2022

Examining Nigerian Immigrant Perceptions Regarding U.S. Government Settlement Support Programs

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Abstract

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Globalization increases international mobility, causing people to migrate for various reasons. The critical problem of migration is integrating migrants into their host communities. Nigerian immigrants are the most educated African immigrants to the United States, yet they struggle with integration barriers. Notwithstanding the extensive literature on why Nigerians emigrated and the challenges they face after immigration, no research existed on the impact of U.S. government policies and programs on integrating Nigerian immigrants into society. This narrative study explored Nigerian immigrants' perceptions regarding the impact of the U.S. government settlement and support programs on their integration into American society. The conceptual framework used to frame the study combined Giddens' structuration theory and Morçöl's complexity theory. A semi structured interview approach was used to obtain data from 12 Nigerian-born immigrants living in New Jersey. Qualitative data analysis software was used to assist with coding and analyzing the data. Findings revealed that Nigerian New Jersey immigrants did not know about and were thus not impacted by government immigration integration programs. Recommendations include that immigration policymakers interrelate with immigrants at every policy stage. The implication for positive social change includes aiding immigration policymakers in developing, updating, and implementing programs that impact immigrants' successful integration into the U.S. society. This study also has implications for social determinants of health in that immigration policymaking should consider all-around wellness and quality of life of people.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my late husband, Chief Oyom, Animana Ana, and my best friend, Chinyere Onyejeaka. Your confidence in me was all the fire I needed to dare to achieve this goal.

Acknowledgments

I want to first acknowledge God as my Divine help and sustainer all through this Ph. D and dissertation journey. I could not have done it on my own wisdom or strength; hence it was God all the way.

Next, I specially thank Dr. Anne Hacker, my indomitable committee chairperson whose transformational leadership and inestimable insights kept me in focus throughout this dissertation journey. Dr. Hacker, in my first contact with you after a change of chair, I wrote: “I bet I inadvertently signed my life away to a great mentor”. What a prophetic truism that turned out to be. For a whole year, you held virtual meetings with me fortnightly despite your extremely busy schedule. Dr. Elizabeth Lane, my second committee member and a one-time course professor; your role modelling simplified the hardest steps all the way and will lead me into the future. I also acknowledge Dr Michael Brewer, my URR reviewer for his encouragements that gave the added push to keep exploring. And Dr. Meena Clowes, thanks for pulling me back when I almost shifted from public policy. Binh Ngo, my student advisor, you never failed to lend a listening ear whenever I hit a rock, you spoke encouragements to me without asking for appointments. Yes, I worked with the best team the Walden University had including the librarians, and the Form and Style editor Dr Witty to arrive at this stage. Thank you all.

I also acknowledge my family and close friends’ supports throughout this journey. I was not much of a mother, sibling, or friend in this three-year journey, but I am glad that they all understood and supported me. Dr. Bolutife Oluwadele, my already graduated study partner, encourager, and prayer partner, I cannot thank you enough Bolu.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Humans have long strived for opportunities and advancement; one way of doing so has been through immigration, moving in search of improvement, security, and family reunification (Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Ellermann, 2021). A key responsibility of immigrant-recipient countries is to ensure effective integration within the mainstream population (Alba & Foner, 2015). Achieving this goal requires acknowledging that assimilation of immigrants in the society is beneficial for the socioeconomic development of both country and immigrant (Kyeremeh et al., 2019; Sulaiman & Raphael, 2016). Because of globalization, nations—particularly industrialized countries—depend on immigration to achieve their developmental agenda. Therefore, immigration is an essential part of global movement and development.

Immigration takes different forms and offers benefits to both the receiving nation and the immigrants. There are various types of immigrants, including refugee, temporary and seasonal workers, and permanent residency that may lead to naturalization, as well as undocumented immigrants (Alba & Foner, 2015; Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Sulaiman & Raphael, 2016). Sulaiman and Raphael (2016) identified some nations, such as Canada and Australia, as heavily populated by immigrants. Similarly, Cummings and Chapman (2019) noted that the United States is historically a nation of immigrants epitomized in the ideals presented in the Statue of Liberty.

Despite its benefits, immigration is fraught with challenges for the immigrants and the receiving nations, with the departed nations suffering developmental drawbacks arising from brain drain (Globerman, 2000; Odoemene & Osuji, 2015). To ameliorate the

adverse effects of immigration and enhance immigrant integration, countries establish immigration policies. Kyeremeh et al. (2019) argued that every government's responsibility is to help immigrants successfully integrate into society. How Nigerian immigrants perceive U.S. government policies and programs to enhance their integration into society is the topic of this study.

Background

A side effect of 21st-century globalization is increased international migration. Some people migrate to escape adverse situations, including wars, harsh economic situations, social injustices, natural disasters, anarchy, and religious upheavals and disturbances (Alba & Foner, 2015; Sulaiman & Raphael, 2016; United Nations, 2020). Others migrate for better opportunities or to contribute to the enrichment of advanced economies. According to Kyeremeh et al. (2019), immigrants have the necessary capital to advance the economic and demographic structure of a country. Qualifying criteria for U.S. immigrant visas are education and skills, incoming economic investments and funds, or evidence of support from relations living in the United States (Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Ellermann, 2021). The first two criteria portend that economic edge is the basis for U.S. immigrant acceptance; indeed, the objective is that immigrants do not rely on the government for support. The economic edge is similar in Canada where, as noted by Sulaiman and Raphael (2016), one of the goals of immigration policy is to fill employment gaps in areas natives avoid or are not sufficiently populated to fill, as well as to improve nation-building. Canada achieves these goals using temporary work visas, permanent settlement, and family reunification.

Globalization has increased the mobility of people around the world. Immigration patterns have shown movement from less-developed countries to advanced nations. Glorius et al. (2013) found that the accession to European Union for the poor central and eastern Europe countries improved their mobility to rich European Union nations, like the United Kingdom and Germany. Other reasons for migration are the push factors of poverty, economic and social insecurity, wars, and natural disasters, as well as the pull factors of a better standard of living, growth opportunities, improved health care, and personal development (Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Schumann et al., 2019; United Nations, 2020).

Integrating immigrants into mainstream society is vital (Alba & Foner, 2015). Integration occurs through government policies and programs in the host countries. However, these policies are subject to the receiving countries' attitudes toward immigration (Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Sulaiman & Raphael, 2016). According to Sulaiman and Raphael (2016), if a nation's attitude is more humanitarian or there are dire needs for immigrants to fill labor gaps and assist in national developments, policies are less restrictive and more inviting. However, where the dynamics have shifted to discouraging immigrants, as has been the situation in the United States after the fourth wave of immigration, policies and programs tend to be more restrictive and discriminatory (Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Ellermann, 2021).

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX; McDaniel, 2015; Pew Research Center, 2018) is an immigration integration measure assessing eight key policy areas of the immigration host countries: labor market mobility, family unification, education,

health care, political participation, permanent residency, access to nationality, and anti-discrimination. These measures allow the classification of every major immigrant host nation, aiding potential immigrants in identifying destination countries and the need for any international interventions.

Immigration has grown exponentially since the worldwide economic depression and World War II. According to Edmond (2020), 3.5% of the world population (272 million people) migrated in 2020, increasing 56% from 174 million migrants in 1995. In response to massive immigration to western Europe and North America, Alba and Foner (2015) noted that the greater concern is not the number of migrants but the implication of migration, which requires integrating these immigrants within the mainstream society. Concerns of immigration integration emerge because the receiving nations must deal with the challenges of integrating the imported cultures of the immigrants with those of the established members of society (Alba & Foner, 2015). The heterogenous society engendered by immigration requires constructive public policies and programs to avoid or reduce societal dissonance.

The United States has long been attractive to immigrants because of its status in the world economy and generous immigration policies. U.S. immigration policies have changed since the industrialization era, with immigrants welcomed to work the mines, till the ground, and enhance the workforce. Following this era was the quota system era, which encouraged only immigrants from western Europe (Alba & Foner, 2015; Cummings & Chapman, 2019). The civil rights era abolished the quota system with the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Alba & Foner, 2015; Cummings & Chapman,

2019; Ellermann, 2021; Pew Research Center, 2018). The United States harbors by far the greatest number of immigrants in the world. Anderson and López (2018) identified a U.S. foreign-born population of 44.8 million in 2018 (i.e., 13.7% of the U.S. population), which tripled the percentage of 4.8% in 1970. According to Alba and Foner (2015), the United States had 40 million immigrants compared to a combined 50 million immigrants in the European Union.

The United States immigration policies are welcoming and provide for temporary, permanent, legal, and undocumented immigrants; one such policy is Deferred Action for Children Arrival (Department of Homeland Security, n.d.). According to Santhanam (2018), one in every six U.S. health care professionals is a foreign-born immigrant. This is due to the nation's policies designed to intentionally brain drain other countries in critical areas of development. This finding supports Cummings and Chapman's (2019) and Sulaiman and Raphael's (2016) positions of immigration in the United States and Canada predicated on skills and economic gains.

The United States immigration has long been a contentious topic among the political parties in the United States, Europe, and worldwide (Lawrence, 2016); this contention is partly due to perceived immigrants' propensity to commit crimes or strain the welfare system. However, there is an underlying fear that immigration to the United States erodes the European individualist culture, which has been the beacon of good American governance (Lawrence, 2016). Alba and Foner (2015) echoed this fear of immigrants contaminating the American-European culture, contending that immigrants are stigmatized and disadvantaged regarding opportunities in education and because of

their race and ethnic backgrounds. Stigmatization of immigrants engenders the engagement of social capital, which could have negative consequences for immigrants, including resorting to illicit or antisocial behaviors. The fear of cultural contamination could also sway U.S. policy establishments.

One of the significant challenges facing Nigerian and African immigrants to the United States is continuing their professions. Many highly educated individuals, such as medical doctors, financial experts, engineers, and analysts, cannot remain in those fields due to the increased qualifications and local experience required in the United States. Schumann et al. (2019) found Egyptian medical professionals went to Germany because of the opportunity and ease of continuing their medical careers in that country and, from there, absorption into other European countries. Every immigrant to the United States or Canada has dreams of being better off than they were in their birth countries (Cunnings & Chapman, 2019; Katz, 1996a; Kyeremeh et al., 2019). However, unless immigrants can successfully integrate within the host community, they cannot achieve their dreams and, therefore, might not contribute to the host communities as positive change agents.

Problem Statement

Most immigrants to the United States come from cultures that differ from American individualism (Althen & Bennett, 2011). Many face tremendous integration challenges, including professional continuity, assimilation into U.S. culture and lifestyle, and language barriers. Trevena (2013) explored various obstacles that Polish immigrants to London encountered, including language, appropriate job placement, accession, and politics. One of the most significant problems facing any U.S. immigrant, including

Nigerians, is integrating with society. This problem stems from many issues, including the power of state control over individual activities, cultural differences, and anti-immigrant hostilities (Menjívar & Lakhani, 2016).

The United States has the most liberal immigration programs, including diversity, refugee, and Deferred Action for Children Arrival programs (Department of Homeland Security, n.d.). However, there are no specific government programs to assist immigrants' assimilation into society (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019; Imoagene, 2017; Jiménez, 2011). The lack of specific official intervention to integrate immigrants, including Nigerian immigrants, into the U.S. society has left most of these individuals struggling and frustrated, making some susceptible to antisocial behaviors (Imoagene, 2017; Menjívar & Lakhani, 2016).

Nigerians are the most populous and educated African immigrants to the United States (Casimir, 2008; Migration Policy Institute, 2019; Anderson & López, 2018; Rodríguez, 2014). Many Nigerians are excited to migrate to the United States (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019; Imoagene, 2017). However, they often feel disenfranchised upon arrival as they encounter roadblocks, such as the inability to complete their education, obtain good-paying jobs, and face racial discrimination (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019; Imoagene, 2017; Odoemene & Osuji, 2015; Oriji,2020; Oyebamiji & Adekoya, 2019). These immigrants must also cope with hostilities and informal state controls over immigrants' activities and mindsets (Menjívar & Lakhani, 2016). The inability to integrate can negatively impact immigrants' abilities to optimize their potentials, maintain family and social status, and contribute to their host

communities' development (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019; Imoagene, 2017a; Odoemene & Osuji, 2015; Rodríguez, 2014).

Many researchers have examined constructive policy programs and immigrant integration (Johnson, 2018; Rodríguez et al., 2020; Song, 2018; Vega, 2018; Villarreal & Tamborini, 2018; Xu, 2020). However, studies of integration from the perspectives of Nigerian immigrant communities in New Jersey are limited or nonexistent. In this study, I addressed this gap in knowledge by conducting a qualitative storied narrative inquiry of the Nigerian diaspora in New Jersey. I used Giddens' (1979, 1984) structuration theory and Morçöl's complexity theory (2010) as the conceptual framework to assess how the U.S. government's policy programs support assimilation for Nigerian immigrants residing in New Jersey.

Purpose of the Study

In this qualitative narrative inquiry study, I examined the stories and experiences of Nigerian immigrants regarding government programs and policies that assist or limit their assimilation into New Jersey. I explored the perceptions of U.S. immigrants from Nigeria regarding the impact of government policies and programs on their assimilation within the society. I discovered new knowledge about the lived experiences of Nigerian immigrants in New Jersey by uncovering the barriers they faced in integrating into U.S. society. I explored how Nigerian immigrants perceive government policies and programs for their settlement through the lenses of the self-organizing and emergence complexity theory of Morçöl (2010) and the duality concept of Giddens's (1979, 1984) structuration theory to explain what compels their actions. The findings of this study may be used by

policymakers in New Jersey to formulate immigration integration and assimilation policies and programs.

Research Question

The research question for this study was: How do Nigerian immigrants in New Jersey perceive the impact of the U.S. government settlement and support programs on their integration into American society?

Conceptual Framework

The framework for this study consisted of Giddens's (1979) structuration theory and Morçöl's (2010) complexity theory. Giddens formulated the structuration theory in 1979 with the assertion that an individual's autonomy is influenced by structure, which individuals or the human agency maintains. The structure, in this regard, includes groups and institutions that make up a system or a society, such as family, economic, political, government, and religious institutions. Within these structures is the formulation of policies that affect agents and serve as a backdrop to construct meanings and negotiate actions.

Furthermore, the structure shapes personality and society and results in the production of activities. McPhee et al. (2020) found that Giddens's (1979) structuration theory was predicated on observable patterns from multiple layers of systems, including micro, macro, network, and intersocial. This conformed with Morçöl (2010), who specified that the policy system should not stand alone but integrate other systems, including the economic and social systems. Morçöl (2010) stipulated that public policy must be perceived as a macro process while also objectifying individual choices and

behaviors embedded within the micro processes. McPhee et al.'s analysis is congruent with the views of Morçöl (2010), who argued that public policies must integrate social actors. By this argument, Morçöl expanded on Giddens's (1979, 1984) duality concept of micro/macro systems integration in governance. Giddens based the structuration theory on the three pillars of signification, legitimation, and domination, asserting that analyzing institutions occurs in relation to individuals' actions.

To this extent, structuration theory gives insights into organizational climate and group decision-making and shows how the interaction of structure and agency (individual expression of will) affects people's behaviors. Therefore, the social structures within which individuals' behaviors shape their actions could be micro or macro. The microstructures are the small-scale interpersonal relations (Giddens, 1979) pertinent to family, interpersonal, or internal issues. In contrast, the macrostructures relate to social structures and functionalism. According to Giddens (1979), these structures could constrain or enable. To McPhee et al. (2020), migrants who live in multicultural societies (diasporas) are actively involved in negotiating their interconnected realities. When individuals perceive a structure through different cultural norms within a multicultural society, there is usually a collision of concepts (McGarry, 2016), underscored by Morçöl's (2010) complexity theory.

The United States, like many other countries, established minimum requirements for integrating into society, either expressed or implied. Most of these requirements do not benefit the immigrants whom the host community claims to be helping to integrate (Sulaiman & Raphael, 2016). Therefore, immigrants face what Giddens (1979) referred

to as *signification*, which is when the immigration euphoria has cleared from immigrants, and the reality of what they face in their new country dawns on them. The signification element of Giddens's structuration theory underscores the reality of immigrants to the United States as they grapple with the standards under the authorities and systemic allocation. These realities quickly eliminate the enthusiasm Nigerian immigrants had before arriving in the United States (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019). U.S. requirements complicate immigrants' integration and, by extension, their abilities to contribute to community development, indicating the need for official interventions to enhance assimilation. According to Morçöl (2010), both policy systems and individuals and groups self-organize within the complexity theory, meaning there is no separating the social from the public policy system. Understanding the realities of Nigerian immigrants as part of the complex system in integrating with the public policies and social systems of New Jersey was my objective for this study.

Minimum integration requirements could cause considerable concerns for immigrants. One hindrance faced by people of color moving into senior professional positions is fear of failure (Bugg, 2016). This fear of failure may have its roots in this immigrant group's micro or family structures or in the legitimation or dominance elements of structuration theory or could be related to the collectivist culture of Nigerian immigrants. In this study, I examined Nigerian immigrants' perceptions of barriers or obstacles toward their full integration into U.S. society in New Jersey. According to Bugg (2016), macrostructure includes policies specific to people of color's employment to balance employee structure, but none that actively specify the ratio in senior management

cadre. Extrapolating this principle to the U.S. noble and extensive visa grants, but without other integration programs for the immigrants (Jiménez, 2011), thereby leaving them in difficult situations and limiting their potentials to contribute to the host state's developmental agenda. Because Nigerian immigrants live within a multicultural and multifunctional society, they continually negotiate their interconnected realities of collectivism in the individualistic and racist structure of the United States (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019; Imoagene, 2017a) under legalistic and imposing governance (Cook et al., 2018, Menjívar & Lakhani, 2016). These realities fall within the micro and macrostructures of Giddens' (1979, 1984) structuration theory and Morçöl's (2010) complexity theory.

Nature of the Study

For this study, I used a qualitative design using a narrative inquiry (see Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Researchers who use the narrative inquiry approach focus on participants' storied experiences to understand and interpret their perspectives about the impact government policies and programs have on their assimilation into U.S. society. I asked qualified participants to voluntarily narrate their experiences using stories via semi structured interviews. To obtain a deep insight into the participants' lived experiences, I posed open-ended and follow-up questions based on these experiences, an approach supported by Patton (2015), Ravitch and Carl (2016), and Rubin and Rubin (2012). The study was a means to generate, analyze, and describe participants' stories about their experiences with government intervention in assimilating into U.S. society after immigration to New Jersey.

Participant recruitment was purposive and involved only Nigerian-born adult immigrants (men and women) who have been residents in New Jersey for at least 1 year. I sourced participants through churches environments and Nigerian associations social media in New Jersey, including town unions and organized Nigerian groups, such as United Nigeria Movement for Change and Nigerian churches scattered all over the state. To obtain government and nongovernment organizations' perspectives on immigrants' access to interventions that assist their assimilation, I also reviewed public reports on the integration and assimilation of immigrants in the state of New Jersey.

Definitions

Acculturation: In cultural assimilation, immigrants give up their cultural identities in exchange for the host country or community's culture. Acculturation of immigrants could create cultural barriers, with subsequent restrictions and misunderstandings in global integration (Hall, 2011).

Assimilation: Assimilation is the total immersion of immigrants into mainstream society (Alba & Foner, 2015). This integration happens when some form of relationship (cultural and social) between the immigrating community and the host community facilitates assimilation. These relationships include language and speech patterns.

Brain Drain: When a stronger organization or country lures the skilled professionals of a weaker organization or government with higher pay and better conditions of service (Globerman, 2000).

Culture: Culture is a learned behavior leading people to act how they have been taught or what they have seen in their birth nations, and it is the common bond between a

group of people (Althen & Bennett, 2011). According to Northouse (2019), culture is the beliefs, values, and norms familiar to people.

Discrimination: Discrimination is the intentional alienation of certain people because of inequality, prejudices, and biases, with those discriminated against losing privileges in the organization or society. Usually, the people of lower status or circumstances are the ones discriminated against (Ekwemalor &Ezeobele, 2019; Trevena, 2013).

Diversity: The term *diversity* is a means to differentiate factors in any organization or environment. According to Nkomo et al. (2019), distinguishing factors include demographic differences, such as gender, sex, race, color, and ethnic group.

Duality: With duality, two entities exist concurrently to complement each other without one being superior. Duality integrates two systems to make a workable whole and involves an adaptation of both systems (Xiao et al., 2014).

Government policy: Government policies are codes, legislation, and regulations that guide human conduct, including immigration integration, and determine the rights and privileges of immigrants admitted into the country (Lutz, 2019).

Human agency: Agency means that humans act freely and be unconstrained in their behaviors as they make independent choices (Bodolica et al., 2016). Simply defined as agency by Giddens (1979, 1984) and Morçöl (2010), human agency as a microsystem integrates with the macrosystem of social, legal, and other official structures to create a constraining and enabling force, which Giddens and Morçöl call the duality concept of governance.

Immigration: Immigration happens when an individual or a group of individuals enters another country with a plan to reside in that country permanently (Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Sulaiman & Raphael, 2016). People who travel to other countries for tourism or temporary are not immigrants.

Integration: Integration acknowledges that immigrants are not necessarily submerged in the cultural and social system of the host community (Alba & Foner, 2015). By this concept, immigrants' cultural backgrounds should subsist with the host community, and sometimes, the host culture learns the culture of the immigrants for better relationships (Song, 2018).

Migrant Integration Policy Index: MIPEX (2020) is a tool to measure the policies integrating migrants in countries across five continents, including all European Union member states, North America, South American, Australia, and New Zealand. MIPEX is necessary to examine the human rights angle of immigration.

Multiculturalism: Multiculturalism means recognizing the minority groups' cultures, races, and ethnicities within the mainstream majority group (Ward et al., 2018). This recognition presents pluralism as an integral part of modern democracies and underscores one of the effects of globalization.

Social capital: Social capital is the beneficial effect of belonging to a network (Álvarez & Romaní, 2016; Villalonga & Kawachi, 2017). These benefits take the forms of favors and trusts, with sanctions often applied to people who belong to a group. Social capital could be a strong support system for immigrants, especially upon their arrival in a different country.

Socioeconomic: This has to do with the interrelationship of the interaction between social and economic factors in society. Immigrants' integration is usually affected by their socioeconomic status when they cannot obtain appropriate jobs commensurate with their educational and professional backgrounds. The socioeconomic status of an immigrant is a good measure of successful integration (Kyeremeh et al., 2019). Trevena (2013) argued that immigrants' socioeconomic factors have to do with both the sending and migrant host countries. Therefore, what compelled highly skilled Poland immigrants' post-accession to take very low-paying jobs in Britain was concerned with the macro-structures of Poland and Britain.

Structure: A socially induced and created arrangement, structure limits the availability of choices to make and situate actions by people (Bodolica et al., 2016). In essence, structures are a product of the hierarchical system to direct the activities of agents. Xiao et al. (2014) referred to structure as comprised of rules in a society, formal and informal. Structure incorporates the policy, rules, and regulations that guide actions and the application of sanctions (Giddens, 1979, 1984).

Assumptions

Researchers bring a lifetime of experience and cultural backgrounds to the research process (University of Wisconsin, 2007). Assumptions are aspects of a study that are out of the researcher's control yet necessary for the investigation (Simon, 2011). Accordingly, researchers should study topics that interest them (Babbie, 2016; Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Simon and Goes (2013) identified assumptions as unproven beliefs necessary to conduct a study.

Some basic assumptions are necessary for this research. The first assumption is that Nigerian immigrants, whether male or female, bring to the United States their cultural orientations and share similar migration integration experience. Therefore, neither sex nor gender will affect participant eligibility. Next is the assumption that participants who have spent at least 1 year in New Jersey have had sufficient immigration experience regarding barriers or facilitators of integration within the state to understand the questions and provide informed answers. This assumption includes that the target participants are adults of working age who would have had the opportunity to interact with the society within the 1-year minimum residence.

A third assumption is that participants will answer questions truthfully (Simon, 2011) and tell stories of their lived experiences facilitated by the qualitative narrative research approach (see Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Accordingly, participants were expected to talk about their realities through meaningful constructs (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016) of what they have experienced specific to the desired outcome of U.S. society integration before their emigration. Honest answers should be possible upon assuring participants of the confidentiality of their responses (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Simon & Goes, 2013) without affecting their status in the state.

Finally, the ontological assumption for this study is the appropriateness of a constructivist and interpretative qualitative research frame (see Babbie, 2016; Beaton, 2016; Burkholder et al., 2016; Creswell, 2013). Therefore, understanding participants' beliefs and perspectives required me to be conscious of divergent experiences and realities, as each might experience and see the world differently (Beaton, 2016; Creswell,

2013; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Truth is always subjective; thus, there is no expectation that all participants will provide the same response to the questions (Babbie, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of a study is the extent to which the research area was explored and usually specifies the parameters within which the study was operated. (Simon & Goes, 2013). Delimitations are criteria established by the researcher (Simon, 2011). The focus of this study is Nigerian immigrants in New Jersey. As of 2017, the United States was home to 348,000 Nigeria-born immigrants (Pew Research Center, 2018). New Jersey ranked fifth in the nation in the population of Nigerian residents as of 2016 (Sanusi, 2019). This study centered on Nigerian immigrants' residents in New Jersey. The intended sample size was 10 participants. The sample population decision is a delimitation because it defined the scope of the study and set its boundaries (Simon, 2011; Simon & Goes, 2013). Another delimitation was the choice of the frameworks creating the lenses for this study. Despite the availability of several conceptual frameworks, the complexity theory of Morçöl (2010) and the structuration theory of Giddens (1979, 1984) were the most appropriate. Third, the choice of qualitative narrative inquiry is a delimiting factor, eliminating the possibility of a quantitative paradigm. Finally, the participation criteria of Nigerian-born immigrants who have lived and worked in the United States for a minimum of one year but residing in New Jersey during the study is a delimitation established to ensure response quality.

Limitations

Limitations are study weaknesses outside the researcher's control (Simon, 2011). Simon and Goes (2013) submitted that whatever is beyond a researcher's orbit is a limitation. Nigerian immigrants come from a collectivist cultural background: they emigrated from an economically unstable Third World country and have black skin. These characteristics may have influenced how Nigerian immigrants perceive their connections to the concepts of complexity and structure of government policies and programs toward their integration. For instance, Nigerian immigrants come from a place of extreme capitalism where individuals, not the government, provide the necessary infrastructure, such as water, power, schools, and security. This background could have influenced their perceptions of New Jersey's integration policies and programs and affected the study. Factors that could have potentially influenced the participants' interview responses are beyond my control and are, therefore, limitations. A second limitation could be individuals' unwillingness or inability to create time for the interviews and share their stories. There is always the possibility of some participants withholding their responses rather than talking freely about their experiences, perhaps due to pain from their immigration integration experiences. Finally, COVID-19 was a limitation given the study's timeline, impacting participants' comfort and ability to schedule interviews.

Significance

This study is significant because it provided insights into what constrains Nigerian immigrants from fully integrating into U.S. society postimmigration. The social

change implications include that by telling immigrants' stories, policymakers and program managers might make policy changes that will allow for greater integration. Also, the study outcome could contribute to New Jersey's socioeconomic and developmental agenda since it may assist immigration policymakers in formulating policies that are win-win for both the state and the immigrants.

The study's significance is underscored by humanity's many challenges in the 21st century, such as peace and security, sustainable development, human rights, disarmament, terrorism, humanitarian and health emergencies, gender inequality, governance, and food production, among others. These concerns force people to migrate to other nations (United Nations, 2020). The receiving countries also undergo policy adjustments to accommodate and integrate migrants from various cultural orientations. The influx of migrants to a nation could cause political and administrative distortions and conflicts, such as the U.S. sanctuary states' struggles with the Trump Administration (Scown, 2018) and the ongoing border control issues high on the Biden Administration's agenda.

Immigration can cause considerable economic and social setbacks for immigrants as they learn new cultures and languages and face stigmatization, racism, and undue government controls (Cook et al., 2018; Francis et al., 2017; Kumi-Yeboa et al., 2019; Menjívar & Lakhani, 2016). When confronted with different cultural realities they perceive as harsh or competitive with their birth country, immigrants could exhibit antisocial and disloyal behaviors to the host community (Chiou & Brittany, 2016), further hindering assimilation into the host society. Immigrants' well-being at work, in school,

and within society is essential for society's proper functioning (Lague et al., 2020). The Department of Homeland Security report showed that in 2018, the United States admitted nearly 1.1 million immigrants (Buach, 2019). Thus, significant numbers of individuals enter the country yearly, bringing with them diverse cultures and problems and needing constructive integration assistance from national and state governments.

The United States has the third-largest population of Nigerians globally, after Nigeria and the United Kingdom (Nairaland, 2021b). Nigerian immigrants in the United States rank third among Black immigrants, after Jamaica and Haiti (Pew Research Center, 2018). Referencing the 2016 American Community Survey, Sanusi (2019) identified 380,785 Nigerian-born immigrants in the United States, with New Jersey the fifth-highest state. Therefore, assimilation programs from official sources would prove invaluable to both the immigrants and the state because both stand to derive more significant benefits if the immigrants are better settled and have a good sense of belonging to the society. Consequently, New Jersey should strive to achieve unity with Nigerian and other immigrants by institutionalizing policies and programs that enhance assimilation within the state.

Summary

Immigrants' integration in a host community is a concerning global phenomenon (Alba & Foner, 2015; United Nations, 2020). Migration has increased in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, with globalization and global inequality inspiring mobility. Immigration generates political, economic, and human discussions worldwide, with countries' various policies complicating the issue. The process of integrating immigrants

is very involved and sensitive. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the integrative roles of government as the creator of policies within which the immigrants must operate in tandem with other systemic elements to construct their views and (re)produce the structure.

This qualitative narrative inquiry was an exploration of the perceptions of Nigerian immigrants to New Jersey of the impact of government policies and programs on their integrative process in society. Immigration integration is grounded in government policies and its connection with the immigrants and other resources to achieve the desired policy goals. However, blending all the elements of integration is a complex and lengthy process because of the need to appreciate the human agency (immigrants') angles and incorporate them into policy formulation. Therefore, Giddens' (1979, 1984) structuration theory and Morçöl's (2010) complexity theory provide an appropriate conceptual framework to analyze the perception Nigerian immigrants have of integrating structures.

I present in Chapter 2 the structuration and complexity theories to indicate how they are severally and jointly relevant to understanding the immigration integration phenomenon. Also, I discussed the literature addressing the critical ideas of immigration integration, including immigration policies, discrimination and diversity management, social capital, why Nigerians emigrate, and how well they have integrated into the United States in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, I present the research methodology, participant details, data analysis plan, issues of trustworthiness, and relevant procedures.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A problem exists that although many Nigerians are excited to migrate to the United States (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019; Imoagene, 2017), they often feel disenfranchised upon arrival because they encounter roadblocks, including the inability to complete their education and obtain good-paying jobs. Nigerian immigrants to the United States also face racial discrimination (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019; Imoagene, 2017; Odoemene & Osuji, 2015; Oriji, 2020; Oyebamiji & Adekoya, 2019). The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the stories and experiences of Nigerian immigrants regarding government programs and policies that assist or limit their assimilation into New Jersey. I explored Nigerian immigrants' perceptions regarding government policies that helped their integration.

My objective in this chapter was to review contemporary and foundational literature and policies that relate to immigration integration with a focus on the United States. I also reviewed some key host countries' comparative integration development. As defined for this study, immigrants are people who enter another country with plans to stay permanently (see Cummings & Chapman, 2019). While the number of immigrants in the global economy is significant, the critical issue is not the amount of movement but the immigrants' integration within the host communities (Alba & Foner, 2015).

Immigration is a global phenomenon that Dokos (2017) referred to as being as old as humanity. The Bible states that God ordered Abraham to "go from your country, your people and your father's household to a land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation" (Genesis, 12:1-2b, NIV, written in the ancient world, about 1450-1400 BC).

Wamono (2021) submitted that human migration commenced about 2million years ag with the African Homo erectus. Transnational mobility and settlement in nations outside an individual's country of birth increased after the Great Depression (1929-1939) and World War II (1939-1945) because of globalization (Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Kyeremeh et al., 2019; Markus & Taft, 2015; Sulaiman & Raphael, 2016; United Nations, 2018). Like the biblical quote from Genesis, the primary objective of migration is advancement or blessing; hence, people migrate in quest of better employment opportunities, lifestyle, and living conditions (Cummings & Chapman, 2019; United Nations, 2020). They also migrate to escape wars, oppression, hostile political and social environments, and difficult ecological situations (Pew Research Center, 2018; Sulaiman & Raphael, 2016; United Nations, 2020). Additionally, host countries may encourage immigration to aid in economic development (Alba & Foner, 2015; Ellermann, 2021; Kyeremeh et al., 2019; Sulaiman & Raphael, 2016). Alba and Foner (2015) found the high immigration rate in Canada instigated by the host nation to boost employment in areas avoided by native-born workers.

The United States had a similar goal as Canada during the first and second waves of immigration when it sought immigrant workers to farm the land, work the mines, and help in the vast industrialization movement (Alba and Foner, 2016; Ellerman, 2021; Cummings & Chapman, 2019). According to Edmond (2020), migration and mobility reflect socioeconomic, political, and technological changes affecting many high-priority policy issues. Therefore, these elements of transformation influence national and

international policies and, by extension, the mobility of people within and outside of a country.

The interconnected and complex realities of the elements of global transformation with humans who are agents in motion support the choice of the theoretical lenses of Giddens's (1979, 1984) structuration theoretical framework and Morçöl's (2010) complexity theory. In this literature review, I present a discussion of the foundational theories that comprise the study's conceptual framework. In addition to immigrants' integration into the United States, this chapter includes a profile and comparative analysis of immigration assimilation in key immigrant host countries, such as Canada and the United Kingdom. The United States is a country of immigrants (Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Katz & Stern, 2006; Katz, 1996b; Pew Research Center, 2018). In Chapter 2, I present a history of immigration in the United States, as well as the expectations and outlooks of Nigerian immigrants.

Literature Search Strategy

I used various sources to obtain relevant literature for the topic under study. The key sources were the Walden University Online Library, Google Scholar, SAGE Journals, and ScienceDirect, with the websites of government and international organizations obtained through Google, Academic Search Complete, and ProQuest Central. I also reviewed the references lists of the accessed literature as a further search strategy.

The primary keywords, phrases, and combinations of phrases that I searched were: *immigration, assimilation programs, integration of immigrants, immigration*

policies, programs of assimilation, constructive immigration policy programs, immigrant integration, multiculturalism, immigration settlement, diversity, Nigerian immigration to the United States, immigration theoretical frameworks, diversity management, migration effects, United States AND immigration, public policy, structuration theoretical framework, complexity theoretical framework, immigration impacts, and *integration policies*. I obtained search assistance from a Walden University librarian.

To obtain literature faster, I first searched the keywords in Google Scholar, and if I could not obtain the full article in that database, I accessed the Walden library. There, I clicked "public policy and administration" on "search by subject," then pasted the title under "start my public administration research" and searched. This process was successful in accessing 95% of the articles reviewed. The majority of sources had publication dates of 2015 or after; however, a few foundational articles were necessary. I identified books primarily through Google Scholar specific to immigration integration, public policies, and structuration theoretical framework, purchasing those I considered relevant from Amazon.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that formed this study's lenses are Giddens's (1979, 1984) structuration theory and Morçöl's (2010) complexity theory. Immigration is a complex phenomenon, associated with multiculturalism, diversity, racism, discrimination, and a myriad of other social and political terminologies and agitations. Immigration is a multifaceted phenomenon that affects individuals and groups (immigrants and mainstream), governments (legal and cultural), and international

organizations (Alba & Foner, 2015; Bodolica et al., 2016; Haslet, 2020; Reitz, 2016; Xiao et al., 2014). Multiculturalism represents a complex system. Beyond the typical family system, every other system and organization including corporate, religious, national, regional, and continental, affects all forms of diversity, multiculturalism, ethnicity, and racism. In turn, this impacts economic, political, educational, and policy systems. The rise in and embrace of multiculturalism even affects family systems with intermarriages and diverse social norms.

Some anti-immigrant behaviors stem from inadequate regulations and unquestioned social norms that impact immigrants (Xiao et al., 2014). According to Giddens (1979, 1984), social structures comprise rules and resources associated with the exercise of powers over people's actions. Giddens further argued that people's actions cannot be separate from structures within which they operate and that their actions can, in turn, influence the system in what the author termed d*uality* of social structure and agency. In conformity with Giddens' duality concept, Morçöl (2010) contended that instituting policies required the interplay of the social structures and actors. Morçöl argued that a cluster of actors and individuals populate public policies as a multifaceted system and must coevolve.

Both Giddens's (1979, 1984) structuration and Morçöl's (2010) complexity theories are based on micro and macro integration. Giddens originated the duality of structure concept, and Morçöl highlighted and underscored it as the interrelationship of micro- and macrostructures through his complexity theory approach. Therefore, the theories of complexity and structuration are appropriate for studying the complexity of

the interrelated and multifaceted realities confronting immigrants within a given social, cultural, and policy system. These two theories delineate the struggles both the structures that quarter immigrants and the immigrants themselves undergo to integrate or assimilate. In this study, I explored how Nigerian immigrants to New Jersey perceive the interplay of their activities and values and how the state social and policy programs enhance or constrain their integration.

Many authors such as Bodolica et al. (2016), Haslet (2020), and Xiao et al. (2014) have used the structuration theory as a framework for studying the intersection of structure and agency. Although both Bodolica et al. (2016) and Xiao et al. (2013) used the structuration theory to frame their studies in systemic medical integration, Bodolica et al. (2016) believed that the disconnect between government and the agents was limited integration; in contrast, Xiao et al. (2013) identified the problem as a disconnect between agencies (immigrants and the mainstream). Haslet's (2020) focus was on organizational communication in influencing the structure–agency duality. The complexity theory has also been used to frame policy processes (Sabatier & Weible, 1999) and policy as a macro process (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009). However, no researchers have used the two theories to understand the integration issues of a group of immigrants. In this study, I used both theories to understand how Nigerian immigrants to New Jersey perceive the interplay of their activities and values and how the state social and policy programs enhance or constrain their integration.

All systems face multiple issues in formulating all-inclusive laws and policies while establishing immigration integration and assimilation guidelines. Without

incorporating every systemic stratum's needs into policy formulation, dissonance could erode the reason for the regulations; at best, resistance would negate legal goal achievements (Bodolica et al., 2016; Xiao et al., 2014). Morçöl (2010) recognized this complex nature of policy formulation and implementation. Giddens (1979, 1984) advocated the systemization of an all-inclusive policy-making process through the duality concept. I provided new scholarly perspectives for understudying immigration integration by amalgamating the two theories in this study. I also used the combined theories in effectively addressing the research question because both the immigrants and their accommodative structures fall within this study's purview. Finally, I used the relatively contemporary Morçöl's (2010) complexity theory to reinforce the critical elements of Giddens's (1979, 1984) structuration theory and thus validate their combined relevance as the foundation for the study.

Structuration Theory

Giddens, an English sociologist, formulated structuration theory in 1979 (McGarry, 2016; McPhee et al., 2020). In 1984, Giddens elaborated the 1979 work and evaluated the views of subsequent authors regarding the elements of the structuration theory. Giddens's (1979, 1984) work has since formed the basis for extensive scholarly studies of the structuration theory and its use in various disciplines to frame studies, especially regarding the micro/macro interrelationship of social systems.

Structuration theoretical framework provides insights into human behaviors through the fusion of agency and structure (Haslet, 2020). Similarly, McPhee et al. (2020) submitted that this theory enables the understanding of organizational climates

and groups' decision-making as it reveals the impacts of interaction between structure (policy) and agents (individuals) on peoples' behaviors. Giddens (1979, 1984) defined structures as the rules and resources that guide actors in their endeavors, and these are supported systems. Structuration, therefore, shows that the interaction of policies and rules as constituted structures with agency results in the production and reproduction of social systems (McPhee et al., 2020).

Production is the concept whereby rules and regulations created by the macrosystem, or governing body guide the micro components or agents (Giddens, 1979, 1984). Rules' reproduction is agents' effect in replicating or maintaining the system (Bodolica et al., 2016; McPhee et al., 2020; Giddens, 1979, 1984). Giddens (1984) described structuration as a recursive involvement of structure with the activities of human agents for reproduction over time and space. Structuration is, therefore, the integration of the micro/macrosystems.

Authors have used the structuration theory in analyzing various concepts, including health care (Bodolica et al., 2016), immigration and integration (Cook et al., 2018; Farina, 2017; Menjívar & Lakhani, 2017; Seibel, 2016; Vega, 2018; Xiao et al., 2014), organizational communication (McGarry, 2016; McPhee et al., 2020), intercultural competence (Haslet, 2020; McGarry, 2016), and others. Structuration theory, therefore, serves as the underlying context in which structures (policies, regulations, laws) and agency (individuals, groups, organizations) interrelate to cyclically produce and reproduce the structures (Bodolica et al., 2016; McPhee et al., 2020). This

interrelationship of structure and agency leading to the reproduction of structures is the duality of structure.

Origin and Key Concepts of the Structuration Theory

As earlier noted, the structuration theory was formulated by Giddens in 1979 and updated in 1984. According to Giddens (1984), the critical elements of the structuration theory are agency, structure, and duality concepts. As the micro or relational governance, agents are individuals and groups that operate within a system. These agents continuously monitor themselves and the environment, including other people and structures, and form views that influence their actions based on their understanding. Giddens (1984) defined macro governance (structures) in two ways: functionalist and structuralist. For the functionalists such as Comte, Parson and Durkheim (Giddens, 1979, 1984), structure constrains people as an externality, while it is an intersection of systems to the structuralists like Althusser, Derrida, and Saussure (Giddens 1984). Notwithstanding the definition by the structuralists and functionalists, Giddens took a simplistic approach by defining structure as rules and procedures of social interchange.

In this study, I used Giddens' definition of structure specific to the theoretical framework. It then follows that those rules or structures are contextually interrelated with individuals' actions. McPhee et al. (2020) specified that the interrelationship of structures and agency is the basis for the production and reproduction of structure. Rules underlie the formation of meaning by individuals and the disciplinary measures taken against them (Giddens, 1979, 1984). Conceptually, Giddens (1979, 1984) postulated that the structure,

maintained by individuals (agency), influences an individual's autonomy, and the point of intersection between the two is structuration.

Giddens (1979,1984) used the structuration theory to put forth the duality of structure concept in which agents engage the rules in the production and reproduction of actions (Giddens, 1984; McPhee et al., 2020). The essence of this (re)production of actions is that structure cannot operate in isolation of agency and other systemic elements (Bodolica et al., 2016; McPhee et al., 2020; Morçöl, 2010). The duality concept of structuration shows that structure is both the medium and outcome of the interplays between agents and structures (Giddens, 1984; McPhee et al., 2020) and underscores the importance of policies in every endeavor involving humans and society. Some scholars cited by McPhee et al. (2020), such as Barley (1986), Leonardi (2007), and Archer (1982), do not agree with the parallel interrelationship of structure and agency as stipulated by Giddens' (1984) structuration theory. In the views of McPhee et al., 2020, these elements are distinctive phases influenced by action and structure. Giddens rejected this school of thought because it is a dualism concept rather than duality, the former being that structure and agent are independent occurrences. Giddens found the theorem of structuration highly predicated on the duality concept and that structure cannot be independent of people and vice versa. McPhee et al. related the structuration theory with Bennet's (2013) polarities of democracy theory. The Polarities of democracy (POD) by Benet (2006, 2013) consist of 10 elements divided into five pairs. These elements are freedom, authority, justice, due process, diversity, equality, human rights, communal obligations, participation, and representation. Pairs of the ten elements consist of freedom

and authority, justice and due process, diversity and equality, human rights and communal obligations, and participation and representation (Benet, 2013). McPhee et al. (2020) argued that, as the pairs in the polarities of democracy, several conceptions of the structuration theory, such as action and structure, variability and steadfastness, and establishment and interplays, are poles interrelated by inseparable lines. Structuration theory emerged from observable patterns from multiple layers of systems, including micro, macro, network groups, and intersocial (McPhee et al., 2020). In the views of Morçöl (2010), these layers of systems self-organize to produce actions. Haslet (2020) proclaimed the structuration theory is insightful for analyzing power relations in a social system; Xiao et al. (2014) applied the concept to underscore adaptation and agency reciprocity. Using the structuration theory, McGarry (2016) argued that migrants who live in multicultural societies (diasporas) actively negotiate their interconnected realities. When perceiving a structure through different cultural norms within a multicultural society, there is usually a collision of concepts. Therefore, the structuration theory is well suited as a lens to study Nigerian immigrants' (as agents) perception of New Jersey government policies (as structure) to aid their integration within American society.

The wide application of the structuration theory emphasizes its versatility and diversity as a theoretical lens in various spheres of human endeavor. In this literature review, I present three key areas—organizational communication, health care, and migration studies—guided by the structuration theoretical framework.

Organizational Communication Using the Structuration Theory

Organizational communication is a crucial area of application of the structuration theory because organizations, whether government or private, delineate macro (structure) and micro (agency) relationships. McPhee et al. (2020) noted that the structuration theory was first applied to institutional communication in 1980 but has since evolved as a valid theory in organizational communication research. Every organization, including family, religious, corporate, associations, or government, incorporates rules, written or unwritten. Most families do not have written rules; nevertheless, every family member knows the consequences of breaching the rules. These rules direct the behaviors of agents in the organization and establish how to apply discipline for noncompliance (Giddens, 1984).

The order and coordination of interchanges within the organization align with the structuration theory (McPhee et al., 2020). According to MacPhee et al., organizational interaction is correlated to structuration theory in various ways, including the availability of resources to agents, categorization of powers within the organization, contextualization of interdependence within the system, harmonization and control of language power, and duality concept because it identifies production with systemic relationships that maintain and transform resources, i.e., reproduction. Using the four flows models of communication (connecting organization people, structuring the organizations, being a means of activities coordination, and externally positioning the organization), McPhee et al. (2020) further argued that structuration pervades the constituents of organizational communication. Communication flows between the micro/macrosystems are essential to the successful production and reproduction of structures. Bodolica et al. (2016) stated that

the lack of integration of the government (macro) with physicians and patients (micro) is why there are many gaps in the health care delivery system, despite enormous investments. The communication flow concept will accentuate participants' perceptions in this study regarding government support for their integration.

Health Care Delivery and the Structuration Theory

There is apprehension about the interrelationship between agency and government in the healthcare system. Bodolica et al. (2016) were concerned about a lack of integration between the hierarchical government structures that set the health care policies and the microsystems of health care practitioners and patients. These authors submitted that health care delivery has fallen short of expectations because of the macro and micro disconnect. Xiao et al. (2014) explored another angle of health care delivery by assessing barriers to integrating immigrant nurses with the host community, again noting the disconnect between micro and macrosystems. In the views of Xiao et al., several factors, including social structures and unchecked discriminatory actions of host staff members and employers, affect immigrant nurses' actions and inhibit their integration. One of the specified barriers to integration was the inadequacy of regulatory policies used in classifying experiences of immigrant nurses,' and these contribute to institutional discrimination toward nurses (Xiao et al., 2014). The shortage of appropriate policy to classify immigrant experiences and expertise engenders discrimination, discounting the experiences of immigrants in job placement. This is a failure of macro governance with the potential to affect agents who perceive different meanings and act on this failed structure based on their understanding (Giddens, 1979, 1984). In analyzing why highly

educated Poles gravitated toward low-status, low-paid jobs after the post accession, Trevena (2013) identified the United Kingdom's macro system as part of the cause. In failing to recognize Polish immigrants' qualifications, organizations created barriers to occupational change. Although immigrants may feel they have received their rightful positions on the job based on their experience and qualification in the new country, they might operate sub-optimally and have no organizational loyalty. Among nurses, there is a tendency to be unethical during patient care delivery. Bodolica et al. (2016) specified that hierarchical governance constitutes the macro-level framing and coordination efforts occurring through top-down, resources managerial decision making in the medical industry. These authors insisted that unless there is reciprocity of interaction between the micro-and macro-levels of patients, physicians, and policymakers, trust, and solidarity, which define patient-physician relationships, will exclude the policy level and (re)production will remain elusive. This macro–micro disconnect in the medical system could explain misconduct and fraud in U.S. Medicare and Medicaid operations (Eaton, 2018; U.S. Department of Justice, 2015).

Structuration Theory in Migration and Immigration Integration

Migration and immigration integration are areas of studies where the structuration theory has wide application. Such application is likely the result of migration and immigration being structurally embedded phenomena pertaining to human agents. According to the United Nations (2020) report, a substantial portion of global economic, social, and political transformation in technologies relates to policy prioritization issues of migration. Immigrants to any nation must interact with the policies of their receiving

countries and, in these interactions, (re)produce the structure (Giddens, 1979, 1984; McPhee et al., 2020).

McGarry (2016) reviewed various theoretical approaches framing migration studies, stating that the structuration theory is a meta-theory elevating the robustness of the intersectionality theory. Therefore, McGarry submitted that although intersectionality is a contemporary evolution in epistemological migration and ethnic research, it categorizes actors as located within unchanging gender, class, and race rather than the more desirable fluid social situation. The structuration theory eliminates this hindrance with the lexicon of humans as agents interacting with social structure.

Giddens (1979, 1984) distinguished three dimensions of structuration: signification, domination, and legitimation. Signification is the dawning of the consciousness of reality in a person (Giddens, 1979). Signification occurs when immigrants encounter policies and other unanticipated situations, such as language and cultural barriers, discrimination, and anti-immigrant attitudes, different from their home society (Cook et al., 2018; Farina, 2017; Vega, 2018). Domination has to do with authority and power, especially resource allocation, while legitimation is the regulatory norms (Giddens, 1984).

Immigration studies have shown these structural properties of structuration. Cook et al. (2018) discussed the impact of immigration legalization policy initiatives on the immigrants and job market. They found that some significant immigrant host nations neglect the effect of legalization programs on immigrant workers. Menjívar and Lakhani (2016) argued that legal status could create divergent courses, leading to the social

exclusion and marginalization of immigrants. Menjívar and Lakhani decried the state's power to affect immigrants' self-worth through domination and control of their activities and mindsets. Seibel (2016) also underscored the adverse effects of dominating immigrants' mentality when the United State government's power to impose its ideologies of age on the birthdates of refugees changed their identities and psyche. Engaging psychoanalysis of an undocumented immigrant with a United State-born minor child, Farina (2017) found that recent U.S. executive orders on migrants from certain countries have reified the exclusion of immigrants. As explained by Giddens (1979, 1984) and discussed by various scholars, signification, legitimation, and domination issues pose integration hindrances for immigrants into the United States. The studies discussed have fundamental concept of the duality of structure in Giddens' structuration theory. Agents, including immigrants, must make meaning of policies and, during interaction with the regulation, cyclically (re)produce the structure; otherwise, the system will continue to struggle with disrupted equilibrium (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993).

In summary, all human endeavors involve agency and policy, and the integration of the two results in the duality of structure, as shown by Giddens' structuration theory. Structuration theory has versatility and wide application, especially concerning immigration, where national and international rules dominate. As such, the theory is appropriate for this study of the perceptions of Nigerian immigrants in New Jersey regarding the government's support to their integration within society.

Complexity Theory

Brief History and Conceptualization of Morçöl's Complexity Theory

Complexity theory has at its foundation the ever-changing nature of systems emphasizing organizational unpredictability because of process complications among actors. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith developed the advocacy coalition framework to recognize that substantial goal conflicts exist in policy processes from different levels of government, resulting in disputes (Sabatier & Weible, 1999). This aligns with Baumgartner and Jones (1993), who stated that the equilibrium of policy processes is punctuated because of the dual substructure of political institutions and decision-making in the context of agenda-setting. When there are goal conflicts among policymakers, the policy outputs are likely discriminatory to some groups. Complexity theory is analogous to a catalyst, suggesting that various initial conditions can lead to similar effects while different outcomes could result from identical initial conditions (Meissner, 2015). Scholars in multiple fields have applied the complexity theory. According to Woermann (2011), complexity theory is an extension of interchanges between many disciplines, including mathematics, physics, and economics. Therefore, complexity theory is capable of multiple interpretations and applications, depending on the authors' disciplinary backgrounds.

Morçöl (2010) discussed the concept of public policy from the angle of complexity theory and argued that public policies cannot be divorced from the social or community actors. In this argument, Morçöl recognized the duality concept of Giddens's structuration theories, where the micro/macrosystems integrate to determine systems of

governance. Some authors define public policy simply as government choices of what or what not to do, or ought or ought not to do. Morçöl (2010) rejected this simplistic definition and referred to public policy as complex processes. Morçöl described two conceptualizations of public policy as a macro process and as an integration of the micro and macro processes. The author embraced the latter concept, asserting that for relevant contributions to public policies, complexity theories should embrace the insights from Giddens's (1979,1984) structuration theory. With reference to the institutional analysis and development framework by Ostrom 2005; the advocacy coalition framework by Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1993; and network governance theories by Koppenjan & Kleijn 2004; Morçöl (2010) concluded that public policies are complex systems that need to be conceptualized as multiple layers of systems inhabited by individual and other actors. Therefore, Morçöl summarized that recognizing the complexity of policy processes unfolds a course for the construction of complexity theory of public policy.

In this study, I focused on public policy as a complex system. Therefore, I center this literature review and the study on Morçöl's (2010) construct of the complexity theory, which is rooted in the interrelationship between public policy and human agents and aligns with Giddens's (1979, 1984) structuration theory. Some studies framed with the complexity theory are integral parts of this literature review.

Complexity Theory and Healthcare

One of the measures MIPEX uses in determining how well a country is integrating immigrants is providing healthcare services for the immigrants (McDaniel, 2015; Pew Research Center, 2018). According to Scholten (2019), immigrants'

integration is complex and goes beyond their mainstreaming into the society to health issues, education, and housing. Scholten averred that the World Health Organization is increasingly involved with immigrants and refugees' healthcare in collaboration with other global organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM). Horvat and Filipovic (2020) engaged the complexity in leadership theory to determine the quality and effectiveness of leadership in healthcare service delivery. The authors found that organization leaders' recognition of complexity in business strategies engenders differences in healthcare service delivery effectiveness and affects job performance. Similarly, except the complexity of healthcare service to immigrants is properly articulated by immigration policymakers, they may not achieve the desired immigration goals.

In their roles to look after the public interest, governments develop and implement policies that enhance the living standards of their people (Wellard & Secker, 2015). Healthcare strategies are one of the priority areas of wellbeing pursued by many government policies. However, there are sometimes conflicts between different government strategies to improve healthcare and the individual perception of their wellbeing priorities. A typical example is the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act of 2009, which gave the FDA exclusive powers on regulating, manufacturing, marketing, and selling tobacco throughout the United States. Gillette (2012) noted that this Act had some negative consequences on some subnational governments because of massive obligations incurred

from not correctly anticipating and articulating the cost-benefit analysis of such laws on states and regional governments that have substantial investments in cigarettes and tobacco. In their study of sports and physical activities for children, Wellard and Secker (2015) observed that governments focused more on the positive effects of physical activities for children's health without considering the complicated process of adults' perception and construct of what constitutes childhood health and suitable physical activities.

Because government policies are very complex, as earlier noted by Morçöl (2010), subjective and objective considerations must be brought to bear in policy formulation. Again, these perspectives (subjectivity and objectivity) underpin Giddens's (1979, 1984) duality concept. Wellard and Secker (2015) argued that debates about the effectiveness of putting government health policies into practice should pivot upon subjective and objective interpretations of wellbeing by the people impacted by the intervention and measuring process. Consequently, immigration integration effectiveness, including the healthcare angle without seeking to understand the immigrants' perception, could be an effort in futility.

Complexity Theory and Immigration

In the trajectory of immigration integration, complexity trails different state policies evolving in all forms of modifications that create factions among leaders, political parties, and the public. Mexican border control is one such reference point in the recent U.S. immigration history. The U.S. immigration policies enjoyed some equilibrium levels until 9/11 when emphasis shifted to border security (U.S. Citizenship

and Immigration Services, 2019). Post-9/11, the U.S. government created three new departments—Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to purge noncitizen criminals, at the same time welcome law-abiding immigrants. The dilemma is determining who among the *lawful* immigrants is not a criminal or would not be criminalized in the future, and the parameters for ascertaining among the new intakes which are or is not a criminal. These dilemmas constitute complex policy processes, even for the best-informed structure. Saint-Blancat (2018) applied the complexity theory to analyze Italy's scientific brain drain phenomenon since the 1990s, finding the topic was more complex and beyond scientific mobility, with individuals' movements also influenced by push and pull factors. Au's (2019) contribution was from the angle of medical health care policies. This author discussed the complexity of delivering mental health care education and programs to Asian Americans because of the sensitivity to their family culture, which stigmatizes mental health patients and inhibits the acculturation of these immigrants. Au recommended that self-organizing, an attribute of Morçöl's (2010) complexity theory, was a more efficient and flexible way to address mental health among Asian Americans. In another study, Scholten (2019) explored why policymaking in diversity and migration-related issues were out of control, attributing the application of stopgap measures and lack of appreciation of the level of complexities involved in migration and multiculturalism. Meissner (2015) argued that complexity is a fundamental facet of diversity. Because a discussion of immigration integration cannot occur without diversity or multiculturalism, complexity theory was essential for my study.

Organizations and Communication Using Complexity Theory

Contemporary organizations operate within complex environments affected by consistently changing technology, economic crisis, high competition, changes in styles and tastes, new entrants, and leadership and governance turnovers (Shadid, 2016). These changes further complicate the complexity of managing businesses and may constitute communication barriers. According to Robbins and Judge (2009), organizations communicate with internal and external stakeholders using various modes, including verbal, nonverbal, written, sign, graphical and electronic modes. Managing diverse human behaviors in a multicultural organization further complicates governance and impacts goal achievement. Complexity incites managerial anxiety within and outside the organization and affects information flow at all layers of the organizational hierarchy (Shadid, 2016).

Organizational and business complexity have assumed heightened levels with the upwardly spiraling global infrastructure, social media, internet, and robotic automation processes (Benbya et al., 2020). The authors argued that expanding digitalization implies the generation of numerous challenges and opportunities for information systems (IS) due to the increased complexity in sociotechnical processes. It is within these heightened techs and digitalization that integration policymakers and immigrants must, according to Morçöl (2010), coevolve and reproduce.

The most intuitive and insightful aspect of Morçöl's (2010) complexity theory is that systems (policy, agency, and other systemic elements) must coevolve. Scholten (2019) corroborated the coevolution of systems by insisting on mainstreaming principles

rather than alienating migrants from problems, institutions, and political policy processes. Scholten recommended that immigrants should not be stand-alone or face a one-size-fits-all approach. With immigrants' requirements, viewpoints, and perspectives as agents factored into the complex policy systems of states, there will be an intersection of Morçöl's complexity and Giddens's (1979, 1984) structuration theories as to the conceptual framework in this study.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Immigration and Integration Policies and Policy Drivers

Because of the increase in globalization after the Great Depression (1929-1939) and World War II (1939-1945), there has been extensive migration of people across the world, particularly from the less advanced to advanced countries (Dokos, 2017; Ellermann, 2021; Kyeremeh et al., 2019; Sulaiman & Raphael, 2016; United Nations, 2018). Migration poses concerns about the welfare of people in the host countries because there is no standardized policy institutionalization and implementation to ensure immigrants' welfare across the globe. Murphy et al. (2019) noted that public and international bodies view immigrants' welfare in terms of how well they integrate into their host communities. Murphy et al. identified concerns about social cohesion, immigrants' identities, and the merit of host countries' diversity policies.

Murphy et al. (2019) considered immigration integration policies from the angle of human rights. The researchers averred that implementation always falls short of policy regarding equal education, employment, and housing rights of immigrants compared to the established host community. Murphy et al. perceived the goal of immigration

integration policy to be the inclusion of immigrants on an equal basis with the established members of the society. In their views, approaches to achieving inclusivity by policymakers should include a commitment to (a) positively eliminate discrimination, (b) actively promote liberality and consideration of other people's cultures within the society, (c) relinquish concepts of assimilation, and (d) consciously execute and monitor integration programs to achieve balanced and equal civil, social, and economic rights for all (Murphy et al., 2019).

Lutz (2021) analyzed immigration integration policies from the standpoint of gaps between political campaign promises and the ability of the ruling parties to carry out their agendas. Lutz argued that there is a tremendous gap between political campaign promises and immigration policies after taking office. The author specified that politicians present strong ideas when campaigning but are usually weak in implementing the promised immigration policies once elected. During political campaigns, immigration policies are more restrictive (Alba & Foner, 2019; Ellermann, 2021; Lutz, 2019, 2021). Paradoxically though, immigration policies are more liberal in implementation (Lutz, 2021). The paradox between restrictive political manifestos and immigration policies and liberal performance traces back to the powers of the legislation, especially in the United States, over political party declarations (Ellermann, 2021; Lutz, 2021). The United States legislation has a far greater effect on immigration policies implementation, and unless the ruling party can negotiate bipartisan support, they may be unable to implement campaign promises. This was apparent in the Trump era, as the President could not complete a Mexico border wall as promised during the 2016 campaign (Cummings & Chapman,

2019). Divergence of action from political promises leaves citizens dissatisfied, without confidence in political promises.

Governments' immigration policies implementation has three primary influences (Lutz, 2021). These include (a) the need to fulfill electoral mandates (Alba & Foner, 2015; Jiménez, 2011), (b) limitation of electoral mandates performance because of diplomatic pressures from international bodies (Ellermann, 2019; Murphy et al., 2019), and (c) constraints from the moderation of ruling parties' activities by the institutionalized governing bodies (Alba & Foner, 2015; Ellermann, 2019). According to Lutz (2021), international pressures often affect states' immigration policies, especially to limit adverse human rights effects on immigrants and curtail systemic discrimination. The 1965 Immigration Act of the United States was a result of international coercion against the many decades of state of origin policy that restricted immigration from countries other than Canada and western Europe (Alba & Foner, 2015; Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Ellermann, 2021; Jiménez, 2011; Lutz, 2019, 2021; Murphy et al., 2019).

Liberal democracies thus face gaps between immigration policies and implementation (de Haas et al., 2018). Lutz (2021) discussed three of these gaps in immigration policy systemization as those between public policy and public agenda, between policy implementation and outputs, and between implemented policies and policy outcomes. These gaps mean that party politicians struggle to carry out public agendas and keep their promises. These uncomfortable gap-creating situations are, in part, because ruling parties feel compelled to create additional migration laws and regulations if they emphasized immigration in their campaign programs (Lutz, 2021).

Gaps may have been the reasons behind most Trump Administration immigration policies, bans, and restrictive border controls (Cummings & Chapman, 2019). For example, concerns about the United States' image as the leader of the free world (Ellermann, 2021) was a critical decider in the curtailment of the Asian exclusion and state of origin policies that existed for several decades. In the preabolition of state-of-origin, quota-basis immigration policy, Ellermann (2021) cited Tichenor's (2002, 215) response regarding the urgent and most-needed immigration policy change. Tichenor noted the inconsistencies of America's apparent projections to the world that all people are born equal yet paradoxically in their admission of immigrants into the US, predicated immigrants' selection on their birthing countries. The discussions that invariably led to the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act showed the power of world pressures to influence immigration policy institutionalization and implementation despite domestic opinions. Therefore, constraints from international and organized interest groups are always attributes of immigration policies in any nation (Alba & Foner, 2021; Lutz, 2019, 2021).

Historically, immigration policies are in line with a country's socioeconomic and sociocultural preferences. Before the World Wars, immigration policies of North America and northern Europe were the result of socioeconomic needs for industrialization, mining, and agricultural development (Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Jiménez, 2011; Katz & Stern, 2006; Kyeremeh et al., 2019; Sulaiman & Raphael, 2016). The involuntary immigration from Africa during the slave trade era was necessary to obtain the required mining and agricultural labor (Alba & Foner, 2015; Cummings &

Chapman, 2019; Ellermann, 2021; Katz & Stern, 2006; Katz, 1996b). The exclusion of the Asian countries and origin/quota system immigration policies of the United States before the civil rights movement brought about the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act (Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Jiménez, 2011; Lutz, 2019; Murphy et al., 2019). Cummings and Chapman (2019) observed that xenophobia was an attribute of immigrants' pushback from Native Americans, and Lawrence (2016) argued that immigration brought about an erosion of the European cultures, which had been the beacon of good governance for the United States. Lawrence's notion delineates the exclusion and quota systems inherent in 1890 to 1960 U.S. immigration policies (Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Jiménez, 2011). Lutz (2021) argued that the implication of sociocultural immigration integration policies was more important than the socioeconomic implication because the former included more anti-immigrant policies. This finding corroborated Lawrence's argument that immigrants erode the European culture of the United States and affirmed Alba and Foner's (2015) contention that immigrants are stigmatized based on race.

However, whatever the drivers of immigration policies by any nation and in any time and space, de Haas et al. (2018) found countries' abilities to cut back migration and the rights of some categories of migrants limited by international and national human rights laws and the judiciary systems. These restrictions particularly relate to family members of immigrants and people seeking asylum.

Diversity Management and Multiculturalism.

At the heart of the confusion in integrating into a multicultural society (Ojukwu & Oni, 2017) is the predisposition that an environment deemed multicultural will also be diversified. Multiculturalism is the melting point for people of diverse cultures and ways of life. Nevertheless, Taylor and Foster (2015), in their study of social cohesion in Canada, elucidated that many migrants suffer immeasurably because resistance and restraints sometimes discourage them from integration into the new society. According to Ojukwu and Oni (2017), although multiculturalism positively impacts the United States economy, the question remains whether diversity does not increase interpersonal distrust and isolation of certain persons on an individual basis.

If there is unity in diversity, one would naturally expect that the economic benefits from the booms will become shared prosperity among diverse groups, with no one left behind. However, the reverse seems to be the case. For Nigerian immigrants, their presence in the new country undergoes adverse effects from a combination of natural and ethnic biases (Ramos et al., 2020, Imoagene, 2019 b). Bugg (2016) spoke about the challenges people of color (Black Americans) face on the job and the impact on career advancement, identifying the topic of biological racism. On the other hand, Nigerian immigrants' concerns are further complicated by exposure to cultural racism because they came from a different cultural background (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019). Ekwemalor and Ezeobele enunciated the culture shock, and the ignorance of the new immigrants on the nuances of their new environment contribute to their frustrating inability to adjust quickly. For instance, they emphasized the challenges of male Nigerian

immigrants, who find it extremely difficult to pull off the patriarchal attitude of the dichotomous obligations of both genders in the maintenance of the household. Perhaps, Ekwemalor and Ezeobele speculated, the men who complain about the multicultural prisms strongly want to hold to such practices that the wife must cook for the husband. Where multiculturalism works, gender roles should become a nonissue, with no one overburdened by the need to become "a new creature" (Holy Bible, 2 Corinthians 5:17).

In contrast, Markus and Taft (2015) detailed Australia's experiences with assimilation policy for immigrants after World War II. The researchers deduced that it was almost impractical to alter immigrants' ways of life, at least not for the first generation. There is undoubtedly much excitement by Nigerian immigrants in New Jersey and elsewhere in the United States, expecting they have arrived at a nation where things work seamlessly. However, that excitement soon fades to despair, with profound psychosocial impacts (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019). Despite the multicultural inclination, immigrants' lack of knowledge and the host community's impatience can subject the new immigrants to biological and cultural racism (Ramos et al., 2020).

The logical question is how much diversity the U.S. can achieve in a multicultural environment with embedded biases and prejudices. Sheppard (2018) advocated for the win-win-win model, which the author described as the only way to benefit the people, the organization, and society. To Sheppard, any form of disrespect and discrimination in the workplace and community is unacceptable, hindering progress and undermining societal prosperity. Sheppard (2018) decried the erroneous and mindlessness of racism and intolerance to other cultures. The takeaway is that multiculturalism that is averse to

nondiscriminatory diverse management is a deception. The deception lies in the expectation of many immigrants who became trapped in an environment they had hoped for but did not find (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019).

Discrimination Against Immigrants

Jiménez (2011) distinguished between established Americans and newcomers to examine the impact of assimilation in American society. Although the author was aware of the complexities of interactions among various groups, the delineation between these groups in broad terms may be complicated. As stated by Bugg (2016), there is a form of discrimination that is more of biological racism, as is the case of the conditions of Black Americans. Beyond biological racism, average Nigerian immigrants will suffer the double jeopardy of racial and cultural racism (Oriji, 2020; Ramos et al., 2020). According to Oriji (2020), Nigerian immigrants in the United States suffer racialized discrimination causing an identity crisis.

Trevena (2013) highlighted the plight of educated and skilled Polish immigrants in London mostly restricted to low-skilled jobs. Before the European Union free movement, most immigrants found their way into Britain through semilegal and illegal means. However, faced with the challenge of not speaking English fluently, the Poles' chances of engagement in formal and corporate environments suited to their qualifications was limited. Also, after the EU free movement, other levels of discrimination came to the fore, including the downgrading of the certifications acquired in Poland before emigration to Great Britain.

Although Trevena's (2013) study does not directly align with Nigerian immigrants to the United States, many parallels exist. First, although immigrants of Nigerian origin may be mostly legal and documented, certificate recognition (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019) could be a significant barrier to continuing in their previous profession or finding jobs that match their education and experiences. As much as Poles in Britain may suffer cultural racism (Ramos et al., 2020), Nigerian immigrants in the United States endure both racial and cultural racism, which affects their chances of getting suitable jobs. Trevena (2013) showed that the Poles suffered from low self-esteem; this is not the case for most Nigerian immigrants, who are immensely proud of their educational attainment and cultural background.

Markus and Taft (2015) found significant resources available to immigrants to Australia to learn English (though not generally successful because of resource constraints). Poles had to make personal arrangements to improve their communication abilities in the United Kingdom, their new country. Although Nigeria is an English-speaking country, many immigrants still suffer discrimination because they speak the language with strong accents (Branker, 2017). Branker (2016) discussed the peculiarity of some English-speaking Caribbean immigrants about their accent and difficulty understanding linguistics and how that increased discrimination. The discrimination's impact, which disproportionately affects men, is partially responsible for the psychosocial anomaly, as Ekwemalor and Ezeobele (2019) detailed. It is reasonable to infer that the pattern noticed by Ekwemalor and Ezeobele in Houston, Texas, is similar across the United States.

Another more profound discrimination, as detailed by VanNatta (2018), is the overt criminalization of immigrants, especially those undocumented, including people from Nigeria. Nigerian immigrants committing any form of infraction against U.S. law find themselves the victims of intolerance. Most often, there is insufficient time given to Nigerian immigrants to understand the specifics of their new environment. More so, coming from a background of communal living (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019), many Nigerian immigrants find it hard to adjust to the individualistic American lifestyle. Thus, a lack of understanding of Nigerians, both established and new (Francis et al., 2017; Jiménez, 2011), can create misunderstandings from both sides; as a result, Nigerian immigrants continue to experience discrimination.

U.S. Immigration Policies: A Comparative Analysis

U.S. immigration policies have been of global focus from the country's founding, as the United States is a nation of immigrants (Alba & Foner, 2015; Ellermann, 2021; Jiménez, 2011). The versatility of American immigration policies has accounted for its perception as the most liberal regarding immigration. However, Kraut (2017) suggested that although the United States attracts immigrants because of its versatile immigration policies, Americans repel them. This section presents U.S. immigration and integration approaches compared to other countries.

Quests for economic gains top U.S. and Canadian immigration and integration policies (Alba & Foner, 2015; Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Kraut, 2017). Both countries historically embraced immigration to obtain labor for agriculture, mining, and factory production. The United States sought foreign-born workers to toil in the fields

and factories, exploiting their intellectual talents (Kraut, 2017). Globalization and industrialization brought about increased mobility with a more significant influx into North America and western Europe. The United States, therefore, introduced various measures to stem the immigrant inundation, such as the Immigration Act of 1917 (i.e., the Asiatic Barred Zone Act; Young, 2018), the regional restrictive immigration law that limited immigrants from southern and eastern Europe and other countries except for western Europe (Alba & Foner, 2015; Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Ellermann, 2021; Jiménez, 2011). The United States ended restrictive immigration with the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Alba & Foner, 2015; Cummings & Chapman, 2019), which opened the borders to many people in the fourth wave of American immigration.

In contrast to the restrictions introduced by the United States, Canada pursued a policy of multinationalism (Alba & Foner, 2015; Kyeremeh et al., 2019; Sulaiman & Raphael, 2016). However, both countries' immigration policies stemmed from economic quests (Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Kyeremeh et al., 2019). Hence, the two nations targeted immigrants with capital to invest, skilled professionals, and human capital to fill productive gaps that they could not fill with native-born workers. Opening immigration to countries other than western Europe was necessary from the downward steep of immigrants from western Europe and other nations and international pressures (Alba & Foner, 2015; Ellermann, 2021). Kraut (2017) perceived emigration from North America to other European countries as resulting from discriminatory attitudes of core European indigenes who are uncomfortable with the influx of immigrants. While there were no structured immigration integration programs in the United States (Jiménez, 2011),

Kyeremeh et al. (2019) asserted that, in recognition of the importance of immigrants in Canada's socioeconomic development, the nation designed policies to attract and retain hundreds of thousands of immigrants yearly.

Australia and New Zealand followed Canada's lead to institutionalize immigrant attraction and retention policies through successful integration programs (Kyeremeh et al., 2019). The United States comparatively has a laissez-faire approach to immigrant integration except as it concerns refugees (Jiménez, 2011). Per Johannesen and Appoh (2020), immigration integration is a prioritized agenda in European countries. Norway published a white paper to address immigration challenges and possibilities of increased immigration. To enhance immigrants' ability to integrate and secure jobs, there is a national law requiring every newly arrived immigrant to attend an introduction training program in Norway (Johannessen & Appoh, 2020). However, critics of the introduction training program believe it indoctrinates the immigrants into the Norwegian culture, particularly because it includes passing the Norwegian language test.

Britain's immigration policies were affected by its transition from an empire into a nation-state within the decolonization process (Fomina, 2010). Unlike the United States that began as an immigrant nation, Britain was an empire that colonized many other countries within the commonwealth. Therefore, Britain's shift to embrace multiculturalism, such as that obtained in Canada (Kyeremeh et al., 2019), was a slow, sometimes painful process (Fomina, 2010). Compared with other immigrants, the commonwealth membership empowered immigrants from such countries in many ways except for the quest for equality. Before the U.S. Immigration Act of 1965, immigrants

from western Europe enjoyed similar privileges in the United States as commonwealth immigrants in Great Britain. Nonetheless, like the United States, the United Kingdom does not seem to have any structured immigration integration process (Sammut, 2012).

Social Capital as an Integration Tool

Stigmatization and discrimination against immigrants are prevalent in immigration processes and engender the engagement of social capital by immigrants as survival tactics. Social capital is the resources accessible to socially connected people (Villalonga & Kawachi, 2017). Members in the networks derive benefits, such as access to jobs, social facilities, education, and housing opportunities (Álvarez & Romaní, 2016; Johannesen & Appoh 2020; Villalonga & Kawachi, 2017). Immigration integration-focused governments, such as London City in Canada, foster social capital (Kyeremeh et al., 2019) because of the vast benefits derived from this network capital. Social capital cuts across and between immigrants of similar biographic origin and others of different birth cultures. Hence, people could form network groups in workplaces, residential communities, volunteer organizations, and school forums (Johannesen & Appoh 2020; Villalonga & Kawachi, 20 17).

Johannesen and Appoh (2020) studied the coping mechanisms of African immigrants in Norway, finding that social capital was their linchpin in an entirely different culture from their prior experiences before immigration. For the African immigrants in Norway, their most valued sources of social capital were the teachers they met at their mandatory, government-organized immigrant assimilation orientation and the coparents of their school children. Au (2019) found the complex cultural context

preventing East Asian immigrants in the United States from accessing mental health facilities based on family stigmatization within the social support system. This, according to Villalonga and Kawachi (2017), is the dark side of social capital.

Literature is vast on the discrimination and stigmatization facing immigrants that limit their integration (Alba & Foner, 2015; Johannesen & Appoh, 2020). Social capital is a self-help system that immigrants can use to ameliorate discrimination (Johannesen & Appoh, 2020). Social capital is powerful among certain groups of immigrants. The Asian community practicalizes social capital; hence, all major U.S. cities have scattered Chinatowns where Asians carry out socioeconomic and cultural activities (Oriji, 2020). Similarly, African immigrants to Norway bond well through social supports (Johannesen & Appoh, 2020). In contrast, the Maltese immigrants in the United Kingdom face an immigration integration challenge: they cannot establish bonding through social supports among themselves because of a past adverse history of Malta-to-United Kingdom immigration (Sammut, 2012).

Despite all the perceived benefits of social capital, Villalonga and Kawachi (2017) presented its dark side as behavioral contagion, leading to health challenges in immigrants involved in the network supports. In any network, issues such as groupthink can suppress expressions and independence for some members (Robins & Judge, 2009). There can also be unanticipated health complications, such as those limiting East Asian immigrants' access to mental health care facilities (Au, 2019)

Facing and challenging ethno-racial stigma and discrimination in any country is more effective when people of similar ethnic and racial backgrounds collaborate (Gillum

& Mose, 2016). Finding and belonging to an ethnic and cultural body is an essential element of integration for any new immigrant (Johannesen & Appoh, 2020). Everything seems strange on arrival, including food, weather, language, way of life, and dress styles. Immigrants who can quickly find people of a similar culture to help them navigate and negotiate the new terrain can settle faster (Johannesen & Appoh, 2020; Sammut, 2012). Nigerian immigrants are perhaps the most frequent beneficiaries of social capital as a cushion for immigration challenges. This benefit could be because Nigerians, like individuals from other Sub-Saharan African countries, typically come from collectivist cultures (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019; Imoagene, 2017a). Additionally, Nigerians have learned communal interdependence rather than depend on the government (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019; Madueke & Vermeulen, 2018). A government that embraces and encourages social capital, such as Norway, finds significant success in immigrants' integration with the mainstream (Johannesen & Appoh, 2020; Kyeremeh et al., 2019).

Nigerian Immigrants in the United States

Nigerians are the most populous African immigrants in the United States. Sanusi (2019), referencing the American Community Survey report, placed the 2016 population of Nigerian immigrants at 380,785, making Nigeria the third-largest Black immigrant country to the United States after Jamaica and Haiti (Pew Research Center, 2018). This number likely does not account for the undocumented immigrants from this group. Referencing to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Babalobi (2020) reported that because of the United States' restrictions on undocumented immigrants, some 9,898 Nigerians illegally crossed over to Canada between February 2017 and June 2018 from

undesignated ports of entry. Babalobi's report also showed that there were 11,629 pending asylum applications of Nigerians as of 2018.

Pew Research Center (2018) found that among Nigerian immigrants to the States, 59% have a bachelor's degree or more. Therefore, it is worth exploring why these highly educated people migrate from their country and how they have fared as immigrants in the United States.

Why Do Nigerians Emigrate?

Nigerians are the most geographically mobile African residents (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019; Pew Research Center, 2018; Rodríguez, 2014). People emigrate for various reasons, including to escape from conflict zones, poverty, harsh environment, poor living standards, flawed political systems, and poverty; seek better education; obtain better health care; join loved ones; and pursue change or adventure (Alba & Foner, 2018; Babalobi, 2020; Cummings & Chapman, 2018; Pew Research Center, 2018; United Nations, 2020). These reasons also account for why Nigerians emigrate. However, Nigerians' quest to leave their country has heightened since the mid-1980s, with the extreme recession and structural adjustment programs (Nairaland, 2021a) leading to a steady slide of the naira against the dollar, ending in its massive devaluation. In 1985, one Nigerian naira exchanged for $1.12 USD (Nairaland, 2021a); presently, the official exchange rate is 409 naira to $1 USD (Central Bank of Nigeria, n.d.).

Nigeria was a multiproduct agricultural economy producing and exporting cocoa, palm kernel, groundnut, coffee, hides, and skin as its primary sources of foreign exchange earnings before discovering crude oil in commercial quantity in 1956 (Okotie,

2018). The discovery of crude oil brought infrastructural and technological advancements that eventually led to the demise of agricultural production and exports such that Nigeria became an importer of staple foods. Oil production changed the trajectory of Nigeria to petroleum export as its only product and foreign exchange earner. Therefore, when the oil price crashed in the mid-1980s, the country entered a severe recession and underwent the structural adjustment programs (SAPs). Nigeria has not been the same since the SAPs because the economy has experienced a vast downward trend ever since. The economic slide worsened with the rampant corruption of government officials, poor management of resources, kidnappings, an ineffective justice system, ethnoreligious violence and conflicts, and willful destruction of land and property (Madueke & Vermeulen, 2018; U.S. Department of State, 2021). Before the International Monetary Fund and World Bank induced SAPs (Kolesnik, 2017), Nigerians migrated to the United States and western European countries, mainly to acquire education. Upon graduation, most of these students returned home, where they had lucrative jobs waiting. However, beyond the SAPs and the ever-worsening violence, inadequate infrastructures, insecurity, and increased competition for scarce jobs due to the high turnout of college graduates, Nigerian students abroad had no motivations to return. Relocation abroad became the dream of Nigerians (Babalobi, 2020). The millions of jobless college and other tertiary institution graduates every year either seek jobs abroad or become unemployable after years of schooling without an appointment. One of the reports by The Nairaland Forum (2013) showed that due to an assortment of factors, including tumultuous investment

opportunities in the marketplace and poor economy, Nigerian graduates face the challenges of employment prospects.

Enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution 1999 (as amended; Federal Republic of Nigeria, n.d.), Nigeria has patterned its rules and regulations after those of the United States. The laws should, therefore, address all the human rights and governance issues in this African country. On paper, there are policies to enhance quality governance, good security, and the country's peaceful coexistence. Paradoxically, however, systemic corruption, ethnoreligious violence (Madueke & Vermeulen, 2018), greed, and the leaders' selfishness have impeded implementing the federal laws as written (U.S. Department of State, 2021). Notable among these violations are:

1. Politically motivated killing and arbitrary deprivation of life. The report indicated that Nigerian government or its agents committed arbitrary, unlawful, or extrajudicial killings noting that the state and federal panels of inquiry investigating suspicious deaths did not make their findings public (U.S. Department of State, 2021). Section 33(1) of the Nigerian Constitution stated that everyone has a right to life, and no person should be intentionally deprived of it unless as an execution of the judgment of the court. The report also showed that hundreds of people disappear because of the operations of criminal groups and Boko Haram, who abduct people to collect ransoms.
2. Torture and other cruel degradation of people. Section 34(1) of the Nigerian constitution prohibits torture, cruelty, and inhumanity to people; however, the U.S. State Department report showed that the #EndSARS protest in 2020 was

rife with police brutality. Also, Amnesty International reported 82 cases of torture in Nigeria since May 2017 (U.S. Department of State, 2021).

3. Bad conditions of prisons and detention centers. The Nigerian prisons and detention centers are overcrowded, in impoverished states, and lacking basic human existence facilities. Prisoners and detainees endure brutal treatment from prison officials, and the centers are infested with disease and have inadequate food. Many people have been indefinitely detained in contradiction to Section 35(4) of the country's constitution. Nigerian prisons are, therefore, like death sentences for prisoners and detainees.

These inhumane treatments, the harsh economic and security conditions, and the government's apparent lack of resolve to enforce the policies constitute the push factors that force Nigerians to emigrate.

How Have Nigerians Historically Fared in the United States?

Despite the push factors, Nigerians are immensely proud of their country because they value their collectivist culture (everyone involved in each other's lives and helping each other along) with their unique tough-it-out attitude (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019). This cultural orientation has boosted the number of Nigerian immigrants, as Nigerians pull their family members to the United States as soon as they become citizens, filing under the family unification visa. The diversity visa also contributed to the more significant number of Nigerian immigrants in the past 2 decades (Imoagene, 2017a). However, immigration into the United States and the United Kingdom is not always pleasant for Nigerians because of the tremendous integration barriers. Ekwemalor and

Ezeobele (2019) found that discrimination and stressful life events have considerable psychosocial impacts to Nigerian immigrants, sometimes leading to health challenges, family separations, inability to continue education, exclusion from good jobs commensurate to their education and professional experiences, and an inability to integrate within the U.S. social structures. Rodríguez (2014) studied Nigerian immigrants in New York and found that they retained their loyalties in Nigeria because of their inability to integrate within U.S. society.

Nigerians in the United States and most of western Europe are caught between their Nigerianess and their Blackness (Imoagene, 2017b; Kyeremeh et al., 2017; Oriji, 2020) and battle with identity crises. Because they are Black, Nigerian immigrants in the United States face the paradigm shift of racialization, contrary to their belief that their ethnicity differentiates them from Africa Americans (Oriji, 2020). Oriji (2020) found that being perceived as African American while facing entrenched racialized treatment by White American natives has forced Nigerians' alignment with the Black community. However, they have very distinctive cultural orientations from African Americans (Imoagene, 2017b), causing friction between Nigerian-born immigrants and their American-born children. The identity conflict is greater among second-generation Nigerian immigrants (those born to Nigerian-born immigrants) caught in multifaceted identity crises. This conflict prevents the second-generation Nigerian immigrants from fitting into their host countries because they neither accept their classification as African American in the United States (or Black Caribbean in the United Kingdom) nor see themselves as pure Nigerians. Rather, they have developed a diasporic Nigerian ethnicity

to balance their racial status. According to Alba and Foner (2015), assimilating rather than integrating is unhealthy for any immigrant group; perhaps this is what impacts second-generation Nigerian immigrants and gives them the feeling of not belonging to any nation (Imoagene, 2017b). When the structures of a state are rife for immigrants as agency, then structure works to (re)produce for the benefit of everyone in the society (Giddens, 1979, 1984; Morçöl, 2010).

Most Nigerian-born immigrants in the United States have their eyes back home to avoid the systemic violence and racial viciousness (Oriji, 2020) they perceive or experience in America. Therefore, they are engaged in heavy remittances to Nigeria for investment in properties, infrastructure, politics, and families' lives (Nwadiuko et al., 2016; Oguniyi et al., 2020; Rodríguez, 2014). There is a perception of Nigerian-born immigrants in the diaspora having one foot in their host country and the other in their home country (Kyeremeh et al., 2021). With the implementation of policies to improve governance, infrastructure, and security in Nigeria, these immigrants might be happy to return (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019; Rodríguez, 2014).

Summary

In Chapter 2, I presented a review of the main concepts and foundation for the study in line with the conceptual framework. Features of immigration integration policies, the comparative analysis of U.S. immigration policies, multiculturalism, diversity, discrimination, social capital, and driving forces for the emigration of Nigerians are concepts that underlie the study. Despite extensive literature on immigration integration features, what is unknown is the impact immigrants' assimilation programs

and policies have on Nigerian immigrants in New Jersey. Structuration and complexity theories form the conceptual framework framing the research. Synchronously, the structuration theory of Giddens (1979, 1984) and the complexity theory of Morçöl (2010) indicated that effective implementation of government policies requires an interrelationship between structure and agency (the duality of concept). It is within this duality of structure concept that (re)production of systems occurs. Therefore, immigration integration is not possible with the structure polarized from the agency, the subject of integration policies (Bodolica et al., 2016; Giddens, 1979, 1984; McPhee et al., 2020; Morçöl, 2010).

The major themes of the literature review that connect with this study's conceptual foundation were government integration policies, discrimination, multiculturalism, and diversity. The microlevel of integration is immigrants (agents), and the macrolevel is the government that sets and monitors the immigration integration rules and regulations. The conceptual framework shows that there must be a synchronization of the micro/macrosystems for (re)production to happen. Government roles in ensuring integration are needed because the core problem of global migration is not the number, but effectively integrating the immigrants within the host community to achieve the individual's and host state's goals of immigration (Alba & Foner, 2019; Kyeremeh et al., 2019).

I also presented the role of immigrants' culture and beliefs (see Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019; Imoagene, 2017b) within the literature reviews and the attitudes of the host government and established community (Kraut, 2017, Menjívar & Lakhani, 2016;

Seibel, 2016) in influencing integration. This study uniquely combined structuration and complexity theories to explore perceptions of immigrant integration and assimilation in the United States by Nigerian immigrants in New Jersey. In chapter 3, I present the qualitative narrative inquiry approach and procedures used in this study. It further showed how I planned to use the storied lives of immigrants in a trustworthy manner to explore government policies' impact on immigrants' assimilation.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this narrative inquiry study was to examine the stories and experiences of Nigerian immigrants regarding government programs and policies that assist or limit their assimilation into New Jersey. Using the stories told by participants, I was able to explore the extent to which government integration policies and programs enabled or constrained their integration process. I explored Nigerian immigrants' perceptions regarding government policies that helped their integration through the study. In this chapter, I detail and address the research design, the rationale for the study, the methodology, the role of the researcher, and issues of trustworthiness.

Research Design and Rationale

My insights for this study were through the research question: How do Nigerian immigrants in New Jersey perceive the impact of the U.S. government settlement and support programs on their integration into American society?

A critical concern of most immigration literature is integration (Alba & Foner, 2015; Johannesen & Appoh, 2020; Sammut, 2012). Challenges and opportunities accompany all migrants because they must negotiate through a maze of official and unofficial structures and cultures to abide by the policies of the host state (Johannesen & Appoh, 2020). Sammut (2012) demonstrated that the point of view of immigrants determines their ability to integrate. Immigrants' perception of government policies and programs influences their integration ability. Morçöl (2010) and Giddens (1979, 1984) postulated that it takes both the structure and agency to (re)produce the desired outcomes, which in this study is the integration of Nigerian immigrants into U.S. society. This

study, therefore, was a means to understand the effect of the duality of structure (see Bodolica et al., 2016; Giddens, 1979, 1984; Morçöl, 2010) on Nigerian immigrants' integration.

Participants' answers to the research question provided a better understanding of a sample of Nigerian immigrants' perceptions about government support programs for their settlement and integration. The study was based on the ontological assumption that participants have different truths and realities (see Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), social constructivism is a paradigm that is typically interpretive and perceived as qualitative research. Constructivists view truth as subjective. Therefore, meanings are usually diverse and numerous, requiring the researcher to search for the complexity of viewpoints (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Participants' responses in this study varied because each has different worldviews and diverse experiences (see Babbie, 2018; Creswell, 2013; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). A qualitative research approach was appropriate to enable a deep understanding of the perspectives regarding the impact of government support programs on their integration and to engage and report their varied truths (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). According to Creswell (2013), qualitative researchers can frame their studies in various ways, with the choice of the design predicated on the research question(s). This study was a means for me to explore individuals' views and not test a hypothesis. Therefore, it was grounded in the interpretive approach (see Beaton, 2016; Burkholder et al., 2016; Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015), which conforms with a qualitative research design.

Methodology

The research methodology that I used as an in-depth understanding of participants' views in this study is a qualitative narrative inquiry. I sought to understand and interpret the meaning participants made of a shared phenomenon (Patton, 2015; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). According to Rudestam and Newton (2015), a narrative research inquiry relates to the recount of natural experiences by the research participants. In this study, I listened to Nigerian immigrants in New Jersey tell of their experiences with government support programs that impacted their integration. I chose narrative inquiry because immigrants often perceive hostilities, abuses, being exploited, and discriminated against by the host communities; the immigrants consider these to be social injustices. Narrative inquiry researchers are witness bearers to social injustices on the world's silenced and abused (Barone, 2009). Rudestam and Newton (2015) aligned with Barone by noting that the narrative researcher is responsible for absorbing the voices and stories of study participants. The essence of narrative inquiry is that the meaning participants make of events is critical to the documentation (Rudestam & Newton, 2015)

I sought to draw out participants' deep meanings of government support programs through semi structured in-depth interviews. Conducting the interviews elicited the thoughts, emotions, body language, and interpretations of the participants as they told their storied experiences (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Rudestam & Newton). Chase (2005) and Rudestam and Newton (2016) asserted that narrative inquiry is a socially set interactive production during which the interviewer engages to capture

the storyteller's perspectives of a phenomenon at a given time and place and for a specific purpose.

The in-depth interviews with Nigerian immigrants in New Jersey revealed how they understand immigration integration, immigration integration policies, their goals, and how well they have achieved their immigration objectives. Participant selection was purposive (see Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012), and participants met the criteria of being adult Nigerian-born immigrants who have lived and worked in New Jersey for a minimum of 1 year.

Data triangulation consisted of making transcribed interviews available to participants by sending them the transcriptions for re-confirmation. I also obtained the New Jersey government's official perspectives by reviewing publicly available government information on immigration integration and assimilation and nongovernment institutions involved with immigrants' integration, such as the Catholic Mission of Southern New Jersey.

Participant Recruitment

Participant recruitment was via purposive sampling (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Participation criteria was adult Nigerian-born immigrants who have lived and garnered some professional experience in the United States for a minimum of 1 year but residing in New Jersey during the study. Although Nigerians have various ethnic groups with different native languages, the lingua franca for Nigeria is English; the *Queen's English* since it was a former colony of England. Consequently, I presumed that every Nigerian with a high school diploma is conversant with English.

Qualified participants for this study were people who had work experience in New Jersey and are English speakers since they undertook their visa and work interviews in English. I did not expect to have interpreters, and I did not hold the discussions in any language other than English. Participant recruitment was through flyers (Appendix B) distributed on the sidewalk of various venues where Nigerians meet, such as Nigerian churches and community associations scattered all over New Jersey. Virtual copies of flyers were also placed on the social media of the United Nigerian Movement for Change (UNMC) per the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Participants mostly came from the urban areas. However, I accorded priority to participants that emerged from rural areas to enable a comparison of perception between urban and rural immigrants.

Participants included men and women, and they were all Nigerian-born immigrants who have lived in New Jersey for at least 1 year and have had some work experience. I detailed participation inclusivity requirements in the flyers distributed around the UNMC social media and other places. I planned on interviewing at least 10 participants for the study. The rationale for planning 10 participants was because I expected to achieve data saturation when I concluded in-depth interviews with these ten participants. Therefore, the possibility of new information beyond this number was minimal as data saturation would have been achieved. I however experienced data saturation after the eighth interview because no new information was derived after these points because of the in-depth nature of the interview (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Therefore, a sample size of 10 participants was considered adequate to gather enough information to answer the research question. I eventually held 12

interviews because of the overwhelming responses and achieved urban-rural area coverage as described in Chapter 4.

I issued formal letters of invitation to positive responders to the recruitment flyers inviting them to participate in the study (see Appendix C). After they responded to my letter of invitation, they were issued consent forms which they were required to sign. The selection criteria ensured that participants were knowledgeable and independent persons who could provide information sufficient to answer the research question (see O'Sullivan et al., 2017; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). In my study, gender was not an issue in being considered for participation. Therefore, I issued letters of invitation to positive respondents to the flyers irrespective of their gender until I obtained the minimum number of participants for the study.

Data triangulation consisted of making transcribed interviews available to participants by sending them the transcriptions for reconfirmation. To supplement the interview data, I reviewed public reports on the integration and assimilation of immigrants in the state of New Jersey. The outcome of that review is in Chapter 5.

The Role of the Researcher

In this study I explored the perceptions of the impact of government support programs on immigrants' integration into society. I had no personal relationship with the participants. However, I brough to this study a bias as a Nigerian immigrant resident in New Jersey who has experienced immigration integration issues. Therefore, given my positionality, I undertook consistent reflexivity and reflection throughout the fieldwork

and data analysis stages, open to learning without prejudice that mitigated any bias (see Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016, Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

To prevent my experiences from influencing the analysis and thematic outcomes, I used a recursive approach during categorization and theming to ensure that evidence from the study supports the interpretation and analysis (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I used the recursive approach to take a second look at the emerging categories. Using this approach was helpful to see the emergence of new patterns for further categorization. The methods used for this included but were not limited to the axial coding system. Maintaining a detailed audit trail, memoing, journaling, and documenting processes which were essential to add validity and reliability to the study (see O'Sullivan et al., 2017; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). I was fully immersed in this study to understand and interpret participants' stories.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The data collection method for this study was in-depth, semistructured interviews which aligned with the qualitative narrative inquiry approach (see Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Interviews lasted last between 60 and 75 minutes and occurred at a time and place convenient to each participant outside of their workplace. I held the interviews only over Zoom since this was the participants' preference because of the COVID-19 protocols. Before each interview, I reminded participants of the use and confidentiality of the information they provide and asked them to confirm their intention to continue (see appendix E). Rubin

and Rubin (2012) also noted the importance of researchers keeping their words as a mark of respect and ethical compliance.

I used a researcher developed interview guide (see Appendix A), posing follow-up questions, as appropriate, to obtain more depth (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). At the end of each interview, participants were debriefed, including a reminder that participants could still withdraw before data analysis and results write-up (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I audio-recorded all interviews, having them transcribed using Otter ai transcription software before coding, categorization, and theming the data. I then shared the transcripts and initial interpretations with each participant for confirmation. Participants were required to respond to the transcripts and interpretation within three days; otherwise, it would be regarded as confirmed. The data collected through in-depth interviews underwent coding, categorizing, and theming for analysis (see Saldaña, 2016). The narrative inquiry is appropriate for this study because the design enabled the researcher to obtain storied experiences of the participants for interpretive purposes (see Beaton, 2016; Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015).

Rubin and Rubin (2012) discussed interview protocols, including constructing qualitative interview questions. I used the insights from Rubin and Rubin's qualitative interviewing protocols and those elucidated by Creswell and Creswell (2018) to construct the interview questions found in Appendix A. The conceptual framework of Giddens' (1979, 1984) structuration theory and Morçöl's (2010) complexity theory, coupled with my personal experience as a Nigerian immigrant who has experienced integration issues, formed the basis for the interview questions. These interview questions, which were 13

open-ended questions, elicited sufficient information from participants to answer my research question. I shared the questions with my study peers, who gave their opinions and confirmed the sufficiency of the questions to extract information from participants to address the research question. I also had the privilege of obtaining my committee members' inputs to the questions.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, especially with the onslaught of the Omicron variant, we held only Zoom interviews. I interviewed from my home office, while participants confirmed that they interviewed from their home offices or private rooms. All interviews were outside workplaces. Using the Zoom technology to interview, I was able to observe participants' facial expressions and exclamations, which are essential aspects of qualitative interviewing (see Creswell, 2013; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I used the Otter ai transcription software to transcribe audio-recorded interviews and thereafter, shared the texts with the participants as a form of data validation.

I sent letters of invitation (Appendix C) to participants who responded to the flyers, asking those who confirmed to complete a consent form. This was in line Walden University' IRB requirements for fieldwork. Memoing and notetaking during interviews were other sources of data collection. Notes are always the basis for follow-up questions and clarification of significant points (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) from participants when needed. The interviews were clear, I did not need follow-ups.

Data Analysis Plan

The central focus of qualitative research is data analysis. Coding facilitates bringing together all the interviews on a similar topic to enable the researcher to evaluate the ideas (Saldaña, 2016) and enhances analysis. I coded, categorized, and themed answers to interview questions (see Saldaña, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016) using the axial three-cycle coding framework to enhance data categorization, theming, and analysis. According to Saldaña, axial coding establishes the relationship between the primary, secondary and tertiary codes along the coding continuum. The primary coding methodology included narrative, eclectic, and emotional coding methods, which were all amenable to qualitative narrative inquiry (see Saldaña, 2016) and supported this study's research paradigm and conceptual framework.

Another term for axial coding is thematic clustering or pattern coding (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The process involved in axial coding is movement from coding data blocks in the 1st cycle of coding to determine how the codes come together to establish categories from which concepts or themes are constructed (Ravitch &Carl, 2016; Rubin &Rubin, 2012; Saldaña, 2016). The originally coded data block in the 1st cycle gets recoded axially to establish categories that eventually lead to themes and probably theoretical developments during the 2nd cycle coding (Saldaña, 2016). Axial code is thus the category around which other codes revolve and form the foundation for explaining any grounded theory (Saldaña, 2016). According to Saldaña (2016), during the 1st coding cycle, patterns emerge, which are subsequently categorized, to form the 2nd coding cycle. The categorization of data is the grouping of similarly coded data into categories based

on distinct resemblance. When using the axial coding method, the researcher must be aware that data collection and analytical memo writing are essential elements of the study. Therefore, categories emerge from the data collected and field memos after the initial coding process. The first cycle coding could include Narrative, In Vivo, or Process coding, while the second cycle coding inculcates axial coding method (see Saldaña, 2016).

The preliminary data analysis codes for this study included assimilation, immigration regulation, policy, inter-relationships, equality, discrimination, multiculturalism, diversity, values, rights, privileges, power, manipulation, beliefs, perception, controls, harm, character, attitudes, goals, heroes, angels, and devils, strategies, language, cooperation, determination, and association. Emerging sub-codes from the primary codes were expected to result in tertiary coding before categorizing the codes to determine patterns for thematic analysis (see Saldaña, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Table 1 below is the preliminary coding strategy for the interview data and is based on the conceptual framework for this study: structuration and complexity theories.

Table 1

Preliminary Coding Plan

Main Codes	Sub-codes	Interview Questions
Legal Frame	Rules, Regulations, Facilities access	2, 3, 5, 6, 7,8,9,12
Political	Policy drivers, Ruling party, Racism /discriminati	8, 10
Societal effects	Culture, Language, Heroes, Angels, Devils	4, 6,11,12,13
Relationship	Family, Workplaces, Church/religion, Recreational	4, 5, 6, 7
Psychological	Emotions, Winning/losing feeling, Fitting-in, Pains, Joys	1, 2, 3,
Culture	Diversity, Attitudes, Acceptability, Adaptability	3,5,6,7,8
Self-awareness	Upbringing, Sex, Age, History, World view	3-6
Financial	Career, Job satisfaction, Career prospects, Housing, Education	5,6-8

Creswell and Creswell (2018) cautioned that a researcher must avoid disclosing only positive results instead, to embrace and support only the participants' perspectives while maintaining respect and confidentiality. Identifying and testing a thematic framework are essential elements of data analysis (see Smith & Firth, 2011) to collate and synthesize the various experiences. Recognizing and testing themes entailed transcribing and summarizing each interview, followed by coding as earlier explained, categorizing, and theming (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Saldaña, 2016).

I required total immersion and time to comprehend the themes emerging from the data (Saldaña, 2016). A researcher's immersion is iterative and needs recategorization as the process unfolds to change the initial categories assigned to data if need be (see Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). After categorization, I further identified preliminary themes to explore other themes (see Smith & Firth, 2011), ultimately leading to further refinement of both the categories and themes for analysis and conclusions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016;

Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In this study, I engaged reflexivity and reflectiveness as the hallmark of ensuring the study's validity (Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I used the NVivo data analysis software as a coding and data analysis tool.

Trustworthiness

Positivist and constructivist researchers differ concerning how to evaluate their outcomes. There has been a long history of debate about which method, qualitative or quantitative, is superior (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Positivists challenge the validity and reliability of qualitative research because of the lack of scientific inquiry or results with a *p* value/level of significance (see Shenton, 2004). Positivists believe the only way to establish truth is through experimentation (see Babbie, 2016; Burkholder et al., 2016; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004); therefore, they reject qualitative methods, which hold that subjective truths can validly and reliably reflect the reality about the phenomenon under study. Therefore, in the views of the positivists, the canons of trustworthiness in any research outcome are validity, reliability, and generalizability (Carcary, 2009). Drost (2011) referred to this positivist's view as the measurement of human behaviors. In the opinions of Rudestam and Newton (2015), determining reliability and validity is not possible in qualitative research's naturalistic and subjective nature.

The criteria engaged by positivists for establishing qualitative research trustworthiness are regarded as unimportant by qualitative researchers to establish the merits of their interpretive investigations (Carcary, 2009). Carcary (2009) suggested reconceptualizing the canons to include credibility, dependability, and transferability to

address the constructivists' concerns. Carcary's stance aligns with Shenton's (2004), who recommended that the trustworthiness of qualitative research should be predicated on the true picture (credibility), transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Carcary further stated that the overarching strategy for establishing the trustworthiness of qualitative inquiry is developing an audit trail. I maintained a detailed audit trail to achieve trustworthiness in line with the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility is the constructivists' equivalent of what internal validity is to positivists' investigations and reveals the consistency of the investigator's findings with reality (see Shenton, 2004). Credibility requires the researcher's professional and ethical management of the research process. A researcher must uphold ethical standards in a professional relationship with participants and constantly reflect on positionality (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Enhancing credibility also comes from following the IRB specifications and ensuring participants' privacy, protection, and anonymity. Data triangulation is another credibility enhancer in qualitative research (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Shenton, 2004). According to Shenton (2004), the best way to establish the trustworthiness of any research is to demonstrate credibility. I this study, I conformed with all the elements of credibility detailed herein.

Transferability

Transferability requires including sufficient detail and context of the participants and fieldwork sites (see Shenton, 2004). Thick, rich description enables a reader to

determine whether the findings are applicable to a similar background or situation. Transferability indicates if other researchers can reliably apply the findings to another study or sample. Avoiding disclosing only information the researcher regards as positive (i.e., taking sides; Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and recursively analyzing data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016) also enhance the transferability of qualitative findings.

Dependability

Dependability determines if investigators can conduct similar work and test the theories, achieving similar results. If a study can serve as a replicable prototype archetype (see Shenton, 2004) and the findings are identical under similar conditions, then the findings have dependability. To enhance a thorough understanding of research output and ensure dependability, Shenton (2004) recommended that the text include sections for research design and implementation, data collection details, and data analysis reflections.

Confirmability

Confirmability is about records availability of well-analyzed data for verification and authentication by the IRB, research supervisors, or interested parties. Critical in confirmability are maintaining a descriptive audit trail, journaling, and memoing by documenting the processes (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Confirmability means that the study results emerged from the participants' information and are devoid of researcher bias. I shall maintain journals, audit trails, fieldwork memos, and the documented thematic process securely for 5 years after project completion, and then destroy all files following Walden University IRB requirements.

Ethical Procedures

Some of the essential characteristics of the qualitative approach include that the researcher is the key instrument of data collection, research takes place in a naturalistic setting, there are multiple sources of data, the study is inductive, and participants will give various meanings of the phenomenon (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I focused on these characteristics as my responsibility for abiding by ethical standards to ensure validity and reliability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

There was no conflict of interest between me and this study because I am in a different professional field from the participants. I prioritized the participants' rights, values, and preferences throughout the process (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). No participant would suffer hardship due to providing information for this study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The confidentiality of the individuals' supplying information was critical throughout the fieldwork and beyond. Achieving confidentiality entail using pseudonyms instead of participant names and not revealing their identities to third parties except as expressly permitted. Participants were aware of the purpose of the study and how I would use the data through written and verbal explanations, and I obtained their signed permissions through written consent before proceeding with the study (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

To further strengthen transparency and ethical code adherence, participants were given the opportunity to review their verbatim transcripts and restoried data interpretations for confirmation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ravitch & Carl, 2016;

Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Additionally, I gave every participant a choice to discontinue participation and not to volunteer information on any question with which they were uncomfortable (see Appendix E). I obtained approval from the Walden University IRB before the commencement of the fieldwork (see the IRB number in Chapter 4), and I abided by the IRB requirements throughout the research. Per the IRB approval, I did a pilot run by interviewing a friend and a family member who were qualified to be participants but were not part of the participants for the study. Pilot running was to test the sufficiency of all instruments, the timing of the interviews, and the efficiency of the transcription software in use.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I presented the methodology for studying participants' perceptions of the impact of government programs on the integration of Nigerian immigrants in New Jersey. The chapter included the research method and design, rationale for qualitative narrative inquiry, and the philosophical grounding that influenced the choice. I discussed other elements of the research process, such as the researcher's roles and bias, recruitment procedures, data collection and analysis, ethical issues and compliance, data collection instruments, and the need for participant protection. I further addressed the plan for data analysis and ended with trustworthiness issues, including the four concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and transferability in Chapter 3. I present research findings in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

On obtaining approval from Walden University's IRB (approval #12-01-21-0670576), I commenced the study to explore Nigerian immigrants' perception of the United States regarding the impact of government programs on their integration and settlement. The purpose of this study was to obtain data to answer the research question of how Nigerian immigrants in New Jersey perceive the impact of the U.S. government settlement and support programs on their integration into American society. Using the 13 interview questions, I explored participants' reasons for migrating to the United States, their perception of reception at the entry points, engagement with government settlement and integration programs, societal impacts at work and intercultural, and legal and political systems effects on their settlement.. I predicated this study using the research lenses of structuration theory (Giddens, 1979; 1984) and Morçöl's complexity theory (2010), as well as the known literature on immigration integration. I used the semistructured interview method (see Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016, Rubin & Rubin, 2012) to elicit information from the participants regarding their perception of what impacts government programs have on their settlement in New Jersey.

In Chapter 4, I explain the data collection process, including the interviews' settings, a description of the process of data gathering and data transcription, and the coding and theming development processes. Also, in this chapter, I detail the data collection and analysis, including a description of the sample and the research findings based on the participants' responses. Furthermore, I covered how trustworthiness was ensured through the data collection, coding, theming, and analysis as outlined in the proposal

within this chapter. Finally, I conclude this chapter with a results section that details the answers provided by participants for the interview questions.

Pilot Study

I conducted one interview with a family member and one with a friend for the primary purpose of testing the functionality of my interview facilities of Zoom and otter.ai transcription software. Other reasons for the pilot test were to practice, determine the understandability of my interview questions by participants, and gauge the adequacy of time allotted for the interviews. I used the pilot interviews to aid me in appreciating the clarity of understanding of each question by the participants, who were selected based on my pre-established inclusivity criteria for the study. I applied similar procedures of privacy assurance, consent (this time verbal), voluntary participation, data maintenance, and respect that I had planned for the actual study at the pilot interview. The pilot study was not reported, and it did not affect the investigation, and was in line with my IRB approval.

Setting

I held an earlier pre-interview conversation with every participant to firm appointment for the interview and to request for uninterrupted 60 to 75 minutes for the discussions as specified in the consent forms they earlier received on email and responded to with a definitive statement "I consent." Interviews with participants were scheduled based on each participant's time and date availability. I interviewed each person from my private home office. I conducted all interviews virtually over Zoom as pre-agreed by the interviewees, thereby allowing both participants and me to see each

other. However, I recorded only the audio interactions. According to participants, their locations ranged from private home offices to their bedrooms. Apart from one participant that delayed the commencement of the interview for 28 minutes to enable him to complete a phone call with his credit card company, there was no unusual incidence or circumstances throughout the 12 interviews conducted.

Demographics

The study involved interviewing 12 Nigerian-born immigrants (eight women and four men) to the United States who have had at least one year of work experience and were resident in New Jersey at the interview dates. At the proposal approval stage, I planned to interview 10 nongender-specific qualifying participants recruited from urban-rural areas of New Jersey. However, I eventually interviewed 12 participants, including seven persons residing in the urban and city locations of Newark, Jersey City, Irvington, and Trenton, three participants from the semi-urban areas of Willingboro and Cherry Hill, and two persons from the South-end rural areas of Monroeville and Camden counties. The rural dwellers were among the last three participants interviewed.

Since the information from participants is not gender specific as anticipated from the proposal stage, data analysis by gender does not form part of this chapter other than to describe the participant sample. Three of the participants migrated as students, one of which was a minor at the migration date. Ten participants migrated directly from Nigeria, and two came from Europe. Seven participants migrated with their legal immigrant papers, out of which six came on family re-unification (see Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Ellermann, 2021) visas, while one was on the Visa Diversity Lottery. Three

persons came with visiting visas, overstayed, and later regularized their immigration papers. One of the student immigrants entered the United States on a visiting visa and converted to a F1 student visa.

Regarding the educational backgrounds of the participants, 10 of them held a minimum of bachelor's degrees at the time of migration to the United States, one person was a high school graduate, and one concluded high school in the United States. Eleven of these participants have achieved additional and diverse qualifications since immigration. The participants' professions varied; one is a K through 12 schoolteacher, another is a factory worker, two work in government offices, two work in private corporate offices, one is a pharmacist, and five are nurses. Among the nurses, only one migrated as a nurse; the other four changed professions from banking, political/NGO operation, and statistician after relocating to the USA. The participant's ages ranged from 35 to 60 years, and their number of years since migration was 2 to 30 years, with an average number of years of migration of about 14 years. Eight of the participants have obtained naturalized citizenship status, three persons are green card holders, and one is still hoping to regularize legal immigration documentation.

Data Collection

Immediately upon obtaining IRB approval, I embarked on an intensive recruitment drive by placing my recruitment flyers on the social media of UNMC and distributing them at the sidewalks of many churches where Nigerians are known to worship and in African stores in New Jersey. The response was beyond my expectation. Each time anyone called me to indicate interest in participating or making further

inquiries, I requested them to extend the invite to their qualifying friends and family members. Within 2 weeks, I had over 18 people who expressed their interest in participating in the study. Five of the participants said that they saw the flyers on the UNMC social media, two persons told me that someone in their church brought home the flyers I distributed at their church's sidewalk, five persons said that a friend of theirs called them about the study and they felt obliged to participate because it was the first of its kind they were privileged to see since relocating to the United States. In total, I issued consent letters to 15 prospective participants. One person did not respond to the consent form; one declined participation after I gave the consent form; I had to apologize to one person that I could not interview because I already had my desired number of participants.

I conducted the study by interviewing and obtaining data from 12 Nigerian immigrants' who qualified to be interviewed based on the inclusivity criteria approved by IRB. The specified number of participants to be interviewed in the approved proposal was at least 10. However, because of the astonishing number of optimistic respondents to my recruitment flyer, and primarily to ensure that I obtained data from participants residing in the urban, semi-urban, and rural areas of New Jersey, I interviewed 12 participants. I believe that I achieved saturation after the eighth interview. Still, I was very desirous of obtaining interviewees from all the urban-rural areas of New Jersey in case there were going to be differences in perception by rural dwellers on the phenomenon under study. The 10th and 12th participants reside in the rural areas but interviewing them did not show any differences in perceptions with the urban and

semiurban dwellers; therefore, the analysis shows no distinctions between the urban and rural dwellers.

The participants understood the 13 questions used as a guide for the interview. Wherever there was any digression or misconception, I redirected the discussions to the questions to ensure that I obtained answers to the research question. I did not need to revert to any participants with further questions because the Zoom recordings of the interviews were quite clear, and the transcriptions were efficient. My notes during the interview complemented the recording process; therefore, together with the Zoom and Otter.ai records, I had enough information for the data analysis. I administered the same questions in my interview protocols to all participants. However, the follow-up, in-depth questions to probe further in this qualitative study (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012) varied based on each participant's answers to the set of interview questions. Those follow-up questions caused variations in the length of time each interview took. On average, the discussions took about 70 minutes, with the least lasting 68 minutes and the longest taking about 80 minutes.

The participants were enthusiastic once the interview started, such that they did not feel that we had spent the time. Every discussion started with my briefly summarizing the contents of the consent letter, assuring the participants of confidentiality, masking their identities, etc., and obtaining their approval to proceed. Appendix E is typical commencement information before starting the interviews. The debrief included thanking the participants and inviting them to ask questions or make general comments.

I conducted all the interviews virtually over Zoom. I sent the Zoom links to every participant at least 24 hours before the interview. I called up all participants on the phone 10 to 15 minutes before the scheduled time to confirm their readiness for the meeting. Eleven participants logged on at the scheduled time, plus or minus 2 minutes, and only one participant was not available 5 minutes after the agreed time, and I had to call him back to confirm why he was not on the call. He asked me to give him some time because he was on the phone with his credit company. I, therefore, asked him to text me when he was ready, and we started the meeting 28 minutes late from the earlier scheduled time. There was no other anomaly or unusual circumstances throughout the 12 interviews.

The Zoom meetings were on video, but I recorded only the voice conversations and cloud protect-saved them. At the end of every interview, emails were received from Zoom and Otter.ai (my chosen transcription software), intimating that the recordings were available. I had set up a communication between Otter.ai and the Zoom application voice recording to upload the completed voice recordings directly to Otter.ai for transcription. I tested this setup during the pilot run as perfectly working, and it worked just as well throughout the 12 interviews. Therefore, after each interview on Zoom I was able to download the transcripts from Otter.ai into Microsoft Word documents and compared them with the audio recordings to ensure their accuracy. As soon as an interview was complete, I took steps to upload the recordings on zoom and otter.ai to my computer to store the interview data in a secure -passworded place. As second-level storage, I copied all the interviews to an external passworded USB drive I purchased solely for this use.

Overall, the transcription by Otter.ai was exact except that the Nigerian accent of the participants constituted some bottlenecks in some areas, whereby the transcriptions were punctuated, transcribed per the software understanding, or had some question marks. People with heavier accents resulted in more transcription challenges than those with Westernized or minor Nigerian accents. My experience was that the female participants recorded about 95% transcription accuracies. At the same time, the men, who naturally find it hard to change their Nigerian accents, had more challenges involving just about 90% precision of transcription. I remedied these challenges by painstakingly listening to the Zoom audio recordings while reading the transcripts and correcting the transcripts in line with the audio records. Consequently, making allowance for the accents, the transcripts could have achieved 99% precision.

Data Analysis

In this section, I outline the steps I took to obtain the descriptive codes, categories, and themes from the collected data (see Rubin &Rubin, 2012; Saldana, 2016) Every participant received the transcript for review within 3 days of the interview. I requested that they confirm that the transcripts were the complete representation of the interviews and respond within three days of the emails. Eight participants responded that the transcripts they received represent our discussions, and four did not respond. However, the email specified that a nonresponse would be construed as an affirmation that the transcript was acceptable as a complete representation of the interview after 3 days. Consequently, all interview transcripts accurately represented participants' responses to the interview questions and therefore used as the basis for my data analysis.

Coding commenced by creating a secondary document where I deleted my questions and only the participants' answers and responses were featured. This ensured that I coded only the participants' responses for analysis. After that, I highlighted the words and phrases in the participants' transcripts that I considered salient for the study, applying Saldana's (2016) descriptive analysis method, and assigning appropriate codes to the highlighted words and phrases. I employed my preliminary coding plan from Chapter 3 to assist the transcript coding process. However, I was sufficiently open, both at the interviewing and coding stages, to make room for any emerging codes beyond the preliminary coding plan while being conscious that not all initial principles may emerge from the participants' perspectives as captured in the transcripts. I specifically constructed Interview Questions 1 through 3 to obtain data about the participants' pre-immigration information and expectations for migrating to the United States and how they met or did not meet those expectations.

In Questions 4 through 12, I sought the participants' perceptions of government integration programs and their effects on their settlement in the United States. These questions, therefore, reflected immigration integration principles that tested the theories of structuration (Gidden's, 1979, 1984) and complexity (Morçöl, 2010), which I used to frame the study. Question 13 was a feedback mechanism for participants.

I used NVivo 12Plus software to format the data into specific codes, categories, and themes that emerged from the analyzed data. The NVivo made it easy for me to observe the codes that evolved and the categories from which I formulated themes. Appendix D is the Summary of Codes that emerged from the data. Eight themes (Table 2)

emerged from the analysis after progressing data from code to categories and then to themes (Saldana, 2012).

I summarize the themes and frequencies of the originating codes in Table 2. These themes all feature broadly in the literature on immigrants' integration discussed in chapter 2. All immigrants and immigrants receiving countries face issues covered under each theme. Additionally, the evolved themes align with the preliminary codes presented in Chapter 3 to a large extent with a few variations such as knowledge of immigration integration programs which was a surprising fallout of the participants' perceptions and some aspects of the United States discrimination.

Table 2

Emergent Themes and Related Codes

Themes	Codes
Social integration	Family integration *(f=27)*
	Lack of need for government integration programs *(f=4)*
	Need for government integration programs *(f=5)*
	Other forms of integration programs *(f=14)*
	Religious integration *(f=11)*
Benefits of US Immigration	Met expectations *(f=9)*
	Social infrastructure, *(f=19)*
	Family expectation *(f=6)*
	Personal expectation *(f=22)*
US Discrimination	Certificate discounting_ Academic discrimination *(f=16)*
	Language barriers (f=14)
	Medical Discrimination *(f=7)*
	Racial discrimination *(f=18)*
The US Experience	Cultural differences *(f=11)*
	Weather *(f=1)* *(table continues)*
	US-a welcoming country *(f=31)*

	Politics (*f=7)*
Immigration process	Early migration journey*(f=15)* Covid effects *(f=2)* Ease of internet use *(f=1)* Extortion by immigration lawyers *(f=1)* Immigration facilities *(f=21),* Lack of trust for immigrants *(f=1)* Legality of migration *(f=5)*
Knowledge of government integrating program	Lack of publicity of integrating programs *(=2)* lack of knowledge of integration programs *(f=35)*
Finance	Changes in profession *(f=7)* Double shifting jobs to survive *(f=1)* housing *(f=4)* work *(f=22)*
Immigration experiences	Immigration laws *(f=30)* sanctuary state *(f=4)*

Using the narrative inquiry, I focused on obtaining participants' perceptions of government integration policies and programs on Nigerian immigrants in New Jersey, the United States. Almost all participants indicated that government integration policies were

essential for proper and facilitated assimilation of immigrants within the society and optimizing their potential. The literature has shown that adequately integrating immigrants within the society is beneficial both to the immigrants and the receiving country or state (Alba & Foner, 2015; Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Sulaiman & Raphael, 2016). When immigrants are well integrated into the society, this reduces the feeling of frustrations that make some resort to antisocial behaviors (Imoagene, 2017; Menjívar & Lakhani, 2016). Adequately assimilating immigrants into the society has benefits for the socioeconomic development of both country and the immigrants (Kyeremeh et al., 2019; Sulaiman & Raphael, 2016). Additionally, adequate integration benefits the recipient country by boosting their global rating (McDaniel, 2015). Despite the beneficial effects of appropriately integrating immigrants, Globerman (2000) and Odoemene and Osuji (2015) observed that immigration is overwrought with challenges, both for the immigrants and the receiving nations, such as barriers to quality jobs and racial discrimination (Alba & Foner, 2019; Ellermann, 2021)

In this study, I focused on the participants' views of immigration integration. Therefore, through the study, I perceived an opportunity for further research into the challenges governments face in immigration integration. When weighed against the lenses of Giddens's (1979, 1984) structuration theory, the desired result can only materialize if there is an inter-relationship between government as policymakers and immigrants as agents.

From the in-depth semistructured interviews administered to 12 participants, 373 codes (Appendix D) which were considered relevant to my research question, aligned

with the literature, and directed by my research lenses of structuration and complexity theories emerged. I collapsed these codes into 32 categories to cover the ethos of the participants' responses (see Appendix D). From the categories, eight themes addressing the research question emerged (see Table 2):

I constructed the interview questions to elicit responses to answer the research question; How do Nigerian immigrants in New Jersey perceive the impact of the U.S. government settlement and support programs on their integration into American society? In responding to the interview questions, the participants allowed me to receive insights into the research question on how they perceived the impact of government settlement and support programs to enhance their integration into the United State society. Participants' perceptions were widespread, covering their work and career experiences, and struggles for survival. These immigrants specified family, friends, and religion as their immigration heroes.

Systemic bias and discrimination appeared as immigration integration obstacles. Participants noted a lack of communication between the government and immigrants after arrival in the country. At the same time, they also had to cope with different cultures vis avis their long-held cultures.

One participant noted that he thought he was coming into a better stable place in his life only to find himself in a severe condition where he had to drop down and start life again. Another participant wondered how people who had been here for a long time could adjust to the system and therefore affirmed that he was returning home.

Participants who were undocumented were very relieved when they obtained their residency status. All undocumented participants shared their feelings of fear and inability to participate in programs, including those that would benefit the children they birthed here. Participant 12 said their undocumented status debarred them from getting government assistance for a child birthed in the United States, who had some challenges. After change of status, they were able to confidently access help for the child.

Others have stories of benefits for their children that did not extend to them although they had legal status. Participants 8 & 9 relayed that the system cared for them and their unborn babies while pregnant but withdrew moms' medical assistance as soon as the babies were born. These participants all agreed that the legal documentation, including social security cards, green cards, and naturalization certificates, were the tickets to their ease of integration. However, almost all of them claimed ignorance of and participation in structured government integration programs to facilitate their settlement into the United States. Instead, they depended on information and assistance from family and friends to wade through their murky immigration journeys.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

In Chapter 3, I recorded four elements of trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These elements are essential to ground the research findings as unbiased and authentic. Generally, trustworthiness is evidenced by the validity and applicability of an inquirer's data in answering the research question. I further noted in the proposal that the researcher's total immersion in a qualitative study was necessary to ensure understanding and proper interpretation of

participants' perspectives on the phenomenon being studied. Immersion enhances trustworthiness of the research outcome because it entails maintaining a detailed audit trail, memoing, journaling, and documenting processes to add validity and reliability to the study (see O'Sullivan et al., 2017; Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

Credibility

As an internal validity, credibility reveals the consistency of the investigator's findings with reality (Shenton, 2004). It requires the researcher's professional and ethical management in the research process. I ensured that before commencing data collection, I had received Walden University's IRB's written approval. In the interviewing process, I rigorously adhered to the interviewing protocols and procedures that I outlined in Chapter 3 and approved by the IRB. I thoroughly reviewed all interview transcripts against the video recordings to confirm that I did not lose any participants' information. I examined every data at least twice before moving to Nvivo for codification in line with my pre-determined codes. I achieved data triangulation via member checking. I emailed every participant their transcripts and requested them to confirm that they were accurate representations of the discussions within three days of the email. I called every participant and asked that they check their emails for the transcripts. I asked each participant 13 questions as contained in the Interview Question guide. All participants received follow-up probing questions to clarify assertions or reinforce my understanding of their prior answers to avoid misinterpreting their perceptions.

Transferability

Transferability requires including sufficient detail and context and fieldwork experiences (see Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Shenton, 2004) to enhance the possible duplication of the study. An abundant description of procedures and processes enables a reader to determine whether the findings apply to a similar background or situation. Additionally, recursive data analysis (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016) enhances the transferability of the qualitative conclusions. I essentially centered this study on Nigerian-born immigrants in New Jersey. Therefore, I provided context for scholars in any part of the United States or other countries who may wish to study immigrants' perceptions of government integration policies and programs. According to Patton (2005), transferability focuses on generalizing data collected to another population. I have adequately explained the field experience to enable other researchers to determine the extent to which they could interpolate the conclusions of this research to different study settings. Other immigrants say Asians, Afghans, or Latinos within New Jersey or any other parts of the United States, can be used to replicate this study. Using the narrative inquiry method, I sufficiently presented participants' perceptions in such an engaging way that other interviewees and scholars outside of New Jersey would find understandable and replicable. Consequently, a high degree of transferability is achievable based on this study.

Dependability

To enhance understanding of research output and ensure dependability, Shenton (2004) recommended that researchers include sections for research design and

implementation, data collection details, and data analysis ideas. On their part, Creswell (2013) and Patton (2005) specified that it is crucial to secure data from different sources. I engaged field notes, audit trail, and journaling as additional data sources in this study. These other processes and activities firmed the dependability of my research. I obtained the data using the strategies that I detailed in Chapter 3 and adhered to ethical standards throughout the study process. Although I used the otter.ai transcription software, I confirmed every transcription by listening to the audio recordings again while reading the transcripts. I engaged the NVivo standardized data analysis software to enhance the quality of my data analysis techniques.

Confirmability

Confirmability means that the study results emerged from the participants' information and are devoid of researcher bias. An underlying concept in confirmability is that the inquirer should interpret the participant's perspectives accurately and unbiasedly. I maintained my study's confirmability by keeping a descriptive audit trail, journaling, memoing, and documenting the processes (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). This process includes the availability of well-analyzed data for verification and authentication by any interested party. I will keep the records in safe and secure place for five years as approved by the IRB. I boosted the confirmability of my study by member checking in which I requested participants to confirm the authenticities of the interview transcripts. Throughout the interviews, I achieved confirmability by promoting dialogues between the participants and myself. Finally, I used Saldana's

(2016) method of data transcription, editing, and coding to sufficiently determine that I based the analysis on the perspectives of my participants

Results

I analyzed data obtained from participants with a thematic approach (Saldaña, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I extracted eight themes from the data set. I will now present these eight themes and their corresponding analysis in this section. These themes are:

- Social Integration,
- The Benefit of US Migration
- US Discrimination.
- US experience
- Immigration Process,
- Knowledge of Government Integration Programs,
- Finance and,
- Immigration Experience

Theme 1: Social Integration

The social integration theme was noted by all 12 participants as relevant for their integration into the United States. Therefore, it describes the topmost integration consideration by the participants to this study. This theme encompasses family integration (*f=27),* the need or lack thereof of government integration programs (*f=9),* religious and other forms of integration programs *(f=14),* religious integration *(f=11)*.

Participants gave family integration the most significant weight of this social integration. It bellied the Nigerian collectivist culture. Eleven participants saw the family as their heroes in integrating within the United States (*f*=27). Because of family and friends, the participants did not need to explore any government involvement with their assimilation. This heroic family view is not unconnected to the fact that 50% of participants migrated with family reunification visas (Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Ellermann, 2021). One participant migrated with a DV lottery in which family, or a friend filed an affidavit of support for the visa grant. The nonimmigrant visa participants had references from friends and family members before migration. The only student immigrant did not have anything to say about family or friends' integration assistance. Participant 1 had a story to tell about family help that summarizes many of the other participants' experiences and the importance of family connections.

> From the airport we were picked up by the person my brother sent straight to his house. I stayed at my brother's house for nearly five months before I got my own place. It was a problem navigating myself in the first few months but luckily my brother and the wife were equal to the task and made our stay here very comfortable, they made sure that we were very comfortable. The weather when we entered the country was very cold. Back home it was always a temperate weather, and we don't have cold. But when we entered was the thick of the cold winter. It was really a problem. You know it was like being thrown from fire to ice. It was a big problem. But luckily as I said my brother and his wife prepared for us, so we had warm clothes and insisted that we wore warm clothing including

> socks to sleep. My elder brother is here, so he put me through what to do and what not to do and how to go about. So, he helped in shaping things up for us, so we did not have to overstep our bound.

Family and friends helped participants choose the career path and determine funding sources for academic pursuits. While most of the participants felt that all they needed to integrate into the society was family and friends' advice and direction, participant 10 seems to have a different view and averred:

> I know Nigerians are family oriented, your family will always welcome you and help you in any way they can. But you do know that the extended family system will not work here to help you to better your immigration status, but at least they are there to help you as family and welcome you.

It appears that because of family dependency for information on immigration integration, Nigerians are always reluctant to explore other sources to obtain sufficient information to be integrated within the system adequately, which is the downside of social capital (Villalonga Kawachi, 2017). Participant 10 opposed the dependency on family and friends to settle into United States society and further said:

> I think the major failure is that they have somebody that has half information, trying to give them information that they got from another person that has a half information, which ends up being like a situation of the blind leading the blind. Most of the time it's like, I came in, somebody told me this, I did that. So, it's hard to find somebody that actually goes through the system to understand how the system works. It takes time. But if you remain within the same cycle, you're

> just going to have some kind of recycled information from one person to the other, until you move away from your immediate cycle, and move closer to another cycle. Even just from the same Nigeria, we find out that the Nigerian man has like a cluster, you move out of one cluster, you get into another cluster, you get another form of information. What has limited most people to spread and get the best out of this place, especially those that have the documentation to do well in this land is lack of information and information in this land is the key to everything you have to do.

Only three participants affirmed that they would have appreciated government integration programs if they knew it. Four persons felt that family integration was sufficient for them; after all, they obtained whatever information they needed to assimilate within the system from friends and family. All agreed that there was a need for better publicity by the state and the federal government to enhance immigrants' knowledge about integration policies and programs. For all the participants, what they knew about government integration programs are based on the immigration documents, i.e., social security cards, green cards, naturalization, and all such mandatory documents to regularize their status and avoid getting into trouble with the law enforcement. Beyond this documentation, participants predicated their ease of settlement and sense of home in the USA as immigrants on social and religious capital; hence, all participants' high ranking of social integration.

Nigerians are highly religious people, whether they are Muslims or Christians, and they always believe in divine intervention in everything they do. Therefore, it is not

surprising that most of the participants anchored on religion for their integration support. This majority believe that what aided their understanding of the American system and their avenue of external expression outside of family was the church. According to participant 7:

> There is nothing else that gives me more sense of fulfillment other than my participation in my religious activities in terms of my church participation, and my way of worshipping, which, of course, is what has developed my faith in Christ to where I find myself today. So, these are two things that I can tell you have really dragged me into a very greater integration into the American society.

Participant 8's description of the church as an integration tool was:

> I can only mention one religious body that has helped me to integrate, I'm not going to mention name but using the church that I attend as an example it has been a source of support to me, especially emotionally and psychologically. You know when you come into a system, everything is so different from the place you came from and it's kind of emotionally and psychologically challenging. But with the religious running and identifying myself with religious people, I was able to gain kind of support, emotionally and psychologically, and they have helped me a lot to integrate in the system, feeling free, being free and not to let that take me down or drain me.

A few of the participants mentioned other forms of social integration that have helped them assimilate. These forms range from neighbors, people they met at work, friends they knew from school back home before immigration and their family members,

people they ride the bus with, and other people of all races who are simply good-spirited people who love to help others. Participant 4 said that “with time, I got to know the people that lived around the immediate neighbors, and then down the street, and the alleys and actually, they were friendly.” For participant 11, the help she narrated was quite enthralling; she told the story as follows:

> It's just people that I met. I didn't go through a church that helped me. There was no church program that helped me there was no organization that help me either. I met some people along the line that helped me. I cannot forget, Mr. T. He was somebody that I met in the bus I go from one part of New Jersey to the other. I worked night shift at a hospital in the city and then I have to go to day shift job in another town. I didn't have a car; it was a 45 minutes’ drive. It would take the bus two hours to go there. Which is kind of good for me. Because then I get two hours sleep. I get two-hour sleep and when I get to the destination where the bus stops, I’m still sleeping, and Mr. T will wake me up with: you are at your destination. I relied on him. So now when I come to the bus, I relax, and I sleep. Something that little bit meant a lot to me. And there was Mrs. S. Mrs. S will cook for us and invite us for dinner and show us how to cook American food and show us what to buy from grocery store. Doctor's appointments she took us, and these were people helping not the government or any program. I met a lot of people along the way.

For most of the participants, old friends at home were their connection points for integration. Participant 3 said, “I connected with some old school friends, which led to my trip to New Jersey.” Participant 12 lived with one of his friends after he migrated, and

while seeking to regularize his undocumented status, the friend's family member introduced him to the school system to pursue a first degree. For participant 7, friends introduced him to a friend who became his wife and assisted in his conversion from undocumented status to a legal immigrant. All participants agreed that their integration into the US society was boosted one way or the other by connections to some friends or references from one friend or the other.

Theme 2: Benefits of US Migration

This theme ranked next to social integration and encompasses migration benefits-whether the immigrants' expectations were met or not met *(f=9),* social infrastructures *(f=19),* family expectation (*f=6)* and personal or migration expectations *(f=22).* Migration benefits which define the advantage of migrating to the United States over being in Nigeria, ranked highest on this theme. Almost all participants believed that despite the challenges that faced them, being in the USA is better than where they were coming from because of suitable facilities and job availability. Participant 1 specifically said of his family that:

> I think they may have better opportunities here, both for work and then the environment and other matters. They will have better opportunities here and the security here is better, I must be very candid with you, than back home. So, my immigration was, let me say, partly because of them, not because of me as a person. Security-wise, social life are okay here. Power has been 100% constant; the water is constant. All those are better than what we have in my country, so seeing them and getting them, is comforting

The above was corroborated by Participant 11, who came here as a teen student and decided to stay back after college. This participant said that staying back was for "a greener pasture, better life, like everybody else. It was the situation where being here will help me build the family. I decided to stay to build the family better. So, I decided to stay".

All participants expected to improve their education after their immigration. 75% of all interviewees held at least a bachelor's degree before migrating to the United States. Their stories showed that almost all of them have improved their education, whether compelled by the need to obtain jobs and thereby change professions or to continue in their career path before migration. According to participant 10, who was a master's degree holder in international relations and was working in the oil and gas sector before migration:

> When I eventually settled in, my expectation then had to change I have to think about a career change something that I would be able to manage with a child in the process. And that was when I veered into the field of Childhood Studies and education. So, my expectation, of course, was that having come in I had to change immigration documentation that I came in with into a student status. So then, I moved from being visiting immigrant to being a student in an F1 visa.

Of the 5 participants (2, 6, 7, 8, and 9) in the nursing profession, only participant 9 was a nurse from Nigeria. The rest had to obtain additional education and qualification to change careers to nursing. Participant 2, a statistician in Nigeria, holding a master's degree in statistics and who had experience in the banking industry and dreamed of a

Ph.D. in statistics after relocation, veered into nursing by obtaining a nursing degree and qualifications. The student immigrants: participants 5, 10, and 11 all progressed with higher qualifications. Participant 10 declared that she met her expectations "special education-wise." Participant 11 came in as a lab-tech student and became a pharmacist. Participant 3 waited until she obtained a civil service job after regularizing her papers from undocumented to legal immigrant to advance with a master's degree. Participant 12 was a regularized undocumented immigrant with a high school diploma but obtained a bachelor's degree after he converted to a legal resident. Only participant 1, who is less than three years as an immigrant, has not got additional qualifications since relocation to the United States.

Most of the participants had something positive to say about social infrastructure. They were pleased with the security system, educational system for their children, English speaking environment, immigrant acceptability, and other social facilities that make life easy. Participants 3 and 12 who migrated from the UK and Italy respectively specified that they desired to raise their families in the USA instead of the countries they came from because of their perceptions that the USA had a more liberal immigrant acceptance attitude. According to Participant 12:

> To be honest with you my expectation was to raise my children here with English background. I don't want to raise them in Italy with Italian language. And that very time when I went to Italy, in the 80s, things were not the way it is now. There was no acceptance of immigrants the way it is right now.

Participant 11 also specified that her motivation in settling down here after school was to raise her family in the USA and give them a better life than they would obtain in Nigeria. Participant 4, who migrated with a family reunification visa, was glad of the opportunity to become a naturalized citizen and to transfer the citizenship status to his children with all the freedom the status conveys. This participant stated:

> If you are a legal immigrant, you pay your taxes, you're a law-abiding resident, and you do what you're supposed to do and abide by the rules of the land, obey the laws of the land, pay your taxes, which is very, very important to the nation, and then after five years, you can file for naturalization. And that I did after five years and I'm now a US citizen. So, I'm going to say that is one of the best. Then I had the opportunity to transfer the citizenship to my kids. So, if there is nothing else, that is wonderful, and I like it. They feel free, you know, do what other people are doing, go to the same schools, that every person is going to and enjoy the freedom of citizenship. So at least that one is, good.

Most of the participants benefitted from the social infrastructure of funded education. Participant 3 noted that her civil service employment funded her master's degree.

Apart from the migration benefits, most participants also expressed their expectation to help the family and friends they left behind as part of their immigration expectations. Nigeria is a third-world country with many economic and physical infrastructural deficiencies. Its culture is also that of collectivism, where you are not really for yourself and your immediate family; everyone must look out for everyone else.

Therefore, when family members are emigrating to another nation, especially to the western world where they earn hard currencies, there are usually many expectations to assist family and friends left at home financially and academically. Therefore, participants in this study also had expectations that they would use their newfound positions in the United States to help family back home.

Participants 8 and 9 have the vision to use their medical services to elevate health care back home. Participant 9 stated, "then I'm also thinking of back home, you know, going back home, where we don't have good health facilities, going back home and doing something in our country," and in the words of participant 8:

> I was also looking forward to making a positive impact on the people at home by joining some groups or organization that will have to reach out to people back home that are in need of healthcare. I have to join organizations that will make a positive impact back home, I am still working on it, for now I believe I'm still in the process.

Theme 3: U.S. Discrimination

The United States Discrimination was the third highest-ranking theme that emerged from my study. Almost all the participants spoke about certificate discounting *(f=16),* language barriers *(f=14),* academic and work experience discounting, United States Experience (USE) requirement, and racial discrimination *(f=18)* as limiting factors for their integration and career enhancement. The language barrier was mainly at the early stages of their immigration, and these eased off as their period of immigration

lengthened. A few expressed issues on medical health provision and discussed some discriminations between established citizens and immigrants.

Racial discrimination was the most outstanding issue that participants perceived impacted their integration. According to Participant 9, she felt racialized by other students in nursing school because of her accent and worried about how this affected her kids. She also shared that one of her children was severely affected by racism in the K to 12 school. That child underwent therapy. The participant changed the child's school based on fear of being continuously bullied after mentioning the names of those who harassed her in school. Participant 8, a nurse, said that racial discrimination is a real problem and wondered if parents embedded this on citizens from birth. She also fears for her kids and described the racisms issue this way:

> …the first thing that comes into my mind is kind of racism, because they take you as nothing, they see themselves as being superior to you like, even apart from the workers, even the residents that you take care of, they call you all sorts of names, they curse you, they ask you to go back to your country and other stuff. So, it's kind of, but because you know, you already know what you're about to face. So, you don't let it get at you, so you let it slide. But for me, It's a kind of segregation or racism. That's how I will complete it. For me, because I know, I've come to work, and I know my purpose of being here, I don't let it get to me. But sometimes I am scared about my kids that I'm raising here. What will become of them in the future? What if they get attacked? What if somebody comes at them with this? How will they feel? How would they understand it? Will they be able

> to take it? That is my challenge, but for me, I don't let it get at me. I just do my job and let it slide because I have already prepared my mind for such. The people have that trait of racism from birth, I don't know if it's what they were taught as they grow up.

Participant 12 described a situation where he could not move to the next level and people that come after him, including people he trained, move up the ladder, and he sucks it up because complaint may mean losing his job. In the views of participant 4, the racial discrimination is somewhat subtle, and he narrated that "a couple of places I've experienced that, it was as if some other people receiving more attention or cognition." In the opinion of participant 9, who had to change to nursing after being a bank manager in Nigeria, it would be challenging, even if she decided to continue in banking in the United States, to get to the position of a bank manager. She said, "For you to get up to that position when you are in the finance when you're a black person? I don't think it's that easy. Yes, racism will come into it". Participant 5 migrated to the States as a high school student yet felt somehow racialized. She related that:

> But I hated high school. the cliques were already formed. These are people that went to elementary school together, middle school together, and then now one high school. You come into people that have been friends since sixth grade, and you're coming in 11th grade. So of course, hey, you are the new girl, so nobody really brought you into their clique.

Participant 3 said she quit applying for the next level because several attempts showed that there will always be a barrier to career growth for immigrants of her type.

Participant 11 discussed racial prejudice succinctly and noted that it exists even in neighborhoods where you buy a home. She said that she was one of a few blacks that moved into a rural white community, and she discussed her experience as:

> Somebody can say something nasty and if I understand what you say, that's another thing. They do things to insult you, but I don't feel insulted because I don't understand that it was an insult. It's still happening till today. When I bought my house, they sprayed racial things on the driveway, I had no idea that I was being threatened that there is danger around me. I did not know. We lived here for six months. And a friend of mine that is white came to the house and said, did you see this spray here? I said yeah. What did you say? I said, what is it? She said this is racial thing, so how long has it been here. I said since we moved, that we saw it when we moved so I didn't think anything of it. So, you see that is how I feel. I don't even know when most of the prejudice comes and its good. It's a good thing that I don't know. So, there's this prejudice now.

The United States Experience (USE) is another form of discrimination that the participants in my study said negatively impacted them. Almost all the participants who changed to the nursing career did so because they are either unable to find jobs in their former fields or felt that only in the medical area can they find jobs quickly and be accepted to work with less bias. Participant 6 narrated how he was asked to work as a doorman in a bank where he applied. During the interview, he was asked about his USE, and having none; he could not even be given a cashier job in the bank despite his banking managerial position from Nigeria. Therefore, after doing odd jobs at retail businesses, his

next alternative was to change to a nursing line for sustenance. Participant 7 was a political figure in Nigerian engaged in NGO business but changed to nursing to make ends meet. Although participant 2 stated that he enjoys his newfound nursing profession, he still dreams of proceeding someday to obtaining a Ph.D. in statistics to have a name like his colleagues. For participant 9, as earlier stated, discrimination and racism would have been a cog in her wheel of success to climb to managerial cadre in banking that she left behind, hence nursing to the rescue. One certainty from all these participants that changed to the nursing line is that if they had a clear path and were sure that they could grow, they would have remained in their pre-immigration careers. Therefore, their narration about their newfound careers, especially the males, appeared nuanced by the regrets about unmet career dreams. They did not seem very proud to speak about their nursing careers. Participant 6 said that "sometimes you will see some engineers working as bus drivers. I think it is the same kind of put down to where you don't want to be, instead of keeping you at the level you are qualified to be.".

Therefore, the USE dilemma appears to be a massive barrier to a career of pride for the immigrants and hampers their assimilation. This has pushed most immigrants to either take lesser jobs or completely change careers to the medical field they did not anticipate at immigration. Sharing on USE, participant 4 conveyed his early migration experiences this way:

> So, at the time, I had no job experience, and they go, well, we need somebody who has experience. So that will turn you down. Now you go up and say, okay, I will look for a job that will match my qualification. Well, the first thing would be,

> have you worked anywhere in the US? And the answer will be no, then you go for a lower job, and they say you are overqualified. So, it was like crazy. Now, guys, what do you want me to do?

Participant 10 however does not agree that Nigerians' gravitation to nursing career is because of discrimination against obtaining jobs in their pre-immigration careers. In her views, money is the driving force that has created a pull toward nursing or lesser health care careers. She addressed this further by insisting that even in the nursing career, most people do not want to grow to the supervisory levels because they would lose the overtimes, and this would mean less money in their pockets.

A few participants declared that there was discrimination in health care provision. Participant 1 said that the health insurance favors established residents and disadvantaged immigrants. This participant wondered why there must be so much discrimination in the provision of health covers for new immigrants and surmised that most of an administration's pronouncement on the TVs or radios that favor residents is for citizens and not for new immigrants. Participants 8 & 9 asserted that the medical facilities tend to favor their children while, though they are legal residents in the United States, they remained in the lurch. Participant 9 especially narrated how her mother, a senior and a green card holder, is denied certain medical facilities in New Jersey while her friend's mother, with similar legal status in another state, benefits from the same treatment category.

Some participants also observed the language barrier as limiting their assimilation into the society. Participants noted the language as inhibiting, especially at workplaces.

According to Participant 12, "some of them that just see you, they don't even like to talk to you as soon as they hear that accent, they are done with you. They just don't want to see you growing". Participant 3 captured the language barrier this way:

> When I talk, they go I don't understand what she said. I think my English, as far as I'm concerned, is fluent enough and I try to make it sound okay. If I say something and somebody asked me, what did you say, I will, in my defense ask what it is that I said that you didn't understand? Is it how I said it, or what I said, what is it? And so many times I get I'm sorry, I didn't mean it that way. Because, believe me, they understand you but that's a way to try to make you feel like you still speak funny and being mean to me. So these are the coded, you know, working with this people the racism is so obvious. So, I can't, and I will never encourage any of my children to work where I'm working now.

Theme 4: The U.S. Experience

The fourth theme is the participants' individualized United States Experience of being in the USA in descending order of ranking. This theme encompasses integration barriers due to cultural differences *(f=11)* and weather *(f=1)*. It also includes positive experiences the participants had of the U.S. as a welcoming country *(f=31)* and their political engagements *(f=7)*. Participant 1 perceives that the cultural difference is negatively impacting his family. He loses control of his children and sees a lack of respect, especially at work where the younger generation does not respect elders, including calling them by their first names. This participant, referring to his children's newfound independence, said that "it is a lot to cope with, it is not part of our culture. It is

a huge problem here, and people don't know. How you people live here, especially the respect is not here.". Participant 3 felt it was hard learning a whole gamut of other people's culture and she related that it was like: "learning people's culture is just like learning the whole system; how the people live, how they talk, their food, their kind of music, it took a lot, and then you know, coming from a different culture." From the pre-immigration story told by participant 2, Nigerians regard some careers as precludes of women. Therefore, male immigrants who go into it do so principally to make money and probably would not have pride of job. Cultural shocks were not always on the participants' sides. Sometimes, the cultural differences were also on the people the participants were in contact. Participant 11 told a story of when she came to the States in the early 70s as follows:

> They were serving us food and having served the food, they gave us cutlery, and they asked, do you know how to use the fork and knife?" and we were like, "what is he talking about?" We didn't understand that. Somebody asked, have you seen a car. We didn't understand that until we started looking at public TV and seeing how Africa was portrayed. It didn't make sense that people will ask these questions. And then they see us eating with fork and knife and they were amazed, you know how to do that? And then they asked, how do you know, to speak English? When we understood that they had no idea how Africa was, or the way people live in Africa, we just told them, we got to the airport and people were speaking English and we joined them to speak English, and people believed that.

Participants 4 and 10 believe that cultural bias is why Nigerian immigrants fail to seek or optimize government integration programs. Participant 10 believes that Nigerian immigrants are lazy to explore available internet facilities and obtain information that would assist in their integration. Instead, they take the shortcut of relying on half-baked information obtained from their relatives and friends. Participant 4 declared that:

> One thing is this, I think, in a way, it's kind of cultural. I think it's kind of culture with us. Sometimes we think there are easier ways of getting things done and these are ways that will just take you longer or waste your time. Two, I think, it's also a culture where you have a family member that has been in place for some time and based on their stay and experience, they feel that they have a better way of getting you where you need to be than following all the due processes.

Culturally, parental control over children and husband superiority over a wife defines most Nigerian parents and males. This culture is why the recent immigrant, participant 1, is still struggling with the change. The younger generation easily adapts to the United States' culture regarding family relationships. Participant 5, who immigrated as a minor, summarizes it as follows:

> Because as an adult now, looking back, I was thinking that the biggest mistake, quote, unquote, our parents made was to bring the children here, if you wanted to maintain that cultural control you want or want your children to live a certain way, live in a culture that you want them to live in. As long as they leave that culture, they are going to assimilate whether you like it or not. Because this society is where we function. And most often, I've lived here longer than I've

> lived anywhere else. So, you can't expect me to behave as though I'm a full-blown Nigerian that lives in Nigeria, it will never happen. But our parents expect you to still, for however reason, maintain that culture identity you had at 15,14 or 13. And to use it to function in a society that it doesn't work is number one, number two, you've lived most of your life here. Number three probably have not gone home since you came here. So, it's unrealistic.

Almost all the participants affirm that the United States is a welcoming country. 31 out of the 50 coding frequencies under United States experience are allotted to the United States as A welcoming country. Participant 7 said of the United States as a welcoming nation that "there are no two ways about it, it's a great country. The rules and laws in this country are very good things for immigrants". To participant 1, "you will be very well accommodated in America if you entered legally compared with other countries." In the views of Participant 8, the "United States has had open arms concerning immigrants they are all welcome.". Participant 2 feels that the United States is the greatest country. He said that the "United States is the most welcoming country in the world." In the opinion of participant 12, the nation is welcoming, but individuals differ in their welcoming attitudes. This view was upheld by participant 4, who stated that:

> The country is really welcoming. Just like it is in everything we do in life, there are individualistic, are some things that are personal, there are behaviors that are personal. But as a country and the policies that are in place, the United States is a welcoming place, we always say it is a nation of immigrants. I think that says it all. You know, people come from different places, I think this is the country

> where you have the most nationalities having, by percentage almost evenly spread than any other place. So you see people from all the continents, and they just found this wonderful community. So, I think it's a welcoming place.

Many of the participants are not interested in politics. The reason may not be farfetched because one must first pass the level of physiological survival before being involved in politics. Participant 7, who was very active in politics before migrating to the United States, and who indeed stated that his political ambitions in Nigeria were what earned him the ticket to come to the States, averred that:

> Having lived in the state of New Jersey for over 20 years now I think I can, as an individual participate at any level of my political ambition. I wouldn't tell you that I am done with politics, or that I am not active again. Like I told you, every decision is dependent on the circumstances surrounding your situation at a particular point in time. Right now, my only active participation in politics is to exercise my civic rights in accordance with the law. And that I have done, you know, without any hindrances. Other than that, when the situation brings up itself, of course, I will yield to it. But for now, I am only doing the least I can do as a politician.

Theme 5: Immigration Process

This theme defines the participants' early immigration journeys *(f=15)*, immigration facilities *(f=21)*, experiences with immigration officials and law enforcement, the legality of their migration (*f=5)*, COVID-19 effect, and other facility usages such as the internet. One thing that ran through most immigrants was that they did

not experience any problems at the ports of entry. Lack of issues at entry ports is not surprising because Nigerian immigrants generally fly over the Atlantic, and from boarding points, they must possess valid visas. As earlier noted, over 50 % of my participants came with immigrant visas; one person arrived with a student visa, three came with a valid visiting visa, and one came with J1 access. Therefore, all of them had valid entry visas. Participants 2, 3, 5, 6,7, 10, 11, and 12 told stories of smiley welcomes. There were, however, a few stories of minor harassment and unhappy experiences at the ports of entry by immigration officials. Participants 4 and 8 reported some unusual delays at the entry points although they were coming with immigrant visas; participant 9 told of a somewhat unhappy experience as narrated that:

> When I first came into the United States, I came in with my kids and my kids were little. And that was the first time I was traveling outside of my country. So, I would say that my first experience, it wasn't a nice one, I was being treated as though I was being favored. Like, they were favoring me by bringing me into their country and allowing me to come into the country. I remember, there was one Immigration Officer - a black guy. So, when I saw him, I felt like, I was kind of comfortable. Like, oh, this person has my skin color and everything. But I was surprised. He's even the one that was kind of harsh to us. And, you know, they were just talking to us, anyhow, treated us like as if we're nothing you know, and I was like, I thought America is a welcoming country.

Participants 7 and 11 narrated about exploitation by the immigration lawyers they engaged in changing their status. In the views of Participant 10, the continuous request

for ridiculous documents smirks of lack of trust for immigrants. Participant 1 conveyed that they had to hurry their immigration journey on the news that there would be a ban on travels in the early days of the COVId-19 pandemic; hence he and his family came in before their planned time. Participants 6 and 9 relayed the untold hardship they had to go through for the interview process, having to travel many times to another state in Nigeria with cost implications before they were granted the immigrant visas. Participants 1,4 and 8 shared that it took too long after the family unification file was accepted for their documentation for immigration to be processed, putting them under undue waiting time pressures.

All the participants noted that having legal residency was the key to their meaningful integration within the United States. Those immigrants whose visas had expired reported living in great fear of being deported. They also admitted that they had no rights to the basic facilities such as driving privileges, medical facilities, funding for school, and obtaining good-paying jobs. Participant 3 narrated that "before you get your papers, you're not sure of yourself, you're not confident, you are living in fear, anything I do I could get deported. So, you try to stay out of the radar not to get into trouble". According to this participant and participants 7 and 9, they could only work under the table earning peasant incomes while they remained undocumented. Participant 7 told of the level of fear that he lived in this story:

> If I saw a Crown Victoria, (most of the vehicles that the cops use then was Crown Victoria) ahead of me, I will change direction because I didn't want to have anything to do with the cops because I knew that was going to implicate and

> expose me to the hands of the law. Seeing a cop vehicle was a very big problem. I can tell you one experience that I had. One day, my wife and I were coming back from somewhere and she was driving. We got pulled over because her rear light was not on. I can tell you; the cop knew that I was shivering and asked me if I was okay. And, and I said, yes, I'm okay. Apparently, he didn't see any reason to interrogate me or do anything, but then my wife told him that I'm not feeling too good. I can tell you that at a point in time I had a job with a gas station. If a police vehicle comes into the gas station, I run away

Theme 6: Knowledge of Government Integration Programs

Knowledge of Government Integration Programs ran across every participant in my study. It is an emergent theme from my preliminary coding plan and is a surprise theme. All the participants claim a lack of knowledge of government integration programs *(f=35)*. They all acknowledged that they were aware that they needed social security numbers, green cards, and naturalization certificates (where applicable) to have access to many things, including jobs, medical facilities, driver's licenses, and credit facilities. Apart from participant 4, who indicated that he got some pamphlets at the port of entry that informed him of numbers to call in case of emergency and some sites for jobs, and participant 2, who said that the World Education Services (WES) invited him to the training he did not attend, none of the other regular immigrants could speak of any government integration programs that the state availed them. The student immigrant, participant 11, who came on a Nigerian government-sponsored crash program, narrated how she and a team of students they came with were shown videos of American culture

and ended with "the government didn't integrate anything in my honest experience." She further said, "Whatever problem that I had; I didn't use immigration integration programs, because if it did exist, I don't know about it." Participant 1 rhetorically asked and said, "U. S. and New Jersey integration Programs? I do not know anything about them.". For participant 12, his only integration help was from his friend he stayed with when he arrived, who helped him source odd jobs here and there. Answering the question on knowledge of government integration program, participant 6, who came on diversity visa lottery, bemoaned lack of government involvement on immigrants' settlement and said that:

> I don’t know much of any, but in my view, I want to see a situation whereby there is kind of program laid down for people who are coming in to tell them what they should do where they will go, how to be able to do what they want to do. So that they will have less problem getting integrated and finding a job or, you know, doing something they like.

Most participants echoed this response from participant 6 as they expressed that government needs to do good publicity on any integration program they had. That may be why some of the participants who asked me questions were interested in what the outcome of my research would portend for them as Nigerian immigrants. Participants 8, 10, and 12 had similar concerns that people should be educated on their rights and available resources as fallout from my study. Hungry for knowledge about immigration, participant 8 asked:

> How far can this research go in assisting immigrants, whether new or the ones here already? I can understand that our interview is all about the government policy and the impact they are making in immigrants. So how far are this research going to help immigrants to be able to identify or know these government policies so that they will be able to utilize them?

Similarly, participant 12 was desirous of knowing if the much talk about immigration integration would result in the government throwing up programs to help immigrants better assimilate into the society rather than being in the dark about what is available to them.

Knowledge of non-government organizations involved in integrating processes was as poor as knowledge of government programs. None of my participants knows anything about nongovernment involvement in immigrants' integration.

Theme 7: Finance

Every participant in my study specified that work or job *(f=22)* was necessary for their immigration integration process. The importance of work is observed through their emphasis on social security and green card as tickets to their obtaining jobs. Work, therefore, has 22 codes out of the 34 codes for finance. Apart from the safety and availability of suitable facilities in the U.S., most of the participants reported that their abilities to earn income to live a better lifestyle for themselves and their families and financially support relatives they left behind in Nigeria were the driving forces for their immigration. Responding to how far she had met her immigration expectation, participant 11 declared, "the financial part was fulfilled. I was able to send my siblings to school was

able to send my children to school." Participant 1 noted that the basis for immigration for his family was better opportunities for work and other matters for his family. Participant 8 subjugated her rights against discrimination to the chance of employment when she said, "for me, because I know, I've come to work, and I know my purpose of being here, I don't let it get to me." For participants 3, 7, and 12, even while they remained undocumented, financial quest drove them to do all sorts of work, sometimes doing double and triple shifts and earning minimal incomes from each to survive and support their families. Participant 2 stated that:

> I had the expectation to make a better living, for myself and for my immediate family, and for all my dependents. People are still suffering back home doing menial jobs that are earning them little money. Therefore, when relatives travel, they are happy because they know when they have financial challenges, they can bank on you to help. So far it has been working well anyway.

The quest for money or finance is a circumstantial paradigm for Nigerians going by their backgrounds of coming from a developing nation where citizens virtually provide their primary means of subsistence independent of the government. This independence may be the driving force for the participants emphasizing finance above government intervention to fund their expenditures and support their families back home. Participant 1 relayed that a friend of his informed him that they could get some help from the government within the period he and his family couldn’t work. However, his sister-in-law debunked resorting to government on the basis that it was “belittling to go getting money from government to feed but that instead, we should try and shoot for

employment.” In this instance, the sister-in-law was willing to inconvenience her family by caring for additional five immigrants before they could get employment because Nigerians would rather rough it out than depend on government or handouts. This pride and unwillingness to recourse to the government for financial help were reinforced by participant 9, who had a lot of financial pressures with three kids in the early stages of her immigration. Participant 9, therefore, told her finance story as follows:

> We didn't participate on the SNAP program immediately, because people talked down on it. It was degrading, like the country I'm coming from, you know, we feel that feeding is something that you can give to family easily. Like, if someone is feeding your family, you feel like, you're not doing what you're supposed to do. So, because of that, and the way, the people, friends already, of course, the people I met, the people that are from my country. So, because of the way they portrayed the SNAP, we didn't go right into it even though we were qualified.

Interestingly, participant 1, who is over 60-year-old, and a successful, well-educated business professional before immigration, narrated that he now does the hard job of a factory worker. He asserted that "even when my body cannot take it, I work and sometimes, at 3 am I keep wondering that this is a cycle that has to be repeated every day and I have to stand doing the job." This participant further said that his work is pay-check to pay-bill. For participant 6, "I just wanted to do any job that I could get, whether it's in the bank or somewhere else, so that, you know, my family could eat and be able to pay for the bills." Participant 7, a master's degree holder from Nigeria, narrated how he did very menial jobs jumping from one shift to the other to survive. In his words:

> The only job you can get are jobs like warehouse jobs, and other jobs that are under the table. That time, my life used to start at 3am. You know, because I have to go to the turkey farm in the morning, where I was working the floor to catch the beds, and load them up in the truck, and then take them to the abattoir for slaughtering, and hang them up. And I worked for like six hours in the turkey farm, and by seven o'clock, I am all ready, again, to go to the warehouse to work.

As earlier stated, Nigerians do not just work for themselves and their immediate family; they also work to support relatives (close and extended) and friends back home in Nigeria. The World Bank report was that Nigerians in the diaspora remitted $34 billion back home in 2021 (The Cable News, January 22, 2022). The paradigm of being pressured to support relatives back home is opposed by participant 10. This participant especially believes that Nigerian immigrants in the U.S. do not need to work their guts out to help people back home in Nigeria, as it appears that that goal drives these immigrants. Though this position of participant 10 is debatable if weighed against the biases and discriminations other participants have expressed, the truth remains that Nigerians are driven by financial gains in the United States and elsewhere in the diaspora to reach out to people back home. The Nigerian-born immigrant typically has pride in home and wants to travel periodically; hence, they invest in property, security, and politics back home. Funding for all these is through their jobs and works.

Another area of the finance theme that participants mentioned is housing *(f=4)*. Some participants had housing problems at some point or the other, but the majority depended on friends and families to help rather than seek government assistance.

Participant 2 reported that his sister and brother-in-law housed him for the first year of migration. Participant 4 said that his brother-in-law and sister quartered him. Participant 1, who migrated with his wife and three children, had to live in his brother's home for nearly five months until they could work. Participant 5 mentioned seeking a Section Eight house at some point but was unsuccessful. Participant 6, who came with the DV lottery, had his hopes dashed because he was under the notion that the government that made it possible for him to get the visa would stand by him somehow to stabilize. Still, his family turned out to be objects of people's mercy on arrival. He said:

> Some people were saying that when you get there, the government will take care of you, give you housing, give you money, give you a job and all that. I was hoping that this is the way it will be. But that expectation was not real. Because when you come in, nobody's giving you any house, nobody's giving you any job. You must go out and look for a job and look for where you're going to stay. I got to find out why they needed that affidavit of support from somebody. So, it is this somebody who helped us to get a house and paid for it for about two months and he paid the deposit, which we eventually repaid.

Theme 8: Immigration Experience

Immigration experience is the eighth theme that emerged from my study. This theme ranked equally with finance. Immigration laws *(f=30)* are the main category of this theme. In the participants' perceptions, what constitutes immigration laws include the documentation and processes that: enable them to obtain jobs; attend schools; cause their children to attend school; get benefits such as SNAP; enroll in WIC (Women, Infant, and

Children); enable them to obtain credit facilities and rent houses, empowered them to speak up when they perceived injustice; gave them the freedom to drive, vote, and to travel to any part of the world and return to the United States. The second category under this theme is a sanctuary state *(f=4)* and was mentioned only by a few participants who were aware and able to discuss how New Jersey helps immigrants.

All the participants acknowledged that at every stage of their immigration integration, the social security number/card was very empowering as evidence of legal residency. Participant 11 said that in the 70s and 80s, all you needed was a social security card to attend school, work, access all social services, including healthcare. Therefore, although she did not have a green card for many years after being licensed as a pharmacist, it did not debar her from working, buying her home, driving, and doing all those things legal residents did. The only downside was that she could not travel outside of the United States until she regularized her status. For participant 1, "the social security system is a very good system that enables you to be loaded in the social system," meaning that you become recognized as a part of the society. "I will say that they are the key things that you need to live a good life in United States. I was not able to get a job without those and especially not without the social security number", declared participant 2. For participants 3, 7, and 12 who were undocumented at some point, obtaining the social security card was the defining point of freedom. Participant 3 averred that "obtaining a job, you will need social security card/number. Getting my legal status, has somewhat helped with integrating into the American society." Participant 12 informed that "it was a lot because you know initially when I didn't have the social security card, I

had problem getting some jobs." Participant 9 saw the social security number as very instrumental to obtaining funding to change her career trajectory to nursing and enhance integration into society. She said:

> Because through the Social Security thing now, I was able to apply for FAFSA, which is the federal assistance programs that helps in education. Yeah, and then the social security also helped me to apply for loan through the commercial financial lenders. That helps me to pay some of my bills in school. The social security card is just all they need for loan application. They don't require any other collateral security or any other evidence. All the lenders require is just that number and that card, not buildings or landed property and they give you what you want. So, these are helpful.

Without the social security number, you cannot even rent accommodation in your name, according to Participant 12.

Because there are different categories of social security cards: valid or non-valid for work, participants asserted that the green card was the higher form of immigration integration document. According to participant 8, possessing a green card is evidence that you are a lawful resident who can work in the USA. Some people could obtain a social security card without being legal residents. Participant 11 affirmed that in the 70s/80s, there was only one social security card hence the card she had did not specify "not valid for work." Participant 12 observed that after 9/11, was an introduction of stricter immigration measures; therefore, some of the things he did to survive as an undocumented immigrant could not have been possible today.

Naturalization to a citizen by immigrants is the highest immigration integration experience that the participants were thrilled to discuss. For participant 2, "this immigrant integration laws have made me to become a United States citizen." Participant 4 proudly said, "I'm now a US citizen. So, I'm going to say that is one of the best. Then I had the opportunity to transfer the citizenship to my kids.". According to participant 4, this citizenship status made it possible for him to hold sensitive work positions at some point that were the precludes of citizens and allowed him to speak up against a discriminatory situation in one of his employments. He narrated the story as:

> I have worked in certain places where, because of the security level of the job you're going to be doing, you have to be a US citizen for you to be given such positions. I was lucky enough to be in such a position because I am a US Citizen. Despite that all the people around me, I was the only person that looked dark with short hair. So, you understand what I'm saying? The only person of color in the place, and I think that all of them were nice people. But I think it's because of the immigration laws that gave me the opportunity to serve in such places. The immigration system and policies give you the right to demand what belongs to you. So, I've experienced such a thing before, and I spoke out. And not only did I speak out, I wrote out I actually wrote to the highest authority in the company. And I want to tell you, the response came quickly, and the anomaly was corrected. I think that paved the way for other people who came because when I was leaving, we got more people who looked like me.

Citizenship is, therefore, the highest goal of all my participants' integration experience because of the benefits it bestows. Additionally, the participants said that citizenship accords them the power to vote. All the naturalized interviewees spoke with joy of the ability to vote. These immigration experiences were made possible by the immigration laws as specified by participant 7. This participant said that he digested every immigration law during his struggles to regularize his status, to such an extent that he feels he could be a great immigration advisor to any intending Nigerian immigrant to the United States. Participant 5 asserted that "when I paid attention to immigration rules, it was time to become a citizen."

Many participants felt that New Jersey was only a mirror of the federal immigration integration laws and programs. However, a few were conversant of some differences. Participant 7 said, "NJ being a sanctuary state is one of the things that also helped me." Participant 5, who works with the state judiciary system, spoke about New Jersey having a sanctuary city. She also told of how the state would protect undocumented immigrants against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), especially in cases of abuse. She discussed New Jersey protection this way:

> New Jersey is one of the most progressive states to be in the sense that as an immigrant, there was a time ICE had, during the Trump administration, an office in our building. And they weren't allowed to come into the courthouse. They weren't coming to any court proceedings. Because if the person had committed an offence as part of their immigration status, that is entirely different. But if somebody has come to court for family matter, child support, divorce, domestic

violence, juvenile cases, ICE has no business in that environment. So, family courts judges did not allow ICE into any other court proceedings.

Summary of Chapter 4

All participants in the study agree that migration to the United States has tremendous benefits. The majority agree to have met their personal and family immigration expectations considerably, especially financial-wise and assistance to relatives back home. Participants believe that the social infrastructure in the United States has been the primary reason for their feeling of integration. Although some felt high discomforts at the early stages of immigration, especially the undocumented immigrants, they all agree that the end has justified the means. Generally, participants believe that migration to the United States has been a blessing in disguise as an alternative to Nigeria.

Almost all participants clung to family and religion for integration support. Therefore, family and faith emerged as heroes for participants in the study. Most claimed that family and religion were all they needed to survive in the United States. Therefore, they are blinded to government or nongovernment integration policies and programs as enunciated in the New Jersey integration programs in Chapter 5. Almost all participants felt that all they needed to integrate into American society effectively was guidance from their family and friends who had been here before them. However, a few participants felt that sticking with family prevents Nigerian immigrants from perceiving the opened horizon and underscores their culture of collectivism, which can sometimes be a disadvantage. One of the participants claimed that until Nigerians move out of their cluster and embrace other cultures, they will probably not be able to optimize their

potential and achieve more significant career growth and integration within the United States. Some participants informed that all the social engagements they are involved in are with Nigerians. This attitude could further de-limit their abilities to obtain information outside their group and achieve greater integration into society, instead, they depend on recycling information among family members. A participant termed that as a recycling of half-baked information. Even in the religious embrace, the participants again are seen to keep membership mainly with Nigerian churches or churches where there are a lot of Nigerians, thereby still maintaining the cluster. They kind of live in the United States but want to continue in living only the culture of Nigeria.

As presented by the participants, societal racism and discrimination are huge setbacks from adequate integration. Eleven participants discussed social discrimination in workplaces, schools, social gatherings, and from government officials. Some participants felt unduly delayed at ports of entry because of the passport they held and the country from where they migrated. Others felt outright insults by immigration officials; some think law enforcement agents are not as patient with them as other indigenes or established Americans. Participants do not feel that they can compete favorably with the American indigenes. The latter sometimes makes them feel privileged to be in the United States and should be content with what they get. These racist and discriminatory behaviors are seen from insults to their accents, dress codes, and especially, non-recognition of their certificates and work experiences by employers who insist on USE for job engagements. Participants agree that the United States is a welcoming country to immigrants because of its openness to embrace people from all nations and cultures and

its characterization as a country of immigrants. However, they disagree that the individuals representing the nation are as welcoming as the country itself because subjectivity depends on individual's personality and how far back the individuals' genealogy is from the original immigrants. Some participants felt that new immigrants are more receptive than immigrants whose ancestors date back to three generations and above.

Knowledge of government integration programs was a huge one. All the participants claimed ignorance of any government or nongovernment integration programs to assist in their settlement. The only participant aware that there are government programs was limited only to the flyers he received at the port of entry. Discussion on lack of knowledge is in Chapter 5 as a dimension of government interrelationship with the agency to reproduce structures. As noted from participants, the failure of knowledge may be due to participants' cultural bias or the need for the government to do more in the information dissemination of policies they formulate.

The participants all spoke of immigration laws as very enabling, particularly those that evolve in obtaining status that empowers them to work, get all forms of credit, and speak up where they perceive injustices. All participants agreed that the social security numbers, green cards, and naturalization to citizenship are highly empowering. However, almost all of them believe that the government should ensure that racism and discrimination are dismantled or reduced through certificate and experience recognition. According to some participants, reducing USE requirements would lessen the inferiority feelings that discrimination instigates.

In Chapter 5, I will present the interpretation of the findings and discuss the relationship between the codes and their connections to the perceived impacts of government policies and programs on the settlement of Nigerian immigrants in New Jersey. Also, I will address the limitations of the study and conclude with recommendations for further study and implications for social determinants of health and positive social change in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusions

I undertook this qualitative study to explore the perception of Nigerian-born immigrants in New Jersey about the impact of government immigration integration policies and programs on their settlement and integration into society. I used a narrative inquiry approach to obtain data from the participants in the study. Through this study, I also aimed to gauge participants' responses against the study lenses of structuration and complexity theories of Giddens (1979, 1984) and Morçöl (2010), respectively, that framed the study. The literature showed that however noble government policies or structures are, unless there is a fusion and buy-in by the agents who are the people for whom the policies are formulated; the anticipated results may not be achieved (Haslet, 2020). Giddens (1979, 1984) and Morçöl (2010) agreed there must be an interrelationship between the micro and macrostructures in what is termed the duality of structures to effectuate production. In the definition of the complexity theory, Morçöl (2010) further stressed that both policy and individuals and groups self-organize within the complex systems. This self-organization portends the nonseparation of public policy systems from the social system. Therefore, my goal in the study was to seek how interrelated the participants as social systems were with the public system that empowers their integration within New Jersey society.

I interviewed 12 Nigerian-born immigrant residents in New Jersey to share their experiences regarding government integration programs and to determine how their perceptions align with the principles of micro/macrosystems integration in governance. The emergent themes from the study revealed that Nigerian immigrants to New Jersey

feel happy to be in the United States. However, they cannot achieve full integration because of the perceived absence of government actions to address their concerns on specific issues, particularly on several aspects of discrimination (see Imoagene, 2017; Odoemene & Osuji, 2015; Oriji, 2020). Paradoxically, although the participants perceive the United States as a welcoming nation, they also experience racialized and discriminatory obstacles that hamper their full integration into society (see Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019; Oyebamiji & Adekoya, 2019. The study further revealed that Nigerian immigrants are very family-oriented and trust family above government structure. Another revelation from the study is that there is poor publicity of any government integration programs; hence almost all participants know little to nothing of government integration programs. The study also showed that Nigerians gravitate to the nursing career to circumvent the challenges of not obtaining jobs in their pre-immigration professions because of the quest for United States Experience (USE). Before interpreting findings, I present an outcome of the review of public documents on immigrants' integration from New Jersey.

New Jersey on Immigration Integration

In Chapter 3, I specified that I would review New Jersey public reports on integration and assimilation to supplement the interview data. During the public document reviews, I discovered that New Jersey had had a long history of planning policies to integrate immigrants for socioeconomic development and growth of the state. By Executive Order No.78 of 2007, Governor Jon S. Corzine ordered the Blue-Ribbon Advisory Panel on Immigrants to bring up recommendations to tackle the successful

integration of immigrants statewide comprehensively and strategically (State of New Jersey, 2007). What was not clear from the reviews, at least from Governor Corzine's era, is whether the governor eventually created the policies and effectively implemented them. But Governor Murphy, the incumbent Governor of New Jersey, seems enthusiastic about immigrant integration and assimilation policies creation. By Executive Order No. 74 of July 2019, Governor Phill Murphy directed the department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Labour and Workforce Development (DOL) to create the Office of New Americans (ONA) through which immigrant integration statewide would be promoted. The ONA is housed within the DHS and has three key goals: (a)promoting outreach and extending community supports to new immigrants in the state through training, (b)enabling new immigrants to have greater access to state programs through partnering organizations and advocacy actions, and (c), promoting cultural competency and linguistic freedom (NJ DHS & DOL, 2020)

The Murphy Administration has taken further steps to actualize the objectives of ONA. Some of the agendas set out by the administration are the resumption of the truncated state refugee resettlement coordination, expansion of aids to undocumented college students, legal representative funding for immigrants that face deportation, anti-wage and sick leave provision that also cover immigrants (NJ DHS and DOL, 2020). Other pro-immigrant measures introduced by the state of New Jersey under Governor Murphy relate to building trust between immigrants and law enforcement and protecting undocumented immigrants in a sanctuary city for asylum seekers and DACA recipients (NJ DHS and DOL, 2020). Furthermore, the NJ DHS and DOI (2020) showed that NJ

provides occupational licenses to qualified and trained resident immigrants to practice their occupation irrespective of their immigration status.

Immigrants make significant contributions and add value to the state of New Jersey. Therefore, successive administrations in the state have made efforts to integrate immigrants, at least on paper. The NJ DHS and DOL (2020) report indicated that immigrants pay about $30 billion in taxes with a spending power of $65.8B. Furthermore, the report showed that immigrants, both documented and undocumented, constitute 41% of the state's science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce and that over 50% of the healthcare workers are foreign-born.

The public document reviews showed that previous administrations relinquished the state's role of managing refugee resettlement efforts at some point. This abdication of refugee resettlement role was reversed under Governor Murphy in 2019 (New Jersey Department of Homeland Services, 2019). New Jersey actively responds to the federal proposals that negatively impact immigrants (NJ DHS and DOL, 2020) by creating sanctuary cities. Overall, the state of New Jersey has the lofty objectives of being a welcoming state where immigrants are economically, civilly, and linguistically empowered.

It is doubtful, however, going by the shortage of knowledge of participants in my study, if the administration effectively translated these lofty policies and programs to the immigrants. The duality concept of Giddens (1979, 1984) specifies that there must be an interrelationship between government structures and the agents who are subjects of the rules to achieve any meaningful result. The convoluted functioning of governments

within various legalistic, health, environmental, and logistic events, as advanced by Morçöl's (2010) complexity theory, hampers the implementation of even the loftiest policies and programs. The NJ DHS and DOL (2020) reports claim that because of COVID-19 prevalence, most of the legislation signed off by the Governor that would facilitate the take-off of ONA has been slow in implementation. Unfortunately, except these are promoted within Murphy's second tenure, change in government may militate against achieving the three goals for ONA as earlier specified.

Various nongovernment organizations in New Jersey are somehow involved with helping immigrants settle into the state; however, they limit their assistance to providing food and temporary shelter to needy immigrants. The Catholic Charities offer legal service, citizenship classes, and education to immigrants, especially the Spanish immigrant communities (Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton, 2021). Beyond ad hoc legal assistance, teaching on the path to citizenship, and food and temporary shelter provision, most NGOs do not have any structured immigrant programs to help immigrant assimilation and settlement.

As shown, since the administration of Governor Corzine in 2007, successive New Jersey governments have had measures in place to integrate immigrants adequately. Yet, none of the participants in this study was aware of them. This issue may result from a lack of apposite publicity to the target audience of the policy, or it could be due to bureaucratic bottlenecks in governance (Heins, 2008). Therefore, it points to governance complexities where the policy formulators are divorced from the implementers of the guidelines and deficiency in organizational communications (Robbins and Judge, 2009).

Interpretation of Findings

Social Integration

All participants specified that social integration was their crucial resource for settlement into the United States hence this theme had the highest coding frequency from the collected data. Eleven participants said they depended on family and friends to settle into society. According to Villalonga & Kawachi (2017), social capital is an asset accessible to socially connected people and plays a significant role for new immigrants to a nation. Everything, including food, weather, language, way of life, fashion, and culture, seems unfamiliar when an immigrant arrives in a country (Johannesen & Appoh, 2020; Sammut, 2012). Ten participants acknowledged that they felt some helplessness but resorted to help from their family members. A participant who arrived with a DV visa had no strong family ties and reported a feeling of despair on arrival. This participant believed that since the government made it possible for him to obtain the visa, he would have some level of support for some period to enable him to stand on his feet and fend for the family with whom he immigrated. But instead, he became an object of charity from friends for subsistence. While the participants who migrated with family reunification visas had substantial levels of care by their family members in housing and feeding, they still experienced hardship in finding jobs, obtaining healthcare, and coping with language and other barriers within the larger society. These are areas that structured government programs delivered at the local community would have been of great help in integrating immigrants.

Beyond the help they received from family, many of the participants averred that faith was another great help that enabled them to settle in the state of New Jersey physically, psychologically, and emotionally. To some, the church was not just a place they exercised their faith but a place of social interaction, obtaining material and financial supports and an avenue to let out tensions. A participant observed that within the religious circle, she had the feeling of freedom that helped her achieve emotional and psychological balance. This form of social capital fits well with Nigerian immigrants because they are people of great faith coming from a culture where religious members are synonymous with a family membership.

Friends and the extended family system that defines the collectivist culture of Nigerians was another source of social integration for many participants. Even those who had no family members in the United States could get references from friends that enabled them to make headway into settling down in the U.S. society. Participants who were undocumented at some stages of their immigration were the worst hit in integrating. Their only means of survival was to resort to friends and the extended family system to navigate the difficult terrain in which they found themselves.

Given the impact family and religion played in the participants' integration, some claimed they did not need any government integration programs. In contrast, others felt that they would have taken advantage of any available government programs to integrate better if they were aware of any. Therefore, family and religion emerged as the heroes of integration from the study. Life in the United States would have been more challenging than the participants expressed if not for these prominent integration engines.

The Benefit of U.S. Migration

This theme expresses the participants' perception of how their immigration expectations for immigrating to the United States were met or not met. The literature shows both the immigrants, and the receiving countries have immigration expectations (Kyeremeh et al.,2019). Immigrants have varied reasons for leaving their countries of birth including better jobs, better standards of living, better ecological environments, good security, escape from harsh political situations, etc. (Alba & Foner, 2018; Cummings &Chapman, 2019; Ellerman, 2021). The primary concerns for Nigerians that make them emigrate include the country's poor economic situation where there are infrastructural decays; jobs are unavailable for educated citizens, porous security system, and bad governance, all leading to extreme recession (Nairaland, 2021a).

All the participants affirmed that to make a better life for themselves and their families, immediate and extended were their motivations for immigrating to the United States of America. Three participants extol migrating to the United States as excellent opportunities for their family members. Ten participants had personal expectations of better lives, and four expected to assist the families they left behind in Nigeria. Two expressed needs to help the Nigerian health care system. Most of the participants agree that they have achieved their personal and family expectations by meeting their financial needs to a large extent. Two participants have partially completed the expectation to assist family members back in Nigeria.

All participants who said that they wanted to help in healthcare delivery back home in Nigeria said they had not yet started on it. Meeting immigration expectations

impacts integrating immigrants into the system because personal goal achievements give the person a leeway to pursue the larger picture akin to Maslow's need hierarchy (Corporate Finance Institute, 2022).

Nigerian immigrants to the United States are mainly educated above the U.S. average of bachelor's degrees (Pew Research Centre, 2018). Obtaining high-quality education is crucial for Nigerians of all statuses and ages. One of the participants expressed that his first expectation was to get better education like most people he knew who were here already in the United States. Ten participants in this study immigrated with a minimum of bachelor's degree; one was a high school graduate. One was a high school student at the point of immigration. However, 11 participants have added additional qualifications since their immigration, some of them changing their career trajectory through reschooling and others completing their courses of study. All participants held a minimum of bachelor's degrees at the time of the interview. Therefore, the participants fulfilled personal expectations of obtaining higher education.

Six participants were delighted with the social infrastructures in the States that enabled them to obtain funded education for themselves and their children, health care provision, the security system, and other emergency facilities. All participants had something positive about other economic facilities, including internet and communication, power, and transportation facilities. The two participants who immigrated from Italy and the United Kingdom wanted to raise their families in an English-speaking and generally better immigrant recipient country which they believe is what the United States stands for.

In summary, the participants generally felt that they met their reasons for immigrating to the United States to a large extent. Therefore, compared to staying back in Nigerian with all the deteriorating economic and social situations, the interviewees were happy to be immigrants in the United States of America. However, the nuanced perception is, given a better Nigeria tomorrow, would these same participants still be glad to be here in the United States? This observed subtle perception is from their continuing to hold on to the cultures they came with, including accents, collectivism, remaining in the circle of Nigerians, and even retaining their family cultures of parental controls and culinary and fashion tastes. The literature shows that what is needed is the integration of immigrants rather than assimilation or acculturation (see Alba &Foner, 2015; Hall, 2011)

U.S. Discrimination

There is a vast literature on discrimination against immigrants. MIPEX has anti-discrimination as one of its measures of a country's immigration integration performance (see McDaniel, 2015, Pew Research Center, 2018). Discrimination against immigrants shows in forms of inability to complete their education, obtain good-paying jobs, hinder career growth, and cultural and other forms of racial discrimination (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019; Imoagene, 2017). Participants in the study identified U.S. discrimination as a massive hindrance to integration. Participants recognized these hindrances in schooling, linguistic barriers, medical, home purchase, and especially obtaining appropriate jobs.

Ramos et al. (2020) submitted that a host community's impatience with immigrants is a form of cultural racism. Two participants in the study identified cultural

racism at work where the established indigenes did not want to deal with them when they heard their accents. There is a regular bar to the immigrant's career growth to these indigenes. One of the participants observed that moving to a managerial position is very slim or impossible, not because she does not perform well on the job or pass promotional exams, but because a barrier exists against immigrants who should see being on the job as privileged.

Six participants spoke about discounting their certificates and academic qualifications. The majority observed that employers did not recognize their experience from Nigeria because they kept asking for USE, thereby creating entry barriers into jobs. USE both disregards the immigrants' qualifications and experiences, reducing them to very low levels according to a participant who said that it was like "being put down to where you don't want to be, instead of keeping you at the level you are qualified to be." Four of the participants changed to the nursing line as an alternative to their careers in Nigeria. Switching to the nursing line was not a prideful career for these four participants because they discussed their new jobs without joy; some referred to it as backwardness that they decided to survive in the United States of America.

Two bank managers in Nigeria had to veer into nursing because they could not obtain dignifying jobs in the banks, and they did not see any career growth future in banking in the States. One participant was a successful and experienced architect in Nigeria. However, he now works as a factory floor man to make ends meet because he must re-school in the United States to function as an architect and was not sure that USE would not pose a barrier, even if he does, to obtain appropriate jobs or contracts.

According to Xiao et al. (2014), one of the enormous barriers to the integration of migrant nurses was institutional discrimination arising from the inabilities of the regulatory authorities to create policies that adequately classify nurses' experiences. In Giddens's (1979, 1984) duality of structures concept, this is an implosion of the macro governance with the potential to affect agents who perceive different meanings and act base their actions on the structural breakdowns.

Participants also noted linguistic discrimination as part of the hindrances that inhibit their integration. Some participants said that to play safe, they limit their social engagement to people from their culture where they do not have to censor their speeches to avoid feeling judged or condemned. Two participants mentioned that established indigenes unconsciously exhibit racialized and discriminatory tendencies as though embedded in them from birth. A participant spoke of how the clients she serves in the health industry curse them and ask them to return to their country.

I confirmed from the literature that discrimination against immigrants is a prevalent occurrence. Branker (2016) discussed how some English-speaking Caribbean immigrants' accents increased discrimination. VanNatta (2018) spoke about the overt criminalization of immigrants. Trevena (2013) narrated how the Poles took lower-paying jobs in the U.K. after the accession. Menjívar and Lakhani (2016) decried how the state's power to dominate and control the activities of immigrants reduces their self-worth, and Lutz (2021) discussed systemic discrimination.

Participants' concerns about racial discrimination are not only limited to themselves. They worry about the effect this will have on their children. The participant

who immigrated as a minor felt disenfranchised among students, while one parent participant felt how racial bullying in school resulted in her k-12 child undergoing therapy to stabilize. One participant thinks that even though immigrants' children born in the United States may not feel as much discrimination as their parents, their typically culturally based names may become a basis for bias and racialization.

U.S. Experience

The United States experience was expressed with mixed perceptions by participants. This is a cultural change issue which are embraced differently by participants. For participant 1, the imbibement of a culture of individualism by his children smirks of insults and is taking a lot for him to achieve a change. This participant sees as insults, the attitudinal lack of respect for elder to the older generation and believes that most of the societal ills are engendered by lack of family discipline and governmental *over protection* of children. Participant 5 who immigrated as a minor abhors parental control over Nigerian American children and youth by their Nigerian-born parents and feels that it is inhibitive for her generation in a different culture. Participant 11 had a hilarious disposition to her U.S. experience when she narrated the blindness to African culture and events by the people she met during her early immigration.

The United States is a multicultural state with each group of immigrants importing their own culture. This poses additional integration challenges (Alba & Foner, 2015). A Participant spoke of the Nigerian held culture that some careers are the precludes of women including nursing, therefore a Nigerian male in the nursing

profession may not have professional pride. One participant noted that sticking to their culture and being adamant to move out of their cluster may be part of the threats to integration for Nigerian immigrants in New Jersey.

Despite the many integration challenges enumerated by all the participants, majority perceive the United States as a welcoming country because of its robust immigration policies that enables immigrants to chat a path to citizenship if they are law-abiding. This perception of the country as a welcoming state is not however generalized to the people who are the faces of the United State. Opinions expressed by the participants is that extending welcoming hands to immigrants by established indigenes is individualistic. The participant averred that the more recent generation of the U.S. immigrants such as those whose ancestral immigration is below three generations off are more welcoming and accommodative of immigrants than those whose ancestral immigration is more than three generations. These longer stem descendants appear to have forgotten that in the final analysis, everyone is an immigrant as determined in the literature that America is a country of immigrants (Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Katz & Stern, 2006; Katz, 1996b; Pew Research Center, 2018).

Immigration Process

I describe in this theme the participants' early immigration journeys. Most participants explained that they did not have any hitches during this stage of their immigration. All the participants came into the U.S. with valid entry visas. Three of them were on visiting visas, one on a J1 visa, one had an F1 visa, one came with a DV Lottery visa, and six came on family reunification visas. Apart from some delays experienced at

the ports of entry by two participants, all other participants, with one exception, had welcoming stories to tell about their entry point experiences. One of those who experienced delays perceived it to be because of the country he was coming from, thereby bellying discrimination at the entry point. The participant who had an awful experience narrated how she and her children were harshly treated as though they were not welcome into the United States.

Two participants complained of the hardship experienced by having to travel to other states in Nigerian many times to fulfill the documentation requirements and further immigration interviewing processes. The participants who came with family reunification visas all complained about the long years it took from accepting their application to the approval for the interview. For participants 1 and 4, the waiting period was ten years. Therefore, apart from the length it takes to call intending family reunification applicants for interviews and the isolated case of entry point harassment, participants were generally satisfied with their immigration processes.

Knowledge of Government Integration Programs

None of the participants in the study could confidently say that they knew about federal or state government integration programs for immigrants. Murphy et al. (2019) listed conscious execution and monitoring of integration programs to achieve balanced and equal civil, social, and economic rights for all as one of the ways of attaining inclusivity and adequate integration of immigrants by policymakers. In the immigrant integration policies and programs of New Jersey governments earlier presented, it is evident that the state has noble all-inclusive plans to integrate immigrants properly, yet,

though participants in this study are well educated, they hardly know anything about the state's immigrant integration programs. The only participant who claims to have some knowledge is entirely limited to some flyers he received at the airport as he came into the country. Why would the state develop such lofty immigrant integration programs, and the immigrants they are to serve are in the dark? This lack of knowledge points to the complexity of governmental operations (see Morçöl, 2010) and the lack of macro-micro integration (see Giddens, 1979, 1984)

All the participants relied one way or the other on social capital for integration despite that a fundamental responsibility and goal of immigrant-receiving countries are to integrate immigrants within the mainstream properly (see Alba & Foner, 2015). The only reference participants had to government integration was the documentation they needed to obtain, including social security cards, green cards, and citizenship. According to the participants, information about these and how to get them came from families and friends because, communication with the government was nonexistent once you were in the country. The United States is well noted for its liberal immigration policies, but it has failed in establishing and driving specific government programs to assist immigrants' assimilation into society (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019; Imoagene, 2017; Jiménez, 2011). Participant 6 came on a diversity visa lottery. He lamented the lack of government involvement that left him and his family at the mercy of friends as they muddled through the murky waters of settlement in a strange country.

Some participants noted that the lack of knowledge of government integration programs was because the government has not taken steps to publicize its integration

programs adequately. A lot would have been happy to supplement whatever knowledge they get from a family with government programs, and they specified that perhaps they would have integrated better and faster. Therefore, the lack of knowledge is a surprise theme that emerged from the study and should be a matter of considerable concern for the state government as it pursues its noble integration policies and programs.

Finance

From the literature, I perceived that the immigrants always have a better standard of living as part of their immigration goals (see Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Schumann et al., 2019; United Nations, 2020). No matter how good a country is, if the individuals do not work hard to earn a good income and obtain better living standards, they may still end up in poverty. Not working explains why many people still live below the poverty line in the United States. The participants in this study ranked *work* as the highest in the finance theme. Regardless of their inabilities to obtain jobs appropriate for their pre-immigration qualifications and experiences, all the participants see their works and jobs as critical to their survival in the United States. Most of them do double and triple shifts to make money.

Ten participants said that apart from safety and availability of suitable social and infrastructural facilities in the United States, the ability to work and make money to achieve a better lifestyle for themselves, their close families, extended families, and friends they left in Nigeria was their motivation for immigration. The quest to make money also drove the three participants who were undocumented at some point to take up all sorts of under-the-table menial jobs, working long and arduous hours to take care of

themselves rather than depend on others to survive. The participants come from a background where most of their needs are self-catered, including food, schools for their children, healthcare, housing, and other facilities like water, power, and family security. Therefore, dependence on the government for basic things of life will be far from their consciousness. As an alternative, they work very hard to ensure that whatever is not generally provided by the government, they procure through hard work. Only one participant said she sought Section Eight housing and was not qualified. Participants 2 and 11 declared that they had met their financial goals for immigration. Others are at various levels of meeting their expectations finance-wise. One thing, however, that ran across participants is that no one is dependent on the government to meet the basic financial needs of their families. Instead, they work to ensure self-provision.

As noted under the U.S. discrimination, four of the participants changed their professions to the nursing career. What compels these changes is ensuring ongoing job opportunities to earn income rather than pride in career. The Nigerian-born immigrant is typically proud and feels less of an essential person if they cannot travel back home periodically. Consequently, they also cover the cost of home travels and investment they make in property, relations provisions, security, and politics back home. None of the participants in the study could confidently say that they knew about federal or state government integration programs for immigrants. Murphy et al. (2019) listed conscious execution and monitoring of integration programs to achieve balanced and equal civil, social, and economic rights for all as one of the ways of attaining inclusivity and adequate integration of immigrants by policymakers. In the immigrant integration

policies and programs of New Jersey governments earlier presented, it is evident that the state has noble all-inclusive plans to integrate immigrants properly, yet, though participants in this study are well educated, they hardly know anything about the state's immigrant integration programs. The only participant who claims to have some knowledge is entirely limited to some flyers he received at the airport as he came into the country. Why would the state develop such lofty immigrant integration programs, and the immigrants they are to serve are in the dark? This lack of knowledge points to the complexity of governmental operations (Morçöl, 2010) and the lack of macro-micro integration (Giddens, 1979, 1984).

All the participants relied one way or the other on social capital for integration policy despite that a fundamental responsibility and goal of immigrant-receiving countries are to integrate immigrants within the mainstream properly (Alba & Foner, 2015). The only reference participants had to government integration was the documentation they needed to obtain, including social security cards, green cards, and citizenship. According to the participants, information about these and how to get them came from families and friends. Communication with the government was nonexistent once you were in the country. Although the United States has liberal immigration policies, it has failed in establishing and driving specific government programs to assist immigrants' assimilation into society (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2019; Imoagene, 2017; Jiménez, 2011). Participant 6, who came on a diversity visa lottery, lamented the lack of government involvement that left him and his family at the mercy of friends as they muddled through the murky waters of settlement in a strange country.

Immigration Experience

This study is about the lived experiences of the participants regarding their perceptions of government integration programs that assisted them in settling in New Jersey. This study was a constructivist ontological and qualitative interpretative research (see Burkholder et al., 2016; Creswell, 2013). Therefore, I approached the study with the mindfulness that participants would perceive differently and were encouraged to answer the questions only from their perspectives.

Participants' immigration experiences varied, but some ethos was common to most. One of this ethos is that in the participants' perceptions, immigration laws include the documentation and processes that enable them to work, cause their children to attend school, drive, obtain credit facilities when needed and gain access to other social benefits.

Eight of the participants are now naturalized citizens of the United States. They had great joy in narrating the experiences of voting at various levels of state and national elections and traveling to most parts of the world just bearing an American passport. One of the measures through which MIPEX measures a nation's immigration integration performance is access to nationality (see McDaniel, 2015; Pew Research Center, 2018). Participant 4 happily narrated his ability to transfer his citizenship to his children together with the freedom it conveys. This participant also told a story of how, relying on his status as a citizen, he held sensitive positions in some offices and challenged some racial discrimination in one office.

Two female participants narrated their experiences, and their babies benefit from WIC. Most of them shared their experiences of funding their further education through

students' loans and some grants. Only one participant had the experience of obtaining SNAP when it became very tough for her family to keep up while pursuing her nursing education.

All the participants shared that the social security and green cards were the keys to their obtaining jobs, and therefore they all perceived these legal documents as their integration instruments. The three who were not documented at some stages shared how not having social security cards made life very difficult. Participant 11 informed that the rigidity in obtaining social security card increased after 9/11, which also tightened all social integration documentation as observed by participant 12. The change after 9/11 is a form of disrupted equilibrium (see Baumgartner & Jones, 1993) addressed in the literature.

Relationship of Findings with the Literature and the Contextual Framework

I have related the study findings as displayed in the themes to the literature and the conceptual framework. The analysis in this section factored in the relevant literature that underlies the themes. They also revealed that I assessed the themes under the theoretical frameworks that form the conceptual framework for this research. The conceptual framework comprising Giddens's (1979, 1984) and Morçöl's (2010) complexity theory defines that government structure cannot be independent of the agents, and managing systems is complex. As earlier stated, these two theories delineate the struggles both the structures that quarter immigrants and the immigrants themselves undergo to integrate or assimilate. These struggles are evident from the lack of alignment

between the participants' immigration expectations and the New Jersey government's efforts to integrate immigrants appropriately.

The complexity here is that government functionality is affected by bureaucracy because the implementers may not carry the policymakers' passions at implementation levels or subsequent leaderships. Hence the gap in implementation arises and truncates the achievement of goals when targeted beneficiaries are unaware of the policies made for them. Bryson (2018) specified that there are two ways that bureaucracies cripple strategies; lack of skills by political appointees and through inhibiting rules and regulations. In analyzing Italy's scientific brain phenomenon, Saint-Blancat (2018) discovered that the event was more complex than the scientific mobility and involved push and pull factors. Similarly, the findings of Nigerian immigrants' perception of government intervention in their assimilation regurgitated more content beyond government involvement. Hence issues such as funding, healthcare, culture, religion, family and friends', linguistics, weather, interpersonal expectations, and relationships all impacted the participants' integration.

On the other hand, the structuration theory is the intersectionality of government structures and individuals or groups that act on such systems. Therefore, for structuration to occur, there must be an interrelationship between the government and the agents or people for whom such policies or programs are formulated. In this study, the agents or participants were unaware of the state government's immigration integration programs. Therefore, there is an abortion of any planned structuration in the policies or micro-macro synergy. According to Bodolica et al. (2016), the absence of interrelationship between the

hierarchical government structures that set up healthcare delivery policies and the microsystems of health care practitioners and patients causes disruption and lack of congruence in healthcare delivery systems.

Social integration and knowledge of government integration program themes confirm that the participants did not engage in government integration programs for their settlement in New Jersey. Therefore, it is safe to deduce that the participants' perceived that they had no impacts from the government's policies and programs toward their integration in New Jersey.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to the use of structuration and complexity theories of Giddens (1979,1984) and Morçöl (2010) respectively, to explore the perceptions of the impact of government integration programs by Nigerian-born immigrants' resident in New Jersey. I interviewed only 12 participants who represent only a small fraction of the Nigerian-born immigrants in the state. The responses received from the participants reflected their personal views of government integration interventions based on their experiences. Therefore, the data was limited to the participants' perception and may not represent the broader array of more than 14,000 Nigerian immigrants' residents in New Jersey as of 2013 (Fleming, 2020).

The data reflects the attitudes and beliefs held by some members of the Nigerian-born immigrant community in New Jersey and not all of them. I attempted to recruit some undocumented immigrants in this population to achieve diversified perspectives. Still, they were not at liberty to interview, perhaps for fear of exposing their

undocumented status. These undocumented immigrants may also feel that their voices do not matter in the reviews of immigrants' perception of government policies and programs. Data, therefore, came only from people who have legal status to be resident in the United States, while I recognize that undocumented immigrants may have some different perspectives.

Because of the COVID-19 restrictions, interviews were all held via Zoom. While video conferencing over the Zoom has some benefits, body language would have been more evident in a face-to-face interview and provided more insights into the participants' feelings than words.

Recommendations

Structuration theory has been used in many fields by researchers in organizational communication (McPhee et al., 2020), healthcare delivery (Bodolica et al., 2016, Xiao et al., 2014), and immigration integration (Cook et al., 2018; Menjivar & Lakhani, 2016; Farina, 2017; Vega, 2018). Similarly, complexity theory found use in healthcare (McDaniel, 2015; Wellard & Secker, 2015) and immigration convolutions (Au, 2019; Meissner, 2015; Scholten, 2019, Saint-Blanchard, 2018). The current study was limited to the perception of 12 Nigerian-born immigrants regarding the impacts of government programs in their settlement in New Jersey.

The literature conveyed that Cook et al. (2018) found that some host nations neglect the effect of legalization programs on immigrant workers. Menjívar and Lakhani (2016) argued that legal status could create divergent courses, leading to the social exclusion and marginalization of immigrants and negatively affecting immigrants' self-

worth through domination and control of their activities and mindsets, and Seibel (2016) underscored the adverse effects of dominating immigrants' mentality. Given the extensive use of literature in exploring immigrant integration in host communities, the following areas regarding the integration of Nigerian immigrants in the United States would be interesting.

Further Research

The first recommendation for further research is a fallout of the participants' perception regarding the change to other professions and to start from the bottom ladder and climb up again irrespective of their qualifications from Nigeria. It will be instructive to understand what causes them not to achieve stability based on their pre-immigration professions by viewing their immigration through the standpoints of signification, domination, and legalization. Researchers could expand this type of study across the United States, primarily where Nigerian immigrants reside.

The second recommendation for further study is to explore the perception of undocumented immigrants regarding government actions. The state of New Jersey review report revealed a beautiful picture of immigrants' impact on the GDP of the state with over 50% of their health workers being immigrants, $30 B taxes coming from immigrants, and spending powers of immigrants more than $65B (NJ DHS and DOL, 2020). These statistics include the undocumented migrants hence the state's policies in empowering them. Researchers could project this study to embrace a cluster of undocumented immigrants across the United States or the undocumented immigrants'

population in New Jersey or any of the States of the U.S. where it is known that undocumented immigrants aggregate, particularly the known sanctuary states.

Third, to avoid situations where the targeted beneficiaries of government programs and policies are in the dark about the programs, I recommend that researchers explore options of breaking the bureaucratic governance in government quarters to bridge the gap in immigration integration. Here, I advocate that NGOs be studied to explore how they can partner with governments to go beyond the occasional provision of necessities to integrate immigrants efficiently. NGOs can quickly adapt to changing situations based on their experiences and mobility, grassroots orientation, and lack of bureaucracy (Peterson, 2011; Weinstein, 2012). Studies could be on collaborating with the NGOs through all the states of the U.S. with consideration for the peculiarity of each state.

Lastly, it will be interesting to explore why Nigerian immigrants cluster mainly at the lower ladder of jobs in the United States despite being more educated than the average American population (Pew Research, 2018).

Actions

During this study, I learned that Nigerian immigrants desperately need to know about government intervention programs to integrate anywhere they immigrate. I have also learned that while some governments have taken steps to ensure adequate integration of immigrants, many, including the United States, do not have sufficient programs to integrate immigrants. The literature is unquestionable about the dual benefit of appropriately integrating immigrants to the host community and the immigrants (Alba & Foner, 2015; Cummings & Chapman, 2019; Murphy et al., 2019; Sulaiman & Raphael,

2016). Therefore, with the hindsight of this study, I am hoping to take two-pronged actions: 1) galvanize to educate Nigerian and possibly African immigrants on the available government integration programs, 2) explore the possibility of getting involved with ONA to effectively improve the knowledge of New Jersey immigrants regarding government available integration policies and programs.

Implications

Positive social change

One critical consequence of the structuration and complexity theories as applied in this study is that governments must fully appreciate the complications involved in policymaking and implementation. Except measures are put in place to incorporate the needs of the target beneficiaries of any policy, failure commences at its formulation stage. For instance, the ONA has very noble objectives to continuously harness the benefits derived from immigrants in the state of New Jersey. A compelling question is whether the immigrants were involved in formulating these policies. Policymakers must interact with the agents that the guidelines will impact from the outset of the formulation to achieve buy-ins. They must also interrelate with them to enhance the desired macro-micro benefits during policies implementation.

Therefore, the findings of this study have implications for positive social change to influence policymakers in their immigration integration policies formulation and implementation.

Practice

Knowledge derived from this study also has a positive social impact on the immigrants and the established mainstream. The study's findings may sway employers of labor to re-assess their quest for USE, which discounts the certificate and experience of immigrants, thereby diminishing staff loyalty and optimizing immigrants' potential for job engagement. Nigerian immigrants may be positively motivated to explore all available information that would enable them to achieve better integration rather than stick to the known cluster of family and friends. Social change impact on Nigerian immigrants would evolve in imbibing the spirit of multiculturalism rather than sticking to their imported cultures, which inhibit integration into the United States society.

Social Determinants of Health (SDoH)

I present that the study also has implications for social determinants of health. As I noted in Chapter 1, global inequality is a critical cause of immigration. If all the world nations are equally endowed, perhaps there may be little or no need for international mobility. Some of the challenges that 21st-century humanity is faced that make them migrate include peace and security, human rights, disarmament, terrorism, humanitarian and health emergencies, gender inequality, food production (see United Nations, 2020). These challenges impact the physical, psychological, and mental health of people around the globe. In 2019, the challenge of COVID-19 had further complicated the social and physiological health of people, including the participants in this study.

The United Nation’s 2030 developmental goal agenda is specified to be integrative, indivisible, and encompassing economic, social, and environmental premises

that impact the wellbeing of people (United Nations 2015). This study has implications for social and economic beliefs as seen in the two themes, Social Integration and Benefits of U.S. Integration which ranked first and second in the thematic emergence of the study.

As a member of the Adtalem family, Walden University has added to its long-held goal of positive social change, the SDoH. The imperative of SDoH lies in the reality that almost every life event impacts the all-around wellness and quality of life of humans. According to the United States Department of Health, the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP, n.d..), SDoH is classified under five domains: economic stability, education access, and quality, healthcare access and quality, neighborhood and built environment, and social and community context. The SDoH covers safe housing, transportation, and neighborhoods; racism, discrimination, and violence; education, job opportunities, and income; access to nutritious foods and physical activity opportunities; polluted air and water; and language and literacy skills (ODPHP, n.d.). Most of these contents of SDoH are included in the emergent themes of this study and are analyzed in the findings, therefore emphasizing the SDoH implications of the study.

Conclusions

In this study, I used the conceptual framework comprised of Giddens's (1979, 1984) structuration and Morçöl's (2010) complexity theories. Both theories recognize that there must be an interrelationship between the micro and macro systems for the anticipated results of government policies to manifest. The complexity lens further stressed a convolution in the management of structures, thereby calling the attention of

policymakers to the need to be as thorough at implementation as in the formulation of policies.

This study found that the Nigerian immigrants sampled in this study experienced considerable integration difficulties because of their perceptions of the absence of government intervention programs to assist their settlement within the U.S. society. These difficulties have implications for SDoH for the immigrants who have expectations for better jobs and lifestyles in the United States. Therefore, the study has stimulating outcomes that could be useful for evaluating government integration programs at both the state and federal levels. The lens of structuration delineates that what is required by public policy and administration champions is the duality of structure and agency because neither can successfully stand alone. The review of New Jersey public documents on immigration integration confirmed that the government is concerned about the wellbeing of immigrants and formulated and legislated fantastic policies to achieve the goal of effectively integrating them. However, these immigration efforts of the state are effective on paper only since, as the study findings reveal, immigrants are not aware of them.

Enduring inequality and globalization imply that immigration will continue to have national and cultural importance. Therefore, the need for dynamic reviews of immigration integration policies and circumspective inclusion of immigrants' needs and opinions at the formulation and implementation of the guidelines is imperative for public policymakers and administrators. The significance of the conceptual framework for this study is that it exposes the complications that formulators of public policies and programs face, especially when there is a failure of adequate amalgamation of structure and agency.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

1. Tell me about your immigration journey to the United States?
    a. What were your expectations when you decided to migrate?
    b. How have your immigration expectations been met or not met?
2. What was your experience with law enforcement and immigration officials at the port of entry when you first came into the United States?
3. Can you share your immediate postimmigration experiences as you settled in your first community after entry?
    a. What government immigrant integration programs did you participate in?
    b. How do you rate the versatility of the programs to assist immigrants?
4. How much of the immigration rules and programs did you know about within your first 6 months of being in the United States?
5. How have the immigration laws helped you in integrating within U.S. society?
6. How have these immigration laws hindered your integration within the U.S. society?
7. How did these programs assist you in understanding the immigration policies of New Jersey and the United States?
8. How did these integration programs impact your career advancement and interactions with other members of society?
9. What are your views about the U.S. and/or New Jersey immigration integration policies?

10. If you have any issues that relate to state or federal rules and regulations, how do the integrations programs help you to pursue resolving them?
11. What is your perception of the United States as a welcoming country to immigrants?
12. Can you share other nongovernmental, religious, or family programs that have helped your assimilation into society?
13. Do you have any questions for me in any areas we discussed?

Appendix B: Invitation to Take Part in a Research Project

Invitation to Take Part in a Research Project.

Titled: "Examining Nigerian Immigrants' Perceptions Regarding U.S. Government Settlement Support Programs"

> Are you an adult Nigerian-born immigrant to the United States?
> Have you been resident in New Jersey for at least one year, and do you have any work experience?
> Would you like to lend your voice to immigrant integration concerns in the United States?

Then, Let's Listen to Your Immigration Experience Stories!!!!

My name is xxxxxx xxx, a Doctoral student at Walden University studying the impact of government settlement support and programs on immigrants. As a Nigerian adult immigrant, I have also had my struggles with integration into the United States. Therefore, I would like you to lend your voice in a one-on-one confidential conversation.

The Interview process are:

- Interview meeting will last for 60-75 minutes
- Interviews will be held over the Zoom, phone, or face-to-face (provided Covid-19 compliant)
- Interviews shall be recorded.
- All information obtained from participants will remain strictly confidential
- Participation is entirely voluntary

For more information, please call or email me on:
xxx-xxx-xxxx; xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Appendix C: Invitation for Participation in a Research Interview

Date……

Dear Mr./Ms.…,

I hope this note meets you well.

My name is Ifeoma Ana. I am in the process of completing my studies for the award of a Ph.D. degree in Public Policy and Administration at Walden University. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting research titled: **Examining Nigerian Immigrant Perceptions Regarding U.S. Government Settlement Support Programs.**

To further the process, I hereby invite you to be one of the research participants because you meet the selection criteria of Nigerian-born immigrants who have been resident in New Jersey for at least one (1) year and have had some work experience. I hope to interview you in person or by video conference at your convenient time. Interview questions will include aspects of your experiences related to integration in New Jersey. The interview will take approximately an hour to conclude.

Kindly note that if you agree to this invitation, you will be completing a Consent Form, a copy of which is here attached. The interview is entirely voluntary, and there be no disclosure of your identity.

Kindly let me know a convenient time I could call and speak with you. I could be reached on phone number XXXXXX or email: YYYYYYYYY

I look forward to you assisting me in this project by being a participant in the study.

Best Regards

Ifeoma Ana

Appendix D: Summary of Codes

Codes	Frequencies(f)
Lack of knowledge about government integrating programs	35
A welcoming country	31
Immigration laws	30
Family integration	27
Personal Expectations	22
Work	22
Immigration facilities	21
Social infrastructure	19
Racial discrimination	18
Certificate discounting_ academic discrimination	16
Early migration journey	15
Other forms of integrating programs	14
Language barrier	14
Religious integration	11
Cultural differences	11
Met expectations	9
Medical discrimination	7
Politics	7

Change in profession	7
Family expectation	6
Need for government integrating programs	5
Legality of migration	5
Lack of need for government integrating program	4
Housing	4
Sanctuary state	4
Covid effect	2
Lack of government program publicity	2
Weather	1
Ease with the use of internet	1
Lack of trust for migrants	1
Extortion by immigration lawyers	1
Double shifting job to survive	1
Total	**373**

Appendix E: Sample Pre-interview Conversation with Participants

I hope you're doing okay today, and everything is good. Like you read from the consent form that you have signed, this interview is going to be strictly confidential. Every information that you will reside with me, but my faculty will get the transcripts. There's not going to be any tracer to you in the analysis for anyone to know that gave me information. People will know only if you give them yourself, so feel free to answer as thoroughly as you know, because that will help me to be able to achieve the purpose of this research. The purpose is to maybe influence the government to create policies that will help immigrants to integrate properly into the United States and to implement such policies appropriately as well. Also, it is intended to help immigrants to know government programs, which perhaps they don't know, and see how they can utilize those programs to properly assimilate into the society of the USA. The interview is going to take between 60 minutes and 75 minutes. The reason it takes that long is because I have 13 questions, two of them have a and b, and the questions are just guides. Other questions come up from the answers you give. The interview is also something that I want you to feel free to narrate your stories. My research methodology is narrative inquiry, which means stories. We want to hear your immigration stories. And please don't hide anything.

Because this is a social change research, and it's not funded from anywhere, there's no payment for your participation. Also, at the end of the interview, I'm going to work on the transcript, and then send you the transcript for you to confirm that this is what we discussed. You have a right to not answer any question you don't feel comfortable with and even when you receive transcripts, you may still decide that you

don't want to participate. It's your prerogative, but I do hope that that will not be the case here. Please feel free to just give your immigration story as truly as it is. Thank you again, for agreeing to this interview. With all the background that has been given, do you still want to continue with this interview?