown association in Hawaii caters for situations of illness, emergency, and/or death.

MAG has incorporated in its draft constitution the need to provide strong welfare support to members. It also plans to provide and implement a strategic program to protect members from the threat of death through group insurance. This has however not materialized after nearly two
years in existence. COP does not seem to officially involve in the provision of welfare support but the church has shown some benevolence through donations at funerals and contributions to resources mobilized in support of projects in Ghana. Example is when the church collaborated with GAGC to mobilize funds for the victims of stadium disaster in Ghana.

On the issue of educating members, GAGC is at the forefront in organizing seminars and talk programs to educate members on a variety of issues such as tax, health, immigration, insurance, family and marriage counseling, and schooling opportunities. During these seminars specialists and professionals are invited to lead discussions. Such programs have become venues where most members access information on important issues beneficial to their settlement process into the American system. This shows how GAGC serves as a negotiating agency or facilitator of members into the main stream American system. In recent years, GAGC has used the facilities of ICFC for such seminars.

Building networks and assisting in settlement is the main purpose of all associations but the churches are more concerned with spiritual development. The social groups especially GAGC additionally provide welfare and education. The reason behind the purposes of associations relates to helping members to cope and survive the American system. The Murid immigrants of Senegal in New York provide similar education opportunities for its members, spiritual development, welfare programs and even start up capital for their vending business (Babou, 2002). Thus, the purpose for which Ghanaian associations have formed in Cincinnati supports the view in the literature that associations are formed for purposes that relate to mediating ethnic heritage and Americanness.

3.5 Benefits of Associations
The benefits of immigrant associations are central to their success and linked to their functions and membership attraction. Usually immigrants join associations that are successful in providing a forum for expressing their identity and also meeting their needs in the assimilation process. The benefits of association must therefore be tailored to the needs of members in order to continually attract new membership. Closely linked to purposes of associations they provide forums for network creation, transnational links and sense of belongingness to their members.
### Table 3.5

**Benefits provided by Associations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sense of Belonging</th>
<th>Networking</th>
<th>Transnational Activities</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Compiled from field data*

Table 3.5 shows that, first, networking is fundamental to both social and religious associations because this becomes the venue where most members access a variety of information, and contacts to further enhance their settlement process. Nagel (1994) points out that forces of agency (which in this circumstance are the associations) become crucial external forces that contribute in defining, negotiating and constructing ethnic boundaries and identity for immigrants. Many times friendships that develop through associational contacts grow further into strong bonds of surrogate family relationships among members. Members of associations also tap into networks resources available to enhance their chances of survival in the American society.

Second, a sense of belonging to a group or an association is an important marker that reinforces ties and links between members of all the associations. Sense of belonging provides security, reliability and trust among members of both social and religious groups. The feelings of belonging to an association often times create new identities for members (Owusu, 2000). Third, all associations believe that members gain enormous support from each other especially for the newly arrived, this sentiment is so strong that most cannot resist in joining these associations to tap into the reservoir of opportunities created by networking. Examples of opportunities that could be harnessed include initial accommodation, transportation, and job searches (Light et al, 1999), and financial or material support in difficult times during illness or death (Attah – Poku, 1996). These opportunities serve as safety nets for especially the new-arrivals.

Fourth, GAGC additionally engages in transnational network activities to support and link Ghana by providing the umbrella for other associations to participate. GAGC is on record to have in collaboration with ICFC and COP raised various amounts of cash and other items to donate to various causes in Ghana. The first was the donation made to the Ghanaian national women’s soccer team when they took part in the World Cup women’s soccer tournament held in
USA in August 1999. In another collaboration that yielded $1500, GAGC with the support of the churches donated this amount to the national disaster fund when 127 soccer fans died in a stampede at Accra Sports Stadium in Ghana. Similar findings have been provided in the literature on the transnational activities of immigrant associations like that of the Filipinos in Hawaii (Okamura, 1983), Ghanaians in New York (Attah – Poku, 1996) and Senegal Murids in New York (Babou, 2002). These differ from the Chinese associations whose benefit to members are more of start up capitals for small businesses and access to credit (Lyon, 2003).

By providing a sense of belonging, networks and engaging in transnational activities indicates that Ghanaian associations serve as abridge between Ghanaian heritage and the new American experience of their members. These associations therefore help to create identities of Ghanaian immigrants in Cincinnati.

3.6 Educational status of members

How do member’s educational attainments affect the type and quality of organizational ability and leadership capabilities? How does this affect the choice of activities and programs of associations? These are basic questions that this section unravels to explain how such attributes contribute to greater efficiency in meeting the needs of members of the associations.

Table 3.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational statuses of leaders and members of Associations</th>
<th>Higher Education</th>
<th>Lower Education</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from field data

Two categories of educational levels are low and high. The low refers to members with secondary/high school education or less, and high are those with college education and above. The trend shown in Table 3.6 indicates that for the most part each association is made up of people with predominantly low educational attainment. Yet GAGC and ICFC have concentration of highly educated members.

GAGC, the oldest, largest and composed of a blend of high to low educational status members faces the most challenging issues in relation to kinds of activities, programs, language
used and relationships that emerge within the association. The higher educated professional middle-class members who are in the minority (yet are the original members) have over the years provided the leadership and taken the responsibility of running the association. The majority of Ghanaians are of lowly educated working-class status but most have not benefited from full membership status for lack of payment of annual dues. This is because the constitution recognizes membership only after annual dues have been paid. Yet all Ghanaians irrespective of membership status are invited or attend activities and meetings of GAGC. The lowly educated majority of Ghanaians are the ones that create problems and sometimes agitate for changes in welfare packages and programs, and yet are found wanting when it comes to fulfilling their obligation of paying their annual membership dues.

The composition of MAG is mostly men with similar low educational background and of working class status. In addition to the fact that MAG is in its embryonic stage, the social class and status of members have had major impacts on their organizational capability, scope of activities and relationships with other associations. They have never held any relevant program or activity to date except a Christmas party. They usually attach themselves to GAGC to organize picnics and parties. There is an element of incompetence because within two years of existence, it has had four presidents, and this tells a lot about their organizational problems. Barkan et. al (1991), have pointed out that quality and dedicated leadership is the key to successful organization of associations.

The churches are no exception to this class differences. Membership of COP for instance is generally of the lowly educated working class category with very few college graduates. This contributes to the dominance of Akan as their official language, but this situation has changed because of internal ethnic pressures and visits by others of different nationality.

From the foregoing it can be seen that educational attainment plays a vital role in the organizational ability of associations. This is because the better the organization is organized the more trust and respect it encourages its members to rely on to not only express their identities but also negotiate their settlement processes. Educational level is therefore a precursor to good management of associations in its capability in facilitating and mediating the identity of members as Ghanaians and also helping them survive the American experience.
3.7 Conclusion

The conclusion for this chapter is that the nature of associational life among Ghanaian immigrants in Cincinnati provides enough evidence that points to the active role associations play in mediating the Ghanaian heritage and American experience of their members. They do this through the formation of social and religious institutions. They also engage in a variety of activities of social, religious and cultural attributes that bond to Ghanaian nationality. With members predominantly Ghanaian, the associations reinforce the notion of Ghanaian heritage and identity. The purpose of these associations are two pronged: first, they primarily encourage bondage and national identity and relationships, and second, to serve as facilitating agency through which members can harness networks, vital information and resources to enhance their assimilation into the main stream American system. These findings conform to findings of (Kerlin, 2000; Owusu, 2000; Attah- Poku; 1996, and Okamura; 1983) who have done similar investigations on immigrant associations for different nationals. However, the Ghanaian immigrant associations in Cincinnati differ from those of Asian origin that form to enhance credit generation for small enterprise businesses (Yuk et al, 1997).
CHAPTER 4
Facilitating associational life: Social Networks

4.1 Introduction

Social networks play important roles in both the migration and the settlement process of immigrants. They provide the basis for information, contacts, resources and decision-making for many migrants as well as reliable linkages and ties that bind the sending and receiving areas of migrants (Fawcett and Arnold, 1987). This chapter examines the role Ghanaian immigrant associations’ play in fostering interactions through social networks within and between associations. The research question addressed here is: how do Ghanaian associations provide social networks that help mediate the American experience of Ghanaian immigrants? The two kinds of social networks this research focus on are the ties that emerge first among members within associations (known as density), and second between one association and others (the size).

4.2 Density of Networks: Interactions within associations

This kind of interaction normally occurs internally among members within associations. Relationships of this kind provide the members with a sense of cohesion and dependency on one another for support and information in their survival process. They illustrate the density of networks that immigrants can access. This level of social network is of primary importance to most newly arrived immigrants and is one of the determinants for joining immigrant associations. Such networks facilitate and serve as important venues where they get information and connections to rely upon in their adjustment and survival process (Schnegg; Scheweizer, Berzborn, 1998).
Table 4.1 explains the level of interactions found among members within each of the four Ghanaian immigrant associations in Cincinnati.

**Table 4.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinds of interactions among members of the Association</th>
<th>Strong Relations</th>
<th>Medium Relations</th>
<th>Weak Relations</th>
<th>Class Conflicts</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Compiled from Field data*

Table 4.1 shows that interactions among members within most associations are strong, but class differences and conflicts occur especially within GAGC and ICFC. This is not surprising since these two associations have two kinds of income levels. Strong relationships among members of associations indicate that ties of friendship and bonds are also strong. Creation of personal friendship, family ties, and job colleagues are commonly found among members of immigrant associations (Owusu, 2000). For instance, most members of associations depend on ties and relationship to overcome problems and difficulties associated with their settlement. These are prominent in temporary housing or accommodation search, and employment or job search for economic gains in the American system. For example Ghanaian men in particular have accessed such networks in ways that have resulted in many of them working at “Peace Doors” a warehousing outlet specialized in the supply of doors and windows to the housing construction industry. Also, through similar networks many Ghanaians have clustered in their settlement patterns. Examples can be found where Ghanaians live close to each other within the same apartment complexes at Lakewood apartment at West Chester, Meadow Ridge apartment near exit 19 off I – 75, and also formerly at Losantiville. Bonds between members sometimes become very personal leading to pseudo or surrogate family relationship development away from their country of origin. Members rely on these relationships to settle conflicts and acquire favors from friends within a particular association (Attah – Poku, 1996).

Strong patterns of interaction exist within associations, which implies that associations are able to encourage the building and consolidation of individual networks and filial relationships, very crucial for immigrant survival. Social networks that emerge from these interactions further translate into personalized individual ties that provide sources of reliable
information on issues relating to job search and accommodation (Light et al, 1999). The findings of this research are similar to the findings on how Latinos utilize networks to facilitate immigrant job searches and housing for friends within the immigrant economy. It is also true that some Ghanaians serve as conduit to provide their employers with a source of labor channels through personal referrals that employers utilize, similar to arguments made of immigrant Hispanic employees and recruitment of new workers (Johnson-Webb, 2002).

This does not necessarily imply that all members relate very well with each other. Since there are differences in human nature there are bound to be instances where members of the same association barely interact due to either class or personal differences. This may be part of the reason explaining the class differences and conflict identified in GAGC and ICFC. In general, strong and intimate relationships within associations exist when a uniform class makes up the association. Ironically, in cases where class differences exist and thus conflicts emerge at the association level, individually members seem to get along well irrespective of their class differences. In most cases the less educated members are the ones that benefit from individuals with higher statuses because they are first to be contacted for financial assistance and other forms of recommendations. Class differences and conflicts within GAGC and ICFC are internalized, and have bred apathy, absenteeism, non-payment of dues, non-participation in programs and lukewarm attitudes towards associational life.

The density of networks within Ghanaian immigrant associations is therefore very important since it shapes the extent to which members relate cordially with each other and access important information on job searches, housing and other areas of assistance that makes settlement plausible. This further strengthens the bonds of group identity that becomes obvious at places of employment, cluster settlement, and close family –like relationship patterns that shape their Ghanaian identity and practices.

4. 3 Size of Networks: Inter - Associational Relations

Inter-group relationship is another area that social networks emerge. This illustrates the size of networks that Ghanaian immigrant associations can potentially access. Ghanaian immigrant associations’ relate and/or associate with each other groups of Ghanaian, African and American identities to create broaden relationships. These new networks consolidate already formed relationships that also enhance the ability of its members to take advantage.
Table 4.2 shows the degree of inter-associational relationships that determines the size of networks that exist between groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from field data

Inter-associational relations among the four Ghanaian associations are nuance. There is a weak relation between the churches (ICFC and COP), yet fair relations between the social (GAGC and MAG). This implies that associations of the same persuasions do not have strong relationships. COP has weak relations with GAGC and MAG, but ICFC sees its relations with GAGC and MAG as fair. This implies that perceptional differences exist between social and religious institutions. For instance GAGC relates very well with both churches but the churches (especially COP) do not reciprocate this gesture. MAG on the other hand has weak relations with the churches. The kinds of relationships existing between associations under observation suggest that the churches seem to be exploiting particularly GAGC for its members and financial resources.

Five factors help explain the size of networks that exists between groups. First is the issue of break ups and conflicts between associations of similar persuasions; second is the perceptional difference that exists between associations; third is the social and religious differences that affect inter-group relations; fourth is the organizational structures of associations and its impact on social networking; and finally, since some of the associations are in formative stages, their ability to socially network with others is not fully developed.

The fact that some members of GAGC are also members of the churches translates into cordial interactions and relationships that induce association executives to honor invitations to church activities and functions. Sometimes relationship between GAGC and the two churches is reciprocal. At present GAGC uses the facilities of ICFC to host its meetings. Often, this relationship is unequal and benefits the churches through support and cash contributions from GAGC and its members during annual harvest and fundraising ceremonies. COP in particular
does not patronize functions organized by GAGC as a church although it does not officially restrict members from participating. According to the elders of COP, functions organized by GAGC are fraught with alcoholic beverages and unchristian music that conflicts with COP’s strict biblical teachings. This assertion does not however prevent ICFC and its members to participate in most GAGC functions. This religious difference in response to GAGC activities has to do with differences in missions of these churches. The COP is a branch of a bigger church with a hierarchy and strict religious rules laid down by headquarters in Ghana, but ICFC, which is an independent privately owned and operated church, takes advantage of any available opportunity to fraternize with GAGC members in order to win their trust and membership.

GAGC’s fair relations with MAG and vice-versa can be attributed to the way few men decided form an association exclusive of GAGC and other minor misgivings. Even though executives of GAGC barely recognize MAG as a potential treat to GAGC existence, they are skeptical about the group’s capability of achieving any meaningful success. This has been confirmed by the spate of resignations occurring within MAG, as three elected presidents have resigned in two years of MAG’s formation. This notwithstanding, executives of MAG maintain that MAG is not a break away group but rather a subsidiary of GAGC. There is therefore suspicion on the part of GAGC about MAG. The executives of MAG hope that GAGC accepts and collaborate with them since they are not competing but rather complementing by taking charge of the interest of men. This type of men’s grouping is an import from the Ghanaian context into the American system. (For example the researcher was a member of this type of association back home in Tema, Ghana. The association is called “Menkrofo” a solely men’s group formed to cater for the interest of its members). MAG’s weak relations with the churches are not based on suspicion but due to the fact that it is in its formative stages and has not yet developed proper contacts and relationship.

ICFC relates well with GAGC in order to attract members and to reciprocate honoring of invitations by GAGC executives and members during fund raising and other church activities. The pastor’s motive is to intensify his efforts in order to attract as many Ghanaians as possible and also build a reliable relationship with GAGC from which funds could be generated. ICFC’s weak relations with COP can be attributed to tensions that resulted from its break away from COP. A section of COP’s members broke away to form ICFC. COP has since decided not to interact or cooperate with ICFC. For reasons of non-cooperation from COP, the pastor of ICFC
has shifted collaborative activities to non-Ghanaian churches. ICFC does joint prayer sessions, deliverance services, and also invite different pastors from diverse church denominations (some non – Ghanaian) to share the gospel with its congregation.

The weak relations COP has with all other associations, is manifested in persistent non-participation of activities of GAGC, MAG, and ICFC. Members are not restrained from participating in activities of other organizations but are cautioned of how dangerous it is to involve in “sinful” acts of some associations that can be degrading to spiritual purity. Members are however advised to attend educational and cultural programs organized by GAGC. This scenario explains how the strict rules and regulations governing COP have been imported from the parent church in Ghana into the American system. COP does not necessarily have to fraternize with other associations to attract members and generate funds (even though it does sometimes) because as a branch of a worldwide church, and with so many assemblies in North America, they can rely on other branches for human and financial resource assistance.

Finally, GAGC has an excellent relationship with newly founded Union of African Associations (UAA), a coalition of individual country based African associations in greater Cincinnati. GAGC has two permanent representatives on its consultative council, and therefore obligated to invite other sister African associations to some of its functions and vice-versa. The two representatives of GAGC help in the steering of affairs of UAA, as it is supposed to be an umbrella association for all African groups. This level of relationship is at the initial stage and efforts are under way to increase interactions among all African associations. It must be pointed out that all four associations have started on a low profile building ties with other African and American associations, but these ties have not matured into solid joint cooperative relationships. What is currently happening is that many of them invite members of other associations to attend and participate in individual functions and activities.

Literatures on social networks have generally focused both on relationship within associations (Okamura, 1983; Attah –Poku, 1996) and inter–group relations (Okamura, 1983). This research supports findings by Okamura, (1983) where a similar inter – group relationships was discussed on Filipino associations in Hawaii. The findings of this thesis differ from Lee’s (2002) finding that the extent of Korean networks for job searches are not only embedded in their social relations but that which lie beyond ethnicity to the wider society. The difference that this thesis has been able to unravel is the nuance relationships that emerge between associations of
different persuasions (social and religious), and which was absent from Okamura’s research that was based on relationships among Filipino associations of social orientations.

Finally, Ghanaian immigrant associations build networks for basically social and religious purposes and this differs from the Chinese and Asians who develop networks through associations to establish small business enterprises and global connections (Lyon, 2003; Liu, 2001; Bates, 1994). Another finding points out that networks ensure resource mobilization to effect transnational development and assistance to home country (Babou, 2002; Kerlin, 2000).

The foregoing discussion shows that the size of networks among Ghanaian immigrant associations and other affiliated organizations extents the areas to which members can interact and harness vital information sources. This consequently plays into how they define their identity with respect to whether it is for social, culture or religious purposes that consequently help in their settlement process. It also provides some answers to the extent to which associations help define the larger Ghanaian community within the American system and carve out an identity for themselves.

4.4 Social Networks as support system

Social networks of Ghanaian immigrant associations manifest themselves through the nature of support systems provided. To unravel this questions like: How do Ghanaian immigrant associations provide social networks to help mediate Ghanaians heritage and American experience? What kinds of support systems emerge from both within and between groups’ networks? In answer to these questions the thesis shows that Ghanaian immigrant associations in Cincinnati through formal and informal serve as a rallying point where members can harness numerous support systems that helps in their settlement process. Table 4.3 shows the kinds of support systems associations create for members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Immigration Matters</th>
<th>Personal Matters</th>
<th>Financial Matters</th>
<th>Spiritual Matters</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Compiled from field data*
Table 4.3 indicates that all associations provide the forum for members to harness social networks for reasons of matters relating to immigration (Bailey et al. 2002) and personal reasons like seeking assistance in areas of job search and housing (Light et al, 1999; Johnson-Webb, 2002). However, it is only GAGC, which directly provides these supports as an association. These issues are very central to the survival of members within the Ghanaian ethnic community. GAGC in particular disseminate information on immigration matters to members through seminars where immigration lawyers are invited to educate them. MAG, COP and ICFC do not necessarily organize educational seminars but use informal means to provide and share vital information relating to immigration, and also provide the necessary assistance to the needy when possible.

GAGC is the only association that has constitutional mandate that formally provides financial support to its members through a welfare program to cushions them during difficult times like in sickness and death of a relation. The churches apart use supportive prayers that seek Gods intervention and guidance, and informal assistance through individual contributions from members to the needy member. They also informally support members faced with personal problems relating to jobs and accommodation.

Network support systems available within associations are so important for members in their survival process and serve a basis upon which newly arrived Ghanaians depend on to build their new lives (Owusu, 2000). These support systems provided through interactions in and between associations provide a sense of security for members within the Ghanaian community and further strengthen the creation of Ghanaian community and identity.

4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, associations facilitate social networks to help Ghanaian immigrants mediate their American experience and Ghanaian heritage (into a new identity), by the following means: building ties and relationships within and between associations formally or informally, exploitative or mutual, to benefit members. Newly arrived Ghanaians and needy members of the associations are the ones that effectively harness and benefit from support systems available. The combination of these formal and informal network systems facilitate group dependence on one another and this facilitates the new emerging community of Ghanaian national identity in Cincinnati.
The density of networks within Ghanaian immigrant associations shapes the extent to which members relate to each other and access important information on available job opportunities, housing, and other assistance that smoothen the settlement process. The strengthened bonds and networks become obvious with many working at same places of employment, and living within a particular neighborhood. The size of networks also contributes to the extent Ghanaian associations collaborate among themselves and with other affiliated associations.

Network support systems even though vary from association to association are very important for members in their survival strategy. Newly arrived Ghanaians depend on network support systems to build their new lives (Owusu, 2000). These support systems emerge through regular interactions at association meetings and activities to consolidate a sense of security among members and further strengthen the creation of Ghanaian community and identity. The issue of transnational engagements among the associations is very limited and on a minimal level if compared to similar Ghanaian associations in New York and New Jersey. The reason is that Ghanaian associations in Cincinnati are not fully developed as they are in New York and New Jersey. From this discussion the question of network opportunities facilitated by Ghanaian immigrant associations to its members is unraveled.
CHAPTER 5
Acculturation Strategies of Ghanaian Immigrant Associations

5.1 Introduction

The key research question of this chapter is, how have associations contributed to individual members acculturation from the Ghanaian heritage and American experience? It examines issues relating to origin and formation of associations, in order to understand how and why Ghanaian immigrants associate. It also investigates the extent to which these associations have aided in the adaptation, adjustment, and settlement processes of its members in defining an identity in the American cultural system. Acculturation according to Fellman et al (2001) is the adaptability of immigrants in the values, attitudes, culture, and language of the receiving society. It is a process rather than an end stage of change. Fellman et al. further argue that this process may be slow for many individuals or groups because immigrants prefer to retain parent tongue out of choice or necessity for ethnic identification purposes even after fashion of dress, food, and customary behavior have been substantially altered in the new environment.

Questions relating to founding members and their numbers, reasons for formation and growth of associations, language use, and cultural expressions in associational life are addressed in this chapter, to determine the growth and degree of change within associations. This process reveals how Ghanaian immigrant associations facilitate the collective group interest of members, and also strategies they adopted to balance the Ghanaian and American cultural systems in identity creation. The objective, however, is to point out the key role Ghanaian immigrant associations play and the strategies they use to help members integrate their Ghanaianess into the American society.

5.2 Founding Members
This section examines the question of who the founding members of immigrant associations are. The responses in Table 5.1 show that in each case, a select group of individuals of differing socio-economic status and backgrounds initiated the formation of a particular immigrant association.
Table 5.1
Number and Type of Founding members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of Founders</th>
<th>Professionals &amp; Students</th>
<th>Male Friends</th>
<th>Prayer Group</th>
<th>Pastor</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from field data

Table 5.1 shows that both social and religious associations started as small groups. Numerically, GAGC started with about fifteen (15) families whom were mainly professionals and students. Three (3) working class Ghanaian men founded MAG. The churches also started as small prayer groups. An individual pastor with the assistance of three (3) other persons founded ICFC, and about eight (8) people collectively founded COP. Class status or differences played a role in the formation of non-religious groups of GAGC and MAG. Among the churches, the desire to worship the Ghanaian way by COP, in particular, is important because most of its founding members were previous members of COP in Ghana. Founding members of ICFC on the other hand come from different religious denominational backgrounds.

There is also a relationship between period of immigration of founding members, educational status and the type of association they form. For example founding members of GAGC who were professionals and students at that time are seen to be the earlier Ghanaian settlers in Cincinnati. Founding members of recently formed MAG are more recent arrivals. The educational background of founding members of the churches is also diverse. Comparatively, founding members of COP have two founding members as professional accountants while founding members of ICFC are of relatively lower educational attainments. Yet their membership today is different from the classes of their founding members.

Contrary to the assertion of Barkan et. al. (1991), that few educated and successful individuals provide the foundation of associations, this research found that people of different classes and backgrounds are founding members of Ghanaian immigrant associations. It can be inferred that differences in class status, educational background, and religious affiliations have contributed to the formation of different kinds of associations with different aspirations and organizational abilities. In spite of these differences, a commonality for forming associations is supported by Castro’s (2003) assertion that immigrants first associate to maintain cultural
identity and patterns, and secondly to engage or participate positively in inter-group contacts. He further points out that in plural societies like USA unequal access to socially-valued resources like wealth, income, class, property, and cultural products could contribute in formation of associations.

5.3 Origins of Associations

How did Ghanaian immigrant associations in Cincinnati begin? Three different reasons have been given to account for how associations began. These reasons relate to differences in associational perception. GAGC was founded as a socializing group, the churches of COP and ICFC were prayer groups and MAG was purposely for men’s welfare and solidarity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.2 Origins of Associations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socialization of Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from field data

Table 5.2 shows that GAGC began as a social group with the aim of uniting Ghanaian professionals and students living within the greater Cincinnati area. This group was more of an informal forum that met occasionally to fraternize, socialize and build intimate friendship among their peers within the Ghanaian community. MAG’s origin was in response to a vacuum created by the inaction of GAGC to organize Ghanaians, when they needed to be organized after the death of a Ghanaian man to assure them of support in times of strife. After GAGC had performed the burial and funeral ceremony the executives did not follow up with organizing many of the Ghanaians who felt the need to join GAGC. Another fact of the inaction of GAGC executives was that these executives were newly inducted into office and could not take advantage of the situation to bolster membership drive. Further, the desire among some working class men to organize outside the elite and assert their independence from GAGC, coupled with the need to organize men just like is done in many places in Ghana are all reasons that brought about MAG.

As stated above MAG executives do not see their group as a break-away in competition with GAGC. Rather they insist that they are playing a supporting role for Ghanaian men.
Sentiments expressed by some MAG executives indicate that the executives of GAGC do not adequately regard and appoint members of low educational background into leadership positions. This initial perception is however misleading because MAG executives have not shown enough competence in organizational abilities after two years of existence. MAG’s primary focus to provide group life insurance policy for all members to ensure security has not materialized. Available information indicate that GAGC tried once to initiate group insurance program but could not be implemented because the alleged working class who would have benefited most did not show any interest. It could also be that the program was not adequately explained or there were some problems associated with it. The professionals within the association who already have life insurance did not pursue but rather abandoned the idea.

A few individual families who desired fellowship and to pray met in basements and living rooms of founding members to begin the churches. The founding elder in league with other dedicated members who shared similar faith and beliefs met regularly as a prayer group to fulfill their spiritual devotion to God. ICFC’s origin is seen as a break away from COP. A small number of members and the current Pastor who were members of COP decided to break away from COP to form a prayer group which later became a church as members increased. The break away affected initial membership of COP and this has continued to create unhealthy relationships between the two churches and its membership.

Breakaway seems to distinguishes the older associations from the new ones. The older associations of both social and religious persuasions originated from the perception to organize Ghanaians to maintain Ghanaian unity and cohesion, but the newer associations, which are offshoots, brought about competition, rivalry and disunity within the Ghanaian community. Attah – Poku (1996) has argued that emergence of various specific hometown associations within the broader regional association in New York affects commitment and breed’s rivalry within the Ghanaian immigrant community. Although, associations begin for different reasons and by different founding members, the creation of forums to develop and enhance friendship among members and be identified with the group is a key similarity of all associations.
5.4 Recruiting Strategies

The literature provides several ways through which associations attract and recruit their membership (Wickberg, 1982; Cheng, 1985; Babou, 2002). What is missing however was the strategies many associations adopt to recruit its members. This is important because it shows the extent to which associations go to attract members, and the kinds of people it targets to fulfill its vision. This section examines the opinion of respondents on the approaches employed by Ghanaian immigrant associations to attract members. Table 5.3 shows how networks and filial relationships are relied upon to invite friends and relatives to become members of associations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th>Relatives</th>
<th>Adverts</th>
<th>Invitation</th>
<th>Conventions &amp; Crusade</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from field data

Table 5.3 shows that all associations rely upon friends, invitations and relatives in recruiting members. Depending upon the purpose or kind of association, advertising through flyers and conventions or crusades is resorted to by especially ICFC. All associations encourage their members to invite friends and relatives. GAGC, COP and ICFC encourage members to bring along relatives to association meetings as recruiting strategies. GAGC also advertise through flyers at African grocery stores and barber shops. During functions, activities or parties, announcements are made to inform people of GAGC and its ongoing activities. The churches, especially ICFC, resort to organizing crusades and conventions to popularise their activities to attract new members.

As members live within the greater Cincinnati area and outlying areas of Newport in Northern Kentucky and Dayton recruitment also follows a similar pattern. GAGC and ICFC advertisements campaign includes distribution of flyers and posters with information on activities of associations. COP mostly relies on members to invite friends and relatives to the church. The literature points out to a variety of strategies used in recruiting members of immigrant associations. For example the Chinese in Canada for instance use of surnames, which represent kinship to recruit its members (Wickberg, 1982). Similar to the findings in this research
the dependence on social relations like family, clans, society, occupation or trade as depicted by Hakka associations (Cheng, 1985) and also religious affiliations among the Murids in New York (Babou, 2002) are examples that Ghanaian associations in Cincinnati use to recruit.

5.5 Language Acculturation

The language of an immigrant group is one cultural trait that is slow to change in the acculturation process (Fellman et al, 2001). Since language is an integral part of the culture of a people, this section examines the extent to which Ghanaian immigrant associations have maintained, or discarded their language of origin in America. The language used within associations can be attributed to class or educational differences in membership and organizational strategy.

Table 5.4
Language Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Akan</th>
<th>Both languages</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from field data

Table 5.4 summarizes languages used during associations’ functions and activities. COP and MAG predominantly use Akan (a dominant local Ghanaian language) because of lower educational achievements of the majority of their members, and the ease with which issues can be explained and discussed. One respondent from MAG and COP feel that both languages are used as English is occasionally spoken at their functions. ICFC uses English in the course of its activities, while GAGC resort to both English and Akan. However, GAGC put greater emphasis on English with occasional Akan spoken. Executives of GAGC at times use Akan intermittently to clarify issues to the understanding of those less proficient in English. Sometimes Akan is used in the performance of certain traditional functions such as pouring of libation. It must be pointed out that some members of associations hardly speak or understand the Akan dialect, so it is only appropriate to use English. The reason why GAGC uses both English and Akan is more of a strategy adopted to accommodate both members with high and less proficient in English.
ICFC, which is a privately owned church, wishes to maintain the mainstream American language (English) because of the need to attract members beyond ethnicity and nationality. In addition, the majority of its members speaks English and have a higher level of education than members of COP. Recent appearances of other Africans and the diverse ethnic background of Ghanaian members have necessitated the intermittent use of English and Akan by COP. The low educational backgrounds of members of MAG make it appropriate to use Akan during associations’ deliberations and activities. The conclusion here is that the churches and associations use English out of necessity but use Akan to keep their base of members comfortable.

The implication is that Ghanaian immigrant associations strategically use Akan, English or both depending on the circumstances. First they utilize Akan to define their identity and maintain their native language in their acculturation process. Second, they resort to English to engage and smoothen the acculturation and incorporation into mainstream American experience.

5.6 Why Associations were formed
The literature gives a variety of reasons for the formation of immigrant associations. First, they form and function to meet needs of members (Owusu, 2000, Bowers, 1990), and also undertake development project at home of origin (Kerlin, 2000; Attah- Poku, 1996, Okamura, 1983). Others attribute formation to networking and social capital development (Yuk et al, 1997, Babou, 2002, Liu, 2001), which is geared towards the overarching function of integrating immigrants into their ethnic community, on one hand, and into the larger American society, on the other hand.

Table 5.5 summarizes some reasons why Ghanaian immigrants’ associate. Four trends that account for this include organization, perception, function and people - centered appeals and purposes.
Table 5.5 shows that Ghanaian immigrants associate to form and organize both social and religious activities for its members. They also associate because of the perception members have about such associations and what they can do for its members. In this light association try as much as possible to assist, support and provide a sense of security through a variety of functions they undertake. Much emphasis on culture helps maintain a Ghanaian heritage and identity, and create forums that integrate people into a community with similar faith, belief system and cultural identity.

Table 5.5 indicates that the churches were formed mainly from a perception to worship and organize members under Christian faith and to integrate them into a family of Ghanaian Christian community. GAGC and MAG formed to organize Ghanaians and with the perception of creating an identity, and also function to help needy members in settling into the community. GAGC and ICFC focus on the integration of Ghanaians as a key reason for their formation. GAGC additionally function to maintain Ghanaian culture and traditions among its members.

These trends do not suggest that formation of Ghanaian associations is only to pool Ghanaians to share common identity and traditions, but also to serve as a platform where members could indulge the American system. The implications from above observations show that most socializing groups were formed to respond to the threat to loss of Ghanaian culture and traditional needs as they live in America, and also cope with challenges they face as immigrants in America. It must be realized that by forming an association Ghanaian immigrants can better integrate themselves first, into the Ghanaian community, and second, the larger American society. This is reminiscent of the communal spirit of the Ghanaian cultural trait that has been introduced into the American system as a support and adaptive strategy. This is summed by Castro’s (2003) assertion that immigrants first associate to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why associate?</th>
<th>Organize</th>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Integrate into Community</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from field data
maintain cultural identity and patterns, and secondly to engage or participate positively in inter-group contacts.

5.7 Commitment of Associations and the Acculturation Process

Members’ commitment on one hand is an important factor that determines successful participation in activities and programs of associations. On the other hand is the associations’ commitment to members’ welfare that facilitates their acculturation into the American system. An analysis of the ages of associations provides a sense of the length of associations’ existence and the ability to meet the growing needs of members. The differences between listed and paid members also shows how committed members are in terms of financially supporting the activities and programs of association. These are two key issues that account for the continued existence of associations. The question the thesis ask here is “how committed are associations to the realization of its objectives of helping members in the acculturation process?” Information on age of associations can tell how long the association has being in operation, and that on listed and paid members to assess how members are financially committed to the associations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Listed Members</th>
<th>Paid Members Annual Dues</th>
<th>Paid Members Tithe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from field data

Table 5.6 shows that GAGC the oldest association started 10 years ago, COP is 7 years, ICFC about 4 years and MAG is 2 years old. These are generally recent associations that have emerged because of critical mass of Ghanaian immigrants into Cincinnati. Each association has appreciable number of listed members but low paid up members. GAGC recorded 45 (28%) paid members out of its 160-listed membership, while MAG had 15 (60%) paid up out of the 25 listed members.

Even though members of churches don’t pay annual dues, they are obligated to contribute monthly tithes and weekly offerings. Out of about 90 listed COP members an average of 40 attend Sunday church services and an average of 35 (38%) regularly pay their tithe. ICFC with
about 50 listed members receives an average of 35 regular Sunday church services attendees with 32 (64%) members regularly honoring their tithe obligations. The low rate of payment of annual membership dues and tithes reflect the level of commitments of both members and executives of associations.

In general, contributions from potential members for all associations have not been encouraging. The younger associations recorded a much higher membership contribution than the older ones. The older GAGC and COP do not have a lot of members contributing to their finances. The confusion about membership of associations needs to be clarified. First, being a Ghanaian does not automatically make one a member of GAGC. Yet some Ghanaians seem to believe that once they are of Ghanaian nationality it is a right to be a member. The constitution of GAGC states categorically clear that membership of the association is solely dependent upon payment of annual dues. Probing further to understand why only few Ghanaians have paid up their dues, the Treasurer of GAGC responded that people are reluctant to pay up promptly in spite of repeated reminders. Collection of annual dues by executives has not as easy since it must be done voluntarily without compulsion. The executives can only do very little by only reminding members to pay up the annual dues. A committed member must willingly and voluntarily pay up and must do so on time. The timely mobilization of funds from dues payment is a crucial determinant of the activities, programs and benefits members can enjoy in return.

As the constitution does not penalize late payment of dues, members have resorted to delay in payment, and this attitude subsequently affects the associations’ capability to undertake planned activities to the benefit of members. The executives do not have in place adequate and effective mechanism to forestall late payment of dues. For the fear of losing its members sanctions for late payments have not been instituted. An observation made on the field is that most Ghanaians who have not paid their membership dues attend functions and activities organized by GAGC without being bared. Most of the Ghanaians do not have a vote on issues of the association, and don’t qualify for welfare benefits but are partakers of parties and picnics. The remedy, according to the executives is that non-paid members and the general Ghanaian community pay higher entrance fees for parties and annual dance GAGC organizes. Even though Ghanaians may find associations useful and may benefit from them, they do not necessarily commit to it financially. The researchers latest visit to GAGC meeting found out that the
executives in conjunction with the few members present have decided to refocus the activities, programs and benefits for members.

In connection to the literature, Okamura (1983) alludes that Filipinos in Hawaii commit themselves to their association by honoring and promptly paying their annual membership dues in order to benefit from welfare rewards. Ghanaians in Cincinnati do not show that high level spirited commitment to their associations. This therefore implies that the low level of financial commitment to associations has an equal reflection of the degree to which associations will undertake activities geared towards the acculturation processes of their members in the USA.

5.8 Maintaining Ghanaian culture in America

The expression of indigenous culture by immigrant groups in host societies has always been a contested issue for researchers in identifying diverse acculturation processes that emerge. Castro (2003), argues that within the acculturation process there is, first, the decision to maintain one’s cultural identity and patterns, and secondly to engage and participate positively in inter-group contacts. Four possible outcomes of adaptation that emerge according to Berry (1997) are integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. The question then is how do cultural attributes expressed in associational life impact on members acculturation processes? Table 5.7 captures the response on some of the cultural expressions that these associations have exhibited among the rank and file of their members through associational life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ghanaian Dress</th>
<th>Ghanaian Food</th>
<th>Ghanaian Music/ Dance</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from field data

Ghanaian traditional expressions shown on Table 5.7 imply that native dresses, music, dance, and foods are important attributes that characterize these associations and their members in carving out the identity as Ghanaians. These expressions are the focal point around which members of associations bond and identify to create a sense of belonging. Ghanaian associations uphold and guard judiciously these cultural attributes. All associations engage in Ghanaian food.
Almost all engage in music and dance attributes of the Ghanaian culture. Mostly, GAGC and COP engage in Ghanaian dress. The younger associations of ICFC and MAG are less enthusiastic when compared to the older GAGC and COP.

Ghanaian traditional attire is one important identification mark of culture. Most members of GAGC and COP wear Ghanaian attire for functions and activities. Some reasons given by respondents are:

a. GAGC members feel that wearing Ghanaian attire depicts who they are in order to maintain a sense of Ghanaianness to the admiration of non-Ghanaians.

b. Members of COP, especially the women, continually practice the wearing of Ghanaian made dresses with pomp and pageantry, since they are frowned upon and sometimes cautioned by elders of the church if they wear certain types of western dresses This attitude is an importation of strict COP dress code from Ghana. For example, women must not be dressed in trousers or long pants since that is the preserve of men. Women must also always have their hair covered with headgears during church services.

MAG made up of young men feel that a blend of Ghana and western dresses is proper. On numerous occasions one would see a variety of clothes of mixed orientation during meetings and functions. There is manifestation of a blend of western and Ghanaian dresses, food, music and dance but overwhelmingly Ghanaian during picnics, parties and functions. A variety of Ghanaian foods are served with isolated pieces of pastry, cookies and western deserts.

The implication for this trend is that associations, through its activities and members, consciously portray many aspects of Ghanaian culture and tradition through dance, food, music and dresses as they integrate into the mainstream American system. This couches them into a group with an identity as Ghanaians and with a culture that is expressed within the mainstream American culture. Yet there is a tendency to emphasize western wear and culture traits as well. Nagel (2002) has pointed to a similar finding among the Arab immigrants in London where different categories of members of the Arabic community respond differently to their Islamic practices depending on whether they are at home or within the broader society.
5.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, associations both social and religious contribute effectively to the settlement process of members into mainstream American society. They do this in various ways by providing the right associational forum for members to harness support and express their culture. As a result, some associations are growing in membership while others are not compared to the listed membership and the commitment levels. However, associations use a variety of strategies including the use of friends, relatives, invitations and advertisements to attract new members. The churches additionally organize conventions and crusades to recruit more members. Affective relations serve as an important strategy used in membership drive and extending invitations to especially the newly arrived is a Ghanaian traditional way of welcoming them into associations. These strategies have worked to perfection for both social and religious institutions.

Further, associations contribute enormously to the integration of Ghanaians into first, a Ghanaian community with similar culture, values and national identity, and second, into the larger mainstream American society. These findings are in agreement with findings of Ghanaian immigrant associations in Toronto, Canada (Owusu, 2000), and the Pelundos immigrant associations in Portugal (Kerlin, 2000). This is reinforced by the expression of cultural attributes like Ghanaian foods, dresses, music and dance forms that permeates associations activities. Ghanaian immigrant associations in Cincinnati therefore can be seen as a negotiating agency between Ghanaian and American cultural systems, as they enable members to integrate both Ghanaian and American cultural systems in support of the assertion of Berry, (1997).
CHAPTER 6

Helping to Negotiate the Ghanaian and American Systems.

6.1 Introduction

Assimilation is the observed result that emerges from immigrants’ adjustment to the larger society and the several changes that occur in their social structures, cultural patterns, and psychological features from one generation to another (Castro, 2003; Gordon, 1978). The changes experienced are predominantly in immigrants’ culture, marital, identity, attitude, behavior and civility within the plural American society. The question under investigation is: to what extent have associations helped in the negotiation of Ghanaian identity into the American cultural systems? That is, how well have associations helped in the assimilation process. By examining the evolution, growth, challenges, successes and future of Ghanaian immigrant associations, one can determine how well they have contributed towards assimilation of Ghanaian immigrants. The theme of evolution is discussed in this chapter to show the growth, changes and performance of Ghanaian immigrant associations in their ability to help Ghanaians negotiate their Ghanaian heritage and their American experience.

6.2 Changes in Associations

Ghanaian immigrant associations have experienced many changes and continue to undergo changes since their formation. Increase in membership, improvement in activities and welfare support, regularization of operations and acquisitions of facilities are some of the identifiable changes that have been occurred. The ages of associations, and the types of activities they engage in are a result of its stage of evolution.

Table 6.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in Associations since Formation</th>
<th>Increased Members</th>
<th>Improved Activities</th>
<th>Improved Welfare</th>
<th>Regularization/ Formalization</th>
<th>Acquisition of facilities</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from field data
Table 6.1 shows that as membership of each association have increased their activities and operations have also become more complex. These can be seen by the variety of reforms undertaken by these associations in order to meet and suit the changing demands and needs of members. Associations have to regularize their activities through registering with local authorities as non-profit organizations for approval and recognition. The churches whose operations require permanency have acquired buildings where they meet and worship regularly.

The most remarkable change within GAGC, COP and ICFC is the increase in membership. This is due to the influx of many Ghanaians into Greater Cincinnati area. Most of these arrivals have moved from New York, New Jersey and Washington D.C area to settle in Cincinnati and its outlying regions. However, a few of these newly arrived come directly from Ghana. The researchers latest observation indicate that the increasing number of Ghanaians in Cincinnati, and the high number of listed members have not translated into actually attendance to meetings and paying of annual dues. The situation has made the executives and members of GAGC to unanimously agree to refocus the associations’ objectives and vision. The association now plans to direct programs towards only paid members, rather than its previous approaches that were targeted at boosting membership. They also plan to undertake quality programs and pay huge welfare benefits to its members. By this approach it is hoped that the respect and desire for many to join will be materialized. The improvements in activities of associations in both the frequency and quality can be credited first, to the dedication and imaginative leadership, and second, to new members who have joined after resettlement from the East Coast. Welfare activities for especially GAGC and to some extent ICFC have also seen improvements through increased benefits.

Apart from MAG, which is in its formative years, all other associations have regularized their operations by registering as non-profit voluntary organizations in conformity with laws of the state of Ohio and the United States of America. GAGC has experienced enormous increase in membership, and organizes many and well-attended activities such as Christmas and Independence Day parties, summer picnics, educational seminars and funeral services for deceased Ghanaians. GAGC has a written constitution and elected executives who have specific tenure in office. This has enabled the association to properly organize through elections periodically, and appoint executives to guide and execute affairs or programs of this association. The association apart from increasing the amount of money paid out to the recipient of welfare
benefits has widened the scope in terms of areas that members can receive benefits. GAGC has no permanent premises of its own but rather holds its meetings in ICFC premises and uses its facilities. MAG, which is in the youthful stage, and in the process of drafting a tentative constitution to guide its operations, holds meetings in the houses of interim executive members. This means that the more established GAGC affiliates better and have extensive rapport with other organizations than MAG.

The churches have acquired permanent places for worship and also procured musical instruments, chairs and other equipment needed for proper functioning. COP has experienced increased membership and improvements in activities by organizing conferences for elders and select members in collaboration with other sister assemblies to teach and reinforce the teaching and faith of participants in the gospel of God. Marriage counseling, christening of newly born babies, baptism, and bible classes are areas that COP now engages in. Socially, the church also embarks on activities such as picnics, conventions, and involves in activities to assist in the celebration of births through out-doorings, and marriage anniversaries. In the past, christening and naming ceremonies used to be performed by prominent members of GAGC. This seems to have shifted to become the preserve of the churches today. This shows the extent to which the church is increasingly incorporating Ghanaian heritage into their American experience.

Administratively, even though COP does not have a resident pastor, but has abandoned the one elder controlled church to a five elder and a presiding elder leaderships team that steer the affairs of the church. Gender balance has been addressed with the elevation of three women to the positions of deaconess. COP has procured sets of musical instruments and public address systems to facilitate Sunday worship. It has purchased and refurbished its own building.

ICFC has likewise made remarkable progress in its membership drive and social functions. Apart from Sunday church services, prayer meetings and joint services with other non – Ghanaian churches have increased. ICFC occasionally extends invitations to guest pastors from either Africa, Europe and within America to minister to its members. Just like COP christening of newly born babies, organizing conventions or crusades have become part of the spiritual drive. The church organizes regular summer picnics for its members to socialize. As a registered entity, with five elders including one woman managing the affairs, the church has rented a property to worships in. ICFC has also acquired musical instruments and audiovisual equipments for use during Sunday services and other activities.
From the foregoing discussions the changes occurring within these associations reflect the extent to which they are helping Ghanaians negotiate their heritage and American experience. The evidence shows how these experiences determine the extent in which members of these associations assimilate into the larger American society. The irony is that as Ghanaian associations change to adapt to the changing times and needs of Ghanaians in Cincinnati, they become more established to perform better as they increase their capacity at facilitating the assimilation processes of members. This is seen through the adjustments of members to the larger American society socially, culturally and psychologically.

6.3 Growth of Associations

The key question addressed in this section is: Why have immigrant associations flourished in Greater Cincinnati? To adequately answer this, the Table 6.2 provides information on availability of Ghanaians and their willingness to participate in associational life, commitment of leaders, and especially benefits accruing from networks and welfare systems, as most important determinants for the growth of associations. The churches however believe that God’s blessing, directions and protection is the source for their growth.

Table 6.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Influx of Ghanaians</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Leaders Commit</th>
<th>Welfare &amp; Networks</th>
<th>God’s Blessing</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from field data

Table 6.2 indicates that all associations attribute growth to influx and availability of Ghanaians in Cincinnati, and their willingness to participate in the activities of associations. With the exception of COP, the rest of the associations believe that commitment of leaders has helped associations to grow. GAGC and to some extent MAG, feel that welfare support systems and network availability within associations is an impetus for growth. The churches believe that the blessings of God as key to growth and success.

The fact that associations provide platforms formally and informally for members to harness needed networks show that group contact is the most reliable medium to enhance
members’ assimilation prospects. Social networks are important especially for the newly arrived who are desperately in search for jobs and accommodation (Light et al, 1999). Networks also help to build relationships that serve as strong vehicles to provide newly arrived with familiar relations and interactions on which they can begin to build their new lives (Owusu, 2000).

The fact that these attributes aforementioned have contributed to the reasons and growth of immigrant associations in Cincinnati, make it imperative that more Ghanaians will rely on these associations to facilitate their smooth adjustment to the larger society. The implication is that the oldest association (GAGC), which provides better and larger networks (density and size), will be the place where many Ghanaians will use to help them assimilate quickly into the American society.

6.4 Challenges of Associations

In an effort to streamline operations to conform to the dictates of American system, Ghanaian immigrant associations are confronted with a number of internal problems that affect the extent to which they function as agencies to help members assimilate. Some of these challenges include conflicts, lack of punctuality, inadequate funds, able leadership, members commitment, and lack of trust and cooperation among sister associations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conflicts</th>
<th>Lack of Punctuality</th>
<th>Inadequate Funds</th>
<th>Commitments of Members</th>
<th>Lack of Trust</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from field data

Table 6.3 indicates that lateness to functions, inadequate funds and commitment of leaders and members are problems that need urgent attention. GAGC and COP have to deal with conflicts that emerge. Within GAGC conflicts have arisen as a results of differential definitions Ghanaians attach to membership of GAGC. Most Ghanaians (especially the less educated majority) feel that being Ghanaian alone warrants automatic membership into GAGC. But GAGC constitution makes it clear that membership is recognized by the payment of annual dues. So, the crust of conflict is confined between Ghanaians versus members of GAGC. On the other
hand conflict within COP has to do with the strict religious rules and doctrines versus attendees willingness to follow such rules or otherwise.

Another challenge that all associations face has to do with punctuality. Attendance to functions of associations is also fraught with lateness that causes delays in starting most functions. Lateness according to a founding member of GAGC is a canker that must be corrected especially within the America system where time is of value and importance. This is sometimes called “African time” where meetings start two hours after scheduled time. Lack of finance to run associations is another crucial challenge as most associations are operating on shoe-string budgets that affect their ability to organize functions and also provide adequate welfare assistance and benefits to members. Payments of annual dues from members of GAGC and MAG as well as contributions from offerings and tithes to the churches are woefully inadequate to provide reliable financial bases for operations.

Effective and committed leadership is another contentious challenge that associations have to deal with. Leadership positions are voluntary, but most capable candidates within the Ghanaian community feel that it is time consuming to take up such daunting positions. In fact most people’s priority in American is to better their lives economically, (which is the reason for their migration into US), than to devote precious time to organizing associational life. For this reason finding capable members to take up leadership positions has been difficult since most of them prefer to be ordinary members than to take up leadership responsibilities. Within GAGC for example a few committed members take on most of the responsibilities. ICFC in particular feels that the lack of cooperation especially among Ghanaian operated churches is not the best, and needs to be improved because it is potentially dangerous to have a divided front within the united Ghanaian community.

These above mentioned problems have the tendency to affect the extent and ability of associations in their role of helping members adjusts to the larger society socially, culturally, and psychologically. However, in spite of these challenges Ghanaian immigrant associations continue to play important roles in helping Ghanaians assimilate quickly in their settlement process in order to function properly. Barkan et al. (1991) identifies similar challenges to associational life, but added that it only requires few dedicated and committed members to take up leadership roles and whip up enthusiasm for associations to thrive.
6.5 Successes of Associations

What are some of the successes of Ghanaian association? Generally associations have provided a sense of being Ghanaian to members and also assisted in the smooth transition of members into the American society. The churches have succeeded in building strong faith in God among members and secure permanent places of worship. GAGC is the only association that recognizes its efforts at mobilizing resources to build strong ties with Ghana.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sense of Identity</th>
<th>Trans-nationalism</th>
<th>Education of Members</th>
<th>Religious Faith</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAGC</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICFC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from Field data

Table 6.4 shows that all associations have provided some sense of identity of Ghanaian heritage for their members. This identity has provided the networks and many economic benefits like jobs and housing for newly arrived Ghanaians. In order to smoothen transition into the American system, GAGC in particular and MAG to some extent provides informal networks that help members secure jobs and housing. GAGC formally organizes regular educational forum where issues relating to schooling opportunities, immigration, health, insurance, marriage, and family counseling services etc are addressed. These seminars explain issues on these attributes, which subsequently provide security, strength and trust among members that further enhance the bonds and channels for social networking. Overall, these facilitate their assimilation into the mainstream American system. The churches apart from providing the avenue for building strong religious faith among its members have additionally secured permanent places to facilitate their continued worship and spiritual growth. The teachings of the bible by COP and ICFC has also provided with strength and faith in the Lord and enabled them to live righteous life and be law-abiding residents of the USA.

The success of educating members has been spearheaded by GAGC. As for COP, ICFC and MAG they normally reinforce what GAGC’s educational programs have reiterated. These educational drives are geared towards assimilating members into the mainstream American system, in issues relating to health, taxes, mortgages, insurance and educational opportunities.
that most members desperately need. These achievements are crucial for the survival and integration of members of the Ghanaian community into the broader Cincinnati community.

GAGC has collaborated with the churches in mobilizing cash donation for the Ghanaian national women’s soccer team that took part in the FIFA 2000 Women’s World cup soccer tournament held in USA. It has also donated $1,500 to the national disaster fundraising committee in Ghana during the 2001 Accra Sports stadium stampede where about 120 soccer fans lost their lives. These are some few transnational activities ties that associations in Cincinnati have engaged in, but there are plans to extend into other areas of endeavors. It is therefore not just the American experience but also the African heritage that concerns these associations.

In conclusion all associations both social and religious have resorted to education whether of material and spiritual emphasis to help in the assimilation of members into the American society. GAGC does this through organizing seminars on a variety of issues such as immigration, health, educational options, life insurance policy options, and cultural matters. The churches provide spiritual and moral education and development. Immigrant associations in Cincinnati therefore provide the forum of a sense of Ghanaian identity even as they strive to smooth members’ assimilation into the American system. This finding contradicts Alba et al., (1997) assertion that complete integration of immigrants into new societies occurs overtime, with narrowing of the cultural and social distances that immigrants traverse while assimilating. It rather supports the assertion that immigrants make conscious decisions to maintain their cultural identity and patterns, and also engage and participate positively in host societies (Castro, 2003).

6.6 Future of Associations
What is the future of Ghanaian association? All Ghanaian immigrant associations hope to step up membership drive, engage in diverse activities, and also improve their financial bases. Some further wish to improve interactions with other associations and to further collaborate in building stronger trans-national ties with Ghana. The overarching goal of these associations is to unite all Ghanaians living in the greater Cincinnati area, and facilitates the smooth integration of Ghanaian heritage and American experience.
Table 6.5 shows that all associations hope to increase membership and diversify programs of activities. This is to rekindle enthusiasm and give association new direction that will stimulate participation of all Ghanaians and make associations grow even larger. GAGC and ICFC particularly wish to improve interactions with other associations (both Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian). GAGC is poised to organize and provide the leadership for further strengthening of trans-national links with Ghana. This can succeed if GAGC collaborates with the churches and some Non Governmental Organization (NGO) and government agencies to make sure that resources mobilized are effectively utilized for the benefit of the intended purpose. The Pelundo hometown associations in Portugal have developed institutional links with other immigrant associations, the state, and civil society in both Portugal and Guinea–Bissau to facilitate socio-economic development projects in Pelundo, Guinea–Bissau (Kerlin, 2000). All associations also want to see improvement in their finances so that better quality programs and welfare benefits can be extended to its members.

6.7 Conclusion

The executives of Ghanaian immigrant associations have realized that in order to be responsive to the assimilation process, and also, to maintain Ghanaian heritage of their members as well, a variety of things must be done. First, they need to provide the platforms where members can effectively harness social networks and secure vital assistance. Second, they have to improve welfare capabilities and quality activities that enable members to positively participate in the American system. With the realization that filial and affective ties emerge from such cultural or national contacts, they need to reinforce the need to foster and improve relations among members to advance the Ghanaian identity. By this process Associations become official agents responsible for the mediation of Ghanaian heritage and American cultural systems. This
conforms and supports the arguments made by Nagel, (1994) about the Arabs in London, and how they form associations to negotiate their Arab culture and British identity.

In undertaking these functions, Ghanaian immigrant Associations need to overcome challenges of solving conflicts within and among members, securing adequate finances, whipping up punctuality to meetings and devoted membership. They need to encourage capable and committed persons to take up leadership positions to advance the course of the associations. The Executives must endeavor to cooperate, compromise and some times consult with experienced and past leadership to plan and over challenges in order to execute functional and targeted objectives. In addition to the growing needs of new arrivals and members of the Ghanaian community, all efforts must be geared towards meeting many challenges they face. The dual role of meeting the needs of members, and also negotiating the Ghanaian cultural heritage within the mainstream American cultural systems is the clarion call. It is within this integrative process that members can be well integrated and incorporated into the larger American society as Castro (2000), has argued.
CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

This thesis examines Ghanaian immigrant institutions in Cincinnati, and contributes to the literature on the African immigrant experience in general and associational life of Ghanaians in the United States of America in particular. The paucity of literature on African immigration has dictated this need in order to fill in some missing links on the contributions associations’ make towards immigrant acculturation, assimilation and identity. It also enables us to have a broader understanding to how African immigrants associate and express themselves in many ways in the United States through their associations. Apart from the African immigration experience being a recent phenomenon in the USA if compared to experiences of Europeans, Asians, and South Americans, it does not preclude efforts at generating a body of knowledge to explain Africans and their immigration experience. This thesis will go a long way in providing an in depth understanding, conception, and analysis of African immigration that could be compared or complemented to that of the Latinos and the Asians.

The findings of this thesis is partly confirmed by a variety of literature on immigrant and ethnic associations, social networks, assimilation, acculturation and in identity creation of Ghanaians in the USA. There are also differences in other respects to the Ghanaian experience, as the thesis has made clear. The literature alludes to, and the thesis readily supports, the assertion that immigrant associations perform a variety of functions. First, they meet the needs and assist members to settle in destination country, and second, they mobilize resources to undertake socio-economic development projects in their country of origin (Okamura, 1983, Attah- Poku, 1996, Kerlin, 2000). Ghanaian associations in Cincinnati, although promote and protect the common interests of members in areas of jobs, housing and recreation (Barkan et al, 1991) religion, (Babou, 2000), and culture (Attah-Poku, 1996), the thesis did not find Ghanaian associations assisting members financially for small business enterprise development (Yuk et al, 1997). Their degree of transnational engagements with the home country Ghana is woefully limited and weak if compared to the Pelundos immigrants association in Portugal (Kerlin, 2000), the Filipinos in Hawaii (Okamura, 1983) and the Asanteman ethnic association in New York (Attah-Poku, 1996.)

Ghanaian immigrant associations serve as mediating agencies that provide platforms for members to harness network opportunities available in order to cope and survive difficult
encounters in the USA (Schoeneberg, 1985). The impact of these on both individuals and collective behavior is enormous and the decision to join associations is because of the social and spiritual benefits that accrue to members. The thesis supports the literature that social networks provide an important source of economic and social life for members to acquire information resources and relationships (Portes, 1995), and promotes embedded trust among the Ghanaians in Cincinnati (Busken, 2002). Networks also serve as strong vehicles that provide new arrivals with familiar relations and interactions on which they begin to build their new lives (Owusu, 2000). Ghanaian associations in Cincinnati do this in formal and informal ways and this enhances employment opportunities and immediate housing needs (Light et al, 1999, Johnson-Webb, 2002). Members of associations rely on social networks (both in size and density) for effective interactions, and to facilitate coping, adjustment, and solving problems they encounter. It is also true that network systems provide members with financial and moral support in times of grief (death, illness), joy (out-dooring of newly born, marriages) and conflicts resolution (Attah – Poku, 1996).

The thesis confirms that associations mediate the adaptation of members to “fit” the mainstream cultural context (Berry, 1997). Ghanaian immigrant associations first, facilitate the desire to maintain their cultural identity and patterns, and second, to mediate the positive engagement and participation of members in the USA (Castro, 2003). This strategy is known as integration into the American system (Berry, 1997). Ghanaian immigrant associations contribute immensely to the integration of members into first, a community with Ghanaian culture, values and national identity, and second, into the larger mainstream American society. Associations can therefore be said to be negotiating between Ghanaian cultural heritage and American cultural systems to shape members in their new identity in an integrative manner.

By this examination, this thesis contributes to the literature on immigration into the United States, and prompts further investigations on issues such as “why is there an increase in the number of competing associations of African identity?” “Why is there a limited level of transnational activities among Ghanaian associations in Cincinnati?” “Why is the level of participation in most associational activities dwindling?” These and other fundamental questions are areas that could be further investigated. Even though this is not the first study to examine associational life of immigrants in the USA, it has opened up areas that need further investigations from multiple perspectives and dimensions of African immigrant experiences.
The fact that African immigration into the United States continues to increase as shown by the 2000 census estimates, this researcher calls others who desire to investigate into African immigration in USA to focus on multiple dimensions to unravel how Africans register and express themselves on the American landscape with trappings of their home culture.
Postscript

This section of the thesis is written to elaborate and point out pertinent structural organization, growth, development and changes that have occurred within Ghanaian immigrant associations in Cincinnati from July 2002 to December 2004. This situation has arisen because there has been a substantive elapsed two-year time lag between the time of data collection and time for completion of thesis. The researcher therefore deems it appropriate to report on many developments that have occurred between the months of July 2002 and December 2004. Documenting the present state of affairs among these associations is relevant, and adds to the richness of information, and also appropriately reflects observed changes on the ground. This section also reinforces the fact that associational life among Ghanaian immigrants is a natural human process that is subject to dynamism and constant changes. The dynamic nature of Ghanaian immigrant associations with the passage of time is therefore reported accordingly in this postscript.

The associations under investigation namely: GAGC, ICFC, COP and MAG have individually and/or collectively experienced remarkable changes. These growth and developments have varied implications on individual associations. While some of these changes do in certain ways slightly modify and conflict with some of the initially findings in the thesis, it does not overly negate many of the already reported findings. As associations like MAG, COP and ICFC have experienced positive changes, and become stronger in membership and functionality, GAGC has chalked declining fortunes and become weaker. In general these collective changes have not nullified or outdated the overall findings. It has rather reinforced and complimented the growing need for diverse and alternate strategies available to immigrant associations that strengthens associational life.

The most important and salient positive changes that this postscript captures in relation to Ghanaian immigrant associations include institutionalized and transformed organizational strategies, improved confidence and functionality of associations, and increased cooperation and involvement in transnational activities, and finally the relevance of GAGC. These issues are discussed under various associations.
**Ghana Association of Greater Cincinnati (GAGC)**

Between the time of fieldwork and completion of thesis the relevance of GAGC to many Ghanaians in Cincinnati has been affected. The association has seen a continuous reduction in membership count, leading to decrease in participation of many Ghanaians in many of its activities. Membership listing and registration has decreased alarmingly from about 45 paid members to about 20, and payment of annual dues has declined accordingly. Attendance to regular and emergency meetings has been appalling. This must be because many Ghanaians have shifted allegiance to the churches to secure both religious and social needs. The churches especially have therefore emerged, as agencies that fulfill spiritual needs as well as roles that were previously the preserve of GAGC.

For these and related reasons a committee of core members was setup to reform GAGC. The committee reported and designed to refocus or retool the association to revamp its dwindling fortunes. The executives and its members in response passed a resolution in support of the “refocusing” effort in order to make GAGC relevant. This retooling process, which they term “refocus”, has enabled the association to redirect the goals of the association. The objective is to design quality programs for its limited members and abandon the system of welfare packages dependent on association coffers. Henceforth, members will pool personal contributions and donate in the name of association. The past philanthropic attitude of GAGC, which extends welfare to any Ghanaian irrespective of membership status, has been abolished.

The refocused agenda enables GAGC to present healthy welfare packages to active and committed members. Since the implementation of this strategy, GAGC has pooled voluntary contributions from members and made lump sum donations to benefactors. The association recently made donations of $1,000 and $1,500 to two members who were bereaved by pooling private donations from members. This plan is aim at changing the mentality of the Ghanaian community, which for some time now see GAGC as a philanthropic institution that can be relied upon for assistance in spite of membership status. Upon the direction of the refocused committee, the association instead of organizing the regular Ghana independence party, held a church service at a neutral place and about 100 Ghanaians participated. These are all efforts designed to redefine and strengthen the association, and also reinforce commitment and dedication of members.
Indirectly, the message being sent to the Ghanaian community is that, GAGC is relevant and formidable in catering for the socio-economic needs of members in times of mishap. This is also to enable GAGC to regain its influence and leadership position as a viable association with the capacity to deliver in spite of competition from the other associations in Cincinnati. The provision of quality programs and handsome welfare packages will in the long run encourage many Ghanaians to rejoin and remain committed to the business of the association.

Another aspect of this refocused agenda has enabled GAGC to closely monitor and reshape the kinds of activities and functions appropriate for its members. The executives and members have agreed to ensure that upcoming functions are to be organized solely for the benefit of active members, and not for the interest of the larger Ghanaian community. The idea of organizing functions to target the general Ghanaian community is a thing of the past. Henceforth, functions like summer picnics, end of year parties and educational seminars will be improved and be geared towards the interest of members and not the Ghanaian community. However, members of the community who desire to participate will be charged higher rates at the entrance. Past experience indicate that most Ghanaians especially the newly arrived join GAGC for the initial benefits, assistance, networks and support systems, only to leave when such purposes are achieved.

The executives of GAGC through this refocused agenda hope to whip up and strengthen enthusiasm of members, and also encourage deserters, fence sitters and the newly arrived to join. The parasitic tendencies of many Ghanaians if this agenda is sustained will be eradicated and GAGC will re – emerge stronger to advance its leadership role among the many Ghanaian immigrant associations emerging in Cincinnati.

Men’s Association of Ghana (MAG)

The MAG, from July 2002 to December 2004 has made remarkable progress in both organizational and functional capabilities. MAG and its executives have grown in confidence, and have institutionalized their activities by registering with the bureau of registry and also developed a permanent constitution to regulate activities. The leadership has shown signs of stability, and has continually partnered and cooperated with GAGC to organize many functions and activities for the Ghanaian community. For example, in most of the cultural performances during Christmas and Independence Day celebrations, MAG members are responsible. They play
the cultural drums and also do some cultural dancing. Members are also responsible for setting the venue up for the occasion - arranging tables and chairs or tidying up the place. MAG also takes charge of the drinks to be served at these functions. At most funeral ceremonies MAG usually set up table at one part to represent their interest. They collect contributions from members and donate in the name of the association. These strategies have really impressed many Ghanaians and they have become very valuable in many functions.

MAG has adopted another innovation by embossing the logo and name of association on Tee shirts, baseball caps and other traditional clothing that members are obligated to wear during functions. Their apparel denotes their presence and distinguishes members from non-members. Members of MAG sometimes perform singing of some traditional songs, dance to traditional tunes, and perform traditional cultural display. Members of MAG are responsible for raising a soccer team for Cincinnati to play against a sister association from Columbus during summer picnics. The unity, purpose and responsibility of MAG have been impressive and these achievements are a result of leadership and organizational abilities.

MAG is carving out transnational space through many of its activities. By the insistence of their rules and regulations members are increasingly wearing traditional clothing to many functions. A recent invitation of a traditional chief who visited from Ghana to be a VIP speaker and grace their presence at a funeral ceremony is an attempt to reinforce the notion of links to Ghanaian traditional authority. Currently, MAG is growing stronger and making modest progress in its organizational and functional capabilities and also striving to carve out transnational spaces. They have also strengthened their collaborative and cooperative relationship with GAGC in organizing functions for the benefit of the Ghanaian community in Cincinnati.

**Church of Pentecost (COP)**

The COP since the fieldwork has moved from a rented premises to a permanent property they have purchased at Hamilton, Ohio where they worship. The church has increasingly become a part of the global Pentecostal church. As part of a bigger international church with solid transnational links, the church has seen vast improvements in its structure, leadership and programs they organize. For instance elected officers and executives of the church must be appointed and/or approved from the headquarters in Ghana. The strong transnational links has enabled the church to invite on regular basis and received many visiting pastors from other
assemblies around the world. This has also enabled officers of the church to attend international conferences, functions and retreats in accordance with the regulations and directives from the national and international head office in Ghana.

The transnational ties with the global network has enabled the resident pastor from a sister assembly in Columbus to have temporary oversight responsibility of the Cincinnati assembly until a substantive resident pastor is appointed from the headquarters. The extent of transnational activities and institutionalization of COP has provided a strong impetus for the growth in membership, and strict adherence to rules proscribed by the head office, which regulates and controls many aspects of the business of the church globally.

**International Christian Fellowship Church (ICFC)**

Since the fieldwork, ICFC has also grown in strength, membership and institutional capacity. IICFC have vacated the rented space to a permanent property, which is owned by another church it has amalgamated with. The merger of ICFC and Assemblies of God church has brought about remarkable structural changes in the functional and sphere of activities of the church. By this amalgamation ICFC is now know as International Christian Fellowship Assemblies of God Church, and this merger has increased the membership count into a fairly larger congregation. This has impact on the composition of the leadership to include executive members from both churches. The pastor of ICFC who did this on part time basis has now being given full time pastoral responsibilities and duties, and put on the payroll of the church. This broader appeal of the church has enabled the pastor to continue his commitments by engaging and collaborating with other churches and pastors both within the USA and from other countries. Recently, a very renowned preacher by name Reverend Yawson visited with one of Ghana’s most sensational gospel singers “the Tagoe sisters” who graced and performed live songs at the church premises. Another duo gospel group called “Sussie and Matt” also visited and performed at the church auditorium to a large crowd just around the Christmas holidays. These are clear indications that the churches are increasingly becoming more institutionalized and transnational in outlook.

Collectively, all associations except GAGC have grown stronger whether social and religious. MAG, ICFC and COP have all demonstrated the ability in reorganization, institutionalization and transnationalism. On one hand the researchers is of the opinion that
unless GAGC succeeds in its refocused efforts to mobilize and regain its leadership role, the association will become tribal oriented which might lead to the emergence of tribal associations based on hometown and tribe similar to many found in bigger cities of New York and New Jersey. On the other hand if GAGC regains its leadership role and relevance it can still be an umbrella association for all group associations of Ghanaian orientation.

From this growing development and the diverse trajectory immigrant associations seem to exhibit, the researcher calls on individuals who are interested in African immigrant experience and associational life to examine the transnational spaces, engagements and attributes of African immigrants and their impact on the relationship between places of origin and country of destination.

In conclusion the research finds out that Ghanaian immigrant associations in Cincinnati like any other human institution, are fluid and subject to fluctuating tendencies in a variety of ways. In this circumstance level of membership, participation, financial resource generation and organizational capabilities are subject to constant change. In which ever way this process turns out to be, it remains a fact that Ghanaian immigrant associations provide avenues for the Ghanaian community in Cincinnati to carve niches through social networks and support systems that ultimately helps in the adjustment and survival process, and to develop a sense of community, belongingness and identity.
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