

# African Immigrants & Refugees in Illinois:

A Comprehensive Needs Assessment  
and Demographic Study

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## Executive summary

Following the attainment of Africa's political independence in the 1960s, economic downturn, political instability, socio-economic polarization, the pursuit of higher education and patterns of family reunification have led to high levels of out-migration from many African countries. This most recent wave of African migrants has arrived in increasing numbers in the United States in addition to common destinations such as Canada, Europe, Australia and other places outside Africa. In fact, more Africans entered the US between 2000 and 2005 than in the previous decade. It is estimated that 41 percent arrived between 2000 and 2005, compared with 15 percent of Caribbean/Latin American blacks and 22 percent of all foreign-born (American Community Survey 2005).

The African immigrant and refugee population in the US is also growing at a remarkable rate compared to foreign-born blacks from other regions (Kent 2007). An analysis of the 2005 American Community Survey reveals that Africans make up an increasing share of the black foreign-born in the US. Representing only 10 percent of the black foreign-born who entered the US before 1980, Africans accounted for the majority who entered in the first six years of the 2000 decade. Furthermore, as noted in the *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2005 Report to Congress*, nearly 30 percent of sub-Saharan Africans granted legal permanent residence between 2000 and 2006 entered as refugees or asylees. Indeed, sub-Saharan countries figure prominently in all refugees admitted between 1983 and 2005, especially since 2001.

Despite this increasingly visible presence of African immigrants and refugees in Illinois, there is a lack of exhaustive information on their socioeconomic status, demographic characteristics and service needs. And though the challenges and needs of recent African immigrants have been theoretically extrapolated from the experiences of immigrants from other regions, there is a persistent void of literature on post-colonial African immigrants and refugees. This is attributed to the fact that Africans have been largely excluded from research on issues confronting immigrant communities. Notwithstanding micro-studies done on a few country-specific African immigrant communities, data at the continental level is to a large extent tenuous. Until recently, a key impediment had been the absence of an overarching African organization, which made it difficult to develop a common agenda to address emerging service needs and challenges confronting African immigrants and refugees in Illinois. However, the formation of the United African Organization (UAO) in 2005 has created the necessary structure to coordinate research and public policy advocacy.

This study reports the current demographic characteristics of African immigrants in Illinois and in the process illuminates their needs and challenges. Specifically, the narrative unearths the demographic characteristics of immigrants and refugees, forms of migration and resettlement in the United States, community organization and assimilation patterns among African immigrants and refugees, citizenship and civic participation, ties with country of origin, challenges encountered by African students in universities and colleges, entrepreneurship and business development, overcoming ethnic and national division with an African consciousness and shared vision for community empowerment, as well as attitudes toward Africa and the work of the UAO to organize African immigrants and refugees in Illinois.

The study demonstrates that:

- Africans are the most educated immigrants in Illinois: 93.7% have high school diplomas and 53.2% have bachelors or graduate degrees.
- About 4 in 5 (79%) Africans have been in Illinois since their initial arrival in the United States.
- Compared to Latino, Asian, European and Caribbean immigrants, Africans are the fastest growing immigrant community in Illinois: 70.2% arrived in the period 1996–2008.
- 83.5% are between 16 – 50 years of age.
- About a third (32%) came to Illinois to pursue higher education; close to a quarter (24.8%) arrived here to reunite with family members who have been in Illinois much longer. Other reasons include getting out of poverty in Africa, avoiding political instability and religious persecution, while close to 4 percent won diversity lottery.
- Nearly 9 in 10 (87.5%) of African-owned businesses were established within the last five years, which indicates a community that seeks to establish permanent roots in Chicago and elsewhere in Illinois.
- For African immigrants and refugees that have lived in Illinois for less than five years, obtaining employment remains the biggest need. Among those that have been here for more than five years, the most pressing challenge reported is accessing jobs with better pay and benefits.
- Average annual income is \$43,945; 18.2% earn between \$36,000 and \$45,000; 17.3% make less than \$15,000 a year; and 64.4% do not make above \$45,000 a year.
- Compared to other Illinoisans with similar educational backgrounds, annual income of Africans does not reflect educational attainment and other socio-demographic indicators unearthed in the study. Underemployment and underutilization of knowledge and skills remain critical issues. It is apparent that other factors might be responsible for the discrepancy between income and socio-demographic characteristics.
- Most African students in U.S. tertiary institutions are not funded.
- African immigrants and refugees that migrated from Francophone and Lusophone African countries desire the establishment of English as a Second Language (ESL) programs through African community organizations.
- African immigrants and refugees in Illinois are very active in issues around civic engagement. Those that are naturalized United States citizens do register and vote in elections.

- The majority of African immigrants and refugees are not engaged in investment activities in the Illinois as a result of difficulty in garnering capital.
- They keep close ties with one another in Illinois through African community organizations, and also with relatives and friends in their countries of origin.
- The community is characterized by resilience and tenacious attachment to African traditional and cultural values, and profound concern for economic development in Africa.

Overall, this study sheds tremendous light on the needs and basic demographic characteristics of African immigrants and refugees, as well as their adjustment and adaptation to life in the United States. The study will, doubtlessly, strengthen the advocacy agenda of the United African Organization (UAO) and encourage African immigrants and refugees in other states to replicate the efforts of the UAO in Illinois. Furthermore, it will be a useful resource for agencies grappling with ways to design innovative programs or expand existing services in the growing African immigrant and refugee community in Illinois.

## **Background**

Migration and resettlement of humankind across large geographical and cultural boundaries is not a new phenomenon. The movement of people in and out of Africa can be traced to the origin of human species (Hammer et al 1998). Our ancestors first left Africa roughly 1.5 million years ago, initially settling in the Near East, and subsequently proceeded to Central, East, and South East Asia. Perhaps by 60, 000 years ago, they had arrived in Australia.

Human migration can assume a voluntary or involuntary form (Lee 1966). Adventure and the desire to explore, learn, and change scenery are major characteristics of voluntary migration prior to the era of globalization. An integral proportion of this wave of migration was more often than not, a domain of the economic and intellectual elite in urban African societies. However, this dynamic started to change in the mid 1970s as migrants from Africa to the West encapsulated all societal classes. From the latter period onwards, neoliberalism and its resultant structural adjustment of developing world economies, economic globalization, and intensification of poverty in Africa triggered major voluntary migration out of the continent (Ferguson 2006; Hatton and Williamson 2003). Political and religious unrest, ethnic hatred, warfare, famine and disease are among the major causes of involuntary migration (Figure 1).

In recent years, economic inertia, socio-economic polarization, political unrest, ethnic and religious strife, hatred and warfare have been the dominant stimulants of mass migration of Africans to the United States and Western Europe (Castles and Miller 2003). This scenario necessitated tremendous south-north transnational migration commencing in the late 1980s and became pronounced in the 1990s (Hatton and Williamson 2003). This development can also be explained within the framework of 'global citizenship' apparent in recent discourse on

neoliberalism (Ferguson 2006). It can be argued that the quest for a form of ‘global citizenship’ that is apparently absent in most developing countries and Africa in particular, have compelled Africans to migrate to North America in order to tap into the higher standard of living of the West, thus securing a form of global citizenship.

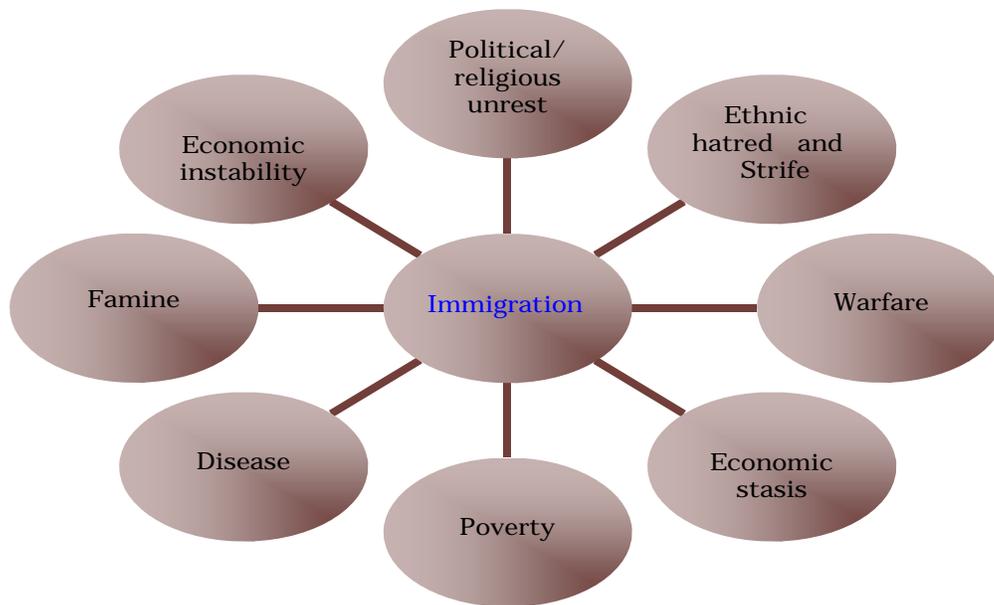


Figure 1: Push factors of recent migration to North America and Western Europe.

The recent transnational migration and resettlement of Africans, Latinos, Asians, Arabs, and Eastern Europeans into the United States and Western Europe is intimately tied to global economics and inequalities (Appadurai 1996, Portes et al 2005, Sassen 1991a. 2001). Today, most major cities in the United States enjoy an ethnic diversity never known in modern history (Nagel 1994). The diversity of cuisine in American cities bears witness to multiculturalism that has been precipitated by the forces of globalization. Although older ethnic enclaves have been part of the American urban landscape, it is arguable that the new immigrants are of a different kind. Most new immigrants to the United States originate from areas outside the traditional

source region in Europe. The majority of immigrants are from South and East Asia, Sub Saharan Africa, and Central and South America (Castles and Miller 2003, Portes et al 2005).

The earliest Africans in the Americas arrived over three centuries ago as involuntary chattel slaves. Voluntary immigration from Africa was rare until the last decade of the nineteenth century, when some 350 immigrants reportedly settled in the United States between 1891 and 1900 (Arthur 2000). About 31,000 Africans migrated to the United States between 1900 and 1960 (Gordon 1998). Following the attainment of African political independence in the 1960s, the trend of African immigration to the United States changed. This era witnessed Africans arriving in the United States primarily for higher educational opportunities. Many were sponsored by their governments and the United States. The majority completed their education and returned to their home countries.

When compared with earlier European immigrants, the majority of the post-1965 immigrants to North America have higher levels of education and professional attainment (Allen and Turner 1996). This trend is also reflected in post-colonial African immigrants to the United States vis-à-vis earlier immigrants. A large number of recent immigrants from Africa are skilled, well-educated occupants of high occupational niches in their countries of origin (Zelinsky and Lee 1998). In studying recent African immigrants to the United States, Speers (1994) indicated that close to 88 percent of African adults who migrated to the United States have a high school education or higher. This is higher compared to Asians (76%) and Central Americans (46%).

African migration patterns initially corresponded to colonial ties. Francophone Africans tended to immigrate to France and Belgium while Anglophone and Lusophone Africans immigrated to the United Kingdom and Portugal respectively. However, with the implementation of more

restrictive immigration policies in Western Europe and the implementation of the 1965 Family Reunification and Refugee law in the United States, African immigrants veered to North America (Djamba 1999). Many African migrants constitute a subset of the international migration of talent, otherwise labeled brain drain (Gordon 1998; Logan 1999). Migrants with skills in high demand in the West often quickly secure employment, gain residency, citizenship and gradually became integrated into American culture (Arthur 2000). These new residents are later joined by their spouses, parents, and even other family members.

Between 1970 and 1990, the number of immigrants from Africa to the United States increased fivefold (Arthur 2000; Myers 2004). Economic stasis, unemployment, underemployment, poverty, political instability, ethnic strife and civil wars, which became pronounced in the 1980s and 1990s, were the principle factors that triggered migration of Africans to North America (Adepoju 1998; Arthur 2000; Myers 2004). The number of documented African immigrants to the United States increased significantly between 1991 and 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). A similar scenario has been identified in Canada's African immigrant population since the 1960s. Prior to 1961, African immigrant population in Canada was under one percent of the total population; it increased to 3 percent between 1961 and 1970. The growth in African immigrant population within Canada nearly doubled between 1971 and 1980 constituting 5.8 percent of Canada's population (Opoku-Dapaah 1993). Furthermore, between 1991 and 2001, African immigrant population in Canada reached 7.6 percent.

Residential location of immigrants generally reflects their level of cultural and economic assimilation into mainstream North American society (Massey 1985). Several African groups have maintained conspicuous geographical and residential concentrations within major

metropolitan areas in North America. As a result of unfamiliarity with the region in their initial years, they tend to select central city locations in propinquity to employment zones. In addition, immigrants garner mutual support from one another especially in their initial years in the Diaspora. This is often demonstrated by a high level of inter-group solidarity among first generation immigrants.

An emerging body of recent scholarship, generally referred to as heterolocalism, has challenged the city location paradigm of new immigrant ethnic communities (Zelinsky and Lee 1998). Heterolocalism argues that recent populations of shared ethnic identity enter an area from distant places and quickly adopt a dispersed pattern of residential location, but at the same time maintain strong social cohesion through diverse means (Zelinsky and Lee 1998). Mechanisms through which African immigrants maintain social cohesion irrespective of wide spatial dispersion include staying within the networks of ethnic associations at the country, regional and micro levels. Telecommunications, visits and other methods of cohering with immigrants of the same country or region fosters social and cultural cohesion. This model challenges the well established opposing paradigms of assimilation and pluralistic schools of thoughts in explaining immigrant spatial behavior.

Immigrants to North America encounter numerous challenges especially in their initial years. The most significant challenge involves adjusting to a new culture and environment. These adjustments are done at the interpersonal and intrapsychic levels (Kim 1978, Padilla 1980). At the interpersonal level, immigrants must learn to relate well in interpersonal relationships, while at the intrapsychic level, they must learn to cope cognitively, attitudinally and behaviorally in a new cultural setting. Stress related to relocation is a pivotal issue immigrants have to grapple

with in their initial years in North America. These stresses include emotional and cultural conflicts, interpersonal conflicts, role conflicts, poor self-esteem and other stressors related to acculturation. Relocation-related changes produce psychological, spiritual, affective and cognitive consequences (Kamya 2001).

African immigrants utilize a number of avenues created by older immigrants in coping with the challenges of relocating and adjusting within North America (Holtzman 2000, Stoller 2002). Senegalese virtual villages in New York City is a case in point where informal networks of employment have been established to partially assist new immigrants from Senegal in meeting their welfare needs during their initial years in the United States. Furthermore, there are a number of African immigrant associations at the national level as well as at micro levels. These associations perform several functions, including economic, psychological, cultural and political support (Arthur 2000). African immigrants are assisted during periods of crisis such as illness or death, and in some instances in the payment of legal expenses. The associations disseminate information about job prospects and access to capital for setting up businesses. There is a strong emphasis of unity among members, protecting and projecting ancestral cultures, providing support to members in times of need, and connecting them with development projects at home (Atta-Poku 1993).

## **Methodology**

### Data collection:

The study was conducted in Illinois with a large percentage of respondents coming from Cook County as it accounts for 43.3 percent of the state's population (figure 2).

Primary data was solicited through administration of a detailed questionnaire (see appendix).

The survey instrument was designed to capture quantitative and qualitative information. The survey was administered between January and April 2008. Population of the sample was randomly drawn from the African immigrant and refugee community in Illinois. Simple random sampling technique was used to target the study population (Cochran 1977, Miller and Salkind 2002). The survey targeted 200 respondents with a receipt success of 160 respondents.

Minimum age of respondents is 16 years.

### Data analysis:

Data was analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics, multiple linear regression modeling and vector Geographic Information System- GIS. Descriptive statistics encompasses percentage frequency distribution tables, measures of central tendency, graphs and charts. Qualitative data was summarized and inferences drawn from the data. A multiple linear regression model was executed to examine the influence of a total of seven independent variables on respondents' annual income (Cohen 2003, Neter et al, 1996). Independent variables entered into the model encompasses year of migration to the United States, educational attainment, gender, age, marital status, occupation and immigrant status.

Vector Geographic Information Systems was employed to demonstrate the spatio-temporal patterns of migration of African immigrants and refugees into Illinois and also to illustrate the spatial distribution of respondents per zip code within the city of Chicago (ESRI, 2006).

### Illinois African Immigrant Sampled Population By Zip Code

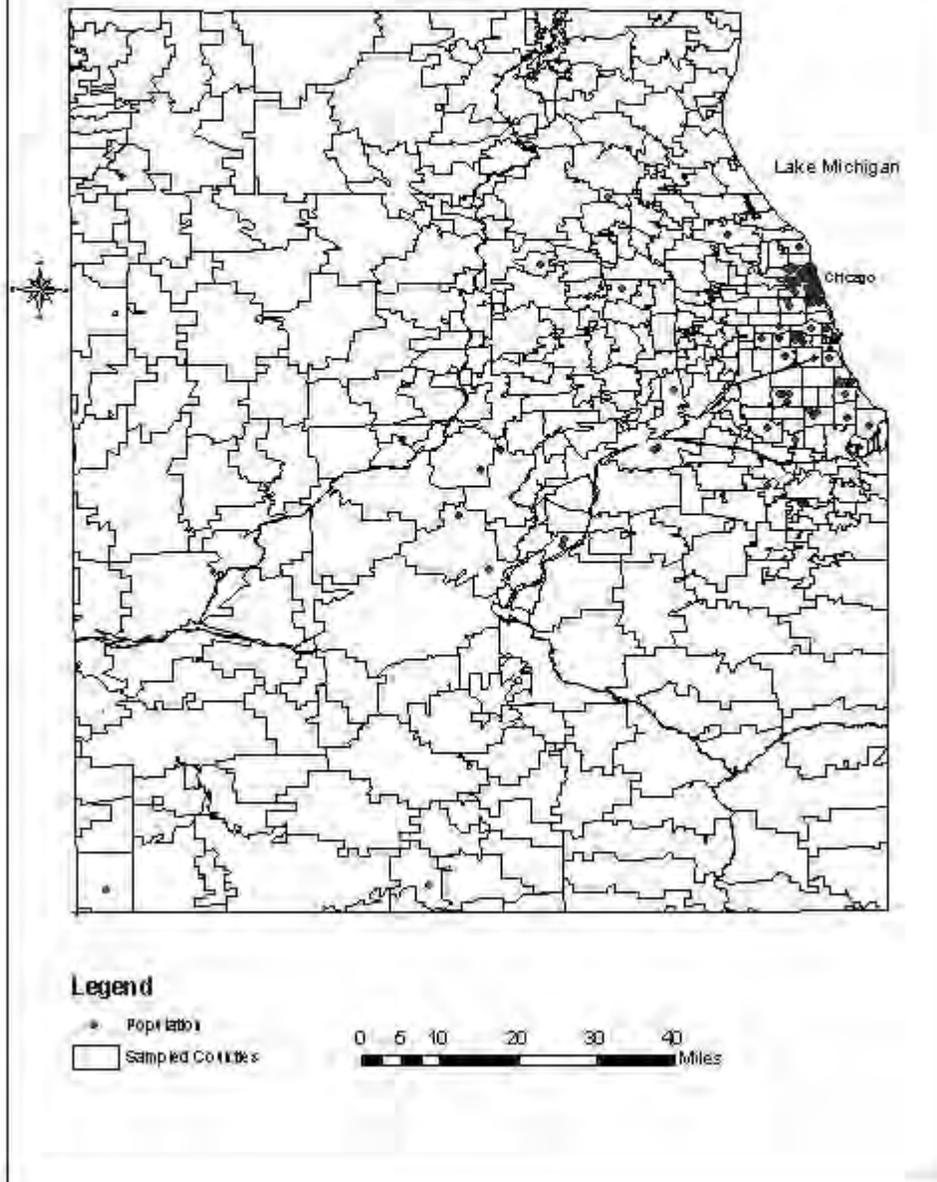


Figure 2. Spatial distribution of part of the sample population.

## Results of Study

The findings of this study are presented and discussed in sections. Section one examines the demographic characteristics of African immigrants and refugees targeted in the study. Section two explores the patterns of migration and resettlement of African immigrants and refugees into Illinois. The patterns of community organization and assimilation among African immigrants and refugees are examined in section three. Section four discusses the needs and challenges of African immigrants and refugees in Illinois. Section five elucidates ties that African immigrants and refugees have with their countries of origin. Section six examines business investments that African immigrants and refugees have in the United States. Section seven unearths citizen and civic participation among African immigrants who are naturalized U.S. citizens. Section eight outlines challenges encountered by African students in US tertiary institutions.

### Section 1: Demographic characteristics

#### Gender:

In the study, gender distribution is almost equal as males constitute a little over half (50.6 %) of the sampled population, while females comprise 49.4 percent as demonstrated in table 1.

**Table 1: Distribution of Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	81	50.6
Female	79	49.4
Total	160	100

Source: Author's survey data.

#### Age:

Age is a pivotal marker in demographic characteristics, and in the study respondents' age range between 16 and 72 years. Average age of respondents is 40 years. The majority of respondents fall between age range 26 to 30 years (19 %). This was followed by age range 46 to 50 years

(16.6%). The least reported age range is not surprisingly above 60 years, which constitutes a miniscule fraction of the sample population (Table 2).

**Table 2: Age distribution**

Age range (years)	F	%
16-20	4	3.3
21-25	8	6.6
26-30	23	19
31-35	12	9.9
36-40	16	13.2
41-45	18	14.9
46-50	20	16.6
51-55	7	5.8
56-60	10	8.3
61-65	1	0.8
66-70	1	0.8
71-75	1	0.8
Total	121	100

NR= 39. Source: Author's survey data.

**Marital Status:**

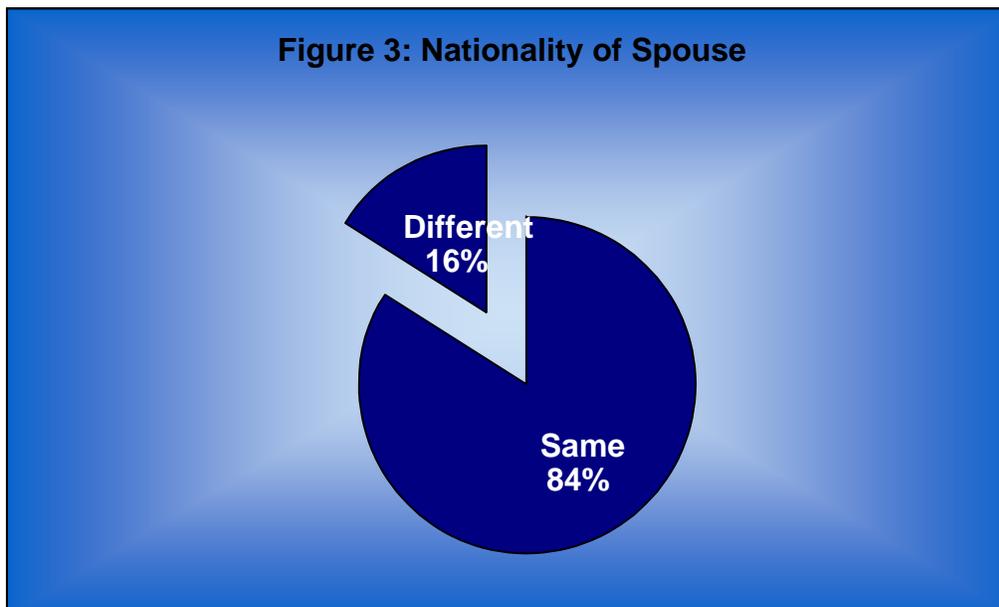
On the question of marital status, over six in ten of the sample population (62.5%) are married. This was followed by those who are single (26.9%). Divorce rate is low (3.7%), which substantiates the fact that the institution of marriage is extremely important in African culture. It is interesting to note the very low divorce rate among African immigrants and refugees in the United States, which has one of the highest divorce rates in the world (55%). Cases of cohabitation are extremely low (1.3%). This is attributed to cultural ties that tend to discourage cohabitation and imbue the institution of marriage among African immigrants and refugees. Table 3 illustrates distribution of marital status among the study population.

**Table 3: Marital status**

Marital status	F	%
Married	100	62.5
Cohabitation	2	1.3
Single	43	26.9
Separated	6	3.7
Divorced	6	3.7
Widow/widower	3	1.9
Total	160	100

Source: Author's survey data.

The study further probed into the nationality and race of spouses of the sample population. Over four-fifths (84%) of respondents are married to a spouse from their country of origin (figure 3). Studies have shown that this has to do with the preservation of cultural ties (Konadu-Agyemang et al., 2001). Among those that are married to spouses other than their country of origin, half of this figure are married to Americans while 44% are married to people from other countries in Africa. There was one case of an African immigrant that is married to an Asian. Those who are married to Americans tend to marry more whites than African Americans (7 in 10).



Source: Author's survey data.

Education:

The African immigrant population is among one of the most educated in the western world (Speer 1994). The data demonstrate that over a quarter of respondents have graduate degrees (26%). Modal educational attainment is bachelor's degree (27.2%). Over half of the study population has university degrees (53.2%) as demonstrated in table 4. Prior to 1991, most immigrants from Africa migrated to the United States for educational purposes (Arthur 2000). This is demonstrated by the high number of respondents with university degrees. In addition, Africans have a strong desire for education as manifested in the high reported cases of educational attainment.

**Table 4: Educational attainment**

<b>Education</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Graduate/professional degree	41	26
Bachelors degree	43	27.2
Associate degree	15	9.5
Some college (no degree)	30	19
High school graduate	16	10.1
9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	7	4.4
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	6	3.8
total	158	100

NR=2. Source: Author's survey data.

Religion:

Religion is a central aspect of African social and cultural life. In the study, four-fifths (84.4%) of the sampled population identified themselves as Christians, while Moslems accounted for a significant proportion of the remaining. This distribution is not reflective of religious configurations within Africa as traditional religions and practices account for a relatively large portion of African religions. The pattern of religious distribution exhibited in this study can be attributed to the influence of western religious practices which is dominated by Christianity.

**Table 5: Religious distribution**

Religion	F	%
Christianity	135	84.4
Islam	21	13.1
Buddhism	2	1.3
Traditional	1	0.6
None	1	0.6
Total	160	100

Source: Author's survey data.

#### Country of Origin:

Table 6 illustrates the country of origin of the sample population. Some Africans happen to have been born outside of the African continent but still self-identify themselves as Africans. The sample distribution does not reflect population distribution within the continent of Africa with the exception of Nigeria, which accounted for close to a third (30%) of the study population and has the highest population in Africa. This distribution can be attributed to the relatively low number of Africans in the Midwest compared to the northeastern states. The African immigrant and refugee population in the Midwest constitutes 13 percent of the African population in the United States, which ranked at the bottom layer compared to the south, northeast and west (Logan and Deane 2003).

**Table 6: Nationality of respondents.**

Nationality	F	%
Algeria	1	0.7
Benin	1	0.6
Cameroon	2	1.3
D.R. Congo	4	2.5
Egypt	1	0.6
Eritrea	4	2.6
Ethiopia	27	17.2
Ghana	30	19.1
Kenya	11	7

Liberia	10	6.4
Nigeria	47	30
Sierra Leone	12	7.6
Sudan	3	2
United Kingdom	1	0.6
U.S.A	2	1.3
Canada	1	0.6
Total	157	100

NR=3. Source: Author's survey data.

Immigration Status:

Immigration status is also an extremely important issue among immigrants in the United States. Regarding the status of immigrants among the study population, most are United States naturalized citizens (40%). The latter is followed by permanent residents (table 7). There are some cases of undocumented immigrants (5.6%). Table 7 shows the distribution of immigration status among the study population.

**Table 7: Immigration status**

<b>Immigrant status</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Naturalized citizen	64	40
Resident	60	37.5
Employment visa	8	5
Asylum	7	4.4
Student	4	2.5
Refugee	8	5
Undocumented	9	5.6
Total	160	100

Source: Author's survey data.

The arrival of refugees from Africa to the United States gained relative momentum following brutal civil wars in west, east and to some extent southern Africa. These conflicts became pronounced in the 1980s and 1990s culminating in massive refugee outflow from the affected countries. The refugee population in the study constitutes 5 percent of the sample (Table 7).

Occupation:

The occupational distribution of the study population spans a plethora of employment types, including the largest category of professionals (27.2%). The second most common occupation among the sample population is Certified Nurse Assistants (23.1%). Other common occupations among African immigrants and refugees in Illinois include cab driving (10.5%) and social services (4.2%) as demonstrated in table 8.

**Table 8: Employment distribution.**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Cab driver	15	10.5
Nurse	33	23.1
Baby sitter	4	2.8
Sales	4	2.8
Factory worker	3	2.1
Health outreach	1	0.7
Professional	39	27.2
Social services	6	4.2
Cashier	2	1.4
House cleaner	2	1.4
Hotel cleaning worker	1	0.7
Waitress	1	0.7
Janitor	3	2.1
Security guard	4	2.8
Garage/ parking attendant	1	0.7
Translator	2	1.4
Self employed	1	0.7
Priest	1	0.7
Teacher	1	0.7
Unemployed	12	8.4
House wife	1	0.7
Technician	1	0.7
Railroad clerk	1	0.7
Clinical trial monitor	1	0.7
Student	1	0.7
Business	2	1.4
Total	143	100

NR= 16. NA=1. Source: Author's survey data.

#### Household makeup:

The study investigated the size of households among African immigrants and refugees, including the number of kids and wards. The results are summarized in tables 9 and 10. The household size in the study population ranges from one to ten people while the average household size is 3.7 persons. The average household size of African immigrants and refugees in the study is three persons (18.4%). This was closely followed by households with four people (17.7%). The household size of above six individuals is uncommon among the study population (2.5 percent and less). Table 9 presents and summarizes the results of household size among respondents.

Household size dynamic among African immigrants is different vis-à-vis the continent of Africa. The average household size for urban Africa is 4.9 persons while the rural family household size is estimated at 5.3 (World Bank 1997).

**Table 9: Household size.**

Household size	F	%
1	25	15.8
2	22	13.9
3	29	18.4
4	28	17.7
5	28	17.7
6	17	10.8
7	4	2.5
8	3	2
9	1	0.6
10	1	0.6
Total	158	100

NR=2. Source: Author's survey data.

The relatively lower household size in Illinois compared to that exemplified in Africa can be attributed to the westernization and urbanization African immigrants and refugees have been exposed to in the United States. In addition, the strong influence of the extended family system among Africans can be better operationalized in Africa compared to the United States due to differentials in institutions and infrastructures.

**Table 10: Distribution of children and wards.**

Kids	F	%
0	52	32.5
1	20	12.5
2	30	18.7
3	27	16.9
4	23	14.4
5	6	3.8
6	1	0.6
7	1	0.6
Total	160	100

Source: Author's survey data.

The number of children and dependents that are cared for among the study population ranges from one to seven. The average number of children and wards per household is 2.7. Over 3 in 10 (32.5%) respondents do not have children and wards in the United States. The average number of children and wards that is reported in the study is 2 (18.7%). Households with more than four children and wards are uncommon in the study. The small number of children and wards exemplified by the African immigrant and refugee population in Illinois can be attributed to education, westernization and urbanization.

Almost all of the study population reported that household members are related. Clusters of African traditional patterns are exemplified by strong national and ethnic presence in urban areas in North America especially among first generation and some second generation immigrants. Africans tend to establish networks among themselves in order to preserve socio-cultural traits, which points to the assertion that Africans acculturate but do not assimilate (Arthur 2000).

Housing type:

The study also investigated the type of housing in which African immigrants and refugees reside. The result is summarized in table 11. The study population resides in almost all the conventional house types that are present in the United States. The majority of respondents resided in single family housing (37.1%), which was closely followed by rental apartments (36.5%). Table 11 illustrates the rest of housing types inhabited by the study population.

**Table 11: Distribution of housing type.**

Housing type	F	%
Single family (owner occupied)	59	37.1
Single family (renter occupied)	18	11.3
Rental apartment	58	36.5
Condominium (owner occupied)	14	8.8

Condominium (renter occupied)	2	1.3
Studio	8	5
Total	159	100

NR=1. Source: Author's survey data

## Section 2: Patterns of migration and resettlement

The research probed into the time period African immigrants and refugees started arriving in the United States. The earliest arrival time of respondents recorded in the study is 1969. The proportion of the study population that arrived in the earliest time period constitutes 1.3 percent (table 12). The majority of the sample population arrived in the United States between the period 1996 to 2000; the latter cohort comprises a third of the study population (table 12). United States Census data has demonstrated that most immigrants outside the traditional source area of Europe arrived in the United States between 1990 and 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). Next in the hierarchy of arrival are those that migrated to the United States between 2001 and 2005. Most of the people in this category were affected by political upheavals in their respective African countries of origin.

**Table 12: Distribution of period of arrival of Africans in the U.S.**

Period of arrival	F	%
1965-1970	2	1.3
1971-1975	4	2.6
1976-1980	5	3.3
1981-1985	9	5.8
1986-1990	7	4.5
1991-1995	19	12.3
1996-2000	52	33.8
2001-2005	36	23.4
2006- 2008	20	13
Total	154	100

NA= 4. NR= 2. Source: Author's survey data.

The data show a steady increase of inflow among African immigrants and refugees between the period 1965 to 1970 and 1981 to 1985. This was followed by a slight decrease between the period 1986 and 1990. Following this time epoch, migration of Africans into the United States sky rocketed and reached its peak in the period 1996 to 2000. This trend veered after 2000 when

the inflow of African immigrants and refugees ebb by 30.8 percent. This decline can be attributed to changes in United States immigration policies following the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attack.

The research also probed into the reasons for Africans migrating to the United States. The results are summarized and presented in table 13. The most important reason reported for migrating to the United States is to acquire state-of-the-art education (32%). Close to a quarter (24.8%) of the study population migrated to the United States to reunite with family members who have been in the region much longer. The latter accounted for the second most important reason for migrating to the United States. Other reasons given include getting out of poverty in Africa, avoiding political instability and religious persecution, while close to 4 percent won in the diversity lottery conducted yearly by the National Visa Center.

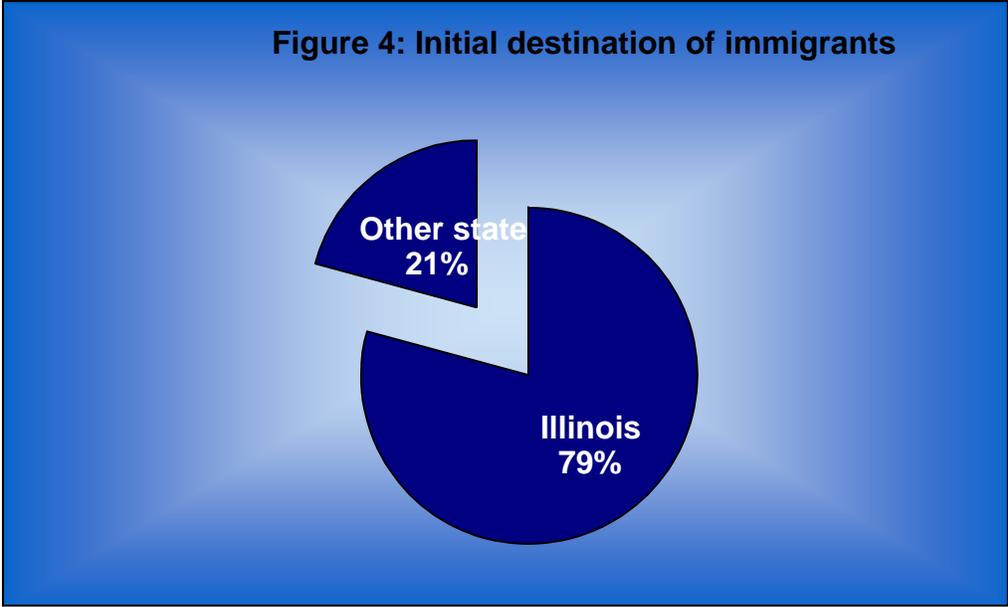
**Table 13: Reasons for migrating to the US**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Education	50	32
Family reunification	39	24.8
Political	30	19.1
Economic	27	17.2
Education & family reunification	1	0.6
Religious	1	0.6
Diversity lottery	6	3.9
Political & economic	2	1.2
Marriage	1	0.6
Total	157	100

NA=3. Source: Author's survey data.

The research also probed whether Illinois was the initial destination of African immigrants and refugees when they initially arrived in the United States. Close to 4 in 5 (79%) respondents have been in Illinois since their initial arrival in the United States (figure 4). Others moved into

Illinois from other parts of the country. Many reasons were given for relocating to Illinois. A large fraction of the respondents disclosed that they moved to Illinois from other areas of the country for employment purposes (46.9%). This was followed by those who moved to Illinois to reunite with family members.



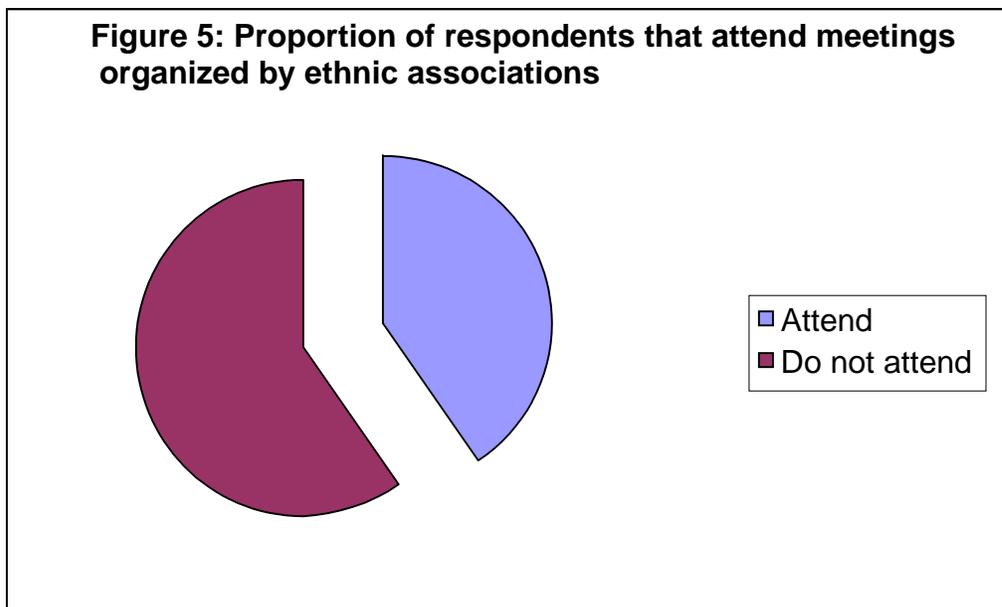
Source: Author’s survey data.

Thirdly, some other respondents moved into Illinois for educational purposes. Other reasons given for relocating to Illinois include the high livability exemplified by the city of Chicago compared to their initial destinations, while some respondents got married to spouses that lived in Illinois.

**Section 3: Community organization**

The city of Chicago and the state of Illinois have a high representation of immigrants from Africa currently residing in the Midwest. Most of these immigrant groups have country organizations wherein social and cultural issues, including the welfare of citizens in the United

States and country of origin, are addressed. The study investigated the extent of association that respondents exhibit with these ethnic organizations that are not from their country of origin.



Source: Author's survey data.

Majority of the sample population reported not attending meetings organized by ethnic organizations other than the one from their country of origin (59.7%). The proportion that associates with organizations that are from a country other than theirs is 40.3 percent as demonstrated by figure 5.

The study further explored the number of country associations respondents are affiliated with. Table 14 summarizes the results. Among the sample population that reported attending meetings organized by country organizations other than the one of their country of origin, over four in ten (45.3%) associated themselves with one ethnic organization. It is interesting to note that over a quarter of respondents (26.6%) associate themselves with more than three country organizations. This result illustrates that African immigrants and refugees are highly interested in larger issues across the continent of Africa.

**Table 14: Number of country based ethnic associations respondents are affiliated with.**

<b>Countries</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
One	29	45.3
Two	12	18.7
Three	6	9.4
More than three	17	26.6
Total	64	100

NA= 96. Source: Author's survey data.

The research probed into the frequency of respondents attending meetings organized by ethnic associations. Most respondents attend meetings periodically (46.9%) rather than regularly (32.8%). A fifth of those that report attending meetings do so on a rare basis.

**Table 15: Regularity of attending meetings.**

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Regularly	21	32.8
At times	30	46.9
Rarely	13	20.3
Total	64	100

NA = 96. Source: Author's survey data.

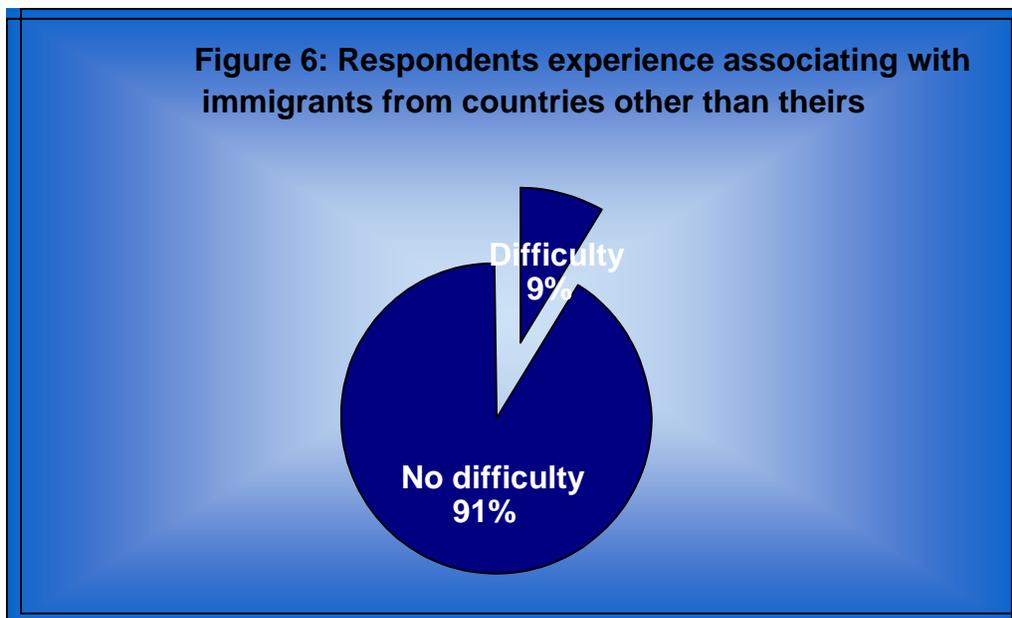
The study investigated reasons for the non-affiliation of some respondents to ethnic organizations. The majority of the sample population stated they were oblivious of the existence of these country organizations and never thought about participating in activities organized by these organizations (37.8%). However, they exhibited strong desire to commence interacting with other country organizations. The second most reported reason for not attending meetings is the very busy work schedule of some respondents (35.9%). Only a small fraction (4.2%) reported that they do not interact with Africans other than those from their country of origin.

**Table 16: Reasons for not attending meetings.**

Reason	F	%
Time factor	34	35.9
Don't resonate with other Africans	4	4.2
Unaware	34	37.8
None	21	22.1
Other	2	2
Total	95	100

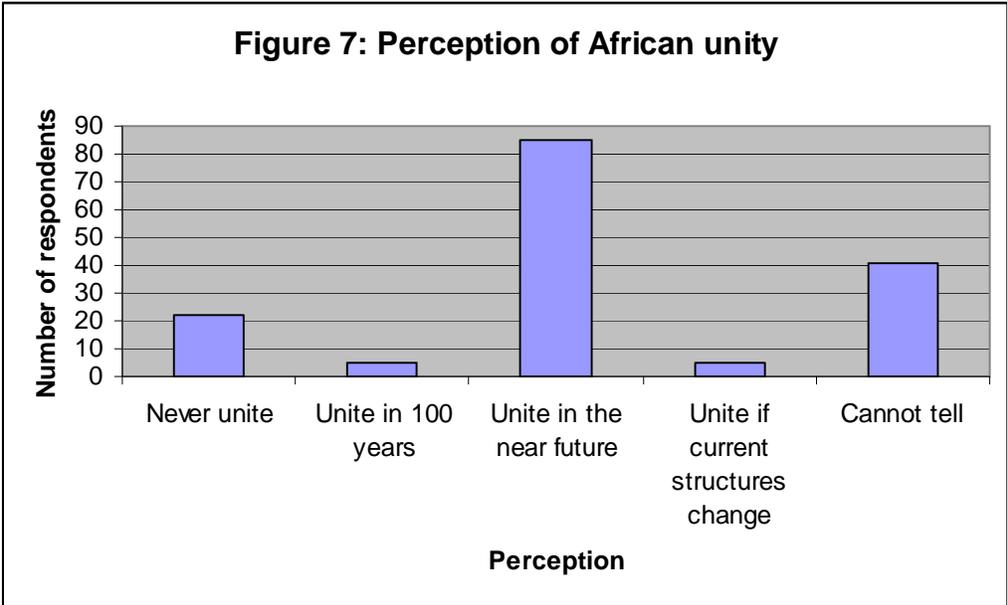
NR=1. Source: Author's survey data.

As a result of the diverse languages and cultures of Africa, the study probed whether African immigrants and refugees experience difficulty associating with Africans from countries different from the one of their origin. The result of this phenomenon is summarized in figure 6. Over 9 in 10 (91%) respondents reported relating with other Africans amicably. Of the small proportion that experience some difficulty in associating with other Africans, the majority point to language barrier in terms of Anglophone and Francophone differentials in language (64.2%). Other factors reported include cultural differences, different political orientation, and strong attachment to their country of origin with little or no provision to accommodate Africans from other countries.



Source: Author's survey data.

Efforts have been made towards the unification of Africa, especially in the immediate post-colonial era. However, most of those efforts did not yield the expected dividend. Regional economic blocks have been largely inefficient in actualizing Africa’s political and economic unification. In this direction, the study probed into respondents’ perception in relation to the unification of Africa.

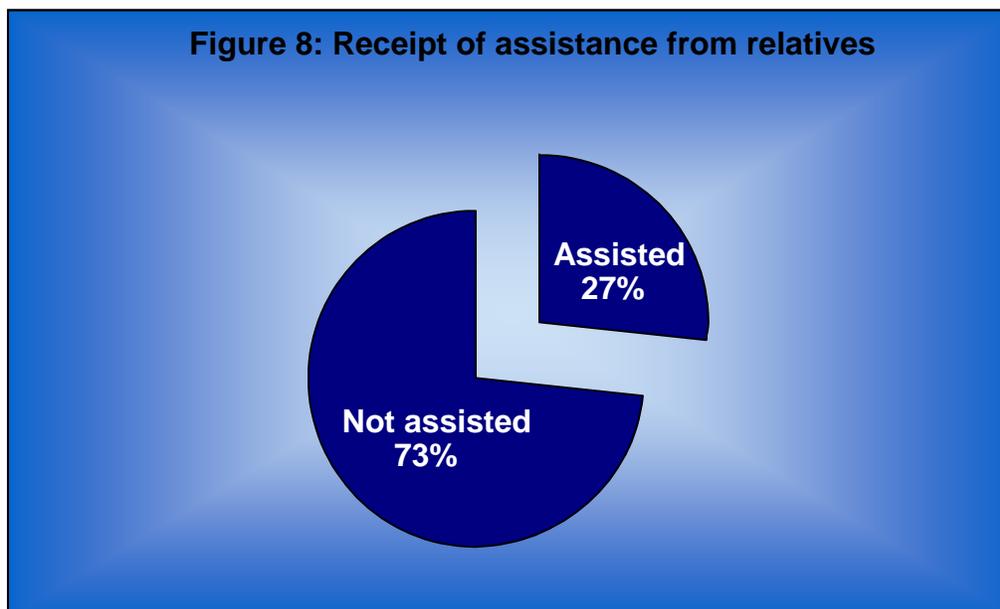


Source: Author’s survey data.

Over half of the study population (53.8%) expressed optimism about African unity in the near future (figure 7). Others are of the opinion that Africa will unite but will take at least 100 years. Some, however, expressed pessimistic views on the issue of African unity (13.9%). Yet a smaller fraction took a conditional position stating that the continent will only unite if current internal political and external geopolitical structures changed positively to accommodate languages, values and political systems exemplified by countries on the continent. The extent of time this will take to materialize is unknown by the study population.

## Section 4: Needs and challenges of African immigrants and refugees

The study investigated the needs of members of the African immigrant and refugee community in Illinois. In exploring this issue, a number of questions were put forward to respondents in soliciting their needs and also gauging the extent of those needs that are currently being met. Respondents were asked if they receive any form of financial or related assistance from their relatives. A large fraction of the study population (73%) reported that they do not receive financial or related assistance from their relatives (figure 8).



Source: Author's survey data.

**Table 17: Extent of help received from relatives.**

Extent of help	F	%
Substantial	17	40.5
Moderate	17	40.5
Small	8	19
Total	42	100

NA= 116. NR= 2.

Source: Author's survey data.

Among those reported receiving help from relatives, 40 percent receive substantial assistance while a similar fraction receives a moderate form of assistance. Less than one in five (19%) stated that they receive very little assistance from their relatives (table 17).

The study further probed into the avenue of help desired by the African immigrant and refugee community. The results are summarized and presented in table 18. On the aspect of avenue of help desired, majority of the sample population (35.7%) stated they prefer receiving help from a family member while others revealed their preference for help from their spouse rather than other family members (17.8%). The rest of the study population prefers assistance from a place of worship, ethnic association and friends respectively (table 18).

**Table 18: Avenue of help desired by respondents.**

<b>Preferred source of help</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Ethnic association	20	15.5
Friends	19	14.7
Family member	46	35.7
Church/place of worship	21	16.3
Spouse	23	17.8
Total	129	100

NA= 27. NR= 4. Source: Author's survey data.

The survey further investigated the most important needs in the lives of respondents. Financial need is the most commonly reported in the study (47.3%). This was followed by exchange of ideas among African immigrant and refugee community in terms of getting acquainted with different cultures, business opportunities and other aspects of development. Access to healthcare ranked third among the pressing needs of African immigrants and refugees in Illinois (11.5%). Other salient needs expressed include work permit/ employment issues (10.8%), regularization of immigration status (10.1%) and assistance with preparation of taxes (4.1%). A significant number of Francophone and Lusophone Africans in the study population expressed a strong

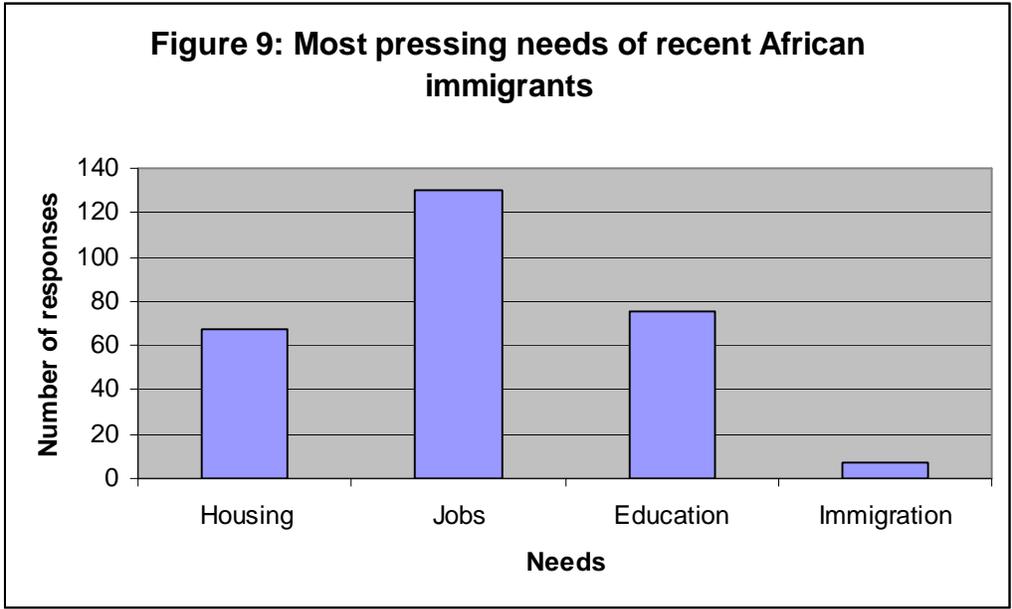
desire to learn English through English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in the community.

**Table 19: Most pressing need among African immigrants and refugees.**

<b>Most pressing need</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Financial	70	47.3
Work permit/employment	16	10.8
Health services	17	11.5
Immigration	15	10.1
Exchange of ideas	21	14.2
Taxes	6	4.1
Other	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100</b>

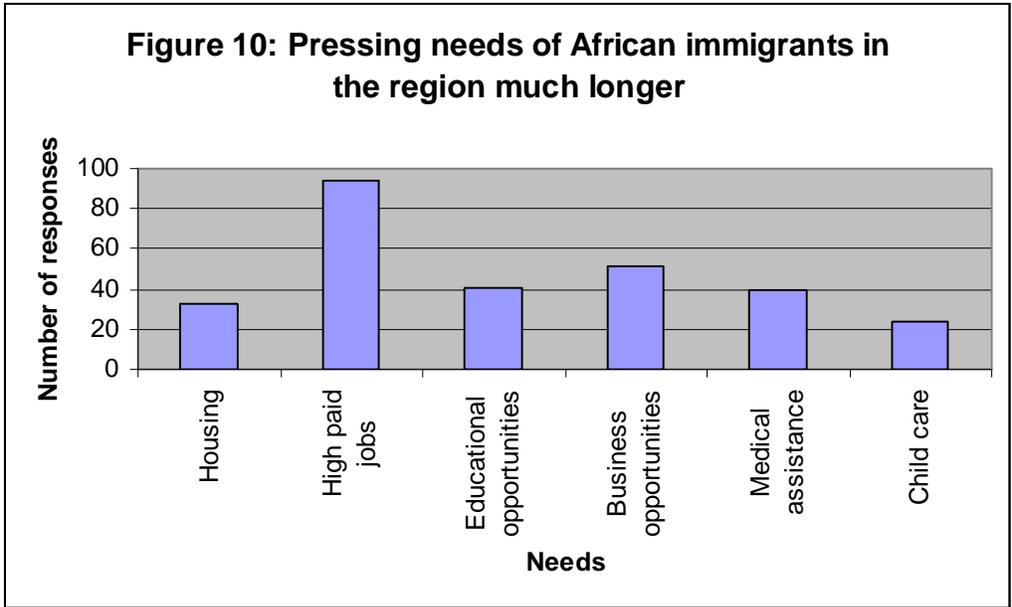
NA= 8. NR= 4. Source: Author's survey data.

The research also probed into the most pressing needs faced by recent African immigrants in the region. Recent African immigrants and refugees were defined as those who have been in the United States under five years. Figure 9 summarizes and illustrates the result. The most important need of recent African immigrants and refugees is obtaining employment, which is followed by access to higher educational institutions (including obtaining funding and services that accompany tertiary education). Housing and immigration-related issues emerged as important needs among recent African immigrants and refugees.



Source: Author's survey data.

The study also unearths the most important needs of African immigrants and refugees that have been in the region for more than five years (Figure 10). Obtaining high paid jobs happens to be the most significant need of the African community in this category. Next in the hierarchy of need is putting modalities in place to establish businesses. Other pressing needs of African immigrants and refugees that have been in the U.S. for more than five years include access to educational opportunities, medical assistance, housing and child care in that order of magnitude.



Source: Author's survey data.

## Section 5: Ties to country of origin

Ties to countries of origin were also captured in the study. Respondents were asked to report the frequency of visit they make to their home countries. The result of the latter is summarized and presented in table 20.

**Table 20: Frequency of visit to county of origin.**

Frequency of visit	F	%
More than twice yearly	6	3.8
Twice yearly	5	3.2
Yearly	15	9.6
Every other year	42	26.9
Not yet visited	77	49.4
Other	11	7.1
Total	156	100

NR=4. Source: Author's survey data.

Close to a half of the sample population have not been to their home country since their arrival in the United States. Financial and other immigration logistics were reported as impediments. Over a quarter of the study population (26.9%) visit their country of origin every other year. This was

followed by those that visit yearly (9.6%), and also those who do not visit regularly (7.1%). A small fraction of the sample population visit more than once yearly (7%).

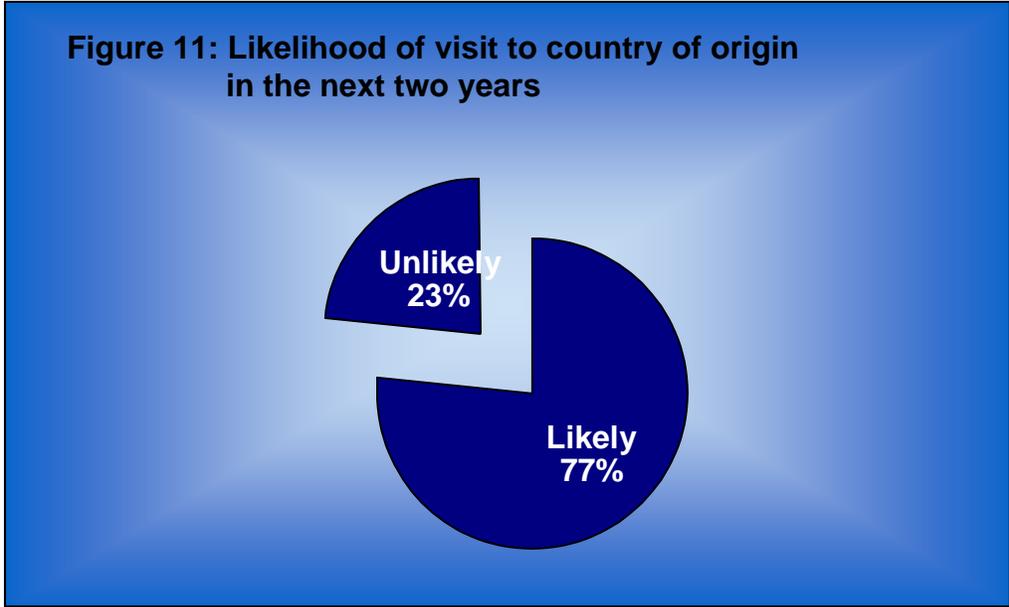
In addition to frequency of visits, the research investigated reasons for making visits to Africa (table 21). Over 7 in 10 respondents visit their home countries for vacation and family reunification (74.7%). The second most important reason for making visits to Africa is to attend family functions other than weddings and funerals (12.6%). A small proportion of those that visit the continent do so for research purposes (1.3%). With regards to trips related to investment, only 1.3 percent of those that make visits to Africa are in this category. The latter demonstrates that African immigrants and refugees invest very little in their home countries.

**Table 21: Reasons for making visits to home country.**

<b>Purpose of visit</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Vacation	59	74.7
Funeral	5	6.3
Wedding	3	3.8
Other family function	10	12.6
Business	1	1.3
Other	1	1.3
Total	79	100

NA = 81. Source: Author's survey data.

Among those that have never visited their home countries since being in the United States, an overwhelming 77 percent stated their likelihood of visiting in the next two years. Others are of the opinion that they will visit but might take longer than two years (Figure 11).



Source: Author's survey data.

In investigating the extent of interaction that African immigrants and refugees have with their home country, the study unearthed the frequency of making telephone calls and sending e-mails to friends and relatives in Africa. The results of this is summarized and illustrated in table 22.

**Table 22: Frequency of communicating with home country.**

Frequency of communication	F	%
More than once weekly	46	29.5
Weekly	39	25
Every other week	17	10.9
Monthly	18	11.5
Occasionally	33	21.2
Never	3	1.9
Total	156	100

NR=4. Source: Author's survey data.

The results demonstrate that majority of respondents keep close contact with relatives and friends in their home country. The latter is exhibited by communicating with the home country more than once weekly (29.5%). This was closely followed by those who communicate weekly (25%). Nearly all of the sample population do send e-mails and make telephone calls to their country of origin with the exception of a miniscule proportion (1.9%).

Studies have demonstrated that immigrants from developing countries in the recent Diaspora mainly contribute to their home country's national income through remittances (Mohan and Zack-Williams 2002). The study probed into the frequency of making remittances to the home country by the African immigrant and refugee population in Illinois. The data show that majority of the study population remit money during cases of emergency. This includes health emergencies, funeral and other unforeseen contingencies that demand imminent financial responses. Others make remittances on a monthly basis (26.3%). The rest of the sample population remits money every other month, during important public holiday season like Christmas; while a very small proportion (1.5%) rarely make remittances (table 23).

**Table 23: Frequency of making remittances to home country.**

<b>Frequency of remittances</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
More than once monthly	20	14.6
Monthly	36	26.3
Every other month	25	18.2
Whenever need arises	11	8
Emergency	39	28.5
Holidays	4	2.9
Other	2	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100</b>

NA= 21. NR= 2. Source: Author's survey data.

Respondents disclosed making remittances to their countries of origin for a number of reasons, which include providing for immediate family welfare (35.8%), parent's welfare (27%), and extended family welfare (19%). A relatively smaller fraction of the study population sends money to assist friends or pay tuition for other family members. On the aspect of business, less than 1 percent of the sample population remits money for investment purposes (table 24). Some of the respondents stated they remit money for all types of occasions with the exception of investment purposes.

**Table 24: Reasons for making remittances.**

Reasons	F	%
Parents welfare	37	27
Immediate family welfare	49	35.8
Extended family welfare	26	19
Assist friends	3	2.2
Business/investment	1	0.7
Other	21	15.3
Total	137	100

NA=21. NR= 2. Source: Author's survey data.

Relatives and friends residing in developing countries have very high expectations for their family members and friends in the western world. The research investigated the extent of financial expectations that relations and friends have for African immigrants and refugees in Illinois. Close to half of the study population (48.7%) reported that the financial expectations of their family members and friends were very high. More than one in five (23.1%) respondents stated that there is an average financial expectation for them in their countries of origin. The rest of the study population intimated that the financial expectation is unsubstantial, while some others reported that there is no financial expectation for them (table 25).

**Table 25: Financial expectations of family members in Africa**

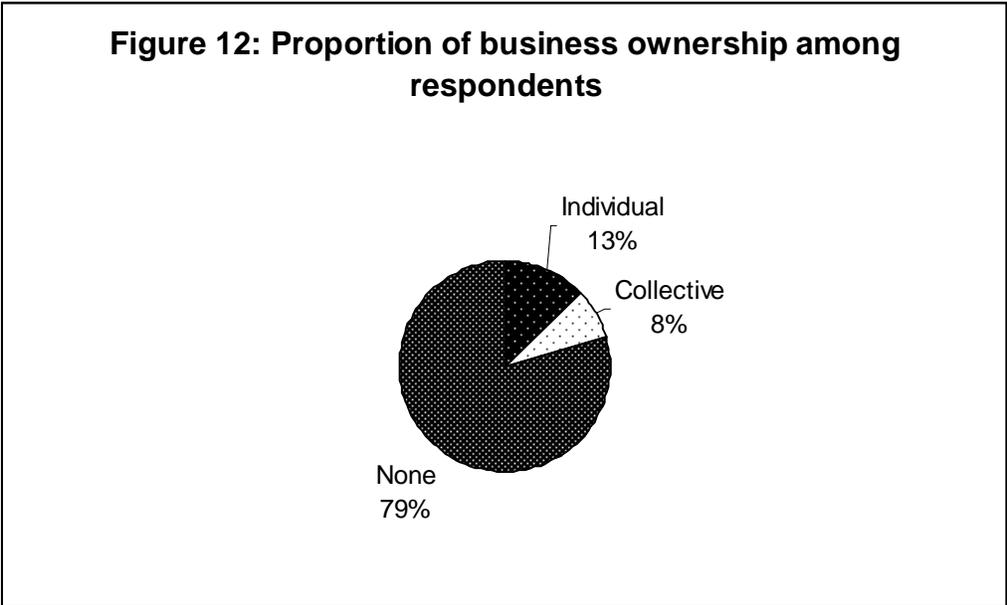
Expectation	F	%
Considerable	76	48.7
Average	36	23.1
Nothing substantial	21	13.5
Nothing	23	14.7
Total	156	100

NR=4. Source: Author's survey data.

## **Section 6: General investment and socio-economic status**

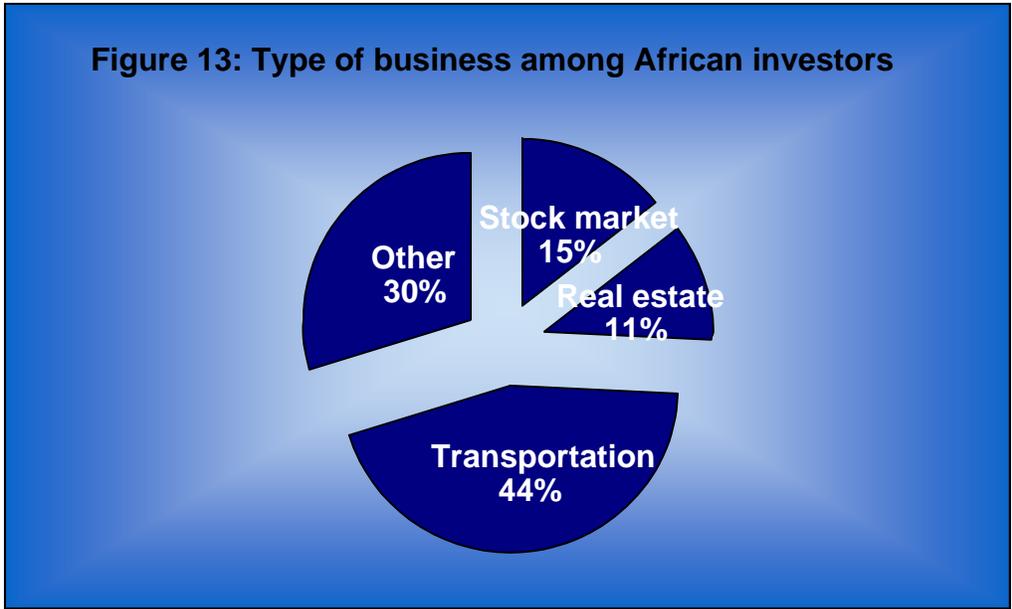
Socio-economic status is one of the most important hallmarks employed in calibrating the success of individuals in society. The study attempted to gauge socio-economic status of African immigrants and refugees in Illinois and also probed into the nature of investment made in the

United States. Firstly, respondents were asked whether they own a business in the United States either individually or collectively. Figure 12 shows that close to four-fifths (79%) of the sample population are not engaged in business investment in the United States. Thirteen percent (13%) of respondents are sole investors of their businesses while eight percent (8%) are in partnership investment.



Source: Author’s survey data.

The study further unearths the area of investments African immigrant and refugees are engaged in. Many respondents invest in the taxi industry (44%), which helps to explain an increase in the number of Africans with taxi medallions and the emergence of several African-owned cab companies such as Choice Taxi and Gold Coast Cab Drivers Association. Investment in the taxi industry is followed by stock market (15%) and real estate (11%). Other types of investments include health care services, small scale itinerant retailing, laundromats, catering, tax preparation, music and timber (figure 13).



Source: Author's survey data.

The study probed the working capital of these businesses. The results are summarized in table 26.

**Table 26: Working capital of business.**

Working capital	F	%
5-10,000	15	47
15-20,000	2	6.2
20-30,000	5	15.6
30-40,000	2	6.2
40-50,000	2	6.2
70-100,000	3	9.5
150-200,000	1	3.1
400-450,000	2	6.2
Total	32	100

NA= 128. Source: Author's survey data.

A huge proportion of respondents that reported owning business investment stated the working capital of their investment ranges between 5,000 and 10,000 dollars (47%). This was followed by business capital that ranges between 20,000 and 30,000 dollars. The average working capital of these investments is \$71,458. More than two-thirds of respondents (68.8%) have business capital

of less than \$30,000. The results suggest that business establishments of African immigrants and refugees appear to be in an embryonic stage of growth.

The extent of time these businesses have been in operation was captured in the study (Table 27).

**Table 27: Timeframe of business establishment.**

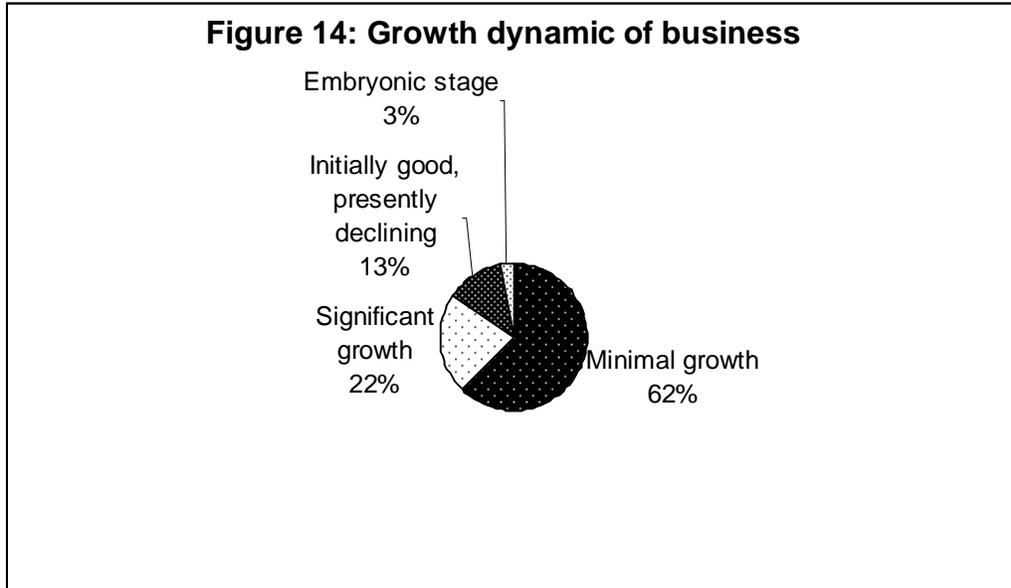
<b>Time frame</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than a year	8	25
1-2 years	5	15.6
2-3 years	5	15.6
3-4 years	6	18.8
4-5 years	4	12.5
5-7 years	2	6.3
7-10 years	1	3.1
10-15 years	1	3.1
Total	32	100

NA= 128. Source: Author's survey data.

The data show that majority of African-owned businesses have been in operation for less than a year (25%). This was followed by those that have been in existence between 3 and 4 years (18.8%). The proportion of businesses reported to have been in existence for more than five years is comparatively small (Table 27). It is unclear whether African immigrants and refugees were not investing in businesses in the past or whether there might have been some businesses that have folded.

An attempt was made to assess the performance of businesses owned by the African immigrant and refugee study population. This is summarized and illustrated in figure 14. Over 6 in 10 investors reported that their businesses have experienced minimal growth (62%) while less than a quarter (22%) disclosed their investments have witnessed significant growth. Over a tenth revealed that their investments used to be performing well in the past but are currently

undergoing a downward spiral. A minute fraction stated that their investment is extremely recent and cannot verify its direction of growth.



Source: Author's survey data.

The research probed into the reasons for African immigrants and refugees not owning business operations in the United States. The rejoinder to this question is summarized and illustrated in table 28.

**Table 28: Reasons for not investing.**

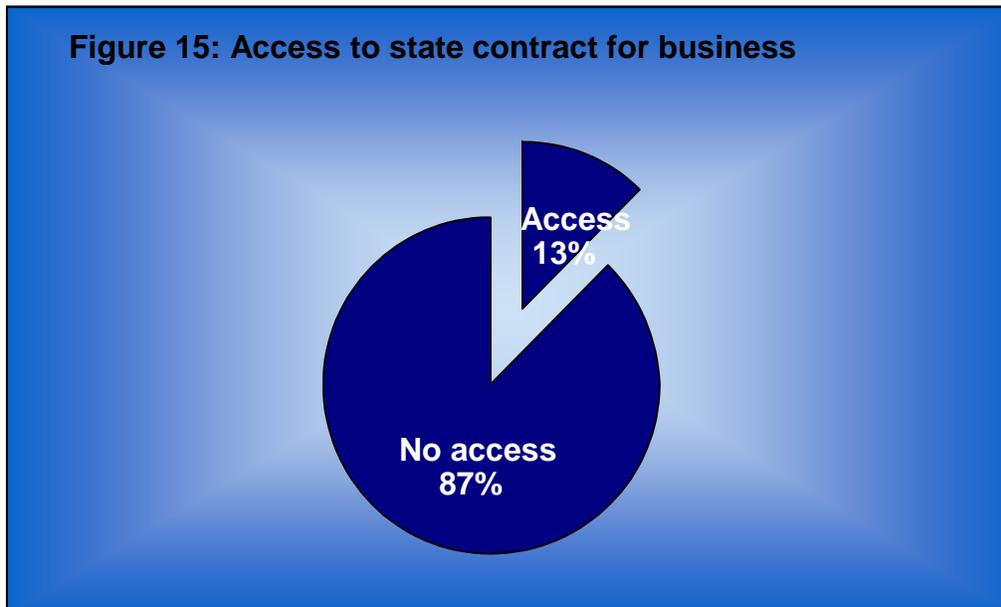
Reason	F	%
Not necessary	18	14.5
Do not know how to establish it	34	27.5
Difficult to raise capital	33	26.6
No access to loans	35	28.2
Other	4	3.2
Total	124	100

NA= 32. NR= 4. Source: Author's survey data.

Access to business loans was the most commonly reported obstacle in the establishment of business by African immigrants and refugees targeted in the study (28.2%). This was closely trailed by those who disclosed that they lacked the knowledge about how to establish a business (27.5%). A significant number of the study population revealed that they have been making

frantic efforts in garnering the necessary capital in establishing business but such attempts have proved unsuccessful (26.6%). Others believed that they have a full-time job and do not visualize business investment as necessary (table 28). Yet others stated that their immigrant status precludes them from establishing business even though they have a strong desire to do so. A few disclosed that working and schooling consume all their time and they do not see the establishment of business as feasible until the completion of their academic endeavors.

When asked whether they have access to state contracts for their businesses, close to 9 in 10 respondents (87%) replied in the negative. This illustrates that only a small fraction of African immigrant and refugee businesses have access to state contracts (Figure 15). The study did not probe into the reasons for this low access to state contracts.



Source: Author's survey data.

Income is the most widely used variable in gauging socioeconomic status. Respondents were asked to state the range of their annual income. The results are summarized and presented in table 29.

**Table 29: Annual income of respondents.**

<b>Annual income</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than 15,000	19	17.3
15-25,999	14	12.7
26-35,999	18	16.4
36-45,999	20	18.2
46-55,999	8	7.3
56-65,999	8	7.3
66-75,999	10	9.1
76-85,999	4	3.6
86-95,999	3	2.7
96-105,000	2	1.8
Above 105,000	4	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

NR =38. NA= 12.

Source: Author's survey data.

Average annual income of respondents is \$43,945. The majority of the study population's annual income ranges between 36,000 and 45,000 dollars (18.2%). The data show that 17.3 percent of the sample makes less than 15,000 dollars (table 29). The study further illustrates that close to two-thirds of the study population (64.4%) do not make above 45,000 dollars annually.

A multiple linear regression model was operationalized to test the influence of a number of variables on the annual income of respondents. Independent variables fitted into the model cover respondent's age, marital status, education, occupation, and year of migration to the United States and immigrant status. The coefficient of determination (R square) that shows the relationship between the independent variables and income was 0.243 with a Durbin-Watson value of close to 2 (table 30). The model revealed a positive but relatively weak relationship between the independent variables tested and income. This suggests that other factors play into

the annual income made by African immigrants and refugees in Illinois. The regression model indicates that although African immigrants and refugees have high educational attainment, are of the preferable work age bracket, and are mostly naturalized citizens and permanent residents, the annual income does not reflect the characteristics of age, education, immigrant status and the rest of the independent variables tested in the model. This outcome raises many questions hovering around under-employment, race, slow upward mobility and related issues. However, these issues were not addressed in the study as it lies beyond the scope of the research.

**Table 30: Multiple linear regression model summary.**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					Sig. F Change	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	
1	.493(a)	.243	.208	25763.958	.243	6.971	7	152	.000	2.032

a Predictors: (Constant), Mg. yr., Edu, Gen, Age, Mrt. St., Occ, Im. St.

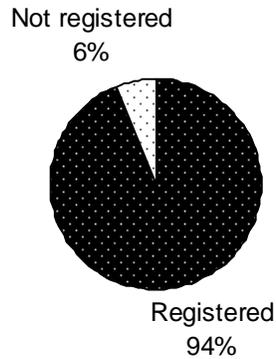
Source: Author's survey data.

b Dependent Variable: Ann y

## Section 7: Citizenship and civic participation

The research investigated the extent of civic participation of African naturalized citizens. Some of the issues explored include voting registration status and regularity of voting. Results from the study demonstrate that over 9 in 10 African naturalized citizens are registered to vote (Figure 16).

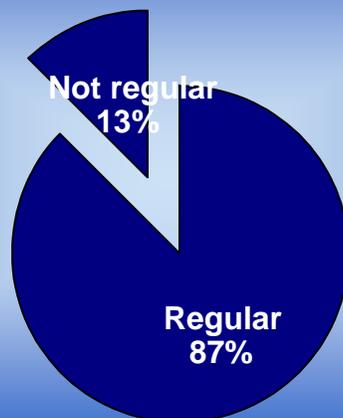
**Figure 16: Voter registration status of African naturalized U.S. citizens**



Source: Author's survey data.

When asked how regularly they vote, 87 percent responded in the affirmative (figure 17). Among those that do not vote regularly (13%), many of them are first-time registered voters and will be participating in the upcoming November elections. A small fraction of the latter cohort disclosed that they do not know whether the past candidates would deliver the promises made during their campaigns and decided to abstain because of this reason.

**Figure 17: Regularity of voting**



Source: Author's survey data.

Some respondents who do not vote regularly did not give any reason for not voting (25%), while time factor and those that visualize the whole electoral process as unnecessary represent very small fraction of the study population.

**Table 31: Reasons for not voting regularly**

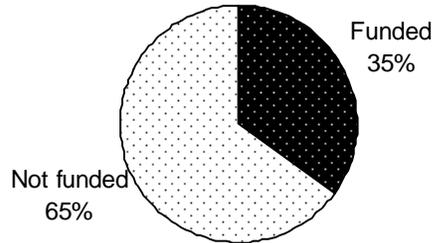
<b>Reason</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Not necessary	1	12.5
Time factor	1	12.5
Do not like candidates	1	12.5
Other	3	37.5
None	2	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

NA= 56. Source: Author's survey data.

## **Section 8: African students in universities and colleges in the US**

African students in colleges and universities are faced with many challenges other than school work itself. Some of these challenges include obtaining necessary funding for tuition and fees, acquiring books and other necessities. The survey attempted to unearth the proportion of African immigrants and refugees that are funded in universities and colleges. Figure 18 demonstrates that only 35 percent of students are funded.

**Figure 18: Funding dynamic of African student**



Source: Author's survey data.

Among students that are funded, a large proportion receives financial aid (40%) while a quarter is on student loan. Other funding sources received by African students include tuition and fee waivers and teaching assistantships, while some are funded by the U.S. military (Table 32).

**Table 32: Type of funding received by African students**

Type of funding	F	%
Teaching assistantship	1	5
Tuition and fee waiver	3	15
Financial aid	8	40
Student loan	5	25
Others	3	15
Total	20	100

NA= 37. NR=2.

Source: Author's survey data.

With regards to African students that are not funded, more than four-fifths work and pay for their education (86.5%). The rest are helped either wholly or partly by parents and friends while a minute fraction are helped by a spouse (table 33).

**Table 33: Financing of education without funding.**

<b>Finance of education</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Parents and friends (fully)	2	5.4
Parents and friends (partly)	2	5.4
Work and pay for school	32	86.5
Other	1	2.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>

NA= 20. NR= 2. Source: Author's survey data.

Among the major challenges faced by African students in U.S. institutions of higher learning, close to 6 in 10 students (59.6%) reported that they find it extremely difficult to pay their tuition and fees. Other salient needs expressed include money for food, rent and other basic needs (table 34) and books and other supplies, while some (15.8%) are challenged by all the issues presented in table 34.

**Table 34: Major challenges of African student in U.S. tertiary institutions.**

<b>Major challenge</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Money to pay tuition	34	59.6
Food, rent and other Basic needs.	7	12.3
Books and other paraphernalia	6	10.5
Doubling full-time work and schooling.	1	1.8
Tuition, basic needs and books	9	15.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>100</b>

NR= 2. Source: Author's survey data.

## Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate that African immigrants and refugees in Illinois have a number of pressing needs and challenges. Furthermore, the study has illuminated the current demographics of African immigrants and refugees in Illinois.

African immigrants and refugees in Illinois are well educated, which corresponds to data from the rest of the country on educational attainment among Africans. Most studies done on African immigrant communities in North America have demonstrated that over 50 percent of Africans have college degrees, which supersedes that of other immigrant groups in the country.

Occupationally, African immigrants and refugees work in many professions, and those that are professionally employed are quite substantial. Employment trends show that the nursing field has been attracting a lot of African immigrants and refugees in the past decade. In this study, certified nursing assistant happens to be the most common employment type.

Income distribution among African immigrants and refugees does not correspond to educational attainment and employment type. The regression model conducted in the study demonstrates a weak positive relationship between income, employment, education, age, gender, marital status, immigrant status and time of arrival in the United States. The model produced a coefficient of determination (R square) of 0.2. This indicates that although African immigrants and refugees are relatively well educated, professionally employed and in the right age category, with a high percentage of married spouses and naturalized citizens and permanent residents, their annual income reveals a troubling disconnect with the various independent variables used in predicting annual income. Therefore, African immigrants and refugees earn lesser income compared to that

expected in the model. The discrepancy raises numerous questions around racial discrimination, income inequality, and barriers to upward mobility and related institutionalized exclusion of issues impacting African immigrants and refugees in public policy discourse.

Obtaining employment is the biggest need of African immigrants and refugees that have lived in Illinois for less than five years. Among African immigrants and refugees that have been here for more than five years, the most pressing challenge reported is getting high paid employment. Most of these people reported they have been in their present occupations for a long time but have been very slow in moving up the career ladder. Previous studies have reported income inequality among blacks and whites. In a study of black-white earning differences among African immigrants in the United States, Dodoo and Takyi (2002) revealed that the wages of Africans are roughly 48 percent those of whites. After adjusting for relevant earning-related characteristics, black wages are 19 percent less than whites.

A significant number of African immigrants and refugees from Francophone and Lusophone countries in Illinois expressed strong desire to learn English. They indicated that English language programs should be established by the United African Organization or other African community organizations.

As noted in a number of studies on African immigrants in North America, Africans establish and maintain close ties with one another in the recent Diaspora and also with relatives and friends in the home country (Arthur 2000). The study demonstrates that African immigrants and refugees in Illinois have close networks that are maintained through various country organizations. A large percentage of the study population keeps close ties to relatives and friends in their country of origin. Africans in the recent Diaspora make remittances to their home countries mainly for

extended family welfare. Studies on remittances have demonstrated that money sent to Africa by Africans in the recent Diaspora is extremely instrumental in cushioning the effects of poverty. The study also shows that most of the remittances are for welfare purposes rather than investment in Africa. Data from this study demonstrate that Africans tend to invest more in the United States than in their country of origins. This can be attributed to the assumption that Africans desire to be closer to their investments and better be able to manage them.

The survey illustrates that the majority of African students in United States tertiary institutions are not funded. Most have to work full time and pay for schooling. A large percentage in this cohort complained about the difficulty of working fulltime and attending college and university.

# Appendix

## Appendix 1: Multiple linear regression modeling.

### Variables Entered/Removed(b)

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Mg. yr., Edu, Gen, Age, Mrt. St., Occ, Im. St(a)		Enter

a All requested variables entered.

b Dependent Variable: Ann y

### Model Summary(b)

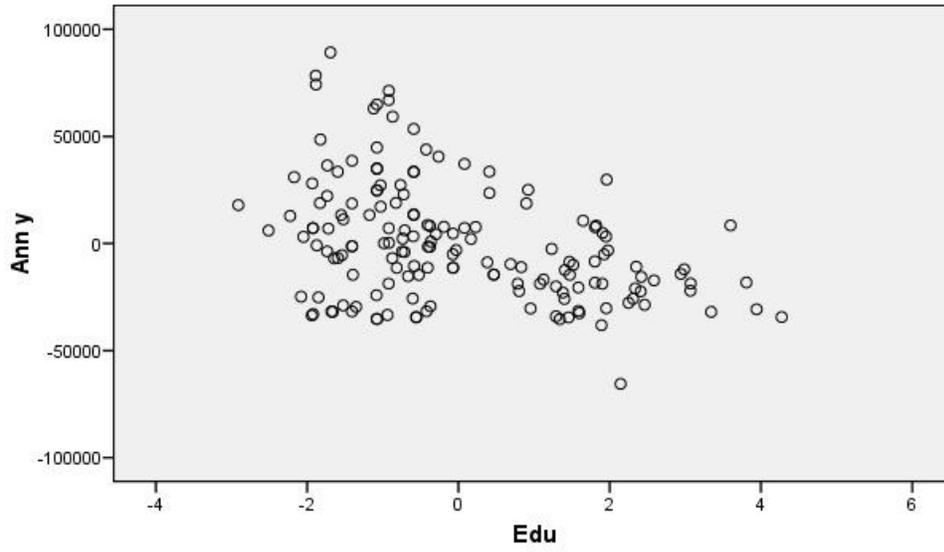
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					Sig. F Change	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	
1	.493(a)	.243	.208	25763.958	.243	6.971	7	152	.000	2.032

a Predictors: (Constant), Mg. yr., Edu, Gen, Age, Mrt. St., Occ, Im. St

b Dependent Variable: Ann y

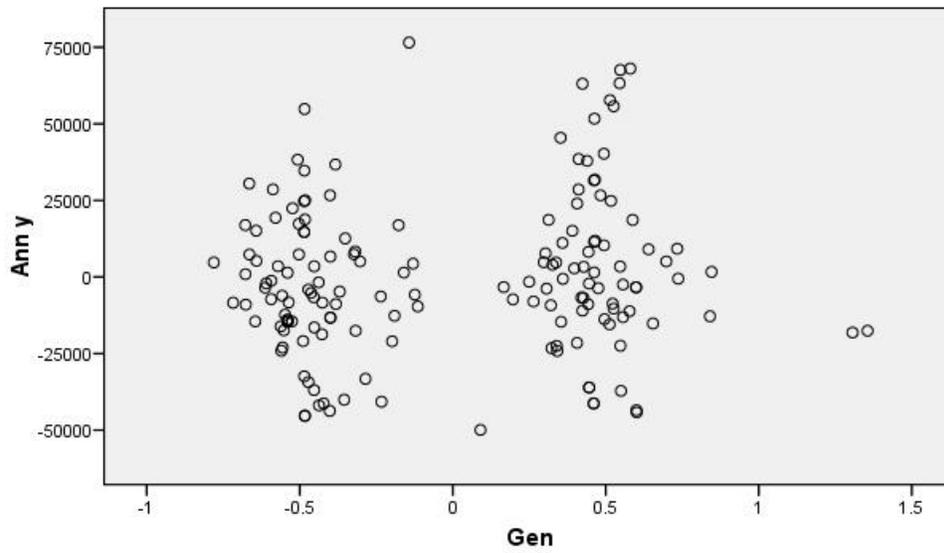
### Partial Regression Plot

Dependent Variable: Ann y

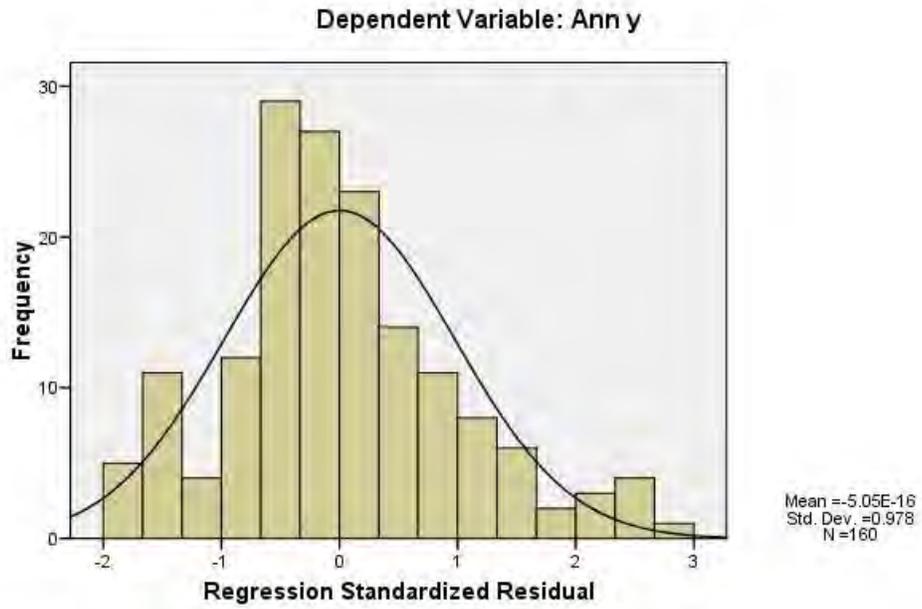


### Partial Regression Plot

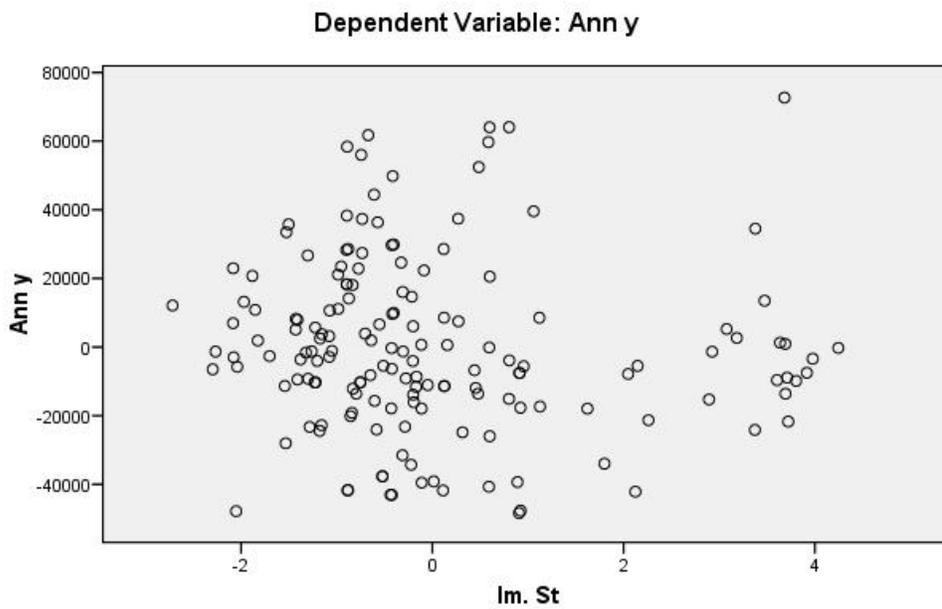
Dependent Variable: Ann y



### Histogram

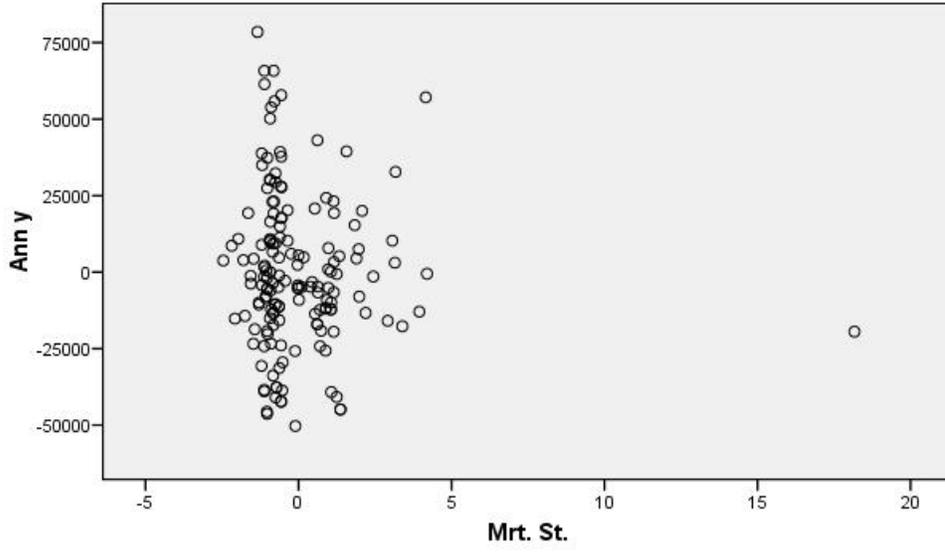


### Partial Regression Plot



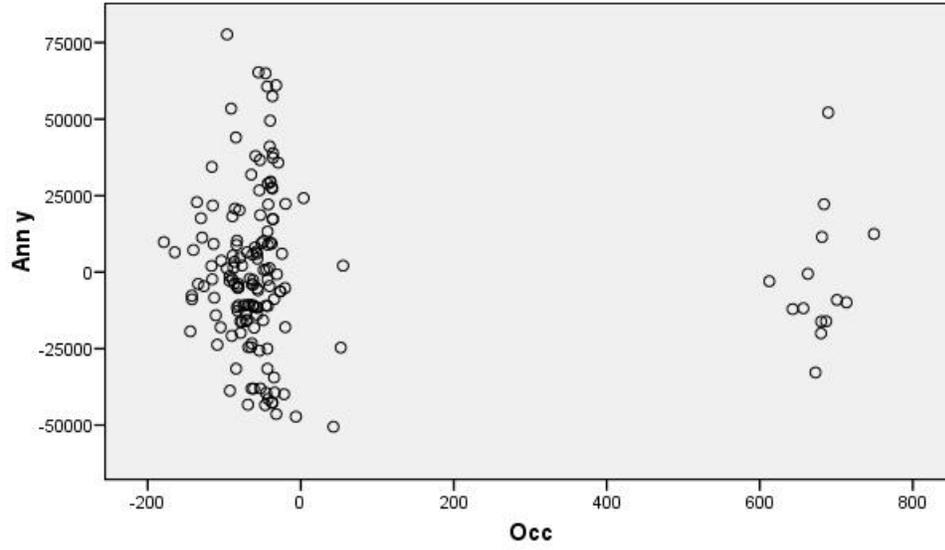
### Partial Regression Plot

Dependent Variable: Ann y



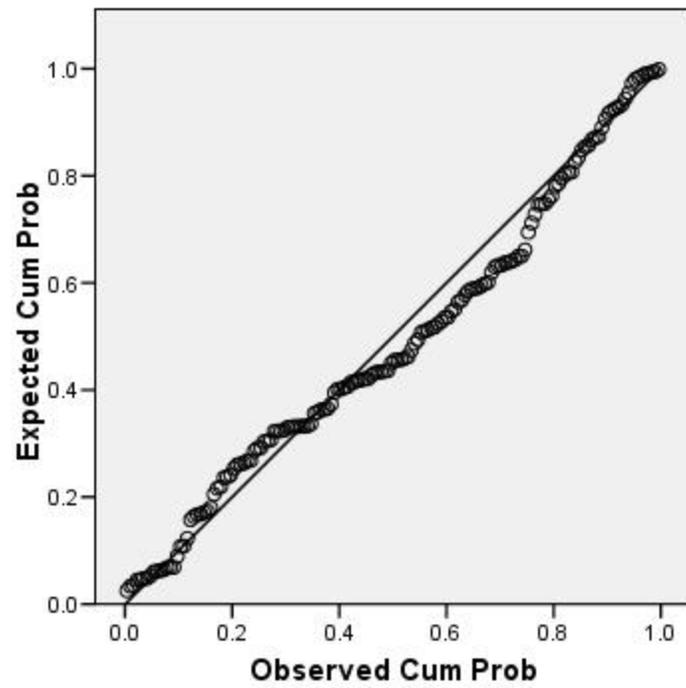
### Partial Regression Plot

Dependent Variable: Ann y



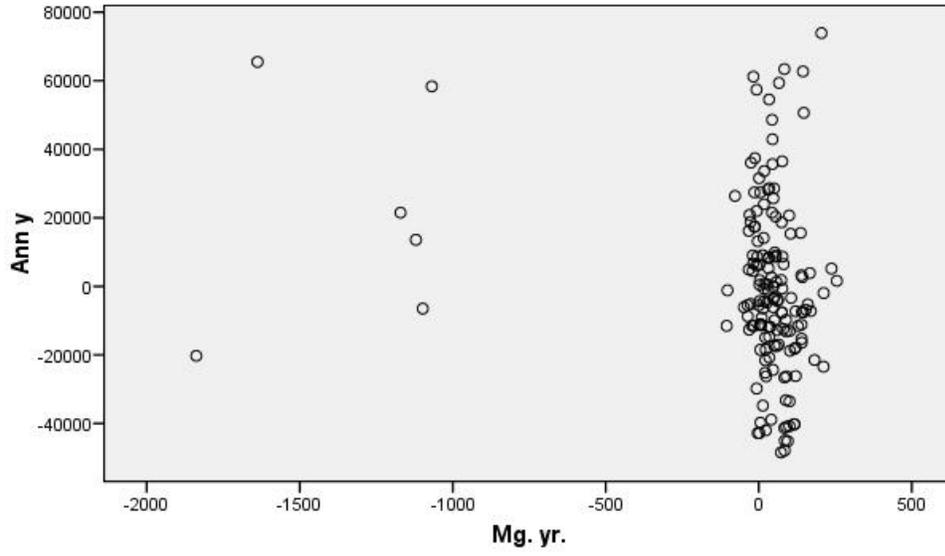
## Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

Dependent Variable: Ann y



### Partial Regression Plot

Dependent Variable: Ann y



Appendix 2: Survey questionnaire

**African Immigrants & Refugees in Illinois:  
A Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Demographic Study**

**Schedule A: Background and demographic characteristics**

1. Gender:      Male                   Female
2. Age \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Marital status: Married   
                         Cohabitation   
                         Single   
                         Separated   
                         Divorce   
                         Widow/widower
4. Education. Graduate or professional degree   
                         Bachelor's degree   
                         Associate degree   
                         Some college (no degree)   
                         High school graduate   
                         9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade (no diploma)   
                         Less than 9<sup>th</sup> grade
5. Religion. Christianity   
                         Islam   
                         Hinduism   
                         Buddhism   
                         Judaism   
                         Coptic   
                         Other  (specify)
6. Nationality \_\_\_\_\_
7. Immigrant status: Naturalized citizen   
                         Permanent resident   
                         Employment visa   
                         Asylum   
                         Student   
                         Undocumented   
                         Other  (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Nationality and race of spouse if different from your country of origin.

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9. Occupation

- Cab driver
- Nurse/CAN
- Baby sitter
- Sales
- Factory worker
- Health outreach
- Professional
- Beauty/Hair
- Travel consultant
- Social services
- Cashier
- House Cleaner
- Maid
- Hotel cleaning worker
- Waitress
- Janitor
- Security guard
- Garage/Parking Attendant
- Car Mechanic
- Translator  (specify languages) \_\_\_\_\_
- Kitchen /Restaurant worker other than waitress
- Cook
- Other  (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Number of kids and wards in the US.

- None
- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five
- Above five

11. Total related members in household \_\_\_\_\_

12. Total unrelated members in household \_\_\_\_\_

13. Type of housing you reside in

- Single family housing (owner occupied)
- Single family housing (rented)
- Rented apartment

- Condominium (owner occupied)
- Condominium (rented)
- Studio apartment

14. What is your zip code?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Schedule B: Characteristics of migration and resettlement

15. What year did you migrate to the United States?  
Year \_\_\_\_\_

16. Why did you migrate?
- Educational reasons
  - Reunification with family members in the States.
  - Political reasons
  - Economic reasons.
  - Other  (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

17. Was Illinois your initial destination when you first came to the US?  
Yes  No

18. If no, why did you move to Illinois?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Schedule C. Community organization and assimilation patterns

19. Do you attend meetings and other activities organized by African organizations other than the one of your country of origin?  
Yes  No  (if no, go to question 22).

20. If yes, how many other country organizations do you associate with?

- One
- Two
- Three
- More than three

21. If yes in question 20, how often do you attend meetings or functions organized by these other organization(s)?

- Regularly
- At times
- Rarely

Never  (Go to question 23).

22. If no, why?

I have no time

I don't get along with other Africans

I have never thought about interacting with other African organizations but it is something I will like to do.

Don't know

Other  (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

23. Do you experience any difficulty associating with immigrants from other parts of Africa?

Yes  No  (if no, go to question 25).

24. If yes in 23, please explain these difficulties

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

25. What do you think of Africa in general?

It will never unite.

It will unite in the next 100 years.

It will unite in the near future

Don't know

Other  (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Schedule D: Service needs in the community**

26. Do you receive any form of help from relatives?

Yes  No  (if no go to 28)

27. If yes in 26, how much help do you receive from relatives?

A great deal

Moderate

Very little

28. What is your preferred source of help?

(check your first choice)

Ethnic association

Friends

Family members

Church/Place of worship

A parent   
A spouse

29. What is your most pressing need among the following?

Financial   
Work permit/Employment   
Health services   
Immigration   
Exchange of ideas   
Taxes

30. What do you think are the most pressing needs of recent African immigrants in your community? (check all that apply)

Housing   
Jobs   
Educational opportunities   
Others  (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

31. What do you think are the major needs of African immigrants who have been in the region much longer? (more than 5 years)

Housing   
High paid job   
Educational opportunities   
Business opportunities   
Medical assistance   
Child care   
Other  (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Schedule E: Ties with your country of origin

32. How often do you visit your country?

More than two times a year   
Twice yearly   
Yearly   
Every other year   
Not yet visited   
Other  (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

33. If you have visited your country, what was the purpose of the visit?

Vacation and family reunification   
Funeral   
Wedding

- Other family functions
- Business
- Other reasons  (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

34. If you have never visited your country since you came here, are you likely to visit in the next two years?

- Yes  No

35. How often do you telephone and send e-mails to your country?

- More than once weekly
- Weekly
- Once every two weeks
- Monthly
- Occasionally
- Never

36. If you send money back home, how frequent do you make such remittances?

- More than once a month
- Monthly
- At least once every two months
- Whenever school fees for siblings, children or close relatives is needed
- Whenever there is a case of emergency
- During Christmas and Easter holidays
- Other  (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

37. Why do you make such remittances?

- To assist parents welfare
- To assist with immediate family members welfare
- To assist with extended family members welfare
- To assist friends
- For business/investment purposes
- Other  (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

38. What are the expectations of your family members back home for you?

- Expect a lot in terms of financial and other assistance
- Expect an average amount of assistance
- Does not expect any thing substantial
- Does not expect anything from me.

**Schedule F. General Investment and economic status.**

39. Do you currently own a business venture either as an individual or collaborate with other people?

Yes (Individual)  Yes (collective)  No  (if no, go to Q. 44)

40. If yes in 39, what is the nature of the investment?

Stock market   
Real estate   
Transportation   
Other  (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

41. If yes in 39, what is the current working capital of the business?

Under \$5000   
\$ 5- 10,000   
\$10- 15,000   
\$15- 20,000   
\$20- 30,000   
\$30- 40,000   
\$40- 50,000   
\$50- 70,000   
\$70- 100,000   
\$100-150,000   
\$150-200,000   
\$200-300,000   
\$300-400,000   
\$400-500,000   
Above 500,000

42. If yes in 39, how long has the business been in operation for?

Less than a year   
1-2 years.   
2-3 years   
3-4 years   
4-5 years.   
5-7 years.   
7-10 years.   
10-15 years.   
More than 15 years

43. Has the business expanded since its start?

Yes, a little bit.   
Has expanded very well.   
Used to be good but has recently been declining.   
Other(s)  please specify \_\_\_\_\_

44. If no in 39, Why?

- I have a full time job and don't think business is necessary
- I will like to but do not know how to go about establishing it.
- Difficult to raise the necessary capital to start it.
- I do not have access to loans to start a business
- Other  (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

45. Do you have access to state contracts for your business?

- Yes  No.

46. Please identify the range of your annual income.

- Less than \$15,000
- 15 – 25,999
- 26 – 35,999
- 36 – 45,999
- 46 – 55,999
- 56 – 65,999
- 66 – 75,999
- 76 – 85,999
- 86 – 95,999
- 96 – 105,000
- Above 105,000

### **Schedule G: Citizenship and civic participation**

(For U.S. naturalized citizens only)

47. If you are a U.S. citizen, are you registered to vote?

- Yes  No

48. Do you vote regularly?

- Yes  No

49. If no, Why?

- Feels it is not necessary
- Do not have time
- Do not like the candidates
- Don't know.
- Other  Specify \_\_\_\_\_

### **Schedule H: African students in colleges and universities**

50. Do you have any form of funding that help you pay for your college education?

- Yes  No.

51. If yes, what type of financial support do you have?

Teaching assistantship.

Research assistantship.

Tuition and fees waiver only

Financial aid

Student loan

Other  (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

52. If you have no form of financial support, how do you pay for schooling?

Helped fully by parents and friends

Helped partly by parents and friends.

Work and pay for school.

Other(s)  specify \_\_\_\_\_

53. What are the major challenges you are encountering as a student?

Getting money to pay tuition and fees

Getting money for food, rent and basic needs

Getting money for books and other paraphernalia

Other(s)  specify \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you very much for your time in answering the questions.**

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