FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO MIGRATION FROM GHANA TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Abstract


FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO MIGRATION FROM GHANA TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (127 pp.)

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This study examines the causes of migration from Ghana to the United States of America (U.S). It explores the internal and external factors that motivate Ghanaians to travel to the U.S. It uses the theories of the laws of migration promulgated by Ernest George Ravenstein, the theory of intervening opportunities by Samuel Stouffer and the migration theory by Everett Lee to facilitate understanding of the causes of migration from Ghana. In addition to identifying the causes of international migration from Ghana, the study also looks at the benefits and adverse effects of international migration for Ghana. The study adopted a qualitative design using semi-structured interview schedule. The target population for the study was first generation Ghanaians based in the U.S recruited through the snowball sampling technique and interviewed by telephone. The study concluded with a confirmation that even though economic reasons motivated the decisions of those who were interviewed to travel to the United States other factors like the world systems, globalization of media and educational opportunities played various roles in informing the decisions of Ghanaians to migrate.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Migration of people from the developing world to the developed world has become an issue gaining the attention of concerned people in all parts of the world due to the role it is believed play in the holistic development of countries in the developing world. The seriousness of the migration from less developed countries to the developed world rests on the role it plays in weakening vital systems in the countries from which these migrants originate. This argument can be understood in the light of the relationship between the poor human resource base that has become a major characteristic of most global south countries and their respective socio-economic progress.

To say the least, migration has created a vicious circle for developing countries with poor work force bases as they lack the requisite expertise to train prospective workers for the purposes of increasing productivity. This is manifested in the large numbers of people from global southern countries who seek further education abroad as a sign of lack of faith in the quality of education or the lack of appropriate facilities for progress in their respective countries. Incidentally, the bulk of those educated abroad get absorbed by the systems of the developed world, a situation that affords their adopted countries the use their newly acquired as well as previous experiences for progress to the detriment of progress in their native countries.
Writing on the impact of the migration of skilled personnel, especially in the health sector, Eastwood et al. (2005) hold that health systems in sub-Saharan Africa are at their lowest ebb and are still being devastated further by the continued emigration of healthcare professionals to already developed economies. They claim that migration from the less developed to the developed countries has always been designed to address manpower needs of the developed world to the detriment of growth and progress in the less developed world. They therefore called for the attention of the Group of Eight (G8) countries to focus on the problem of health professionals’ migration from poor to rich countries.

Moreover, Brush, Sochalski and Berger (2004) confirm that U.S. health care facilities are currently struggling for qualified persons to fill current registered nurse staffing vacancies. The group further postulates that a more critical nurse undersupply is predicted over the next twenty years. In response to this prediction therefore, many institutions, especially in the U.S. are doubling their efforts to attract and retain nurses especially from developing countries. To make a case for the seriousness of the problem, the group examined both past and present foreign nurse use in U.S. institutions as a response to nurse shortages. Through this, they were able to highlight the implications of the migration of nurses from the less developed world to their respective countries of origin.

Apart from the health care professionals, human resources for almost all other sectors of the socio-economic setup of global southern countries are on a steady decline particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. The central cause of this decline relates to the issues
of supply, demand, and local, inter-regional as well as international movement of people in search of opportunities. Unfortunately, no conscious efforts are being made to replenish the ever-migrating workforce. On this note, the developing world faces an imminent crisis, as a number of vital systems will not be able to deliver on their promises eventually. In view of this, there have been calls from some stakeholders to the international community to raise the profile of the issue of human resources. This call is based on the belief that timely action would improve the way this problem is perceived. Furthermore it will make statistical data available to decision makers who can fashion out appropriate policies to cushion the effects on migration on socio economic progress in developing countries. Following from this, affected countries would be able to collect and share relevant data as well as learn from each other’s experiences (Vasant et al., 2004).

In a research funded by the Belgian Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGOS) and Medicus Mundi Internationalis, Marchal and Kegels (2003) concluded that human resources are of strategic importance to the performance of national institutions. They further observed that external migrations in recent years have taken extreme proportions, particularly in Africa. The study chronicled the underlying mechanisms of migration and possible strategies to reduce its negative impact on essential service deliveries in developing countries. Among other things, the study found that opening up of international borders for goods and labor has played a key role in facilitating migration, as the phenomenon has now become part of the current global economy. The study therefore concluded that globalization in this regard is becoming counterproductive to less developed countries as they lose not only their human
resources, but also considerable investments they have put into the education of their migrated workforce who should have been contributing to the development of their native countries.

On the migration of skilled labor, the World Health Organization noted in a report on the 59th session of the World Health Assembly, that the migration of skilled health workers has in the past decade become more complex and global and therefore of growing concern to countries that lose their much-needed health workers. The report confirmed that when significant numbers of doctors and nurses emigrate from developing countries, the affected countries would have been unwillingly subsidizing education in the beneficiary countries. Moreover, with most service delivery systems already fragile in most of these affected countries, this additional loss in investments adds to their burden (World Health Organization [WHO], 2006).

From these observations, emigrations from the poorest countries appear to be unquestionably damaging. More than a dozen countries in sub-Saharan Africa have been tagged as having plummeting life expectancies because of the level of prevalence of the epidemic of HIV/AIDS. In view of the above, African countries need an additional workforce in order to sustain the provision of basic services consistent with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. In the absence of this, these countries would only move backwards with the loss of more professionals and potential workforce; further crippling the already fragile systems. This would inadvertently, strengthen the dependence of the developing on the already developed countries for the running of institutions that are not only vital, but also basic to the progress of source countries.
However, Chen et al. writing in the Joint Learning Initiative (2004) maintain that it is no using for governments to try to block migration on the grounds of its negative consequences on their countries since doing that will be unethical and therefore bound to fail because the freedom to move as one pleases is a basic human right which people will fight to keep. In their view, the challenge is to advance human progress in less developed places while at the same time protecting the workers' rights to seek gainful employment anywhere. They therefore urge countries to train, retain, and sustain their own workforces through national plans that improve salaries and working conditions, revitalize education, and mobilize paraprofessionals and community workers whose services are comparatively more cost-effective than the cost of maintaining actual professionals. An added advantage to relying on these suggested categories of people is that they are less likely to emigrate. In the Joint Learning Initiative (2004), Chen et al. however admit that even though many of the controls need to be pursued in the world's poorest nations, the role of the developed world in providing the appropriate financial and technical aid is still an indispensable part of the equation.

A synthesis report by the World Health Organization on six African countries indicates that migration is constantly challenging national policies in coping with vacancies left behind. According to the report, migration has resulted in the poor training of graduates to undertake roles in their respective fields. This lack of proper training is due in part to the departure of those who have had adequate theoretical and practical experiences to provide the right support to trainees towards further professional development in their respective fields (Awases, Gbary, Nyoni and Chatora, 2004).
Alternatively, others argue that migration of people from the less developed to comparatively developed places marks a positive milestone in the development of the affected countries. The view holds that migration to developed economies by people from the developing world is one of the best things to have happened to most global south countries. The argument rests on the belief that remittances from nationals living and working outside their countries have come to constitute one of the top sources of foreign exchange for most countries in the global south. Dr. E.K.Y. Addison cites the case of Ghana to confirm this. He observes that Ghana has seen a substantial increase in remittances transferred between the periods of 1990 to 2003. According to him, total transfers have increased more than 300% over that period. He therefore concluded that remittances in the case of Ghana have been much bigger and more stable than even the country’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) combined for this same period. He further notes that over the period of 1990 and 2003, remittances have increased much more in proportion to Ghana’s Gross Domestic Product and export earnings (Addison, 2004).

It is based on the above assertions that the need to study the factors that determine migration from Ghana to the United States becomes important. Furthermore, this assessment is crucial to policy formulation if Ghana is to meet the Millennium Development Goals set for 2015.
1.2 Problem Statement

In recent times, traveling out of Ghana for the purposes of settling and working has been a rising trend. This trend, not only denies the country the use of its trained professionals, but also denies the country the availability of a prospective workforce that can be trained to contribute towards growth in the country in later years. This situation in most cases has cost the country financially as Ghana has had to resort to the use of ‘foreign experts’ for local projects that could have been undertaken by local professionals thereby saving the country some foreign exchange money. This trend also enforces a stereotype on the part of foreign donors to always send ‘experts’ to Ghana as part of bilateral and multi-lateral agreements to lead the execution of projects for lack of local professionals who could get the job done. This is because most of the professionals have migrated or are not trained enough to offer quality services. In the end this affects the confidence of the country to achieve progress relying on local expertise as decision makers in also get co-opted into the existing global thinking that the country lacks the expertise to get the job done well.

Martin, Martin and Weil (2006) argue that in cases where the highly educated, employed are recruited the effects are devastating notwithstanding the remittances those recruited send back to the source country. The basis for this assertion is that the absence of most of these trained professionals usually leads to the underperformance of major institutions that are quite crucial for the survival of their native countries. This may also lead to the shutting down of vital institutions for lack of qualified staff to manage them. This therefore has a ripple effect of inducing further layoffs of lower level staff that need
technical or professional supervision if they are to be effective. This then lays the foundation for the middle and junior level professionals to also look beyond the borders of the country for professional enhancement and survival.

A case in support of the above comes from a news report by the Ghana News Agency, carried on Ghana Web’s news of Monday 26 September 2005. According to the report, Ghana was asking for ten experts from SK Corporation of Korea to help train a number of Ghanaian technicians to fill vacancies that were left behind by technicians and engineers of the Tema Oil Refinery (TOR); an institution that refines crude oil into usable petroleum products. The experts from Korea were hired to train new employees of the refinery to be able to operate the Residual Fluidized Catalytic Cracking (RFCC) plant on the country’s meager foreign exchange. Some observers noted that the need for the Koreans to come into Ghana arose because the local experts that used to run this plant left for Oman and Qatar, both countries in the Middle East, leading to the shutting down of the RFCC plant for lack of requisite workforce, an observation the Minister of Energy denied. Two days after the official denial by the ministry of energy the Ghanaian Chronicle; an independent private newspaper confirmed that about twelve experts were contracted from Korea for the training of the new TOR employees with an annual pay of $120, 000 each which was to continue until the Ghanaians were qualified enough to take over from them. The paper projected, based on their sources that up to sixty more experts from various departments in the oil refinery were likely to migrate by the end of that week.
On the educational front, the story is not very different as the country is continually losing most of its teaching staff who sometimes travel abroad to acquire further education and end up staying abroad to contribute to educational progress in their adopted countries to the stagnation of education in Ghana. This situation has reached critical heights that schools are now recruiting pupil teachers to fill in for the ever-increasing vacancies of an estimated 10,000 teachers for rural areas alone. Unfortunately, most of those recruited have not been able to make it past the high school level due to bad grades. On this note, one can only imagine the damage some of these recruits will inflict on innocent pupils and students as a result of the migration of more qualified teachers (Eyiah, feature article on Ghanaweb, 2006).

The story does not get any better when you consider the problems that are currently facing the health care delivery sector in Ghana. According to the Ghana Health Service 2005 facts and figures record, Ghana recorded a total of 1,190 doctors for the whole nation. In which case, there was a doctor population ratio of 1:17,733 for the year 2004. For nurses, the report recorded a national total of 13,971 nurses with a nurse to population ratio standing at 1:1,510 for the same year (Ghana Health Services [GHS], 2005). This discouraging picture is further tainted by the Volta Regional minister, Mr. Kofi Dzamesi when he met the press on October 19, 2006 to brief them on the state of affairs in his region. According to him the Ho Regional Hospital had no physician specialist and had only one gynecologist, one surgical specialist and one pediatrician (Ghana News Agency [GNA], 10/19/2006). This situation is frightening because the Ho hospital serves as a major reference point for a minimum population of about 62,000
people according to the year 2000 Ghana census report (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2002)

1.3 Purpose and Objectives of Study

The purpose of this study was to identify some of the factors that motivate Ghanaians to migrate to the United States of America. In addition to this the study also sought to generate suggestions on how to minimize the emigration trend as well as maximize returns from Ghanaians who have already migrated.

In line with the above, the study was therefore designed to:

1. Examines the push and pull factors that cause Ghanaians to migrate.
2. Examines why Ghanaian migrants choose to stay in the U.S.
3. Examines the major effects of migration on Ghana.
4. Examines how migration from Ghana can be minimized.
5. Examines how Ghana can maximize benefits from migration.

1.4 Research Questions

To generate the appropriate responses that will answer to the purpose of the study, they following key research questions were used to develop the instrument:

1. What are the internal and external factors that motivate migration from Ghana?
2. Why do Ghanaian migrants choose to stay in the U.S.?
3. What are the effects of migration on Ghana?
4. How can migration from Ghana be minimized?
5. How can Ghana maximize benefits from those who have already migrated?

1.5 Significance

The study brings to the fore an insight into the causes of migration from Ghana. The results from this study may be useful to policy makers in guiding them in the formulation of policies regarding education, the creation of employment avenues, and the fixing of salary scales to stem the tide of migration and to harness the expertise of those who have already migrated by motivating them to return to Ghana. Furthermore, the results of the study may serve as a useful reference for would-be migrants on the challenges of migration through the lenses of Ghanaians in the Diaspora. It may also help Ghanaian migrants to reflect on the effects of migration on Ghana and how they can contribute to improve the situation in Ghana.

1.6 Scope of Study

The study focused on Ghana in West Africa as the source country and the United States (U.S.) as the destination country. Results from this study could be generalized as representative of migration from Ghana to other destination countries. It could also be generalized as representative of the causes of migration from other source countries to the U.S. This is because the push and pull factors and challenges of Ghanaian immigrants to and in the U.S. appear to be similar.
1.7 Definition of Terms

Below are some operational definitions for some of the terms that have been used in this study.

**Brain drain:** Brain drain, also referred to as human capital flight, is the emigration of trained and talented individuals from one nation to other nations or jurisdictions, due to conflicts, lack of opportunity or other natural causes in their native countries.

**International Migration:** This refers to the act of moving from one country to another.

**Immigration:** This refers to the act of people entering into a new country to settle permanently.

**Emigration:** Emigration refers to the act of leaving a native country to live in another country.

**Ghana:** A country in West Africa. It was one of the first countries in sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence from Britain.

**West Africa:** This refers to the western part of Africa. Its usage in this study might connote the countries that constitute the western part of Africa.

**Development:** This term would be used to connote social and economic progress. A situation that creates opportunities for people to realize their dreams. Elements of development would include but not be limited to good education, housing, healthcare, utilities and employment.

**Millennium Development Goals (MDG):** According to Lee Jong-Wook, the director-general for World Health Organization., MDGs refer to the eight Millennium
Development Goals derived from a Millennium Declaration signed by 189 countries reflecting an unprecedented commitment by leaders of the world to tackle the most basic forms of injustices and inequality in the world.

**Remittances:** remittances refer to the money sent by foreign individuals to their home country.

**Source country:** This refers to the countries from which migration to other countries originate.

**Destination country:** This refers to countries into which migration ends or migrants settle.

**Global South:** This refers to the developing world.

**Global North:** This refers to the developed world.

**Migration theory:** Theoretical frameworks designed to help our understanding of why people move from one place to the other to live or work. These theories are usually based on careful analysis of previous or prevailing migratory trends to draw conclusions.

**Ghanaian Chronicle:** A private Ghanaian newspaper that circulates daily and is probably the biggest selling private newspaper in Ghana.

**Tema Oil Refinery:** An oil refinery located at Tema in the Greater Accra region for refining crude oil.

**Volta Region:** This is one of the administrative divisions of Ghana. It is located in the Eastern part of Ghana. It stretches from the Northern part of Ghana to the southern coast and shares boundaries with the Republic of Togo.
**Pupil Teacher:** These are untrained teachers employed by the Ghana Education Service to fill in vacancies created by a shortfall in qualified staff.

**Ho:** This is the regional capital city of the Volta Region of Ghana.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter is organized under three headings namely the historical overview, the causes of migration and the theoretical framework.

2.1 Historical Overview

The movements of populations from one settlement to another can be said to be as old as the human race itself as it did not just start today. In the past, just as at present, movement of people can be seen to be motivated by a number of factors ranging from natural disasters, unfavorable weather conditions, famine as well as wars waged on ill protected settlements and groups of people with a view to annexing them or displacing them from their native habitat thereby forcing them into migration (Cohen, 1995).

The modern era that ushered in adventurism and long distant trading added other dimensions to the previously known causes of migration. In most cases, long distance trading aggravated existing causes of migration like wars through the ends that were sought and the means that were subsequently favored for use in this period. In addition to these, the coming into existence of the world systems later brought with it two additional forms of migration namely slavery and indentureship. Slavery which involved the capture and movement of people by force from one continent to the other to render forced labor later gave way to indentured labor migration after slavery was declared illegal. Indentureship was a system that was prominent in Asia where workers were signed up to offer services in areas where slave labor could no longer be used since it was illegal. To
this end, most of the indentured labor had sources in countries like China, Japan and India where people were recruited to work on plantations belonging to Europeans (Cohen, 1995).

Apart from slavery and indentured labor, another instance that witnessed a mass movement of people was the movement of mostly Europeans in the colonial era to voluntarily settle in their colonies all over the world. This was later to become a main characteristic of European expansionism. To some extent these movements were state sponsored in order for colonizing powers to make visible their presence in the colonial territory leading to a consolidation of their hold on those territories. These movements could also be said to have been voluntary as long as they were motivated by personal circumstances of the immigrants and sometimes by whole communities making decisions to migrate due to unfavorable local circumstances and the group desire to find a better future for themselves and their families (Scally, 1971).

Subsequent to the above, the next level of mass movements of people was stimulated by the rise of the United States of America as an industrial power. As the industrial output of the United States (U.S.) accelerated it created the need for extra workforce to sustain this growth since the U.S. population at the time could not satisfy this growing industrial demand. Hence, an opportunity was created for millions of workers from other regions of the world who were facing various forms of economic stagnation and unfavorable weather conditions as well as repressive policies to migrate to the United States. These migrations occurred between the late 1800s until border restrictions started being imposed around the first half of the 1900s. The introduction of
border restrictions therefore marks an important milestone in the history of migration as it started a downturn in the numbers of voluntary migrants to the U.S. This border control situation was further strengthened by the occurrence of the great depression which slowed the pace economic progress in the U.S. (Moch, 2003).

According to Cohen (1995), the next major migration came after the two world wars when the desire for people to seek greener pastures was once more rekindled due partially to the devastation that followed the two world wars especially in Europe. By this time there were many more restrictions on free travel as there was an increased demand by nations of some forms of entry permits before allowing people into their territories. Following the end of the Second World War and as a result of the success of the U.S. sponsored Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe most economies in Europe witnessed tremendous booms to the extent that local labor could no more be relied upon to satisfy the rising demands for workforce. Once more, for Europe just like in the case of the U.S. earlier on, the flood gates for voluntary migration opened, attracting labor from struggling economies across the globe including migrants from less fortunate European neighbors as well as from the Caribbean and Asia.

From the above historical review a conclusion can be drawn to summarize the major causes of migration over the years under three broad headings. The first is that migration could result when people feel their survival threatened either by man-made or natural disasters. In terms of man-made disasters, wars waged either to eliminate a group of people or to subjugate them as well as people migrating to free themselves from repressive politics can be good examples. Examples of natural disasters will include
famine and other hazards that hold the potential to making life difficult for people. The second category recognizes instances where people are forced to migrate against their will. Examples of these will be slavery and modern day trafficking in humans and to some extent indentured labor migrations that have facilitated the movement of millions of people across borders and countries; in many cases, bonded in servitude on terms that are not favorable to them. In the third category we have people moving from one place to the other voluntarily in search of better livelihoods due to unfavorable economic conditions prevailing in their countries or places of origin. To a large extent, this last category can be said to be a fairly recent phenomenon than the first two. However, it does not in anyway undermine the significance of the first two as relevant causes of migration since we still have wars, famine and many forms of human trafficking playing key roles in facilitating the movement of millions of people across borders every year.

Following from our review of the history of migration, it will not be out of context to conclude that most migrations typically originate from countries or areas with troubled economic, political or natural conditions and ends at destinations that are comparatively stable in terms of the stated conditions. In modern parlance and also looking at the trend of migration after pre-modern times, it is clear that migrant destination countries are usually more developed compared with source countries. Bringing it home to Africa, we see a good number of African countries playing source countries to other countries with comparatively better political economies which are also mostly developed and principally in Europe, Northern America and Australasia (Rotte & Vogler, 1998).
2.2 Causes of Migration

Many attempts have been made to assess the actual impact of migration on source countries as well as destination countries. Most literature has blamed the adverse effects of migration for the current slow paced development in many source countries on the rising tide of migration. Advocates for this school of thought argue that migration denies source countries the use or access to their potentially productive workforce. However, to fully understand emigration from the developing to the developed world it is fair to explore the internal and external conditions that motivate people to migrate. This is important because it will help us to put the effects of migration on developing countries into perspective.

According to the World Health Organization’s (WHO) International Migration, Health and Human Rights publication (2003), several factors readily account for the recent surge in migration from the developing world to the developed. Among these factors are the economic, demographic, technological and labor changes that have occurred in many developed countries. The manifestation of these changes have motivated people to move around the world in much the same way as materials, goods and services which usually move freely and at short notice. Having said this, there is a growing debate on the extent to which the lack of fulfillment of economic, social and cultural needs in most developing countries having forced people to leave their comfort zones in search of life enhancing opportunities even at the expense of their lives constitutes forced or voluntary migration (World Health Organization [WHO], 2003). In
other words, how forced is voluntary migration if people are prepared to go through life threatening situations to reach a destination country in search of a better life.

Stalker (2001) argues that one cause of migration from the less developed to the developed industrial world is what he refers to as the new economics of migration. By this concept he argues that in most cases, the decision to migrate has always been a collective family decision as the family usually decides on whom to send abroad especially in cases where they use of collective family resources is involved. The decision to send a member of the family abroad has always been motivated by the desire of the family to spread their risk just as any prudent investor will do. It is a way of guaranteeing a secured future for the family in case the unexpected happens. Hence this venture can be seen as a form of social security by which family members diversify their portfolio of workers to guarantee economic survival. The anticipated gains from these kinds of investments have been for those sent abroad to send home remittances to finance from the scratch or to refinance a troubled family venture. Better still families would often look forward to a regular flow of remittances that could be used to supplement family earnings in cases where the family is underemployed or not employed at all. Explaining this further, Massey et al. (1998) note that many families have been pushed into this decision due to market failures in most source countries that threaten the material wellbeing of households and put impediments on their way to achieving greater economic heights. And given the relative high wages in the developed countries, international migration offers families who have financial and human capital to invest, an
attractive and effective strategy for minimizing risks and overcoming future financial capital constraints.

Contributing to the causes of migration, Rotte and Vogler (1998) note that the investment into migration sometimes is not expected to yield immediate results as the investors understand that it might take a while for their investments to mature. In this case the probability of finding a job after migrating is juxtaposed with how much money the migrant stands to make when he finally finds a job. If higher returns are expected once employment is secured, then the time the migrant is going to spend waiting to be employed becomes worthwhile. According to Rotte and Vogler (1998), this therefore explains why migrants would move into a destination country even if they are aware that the destination country faces some unemployment problems as the cost of waiting a while before securing a job promises higher returns in the future. Rotte and Vogler (1998) therefore conclude that families are motivated to invest in the emigration of other members due to the risk associated with the dependence on an investment in a single labor market especially in countries where public social security is inadequate coupled with the fact many people have minimum or no working capital at all.

Still using the new economics of migration approach to explain migration, Stark (1991) observes the role of relative deprivation as another cause of migration. They explain that it is not just the total income of the prospective migrant in the source country that motivates them to migrate but their total income relative position within their society. In this case there is relatively little motivation for a prospective migrant who is poor in a poor environment than it is for another whose absolute income identifies him as poor in a
comparatively rich environment. In this regard one can conclude that poor people living within a poor environment is less likely to migrate in search of a better life as long as the balance in their income differentials is not greatly disturbed. On the other hand their motivation to emigrate might increase if they have had opportunities to experience other environments that redefine their status as poor among rich. This is because they will no longer be satisfied with the lives they live.

Structurally, Stalker (2001) maintains that even though the personal decision of the prospective migrant to migrate or not occupies a respectable position in the build up to the actual act of migrating, that decision is at the mercy of a number of forces that are usually beyond the reach or control of the would-be migrant. These factors find expression in the political, economic or social circumstances prevalent at the time the decision to migrate is under review. These factors are important in enriching the final decision of the would-be migrant as it pushes him from his country of residence to emigrate and also informs his decision on which country to immigrate. Examples of these factors according to Stalker (2001), extent from population explosion, land shortages and discrimination in the sending country. In the receiving countries attractions might include labor shortages, decent housing, and social services. Confirming the above, Haldenwang (1996) notes that, throughout history, population explosion and lack of improved social services like health, better education, affordable or decent housing have been powerful push as well as pull factors that determine migration.
Politically, Haldenwang (1996) observes that, key factors that have played significant roles in facilitating international migration over time include civil wars, religious radicalism, and politically motivated violence that often come when people in authority attempt to deny basic rights to their citizens. Sometimes this politically motivated violence comes in response to groups’ demand for rights in most cases. In other cases, politically motivated violence have resulted in the aftermath of revolutions that have often set the tone for ethnic cleansing. These have been typical of cases in which the majority gains power at the expense of a hitherto powerful minority. In cases like these, the best alternative for people to live and move on with their lives has always been to migrate to places with comparatively conducive political and most often better economic atmosphere as well. Socially, when people face extreme discrimination, deprivation, fear for physical safety without a compensatory hope that things are getting better migration can result. Other needs like family reunion, marriages, and the collapse of local communal systems have also been instrumental in influencing people’s decision to travel across borders in fulfillment of their respective social needs (Weiner, 1995; Haldenwang, 1996).

Explaining the causes of migration further, Stalker (2001) identifies another determinant as bordering on the dual nature of the labor markets. Expounding on this argument, he accuses capitalist development of failing to generate a smooth flow of jobs from low-skilled to high-skilled to cater for prospective employees based on their suitability for available jobs. Rather, it has succeeded in putting jobs into two categories. With one category made up of jobs that are mostly secured and permanent and require
prospective applicants to have higher skills through qualification or experience in order to be employed. Added to this, these jobs are also mostly well-paid and may come with a lot of other benefits. In the other category we have jobs that are at best temporary, hard to execute, and usually unpleasant to take up. In this latter case only a few people are willing to take up this category of jobs since they are mostly poorly paid, have little or no benefits and are mostly shun by people. To adequately describe the jobs in this category Stalker (2001) refers to them as the 3-Ds because are Dirty, Dangerous and usually Difficult to do. Stalker (2001) maintains that by their very characteristics 3-D jobs had historically found sympathy among women and young people of the destination country due to their inability to vie for jobs in the first category because they lacked the requisite qualification to compete with their more qualified older adult male counterparts. But with the recent decline in the number of young people due to reduced birth rates in the industrialized world coupled with the rising ambition of women and young people in competing for higher paid jobs in recent times due to enhanced education and training, human resources for the 3-Ds have witnessed a downturn. And since they are still jobs that need to be done, migrants have suddenly become the new target population to keep that sector running as its existence is important for the operation of the mega system.

Migrants have also been targeted for these jobs because compared with natives of the destination country migrants have a lessened ability to compete for the higher paid jobs even if they have the requisite qualifications to compete. The reality is that preference is usually given to the native applicants first before their non-native counterparts. On the economic front, targeting immigrants also help employers to keep from messing up the
economics of the mega sector since any attempt to make the 3-D jobs attractive through better salaries will not only erode the profits of the employers but will meet with a corresponding demand from employees in the better paid jobs for more money in order to keep their status quo (Weiner, 1995; Stalker, 2001).

Internationally, Stalker (2001) sees the workings of the world systems as relevant cause of migration from the developing to the developed world. According to him, the world systems have widened the existing income gaps between the rich and the poor countries without any hope in sight for most poor countries. Through recent developments in information sharing between various regions of the world, individuals affected by these income disparities are able to ascertain information that makes it possible for them to appreciate the income gaps between nations. This appreciation of the income differences is usually enough to tempt prospective migrants and even those who are (under)employed to choose to emigrate with the belief that they can earn more than they are presently earning or what they would have earned on a similar or higher job back in their native countries. In the analysis of Rotte and Vogler (1998) this explanation accounts for why even with a good understanding that there is little probability of getting jobs in their fields of specialization in the developed world most employed prospective migrants deem it worthy of quitting their jobs in the source country to migrate if the wage differential is sufficiently high. Because, according to Stalker (2001) the individual’s decision to migrate can be described as a rational one since the prospective migrant carefully weighs the various options available to him and finally settles on the one that he
thinks will bring him the highest returns on whatever investments he is going to make (Weiner, 1995; Stalker, 2001; Rotte & Vogler, 1998; Appleyard et al., 1988).

Apart from its role in widening income gaps between the developed and the developing through unfavorable trade practices, the world systems of modernization and globalization have encouraged further encouraged migration through structural adjustment practices that call for the removal of agricultural subsidies for farmers in the developing world as part of it conditionalities. This move has worsened the plight of small scale farmers in the developing world by putting them at a further disadvantage to heavily subsidized western farmers who also enjoy the advantages of economies of scale through large scale production. This takes away from the motivation of young people to go into farming as an employment option in the source country as it is usually rain fed, and hence provides little security in a fast changing world. This therefore turns prospective farmers into would-be migrants as there is a greater motivation to leave the farms in search of non-existent salaried jobs. Added to the withdrawal of subsidies are policies from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund that call for the cutting down on public sector employment in developing countries. And with the public sector being the major employer in most of these countries, many people end up losing their jobs through these policies. This therefore becomes a cue for them to look beyond their borders for means to sustain themselves and their families; hence emigration. Advancing the argument in a book edited by Cohen (1995), Bigman notes that the introduction of Structural Adjustment into Africa has been a precipitant to the present migration trends that have come to characterize most countries in Africa. She argues that
most of the movements have been in response to deteriorating conditions that followed
economic reshuffles in the 1980s in which jobs were lost through retrenchment.
According to Bigman, most of those who were lucky to still have their jobs also faced the
challenge of going for months without pay in most countries. She notes that under these
circumstances there arises a strong will for people to migrate in search of better future for
themselves and their families. This has since accounted for the scores of people
continuously migrating from most developing countries into countries in the Middle East,
Europe, Australasia and North America in search of better livelihoods. The decision to
migrate on this premise has also received a boost by the globalization of media,
telecommunication, and transportation (Appleyard et al., 1988; Stalker, 2001; Massey et
al., 1998; Cohen 1995).

Still on the effects of world systems as a cause of migration, Russell and
Teitelbaum, (1992) observes that even though remittances from migration play a key role
in improving foreign exchange situations in migration source countries there has not been
much progress accompanying these improved situations. A possible explanation for this
lack of progress is that the foreign exchanges earned through remittances go back abroad
to finance basic imports. This has become necessary because local industries’ abilities to
remain competitive have been greatly weakened making it less prudent to invest the
increased foreign exchange in raw materials to feed them; thanks to free markets and
globalization. Following from this, most developing countries’ abilities to create and
sustain employment have diminished, setting the stage for migration.
Directly opposed to the above is the fact that most destination countries are attractive because of economic development. When the economy of a country develops to an extent that available local labor can no longer meet the demands for labor for industry and commerce the country will naturally begin to attract excess labor from other countries. In these cases migration into destination countries become activated to fill in the void created by the economic expansion. Stalker (2001) observes that, in a lot of cases, this development activates conscious efforts by governments or local agents in the destination countries to recruit the needed labor from other countries legally or illegally. Legally, the governments or agents usually put programs in place to ensure that migrants gain the right entry permit to fill up the labor gaps. Illegally, employers or agents that want to avoid the trouble of getting the appropriate documentation for their target workforce for various reasons might resort to hiring migrants who enter the target countries illegally or with short term visitors’ permits and end up over staying (Weiner, 1995; Stalker, 2001; Appleyard et al., 1988). In short economic expansion creates labor shortages which are usually filled by migrant labor.

The role of social networks in promoting migration cannot be taken for granted as few migrants dare to travel internationally without relying on networks within the country of origin or in the destination countries or both. The importance of social networks, also referred to social capital, lies in its proven ability to mobilize both human and physical capital to assist the migrant to have a trouble-free departure from the source country as well as an arrival in the destination country with little or no fear of the unknown. When fear of the unknown is very much reduced or eliminated through social networks the
would-be migrant becomes more motivated to travel. This can be a push factor as much as it can be a pull factor. Through social networks it becomes easier for people to find accommodation and employment in the destination countries. Massey et al. (1998) see social networks as a myriad of interpersonal relationships that link prospective migrants, funders and former migrants’ in both the source and destinations countries through a network of family, friendship, and other shared characteristics. Massey et al. (1998) maintain that these relationships are important in increasing the likelihood of emigration as it lowers the cost and burden of travel on the would-be migrant and also reduces the risks of international migration through the experiences and further networks that would have been gained by former migrants on how prospective migrants can arrive, find their way around, and find work.

Moreover, cumulative causation has also been identified as one of the factors that motivate people to emigrate from their countries of origin. According to Massey et al. (1998), in migration endemic societies there is the tendency for emigration to sustain and repeat itself over time irrespective of the factors that would have precipitated it. They note that the perpetuation of emigration from most developing countries is a result of the fact that each act of migration alters the existing motivations and perceptions that would have informed a particular migration in ways that result in additional migration. For example, a family may decide to send a member abroad to ensure that there will be remittances to support the family back in the source country in times of financial difficulties. If the same family decides to send more members abroad, the latest decision is likely to be motivated by their desire to raise their status in their community by the
volume of remittances they receive, or by the good feeling of having more family members abroad. Adding another dimension to this, Massey et al. (1998) note that individual migrants undergo changes in tastes and outlook based on their experiences of living and working in developed economies. With respect to productivity, the training that migrants are exposed to, whether it is academic or practical or both inevitably enhance their productivity. In terms of employment the enhanced capacity further raises their value to employers thereby elevating their expected wages. Following from their enhanced status consumption of modern goods is increased among them. Their aspirations for socio-economic mobility also changes as it moves from that of need to comfort thereby changing their motivations and feeding into their decisions to emigrate again or to stay longer in the destination country. In line with this changed motivation, the next wave of migration is most likely to be informed partly by this reformed motivation widening the prospective migrant base in the source country. Hailing the contributions of remittances to source countries Martin, Martin and Weil (2006) concede that remittances have generated a lot of competition among families in communities that have sizeable numbers of its members living abroad. These competitions mostly end up with families putting pressure on more of their members to migrate in order to increase their share of remittances and to upgrade their status among their peers based on what remittances can buy. This new thinking represents a clear shift from the original motivation that would have informed previous migrations.

Van Hear (1994) identifies another factor that pushes people into international migration as stemming from people living in environments they consider to be dull and
unexciting. These situations have been motivation enough for people to target areas or countries they think can offer them the needed stimulation. Decisions to migrate in these cases have always been made on the belief that life in the target country has better opportunities for their personal development and fun and can also enhance their status socially.

Furthermore, Weiner (1995) contends that the role of the emergence of a global system of communication cannot be discounted as a significant cause of migration. This is because it facilitates the provision of knowledge of opportunities to would-be migrants to all corners of the world. Through the internet and other improved channels of communications, information about requirements that can facilitate entry into destination countries is widely available. And thanks to social networks that exist in destination countries information on alternative ways of entry can also be passed on to prospective migrants in source countries through these same channels. Stalker (2001) however blames the global media for many unmet expectations of immigrants as most of them make their decisions to migrate based the on pictures created of the limitless and easy to exploit opportunities available in the developed world (Weiner, 1995; Stalker, 2001; Appleyard et al., 1988). On this note, it will be fair to conclude that factors that cause migration have been boosted by progress in the information and technology industry by which individuals throughout the world can ascertain information on various opportunities available in other countries that they could take advantage of. However having access to this information does not make automatic migrants out of people as the final decision to migrate or not is further influenced by conditions such as personal
experiences, conditions and motivations. Ferris (1993) explains that the final decision of the prospective migrant is affected by what the individual perceives of the prevailing conditions in his own environment compared with the conditions available in other countries as well as the amount and perceived quality of the information available to the individual about the destination country.

In the case of Ghana, the reviewed literature on the possible explanation of international migration only reaffirms the need to ascertain the actual causes of emigration from the country. Gaining a clear understanding of the root causes of migration from the Ghana is a primary step to understand how migration impacts the country and would also feed into determining the way forward.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Many theories have been propounded by various writers to explain various aspects of migration over the years. Given that this study looks at the causes of migration from Ghana to the U.S., the following theories have been selected to help explain the causes of migration as it relates to the study. The selected theories are Ernest George Ravenstein’s Laws of Migration (Ravenstein, 1885), Samuel Stouffer’s Intervening Opportunities Theory (Stouffer, 1960) and Everett Lee’s theories of migration (Lee, 1966).

The theory of the “laws of migration” was motivated by the rise of the industrial age in the last half of the nineteenth century in Europe and North America. At best, this industrial revolution could be said to have greatly interrupted the lives of millions of
people as industries started springing up all over Europe and the U.S. This phenomenon was facilitated by improved transportation systems that culminated in economic booms for most of Europe and the U.S. as the trading in industrial goods increased. These new developments therefore effected changes in the kinds of opportunities that were available in the affected countries for the progress of society. It further affected both the individuals living within those societies and the various societies within which these opportunities could be found. Owing to the fact that scores of people got displaced from their traditional habitats either forcefully or voluntarily in response to the changes that were taking place, the motivation to find alternative means of survival was fueled. It was against this backdrop that Ravenstein deemed it necessary to attempt an explanation of trends of migration with a view to determining the factors that guided them.

Historically, the laws of migration were in reaction to an assertion by Farr (Ravenstein, 1885, p. 167) that “migration appeared to go on without any definite law.” Therefore, to test the efficacy of Farr’s assertion, Ravenstein used census data of populations of the United Kingdom, which in his view were reliable enough to expose patterns of migration if any existed. In doing this, he compared census data gathered in 1871 and 1881. Among his findings was the observation that the rate at which the respective populations of the United Kingdoms of England, Wales and Scotland increased certainly did not correspond with the rate of increase among the natives in each of those kingdoms. He therefore concluded that the increase in population was due primarily to people migrating into these kingdoms possibly from places outside of the kingdoms.
Based on the above observation, Ravenstein postulated the concepts of ‘absorption’ and ‘dispersion’ as the central argument of his migration model. He referred to a county of absorption as one that had a population in excess of the number of its natives as shown by census results throughout the kingdom. In his view, the counties that were found to have populations in excess of it native born were favored destinations that attracted more people into them compared with the numbers of people that were leaving. On the other hand, he described a county of dispersion as one from which more people were leaving than coming in. He further observed that destination counties were characteristically industrial and commercial centers whereas the counties of dispersion were more agricultural in nature. In modern parlance this can be summed up as people moving from the less developed countries which are mostly also agricultural in nature to the more developed world which are industrialized. In other words people move from agro-based economies to industrialized commercial economies.

Ravenstein concluded the study with what he termed the laws of migration which among other things noted that most migrants travel only short distances and that majority of these were women while it was mostly men that traveled longer distances. He further stated that, while migration tended to proceed step by step, each stream of migration produced a counter-stream through the generation of what could be termed as an inverse migration where people from the developed counties visit the less developed counties to do business. In addition to this, he observed that longer distance migrants preferred to go to great centers of commerce or industry while urban dwellers were less migratory than people in rural areas. In this direction, Ravenstein maintained that migration started
mainly from agricultural areas to centers of commerce and industry with the main causes of migration being economic. He therefore concluded that large towns owed more of their growth to migration than to the natural increases of their original populations, since the volume of migration increased with the development of industry, commerce and improvements in transportation systems. This last observation was added later after he had studied migratory patterns in other European countries and North America (Ravenstein, 1885).

This theory can explain migration in Ghana to the extent that most of the people who have dared to travel internationally have been mostly men who later bring other members of their families along. Furthermore, most migrants from Ghana, an agro-based economy; have headed for the more industrial and commercial world, this highlights a clear pattern of Ghanaians traveling from a less developed place to developed places and consequently increasing the population of the places they settle while decreasing the population of Ghana.

Following from Ravenstein’s “Laws of migration” and perhaps with a higher degree of specificity was Samuel Andrew Stouffer, a one time President of the American Sociological Association who in the 1940s came up with a theory to explain the relationship between distance and migration. This undertaking was in reaction to the central position ‘distance’ enjoyed relative to migration in some previous theories that sought to explain patterns of migration. His findings sought exception from the then widely held views that most people traveled short distances, with only a few traveling longer distances. He did this by downplaying the significance of distance to migration
patterns. In his view, explaining migration should rather revolve around what he called the concept of “intervening opportunities” (Stouffer, 1960, p.1). He observed that the number of people traveling a given distance was not directly related to distance per se, but rather it was proportionate to the number of opportunities (perceived or real) available at that distance and inversely proportional to the number of intervening opportunities or what he also called competing migrants from other prospective source countries that were competing for the same opportunities in the destination country. He further noted that the relationship between migration and the actual distance traveled most likely depended on what he termed “the auxiliary relationships” that accounted for the cumulating (intervening) of opportunities as a function of distance (Stouffer, 1960).

Appraising the commentaries of other writers on the migration model of Stouffer, Wadycki (1975) noted that there is significant respect for Stouffer’s migration model because it uses mathematical variables to explain patterns of migration. Therefore it makes it easier to explain patterns of migration with mathematical precision provided one can find a suitable operational definition to start with. However, Wadycki notes with regret that suitable data for verification might not be easily available. Unlike Ravenstein, Stouffer could not easily find suitable data to verify the efficacy of his mathematical propositions and had to rely on the analysis of people moving from one district to another in the Cleveland metropolitan area. Due to the narrowness of the data he was using Stouffer ended up defining opportunities for his study as the availability of dwellings of specified rentals. Despite this deficiency that characterized his study data, Stouffer’s deductions are still relevant in determining the role of the availability of space to
accommodate new comers in affecting the nature and direction of specific departures from observed general patterns.

Relating this to migration patterns in Ghana; it would be helpful to define opportunities as all the perceived advantages that add value to life since what could be described as opportunities for Ghanaian migrants can be many and varied. From this standpoint, one could see migratory patterns in Ghana moving towards areas or places based on the presence of real or perceived opportunities. Looking at migration this way certainly eliminates distance as a central determinant of mobility as Ghanaians are willing to travel far and wide in search of what they deem as opportunities or spaces that they can fit in. Furthermore the relevance of this theory as a determinant of migratory patterns of Ghanaians is confirmed in the places majority of Ghanaians choose to reside when they travel abroad. In the U.S. especially, most Ghanaians are based in the urban areas where industry and commerce are at its peak. A possible explanation for this might be the perceived or real opportunities that these places offer them.

Taking the discussion on migration to another level Everett Lee propounded a theory of migration that seems to have also been inspired by the assertion of Farr that “migration appeared to go on without any definite pattern” (Ravenstein, 1885, p.167) just as it inspired Ravenstein to investigate the truth of that assertion. For Lee, migration defined as a permanent or a semi-permanent change of residence could be problematic since the definition comes with no elaboration on the role of the distance traveled or the voluntary or the involuntary nature of the travel in confirming or rejecting that definition. In the view of Lee, defining migration in such broad terms still clearly excludes “the
continual movement of nomads and other migratory workers for whom there is no long
term residence and temporary moves of people to the mountains for the summer” (Lee,
1966, p.49).

In relation to the above, Lee bases his theory of migration on four main
arguments. The first argument examines factors that correlate with the place of origin,
which in other words can be referred to as the push factors. The next examines the factors
that relate to the receiving area, and can also be referred to as the pull factors. The third
set of factors is those that hinder migration and hence can be called the intervening
obstacles, with the last being what he describes as personal factors (Rystad, 1992).

Explaining the theory of intervening obstacles further, Lee holds that, for every
act of migration irrespective of how easy or how difficult it is, or for how long or short a
time it takes, the thing that remains constant is that “there is always an origin, and a
destination and a set of intervening obstacles, with the distance moved always being part
of the obstacles” (Lee, 1966, p.50). Among other things, Lee’s obstacles also include but
are not limited to perceptions of what would motivate or hinder the prospective migrant
and affect the prospective migrant’s immediate surrounding to facilitate or hinder
migration. With this assertion Lee elevates the importance of pre-determination as an
important factor in the migration decision-making process instead of it being based only
on intervening opportunities as advocated by Stouffer (1960) and Kunz (1973).

Lee’s model of migration can be used to explain migration from Ghana to the
extent that Ghanaian migrants have always moved from an origin, namely Ghana, to a
destination which could be anywhere in the world. Even though these movements can be
said to be motivated by perceptions of some added advantage when people move from Ghana, it is also true that all movements are affected by intervening obstacles either in Ghana or at the destination, or en route. In Ghana obstacles may include family pressures, misinformation, not getting visas, skyrocketing travel costs, and illiteracy. The above notwithstanding, Lee warns that we must not be dogmatic about these intervening obstacles as the same factors that we define as obstacles may be perceived differently by different individuals (Lee, 1966). It therefore goes without saying that what some might see as motivating obstacles others might see as hindering their ability to migrate out of a source country.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A qualitative approach was adopted in the design of the methodology for this study. The approach was found to be suitable for this study because it is touted for its prowess in facilitating data collection in the natural settings of the participants. It is also credited with giving researchers the opportunity to understand a phenomenon from the perspective and point of view of participants (Gorman, Clayton, Shep & Clayton, 2005). According to Holliday (2002), data collected through qualitative research facilitates understanding of the research topic through its description of occurrences using the language of participants to express experiences and situations. In this regard, data are collected verbally and research findings are presented inductively, as opposed to the quantitative approach that places more emphasis on deductions and uses hypothesis to search for answers in research. In the view of Bogdan and Biklen (2003), approaching research with an open mind, qualitative data is analyzed rationally as it seeks to make sense from language and process instead of numbers. In this study, telephone interviews were used to establish a verbal connection with the participants, to listen to their description of events and to understand from their perspectives, the reasons that motivated them to migrate to the U.S. It also sought their explanation on their realities of living in the U.S.

As part of the design for this study the interview method was used while the snowball technique was chosen to collate the names of the prospective participants. Interview questions were developed around key research questions to generate a focused
output. The reason for choosing the interview approach for this study was partly due to the strength of qualitative interviews as a tool that guaranteed a one-to-one interaction between the person conducting the research and those participating in the research. With that approach the researcher got to understand the study participants’ perspectives on their own lives, experiences, and situations through their own words (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Seidman (1998) hails the interview method as a powerful tool that can bring out unanticipated information through which the researcher can gain an insight into the thinking of the study participants. This is an important element a researcher can easily miss in formal survey situations.

Another reason for using the interview method was to take advantage of its ability to facilitate an in-depth understanding to enable the researcher internalize the study topic from the perspective of the Ghanaians that were interviewed. It also provided a rare opportunity of clarifying ambiguities with the study participants interviewed while at the same time giving them the opportunity to also clarify questions with the researcher to avoid situations of misunderstanding (Seidman, 1998). According to Seidman (1998), the effect of the personal touch that is characteristic of interviews can not be taken for granted. Interviews to a large extent bring people together to get to know each other first before starting the interview. This is important in laying the foundation for a good interaction

One shortcoming of using this approach was the amount of time that had to be spent with individual participants in the data gathering process. This is because the researcher and the participants spent much of the interview time on issues that were not
quite relevant to the data being sought with the relevant data coming only in the end Holliday (2002). Prior to starting the main interviews I had to spend some time relaxing the participants and answering questions concerning my nationality, where I got their phone numbers from, why I chose to call them, which school I was studying at and many other introductory questions.

Following from the above, a certain level of sensitivity to the situation and the personality of the participant become important for the researcher. In this regard, discussions were guided in ways that kept the researcher on top of the situation (Kvale, 1996). In most situations, it was necessary for the researcher to go along with the conversation for a while in order to establish a certain level of rapport with the participant before starting the interview. This strategy was used in cases where there was the likelihood that participants would be less inclined to participate in the study if they felt that the researcher needed the information for reasons other than those that were stated or that the researcher did not regard them as humans worthy of respect but as tools to be used and discarded.

The good thing was that the interview questions were designed in a way as to assist the participants to go straight to the answer to the question asked with as little digression as possible. And this helped the researcher to spend most of the interview time on the substantive issues once the interview started. Fortunately interviews were completed with all the participants in all the respective sessions so there was no major follow-up on anybody to complete any previously uncompleted interview. However in three of the cases the researcher had to go back to the respective participants to ask for
further explanations on some of their respective responses. With the issue of sensitivity to the participants’ situation, the researcher’s background as a Ghanaian played a key role in guiding interaction between the study participants and the researcher. It reassured the study participants that the information they gave during the interview was safe with the researcher because of their shared origin.

The study used a semi-structured interview approach to probe the key research questions. An advantage of using this approach for the study was that the researcher was familiar with the substance of the questions and could rearrange the questions any time to maintain a sequential flow of information depending on the direction of the participants’ responses to previous questions (Gilbert, 1993).

3.2 Selection of Participants

For the selection of participants the snowball technique was used to put together a substantial list of names of prospective participants and their contact telephone numbers. Principally, the snowball technique for data gathering relies on the use of existing study participants to recruit others. With this technique, sampling usually starts with a small group of participants and grows in numbers like a rolling snowball as existing subjects introduce the researcher to other prospective participants. According to Salganik and Heckathorn (2004) this sampling technique is popular for its ability to recruit study samples from groups that are not easily accessible due to scarcity in numbers of their members or the relative sensitivity of the subject under study. This notwithstanding, it
has proven itself as a cost effective way of conducting research since there is little or no cost at all in tracking prospective participants.

For the study under review, this technique was appropriate for the study because migration issues can be considered relatively sensitive, especially in the cases of people who might have entered the U.S. illegally. This is because of their fear that information they give regarding themselves and how they got into the U.S. (if they are in the U.S. illegally) could be used negatively against them. On this note it required some level of trust for prospective participants to open up to someone they did not know on a topic like migration. What made the use of the snowball technique easier for the researcher was that most of the referrals were from people the participants interviewed could trust. However, a possible drawback to using this technique was its heavy dependence on referrals which also depended on trust. This made it difficult for the researcher to get an exact idea of the distributions of opinions since the researcher was usually referred to people the referrer trusted and who also held a reciprocal trust for the referrer. In this case a possible bias could be a string of characteristics flowing through those who chose to participate in the study as people always referred the researcher to other people they knew, by virtue of which they were also most like to share some common characteristics (Heckathorn, 2002).

These issues notwithstanding, the snowball technique was quite suitable for this study because, even though some of the referrals were done to friends and family, individual participants still demonstrated a high degree of independence in talking about their personal migration to the U.S. experience without showing signs of being influenced
by any group dynamics. This is because every immigrant in the U.S. has his or her own unique story on migration. Regarding the bias of the distribution of opinions, the study focused more on the personal views of participants based on their personal experiences therefore the distribution of respondents was not critically important to this study. As an effort to safeguard or further lessen any bias of people influencing others, the base group that was used to start the snowball consisted of four persons whose only relationship to each other was the fact that they were all Ghanaians.

3.3 Participants of the Study

The target population for the study was first generation Ghanaian immigrants irrespective of their legal status in the U.S. as long as they originally came from Ghana and are now living in the U.S. The study targeted only adult population above the age of 18 years. The sample size for the study was 20 participants.

3.4 Interview Protocol and Validation Process

A semi-structured interview protocol was used in the data collection process. The protocol was designed to enable the researcher gather the appropriate information sufficient to outline the patterns this study set out to explore. The first set of questions dealt with the bio-data of participants and provided hint of the status and personality of participants. The next set of questions sought to explore the internal and external or the push and the pull factors respectively that encouraged people to migrate from Ghana. The third set of questions examined the personal situations of the participants in the U.S. and
the last set of questions sought suggestions on how Ghana could mitigate the current
trend of migration from the country as well as how Ghana could derive maximum benefit
from Ghanaians who have already migrated. (See appendix A). Before the start of the
data collection the interview protocol was validated by piloting it with three Ghanaians
immigrants in the US. Information gathered during the pilot session was used to
strengthen the protocol by modifying four of the question through rewording. Another
three questions were broken up into two or three further questions and five more
questions were added to elicit responses missing from piloting the initial interview
protocol. The responses collected during the pilot session were not added to the final data
that was analyzed for this study.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The prime target for this study was first generation adult emigrants from Ghana
currently living in the U.S. The snowball technique was used to generate a list of
prospective participants from four initial participants. The researcher started by attending
a meeting of an association of Ghanaians in New Jersey. At the meeting the researcher
had an opportunity to talk to some prospective participants. The researcher then contacted
three of the participants from that meeting all of whom agreed to participate in the study.
They then referred the researcher to other Ghanaians that were subsequently contacted for
interviews. The researcher met the last of the initial four prospective participants at
another meeting of Ghanaians on the campus of Ohio University. The names and
telephone numbers of all prospective participants were collected. Cell phone calls were
then made to the initial prospective participants to connect with them and explain the purpose of the study to them and to ascertain if they were interested in being part of the study. Furthermore, they were asked if they will be willing to grant telephone interviews. While some people agreed to be interviewed immediately, others asked to be interviewed later and others declined to be interviewed. Some were blunt in declining to be interviewed others asked to be contacted later (unfortunately the researcher never got through to most of them during the rest of the study period). While others promised to call the researcher back later to be interviewed when they were free, most of them never got back to the researcher to grant the interviews. However, those that agreed to be part of the study were interviewed and their responses were recorded with their permission using a tape recorder. In doing this all rules of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) were strictly observed as an explanation of the study was always given to the prospective participant prior to the start of the interviews. The participants were then asked if they wanted to continue with the interview, hence all those interviewed had an option to choose not to participate in the study. This process was repeated until twenty participants were interviewed. Two of the interviews lasted for about 25 minutes each which was the minimum. Another two went beyond one hour with the rest of them ranging between about 40 to 45 minutes each.

3.6 The Researcher

As the principal researcher for this study, my responsibilities included identifying and selecting the participants for the study, collecting and analyzing the data as well as
presenting the results of the study. I was in a strong position to do this because I am a Ghanaian who lived and worked in Ghana prior to coming to Ohio University. This put me in a position to relate to most of the information the participants provided. Furthermore, as a Ghanaian living in the U.S., I had access to potential participants through a network of friends and local associations of Ghanaians that exist in the U.S. Lastly I have been able to collect reliable data since I understood enough local languages and cultures to make the participants understand my questions as well as reassure them enough to make them comfortable. To mitigate any bias that might have come as a result of me being a Ghanaian, I remained conscious of the fact that the exercise was not a private undertaking but an academic fact finding study. This way I was able to let participants recount their experiences in their own way.

3.7 Data Analysis

Analysis of the collected data revolved around the key research questions that were expanded to form the instrument. Based on the questions on the interview protocol, collected data were color coded. The researcher started by allocating a different color to each participant’s total responses to the interview protocol. This was used to differentiate between participants’ individual responses to make it easier to trace the source of each response in the course of analyzing the data. Having done this, participants’ responses to individual questions were grouped under the respective questions. After this, individual questions with their grouped responses were further grouped under various key research questions. All the responses that came under each research question were analyzed for
emerging themes that answered the respective research question. The emerging themes were therefore presented as the results from the study. After identifying the themes, they were then analyzed within the framework of the literature reviewed and the theories selected.

3.8 Limitations of Study

Generalizations cannot be drawn from this research because the sample size was small to start with. Furthermore, there was evidence that the data collection process did not reach a saturation point because most women that were contacted declined to be interviewed for personal reasons. A total of 36 names and contact numbers were collected out of which 15 people declined to be interviewed. Of those who declined, five were women and 10 were men. Due to the number of women who declined to be interviewed, the researcher ended up interviewing 16 men and only four women.
Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

This chapter has three sections. Section one deals with the background characteristics of the sample that was interviewed for this study. The next section covers the presentation of the findings based on the research questions, while the last section looks at the presentation of findings in the light of the literature reviewed and the theoretical frameworks used.

4.1 Characteristics of the Sample

To understand the demographic characteristics of the study sample, their ages were categorized into the ranges of 31 – 35, 36 – 40, 41 – 45, and 46 – 50. There were 8 participants in the age group of 31 – 35, 9 participants between the ages of 36 – 40, 2 participants between the ages of 41 – 45 and only 1 participant in the age group of 46 – 50. Through these statistics it can be concluded that majority of the participants interviewed for this study was fairly young.

On the levels of education, the findings revealed that all the Ghanaians interviewed had at least a high school education. There were four respondents whose highest educational qualifications were high school certificates from Ghana, three others had trained teachers certificates from Ghana being their highest qualifications earned, whiles two people had college diplomas from Ghana being their highest. Four others had college degrees. Of the four that had college degrees being their highest qualification, two of them obtained their degrees after coming into the U.S. while the other two obtained theirs in Ghana prior to coming to the U.S.; both are currently pursuing masters’ degrees in
various fields. Six people had masters’ degrees being their highest qualification with all the six degrees obtained in the U.S. Of the six people four of them came into the U.S. with college degrees to attend graduate school in the U.S., while the remaining two acquired both their college and graduate education in the U.S. Only one person had a doctor of philosophy degree (PhD) as his highest education completed. He came from Ghana with a college degree and attended graduate school in the U.S. for both his masters and PhD degrees.

Regarding how long members of the selected sample had been in the U.S., the findings showed that 30% of the participants had been living in the U.S. between 1 – 5 years, another 45% had been living in the U.S. between 6 – 10 years with the remaining 25% being in the U.S. between 11 – 15 years.

The study further revealed that, more than 75% lived in urban centers, with less than 25% living in suburban and rural areas. Also, 75% said the choice of present residence had been influenced by social networks, in other words people they know played a key role in their decision to live where they are presently living. On the other hand, 25% said their choices were not influenced by people they knew or people they wanted to be close with. For them, the reasons for their choice of place of residence included transportation, proximity to work and opportunities, family comfort, and security. Those who chose residences because of people they knew wanted to stay close to extended family members and friends as well as opportunities.

Table 4.1 shows four categories that classify the job status of the study sample in the U.S. at the time this data was collected: professional jobs, middle level jobs, labor
intensive jobs and unemployed in a descending order with professional jobs being the highest. From the study it was found that about 50% of those interviewed were engaged in labor intensive jobs, 35% were in the professional bracket, 10% were found to be in middle level jobs, while the last 10% were unemployed. One person claimed to be unemployed, but volunteering her services to a doctor while looking for a job. Another person who was engaged in an intensive labor job at the time this data was collected has since left that job for a professional job. The numbers of years people in the labor intensive jobs bracket have spent in the U.S. ranged from 3 – 11 years, while those engaged in professional jobs ranged between 6 – 15 years. The numbers of years spent in the U.S. for those in the middle level jobs were 7 and 11 years, while the number of years spent by those who were unemployed was 3 and 6.

From Table 4.1 it is interesting to note that both of the unemployed had teachers’ certificates from Ghana being their highest educational qualification. In Ghana, one of them was a school teacher and the other was a national senior coach for one of the prominent sports disciplines in Ghana. Of the 20 people interviewed, 13 were employed in Ghana prior to coming to the U.S.; six people had just completed their studies when they got the opportunity to travel to the U.S. while one person said he been unemployed in Ghana. Out of the 13 people who had worked in Ghana prior to traveling to the U.S., eight of them were teachers under the Ghana education service, one person was involved with construction as a foreman, two were broadcasters at a television and radio station respectively, and two were technical advisors in agriculture and sports respectively. The sports advisor was also a teacher by profession in Ghana but presently unemployed in the
U.S. Two people were engaged in administrative duties with one also teaching as a second job (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

*Profile of study sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Code</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years in the U.S.</th>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>Present job status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>001</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teacher’s certificate</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>002</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>MBA in finance; MSC in accounting</td>
<td>Financial controller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>003</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Operations specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>004</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>M.A. in communication and development studies</td>
<td>Practical Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>005</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>College graduate - Marketing</td>
<td>Security Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>006</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Masters degree - Management</td>
<td>International trade solvent specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>007</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Teacher’s certificate</td>
<td>Volunteer/unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>008</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>MBA in finance</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>009</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Diploma - Agricultural service</td>
<td>Scan operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>010</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Operations manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Code</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years in the U.S.</th>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>Present job status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>011</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>Security officer / Marketing associate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>012</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>Office Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>013</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Higher National Diploma</td>
<td>Baggage handler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>014</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>College graduate/on-going masters</td>
<td>Nurse/adjunct professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>015</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Teacher’s certificate</td>
<td>Security officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>016</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Aviation worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>017</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>PhD - Education</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>018</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>M.A. International Studies</td>
<td>Program manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>019</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Help Age Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>020</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Masters degree</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interview Data (2007)

4.2 Results

This section deals with the presentation of the responses that were gathered from the participants to answer the key research questions. Those key questions sought to probe what the push and pull factors that influenced migration from Ghana were; why
Ghanaian migrants choose to stay in the U.S.; what the major effects of migration on Ghana were; how migration from Ghana could be minimized; and lastly, how Ghana could maximize the benefits from migration.

4.2.1 Causes of Migration from Ghana

In exploring the causes of migration the responses collected are categorized as pull and push factors. The pull factors are those that attract Ghanaians to travel to the U.S. and the push factors are those that motivate them to leave Ghana.

4.2.1.1 Factors that ‘push’ people to migrate from Ghana.

Many factors feed into the decisions of Ghanaians to migrate from Ghana. These factors are referred to as the push factors since they motivate Ghanaians to get out of Ghana into other countries outside Ghana. In the case of the push factors that influenced Ghanaians to migrate to the U.S., economic reasons played a key part in the decisions of those interviewed. There was a strong conviction that investing in migration to the U.S. had a lot of prospects since the U.S. was economically better off than Ghana and could yield much higher returns in the short run than investing in Ghana. By traveling to the U.S. most of the participants who did not intend to stay for long thought it was an opportunity for them to work for some capital which they could invest in Ghana upon their return. In relation to this, respondent number 009 confirmed that he came to the U.S. “to get some assets that will support me back home or I will try to open a business over there…” Another reason some interviewees cited for leaving Ghana in search of this
investment capital in the U.S. was the lack of opportunities for personal growth. They explained that being in Ghana offered few or no opportunities for them to do what they wanted to do and to grow into what they have always wanted to become. In this regard they thought the best way to realize themselves and their ambitions was for them to migrate to the U.S. Explaining this point further, participant number 008 who was a teacher indicated that “My life was a struggle financially and I felt that when I travel I would be secured financially because my financial background was not secure in Ghana.”

It was evident that, after satisfying some basic economic needs in Ghana, the migrants interviewed also hoped to enhance their material gains, to be able to afford the state-of-the-art consumables money can buy. Responding to a question on what they had hoped to achieve through migration, respondent 009 confirmed that with the money he is making in the U.S., he is building some houses in Ghana, while respondent 020 said there was the need to acquire most of the material things that will make life easier in Ghana in the U.S. before leaving for Ghana.

Moreover more than 80% of the sample stated that their decision to migrate to the U.S. was not just informed by the lack of opportunities for growth but more so, by the lack of opportunities for survival. Explaining this, a section of the participants contended that their future in Ghana did not show any good prospects for employment. And since they needed to take care of themselves and their families who were dependent on them, they had to look beyond the borders of Ghana to the U.S. which they believe had opportunities in abundance. By traveling to the U.S. many of the participants believed that they had the chance of attaining economic prosperity that had the power to set them
free to live life to the fullest. Complimenting this, participant number 009 confirmed that he left Ghana because “the money I was earning in Ghana was not enough and I had a family to support, parent to take care of.”

In addition, 90% of the participants cited the inability of the educational system in Ghana to offer a wide range of choices for them as their reason for leaving Ghana. In their view, only a few lucky people had access to a good college education at affordable costs. Furthermore, only a few lucky Ghanaians got to pursue the actual courses they have always wanted to pursue in college since most people who gained admission into the few colleges in Ghana ended up taking courses they were accepted for but not necessarily those they wanted to pursue. Responding to why he migrated from Ghana to the U.S., respondent number 010 stated that “My main reason for leaving Ghana was to come here to further my education.” In addition, others mentioned the persistent strike actions that have become the hallmark of tertiary education in Ghana as their reasons for leaving the country. Participant number 011 noted that strike actions in tertiary institutions in Ghana seemed to rotate from teachers through support staff to students on a regular basis. Therefore a decision to study in Ghana might not be the best if you can access higher education elsewhere. Added to the issue of strikes, most of those who already had some college education believed that the educational system in Ghana was frustrating at the postgraduate level due to lack of resources and requisite teaching staff needed to get quality work done on a timely basis. Therefore the best way to attain graduate education within the shortest possible time was to travel abroad. They added that they chose to travel to the U.S. because by its sheer size it had a wide array of
educational facilities and programs that could put them well ahead of their cohort in Ghana should they choose to return after their education. Moreover, by studying in the U.S. they thought they enjoyed an added prestige of claiming familiarity with the state-of-the-art resources in their respective fields of education just by attending school in the U.S. Summing it up, one respondent noted that “study(ing) abroad (U.S.) gives you much exposure than in Ghana and if you are able to finish then you stand the chance of achieving more in terms of growth than in Ghana.”

Furthermore, it was interesting to discover that even though almost all those interviewed were pursuing economic goals with various levels of vigor, 10% confirmed to have migrated to the U.S. to enhance their image among their peers back in Ghana. They explained that it was not enough to just migrate abroad, but that migrating to the U.S. made all the difference as the image of the U.S. was well above that of the other industrialized destination countries. Supporting this finding, respondent number 019 confirmed that she came to the U.S. “because I love the U.S., I will say the U.S. is above all the other countries.” Taking thing a step further, participant number 012 noted that “coming to America like we know it down there is like going to heaven.” In order to make this happen, participants looked for opportunities. And these opportunities are sometimes readily provided by the U.S. through various programs like educational scholarships and the Green Card Program called the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program run by the U.S. State Department known in Ghana as the visa lottery, to issue U.S. working permits to a number of people from developing countries to work in the U.S. About 15% of those interviewed confirmed that their economic situation in Ghana was
not so bad but they still decided to migrate to the U.S. not so much for the purpose of achieving any pre-set targets, but just to utilize an opportunity to travel to the U.S.; an opportunity that does not come everyday. In this respect participant number 014 confessed that “I just came because of the opportunity (visa lottery) but not for the thought that it was going to make me what I could not be in Ghana.”

The study also revealed that social networks in Ghana played a role in motivating people to travel. More than 20% of the participants reported that the opportunity to travel was acquired for them by family members. To a large extent this situation promotes migration in the sense that would-be migrants do not have to invest much time and money into making the travel happen. This is because the family members that get these opportunities for them would usually end up paying for the trip as well. Backing this finding, respondent number 003 stated that “My brother was the one who provided everything.” From this, it can be said that the role of social networks in funding and ‘pushing’ people to migrate is to facilitate human investments abroad with a view to reaping remittances or lightening the responsibilities of the networks involved. In other words, social networks will facilitate migration with the understanding that the migrant would assist with some of the responsibilities that the network concerned is burdened with. In this regard, the social networks in Ghana indicated by the participants offered assistance ranging from direct financial investments, through advice on further networks in the destination countries to going to the airport to see the would-be migrant fly off to the U.S.
While some were motivated to migrate by social networks in Ghana, others maintained that it was a personal decision to migrate to the U.S. According to them, they owed their presence in the U.S. to their personal determination to migrate to the U.S. and their accompanying perseverance. Explaining further, they maintained that they did not have to rely on social networks in Ghana to create the opportunities that brought them to the U.S. Despite taking a lot of credit for creating their own travel opportunities, nearly 80% of them indicated that they had to fall back on some form of social networks or another to assist them with money to complete their travel arrangements. About 20% said they had to look for the opportunities to travel all by themselves and also financed the travel through their personal savings. Responding to a question on the role of social networks in Ghana played in her migration effort, sample number 001 said that “no one at all (assisted me), not even friends.” Interestingly all the people who claimed to have looked for their own opportunities to travel to the U.S. are also people who had traveled to the U.S. before for official or some other businesses. It was therefore evident from talking to them that they were motivated to travel again because of the experiences they had when they first traveled into the U.S. This initial experience thereafter informed their decision to travel to the U.S. as a way of realizing the dreams they thought they could not realize in Ghana. Responding to why he left Ghana for the U.S., respondent number 020 stated that he left Ghana for the U.S. because he “was (already) familiar with here (U.S.) and that was part of the reason (he went back).”
4.2.1.2 Factors that ‘pull’ Ghanaians into the U.S.

In simple terms, pull factors are those factors the external factors that attract people to move from their native environments into new ones with a view to improving their lot. In this case pull can be seen as those positive attractions that are present in external environments but absent in the prospective migrants’ native environment. From the study results, a number of pull factors were found to have motivated the Ghanaians interviewed to migrate to the U.S. Among them were findings similar to the reasons cited as informing the decisions of the sample to leave Ghana. One of the findings confirmed that Ghanaians migrated to the U.S. because of the job opportunities; perceived or real, that exist in the U.S. They however explained that they also had the opportunity to review the economic gap that existed between the U.S. and Ghana and came to the conclusion that there were more jobs in the U.S. for all classes of people than there were in Ghana. And looking at the differences in the value of the U.S. dollar and the Ghanaian cedi they became convinced that earning just the minimum wage in the U.S. will still make them better off than most people who live and work in Ghana. The economic disparities between the U.S. and Ghana therefore make the U.S. a viable place for social investment from Ghana. With respect to this, some of the participants confirmed that they migrated to the US to grow the money they invest into migrating to the U.S with the hope of building up capital and skills that they could reinvest in Ghana whenever they returned. According to participant number 008 part of the reason he came to the U.S. was to be able to raise money to “establish my own business in Ghana and that will be a consulting business for the Ghanaian government.”
The availability of a wider range of educational opportunities was another factor that was found to motivate Ghanaians to migrate to the U.S. Of all the participants interviewed, 95% had an educational objective as part of the reasons why they migrated to the U.S. More than 35% of the participants who had intended to go to school had already achieved part of their educational objectives since migrating to the U.S., while less than 10% were still enrolled in some kind of educational pursuit. Unfortunately, more than 25% were still waiting for the conditions to become right for them to get back on track to pursue their educational dreams. Those who were still waiting for the right time to go back to school maintained that that, they had not anticipated problems on their decision to go back to school in the U.S to earn some degrees. Therefore they were unprepared for the sudden reality they faced in the U.S. that was hitherto obscured to them when they were in Ghana. When respondent number 010 was asked why he migrated to the U.S. he responded that:

My main reason for leaving Ghana was to come here to further my education, but when I came in here things were not easy for me make it the way I thought I will be able to do things. In a couple of months I had to move out to be on my own, to find my own accommodation so it was hard for me to go to school. Things don’t always work out the way you want it, but when I become financially sound to be able to pay for my medicals, pay my other bill then I can go back to school. Because if I go now without full concentration I don’t think I can come out with good grades.
Furthermore social networks in the U.S. were found to have played key roles in motivating people to migrate to the U.S. from Ghana. The findings noted that apart from networks playing an important role of encouraging migration by reassuring the incoming migrants of a trouble-free arrival and easy adjustment into their prospective new environments, networks also greatly minimize and sometimes eliminate altogether the risk and sometimes cost of traveling from a comfort zone to the unknown. One of the critical roles networks played was with those who had won the visa lottery and needed someone in the U.S. to guarantee their entry with financial evidence. In those cases the sponsor was to show evidence that the newcomer could be adequately catered for, hence, would not be a burden on public accounts. Expressing gratitude to social networks, respondent number 008 stated that “my high school mate … gave me the affidavit of support and I will never forget his help even until my last breath.”

Another reason why some of the participants migrated to the U.S. was in search of the American dream. Unfortunately when they were asked to explain what the American dream was their answers were not quite satisfactory. It became apparent that they had probably heard other people mention the American dream and they decided to pursue it to the U.S. Summing up his view of what the American dream, respondent number 003 described his American dream as “the luxury, to be able to live comfortably.” What was certain was that even though those who answered this question appeared not have been able to explain it satisfactorily they were quite convinced they will recognize it when it came true.
The conscious effort by the U.S. to bring a select group of individuals from developing countries to work in the U.S. through the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program was also found to have caused migration from Ghana to the U.S. The finding revealed about 25% of those interviewed came to the U.S. via the visa lottery program. Regarding education, 35% of those interviewed came to the U.S. through educational scholarships obtained from the U.S., with the rest of the participants entering the U.S. on visitors’ visas and simply overstaying. Commenting the disadvantages of his visitor’s visa, respondent number 013 stated that “I thought that it will be easier to make the money within a short time, to work yourself up the ladder, get some papers (permit to work) and start life.”

Moreover, through the interviews it appeared that the attraction of the U.S. to Ghanaians as a migration destination also has to do with the multicultural nature of the country. Two participants directly confirmed that the U.S. provided a safe haven for black people since there was a significant African-American population in the U.S. who are natives. Besides black people that had descended from slavery, there were persons from all over Africa legally resident and citizens in the U.S. In this regard there was a lessened probability of a Ghanaian experiencing open racism as may pertain in other developed countries. The basis for this assumption is that as the two groups of black population provided some insulation for illegal new migrants from Ghana by virtue of their color and their background as official English speakers. For the undocumented migrant or those that have over stayed their visa, this means they could still enjoy a considerable amount of freedom as their chances of being stopped by law enforcement
agents to check their status was greatly minimized. Contributing to the findings, participant number 011 stated he chose the U.S. because “the U.S. has relatively much freedom, I think there is much more freedom here than in other countries.” Furthermore, respondent number 006 stated that his choice of the U.S. was because “it is a country that accepts people from different backgrounds and has everything else that makes somebody be able to fit into a new society.”

The image of the U.S. in the world was also found to influence Ghanaians to migrate to the U.S. Participant number 019 summed it up as “the place to be.” This can be explained as the personal status that people derive among their cohort in Ghana for being associated with the most powerful country in the world. One of the participants claimed he got the opportunity to travel to both Europe and the U.S. and he opted for the U.S. explaining that there were more opportunities in the U.S. than in Europe (respondent 011). Alternatively, the global image of the U.S. was found to account for some disappointments expressed by most of the participants at the pace at which they were moving toward their set objectives for migrating to the U.S. Some participants explained that they decided to migrate to the U.S. because they thought it was an environment where they could easily realize their dreams without much sweat. In responding a question on the goals he set himself to achieve by migrating to the U.S., respondent number 015 put it as “not so much what I expected.” This indicated that the vision he had about how easy it going to be to achieve his dreams fell short of his expectation.
4.2.2 Strategies to Minimize Migration from Ghana

Part of the purpose of this study was to solicit suggestions from the Ghanaians interviewed on the best ways to minimize emigration from Ghana. This was in relation to the factors that motivated them to leave Ghana and their concerns on the effects of migration on the development of Ghana. In responding to this question, those interviewed were unanimous in their view that the Ghanaian government needed to play a major role in either creating or facilitating the creation of job opportunities for young people in Ghana. They maintained that some of them were not finding it easy living and working in the U.S. and preferred to return home. However the situation of joblessness they would likely face in Ghana encouraged them to stay on in the U.S. It is evident that if enough opportunities were created in Ghana, many will chose to work in there rather migrate to the U.S.

A participant (Respondent 011) suggested that temporary and short-term jobs should be made to pay higher returns so that people could still have something to live on when the job ended. This way they could have some savings to sustain themselves while they are looked for new job opportunities. He added that in the absence of this measure enough opportunities should be created so that people could easily access other temporary jobs while they waited for jobs of their choice. Respondent number 002 summed it up when he observed that:

*If the government is able to encourage private investment in the economy there will be employment and you will not even tell people not to leave the country, the people will even refuse leaving the country. We have to leave our families for*
greener pasture to be able to keep ourselves alive, so if there is encouragement in the private sector, all those coming abroad will cease because they will be secured.

Owing to the number of unmet expectations among Ghanaians in the U.S., participants suggested that prospective migrants from Ghana should be educated on the realities on the ground in many destination countries including the U.S. This challenges the assumption that once one gets to travel to the developed world including the U.S., all will be fine automatically. Participant number 020 observed that in most cases opportunities available in most destination countries tend to be exaggerated to lure in the unsuspecting migrant. He maintained that what is often missing from the advantages of living in the U.S. is the significance of working permits and citizenship and their roles in guaranteeing the migrant certain job opportunities. Furthermore, there is the question of the racial discrimination and the acceptability of migrants’ previous training or education as a certification for getting into certain jobs. In expressing his frustration over unmet expectations participant number 011 noted that would-be migrants should be told the truth:

How useless your education will be if you decide to migrate here, to tell the truth about how suspicious you will appear if you get into this system to work, to tell the truth about how hard it is to earn income in this country.

Some of the interviewees also noted that while it was appropriate for prospective migrants in Ghana to be educated on the realities of life in the destination countries, there was also the need to encourage honesty from returned or visiting migrants about their life
situations in the developed world. The participants noted that part of the cause of
migration was due to the extravagant lifestyles of migrants whenever they visited Ghana
as they often paint an enchanting picture of migration, masking the realities. Contributing
to this, participant number 004 noted that emigrants who visit Ghana “come back (but)
they do not tell you what they have gone through; they don’t tell you the truth. They ride
in flashy cars, the way they are dressed and be spreading cash everywhere…”

Two participants noted that the continuous and repeated migration from Ghana
has left a mark on the self-confidence of Ghanaians as they tend to undermine what they
can achieve in Ghana. On this note there is the need to build the confidence of Ghanaians
in Ghana by encouraging them to believe that they can equally achieve their dreams in
Ghana. One of them noted that, Ghanaians should be made to understand that migrating
abroad is not a solution in itself as success comes from personal innovation and
perseverance. Hence people in Ghana should be encouraged to look inside themselves
and the country for solutions to their problems (Respondents 001 and 011). Others also
noted that in order to minimize migration there should be a national orientation to update
Ghanaians on opportunities available to them. There should also be an update on where
Ghana stands economically and what that means to the average citizen. There should
open debates about the national strengths and weaknesses and what individual citizens
can do to enhance national development. However, for this to yield the desired result the
country will have to design a realistic national agenda coupled with a genuine
commitment by people in government to achieve results. Participant number 011
explained that “some Ghanaians believe that any other country is better than Ghana”,

while one participant (002) expressed regret with the situation and questioned why Ghanaians leave Ghana for other countries only to take up jobs that exist in Ghana. In Ghana, these are jobs they will not consider as jobs worth doing. According to her “we just get up and we jump into the U.S., we jump into Germany, but look at what we are doing here, who will do it at home? We will not do it at home (Ghana).”

The respondents also acknowledged the role of the Ghanaian government in developing a strong agribusiness in Ghana. They suggested that this could be done by providing farmers with the resources to boost production and also providing avenues for efficient marketing of farm produce. In the views of the respondents this could reduce the current frustrations that have plagued most farming communities forcing young people in farming communities to resort to migration. They postulate that if this is done right there is a higher probability that it can reduce internal migration and subsequently international migration. Added to this, farmers could be encouraged to form cooperatives to make it easier for them to get loans from financial institutions to improve their businesses. Participant number 004 noted that, to minimize migration there was the need for the “farmer getting the inputs to increase his produce.” The participant further argued that government could start the job creation process by encouraging small businesses through youth development programs for the low skilled and the unemployed as a way of minimizing the unemployment that is fast becoming a canker in Ghana. This, according to the participant will broaden the working class base by broadening the base of opportunities available to people in Ghana (respondent number 004).
Moreover, six participants noted that migration can also be minimized if there is an increased commitment by government to curb corruption. There was a strong belief among some of the participants that the current lack of opportunities for the majority of the people was not due to the lack of resources to create those opportunities but rather due to existing corruption in government. They noted that corruption compromised the resolve of public officials to work for the public good of the majority since they are more concerned with their personal progress at the expense of the progress of the masses, hence the need for good governance from public office holders. According to them, checking corruption can reduce migration since it would encourage the formulation of progressive policies that have the development of people at heart. In describing the depth of corruption in Ghana, respondent number 007 noted that “in Ghana whatever you are entitled to and when you go you don’t even bribe just one person, you will begin (bribing people) from the lowest up to the top.” Adding to this participant number 011 stated that “governments have failed their youth in terms of job accessibilities and this have pushed a lot of youth to seek greener pastures outside the thresholds of their countries.” In contributing to the perception of corruption as a cause of migration, one participant (009) asserted that “our leaders can try to make the country better by doing something about corruption so that people can use the resources of the country judiciously and in genuine ways and people will get paid what they are worth.”

In order to minimize brain drain among Ghanaian professionals the findings also pointed out the need for commitment from the government to provide incentives that will encourage professionals who are still in Ghana to remain in Ghana. These incentives
could include improved housing and salaries as well as other benefits. According to the
participants this will enhance productivity since it will strengthen the position of the
government in demanding that beneficiaries meet acceptable national productivity
standards. Respondent number 009 bluntly put it that “my advice will be that the
government pays the people well and make them work for it.”

Another suggestion that came up in the course of the study was that most people
were attracted to migration because of the premium that is put on the opportunity to
tavel. In view of this, one participant suggested that visa acquisition to travel to the U.S.
should be made less stressful so as to make it easier for people to travel to experience at
firsthand the realities of migration in the U.S. without the fear of not being allowed back
into the U.S. after returning to Ghana. In her view this would motivate a lot of Ghanaians
to remain in Ghana as their travel experiences will afford them the rare opportunity of
quantifying in real terms, the value of what they have back in Ghana. She noted that in
the present case where a U.S. visa has so much premium people tend to overlook the fact
that a visa to travel to the U.S. might just be overvalued in some cases, however if
Ghanaians could travel and experience life in the U.S. at minimal cost, most of them may
want to rethink before folding up their business in Ghana to travel to the U.S.
(Respondent 007).

Another way migration from Ghana can be minimized is for the government to
invest in the education of youth to improve the national literacy rate in order to produce
people that can contribute effectively to the creation of opportunities for national
development. This should be accompanied by a similar investment in the creation of
opportunities so that Ghanaians can have avenues where their acquired skills and talents can be utilized to contribute to national progress after completing their education. A section of the respondents noted that the government of Ghana has a responsibility of creating an economic environment of hope; an environment that can reassure Ghanaians that they can still achieve goals similar to what can be achieved by their cohort who emigrate from Ghana in search of greener pastures in the developed world (respondent 020).

Contrary to the views of some participants, participant 011 noted that there are temporary jobs in Ghana, but Ghanaians are so discriminatory of jobs when they are in Ghana, yet they end up doing those same jobs when they leave Ghana. He therefore urged that Ghanaians be encouraged to stop discriminating against temporary jobs while they are still searching for the jobs of their choice in Ghana instead of leaving Ghana on the pretext that there are no jobs there but there are jobs in the U.S. On the other hand, he was quick to add that the encouragement for Ghanaians to take up menial jobs in Ghana needed the support of employers as they should be willing to pay decent salaries for those jobs. He therefore asked for salaries that will at least match the effort put into getting the job done and that would ensure a better living standard for employees.

4.2.3 Effects of Migration on Ghana

To assess their views on the consequences of migration on socio-economic progress in Ghana, the participants were asked if they thought migration affected Ghana in adverse ways. Two key effects were noted here. These were the fact that migration
weakened the strength of mind of the Ghana and also caused financial loss to Ghana. In contributing to the question, participant 001 indicated that migration needed to be discouraged because it dampened the spirit of the nation. She maintained that it has put the workforce of Ghana in a state of mind that makes them view migration as the only means by which their dreams can be realized. She noted that Ghanaians were thinking poorly of themselves that they were not even trying hard enough to improve their situation. She lamented that Ghanaians were also ungrateful with what they have and always thought they could do better if they migrated. Explaining this further, respondent 011 told a few real life stories of other people. In one of the stories he spoke about a colleague living in the U.S.:

\[
\text{Whose mother is quite ill and they needed about $250 to take the mother to the hospital. He gave them only $50 because he does not have the money. Meanwhile he is staying abroad. Meanwhile he used $12,000 to come here.}
\]

In another he spoke about a man who:

\[
\text{Had three houses and a very good job, he sold two of the houses and came here, things are not going well with him and now he wants to sell the last house over which he is having a problem with his sister. Now he wants to go back home but if he does not sell that he cannot even leave here for home, because he needs money to buy some things here to go back home and start afresh. However, prior to his coming (to the U.S.) he would not listen to his sister who advised him not to quit his job (in Ghana) and come here (to the U.S.). Before he came here (to the U.S.) he visited to Germany through his employers (in his former job in Ghana),}
\]
and according to him (narrating his story), he was like a king in Germany, because friends there saw him as a successful person in life and they followed him around, and eat on his bill.

The findings further indicated that migration has caused a lot of financial loss to Ghana. More than 50% of the respondents stated that they left their jobs in the classrooms and other technical fields in Ghana to travel to the U.S. Most of them were really sensitive to the fact that they were trained at the taxpayers’ expense and yet they had to abandon services to the taxpayers to migrate to engage in 3-D jobs (Massey, 1998) in the U.S. just to survive instead of enhancing their education or professional training in the fields they were trained with the taxpayers’ money in Ghana. They noted that migration not only deprives Ghana of the investments it has made in the training of these migrants but also the human resources to assist in national development. Putting a personal touch to this, respondent number 009 started by citing himself as an example, according to him:

*I always cite myself as an example because I was working and helping the country’s economy and now I am out, especially the nurses, they are very important because when they leave Ghana it affects the patients and the economy and we are losing a lot. A teacher leaving a classroom is going to take some time before they get a replacement.*

4.2.4 Strategies to Maximize Returns from Ghanaian Emigrants

Exploring the key research question further, participants were asked for suggestions regarding how Ghana could increase benefits from Ghanaians who were
already living in the U.S. Their responses revealed that Ghana could maximize benefits from Ghanaians living in the U.S. by encouraging them to invest in Ghana, building a database that could be used to track Ghanaians in the U.S., strengthening governance and its supporting institution and investing in the educational and skills development of Ghanaians in the U.S.

Explaining their responses, the sample indicated that Ghana could maximize migration returns from Ghanaians in the U.S. by them of the factors that caused them to migrate from Ghana. Ghanaians were also to be encouraged to work towards making Ghana a better place for those who will want to remain in Ghana and for themselves whenever they returned. More than half of those interviewed agreed that the benefits of migration could be increased by encouraging Ghanaians in the U.S. to invest back in Ghana. However, they noted that appropriate structures should be in place to encourage Ghanaians in the U.S. to invest in Ghana. One of the areas they suggested needed to be improved was the elimination of the culture of corruption and bribery that currently exists in Ghana. They maintained that at present, one could not get a decent business going without bribing public officials before they did what they were paid to do with the taxpayers’ money. They further noted that the judicial system also needed improvement, as its weakness was the main cause of corruption. In business when people invest their money, they want to see an effective and efficient judicial system in place for the fair and speedy adjudicated of cases. However, with the present delay in court hearings of cases in Ghana not many people are willing to risk putting their hard-earned investments on the line in Ghana. The participants opined that streamlining the operations of institutions in
Ghana will not only encourage Ghanaians abroad to invest in Ghana, it can also be sufficient to motivate foreign direct investments into Ghana if the conditions are right. Furthermore, Ghanaians who are not able to invest in Ghana personally might have links with companies with whom they can use the structural and institutional improvements to encourage them to invest in Ghana. They added that the government should have in place various incentives that will encourage Ghanaians in the U.S. to return home. This could include improved housing, business and investment incentives, tax cuts, and easy access to loans (respondents 002 and 009). To encourage investments from Ghanaians abroad, respondent 005 suggested that:

*If you are coming to open your own business government can give you a subsidized loan so that you can start the business. If you are coming back to work for something, at least the government can give you an affordable housing so that things will be easier for you.*

Participant 009 suggested that if government can find ways to manage land in Ghana it could be an opportunity to encourage Ghanaians in the U.S. to invest in real estate back in Ghana. To him, real estates development will not only give Ghana an infrastructural facelift but also contribute to solving the existing housing problems in Ghana. The participant further noted that with the present economic state of Ghana it was comparatively easier for people resident abroad to build more houses in Ghana.

The study also revealed that, Ghana could increase benefits from emigrants if the government can harness the expertise and services of Ghanaians in the U.S. with the requisite experience. The findings indicated that this expertise could be useful for
national policy formulation by constituting or incorporating those Ghanaians into national think tanks to deliberate on vital issues. The findings maintained that returned migrants could inject a lot of expertise gained in the U.S. into national development by contributing to making institutions work efficiently to help in job creation for Ghanaians. However, this can only happen if the country demonstrates its preparedness to receive Ghanaians abroad through the creation of an atmosphere devoid of bureaucratic frustration. Summing up this point of view, respondent 008 concluded, “If the government had an open mind to listen to people like us, I think they will go a long way to improving the economy, but I do not think the government is ready to listen.” Respondents 009 and 019 also suggested that the government of Ghana could encourage remittances from the U.S. to Ghana by finding suitable ways of reducing charges on money transfers and instituting incentives for Ghanaians abroad to send money to their relatives in Ghana.

Additionally, participants also encouraged government to build a database of Ghanaians living in the U.S. and their areas of specialization. In the view of respondent 008, the database will make it easier for Ghana to utilize expert advice from these specialists whenever their input is needed for national programs. Apart from the above, respondent 016 posits that the database will also make it easier for people to benefit from dual citizenship privileges without having to acquire the dual citizenship card that is presently required before Ghanaians with dual citizenship can gain easy entry into Ghana from abroad. Respondents 006 and 011 maintained that with the database would make it easier for the government of Ghana to plan national events like homecomings to bring the
Ghanaian Diaspora in touch with the realities in Ghana. Alternatively, respondent 008 indicated that the Ghanaian government could use the Ghanaian Embassy in Washington D.C. and the foreign ministry in Ghana to reach out to various experts wherever they are, for their input into national decision making through workshops and also to communicate opportunities in Ghana to them when they arise. In the view of respondent 010, the database could facilitate intra-community communication among Ghanaians in the U.S. to coordinate development plans for Ghana. With the database, both vertical and horizontal non-partisan lines of communication can evolve for the benefit of Ghana. Through the vertical lines open discussions can take place between Ghanaians in the U.S. and the government and people of Ghana. In addition, through the horizontal lines Ghanaian abroad can update each other on what they can do in Ghana.

According to respondent 009, Ghana can also increase benefits from migration if government can play an active role in the education and skill acquisition of Ghanaians abroad by giving them the requisite training in education and skills needed for national development. However, the government must find ways to get graduates to return to Ghana to contribute to progress. Participant 009 justifies this by arguing that when individuals take care of their own education abroad the tendency for them to stay back in the destination country is great since they do not see themselves owing much to Ghana. On the other hand, he stressed that for this to work there need to be opportunities at home befitting the education and training of these sponsored migrants if they are to make meaningful contributions to development.
4.2.5  Reasons Why Ghanaians Stay in the U.S.

As part of fulfilling the aims of this study, questions were asked to ascertain the reasons why the sample stayed on in the U.S. even though more than 90% of them confirmed that their goals for migrating to the U.S. have not been met. Responses to these questions included the need to meet goals, the lack of opportunities in Ghana, lack of requisite public and social services in Ghana, the fear of not being able to return to the U.S., having started families and the desire to pursue further education. In their response, they are choosing to stay on with the hope that things will soon change for the better. With this change, they can be able to get what they need from the U.S. and may consider returning to Ghana. Close to 30% appeared to have given up ever realizing the objectives they entered the U.S. to pursue. The above notwithstanding, 95% of those interviewed are still not certain of when they plan to return to Ghana. About 25% said they were choosing to stay on in the U.S. in to raise investment capital with which they could return to Ghana and start their own businesses.

Participants were asked why they chose to stay back in the U.S. if conditions were not so good for most of them. More than 50% indicated their desire to return to Ghana, but noted that the lack of opportunities in Ghana was the only thing preventing them from returning. They claimed that they were not aware of any changes in Ghana that made the situation different from the one that motivated them to migrate in the first place. On this note, most of them stated clearly that they did not intend to return to Ghana until the situation improved or until they retired from the jobs they are doing in the U.S. Those who chose the retirement option, like respondent 008, explained that when they return to
Ghana after their retirement they would not need to worry so much about opportunities and bad governance since they will still be entitled to a steady flow of income from their U.S. pension fund. Based on this, it was evident that the differences that existed between the abilities of the U.S. and Ghana to create and maintain opportunities were still valid even in motivating migrants to return to Ghana or not.

Furthermore, a section of those interviewed confirmed that they were encouraged to stay in the U.S. because not only did the environment provide them with the needed opportunities to reach their potential, it was also friendly enough for them to feel at home since they did not feel threatened in anyway. Participant number 009 stated that part of reasons why he is still in the U.S. is that there is “no crime in the suburbs where I live…and I … making money and working hard.” Another participant (002) noted that he was presently facing no challenges in the U.S. that made him want to leave. He indicated that “to be honest the country (U.S.) has been technically helpful to me and I don’t see anything bad about it that encourages me to leave,” coupled with the fact that there were no similar opportunities open to him in Ghana. He noted that though he and his family had plans to return to Ghana they were not able to do so until they were guaranteed jobs that could pay them well enough to sustain the taste and lifestyles they have cultivated since coming to the U.S.

Extending the above argument, respondent 018 expressed skepticism on his return to Ghana anytime soon since Ghana might not have the requisite social and public infrastructure and services needed to raise their children in Ghana. According to respondent 002, they did not want to expose their children to conditions they had to live
with in Ghana prior to migrating to the U.S. They believe that going back to Ghana meant going back to a lifestyle they did not want to remember. Contrary to the above, the U.S. has several opportunities that their children can exploit if they are raised in the U.S. According to them, educating their children in the U.S. was one of the best gifts they could give to their children. Furthermore, by educating the children in the U.S. they believed the children would grow up to achieve much more than what they would have achieved. In the view of respondent 010 children born and raised in the U.S. were likely to have a hard time adjusting to life in Ghana after the exposure to the life of plenty in the U.S.

Additionally, the findings revealed that three of the participants are chose to stay in the U.S. in part to continue their pursuit of the American dream. They explained the dream to be synonymous with a better life; a life in which they will be free from want. Participant 003 explained the dream as “the luxury, to be able to live comfortably.” Another respondent stated that, “We heard of how people will come in (to the U.S.) and things will go well with them.” In this case, the respondent perception of the American dream was that whoever migrates to the U.S. gets the best of life on his or her own terms. In other words, it was easy for dreams to come true in the U.S. Moreover, respondents 007 and 019 indicated that difficulties with the U.S. visa process in Ghana were part of their reasons for staying on in the U.S. even though their original visas have since expired. Respondent 007 noted that when people travel and their expectations are not met there is always the desire to go back to where they came from to see if things have changed since they migrated. And if conditions there are better than their immigrant
condition, there is a likelihood that they might stay in Ghana instead of returning to the U.S. However if conditions are still the same or have further deteriorated then they might choose to return to the U.S. if that is comparatively beneficial. Unfortunately, they are reluctant to take the risk of returning to Ghana due to the difficulties associated with the U.S. visa process from Ghana. Moreover there is the fear of being denied a new visa to re-enter the U.S. Hence, re-entry into the U.S. is not guaranteed for them if conditions in Ghana do not meet their expectations. Thus, they stay on in the U.S. considering the magnitude of the risk associated with going back home to assess conditions in Ghana. They stay on with the excuse that whatever their condition is in the U.S., it is still better than what they can ever hope for in Ghana. Giving credence to the above, participant 007 stated, “I am not looking for anything big. If I had gotten my document (entry permit) and know I could come and go at anytime. I will only come here to visit, I will not be here.”

Up to 90% of those interviewed claimed some form of educational objectives as part of their reasons for migrating to the U.S. Moreover, while a section of them had completed some level of education since migrating to the U.S., others were still enrolled in various educational programs. Yet, others were still waiting for the opportune time to back to school. About 70% of those who had finished with some education in the U.S. explained that they were staying longer in the U.S. to get some practical experience in their respective fields of specialization. They argued that having experience working in the U.S. raised your competitiveness and was quite valuable if they ever decided to return to Ghana. Other participants indicated that they were in secured employment and will
only consider returning to Ghana after their retirement from active service. The participants still enrolled in various educational programs maintained that they were on track to achieving one of their most important objectives for migrating to the U.S. They held that they would only consider returning to Ghana after completing their studies in the U.S. Those who were yet to start their educational pursuits indicated that they could not leave the U.S. without having further education, so they also had to stay on to achieve this goal before they may consider leaving. Responding to why he chose to stay back in the U.S. for seven years even though he claimed to have come in pursuit of graduate education, respondent 020 explained that “A qualification (educational) might help you get a good job but I don’t want to go and start looking for things like accommodation and a car, I will prefer to get those things here (working in the U.S. to buy those things before returning to Ghana).”

The findings also showed that most participants stay on in the U.S. because they have the legal right to live and work in the U.S. through the Diversity Immigrant Visa Lottery program. About 35% of respondents came to the U.S. through the visa lottery program of whom 80% have moved on to become U.S. citizens. They justified their reasons for staying on as having the legal right to live and work in the U.S.; an opportunity they intended to maximize. Their status in the U.S. notwithstanding, some of them still expressed interest in returning to Ghana whenever they thought their interests could be well accommodated there. One of the respondents who had become a citizen, but was still interested in returning to Ghana stated that as a condition to leaving the U.S. he would:
Try and get a masters or bachelors degree in accounting, but I think I still have time and it is something that I am working on right now. I wanted to do some short course in line with whatever I am going do in future.

Finally, the findings revealed that some Ghanaians decided to stay back in the U.S. for structural reasons. The participants concerned were impressed with how institutions and structures worked in the U.S. Participant 009 explained that the U.S. is a place where the laws seem to be working. The law enforcement agents seem to be doing their job and the judicial system was active and swift. This was in direct contrast to their perception of the weaknesses that characterized the same institutions in Ghana, breeding frustration and corruption. Expounding on the topic, respondent 016 noted that Ghana would be a better place to go back to if such institution and structures mentioned earlier are improved. He suggested that this could be done by, “First corruption has to be curbed, and favoritism, nepotism and tribalism have to be curbed.”

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Analyzing the research findings, it is obvious that most of the factors put forward by other writers as contributing to international migration in the literature reviewed have been found to be true with respect to factors that contribute to migration from Ghana to the U.S.

Primarily, the concept of new economics was found to account for most of the recent surge in migration from Ghana to the U.S. This explained to a large extent, why most of the interviewed participants chose to migrate to the U.S. The new economics
thinking identifies the cause of migration as a collective family decision in sending a member of the family abroad as a sort of investment. The decision is generally motivated by the desire of the family to spread risks as a form of future insurance. Through this decision member of the family hope to guarantee a secured future for the family in case the unforeseen happens. This decision is in anticipation of remittances to finance or refinance ailing family ventures, or to ensure a regular flow of remittances to supplement family income. In support of this, participant 008 maintained that:

*My family had to come together to sell their pieces of lands and all that before I could acquire the ticket. Now today as I am speaking, everybody is happy.*

*Nobody has regretted selling his or her properties for me to travel.*

Adding to the fact that migration is funded as an investment, participant 010 puts it that:

*Actually I was sponsored by my brother so on that aspect it was easy for me, but if I were to come up with such amounts of money I don’t think I could have afforded it, because my financial situation at that time was not the best.*

Furthermore, another respondent (009) pointed out that he “had to borrow money from friends and relatives and had to pay it back.” Finally another respondent (012) disclosed that, “after the visa my dad and big brother contributed, because the plane ticket alone was a chunk of their finance, it was a lot of money for them.” These statements therefore confirm that migration from Ghana to the U.S. means more that just a simple change of environment, is also an investment that is expected to yield profit. Ravenstein’s theory recognized the role of economic factors as a cause of migration after he had moved beyond migration in the United Kingdom to study migration patterns in other European
nations as well as in North America. For Stouffer and Lee, economic reasons as a cause of migration was explained as part of the opportunities that could exist at the migration destination and lacking in the source country, thereby influencing the prospective migrant to migrate.

Expanding the new economics concept as a cause of migration, the findings also indicated that most Ghanaians traveled to the U.S. in order to raise capital with which they can return to invest in Ghana. A section of the participants hinted that they had good ideas of investment opportunities in Ghana, but they just could not raise the requisite capital in Ghana for their planned investments. They therefore decided that migration to the U.S. was a worthy investment as the comparatively vibrant U.S. economy held promises that were absent in Ghana. In response to why she came to the U.S., participant 001 had this to say, “I left Ghana in order to get sponsorship for my basketball team (and a school).” This was also accounted for in all the theoretical frameworks used when they agreed that migrants traveled for economic reasons or for opportunities that are absent in their native areas.

Moreover, the causes of migration as explained by Rotte and Vogler (1998) were also found to be true in the case of migration from Ghana. The findings confirmed the role of relative deprivation as cause of migration. The findings revealed that some people migrated because they were motivated by their relative economic position in the societies that they lived. For most of those interviewed, their societies in Ghana led them to define their circumstances as poor. This definition was then followed by the decision that something needed to be done to improve their circumstances. Giving credence to this
assertion, one respondent described himself prior to coming to the U.S. as coming from a “from poor background and it was not easy especially for some of us, it was not easy on our parents to be able to finance such life…” Therefore he and the family decided to fall on social networks for him to travel to the U.S. for them to escape the poverty they were living in. The closest the theory of Ravenstein came to explain this as a cause of migration is when he states that migration proceeds from agricultural areas to centers of commerce and industry. For Stouffer, the availability or lack thereof of opportunities is enough to explain relative deprivation as a cause of migration. This also holds true for Lee’s theory when he explains relative deprivation as pull and push factors that affect decisions to migrate.

In the view of Handenwang (1996), the causes of migration also include social circumstances like family reunion, marriages and the breakup of local communal support system in most developing countries as some of the instrumental factors influencing migration decision internationally. In the light of the interviews conducted, there was no hint that any of those interviewed made the decision to migrate to the U.S. due to the collapse of communal support systems. Even though the findings contained evidence that some participants had their partners join them in the U.S. from Ghana and other countries, none of those interviewed migrated to the U.S. through family reunion or marriage. Even though some aspects of the three theories can be extended to explain social circumstances as a cause of migration, none of the theories used explicitly captures this phenomenon as feeding into the decision to migrate.
The explanations of Weiner (1995) and Haldenwang (1996) of migration resulting from conflict situations was not found to be true in the case of migration from Ghana to the U.S. This is because none of those interviewed gave any hint of making the decision to come to the U.S. as a means to escape any form of conflict situation in Ghana. There was also no migration response recorded for Ghanaians migrating due to religious extremism or any form of persecution in Ghana. However, other political circumstances were relevant in informing some migration decisions. In this respect, some respondents accused political office holders for the plight of the country as they were not seen to be doing enough to improve the financial situation of the country. The respondents accused the politicians of working for themselves through corruption instead of working for the advancement of the public cause. Respondent 012 indicated that “if our leaders use resources wisely things will get better and people will be encouraged to work within the country.” When examined in respect of the theoretical frameworks used, only Lee’s theory of push factors came close to explaining why corruption could constitute a cause of migration. Unfortunately this was true with Lee only because corruption qualified as a push factor. With the other theories there was nothing explaining why this could be a cause of migration.

Furthermore, the dual nature of the capitalist labor markets in partitioning jobs in the developed countries into highly paid jobs and other jobs was also found to contribute to migration internationally. Stalker (2001) maintained that capitalism could be created with the portioning of jobs into technical or professional jobs and lower level jobs which he also refers to as 3-D jobs because they are Dirty, Dangerous and Difficult to do. He
explained that this division made the lower level jobs so unattractive that people in the
developed world are constantly moving away from them freeing them up for migrant
labor. The findings reflected the division of jobs into two classes as a pull factor in the
case of migration from Ghana to the U.S. The evidence was contained in the profiles of
the people that were interviewed and the fields within which some of participants worked
in Ghana prior to migrating to the U.S., and what they were presently doing in the U.S. If
was evident that most of them have not been able to reach the higher paying jobs that
they thought would have been easily accessible to them. In this case they have had to
content themselves with the 3-Ds jobs. For the Ghanaians, these jobs are at best
temporary, hard to execute, and sometimes unpleasant to do with only a few people
willing to openly admit to doing those jobs. But with the recent decline in the number of
young people due to reduced birth rates in the more industrialized world coupled with the
rising ambition of women and young people to compete for higher paid jobs due
enhanced education, human resources for the 3-Ds have witnessed a downturn among
citizens of developed countries. And since they are still jobs that needed to be done,
migrants everywhere including from Ghana have suddenly become the new target
population to keep that sector running as its existence is important for the operation of the
mega system. These are jobs that target migrants because they have a lessened ability to
compete for the higher paid jobs even if they have the requisite qualifications. One
participant summed this up with the observation that “if I were in Ghana I would not have
been a security officer” because prior to coming to the U.S. he “had a good job in Ghana
because the ….was considered a good job and I was in a higher income bracket.”
However, the categorization of jobs into high and low paying jobs which creates room for migrant labor for the low paying jobs in the destination countries could not be explained by any of the theoretical frameworks the study used. The any one of them came to explain this observation was the fact that it created opportunities that attracted migrants into the destination countries. This fits into the theories of Lee and Stouffer as they explain pull factors and intervening opportunities respectively.

Another factor that emerged from the interviews as a cause of migration from Ghana to the U.S. was the evident disparities in the wealth of countries in the developing and the developed world. While the developing world is constantly struggling to provide opportunities for sustenance for its population, the developed world appears to have an abundance of opportunities for jobs and growth. In real terms, Ghana, compared with the U.S., is not only burdened with lack of opportunities, but also with a currency that has a lower purchasing power compared with the U.S. dollar. Looking at these differences most of the participants were convinced that the U.S. was the place to be, if one wanted to become economically prosperous. Participant 012 even likened the experience of coming to the U.S. to “going to heaven, so coming here was just to come and get the good part of life. The opportunities here are more than those in Ghana.” Another respondent (006) stated that “The U.S. is generally considered as the land of opportunities and throughout the world young people like myself would always want to come here to exploit those opportunities to better their lives.” This is explained by the theories used for this study to the extent that Ravenstein recognized that as regions industrialized there was bound to be differences in economic opportunities. And those
migrants who were looking for better economic opportunities were expected to respond to these differences. In the view of Lee, scant opportunities in the home country and abundance in the destination country was enough to get prospective migrants moving. This thinking is reflected in the writings of Stouffer when he posits that people will usually migrate to places where there were better opportunities than where they lived.

The study also confirmed the assertion that attraction into destination countries was based on economic growth and its resultant labor requirements for industry and commerce. In the U.S. it is evident that there is demand for certain classes of labor to fill vacancies created or anticipated by the economic expansion. In support of the above assertion, the findings confirmed that most participants migrated to the U.S. through the Diversity Immigrant Visa Lottery program which is a conscious effort put in place to attract people with some minimum qualifications to migrate to the U.S. From the findings more 25% of those interviewed came into the U.S. on this program. When a participant (014) was asked why she came to the U.S. she responded that “I came to the U.S. because I had an opportunity to come here.” When another question was put to this same participant on what she hoped to accomplish by traveling to the U.S., she replied that “I think I just came because of the opportunity but not for the thought that it (the U.S.) was going to make me what I could not be in Ghana.” Apart from the visa lottery program, others came in through educational scholarship programs and chose to stay back in the U.S. to fill employment gaps to contribute to productivity and development. On this finding, Ravenstein, Stouffer and Lee were unanimous in their recognition of the power
of economic growth in one region of a country or the globe to attract people from other areas where the opportunities were less.

The role of social networks in promoting migration was also found to be a relevant cause of migration from Ghana to the U.S. This conclusion is based on the role social networks were found to have played in Ghana to assist the migrants with their preparation to migrate and in the U.S. in guaranteeing a trouble-free entry for the migrants when they got to the U.S. The study revealed that all the interviewees got some form of help from social networks in Ghana, in transit or upon arrival in the U.S. Some of the assistance that was found to have been given by networks ranged from human to physical capital. Through some of the assistance they discussed, the chances of their migration to the U.S. were greatly increased while the risks associated with it were reduced or eliminated altogether. The findings revealed that, through social networks it was easier for people to find accommodation and employment. Members of the networks ranged from family through friends to others with shared characteristics. For most of the respondents the networks greatly lowered the cost and burden of their travel through the monetary support that they received. In highlighting the role of social networks in getting him into the U.S., a respondent (008) stated that:

*He gave me the affidavit of support and I will never forget his help even until my last breath, even before I die I will tell my grand children what he has done for me and what he has done for them. He has changed my life; he has changed the life of my family. And the lives of the generations to come for the fact that he gave me that piece of document – the affidavit of support, this to tell the U.S.*
government that I will not be a public charge and he will be able to take care of me until I found a job.

On the Ghanaian front one participant indicated that “friends and other family members … were able to coordinate and come up with alternative solutions and we were able to organize something for me to come”. Notwithstanding the significance of this finding in determining migration none of the theories used could explain the role of social networks as a migration determinant.

Furthermore, the effect of cumulative causation was found to have been active in accounting for migration from Ghana to the U.S. It was evident from the study that a section of the participants chose to travel to the U.S. because they had had an earlier opportunity to travel to the U.S. In this regard Massey (1998) observes that people in migration endemic societies or people who had traveled before were most likely to migrate than those that had not traveled at all or those that lived in non migration endemic societies. From the findings of this study three people confirmed that they had traveled to the U.S. before and had later decided to migrate to the U.S. because they liked what they saw. Massey (1998) further explains that in migration endemic societies, subsequent waves of migrations are likely to be motivated by objectives different from the ones that would have instigated the previous wave. He therefore concludes that ambitions that governs socio-economic mobility undergoes some changes as it moves from need to comfort hence changing motivations and feeding into decisions of people to emigrate again or to stay longer in migration. Applying this to the study, a participant
(020) who traveled to the U.S. for graduate studies and decided to stay, was asked why he chose to migrate to the U.S., he replied that:

*While I was in school I did visit here a number of times and that helped me economically and by the time I finished with my college education I was familiar with here and that was part of the reason.*

Another respondent (001) added that she chose to migrate to the U.S. because “I was here in 2004.”

Adding to the above, Martin, Martin and Weil (2006) also observed that remittances have generated a lot of competition among families in migration endemic societies. The findings revealed that this competition has been instrumental in families pushing to get more of their members to migrate to increase their share of remittances. In this just having one family member abroad was not enough as it amounted to limited inflow of remittances for the family. Underscoring the lengths family members go to get more members to migrate, one participant (005) who confirmed to have had some family members in the U.S. prior to his migration to the U.S. stated that:

*My financial burden was supported by my family. Especially when it came to paying for the visa as my family did it. My family also paid for the ticket that I used out of Ghana and also traveling to the capital was not such a big deal for me as I was always given money for my upkeep.*

From his statement, the need to get another family member into the U.S. supports the claim of Martin, Martin and Weil (2006) that families would only send more members abroad not just to insure the spread of investments but also to upgrade their status among
their peers based on what remittances can buy in the source country. This decision to send more family members abroad represents a clear shift from the original intentions that would have informed the earlier waves of migration. Unfortunately, none of the theories used could explain this change in motivation.

Haldenwang (1996) observed that people could also be motivated into international migration if they lived in an environment they considered dull and unexciting. This observation was also found to be true among a section of the sample interviewed. The results from the study showed that some of the respondents believed that the U.S. was not just a country with many opportunities, but also a place that had a lot of excitement. Responding to a question of why she chose to come to the U.S., a participant (019) remarked that “everybody wants to come to America even those in England.” She argued that if it was just for financial reasons then England would have been the place to go since the British pound sterling has more value than the U.S. dollar. And since people in the United Kingdom to want to come to the U.S., it means that there is more to being in the U.S. than just money. Unfortunately, there was no explanation to this in any of the theories used.

In line with the assertion of Weiner (1995), the emergence of a global system of communication was also found to play a key role in informing the decisions of people to migrate. Through this medium, knowledge of opportunities in the U.S. has become available to prospective Ghanaian migrants through the internet and other improved channels of communications. Ghanaians have been able to access information about perceived or real opportunities available in the U.S. They have also gained access to
information about requirements that can facilitate their entry into the U.S. Through social networking, information on alternative ways of entry has been accessible to prospective migrants from Ghana as well. The proliferation of international direct dialing telephone systems, email and internet services was found to have played various roles in informing the decision of those interviewed in traveling to the U.S. In support of this finding, is the fact that most of the participants access educational and green card opportunities through communications of some sort. However confirming how misleading communications have also become, a participant was asked if his present condition was what he expected when he came into the U.S., he confessed that through the information that was available to him he, “thought it will be easier to make money within a short time, to work yourself up the ladder, get some papers, and start life.” Another participant bluntly stated that it was “a disappointment.” Based on the frustration of migrants with the reality of living in the U.S. and in other developed countries, Stalker (2001) blames the global media for informing decisions to migrate based on the picture they create of the limitless and easy to exploit opportunities prevalent in the developed world. In the case of migration of Ghanaians to the U.S., Up to three participants mentioned that they migrated to the U.S. in pursuit of the American dream. However, they had difficulty defining the American dream except to say that it was “how people will come in (to America) and things will go well with them” (respondent 007). Another participant (003) explained it as “the luxury, to be able to live comfortably.” This finding can be accommodated under Lee’s theory of migration when he talks about the obstacles that can hinder or facilitate migration as explained by some writers to include the availability of information. It can further be
explained by Stouffer’s theory when he states that people can migrate in search of real or perceived opportunities.

The lack of extensive educational opportunities coupled with the uncertainties that characterized education in Ghana was also a reason for many people to migrate from Ghana to the U.S. One participant (011) stated that “the educational system in Ghana was plagued with students going on strikes, university workers and teachers going on strike.” The respondent further stated that he was disappointed that he “did not have enough knowledge of the educational system and relied on the misconception that higher education in the Western world is more accessible than in the developing country.” On the other hand, the level of educational opportunities in the U.S., real or perceived, played a part in motivating Ghanaians to travel to the U.S. Up to 30% of those interviewed confirmed that they came into the U.S. on student visas. Others also confirmed that even though they came in through other visas they were presently pursuing some kind of education or had plans to get some further education before leaving the U.S. if they ever decided to. Expressing gratitude for migrating to the U.S., one participant (002) said that “I don’t know if I would have been able to successfully achieve an MBA in Accounting and a Master of Science in Finance, maybe my limit would have been undergraduate studies if I remained in Ghana.” The significance of educational pursuit as a contributory factor to emigration from Ghana not withstanding, there was no evidence identifying education as a significant cause of migration in the literature that was reviewed. However, up to 90% of the participants interviewed claimed that they were motivated to travel to the U.S. because of the educational opportunities
that exist there. The participants explained that their desire to educate themselves was a way of guaranteeing a future for themselves as they could always use the education to secure better paying jobs. What was also interesting was that they were not just interested in education anywhere, but education in the U.S. because of the variety of schools and course options that existed in the U.S. This decision was strengthened by the participants’ claim of the respect ascribed to U.S. trained human resources in most parts of the world. To a least extent, this finding was could be said to be in line with the assertions of both Stouffer and Lee that most migrations originated from places with fewer opportunities to places with comparatively higher opportunities.

Added to this, another factor that became evident through the study as a cause of migration from Ghana to the U.S. was the multicultural nature of the U.S. Most of the participants were of the view that the U.S. provided a safe haven for black people since there were a sizeable number of African-Americans and other black people as citizens and legal residents. On this note, the U.S. was attractive to Ghanaians because of their lessened probability to experience open racism as may be the case or perceived to be the case in other industrialized countries. For this reason, most undocumented Ghanaian migrants and those who intend to overstay their visas could still enjoy a fair amount of freedom as their chances of being stopped by law enforcement agents for document check on their status was comparatively minimal. One participant (006) explained that the U.S. “is a country that accepts people from different backgrounds and has everything else that makes somebody be able to fit into a new society.” Another respondent (011) added that “you are not likely to have other people bother you on migration status and all
those things.” Even though this finding was found to influence some decisions to migrate from Ghana to the U.S., none of the literature reviewed identified it as a cause of migration. Furthermore, the finding was also not accounted for by any of the theories that were chosen to explain migration.

Even though some of the literature reviewed referred to the role of the global media in informing the decisions of people to migrate, there was no literature that explained the role of the global image of the U.S. that made it attractive to Ghanaians as a migration destination. One of the interviewees (019) summed up her reason for migrating to the U.S. by describing the U.S. as “the place to be”. This might be due to the personal status people enjoyed in Ghana among their peers for being associated with the most powerful country in the world. Explaining this further the participant noted that “because of the popularity of America if you go home (to Ghana) and someone comes from England there is much more attention on you than the person from England”. However, there was no literature to explain this phenomenon from the theoretical frameworks used.
Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion and Suggestions

This Chapter has three major sections namely the summary of the study that includes the major findings derived from the study, the conclusions, and suggestions. The suggestions section is also subdivided into four parts namely suggestion for stakeholders like policymakers in Ghana, the prospective migrant and the Ghanaian living in the U.S. The last part of this section deals with suggestion for future research.

5.1 Summary

Migration and labor relations have a prominent role in international relations based on the relationship between labor and development. Haldenwang (1996) notes that population growth in most developing countries have overtaken those countries’ abilities to create new opportunities to accommodate their labor growth. This excess labor from the developing world has in some cases compensated labor vacancies in the developed world by filling labor gaps there. However, importance of this movement of labor has not been lost on developing countries whose potential labor reserves keep dwindling. The importance lie in the fact that labor reserves that could have refreshed development thinking in most developing countries end up migrating because of the lack of opportunities to contribute their ideas to national growth. This state of affairs further limits the abilities of most developing countries to compete in many spheres with their developed counterparts, because their best brains have been lost to the developed world. This however is not to say that, developing nations would have been able to harness effectively the potential of their prospective emigrant population if they had stayed back.
In the views of Massey (1998) and Stalker (2001), the reason for the inability of developing countries to exploit their own talents stems from the present relationships that exist between nations. In their views, these relationships have made it quite difficult for most developing countries to fully utilize the resources at their disposal due to the economic and power disparities that govern globalization.

In line with these assertions, this study was designed to investigate the factors that contribute to migration from Ghana to the U.S. The study therefore adopted a qualitative approach that used semi-structured interviews to explore the following key questions:

- What are the push and pull factors that determine migration from Ghana?
- Why do Ghanaian migrants choose to stay in the U.S.?
- What are the effects of migration on Ghana?
- How can migration from Ghana be minimized?
- How can Ghana maximize benefits from migration?

The literature reviewed noted that disparities in the wealth of nations decreased opportunities in some countries while increasing opportunities in others. Furthermore the desire of families and individuals to spread their investments as a safeguard against future uncertainties was also found to be a cause of migration from Ghana. Added to this, the study confirmed that the globalization of media which sends information to all parts of the globe accounted for migration from Ghana to the U.S. as well. The theories of the laws of migration, intervening opportunities, and Lee’s migration theories were selected to guide this study.
In selecting participants for this study the snowball sampling technique was used to identify names of first generation Ghanaians living in the U.S. who were the target for this study. All participants were interviewed by telephone and their responses captured on a tape recorder. The following is a summary of the major findings from the study under the key research questions:

Regarding the push and pull factors the following factors were found to contribute to decisions to migrate from Ghana to the U.S.

- The differences in wealth between nations. This has led to the categorization of nations into those that have abundant economic resources and those that have limited economic resources leading to accelerated and stagnated development of opportunities respectively.

- The division of jobs into highly paid and 3-Ds. The highly paid ones are those that require some amount of academic and sometimes technical training to qualify for while the 3-D jobs are those that many people do not want to do because they are dirty, dangerous and difficult to do and mostly reserved for migrants which includes Ghanaians.

- The globalization of media and communication has transmitted information on real and perceived opportunities to all corners of the world including Ghana to feed into decisions to migrate.

- The desire of families and individuals to diversify their investments. This is because families and individuals want to avoid situations were they lose
because of one misfortune. This has informed decisions to migrate from Ghana to spread risks so that when one venture fails others can provide for all.

- **Opportunities for better education in the U.S. and as a lifeline.** Over time, Ghanaians have migrated to the U.S. in search of educational opportunities that are more accessible and advanced than what they would have had access to if they had remained in Ghana. Education in the U.S. has also become a safeguard for Ghanaian migrants to guarantee a stable future.

- **The media portrayal of the U.S. as a powerful country and above all other countries has also motivated some Ghanaians to migrate to the U.S. to share in its glory.** Their association with the U.S. brings them respect in Ghana.

In exploring the question of why Ghanaians chose to stay in the U.S. the major findings were:

- **Most of the sample stayed in the U.S. even though not all of them appeared to be doing well because they are on the green card permit that entitles them to privileges not available to other categories of Ghanaian migrants.**

- **The study also found that some of the participants stayed in the U.S. to further their education as security towards their future.**

- **A section of those interviewed also indicated that they decided to stay because they are dissatisfied with the way vital institutions like the police force, the judiciary and public offices operate in Ghana, while they are happy with how the same structures work in the U.S.**
The findings also revealed that some of the respondents were afraid to leave the U.S. without a guarantee that they could return anytime they decided to.

Furthermore, others decided to stay to pursue the American dream which they see as the opportunity to be able to have what they want and when they want it.

Many Ghanaians have also stayed in the U.S. because they have started families since migrating to the U.S. and wish to raise the children in the U.S. as they think it would offer the children better opportunities for the future.

Others indicated that they are still in the U.S. because they do not know of improved opportunities in Ghana, hence the motivation for them to return to Ghana remains absent.

Others stated that they have been motivated to stay on because of the receptive nature of the U.S. to other cultures and races.

The findings further revealed that many Ghanaians are staying because of secured jobs with promising retirement benefits which they do not want to leave to return to Ghana.

Others are also staying because they want to get investment capital with which they can invest in Ghana or start their own businesses before going back.

When a question on the effect of migration on Ghana was posed to the respondents the following findings emerged:

Migration weakens the confidence of Ghanaians generally and makes them underrate what they can achieve in Ghana without traveling abroad.
Migration also resulted in financial loss to Ghana because the study revealed that most of those interviewed received some form of training in Ghana paid for by the Ghanaian taxpayer only for them to migrate instead of staying back to contribute to development in Ghana.

When participants were asked about their views on how migration from Ghana could be minimized the major findings included the following:

- The participants suggested that the job situation in Ghana needs to be improved to create opportunities for people in Ghana.
- Other participants suggested the need for more temporary or stop gap jobs that people could rely on to survive while looking for jobs they really liked to do.
- They also urged employers in Ghana including the government to improve salaries of workers and introduce incentives to stop people from migrating and to entice Ghanaians abroad back to Ghana.
- The participants further expressed the need for would-be migrants to be given the right information about the realities on the ground in the U.S. to prevent people from migrating for the wrong reasons and also to minimize the cases of unmet expectations.
- The participants also call on immigrants to be honest about their economic circumstances in the U.S. when they visit Ghana. This is to stop people thinking that life is easy in the U.S.
- Others also suggested the need to rejuvenate the confidence in Ghanaians that they can turn things around in Ghana. They called on themselves and policy
makers to start plans to make Ghanaians feel good about being a Ghanaian in Ghana. And to cultivate the belief that their respective contributions are vital to national development.

- Others urged the Ghana government to reintroduce subsidies for agriculture and agribusiness to create employment for people in Ghana as a way of curbing migration.

- There were also views on the role of corruption in depriving Ghanaians the opportunities of life and called on the government to take active steps towards controlling corruption among public officials.

- There were suggestions that if U.S. visa conditions in Ghana could be relaxed for Ghanaians it would lessen the premium people put on acquiring the visa and will consequently reduce migration.

- There were also the calls on government to invest in education in Ghana to make it attractive for Ghanaians and the rest of the world.

On the question of how Ghana could increase benefits from Ghanaians living abroad the following findings were revealed:

- To increase benefits there was the need for the government of Ghana to maintain an active communication with between Ghanaians in the U.S. and those at home to harness the experiences and advice of Ghanaians abroad on policy issues.

- Benefits can also be increased by the government encouraging Ghanaians in the U.S. to invest in Ghana. Through communications, opportunities available in Ghana can be communicated to Ghanaians in the U.S.
• There is also the need for a conscious effort by government to create means through which the country can utilize the practical expertise of Ghanaians in the U.S. for national development.

• There were suggestions that the government of Ghana could invest in the development of Ghanaians currently resident in the U.S. and put measures in place to get them back to Ghana to contribute to development.

• To develop a database of Ghanaians living in the U.S. to enhance the communication of opportunities in Ghana to Ghanaians in the U.S. Through this data base, Ghanaians in the U.S. can be contacted on important national assignments or inputs and benefits as they come.

• Some of those interviewed also urged the Ghana government to negotiate reduced charges on remittance transfers to Ghana.

5.2 Conclusion

From the above it can be concluded that migration from Ghana to the U.S. in recent times has been greatly influenced by the global politics between nations that have created imbalances in the economic situations of countries. The result of these imbalances in the case of the U.S. and Ghana is the weakening of Ghana’s ability to create opportunities for Ghanaians while at the same time enhancing the image and the internal ability of the U.S. to create opportunities for people in the U.S. Furthermore, Ghanaians who have migrated to the U.S. have chosen to stay with the hope of taking full advantage of the opportunities that the U.S. provides over Ghana. Moreover, in line with
Ghana’s weakened abilities migration further erodes the self-confidence of Ghanaians regarding the future of Ghana. This is because most people in Ghana think the only way they can achieve their best is to travel abroad. As part of the lack of confidence in their abilities Ghanaians tend not to appreciate what they acquire in Ghana based on the thought that they could do better if they were outside of Ghana. Migration has also been found to drain the limited resources of Ghana by moving out people who have been educated at the taxpayers’ expense. It is therefore heartwarming for Ghanaian migrants to call for the creation of opportunities and incentives and to improve information sharing to motivate Ghanaians to stay in Ghana to contribute to development. Added to this, there is a strong belief that Ghana could also benefit from Ghanaians living in the U.S. if the necessary opportunities and structures are put in place to harness investments and other expertise from them.

5.3 Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study the following suggestions were found to be appropriate for various stakeholders in the migration discourse. Suggestions for policymaker include what they have to do to make create opportunities in Ghana and also to make these opportunities attractive to people living in Ghana. For the prospective migrants, there is the need to verify information before making the decision to travel and for Ghanaians living abroad, the suggestions covered the need to make conscious efforts to contribute to progress in Ghana and also to control the reflect the realities of migration whenever they visit Ghana.
5.3.1 **Policy Makers**

One way Ghana can benefit from Ghanaians living in the U.S. is for the government to put policies in place that would start a dialogue between Ghanaians in the U.S. and the government of Ghana. From this study it became apparent that there are many Ghanaians with varied expertise in the U.S. by virtue of their education or work experience. If government is able to harness these resources, it will go a long way to enrich policy decisions in Ghana towards national development.

In addition to this, Ghana has a lot to gain through good governance. These include putting in place policies geared toward economic growth as well as the reduction in corruption. Many of the participants interviewed were skeptical about investing in Ghana due to the frustrations that people allegedly go through when they decide to invest in Ghana. According to the findings most of these frustrations are machinations to extort money from prospective investors. This situation is further aggravated by the lack of effective law enforcement and judicial structures in Ghana due to corruption. Therefore if government becomes proactive on corruption it might entice Ghanaians and even some non-Ghanaians to start looking towards investing in Ghana.

In order to bring down the present levels of migration from the country, policies will have to be put in place to create opportunities for Ghanaians in Ghana. Policy makers could also take steps to improve existing educational structures and school systems in Ghana. This can have a double benefit of encouraging Ghanaians to take up further studies in Ghana as well as improve the image of Ghanaian education abroad. Ghana
could even start earning income from education if quality opportunities are created to attract students from the African sub-region and beyond.

Furthermore, based on the newfound power of the global media in changing perceptions, Ghana will benefit a lot if it also invests into marketing itself to the rest of the world in terms of its strengths. This can have the effect of restoring confidence in Ghanaians as people who can do it for themselves instead of looking forward to traveling abroad as the only way to realize their dreams. Moreover, to make people stay and work in Ghana, salary levels will need to be improved in line with existing cost of living in Ghana. This is to guarantee that people who have jobs can live decent lives without having to resort to corruption and other forms of extortions to supplement their salaries. In this regard, the new salary structure negotiations that are currently going on in Ghana will be a pragmatic step toward reducing migration and enticing Ghanaians living in the U.S. to return to Ghana to contribute to socio-economic progress.

Instead of lamenting the migration of trained professionals as brain drain, the findings of this study revealed that Ghana could convert brain drain into brain gain by simply identifying areas of training from which most people migrate and investing into the training of more of those professionals for the purposes of migration. This will have a number of positive effects. First of all, Ghana will be able to increase the amount of remittances it gets from migration while at the same time maintaining an adequate stock of trained professionals to get the job done in Ghana. Ghana can also improve employment opportunities in Ghana as there will be a regular internal reshuffle of human resources as people move into professions to be trained thereby creating opportunities for
newcomers. Furthermore Ghana can enter into some agreements with migrant receiving countries and agencies to commit part of the remuneration of Ghanaian migrant workers back to Ghana to enhance the training of more people in that field of specialization.

5.3.2 Prospective Migrants

For the prospective migrant, there is the need to get the requisite information prior to traveling. This is to avoid the disappointments sometimes associated with unmet expectations. Prior information would inform the prospective migrant’s decision to finally travel to the U.S. based on an adequate understanding of the opportunities and challenges in the U.S. This is because the reality on the ground in the U.S. is always different.

5.3.3 Ghanaians Living in the U.S.

The research findings indicated that there are a number of roles Ghanaians living in the U.S. can play in Ghana’s socio-economic development. Ghanaians in the U.S. could start a dialogue with policy makers in Ghana to ascertain how they can contribute to improving the quality of life in Ghana. These dialogues can be important sources of expertise for enriching public policies in Ghana. Furthermore they could start cooperatives in the U.S. to raise money to finance and execute projects in needy areas in Ghana or in their local respective local communities. This would do a lot to start empowering Ghanaians from the grassroots in order to reduce migration from rural to urban areas and subsequently from urban areas to U.S. and other destination countries.
Another way Ghanaians living in the U.S. could help development in Ghana is to be humble in their lifestyles whenever they visit Ghana. It will be helpful if they could cut down on their extravagant spending that usually creates discomfort among locals in Ghana. In addition to this, Ghanaians living abroad should start being frank with Ghanaians back home about their actual living circumstances in the U.S. and stop trying to create sensational images about their success in the U.S. when most of them live from paycheck to paycheck.

5.3.4 Suggestions for further research

In order to consolidate the findings from this research there is the need for future researchers to increase the sample size of their study to see if their findings are still in line with this research. There is also the need to search for other theories of modern migration as the theories of Raventein (1885), Stouffer (1960) and Lee (1966) no longer adequately explained international migration in recent times, more specifically from Ghana to the U.S. A possible explanation for this inadequacy may be that most of the variables that informed these theories are not quite valid in the case of Ghana. Another explanation could be that the variables that informed these theories have been transformed by the fast changing world.
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Occasional paper


Appendix A: Thesis Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

This is a study to identify the factors that cause Ghanaians to migrate from Ghana. The study will also seek suggestions on how Ghana can minimize the prevailing migration trend.

Bio data

1. How old are you?
2. What is your highest level education completed?
3. How long have you been in the U.S.?
4. What are you doing in the U.S. at present?
5. Why did you choose to settle where you presently reside? (Urban, Rural or Sub-Urban)?
6. What role did social networks play in your choice of residence in the U.S.?

Section I

7. What were you doing in Ghana prior to leaving for the U.S.?
8. Why did you leave Ghana?
9. What challenges or difficulties did you face in your preparation to leave Ghana?
10. How did you overcome those challenges or difficulties?
11. What role did social networks play in getting you out of Ghana?
12. Why did you choose to travel to the U.S.?
13. What role did social networks play in bringing you into the U.S.?

Section II

14. Why did you choose to stay in the U.S.?
15. Do you consider yourself a migrant or a temporary resident of the U.S.?
16. How long do you intend to stay in the U.S.?
17. What did you hope to accomplish through migration?
18. Is your present situation in the U.S. what you expected?
19. How has migration fulfilled your dreams?

**Section III**

20. Under what conditions would you return to Ghana?
21. Should migration from Ghana be encouraged or discouraged?
22. What in your view:
   a. Are the benefits of migration to Ghana?
   b. Are the disadvantages of migration to Ghana?
23. How can migration from Ghana be minimized?
24. How can Ghana increase its benefits from migration?